

# **Leiston Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2029**



**Submission Stage Consultation Version  
(Regulation 16)**

**June 2016**

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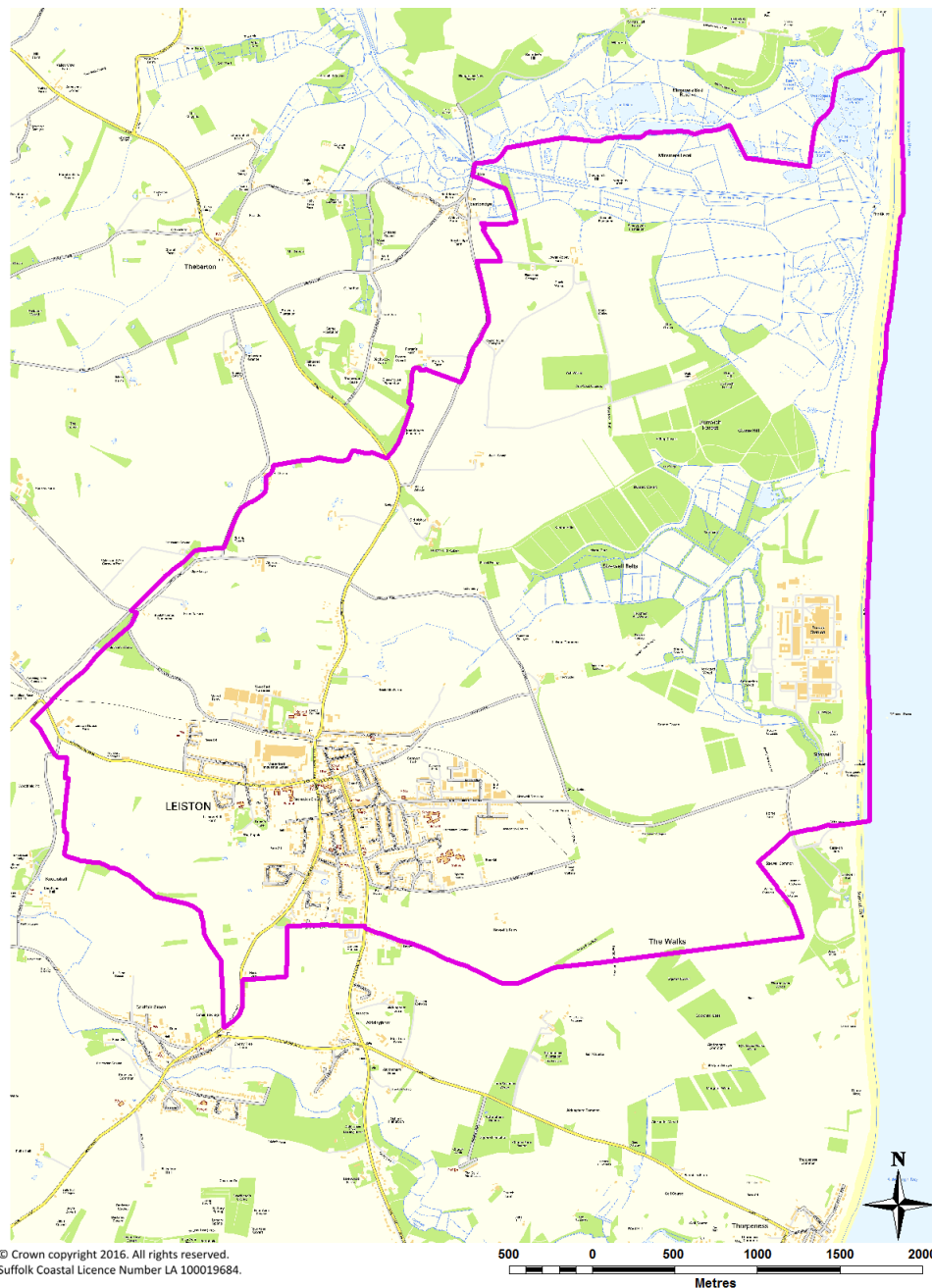
**Appendix A** Verges and Greens

**Appendix B** Suffolk Coastal Local Plan saved policies to be superseded by the Neighbourhood Plan

# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Leiston-cum-Sizevell Parish (hereafter known as 'Leiston'). It represents one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2015 to 2029, the other part being the 2013 Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy. For clarity, the development plan consists of any planning policies currently adopted by the local planning authority, Suffolk Coastal District Council, and this Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2 Suffolk Coastal District Council, as the local planning authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of the Leiston parish area in October 2013 to enable Leiston-cum-Sizevell Town Council (the 'Relevant Body') to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan Group (LNPG).

**Figure 1.1: Leiston Neighbourhood Plan boundary**



- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). The LNPG has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2015 to 2029.
- 1.4 The map in Figure 1.1 above shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Leiston Parish.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the designated Neighbourhood Area. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Leiston, its residents, businesses and community groups. It has therefore given the community the opportunity to guide development within their neighbourhood.

## **Policy context**

- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

*"Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes ... can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications (para.183).*

*Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.*

*Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies (para.184).*

*Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation (para.185)".*

- 1.7 The Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2013 and, under the guidance provided by the NPPF, is up to date. It provides the strategic context for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Local Plan also currently consists of a number of saved policies from the earlier Suffolk Coastal

Local Plan (incorporating 1st and 2nd Alterations) 2006 that are relevant to Leiston. It is the intention that these saved policies, where applicable, will be superseded by the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan once it is made. Clear reference is made in the Neighbourhood Plan to where this is the intention.

- 1.8 The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is on change within and around the built-up area of Leiston town. Some of these policies may have wider impacts on the surrounding rural area but the majority are addressing the needs of Leiston as they relate to Leiston town. This reflects the views of the community through the engagement processes undertaken. This does not mean that the community does not value the wider rural areas within the parish, rather that the existing policy framework provided by the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan is sufficient to reflect how this area should change over the plan period.

### **How to read this document**

Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. There is also a summary of how each policy contributes towards the objectives of the plan. The policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

## 2 LOCAL CONTEXT

### History of Leiston

- 2.1 The coastal parish of Leiston-cum-Sizewell was first inhabited in the Mesolithic period. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a Premonstratensian abbey was built on the Minsmere marshes, and its chapel still stands today. The two sites at Leiston Abbey are both scheduled ancient monuments. Within the second site is St Mary's Abbey, which is Grade I listed.

#### Leiston Abbey



- 2.2 The County Historic Environment Record (maintained by Suffolk County Council) has entries for 250 sites of all dates within Leiston-cum-Sizewell. Prehistoric sites from the Mesolithic period onwards are recorded across the parish, particularly on the lighter, sandier soils overlooking Sizewell Belts and Minsmere and also to the north of Leiston itself. Roman and Medieval archaeological sites are spread across the parish, and recent excavations have revealed extensive medieval activity around Sizewell and Sizewell Gap, relating to the former port. Scheduled Monuments include the Premonstratensian Abbey to the north of the historic settlement core, and the site of its predecessor in the Minsmere Levels to the northeast.
- 2.3 Over the centuries the population of the Leiston settlement continued to grow. In 1778 a blacksmith set up a forge in Leiston which was then an agricultural backwater. The business gradually grew and by 1830, 60 men were employed at the Garrett's Works. Production of portable steam engines, mainly used in agriculture, commenced at the Leiston Works in 1847, and by 1850 the firm employed 300 men. Richard Garrett (IV) sent an impressive array of the Works' products and took 300 employees and their wives to the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in the Crystal Palace in London. As the railway began to rise in importance, Leiston was linked via a branch line to the main Ipswich - Lowestoft line in 1859. By 1862 there were 600 men employed at the Works, which now occupied over 10 acres in the centre of the village. Many houses were built to accommodate the growing workforce and this has produced the terraces and close packed housing that exists around the centre of the town today. The roads and pavements are narrow by modern standards and there is a severe shortage of on street parking as a result. Leiston remains an anomaly amidst the rural landscape in which it sits but has a comfortable relationship with the agricultural heritage of the area.
- 2.4 Leiston-cum-Sizewell was constituted an Urban District in 1895 because of the need to provide a sewerage system for the town. This status remained until local government re-organisation in 1974 when it became part of Suffolk Coastal District Council. The Urban District Corporation (UDC) undertook an extensive housebuilding programme which has left an important legacy of social



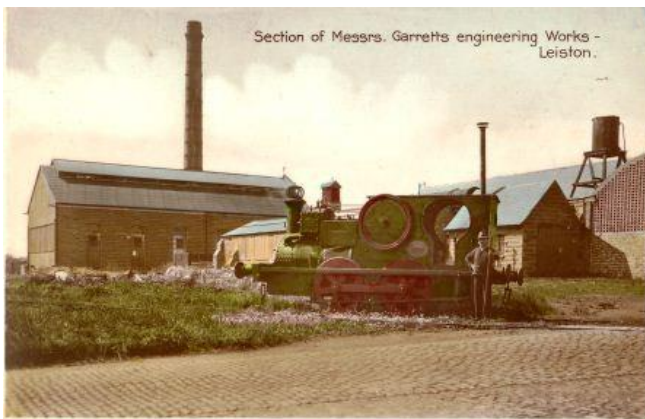
housing in the town with most of these properties having good-sized gardens and the planned estates having high quality public open spaces.

### **Sizewell A and B nuclear reactors**



- 2.5 On top of this, other accommodation was built around the 1960s. This was because, in 1957, the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) were looking round for sites for nuclear power stations on the east coast. In response to an advert in a national paper the Town Council wrote to the CEGB to suggest they consider Sizewell. There was a growing problem with unemployment in the town as the Works downsized and this looked like a good way to increase employment opportunities. With Sizewell becoming the chosen location, this saw the building of Sizewell 'A' nuclear power station. It took five years to build and provided employment to many. Some 45% of the staff were recruited from local sources so housing was required for many of the remaining new staff. It was around this time that national policy, for safety reasons, restricted domestic development in the town, particularly toward the eastern fringe. Sizewell 'B' nuclear power station was built later (between 1987 and 1995) and started supplying electricity in 1995. During the public inquiry for this, the restricted development criteria was confirmed.

### **Garrett's Works and the Long Shop Museum**



- 2.6 There was a slow increase in development of domestic properties however and, around this time, Garrett's Works went into receivership. The works were closed down in 1981 and a large part of

its site in the centre of town used to build domestic properties. The Long Shop Museum stands as a legacy of its history and influence.

- 2.7 As a market town, Leiston provides many important services and facilities to the surrounding settlements. It boasts the oldest cinema in Suffolk and has a good range of independent shops, a leisure centre and swimming pool.
- 2.8 EDF Energy aims to build a new power station with two reactors (Sizewell C) located on land next to the current Sizewell B station. At the present time this has not been given approval to go ahead so the Neighbourhood Plan is not in a position to fully understand its land use impacts. In addition, nuclear power matters are not ones that the Neighbourhood Plan can deal with in its policies although clearly the decision over whether Sizewell C does proceed will influence the future of the parish. The context provided by the Neighbourhood Plan is intended, as far as is possible, to help positively influence the outcomes for the parish, no matter what the final decision.
- 2.9 Today the grid connection at Sizewell is used by the offshore wind industry. The role of the energy sector in this location is important in the context of Leiston, the wider district and nationally. However, as with nuclear power, these are not matters within the ultimately control of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.10 Also today, the legacy of the housebuilding programme still stands. Leiston's housing stock is predominantly in smaller, largely terraced housing which is at quite a high density. In fact, the density of Leiston town is 41.5 persons per hectare, which is even higher than the density of Ipswich borough (33.8 persons per hectare)<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.11 Figure 2.1 shows the timeline for growth of the town.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: 2011 Census

Figure 2.1: Timeline for growth of Leiston Town



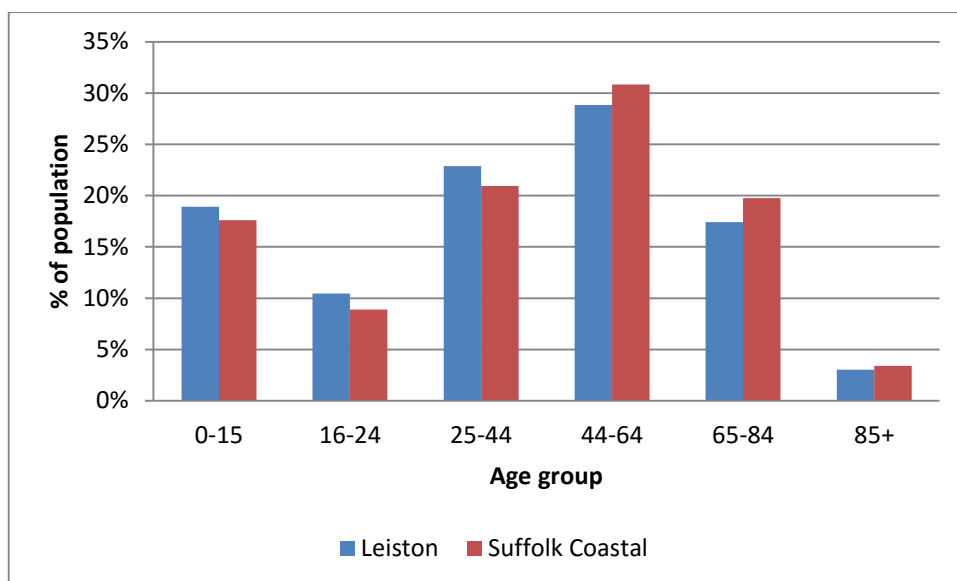
## Socio-economic profile

2.12 Unless stated otherwise, the profile of the community has come from the 2011 Census.

### Population

2.13 In 2011, the population of the parish was 5,508. Compared to Suffolk Coastal district, it has a higher proportion of young people - 29% were aged under 25 in Leiston compared to 27% across the district (see Figure 2.2). This should be taken in context though as Suffolk Coastal district itself has an older age profile than the national average.

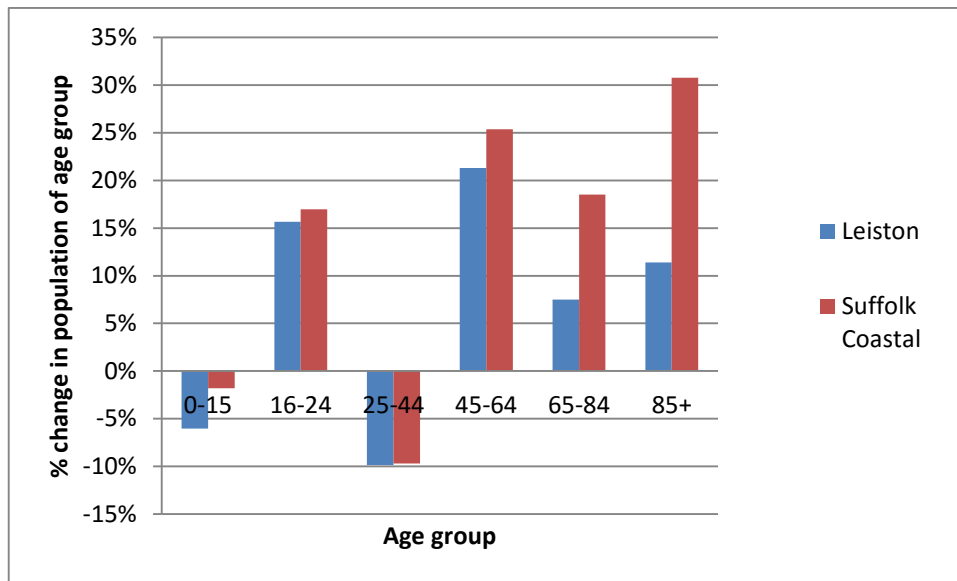
**Figure 2.2: Population profile, 2011**



Source: 2011 Census

2.14 Since 2001, the population of the parish has only grown by 236 persons, a 4.4% change compared to 9.6% growth across Suffolk Coastal district as a whole. What is particularly interesting is the change in population by age group.

**Figure 2.3: Change in population, 2001-2011**



Source: 2011 Census

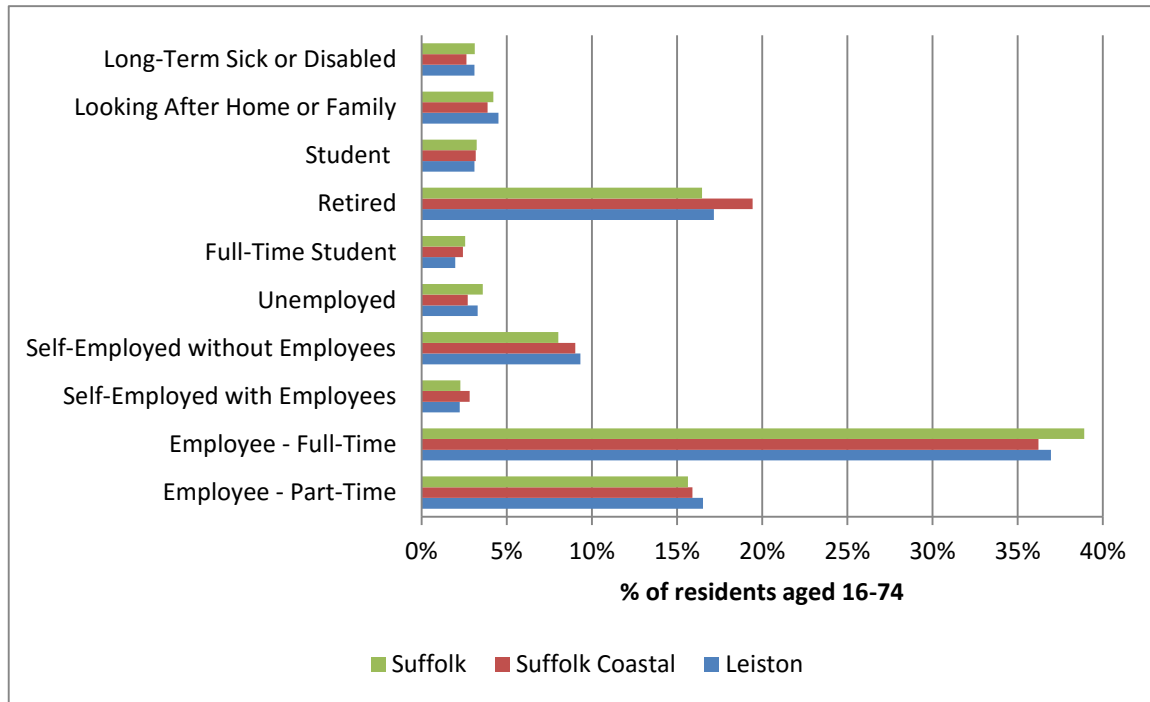
2.15 Leiston has not experienced very strong growth in any of its age bands although the 45-64 age group has still grown strongly (up by 21%). In addition, there has been a decline in children aged up to 15 and also in young adults aged 25-44. These two are linked as these young adults are the parents of the young children. This suggests that there is a declining base of young people in the parish, which, if the trend continued, could create long term structural problems for the local workforce. Equally however, there has been limited growth in those of retirement age. This is shown in Figure 2.3.

### Work

2.16 Leiston’s levels of economic activity are broadly in line with the district and county figures. It does have slightly higher levels of self-employed people without employees, suggesting a significant number of people working for themselves.

2.17 This is shown in Figure 2.4.

**Figure 2.4: Economic activity, 2011**

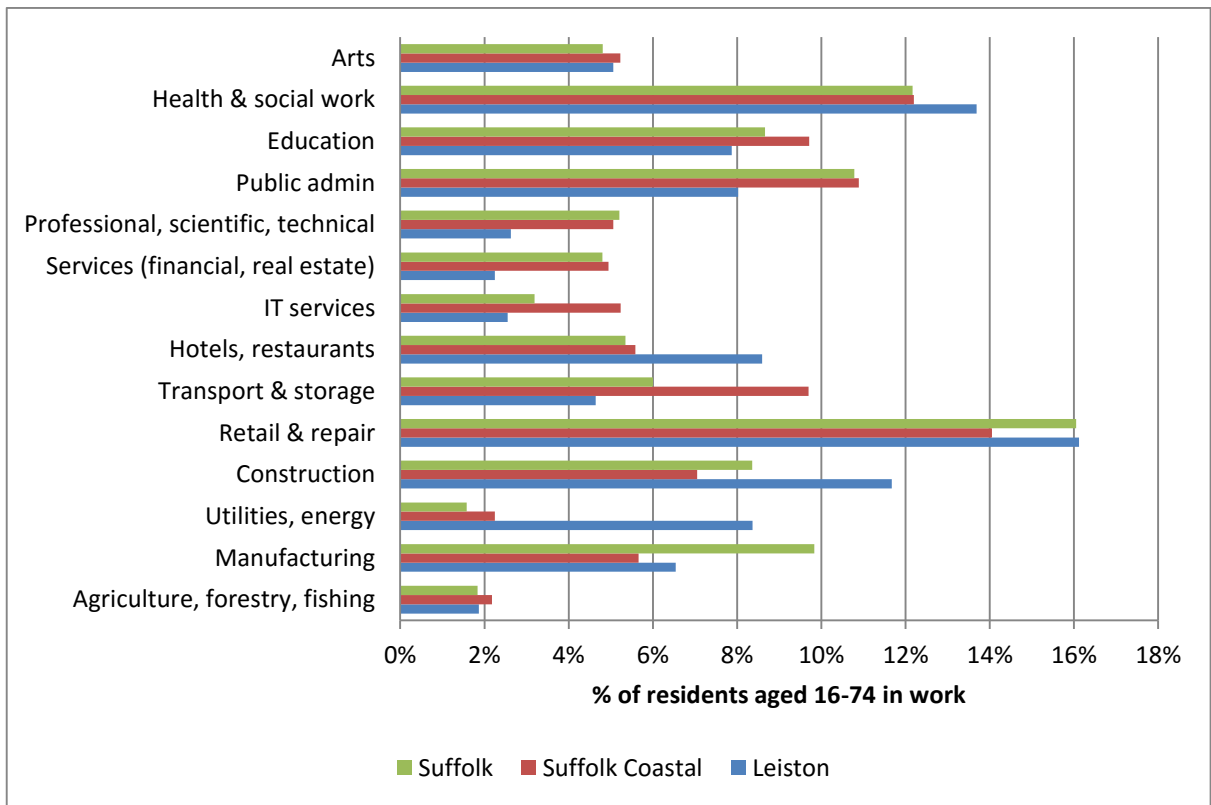


Source: 2011 Census

2.18 Leiston is comparatively strongly represented in the utilities and energy sector, due to the presence of Sizewell. The other sectors that it is strongly represented in are hotels and restaurants and health and social work. The former demonstrates that there is a significant tourist element to Leiston, even if it is not a 'tourist town'. Conversely, Leiston is poorly represented in the higher skilled sectors, including professional, scientific and technical industries, and services industries, with a focus on financial, real estate and communications services.

2.19 This is shown in Figure 2.5.

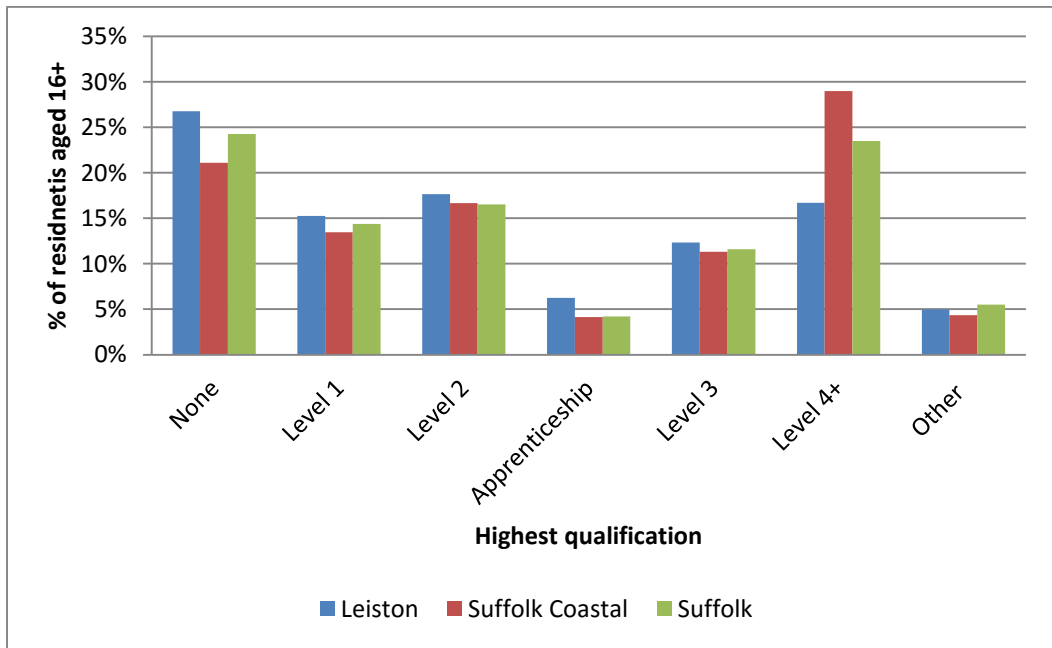
**Figure 2.5: Type of industry, 2011**



Source: 2011 Census

2.20 Figure 2.6 reinforces this, showing that over 25% of the population have no qualifications. By contrast, the proportion that have been educated to Level 4 or above, i.e. degree level, is low. However, what is noticeable is that the proportion with apprenticeships or educated to Level 3, i.e. to A-level or BTEC, is comparatively high.

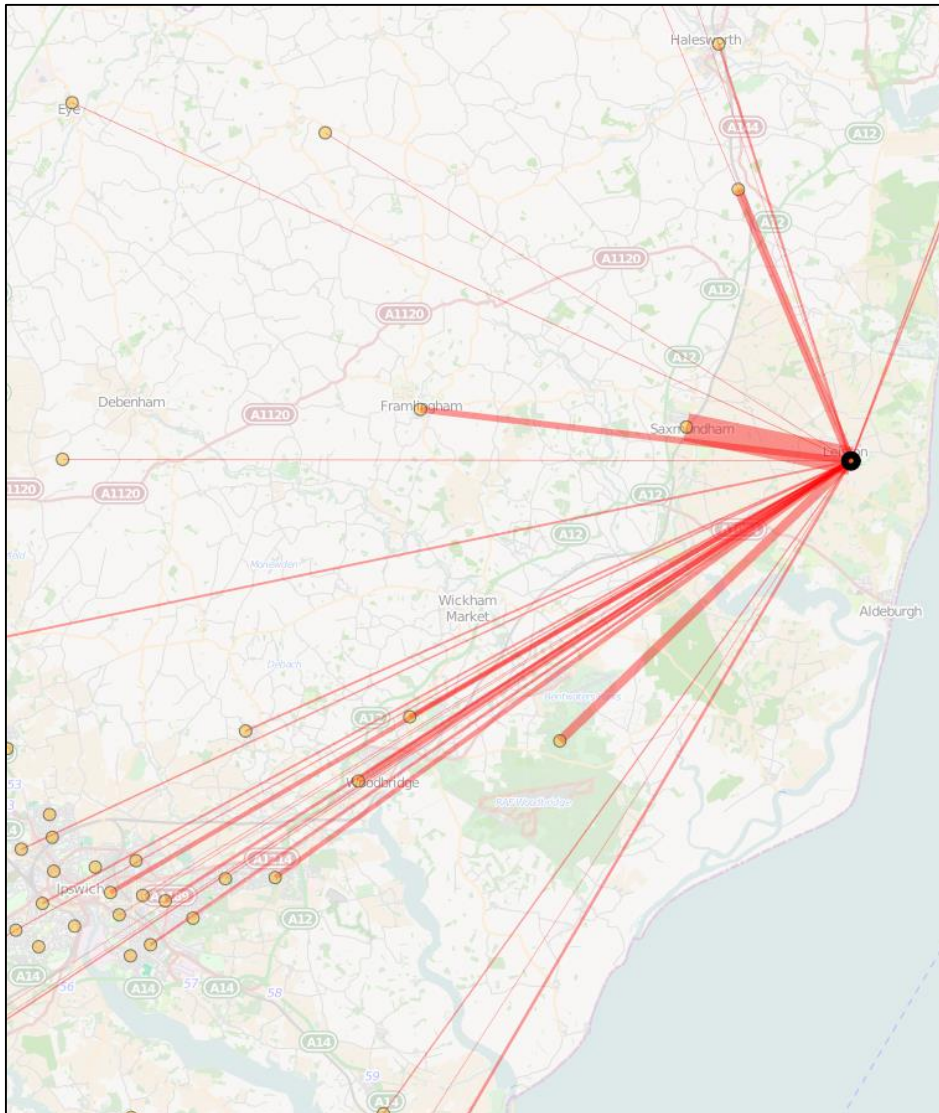
**Figure 2.6: Qualifications of residents aged 16 and over**



Source: 2011 Census

2.21 Every day there is a net inflow of over 1,000 workers to Leiston, i.e. over 1,000 more people come to Leiston to work than leave to work elsewhere. Figure 2.7 shows where residents of Leiston go to work. This shows that the majority (56%) live and work locally in Leiston, with 14% travelling to nearby market towns of Saxmundham and Framlingham. There are also significant flows to Ipswich.

**Figure 2.7: Travel-to-work flows of Leiston residents**



Source: Datashine

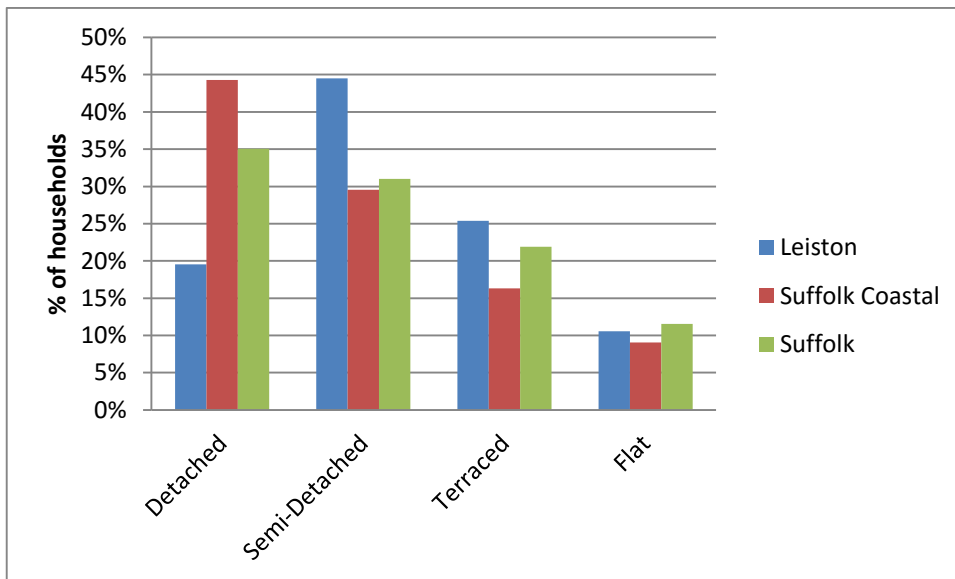
## Housing

2.22 Leiston is dominated by semi-detached and terraced housing, representing nearly 70% of its housing stock. The proportion of detached housing is very low, which reinforces the historic development of Leiston as a high density town.

2.23 This is shown in Figure 2.8.



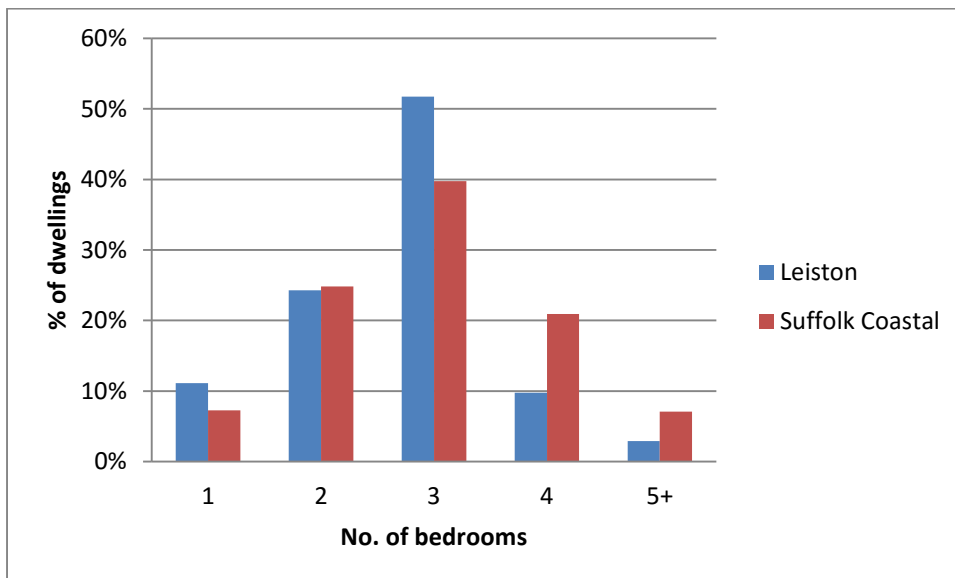
**Figure 2.8: Type of dwelling**



Source: 2011 Census

2.24 This is reinforced when looking at the number of bedrooms that properties in Leiston have. Figure 2.9 shows that it has a higher proportion of 1- and 3-bed properties than the district, with the number of 2-bed properties broadly in line with the district. By contrast, the proportion of 4-bed properties or larger is much lower. Leiston is also one of the more affordable towns to buy residential property within the district, with prices reflecting the more urban nature of the town compared to the rural stock of its neighbours.

**Figure 2.9: Number of bedrooms**

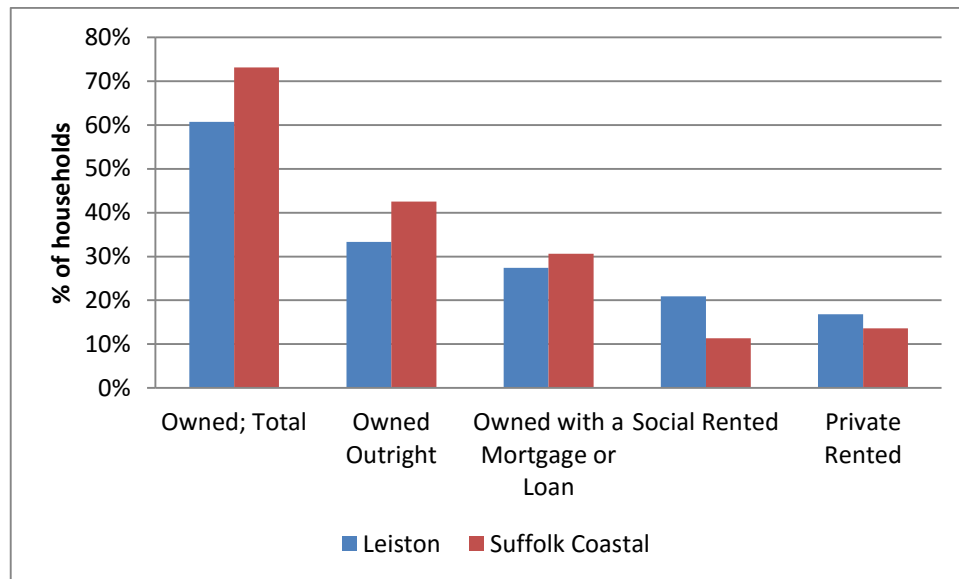


Source: 2011 Census

2.25 The ownership profile of these dwellings reinforces the profile of Leiston as a mixed area of private ownership and social rented housing. Figure 2.10 shows that the proportion of people owning their

property is lower than the district average, whereas the proportion in social rented accommodation is high, at over 20%.

**Figure 2.10: Ownership profile**



Source: 2011 Census

## Services

2.26 As a market town serving a wider hinterland, including some of the needs of other nearby market towns, Leiston has a number of key services that support this function. This includes:

- both a primary and secondary school;
- a GP surgery;
- a town centre with a wide range of shops, including a large convenience store (Co-op Solar) and a weekly market;
- a library and cinema;
- a number of leisure facilities, including a recreation ground, community centre, swimming pool, BMX track, skatepark and sports pitches.

2.27 The clear opinion of residents (through engagement on the Neighbourhood plan and the 2011 Town Appraisal – see below) is that many of these facilities are in need of improvement and expansion, particularly given Leiston’s role as a market town and the growth that it is expected to have to accommodate over the plan period.

## 2011 Town Appraisal

2.28 In 2011, a Town Appraisal was undertaken. A survey covering a wide range of topics resulted in a 47% response rate. This Town Appraisal has been crucial in informing the Neighbourhood Plan and the matters that it addresses.

2.29 In summary, the key issues raised by the Town Appraisal were as follows:

- There was a clear desire to improve the town centre, with 63% of residents and 77% of businesses saying that a large retail development would have a positive effect. At present the

high street suffers from a number of empty shops, particularly away from the central shopping area.

- Guest houses and a Tourist Information Centre were seen as the priority for attracting more visitors to Leiston.
- Traffic speeds in the town centre are an issue for pedestrian safety, although there needs to be sufficient parking available.
- Better leisure facilities are wanted by all people, particularly young people. In particular, this includes a larger community centre.

2.30 The detailed information from the Town Appraisal has been used to inform the development of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

## 3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### Challenges for Leiston

- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Leiston Parish. This reflects the challenges identified and articulated in the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SP24 for Leiston as well as other local challenges identified through the Town Appraisal and the engagement process for the Neighbourhood Plan. In summary these challenges are:
- **Housing** – identifying land to accommodate the minimum amount of housing required and then the most suitable locations for this, whilst ensuring it addresses the needs of Leiston.
  - **Infrastructure** – recognising that the infrastructure in Leiston has not kept pace with its growth over time and that there is a need to ensure new growth is appropriately supported by new infrastructure (e.g. community and leisure facilities).
  - **Leiston town centre** – seeking to retain and improve the vitality of the town centre as a place for residents to address their shopping and service needs and for tourists to visit.
  - **Community activities** – the need to provide for more community activities that will encourage particularly young people and families to stay in the parish, e.g. green space and community facilities, including children’s play and youth facilities.
  - **Commercial activity** – recognising the value of existing businesses and trying to provide for their needs in order to ensure their ongoing presence, along with recognising the importance of providing opportunities for new businesses to locate and create jobs in Leiston.
  - **Movement by non-car modes** – the need to enhance movement by non-car modes, particularly walking and cycling but also public transport providers.
- 3.2 All these challenges sit within the context of potential for the expansion of Sizewell Nuclear Power Station – Sizewell C – within the parish. If this goes ahead within the plan period, then it will have a major impact on the future of Leiston as a place to live, work and spend leisure time. All of these challenges therefore have to be considered under two scenarios – if Sizewell Power Station is expanded within the plan period and if it is not.

### Vision for Leiston

- 3.3 A broad vision for Leiston has been articulated in the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy, Policy SP24, which is a starting point for the development of the Neighbourhood Plan vision. The key elements of Policy SP24 are:
- To consolidate and build on the role of the town, not only in relation to its own residents and rural hinterland, but also in recognition of the wider role it plays in the provision of leisure, education and employment facilities for other neighbouring market towns.
  - To recognise and work with the unique combination of circumstances that apply to the town, given the presence of the Sizewell nuclear facility.
  - The strategy is to identify land for new housing provision, with priority being given to affordable housing to meet local needs.
  - To work within the nuclear safeguarding limits to maintain the vibrancy of the town, with efforts being concentrated on retaining and improving the quality and range of facilities available to local residents and an improved physical environment.

- To retain, strengthen and expand its employment base, despite the detrimental effects of decommissioning Sizewell Station 'A'.
- To accept and embrace an incremental improvement in its tourism offer, building on its location and its industrial heritage.
- To protect and enhance the setting to the town.
- Opportunities exist for development within the physical limits of the town on previously developed land and also in part on greenfield sites on the edge of the town.
- Given the availability of facilities such as a High School and leisure centre, which serve a wide rural catchment area, the District Council will work with public transport providers to maintain and improve accessibility.

3.4 The vision for Leiston Parish, as articulated by the community of Leiston, is as follows:

**In 2029, Leiston-cum-Sizewell parish and its villages are well served by Leiston town, a service centre that recognises and embraces its industrial heritage. The evolution of Sizewell nuclear power station has had an influence on Leiston but has not defined it; Leiston is thriving because the community of Leiston has ensured that it thrives. Those coming to work here have also reaped the benefits.**

**Leiston saw that it had a thriving community spirit but there was nowhere for people to go to be able to nurture this. So the town focused its efforts on strengthening the range of services that it offers to its residents and businesses. This is particularly the case on the High Street, with the redevelopment of the former car park to provide a modern town centre offer that people come to meet, shop and enjoy their leisure time in. This has been complemented by an improvement to the environment of the town centre, making it a place people actively want to come to. As a rural centre, Leiston has had to be car-friendly but has ensured that this has been managed effectively. These actions have collectively led to there now being a buzz about the place.**

**Leiston understands that it is not a tourist town but has still sought to make the most of the parish's visitor assets, both in terms of its historic legacy (including the Long Shop and Leiston Abbey) and its special countryside, leading down to the sea.**

**Whilst looking to retain its young people through the provision of smaller, more affordable housing, Leiston has also looked after its older and disabled residents by building housing appropriate for their needs.**

**All of this has been supported by improved infrastructure, one of the biggest issues that has held Leiston back in the past. Improved community facilities – particularly on the land adjacent to the Victory Road Recreation Ground – have been joined by better cycle and pedestrian routes leading between residential areas and the town. Leiston has become a place that people can move around without the need for a car and a place that people don't have to leave in order to go about their daily lives. This has helped it to become an attractive place for businesses to locate in which has consolidated its employment base.**

**In short, Leiston works. It recognises the role of a modern market town and has made the most of its assets in order to retain the community spirit that defines the parish for anyone that spends time there.**

## Objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan

3.5 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

- **Objective One:** Contribute to the Core Strategy district-wide housing requirement and provide for the housing needs of the parish.
- **Objective Two:** Work with service providers to improve the physical infrastructure serving the residents and businesses of Leiston.
- **Objective Three:** Improve the community infrastructure of Leiston in order to provide more places for people, young and old, to undertake their leisure pursuits.
- **Objective Four:** Make Leiston town centre a place that more people want to visit for their shopping and leisure time.
- **Objective Five:** Improve movement by non-car modes, principally walking and cycling, whilst ensuring that all new residential properties have levels of parking that are appropriate to Leiston's role as a rural settlement and parish.
- **Objective Six:** Protect the existing business base of the town and ensure their needs are provided for as well as the needs of new businesses.

## 4 PHYSICAL LIMITS BOUNDARY

- 4.1 In a rural parish such as Leiston with one principal settlement, it is important that development is directed to appropriate locations - principally Leiston town - and that sprawl is avoided. The purpose of a physical limits boundary is to help to provide that direction.

### **Policy justification**

- 4.2 The Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy refers to the fact that 'physical limits boundaries' will be defined for Major Centres down to Local Service Centres. This includes Leiston town and it is the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to define this.
- 4.3 The main bulk of growth will be delivered on the site allocations, as detailed in Policies SA1 to SA4. More detail on how the site allocations have been determined is included in Section 6 but they reflect the preferred options as presented to the community of Leiston and therefore it is considered appropriate and necessary to revise the physical limits boundaries accordingly to include these site areas.
- 4.4 There will also be infill development within the physical limits boundaries on small windfall sites.
- 4.5 Outside of the physical limits boundaries in the open countryside, development is more restricted. However, certain uses are considered to be appropriate in the countryside and these are identified in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (July 2013) (hereinafter referred to as the Core Strategy). These most commonly relate to housing, employment, retail, agricultural uses, tourism and community uses and include:
- Policy DM3 (Housing in the Countryside)
  - Policy DM13 (Conversion and Re-Use of Redundant Buildings in the Countryside)
  - Policy DM14 (Farm Diversification)
  - Policy DM15 (Agricultural Buildings and Structures)
  - Policy DM16 (Farm Shops)
  - Policy DM17 (Touring Caravan, Camper Vans and Camping Sites)
  - Policy DM18 (Static Holiday Caravans, Cabins and Chalets)
  - Policy DM30 (Key Facilities)
  - Policy DM31 (Public Buildings)
  - Policy DM32 (Sport and Play)
  - Policy DM33 (Allotments)

## Policy

### **POLICY PL1: LEISTON TOWN PHYSICAL LIMITS BOUNDARY**

The development of Leiston town shall be focused within the physical limits boundary as identified on the Proposals Map.

Development proposals will be supported within the physical limits boundary subject to compliance with other policies in the development plan.

Development proposals outside the physical limits boundary will not be permitted unless:

- they are in accordance with the Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy policies in respect of appropriate uses in the countryside; or
- they relate to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available.



## 5 HOUSING

- 5.1 Meeting housing needs, particularly needs for affordable housing, is a strategic objective in Suffolk Coastal district. Delivery of the new housing development in the quantity and form necessary is fundamental to the policies of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. Key drivers for these policies are the demographic trends at work in the district, the evidence of need for affordable housing set out in the strategic housing market assessment, and the needs of individual towns and villages for additional housing of a range of costs and tenures as part of their development as communities and more sustainable places.
- 5.2 The Local Plan identified that the five market towns of Leiston, Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Saxmundham and Woodbridge are required to deliver a minimum of 1,520 dwellings over the period from 2010 to 2027 (Strategic Policy SP2). This includes at least 940 dwellings on allocated sites. The Local Plan provides no breakdown of these figures by each market town.
- 5.3 Since this time, Suffolk Coastal District Council has undertaken further work on providing a more detailed indication of the housing requirements for each of the market towns. In April and May 2016, it is consulting on its 'Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Local Plan' Proposed Submission Document which contains these indicative figures. For Leiston the figure given was 601 dwellings over the plan period 2010 to 2027. This includes completions and sites already in the planning pipeline<sup>2</sup> and requires 400 dwellings to be found on site allocations. It is important to understand that all figures represent a minimum of what must be planned for.
- 5.4 For Leiston parish, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to contribute towards this by addressing the housing needs of the parish whilst ensuring that development does not have an unacceptable impact on the local infrastructure or any adverse effect of the nuclear emergency plan arrangements. This will be achieved by:
- providing for new dwellings – principally on its four site allocations, SA1 to SA4, between 2015 and 2029 in accordance with Suffolk Coastal District Council's Local Plan and ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity;
  - ensuring that the physical limits boundary reflects this need to grow but is maintained so that it provides appropriate safeguards to Leiston town's identity; and
  - ensuring that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people, taking into account the current and projected demographic of the parish.
- 5.5 It is the chosen role of the Neighbourhood Plan to allocate sites for housing development within Leiston parish. Given the importance of this role, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to be positive about growth whilst recognising the past legacy of inadequate infrastructure provision and the consequent concerns that the community have about the need for further development to be accompanied by appropriate levels of infrastructure provision that can also help to address these historic deficits in provision.

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<sup>2</sup> The position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, including a list of sites with planning permission, is shown in the SCDC 'Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Local Plan' Proposed Submission Document

## **Sizewell emergency arrangements**

- 5.6 Over a number of years, the Office of Nuclear Regulation (ONR) has engaged with Suffolk Coastal District Council on matters pertaining to growth and development both for Leiston and for the area incorporated within the Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ)<sup>3</sup>. However, the DEPZ does not have any direct implications or place any constraints on development planning.
- 5.7 The Head of Emergency Planning, Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit, discharges a statutory duty of Suffolk County Council with respect to maintaining the Sizewell Off-Site Emergency Plan. Any future development application in the Leiston area will have to be assessed by the Head of Emergency Planning for its impact on existing emergency arrangements around the Sizewell nuclear sites and advice will be passed to the ONR to allow them to provide a view to Suffolk Coastal District Council with respect to the safety of any such new development.

## **Housing needs and capacity**

### **Policy justification**

- 5.8 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should ensure that their Local Plan 'meets the full and objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area.'
- 5.9 The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy Policy DM2 requires, on developments of six or more dwellings, 33% of these dwellings to be delivered as affordable units. This is unless its provision is not required due to a lack of local need in the area or due to the site conditions, suitability and economics of provision.
- 5.10 The assessment that establishes needs is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the most recent SHMA was produced in 2008<sup>4</sup> and subsequently updated in 2012<sup>5</sup>. This identifies a significant backlog of households in need of affordable housing, with need in Suffolk Coastal being high, at 355 dwellings per annum.
- 5.11 The SHMA recognised that, with more older people being assisted to remain at home, the trend for larger homes to be under-occupied is likely to increase. This could have a knock-on effect of constraining the supply of homes. At the same time, older people will expect more choice on the type, quality and location of accommodation. The SHMA called for a better understanding of these expectations to inform actions that promote 'down-sizing'. It went on to recommend that the development of Neighbourhood Plans should be used to promote accommodation which would be suited to the needs and expectations of older people.
- 5.12 An indicator of need is provided by those on the Suffolk Coastal housing register. As at November 2015, for applicants living in Leiston parish, there were:
- 57 applicants waiting for 1-bed accommodation
  - 46 applicants waiting for 2-bed accommodation
  - 13 applicants waiting for 3-bed accommodation
  - 3 applicants waiting for 4-bed accommodation

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<sup>3</sup> Current guidance is available at <http://www.suffolkresilience.com/emergency-plans>

<sup>4</sup> Fordham Research (2008) *Suffolk Coastal Strategic Housing Market Assessment – final report*, for Suffolk Coastal District Council.

<sup>5</sup> Babergh, Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk Councils (2012) *Ipswich Housing Market Area: Strategic Housing Market Assessment*

- 5.13 SCDC reported that in the past it has had difficulties in letting 4-bed dwellings in Leiston.
- 5.14 The housing register is a live document so is always changing. However, it is understood that the position has not changed much over recent years and compared to equivalent figures from 2013<sup>6</sup>, this view is supported. It is also important to understand that this does not represent the full extent of housing need. There will be many other households that have housing needs they cannot fulfil that are not on the register.
- 5.15 The main housing association operating in Leiston is Flagship. It has confirmed that it is actively seeking to deliver new affordable housing for social rent in Leiston in response to demand and has funding available to do so. Its development strategy aims to increase this further through sourcing other funding streams and delivering a more diverse range of housing products in terms of tenure and housing mix.
- 5.16 The Town Appraisal identified that there were over 500 respondents that had a member of their household that would be in need of accommodation in Leiston over the next five years. Of this, 45% would be looking for 1-2 bed properties with a further 23% looking for 2-3 bed properties. Homes for the elderly were also specifically identified by a significant number of respondents.
- 5.17 In September 2013 a consultation was held on the Leiston Recreation Ground as part of a 'Show Me' event where clear support was given for further appropriate development in the town. The main themes coming from this consultation were the need for extra communal facilities to support the additional housing and a lot of support for increased infrastructure for cycling and pedestrians. The biggest response was with regard to the type of housing needed, with affordable and starter homes of one or two bedrooms the most requested, followed by provision for the elderly. There was no support for buildings over three storeys high and more eco-friendly designs, with usable outside space, got most support for the type of layout desired.

### **Waste water capacity**

- 5.18 There is a potential constraint to future housing growth. The Water Recycling Centre (WRC) in Leiston is nearing the capacity of its discharge consent. The Haven Gateway Water Cycle Study Stage 2 Report<sup>7</sup> (WCS) assessed the capacity of the WRC based on a scenario of 189 dwellings and 16 hectares of employment growth. Since this time, the amount of employment growth has been reduced to 5 hectares. At the Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy Examination in Public, Anglian Water Services (AWS), the used water provider, submitted a joint position statement with the Environment Agency which stated that, along with 5 hectares of employment growth, the existing capacity could accommodate a total of 250 dwellings without the need for upgrade. If growth were to exceed this, then additional capacity at the works would need to be found whilst continuing to safeguard the Sizewell Belts Site of Special Scientific Interest downstream.
- 5.19 Since the WCS was published, approximately 160 dwellings have been either constructed or granted planning permission within the catchment of the Leiston WRC. Therefore, based on the stated position of AWS and the Environment Agency in 2013, there is a maximum remaining capacity for up to 90 dwellings, assuming that five hectares of employment land is delivered. If the quantum of employment space was less – which given the limited demand for employment space in Leiston over recent years, is quite likely – then it is likely that this figure for residential capacity would rise.

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<sup>6</sup> In March 2013 there were 131 applicants

<sup>7</sup> Royal Haskoning (2009) *Haven Gateway Water Cycle Study: Stage 2 Report*, Haven Gateway Partnership

- 5.20 However, in June 2015 the Environment Agency confirmed that, following further discussions with AWS, the more recent monitored flow data from Leiston WRC is more accurate than had been previously received and shows that there is now capacity for the proposed growth of approximately 400 new dwellings in the Plan.
- 5.21 Whilst this does provide some assurance, this is clearly an issue for the delivery of housing over the plan period. At the present time AWS has not included any expansion of capacity at the Leiston WRC in its asset management plan to 2015 and it is not expected to be included in the plan to 2020. However, over the 15-year plan period it is possible that upgrades or alternative solutions could be found.
- 5.22 The Neighbourhood Plan proposes to allocate four sites for residential and employment development, totalling approximately 390 dwellings<sup>8</sup> along with 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace. The delivery of this will be subject to the necessary provision of used water treatment capacity.

#### **POLICY H1: HOUSING STRATEGY**

Over the period 2015 to 2029, new residential development of approximately 400 dwellings will be provided in Leiston parish. This shall principally be located on the four identified site allocations as follows:

- Policy SA1 – Land at Highbury Cottages, Saxmundham Road - 150 dwellings
- Policy SA2 – Land at Red House Lane - 70 dwellings
- Policy SA3 – Land the rear of St Margaret’s Crescent – 70 dwellings
- Policy SA4 – Land at Abbey Road – 100 dwellings

A limited number of dwellings suitable for older people is also included as part of a mixed use allocation on land off Waterloo Avenue (Policy IN2) and housing could be included as part of a mixed use redevelopment of land in the High Street, Leiston Town Centre (Policy TC2).

In addition to these allocations, infill development will be considered acceptable within the built-up area, subject to the provisions of Policy PL1 and other material planning considerations.

The delivery of new dwellings is subject to the confirmation of sufficient treatment capacity at Leiston Water Recycling Centre and capacity within the sewerage network. If there is insufficient capacity at Leiston Water Recycling Centre, then confirmation will be required that used water treatment can be managed by alternative means to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. In all other circumstances, planning permission will be refused.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP3, SP18, SP24, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM7, DM8***

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<sup>8</sup> Plus a small amount of housing at Waterloo Avenue (Policy IN2) and potentially as part of the High Street redevelopment (Policy TC2)

## Housing mix

### Policy justification

- 5.23 The housing mix in terms of dwelling size is an important issue in Leiston. As the earlier analysis has shown, Leiston parish has a slightly higher proportion of its population aged 17-40, i.e. in the first-time buyer category for housing. Moreover, it has a slightly higher proportion of people under 18 who will be the next generation of first-time buyers over the plan period.
- 5.24 Perhaps partially reflective of this population mix, Leiston parish has a small proportion of large properties (4 or more dwellings) and a large proportion of 3-bed properties and, to a lesser extent, 1-bed properties.
- 5.25 This suggests that the need is to continue to provide smaller properties over the plan period. This is supported by the evidence from the community, which has stated that there is a continuing need for smaller properties. Furthermore, demand for larger affordable units by those on the housing register is very limited, with the predominant demand being for 1- and 2-bed units.
- 5.26 Strategic Policy SP3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan reflects a policy requirement for developments to provide for needs as they change over time. At present, it is seeking the following split of dwelling sizes on developments of five or more units:

**Table 5.1: Target proportions of house sizes in Suffolk Coastal Local Plan**

Bedrooms	1	2	3	4+
Open market housing	6%	32%	39%	22%
Affordable housing	43%	31%	16%	11%
All sectors	13%	32%	35%	20%

Source: Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Table 3.6

- 5.27 Based on the engagement with the local community as part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that this split is broadly appropriate for Leiston. However, with the need for such provision in Leiston considered to be acute, it is important to reflect this more explicitly than in Strategic Policy SP3. At a parish level it is considered appropriate to do so and as such, Policy H2 of the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to reinforce Strategic Policy SP3 of the Local Plan.

### **POLICY H2: HOUSING MIX**

In line with Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Strategic Policy SP3, developments of more than 10 dwellings should provide a mix of dwelling sizes (market and affordable) that fall within the following ranges:

- 1-bed dwellings: 10-15% of all dwellings
- 2-bed dwellings: 30-35% of all dwellings
- 3-bed dwellings: 30-40% of all dwellings
- 4+-bed dwellings: 15-20% of all dwellings

An alternative mix of housing will only be permitted where this is in line with up-to-date housing need and market demand as evidenced through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP3, SP24**

## Residential density and design

### Policy justification

- 5.28 Leiston town, as a settlement that has developed significantly since the Second World War (as shown in Figure 2.1), has some relatively unique features on terms of its housing layout. For a rural settlement, the residential development close to the centre of the town is at quite high densities, reflecting its Victorian heritage. As you move away from the town centre, densities are more in keeping with other rural settlements, with low densities experienced in locations such as St Margaret's Crescent.

### Housing at St Margaret's Crescent



- 5.29 It is important that new development respects the heritage of Leiston and is in keeping with that of the surrounding area. For any development of multiple units, it is considered necessary to undertake an assessment of the surrounding densities in order to ascertain what is appropriate. Any development proposals must demonstrate that they are broadly in keeping with these surrounding densities. They should also note and address the current lack of amenity in many areas of the town where on- and off-street parking is a major problem. The rural aspect of the town means that public transport does not cater for travel to employment areas and therefore, car dependency and ownership is very high.

### Terraced housing in Leiston



- 5.30 Another feature of Leiston is the provision of private open space with dwellings. This is in the form of both private and communal gardens. Whilst there is a need for smaller properties to address local needs, this does not mean that it should be provided without open space. Even in rural settlements, having private open space is important to the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly older people who may find it more difficult to get out into the surrounding countryside.
- 5.31 New developments should therefore incorporate private open space into their design. If, for example, a flatted development is provided whereby it is more efficient to provide this as communal private open space, then this would be acceptable, subject to the accessibility and layout of the open space.

### **POLICY H3: RESIDENTIAL DENSITY AND DESIGN**

Within the Leiston town physical limits boundary, developments of two or more dwellings shall be delivered at a density in keeping with existing developments in the immediate surrounding area of the site.

Design of new housing developments shall ensure that the following can be provided:

- Sufficient off-street parking in line with Policy TM3; and
- Usable private open space, ideally as green space. This would mainly be in the form of private or communal gardens.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP15, SP24, DM7, DM8, DM22***

## **Residential energy efficiency**

### **Policy justification**

- 5.32 It is imperative that, in order to address issues of climate change, new development is made as energy efficient as possible. Whilst new national minimum standards for energy efficiency of development were brought in during early 2015, a strong effort should be to deliver above this minimum standard where possible. In particular, new residential development, which is expected to represent the bulk of new development in Leiston over the plan period, should seek to be delivered as near to zero carbon as possible.

### **POLICY H4: LOW CARBON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Development proposals which propose new buildings that are carbon neutral, or as near to carbon neutral as is reasonably possible, shall be strongly supported. Development proposals must demonstrate how they will ensure that new dwellings include energy saving and CO<sub>2</sub>-reducing measures that at least match, and ideally exceed, current regulations.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP1, SP12, DM22***

## Lifetime Homes

- 5.33 Engagement with the community of Leiston highlighted the issue of the ageing population. This is supported by the evidence with nearly 20% of the population of the parish being of retirement age. Over the plan period, nearly 15% of the population could be over 80 years of age.
- 5.34 It is therefore considered that the requirement to address the needs of the ageing population in terms of the housing stock that is provided is important.
- 5.35 The development of Lifetime Homes<sup>9</sup> helps to ensure that properties are appropriate for older persons' needs whilst still meaning that they are suitable for other types of occupiers such as first-time buyers. The Lifetime Homes (LTH) standard 'seeks to enable 'general needs' housing to provide, either from the outset or through simple and cost-effective adaptation, design solutions that meet the existing and changing needs of diverse households'.
- 5.36 The cost of complying with LTH standards - a set of 16 design criteria that provide a model for building accessible and adaptable homes - does increase the cost of development. The Department for Communities and Local Government Housing Standards Review in 2013<sup>10</sup> produced evidence that compliance with the LTH, taking into account the extra-over costs of compliance, the additional space required and the extra administrative costs, were £1,930 for a two-bed apartment, £2,600 for a two-bed house and £2,019 for a three-bed house<sup>11</sup>. In the Leiston area between June 2013 and June 2014, the average sale price of terraced and semi-detached houses ranged from £97,000 to £118,250<sup>12</sup>. Therefore this extra cost represents around 2.5% of the sale price of these smaller properties (as opposed to all properties) so is not considered likely to impact significantly on viability.

The Lifetime Homes standard is a set of 16 design criteria that addresses design issues such as:

- Approaches to dwellings from parking (distance, gradients and widths)
- Entrances, internal doorways and hallways
- Entrance level living space with the potential for bed-space
- Stairs and potential through-floor lifts in dwellings
- Potential for fitting hoists
- Glazing and window handle heights

LTH is widely applied by local authorities, particularly for affordable housing and, for example, London Plan policy requires that all new homes within the Greater London Authority area must meet the standard.



<sup>9</sup> <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

<sup>10</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2013) *Housing Standards Review Consultation: Impact Assessment*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp.30-31

<sup>12</sup> Source: [www.home.co.uk](http://www.home.co.uk)



- 5.37 In 2015, national standards were brought in for the design of residential properties the needs of users. As such, it is not possible for the Neighbourhood Plan to require certain minimum provision in its policies. Nevertheless, proposals to exceed the minimum standards and deliver housing to Lifetime Homes standards will be strongly supported.

**POLICY H5: DWELLINGS APPROPRIATE FOR THE NEEDS OF OLDER PEOPLE**

Proposals to deliver new residential development to Lifetime Homes standards will be strongly supported.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP3***

## 6 RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SITE ALLOCATIONS

- 6.1 This section of the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for residential and commercial development.
- 6.2 The approach taken in the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan is to identify housing allocations which achieve the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan whilst also providing a clear spatial strategy for contributing towards the delivery of the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan housing requirement for the market towns in the district.
- 6.3 In addressing the needs of Leiston today, there are already sites in the planning pipeline which will serve to provide new homes for the community as well as placing additional demands on the infrastructure of the parish. However, in order to recognise the growing needs of the community over the whole plan period, it is important to plan for further growth, provided it meets the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.4 The following sites are allocated wholly or primarily for housing:
- Land at Highbury Cottages – for approximately 150 dwellings (Policy SA1)
  - Land at Red House Lane - for approximately 70 dwellings (Policy SA2)
  - Land to the rear of St Margaret’s Crescent - for approximately 70 dwellings (Policy SA3)
  - Land at Abbey Road – a mixed use allocation for approximately 100 dwellings and 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace (Policy SA4)
- 6.5 In addition, housing is proposed as part of the following mixed use developments:
- Land at Waterloo Avenue (Policy IN2)
  - Land at High Street, Leiston Town Centre (Policy TC2)
- 6.6 The amount of housing delivered as part of these two allocations will depend on the mix of uses and design of any proposed development.
- 6.7 This overall scale of growth is considered to represent an appropriate balance between the need to provide for a growing and changing population whilst also recognising the aim of maintaining Leiston as a sustainable, rural town.
- 6.8 It is important to be clear that it is Leiston town that is identified to accommodate growth, this being the most sustainable location in the parish. The remainder of the parish is covered by other policies in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy. The main strategic policy is Policy SP29 (The Countryside).

### Site selection criteria

- 6.9 The site selection criteria adopted the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan listed in Section 3. Sites were identified through the Suffolk Coastal Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and a Neighbourhood Plan ‘Call for Sites’ process. Site promoters were invited to demonstrate how their sites would contribute towards achieving these objectives.
- 6.10 Sites were then assessed against the following criteria:
- Availability – if the site is available for development;
  - Suitability – if, when assessed against policy restrictions (such as designations, protected areas, existing planning policy), physical problems (such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, hazardous risks, pollution or contamination), potential impacts (including

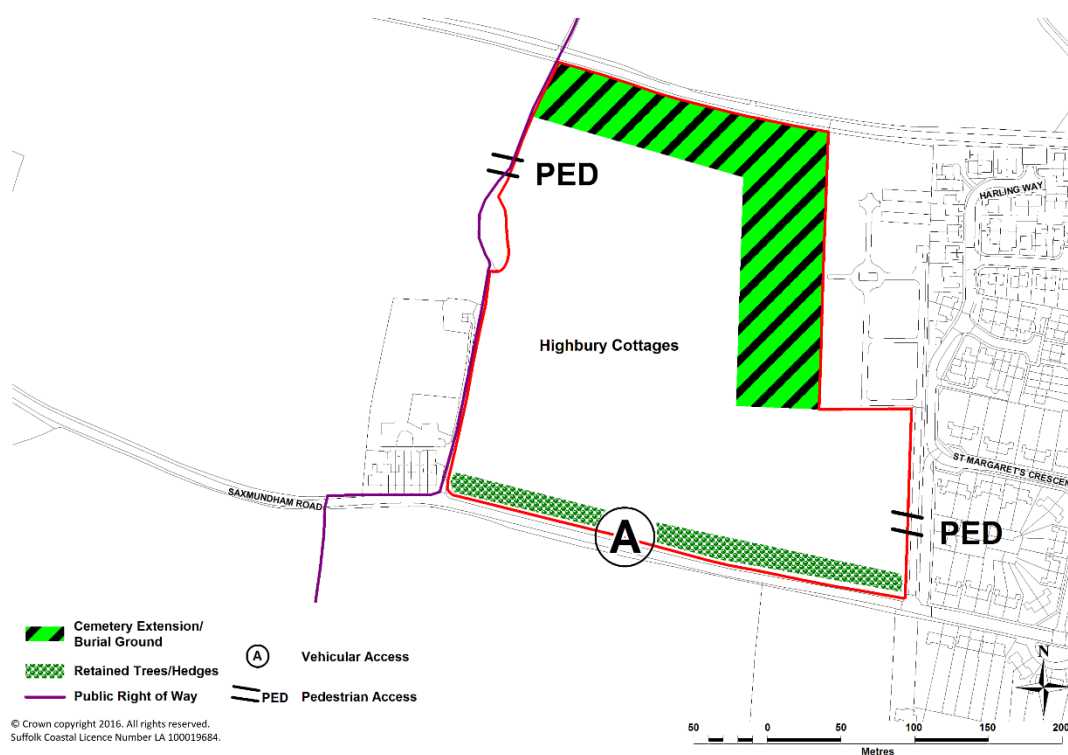
effect upon landscape features and conservation) and environmental conditions (which would be experienced by prospective residents), it is a suitable location for development;

- Achievability - if there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be developed on the site, this being a judgement about its economic viability.

6.11 These criteria are provided by Government guidance on undertaking assessments of housing sites. Separately the sites were then assessed as part of the Sustainability Appraisal underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan in order to identify which sites represented sustainable options for growth.

6.12 The sites that are potentially sustainable options for growth were then presented to the community who were asked to give their views on the extent to which each site would contribute towards the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. The sites allocated reflect the views of the community (see the Consultation Statement).

### Land at Highbury Cottages, Saxmundham Road



6.13 This land totals 7.5 hectares and is currently an agricultural field. To the north, west and south is open countryside and to the east is the existing cemetery and the residential edge of Leiston. The southern boundary of the site is provided by the B1119 Saxmundham Road and there is also a small access road on the eastern side which serves as an access to the cemetery. The site is flat.

6.14 Access can be provided midway along the southern boundary of the site directly onto the B1119. This stretch of road provides reasonable visibility. The site can also provide a separate pedestrian link exiting the site on the south eastern boundary onto the access road to the cemetery or directly onto the B1119. This will be capable of linking up with the existing pavement on the north side of the B1119, providing safe pedestrian access into the town centre. There is a public right of way running along the western boundary of the site and access to this should be provided from within the site boundary.

- 6.15 The site does open development out slightly into the countryside but is still considered to relate reasonably well to the existing settlement pattern. However, careful design and landscaping will be important as the site represents an important entrance into the town. In this respect, it will be necessary to achieve an appropriate balance of density and design between the creation of an overly urban feel (for example, with the front doors of properties opening out close to Saxmundham Road) and a low density 'suburban' development which would not be in keeping with a town such as Leiston.
- 6.16 The site provides the opportunity to extend the existing cemetery in order to provide for the long term burial needs of Leiston. It has been reported by SCDC that Leiston has a maximum of 16 years' burial space remaining, therefore it is important that the opportunity is addressed over the current plan period. This could extend along part of the eastern boundary and also along the northern boundary, providing a softer buffer to the edge of the settlement than would be provided by residential development and retain space for future extension if needed.
- 6.17 Accessible public open space will be required on this site in line with the requirements of Strategic Policy SP16 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. This may need to be reduced if the provision of this and land for the cemetery significant impacts the viability of the scheme.
- 6.18 The site is considered to be suitable to accommodate approximately 150 dwellings. The extension to the cemetery will require approximately 1.5 hectares (to allow for burial space, the provision of public toilets and additional parking), leaving a balance of approximately 6 hectares. This density reflects a balanced approach that seeks to make the best and most effective use of land being brought forward for development whilst respecting the setting and general location of the site on the north western edge of the settlement.

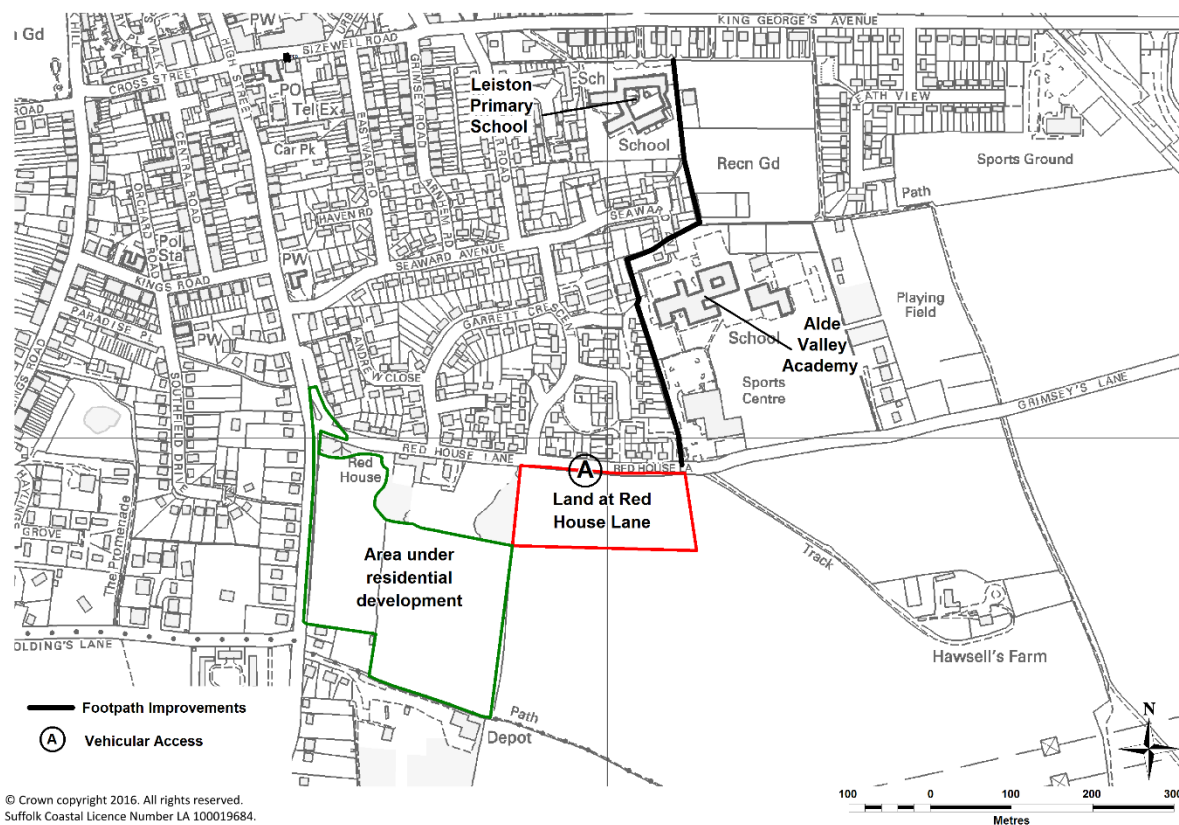
#### **POLICY SA1: LAND AT Highbury Cottages, Saxmundham Road**

Planning permission will be granted for residential development on 7.5 hectares of land at Highbury Cottages subject to the following criteria:

- the provision of an extension to the existing cemetery of at least 1.5 hectares in the north western corner of the site, with public toilets and appropriate parking; and
- demonstration of a high quality design with care taken to ensure satisfactory integration of the development of this important entrance to Leiston town and the relationship of its boundaries to the open countryside, Saxmundham Road and the cemetery (as extended); and
- that it can be demonstrated that development will enhance and have a positive effect on wildlife; and
- the adequate provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS); and
- the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site from the B1119; and
- the provision of a dedicated footway or footpath from the south-eastern edge of the site to link up to the existing footway on the B1119; and
- the provision of an attractive link to the public right of way running along the western boundary of the site.

**Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP24, DM2, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24**

## Land at Red House Lane



- 6.19 This land totals 2 hectares and is currently an agricultural field. To the east and south is open countryside, with land to the west and south granted planning permission for residential development. The northern boundary of the site is provided by Red House Lane. The site is flat.
- 6.20 Access can be provided from Red House Lane although it will be important to ensure that if needed, there is an appropriate highway solution to address the additional traffic which will access the junction with the B1122 (Aldeburgh Road) and to ensure that the width of the road is maximised where possible to allow for future expansion. There is also the opportunity to provide a separate pedestrian footpath along the western boundary of the site along the existing desire line. Opposite the north-eastern boundary of the site contributions would be sought to improve the existing public right of way. Improvements to this footpath would make it capable of use all year round and enhance its usefulness to the proposed development as a linkage to both Alde Valley School and Leiston Primary School, as well as to King George's Avenue. This would in turn provide safe pedestrian access into the town centre and the recreation ground.
- 6.21 The site does open development out slightly into the countryside but is still considered to relate reasonably well to the existing settlement pattern. However, careful design and landscaping will be important, particularly on the eastern and southern boundaries.
- 6.22 Accessible public open space will be required to be provided on this site in line with the requirements of Strategic Policy SP16 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.
- 6.23 The site is considered to be suitable to accommodate approximately 70 dwellings. This density reflects a balanced approach that seeks to make the best and most effective use of land being

brought forward for development whilst respecting the setting and general location of the site on the south eastern edge of the settlement.

#### **POLICY SA2: LAND AT RED HOUSE LANE**

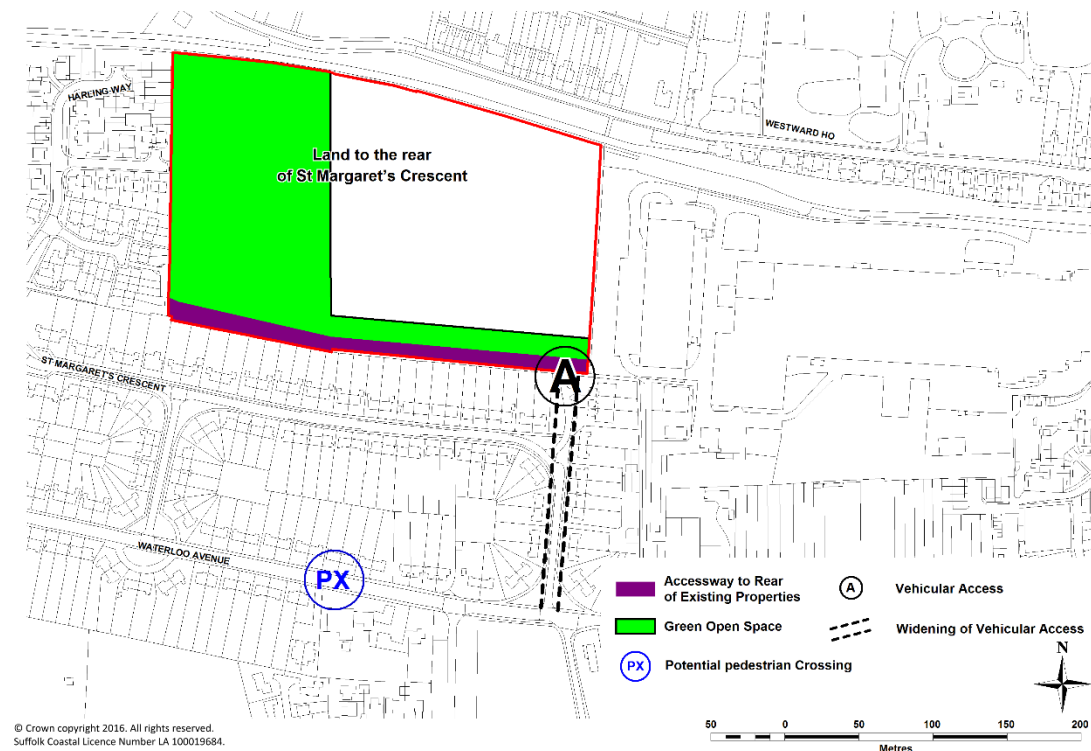
Planning permission will be granted for residential development on 2 hectares of land at Red House Lane subject to the following criteria:

- retention of the existing unofficial footpath along the western boundary; and
- the introduction of landscaping on both the eastern and southern boundaries of the site to ensure that the development does not have an unacceptable impact on the adjacent open countryside; and
- the adequate provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS); and
- the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site from Red House Lane; and
- any necessary highway improvements at the junction of Red House Lane and the B1122 (Aldeburgh Road) and the widening of the carriageway and provision of a footway as appropriate on the northern boundary of the site.

Contributions will be sought towards the provision of an improved footpath along the existing public right of way to the north of the site, providing access to Alde Valley School, Leiston Primary School and to King George's Avenue. This will be either through the Community Infrastructure Levy or via a Section 106 agreement, as appropriate.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP24, DM2, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24***

## Land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent



- 6.24 This land totals 5 hectares and is currently an agricultural field on the eastern part of the site and playing fields on the west. To the west and south are existing residential areas and to the east is an existing industrial area. The northern boundary of the site is provided by the former railway line. The site is flat.
- 6.25 Access can be provided from the south-eastern boundary of the site onto St Margaret's Crescent. There is an existing accessway that would need to be widened to the appropriate standard. Alternative access options are also available into the western edge the site. It will also be important to ensure that if needed, there is an appropriate highway solution to address the additional traffic which will access the junction with the B1119 (Waterloo Avenue).
- 6.26 Adjacent to the site is a public right of way that links Waterloo Avenue with Westward Ho to the north. This will require improvement which will be possible because it is within the same ownership.
- 6.27 The southern boundary of the site abuts the rear of the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent. It will be important to ensure that development is set back sufficiently from the boundary of these properties in order to protect their amenity. In addition, the development should provide a vehicular accessway along this southern boundary to enable the existing residents of the properties on St Margaret's Crescent to gain vehicular access to the rear of their properties. However, before this is done, a mechanism should be agreed with the owners of these properties as to its ongoing maintenance. Landscaping should then be provided on the north side of this new accessway to further help with screening.
- 6.28 The site's position adjacent to the Masterlord Industrial Estate means that there could be an impact from the industrial activity on new residential properties. It will be important that the amenity of the residents is protected, particularly in relation to noise, air pollution and odours. This may

require conditions to be imposed on any grant of planning permission for residential development at the land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent that address any issues.

- 6.29 The development of the site could incorporate some of the adjacent playing fields if this enhanced the development but there should ideally be no overall loss of green space. This would provide an opportunity for sympathetic natural landscaping and enhanced play space provision to increase the amenity of residents close by.
- 6.30 The site also provides the opportunity to deliver additional allotment space, subject to demand. Whilst at present there is not a net demand across Leiston for allotment space, this part of the town is poorly provided for in terms of allotments and therefore it is considered important to increase provision here.
- 6.31 Accessible public open space will be required to be provided on this site in line with the requirements of Strategic Policy SP16 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.
- 6.32 The site is considered to be suitable to accommodate approximately 70 dwellings. It is assumed that the existing playing fields will represent approximately 2 hectares of the site, with additional allotments taking up a further 0.5 hectares. This leaves a balance of approximately 2.5 hectares. This density reflects a balanced approach that seeks to make the best and most effective use of land being brought forward for development whilst respecting the amenity of neighbouring residents in particular on St Margaret's Crescent.

### **POLICY SA3: LAND TO THE REAR OF ST MARGARET'S CRESCENT**

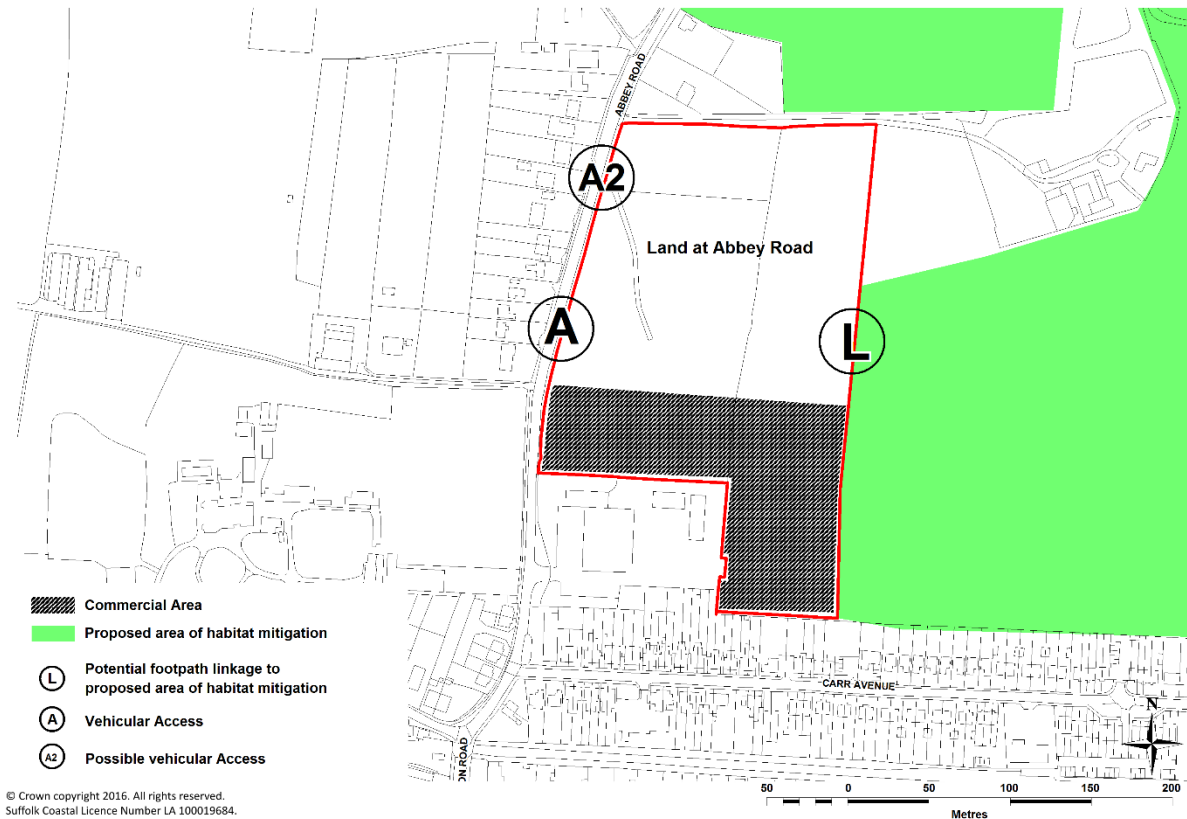
Planning permission will be granted for residential development on 5 hectares of land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent subject to the following criteria:

- the design to ensure that development is set well back from the southern boundary of the site in order to protect the amenity of existing residents in Margaret's Crescent;
- the development ensures that the amenity of residential properties is protected from the commercial activity at the adjacent Masterlord Industrial Estate, particularly in respect of noise, air pollution and odours; and
- the retention or re-provision of the existing playing fields on the site (with any re-provision ensuring that there is no net loss of playing field area); and
- the provision of 0.5 hectares of allotment space or community garden, potentially incorporated as part of the wider open space provision; and
- the adequate provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS); and
- the improvement of the existing adjacent public right of way; and
- if possible and agreed by all affected residents, the provision of a vehicular accessway along the southern boundary of the site to serve the rear of the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent;
- the introduction of landscaping on the southern boundary of the site (immediately to the north of any accessway) to screen development from the existing properties on St Margaret's Crescent; and
- the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site; and
- any necessary highway improvements at the junction of St Margaret's Crescent and the B1119 (Waterloo Avenue).



**Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP24, DM2, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24**

**Land at Abbey Road**



6.33 This land totals 4.6 hectares. Whilst giving the appearance of being a greenfield site, it has been confirmed through extensive investigations that the site is in fact brownfield. This is because it had a previous use as a crater into which the Garrett Works tipped sand. The eastern part of the site is being landscaped into a new nature reserve which will have permissive public access once matured. To the north and east is open countryside. To the west is the B1122 Abbey Road, with existing residential properties and Leiston St Margaret’s Football Club’s ground on the other side of the road. To the south is a builder’s merchants and housing on Carr Avenue. The site is largely flat but does slope slightly, although not sufficiently to impact on development.

6.34 Part of the land is allocated as an employment area under the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Saved Policies. Policy AP145 states that the land,

*"...is considered suitable for Class B1 employment use if developed to a high standard of design and layout with adequate landscaping. Class B2 (industrial) uses may be acceptable if subject to suitable controls."*

6.35 This part of the site was first allocated for employment uses in 1994. Since November 2008, the site has had the benefit of planning permission for new industrial development and a new estate road to serve it. The owners have sought to market the site but have had no commercial interest. There has therefore been no commercial development come forward on the site since its first allocation.

- 6.36 Currently Sizewell A and B is a major centre of employment, and will become very significantly more so if Sizewell C goes ahead. It is recognised that the Neighbourhood Plan does not have the opportunity to influence planning decisions on this matter, which are of national importance. However, should construction of Sizewell C go ahead, other businesses in the parish may find the impact on the local economy results in the potential to severely reduce their access to the local workforce at a time of increased trade.
- 6.37 In the event of the construction of Sizewell C, a 'work site' will be developed on the land owned by EDF Energy adjacent to the construction. This will provide for the non-residential accommodation needs of the contractors. Informal discussion with the Sizewell C Information Office suggests that the need for additional business space in the town will be limited and is likely to be met from existing provision.
- 6.38 It is therefore considered suitable to adopt a more flexible approach to development of the site. However, it is important that the site retains some form of commercial activity and a quantum of approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace is considered to represent an appropriate balance. This could provide for up to 95 jobs, although this depends on the types of user and could be less.
- 6.39 In order to ensure that the commercial floorspace is available to the market, at least 50% of the employment units must be completed before the residential element of the scheme has been completed.
- 6.40 The site is considered suitable for a mix of residential and employment uses. The employment uses would principally be small B1 office and light industrial workshops. These would need to be located on the southern part of the site, closest to the existing builders' merchants in order to protect the amenity of the new residents. It will be important that the amenity of the residents is protected, particularly in relation to noise, air pollution and odours. This applies not only to the new residents but also existing residents in properties along Carr Avenue. The employment area could have its own access road off the B1122, or the access could be provided by a new estate road serving the residential area on the northern part of the site. This stretch of the B1122 provides reasonable visibility.
- 6.41 It will be important that improved pedestrian linkages into the town centre are provided. There is a pavement on the western side of the B1122 and therefore a dedicated pedestrian crossing must be provided from the site to this footpath to ensure sustainability.
- 6.42 The site does open development out into the countryside on its northern and particularly eastern sides but is still considered to relate reasonably well to the existing settlement pattern. However, careful design and landscaping will be important, particularly on the eastern boundary. It will be important that the scheme is designed sensitively where the residential development is adjacent to the commercial floorspace in order to protect the amenity of the residents.
- 6.43 The site is adjacent to the habitats mitigation area proposed in lieu of the loss of habitats as a result of the development to serve the construction of Sizewell C. The arable farmland at Aldhurst Farm is adjacent to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site and the low-lying land in the valley have been engineered to create the conditions needed for a wetland habitat. There would be opportunities to create pedestrian and cycle access for the community in order to be able to use this new area in discussions with the landowner (EDF Energy). If such an access is provided, it should be ensured that it addresses the needs of disable people and people with pushchairs.
- 6.44 The site is considered to be suitable to accommodate approximately 100 dwellings. This density reflects a balanced approach that seeks to make the best and most effective use of land being

brought forward for development whilst respecting the setting and general location of the site on the northern edge of the settlement.

**POLICY SA4: LAND AT ABBEY ROAD**

Planning permission will be granted for residential development on 2.6 hectares of land at Abbey Road subject to the following criteria:

- the provision of a minimum of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of Class B1 employment floorspace, with at least 50% of this floorspace completed prior to the completion of all the residential units; and
- the development ensures that the amenity of residential properties is protected from the commercial activity, particularly in respect of noise, air pollution and odours; and
- the adequate provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS); and
- the provision of a suitable pedestrian crossing of the B1122 (Abbey Road); and
- the provision of appropriate vehicle access into the site from the B1122 (Abbey Road); and
- where possible, pedestrian and cycle access to the proposed habitats mitigation area at Aldhurst Farm is provided.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP5, SP6, SP24, DM2, DM10, DM20, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24***

## 7 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7.1 This section seeks to address the provision of a range of infrastructure that the community considers is important. This consideration is both of existing shortfalls in provision that should be addressed and also of additional needs arising from growth in the population.
- 7.2 The term 'community infrastructure' refers to the facilities and space provided for the benefit of the community so that they can undertake leisure activities.

### Beach huts

#### Policy justification

- 7.3 The 12 beach huts on Sizewell Beach belong to Suffolk Coastal District Council. The waiting list is extremely long and at present consists mostly of applicants from outside the parish which has reduced the chances of Leiston residents ever getting one. As a result, residents on the waiting list report having to wait 20 years to be offered one.
- 7.4 Sizewell could benefit from more beach huts to cater for the demand and to enhance the local economy. Therefore, if new beach huts are built, then they would be of general benefit to the community if they were reserved for local community use. The land where any beach huts are located belongs to Suffolk Coastal District Council so the new provider would have to gain a lease and comply with any restrictions that SCDC might determine to be necessary.

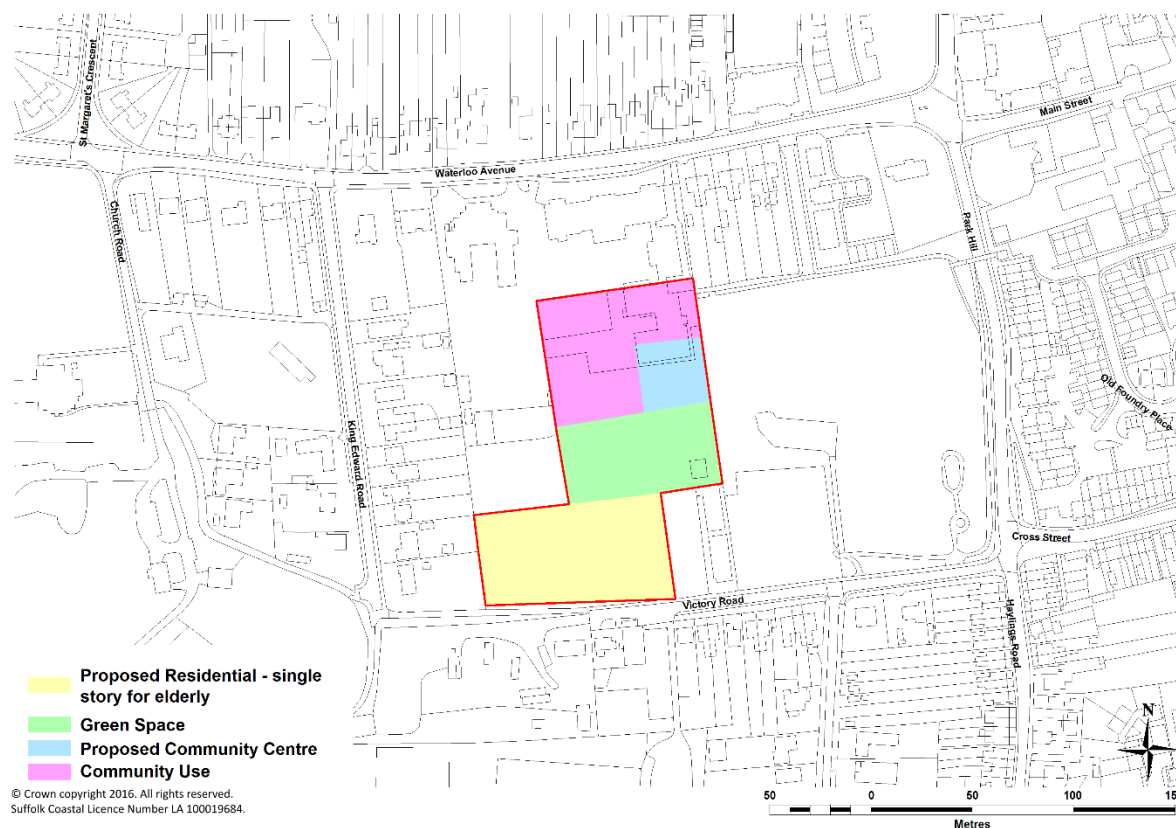
#### **POLICY IN1: PROVISION OF BEACH HUTS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY USE**

The development of new beach huts at Sizewell will be supported if a mechanism is introduced to provide for either of the following:

- to ensure that the new beach huts are reserved for use by the local community of Leiston-cum-Sizewell; or
- to ensure that first refusal on the purchase or lease of a beach hut is given to residents of the Leiston-cum-Sizewell parish.

**Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP16, SP18, SP24**

## New Community Centre, Waterloo Avenue



- 7.5 Leiston currently has one small community centre which was built as a day centre for the nearby sheltered housing around King George Avenue. It is still used for lunch clubs, meetings and various social events etc. but it is severely limited by its size for larger community events and dances. It consists of one main room only and a kitchen.
- 7.6 The Town Appraisal in 2011 identified that there was a need for a larger community centre and further engagement with the community in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has shown that there is a desire for such a facility to be located either adjacent to the Recreation Ground or, as an alternative in the town centre. At the location adjacent to the Recreation Ground, the development would have the space to provide much needed toilets and possibly a café. During consultation there was doubt as to availability of the school site, hence the alternative, but clarity has now been gained. A business case will have to be worked up when discussions and possibilities are negotiated but, in the first instance, the Town Council would seek to gain the gymnasium, which is a ready-made space suitable for all envisaged community events. The addition of the adjacent classrooms would allow conversion to rooms and spaces suitable for youth activities, organisations and clubs (as well as toilets and a café).
- 7.7 The land adjacent to the Recreation Ground belongs to the County Council and, as of January 2016, is a redundant school site. It is appreciated that there are hurdles to overcome relating to the disposal of school sites and open space but the Town Council is in contact with the County as they consider its future use. It is considered that the provision of a new community centre with associated facilities, either on the site or using the existing buildings, would be a desirable use of

the site that would provide substantial community benefit. The delivery could be through other enabling development on the site as the County look to get best value from the regeneration. The site is an important central swathe of land in the centre of town which must be made best use of for the future.

7.8 In that context, it is considered that the site provides the opportunity to deliver the following other benefits:

- A number of dwelling units specifically suitable for independent elderly residents, possibly run by a social housing provider; these would be situated near Victory Road to allow easy and sustainable access to the town centre and its services. It would be important to ensure that the new community centre did not impact on the amenity of these residents.

#### **Examples of units for elderly residents in Leiston**



- The parking provision required to support the new community centre could also provide dedicated parking spaces to relieve on-street parking issues in Victory Road by virtue of a pedestrian link to the site.

7.9 It is important that, as part of any scheme, recreation and community uses are the predominant uses. It is not suitable for any proposals to bring forward a large scale residential-led scheme with housing units across the whole site. Housing is only considered to be suitable along the Victory Road frontage for elderly residents and around the older school buildings and playground area adjacent to Waterloo Avenue.

7.10 Access to the site will continue to be from Waterloo Avenue but will need to be re-engineered for the increased use envisaged.

**POLICY IN2: PROVISION OF A NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE AND FACILITIES, WATERLOO AVENUE**

Proposals to use the land and/or buildings adjacent to the Recreation Ground in Victory Road for a new community centre will be strongly supported. Such a facility should ideally provide the following:

- A hall and meeting rooms
- A café and catering facilities
- Public toilets
- Suitable parking provision for users

If it is not possible to deliver a new community centre at the Recreation Ground, proposals for equivalent provision at an alternative location will be considered favourably, subject to the site fulfilling the following criteria:

- it is within or immediately adjacent to the built up area boundary, as defined in Policy PL1; and
- it is generally accessible on foot.

The Waterloo Avenue site is also considered to be suitable for a limited amount of residential provision. Such provision must fulfil the following criteria:

- sympathetic development of the older school buildings and playground; and
- the dwelling units must be capable of addressing the needs of older people;
- the dwelling units must be restricted to the boundary with Victory Road;
- as part of a comprehensive scheme, the new community centre must not impact on the amenity of the new residents; and
- the parking provision provided to serve the new community centre must provide additional spaces to help relieve the on-street parking problems in Victory Road.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP2, SP3, SP16, SP18, SP24, DM2, DM21, DM22, DM23, DM24***

- 7.11 The provision of a new community centre could then be complemented by improvements to facilities at the Recreation Ground itself, which were desired by the community. These include an expansion of the skateboard park.
- 7.12 Contributions from development will be used to support the funding of these improvements, along with grant funding from sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Suffolk Coastal District Council and Suffolk County Council. Suffolk Coastal District Council has put in place a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charge which will ensure that, once the Neighbourhood Plan is made, 25% of all contributions from development from within the parish will go directly to Leiston Town Council to spend on such improvements.

**POLICY IN3: PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AT THE RECREATION GROUND, VICTORY ROAD**

The provision of the following community facilities at the Recreation Ground, Victory Road, will be strongly supported:

- Further play equipment
- Extension of the skateboard park (with the involvement of local young people on its design)

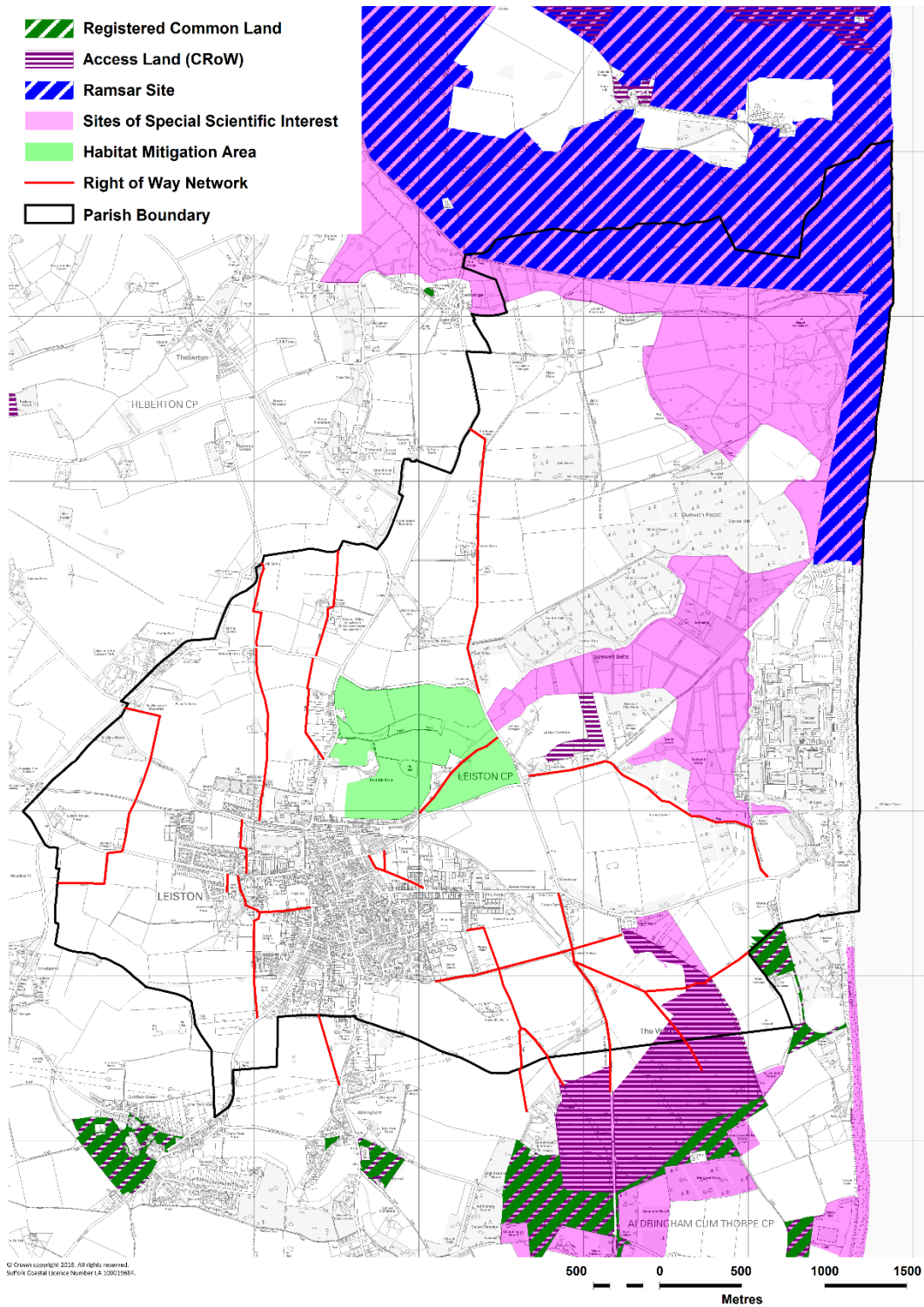
***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP16, SP18, SP24, DM32***



## 8 ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

8.1 The Neighbourhood Plan area sits in and adjacent to a significantly sensitive environment in terms of the habitats it supports. In the wider area there is Sizewell Beach, Sizewell Belt, Dingle Marshes National Nature Reserve, Minsmere RSPB Reserve, North Warren RSPB Reserve, Dunwich Forest, and Dunwich Heath.

**Figure 8.1: Environmental assets and access**



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- 8.2 In total, the wider area has access to over 3,200 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace. This is more than sufficient to support the population of the wider area, given that the expected standard for such provision<sup>13</sup> for less than 1,000 hectares. The Suffolk Coastal Open Spaces Assessment also shows that there is already an above-average provision of amenity greenspace (30% above the required standard), allotments (85% above the required standard) and children's play areas (65% above the required standard) in Leiston and District, compared to Suffolk Coastal as a whole.
- 8.3 Within the Neighbourhood Plan area, provision of open space is equally plentiful. Allowing for the growth in population over the plan period, there is expected to be a surplus of amenity greenspace, and allotment space.
- 8.4 Suffolk Coastal District Council's Leisure Strategy 2014-2024<sup>14</sup> will increase access and availability of leisure and recreation opportunities to the wider community, enhancing and communicating the current and future offer to meet the wants and needs of local communities over the next ten years. This strategy suggests that opportunities may come forward outside the scope of this Neighbourhood Plan for increased leisure and recreation in ways which would not impact upon the nature conservation interest of designated sites in and around Leiston.
- 8.5 Yet it is important that the growth of population over the plan period does not have a detrimental impact on this sensitive environment.
- 8.6 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the habitat mitigation site being constructed by EDF Energy on the site of Aldehurst Farm to the north-east of the Town. This will provide ample mitigation for dog walkers and recreation for the Abbey Road development (Policy SA4) whilst also increasing the amenity for much of the rest of the town in that quadrant providing links to the Sizewell Belts and Kenton Hills which are currently mostly accessed by vehicle.
- 8.7 The Red House Lane development (Policy SA2) is close to the playing fields/Recreation Ground which will be available to meet the needs for regular recreational activities such as dog walking. Therefore the use of the public rights of way network towards Aldringham Walks is expected to not undergo a significant increase in activity. The proposed developments along and behind Waterloo Avenue are both on land that is currently inaccessible to residents for recreation so the open space requirements in the policies and the provision (in Policy SA1) of an attractive link to the public rights of way network to the north-west of the town will enhance amenity of all residents in that quadrant too.
- 8.8 Overall Leiston has significant access to open spaces and countryside in the parish such that there is no concentration of dog walkers in any one area to cause concern for habitat degradation. Sizewell Beach is already used a lot by dog walkers from a wide area and any increase in usage that may occur from developments proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan would have no increased impact on the habitat there either.
- 8.9 Overall it is considered that the Neighbourhood Plan actually enhances and increases useable and accessible green space without causing any impact on established habitats.

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<sup>13</sup> A standard of 47 hectares per 1,000 population is used in the Suffolk Coastal Open Spaces Assessment (2014)

<sup>14</sup> Published in 2014 by Suffolk Coastal District Council

## Local Green Spaces

8.10 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the community was asked to consider if there were any important green open spaces of value in the Parish. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect these where appropriate.

### Policy justification

8.11 Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 77 of the NPPF says that Local Green Spaces should only be designated:

- *"where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."*

8.12 Whilst there are many smaller green spaces that create an open setting to some of the estates that have been developed, these do not fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF. However, three areas do which are:

The Recreation  
Ground on Victory  
Road



The original playing field adjacent to Alde Valley Academy and former Primary School playing field, off King Georges Avenue



Haylings Pond



Figure 8.2: Local Green Spaces



- 8.13 All of these areas comprises a significant public space in which the community of Leiston can congregate for informal and formal leisure pursuits and in which the Town Council is already establishing permanent and extensive play, leisure and fitness equipment. The Neighbourhood Plan engagement process showed a strong desire to retain it for this purpose.

#### **POLICY LG1: PROTECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF LOCAL GREEN SPACES**

The following areas identified on the Proposals Map are designated as a Local Green Spaces:

- Victory Road Recreation Ground
- King George Playing Field and Primary School Playing Field, off King Georges Avenue
- Haylings Pond

Proposals for built development on these Local Green Spaces will not be permitted unless:

- the proposal is of a limited nature and it can be clearly demonstrated that it is required to enhance the role and function of an identified Local Green Space; or
- the proposal would result in the development of local community infrastructure.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP15, SP16, SP17, SP18, SP24***

## **Verges and Greens**

### **Policy justification**

- 8.14 The verges and greens across the built-up area of Leiston are important because they contribute towards the town's character and distinctiveness. They also perform a biodiversity function, being a place where various species thrive. It is therefore important that verges and greens are protected from development.
- 8.15 A list and map of the most valued greens and verges is provided in Appendix A.

#### **POLICY LG2: GREENS AND VERGES**

Development within the Leiston Town physical limits boundary that directly impacts on a green or verge must demonstrate how it contributes to and enhances the role of that green or verge.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP17, SP24***

## Heritage

- 8.16 In particular, Leiston Abbey is a heritage asset of national importance. This and the other heritage buildings and monuments in the Neighbourhood Plan area should be protected to ensure their wellbeing.
- 8.17 None of the growth proposed is close to the Abbey site or any of the other heritage assets. Nevertheless, other development which is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan should consider its impact on these assets where relevant.
- 8.18 The NPPF seeks to avoid or minimise conflict with the setting of a designated heritage asset in respect of development.

### **POLICY HE1: PROTECTION OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

Development proposals will be required to sustain and enhance the setting of heritage assets in their vicinity through the careful choice of building heights, layout and materials, use of landscape buffers and placement of green open space. These should avoid placing incongruous tall buildings in prominent locations in views that contribute to the significance of these heritage assets and should create frontages that provide an attractive interface with areas of open landscape.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP15, DM21***

## 9 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

### Accessibility for cyclists and pedestrians

#### *Policy justification*

- 9.1 There is concern amongst the community of Leiston for the safety of cyclists. Most of the roads in Leiston town, and also some of the approach roads, are narrow with barely enough space for two cars to pass one another. Where cars are parked at the side of the road then the road is effectively reduced to a narrow single width road.

#### **Parked cars create very narrow road spaces**



- 9.2 Where roads are narrow it is not possible for vehicle drivers to give cyclists sufficient room when overtaking. This is exacerbated when large commercial vehicles enter the town. One example is Valley Road/Kemps Hill.

#### **Valley Road/Kemps Hill**



- 9.3 The solution is to expand the network of cycle paths along key routes. Currently there is a cycle path from Knodishall to the Leiston parish boundary which then continues along Goldings Lane where it ends. There is no cycle path along Aldeburgh Road towards the town centre.
- 9.4 There are two identified routes where there is the potential to improve access for cyclists:



- There is space currently available for a cycle path to be installed on the east side of Aldeburgh Road from the Goldings Lane junction at least as far as the junction with Seaward Avenue. This would provide safe cycle access to the main Leiston schools. It would require a crossing point at Goldings Lane which would need to be the subject of a safety audit to determine that it was suitable.
- The link between the lower end of Valley Road and Lovers Lane, known to locals as 'Kemps Hill' is a narrow, single vehicle-width road commonly used by cyclist and pedestrians. It is the main route out of town to Lovers Lane and the Sizewell Belt walks for people. There are no passing places along the road. It is used by vehicles as a short cut to parts of the town. Vehicles using it in this manner present a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists and many of the community commented how they are discouraged from use this route because of the volume of vehicular traffic. It is therefore proposed that in the interests of safety it is closed as a through route to traffic.

9.5 There is also an emerging opportunity to provide a solution to the Kemps Hill problem and to provide a circumnavigatory cycle path around the perimeter of the new wildlife area being constructed on Aldehurst Farm to widen the cycle routes to include Lovers Lane. This will require discussions with EDF when consultation starts on public access to the site.

#### **POLICY TM1: DEDICATED ACCESS FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS**

Proposals to provide dedicated access for cyclists and pedestrians will be encouraged.

In particular, the following will be strongly supported:

- provision of a dedicated cyclepath along Aldeburgh Road as far as Seaward Avenue; and
- the closure of the Kemps Hill stretch of Valley Road to vehicular traffic; and
- provision of a dedicated cyclepath along Sizewell Road to the Crown Farm junction; and
- extension of the existing footpath from the Crown Farm junction to the Sizewell Belts walks.
- a cycle path around the perimeter of the Aldehurst farm wildlife mitigation area.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP11, SP24, DM22***

## **Highway capacity at key road junctions**

### ***Policy justification***

9.6 Many members of the community have raised concerns about the impact of growth in terms of congestion at key road junctions in the town centre. Through work with Suffolk County Council, the highway authority, three particular junctions have been identified which could see unacceptable impacts arising from growth:

- Waterloo Ave/B1122
- B1122/Cross Street
- Cross Street/Sizewell Road/High Street

- 9.7 When proposals on site allocations SA1 to SA4 come forward, it will be particularly important that they are able to demonstrate that they will not have a severe detrimental impact on any of these junctions, individually or cumulatively.
- 9.8 Assessment of individual and cumulative impacts on other junctions is also expected to be required, and should be discussed with the Highway Authority as part of pre-application discussions.

#### **POLICY TM2: HIGHWAY CAPACITY AT KEY ROAD JUNCTIONS**

Any development on site allocations SA1 to SA4, or on any other sites which generate sufficient movement to justify a transport assessment, will be required to consider through a transport assessment the cumulative transport impact of all permitted and allocated development with significant movements in Leiston on the following junctions:

- Waterloo Avenue/B1122
- B1122/Cross Street
- Cross Street/Sizewell Road/High Street

Proposals that would result in a severe impact on any of these junctions, individually or cumulatively, will be refused unless the transport assessment includes proposals to mitigate cumulative impacts.

Development will be expected to make a proportionate contribution to mitigating impacts, according to what is necessary to grant planning permission.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP11, SP24, DM20***

## **Residential parking**

### **Residential parking standards**

#### ***Policy justification***

- 9.9 It is considered that, with the relatively high density of development in Leiston, the increase in levels of car ownership has created significant issues with the levels of on-street parking.
- 9.10 Suffolk County Council Parking Guidance<sup>15</sup> requires future parking designs to accommodate safe passage of highways users, including emergency services vehicles. This is particularly relevant in Leiston, given the existence of emergency plans that cover any nuclear emergency at either Sizewell nuclear site. Therefore it is imperative that new development in Leiston does not compromise any emergency routes through high levels of on-street parking.
- 9.11 The SCC Parking Guidance is considered to be appropriate in this regard and if followed, will provide safe passage of highways users, therefore meaning that there are no additional requirements to support Sizewell emergency arrangements. Leiston however, by virtue of its rural location, has very little public transport to support employment outside the town. This is particularly acute for workers trying to get home after 5pm (currently there is no public transport

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<sup>15</sup> Suffolk County Council (2014) *Suffolk Advisory Parking Guidance – Technical Guidance*

service after this time). Car ownership is therefore an essential for employment and families with working age children exceed the expected number of parking spaces required on a regular basis.

- 9.12 Therefore, for the community of Leiston, it is imperative that new development does not recreate and exacerbate the situation of unacceptable levels of on-street parking that currently exists. New residential units will be expected to provide off-street parking based on the size of dwelling in question. This will help to underpin the Suffolk County Council guidance for non-urban developments.
- 9.13 It is also considered that there should be no reduction of existing parking provision, either off-street or on-street, unless it can be appropriately re-provided.

### **POLICY TM3: RESIDENTIAL PARKING STANDARDS**

For new residential developments (Use Class C3), the following minimum parking standards shall apply for the provision of off-road parking:

- 1-bed house/flat 1 off-road car parking space
- 2-bed house/flat 2 off-road car parking spaces
- 3-bed house/flat 2 off-road car parking spaces
- 4-bed house/flat 3 off-road car parking spaces
- 5+ bed house/flat 4 off-road car parking spaces

Development that results in the loss of existing off- or on-street parking will generally be refused. The loss of any such spaces will only be permitted if at least the same number of parking spaces can be re-provided in the immediate proximity of where the spaces would be lost.

The provision of unallocated/visitor parking spaces and cycle parking spaces will be in addition to this and are expected to follow the Suffolk Advisory Parking Guidance.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP24, DM19, DM22***

- 9.14 For avoidance of doubt, this only relates to residential parking. All other development types are expected to comply with the Suffolk Advisory Parking Guidance.

## **Parking garages**

### ***Policy justification***

- 9.15 In locations such as Garrett Crescent and Quakers Way, there are parking garages which provide a vital function for local residents. With historic residential development providing little in the way of storage space or off-road parking spaces, these groups of garages address a clear need for space. Their retention is therefore considered to be particularly important to the residents they serve and therefore their redevelopment for alternative uses should only be permitted if equivalent garage/storage space can be provided elsewhere.

### **POLICY TM4: PARKING GARAGES**

Proposals that would result in the loss of communal parking garages will not be permitted unless alternative and equivalent parking/storage space is provided.

Alternative parking/storage provision will be required to meet the following criteria:

- the scale of the alternative site must be of an equivalent scale to the existing parking/storage provision; and
- the location of the alternative provision must be in very close proximity to the existing site and must be accessible by car.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP24, DM22***

## **Access to Leiston Household Waste Recycling Facility**

- 9.16 One of the issues raised by the community was the access to the existing recycling facilities serving Leiston. At present there is a single household waste recycling centre (HWRC) in Leiston, at Lovers Lane and the specific issue relates to the safety of the road that serves the HWRC at times of peak demand. With the increasing population this issue will need to be addressed at some point during the plan period. This a road safety issue, not a waste issue, therefore comes within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 9.17 The current landowners, EDF Energy, are happy for land adjacent to the existing facility to be used should any solution require it. Therefore the only issue is the cost of providing any solution. Any funds raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy could be used towards addressing this issue.

### **POLICY TM5: IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO LEISTON HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING FACILITY**

The improvement of access to the existing Household Waste Recycling Facility at Lovers Lane will be strongly supported.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP18***

## 10 FLOODING

- 10.1 Flooding is an issue of concern to the community of Leiston.
- 10.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, at paragraph 100, that:

*"Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere."*

- 10.3 There are no life-threatening flooding situations but there are areas of Leiston town which get flooded to a level that causes damage to property, i.e. buildings with flooded floors. There is also a possible health hazard where flooding overcomes the sewage system. The policy seeks to address areas of particular concern.

### **Policy justification**

#### ***Orchard Road***

- 10.4 It is probable that in the distant past a stream ran through Leiston and that the path of that stream was from the Haylings Road area, across Orchard Road and across Central Road approximately where the cinema is located.
- 10.5 At the end of Orchard Road, about where this stream may have run, new housing was built in the early 2000s. The foul drainage from these properties flows into a collecting well and is then pumped up to the sewer that runs along Haylings Road. When there is very heavy rain this collecting well overflows and floods the immediate area so covering the floor of one garage, the car parking area and possibly one or more of the properties. This area of the road is used as a play area by local children and consequently there could be a health hazard from the overflowing collecting well. The explanation is that the well floods because of excessive water in the main sewage pipe in Haylings Road back flowing to the well. This would mean that a significant number of properties that feed the Haylings Road sewer with foul water also feed it with surface water.

#### ***Main Street***

- 10.6 This is a natural water collecting area, being lower than surrounding areas. Thus water flows down from the High Street, the Dinsdale Road area and the former Garrett Works area. If the drains cannot cope in these areas then the excess water floods the Main Street in the Barclays Bank and Town Council office area. This flood then decants down Valley Road at the lower part of which there are further problems.
- 10.7 The area is vulnerable to flooding and it occurs at times of very heavy rain. It is evident that the drainage system cannot cope. The flood levels have been such as to enter at least two buildings (Barclays Bank and The Engineers Arms) and has come very close to entering many more. The images below show the situation in July 2012.

**Flash flooding in Leiston town centre, July 2012**



***Sizewell Road/King Georges Avenue***

- 10.8 During the heavy rain in July 2012 the area in front of the Fire Station and Community Hall was flooded. It is likely that the water came from the upper part of Sizewell Road, Crown Street and Sylvester Road. The extent of the floods is shown in the images below.

**Flash flooding in front of the Community Hall and Fire Station, July 2012**



- 10.9 It has since been reported that during another period of heavy rain, the area did not start to flood until after the rain had stopped. The significance of this is that it indicates the flooding is not solely

due to surface water running down Sylvester Rd, etc, but water being forced up from what was already in the ground by pressure from elsewhere, probably from soakaways on higher land. A new soakaway was constructed at this junction in 2015 but its effectiveness has yet to be tested.

### ***Valley Road/Carr Avenue***

10.10 These roads run downhill to the location of the waste water works where they join. This is the area where the old Leiston Stream is thought to have existed. Water accumulating in this area not only comes from the end of Valley Road nearest to the town and Carr Avenue but also from the Lovers Lane area by flowing down the eastern end of Valley Road. There are also suggestions that water from the Abbey Road area feeds down to this area. The flooding in this area does threaten property and intrudes in garages leaving them having to be cleaned out. The flood water also carries a good deal of mud so requiring local residents to have to clean up. Examples of this flooding and the residual mud are shown in the images below.

### **Flash flooding in Leiston, July 2012**



### ***High Street***

10.11 It was reported that in July 2013 the offices at 80 High Street were flooded to about 18 inches. The property is set below street level but to have flooded from the street the water there would have had to exceed kerb level. There is nothing to suggest that it did this, consequently it is possible that this flooding was caused by water being forced up out of the ground.

10.12 The provision of waste water networks is the responsibility of Anglian Water Services (AWS). AWS has stated that the waste water treatment works in Leiston is very close to capacity. It is vital therefore that, in bringing forward new growth, the existing issues of foul and surface water are

better understood and properly taken into account. Solutions should be put in place to ensure that there is not a worsening of the situation for existing residential and commercial properties.

- 10.13 The Leiston Flooding Working Group continues to consider the flood risk in Leiston. Anglian Water continue to be an active member of this group along with other key stakeholders working together to address the issues. It is expected that developers bringing forward proposals engage at the earliest possible opportunity with the relevant wastewater provider to formulate a drainage strategy and identify any infrastructure constraints and necessary upgrades required.

**POLICY FL1: ADDRESSING LOCALISED FLOODING MATTERS**

All new development must ensure that it does not result in a worsening of foul and surface water flooding to existing properties. Any development which fails to do this to the satisfaction of the waste water provider and the relevant flood consenting body will be refused.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP12, DM28***



## 11 LEISTON TOWN CENTRE

- 11.1 Leiston meets the historical Government definition of a market town, i.e. 'an urban area having a set of attributes that serve a wider rural hinterland'<sup>16</sup>. The town centre performs a vital service function, not just for the residents of Leiston town itself but the wider hinterland of the parish and beyond. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SP9 identifies it as a retail centre.
- 11.2 Whilst performing an important function, Leiston's town centre does not provide all of the functions that many market towns do. In particular it currently has no market square, with the weekly market being held in the small car park of a public house. The town centre is in need of improvement and regeneration in order for it to compete and survive.

### Town Centre

- 11.3 Leiston is a market town and has an identifiable town centre. This area has been defined as the 'Town Centre' on the Proposals Map. This is to ensure that:
- commercial uses do not gradually spread into adjacent residential streets, to the detriment of the amenity of local residents and the character of the areas;
  - the concentration of shopping floorspace is within a reasonable distance of car parks and public transport facilities.
- 11.4 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SP24 states that the strategy for the town is to:
- 'maintain the vibrancy of the town, with efforts...concentrated on retaining and improving the quality and range of facilities available to local residents and an improved physical environment.'*
- 11.5 The Neighbourhood Plan will seek to achieve national policy objectives by locating and promoting shops, commercial uses and other traffic generating activities such as leisure, entertainment and health, within the town centre. There will be exceptions to this policy, e.g. small local shops to serve rural communities and the provision of a new community centre in Victory Road (Policy IN2).
- 11.6 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Saved Policy AP56 (Town Centre) sought to reflect this approach and it is proposed that this policy is retained in the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### **POLICY TC1: LEISTON TOWN CENTRE**

In order to offer a choice of modes of transport - particularly for people who do not have the use of a car - Leiston town centre is the preferred location for the following, unless there are other overriding material considerations, or in accordance with other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan:

- major new shopping;
- commerce;
- entertainment and leisure;
- health;
- community uses.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP9, SP24***

<sup>16</sup> DEFRA (2005) *Classification of Local Authority Districts and Unitary Authorities in England: A Technical Guide* (now superseded)

## Land at High Street, Leiston Town Centre

- 11.7 The town centre currently supports a supermarket/department store forming the anchor plus a wide range of small independent retailers providing a significant number of the community's requirements. Notable deficiencies include outlets catering for the retail needs of younger people, e.g. media, certain types of fast food/café outlets. The number of charity shops has attracted adverse comments from the community but does reduce the number of vacant shops and in some cases exist on a 'pop up' basis, pending occupation of the premises by a more long term leaseholder. The night time economy is supported by the film theatre, public houses and a range of eat in/takeaway food outlets. However, community surveys consistently show a desire for a wider range of food and drink establishments, in particular family-friendly eating places available throughout the day and evening.
- 11.8 The Town Appraisal and other work underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan have identified the disjointed format of the retail areas of the town and the need for a more focussed town centre with outdoor provision for seating, eating and drinking, organised social events and markets. Following the Town Plan of 2003, the 'heritage' area of Leiston, encompassing the area around the Long Shop and Old Post Office Square, was significantly improved and forms a good model for the style of development required.

### Policy Justification

- 11.9 The Suffolk Coastal District Council Retail Study (updated 2008)<sup>17</sup> notes that the number of vacant retail premises stayed static between 2005 and 2008, standing at just two units, or 3.2% of the stock of units. Since this time, the economic downturn has increased the number of vacant units in the town centre - in the survey undertaken by the Leiston Business Association (LBA) in May 2014, the number of vacant retail premises was eleven. The Retail Study 'Refresh'<sup>18</sup> identified a likely future requirement for retail space as follows:
- 156m<sup>2</sup> net of convenience retail floorspace by 2031
  - 282m<sup>2</sup> net of comparison retail floorspace by 2031
- 11.10 The LBA survey also showed that the vast majority (88% in May 2014) of staff employed by town centre businesses are local. Development proposals to provide for the additional retail requirements and increase footfall generally will therefore support local employment.
- 11.11 In her May 2014 report 'Why our High Streets Still Matter', Mary Portas notes that "High Streets are vital to our communities . . . and will thrive if we re-imagine them". Many of her findings and recommendations are most relevant to the Leiston Town Team and a revised Town Plan. However aspects relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan support the following requirements for future town centre development which need to:
- avoid overprovision and the resultant increase in vacant premises;
  - site and design any development to encourage cohesion within the development and with the existing town centre facilities;
  - avoid a threat to the existence and range of the existing town centre outlets;
  - where possible meet the needs of the community as expressed in the various consultations and reviews underpinning the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - provide a mixed offer including retail, leisure and recreation;
  - be accessible, attractive and safe;

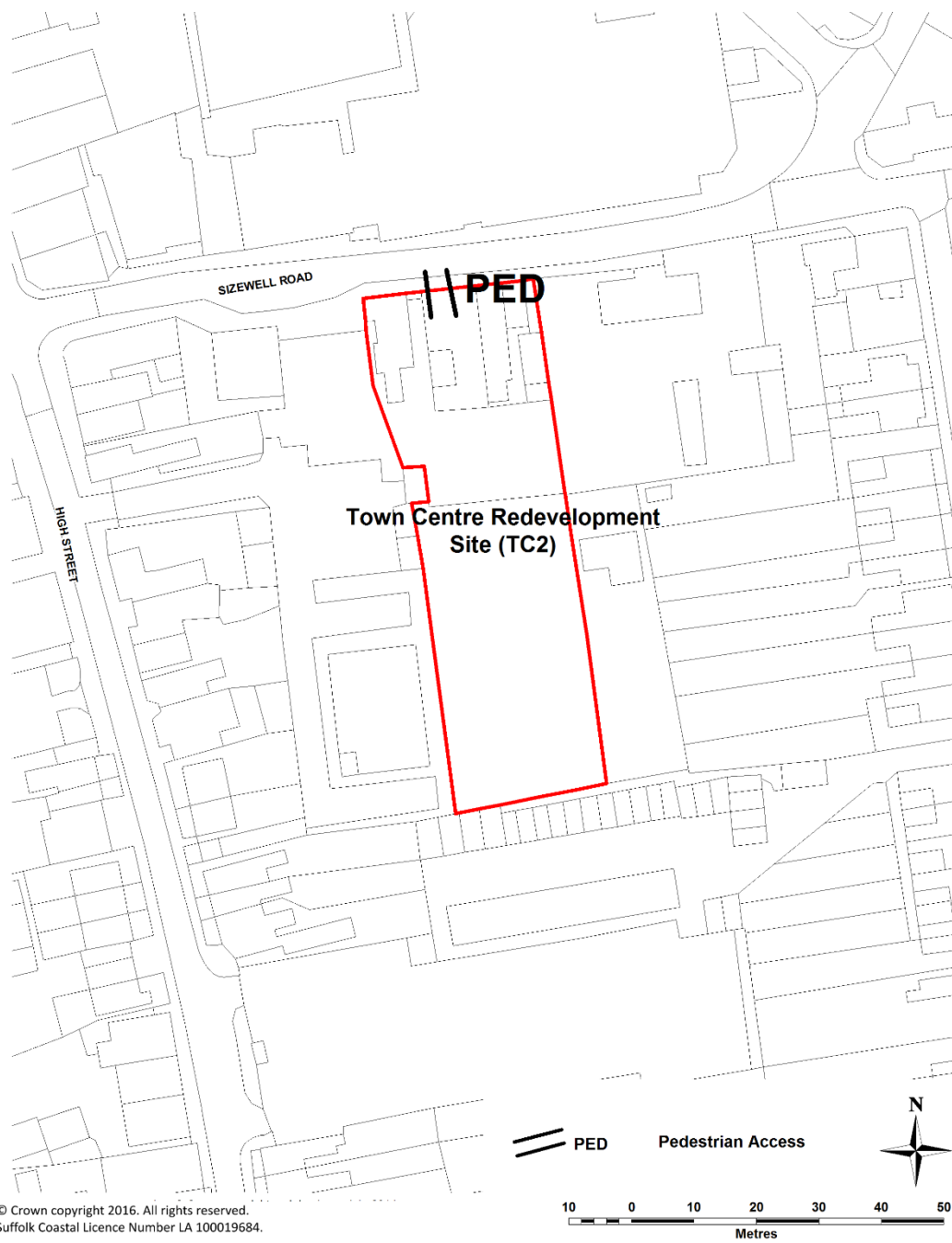
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<sup>17</sup> CB Richard Ellis (2008) *Retail study Update*, for Suffolk Coastal District Council

<sup>18</sup> Carter Jonas (2015) *Suffolk Coastal Retail Study Refresh*, for Suffolk Coastal District Council

- secure the town centre parking provision necessary to support both the daytime and night time economies.

11.12 Leiston currently has a significant semi-developed brownfield site in the town centre. This comprises a car park and scrubland owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council and a row of shop units in a poor state of repair and further scrubland owned by a local family trust. Both landowners support Leiston Town Council's aspirations for the town centre redevelopment and are, in principle, supportive of their land contributing to a comprehensive redevelopment proposal for the area as it comes forward. Adjacent to this is further privately owned land which is also suitable for inclusion.



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- 11.13 The site is seen to represent a major opportunity to provide a mix of uses, led by retail provision to potentially address both comparison<sup>19</sup> and convenience<sup>20</sup> needs over the plan period. For convenience retail needs, the site has the potential to accommodate a store that can provide most of the items on a typical weekly shop.
- 11.14 The development must provide positive regeneration benefits that make Leiston a more attractive place to shop and spend time. It is envisaged that such a development will have some form of 'market square' that could potentially be used as a weekly market. It should also give the opportunity to provide a range of shops, cafes and restaurants so that it supports the night time as well as the daytime economy.
- 11.15 The mix of uses could encompass residential uses which would help to underpin the viability of any development whilst at the same time providing residential space in a very sustainable location in the town. In this respect, it is seen as a focus for housing that addresses the needs of older people but also could create opportunities for younger people to stay in the town.
- 11.16 Development could also provide for a range of community and leisure facilities, particularly if there was a need to move existing public facilities such as the library.
- 11.17 It is very important that the quantum of existing parking spaces currently provided on the site is retained. This could either be in the existing location on the site or as part of a reconfigured site. However, related to this it is very important that the new development does not draw shoppers away from the rest of the town centre. Linkages between the development and both the High Street and Sizewell Road should be created. In particular the linkage through to Sizewell Road, opposite the Co-op store is a vital one.
- 11.18 The ultimate aim regarding access is to make 'shared space' provision in Sizewell Road from the High Street/Cross Street junction in an easterly direction to the Sizewell Road junction with Crown Street. This would include level access to the market square and retail and leisure facilities, facilitating ingress and egress by mobility scooters, wheeled walkers, etc. Limited time parking bays for Blue Badge holders, pick-up and drop-off provision and covered cycle and mobility scooter parking would all be included in or immediately adjacent to the market square. No demand for a formal taxi rank has arisen during any consultations. Scheduled public bus services will continue to use the High Street/Aldeburgh Road routes which will provide access to the market square. 'Suffolk Links', the on-demand community transport services would provide direct access to the square.
- 11.19 Design is a key component of any development and the design brief that accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan provides some examples of the way the issues above could be addressed.
- 11.20 The feasibility of redevelopment coming forward during the plan period has been established through extensive consultation with interested parties including current landowners, potential developers, retail and leisure occupants. Orwell Housing (regeneration partners) have confirmed that they have the capacity, capability and funding available to commence the residential development of the south section when the plans come forward. Suffolk Libraries have already committed £100,000 to the relocation of the existing library and are expected to be partners in the regeneration. The current weekly market stallholders have welcomed the proposals and confirmed that stallholders for whom there is currently no space will also attend.

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<sup>19</sup> Comparison retail is non-food retail, e.g. clothes, white goods, DIY, etc

<sup>20</sup> Convenience retail is principally food retailing but will include other everyday items such as stationery, magazines, confectionery, etc.

### **POLICY TC2: REDEVELOPMENT OF LAND AT HIGH STREET, LEISTON TOWN CENTRE**

Planning permission will be granted for mixed use development of land at High Street, Leiston, as shown on the Proposals Map: subject to the following criteria:

- a mix of uses including retail (A-class) and leisure (Class D1 and D2) are provided; and
- residential uses; and
- a 'market square' is created; and
- the development must be physically linked to the existing town centre so that pedestrians can move easily and safely between the existing and new parts of the town centre; and
- the provision of on-site parking in line with Suffolk County Council parking standards, including public parking at least to the current level of provision.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP3, SP6, SP9, SP24, DM21, DM22***

### **Town Centre car parking**

11.21 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Saved Policy AP146 (Leiston: Town Centre Car Parks) will largely be retained, recognising the importance of protecting the provision of car parking to serve the town centre. The only amendments are as follows:

- There will be a flexible approach to the provision of the car parking off the High Street, reflecting the requirements of Policy TC2.
- Relocation of Sizewell Road car park has also been considered but is felt to perform an important function for shoppers using the town centre.

### **POLICY TC3: TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS**

As identified on the Proposals Map, the dedicated car parks that are available for use by the public within the Town Centre will be retained. Parking provision off the High Street will be subject to the requirements of Policy TC2.

Development of these sites that would result in a loss of parking will generally be refused. Alternative parking provision may be made elsewhere, provided this is at least as accessible for Leiston town centre.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP24, DM22***

## **Town Centre environmental improvements**

- 11.22 It is important that the appearance of the town centre is enhanced where possible. New street furniture is required to serve the town. In addition, it is important that new shopfronts and advertisements are of a high standard and reflect the existing design and use of materials. This will help to preserve Leiston's identity as a rural Suffolk market town.
- 11.23 In order to achieve this, the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Saved Policy AP147 (Leiston: Town Centre Environmental Improvements) will be retained in the Neighbourhood Plan.

### **POLICY TC4: TOWN CENTRE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

Environmental improvements will be sought to the floorspace and street furniture of the following parts of Leiston Town Centre:

- High Street; and
- Sizewell Road

These will be complemented by the requirement that new shop fronts and advertisements in those areas be to a high standard of design and materials.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP15, SP24, DM21***

## 12 EMPLOYMENT

- 12.1 Employment opportunities in Leiston range from the highly specialised and qualified roles required by the nuclear power station through the full array of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled positions in all the sectors required to support a working town in a rural area including retail, manufacturing, tourism and other services, with many people being self-employed. Whilst many local young people and adults are able to meet the needs of local employers, others choose to leave the area for further/higher education and employment. Conversely, many workers are attracted to the area from outside, either to meet specialist skills needs or to establish home-based businesses. However, despite the presence of several high-tech industries in east Suffolk, the current absence of fast, comprehensive access to decent mobile phone and fast broadband is a problem. The fluctuation in demand for specific skills (including for technical skills related to the power station and for tourism) also means that there is a substantial influx of temporary staff with associated accommodation and other support needs at particular times.
- 12.2 The majority of business activity (and therefore employment) in the Parish is focused on three major sites – the town centre itself, the industrial estates on the edge of the town centre and the Sizewell nuclear sites. The town centre is dealt with in a separate section. Sizewell, being of national importance, is not addressed directly within the Neighbourhood Plan. Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SP6 specifically refers to the fact that the decommissioning of Sizewell A nuclear power station has added to the impact of the decline of local engineering.
- 12.3 Significant business activity, including that provided by those in self-employment, is servicing not just the needs of Leiston but also that of the wider area. Typically, this is evidenced by the establishment of three independent building supply merchants in the town supporting a range of tradespeople. The Leisure Centre, swimming pool and film theatre also serve a substantial local area.

### General employment areas

#### Policy justification

- 12.4 One of the main objectives of the Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan Core Strategy is:
- 'To deliver a network of employment sites of a size, quality and in locations that:*
- accord with the Settlement Hierarchy;*
  - best meet the needs of existing businesses;*
  - are able to support the growing sectors of the local economy; and*
  - where appropriate, contribute to regeneration.'*
- 12.5 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy Policy SP5 states that General Employment Areas will be identified in the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document. This also needs to be reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 12.6 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Saved Policy AP51 (General Employment Areas) is relevant to Leiston, as are Saved Policies AP142 (Eastlands Industrial Estate) and AP145 (Abbey Road). The northern part of the latter is proposed for a mixed use development in Policy SA4.

- 12.7 It is proposed that the main existing employment areas – at the Masterlord Industrial Estate and the Eastlands Industrial Estate – are retained in the Neighbourhood Plan, as per the wording of the saved policy. These industrial estates will continue to provide for the employment needs of the community of Leiston and the area it serves.

**POLICY EMP1: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT AREAS**

Unless otherwise stated in other policies of this Neighbourhood Plan, on the Industrial Estates identified as General Employment Areas and shown on the Proposals Map, planning permission will normally be granted for Classes B1, B2 and B8 development.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP5, SP6, SP24, DM10, DM12***

- 12.8 In all other cases, the relevant Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan Core Strategy policies will apply. These are:
- SP7 (Economic Development in Rural Areas)
  - DM10 (Protection of Employment Sites)
  - DM11 (Warehousing and Storage)



## 13 SELF-CATERING TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

- 13.1 At present there is a significant demand for self-catering tourist accommodation across the Parish including established touring caravan sites. Proposals for new sites should be considered against the need to protect the rural nature of the wider Parish and prevent the establishment of 'trailer park sprawl'.
- 13.2 During building of Sizewell B, land off King Georges Avenue to the west of the Eastlands Industrial Estate was used as a caravan site primarily by construction workers and their families. This is currently a disused area although SCDC is considering using it for the same purpose as before if Sizewell C goes ahead. If this does not happen it should still be retained for this use if further demand can be identified. A touring caravan facility only permits mobile caravans to be pitched overnight or for a few nights.
- 13.3 It is important that any application addresses the requirements of Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Core Strategy Policies SP8 (Tourism) and DM17 (Touring Caravan, Camper Vans and Camping Sites).

### **POLICY ACC1: LAND OFF KING GEORGE'S AVENUE**

Planning permission will be granted for the provision of touring caravan facilities at land off King George's Avenue, to the west of Eastlands Industrial Estate, as shown on the Proposals Map.

***Relevant District Local Plan Core Strategy policies: SP8, SP24, DM17***

## 14 NON-LAND USE ISSUES

14.1 There are a number of issues that have been raised through the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan that are not directly related to land-use matters (although several indirectly relate to the use of land in some form). As such, they are not matters that can be addressed directly by the provision of a planning policy in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, this is not to say that these are not important matters and it is important that a strategy for dealing with these matters is assembled and taken forward. In doing so, this will help to achieve the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Allotments

14.2 Leiston has sufficient allotments on both statutory and non-statutory sites. All sites are in the ownership of the Town Council who have undertaken to maintain the current provision for the duration of this plan. Possible enhancement to this provision in the west of the town is covered in Policy SA3.

### Public facilities

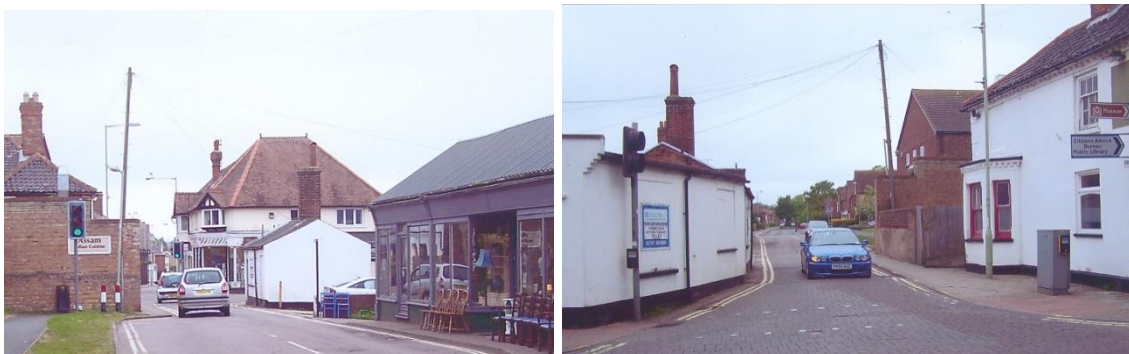
- 14.3 Financial provision should be made to provide more public toilets, particularly serving the town centre. Proposals to provide new public facilities should be considered favourably.
- 14.4 Financial provision should be made for the provision of shelters at all bus stops in the town.
- 14.5 Proposals to provide an open, hard surface where local markets and displays can be held should be considered favourably.

### Transport and movement

#### Cross Street/B1122 junction

14.6 The Cross Street/Aldeburgh Road (B1122) crossroads is an important road junction that affects the flow of traffic in the Town Centre. The roadways are narrow and the corners are blind for motorists and pedestrians alike. In addition, the two roads carry a significant amount of traffic from the Solar store car park, Eastlands Industrial Estate, King Georges Avenue (including the caravan park), Sizewell A and B, and the Sizewell beach car park and caravan sites. Traffic wanting to head south from these areas will pass through this junction. The traffic heading for Snape and the A12 will use Cross Street which links into Haylings Road. This also applies to traffic coming from the reverse route.

#### Cross Street/B1122 junction – (i) looking east and (ii) looking west



- 14.7 As a result, this junction can create a significant bottleneck at regular intervals. The situation exacerbated by the narrowing of Cross Street, as shown in the photographs above. Short of demolishing property, there is nothing that can be done to improve this situation.
- 14.8 It is therefore considered vital that, when planning applications for development which could create significant additional traffic movements are being considered, the impact on this junction is properly modelled. Not only should it be proven that the development would not have a severe impact on the junction (Policy TM2), but development should seek to actively improve movement at the junction through innovative solutions.
- 14.9 As part of a longer term solution, the potential for a limited one-way system in the town centre should be explored.

### **Rail transport**

- 14.10 There is the infrastructure available to re-establish a public rail link to Saxmundham. This could improve access to Ipswich and also to the Greater Anglia mainline serving Norwich and London. Therefore, proposals to re-establish this link to Saxmundham will be strongly supported. This has the full support of Suffolk County Council which has taken this forward in its own transport strategies.

### **Parking problems in St Margaret's Crescent**

- 14.11 The community living in St Margaret's Crescent has highlighted parking issues in the road as a particular issue. Discussions with Suffolk County Council have failed to identify an engineered solution but one solution identified has been to possibly provide more dropped kerbs that would facilitate more off-road parking by residents. Such proposals, as far as they are relevant to planning, will be supported.

### **Traffic management**

- 14.12 Many of the streets in Leiston town are narrow and have multiple vehicles parked in them. This applies to the through roads such as Kings Road, Cross Street, Sizewell Road, upper Valley Road and Crown Street. Even the wider roads like Haylings Road, Aldeburgh Road, Abbey Road and Waterloo Avenue have vehicles parked or stopped and so restrict the effective road width to a single lane. This presents a danger to cyclists as passing vehicles cannot allow them the prescribed room. Fortunately cycle accidents are not common but the potential danger discourages residents from cycling and so places more traffic on the roads. Also the lack of open space play areas for children in residential areas places children at risk from speeding or very large vehicles. It is therefore considered that the current 20mph speed limit which applies only to a small area of the town centre should be extended to cover the whole of the town centre.
- 14.13 Where appropriate, speed limits shall be extended to the physical limits boundary of Leiston town. Appropriate supporting infrastructure, e.g. coloured patches on the road surface and speed indicator signs, shall be used to make drivers aware of these speed limits.
- 14.14 The cost of addressing such needs shall be met through developer contributions, either Section 106 agreements or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Measures necessary to make new developments acceptable in planning terms (such as necessary site-specific highway measures) will be dealt with under the Section 106 regime. This could include the costs associated with amending speed limits. However, if these improvements are delivered as part of more general improvements, then they could only be funded through CIL.

## **Visitor accommodation**

- 14.15 Temporary accommodation for visitors to Leiston including tourists and contractors is currently provided by one hotel, a number of guest houses / bed and breakfast establishments and self-catering provision including caravan and camping facilities across the parish.
- 14.16 The towns of Aldeburgh (4.6 miles away) and Southwold (16 miles away) have a range of accommodation including 4\*/5\* hotels and self-catering provision for the large numbers of tourists visiting the towns. The local railhead town of Saxmundham (4 miles away) has limited hotel/temporary accommodation.
- 14.17 During annual reactor maintenance 'outages' at Sizewell, the number of contractors rises dramatically for a period of approximately three months. Current temporary accommodation provision is inadequate and contractors must therefore seek accommodation across a 20-mile radius. This potentially impacts on the environment (vehicle CO2 emissions) and road safety following the drivers' often strenuous and physically demanding twelve-hour shifts. At the same time, this limits availability of accommodation for tourists.
- 14.18 Leiston is strategically located in coastal Suffolk for access to significant local attractions such as the RSPB Minsmere, Leiston Abbey, Leiston Airfield, Snape Maltings, the towns of Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Southwold and Thorpeness and the wonderful surrounding countryside, an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). Suffolk is being proactively marketed as a tourist destination but Leiston is currently unable to benefit significantly from any increase in tourist numbers other than from day visitors because of the limited visitor accommodation.
- 14.19 If Sizewell C goes ahead, the annual outage requirements of three reactors will require contractors on site over some nine months each year throughout the operational lifetime.
- 14.20 Therefore, in the event that Sizewell C is developed, further provision of good quality affordable visitor accommodation will be encouraged to meet increasing needs.

## **Employment and Town Centre**

- 14.21 Below are a range of principles and guidance on matters pertaining to development of employment sites including in the town centre.

### **Style**

- 14.22 Leiston is significantly a Victorian industrial town set in an originally remote rural area. Original housing stock is of local redbrick manufactured in the Aldeburgh brickworks, or of Suffolk White bricks, particularly in the High Green area. The heritage centre of Leiston based around the Long Shop and Old Post Office Square includes the use of decorative wrought iron work and 'industrial' seating. New development and installations in the town centre, including street furniture, should seek to be sympathetic to this style.

### **Street Furniture**

- 14.23 The heritage and retail centres are located separately within the town with no signage to link the two. The flow of pedestrians throughout the town would be improved by the installation of visitor maps and 'fingerposts' thereby improving footfall to the Long Shop and the local shops. Provision of strategically-placed public seating will assist in the accessibility of the town centre for residents with mobility issues as well as increasing 'dwell time' in the town centre.
- 14.24 Provision for such needs will be welcomed.

### **Sizewell Road**

- 14.25 The development of the market square should include provision for the creation of a 'shared space' on the Sizewell Road between the traffic lights and the western side of the Urban Road junction. The paving to the new square should be continued on the same level throughout this area to provide a level surface across to the wall of the Co-op building.

### **Adult skills training**

- 14.26 Basic skills in Leiston is an issue. In the view of the local JobCentre Plus many need to improve their basic skills (e.g. literacy, numeracy and ICT) to improve their employment prospects.
- 14.27 Primary, secondary and tertiary education is not addressed in this plan and local further education (FE) colleges provide a range of technical skills. However the delivery of basic adult skills training should be addressed through the provision of appropriate facilities to accommodate the time availability and transport issues faced by unemployed or low-income residents.
- 14.28 Alde Valley High School, located in Leiston, converted to Academy status in January 2015. The new governing body may elect to make this provision within existing land/buildings already allocated for education. Otherwise the required resource may need to be made available within the town centre development or as part of the Community Centre on the former Middle School site. This would also need to include provision for apprenticeship schemes supported by local employers.
- 14.29 Proposals to develop premises that address the need for training and education in Leiston will be supported

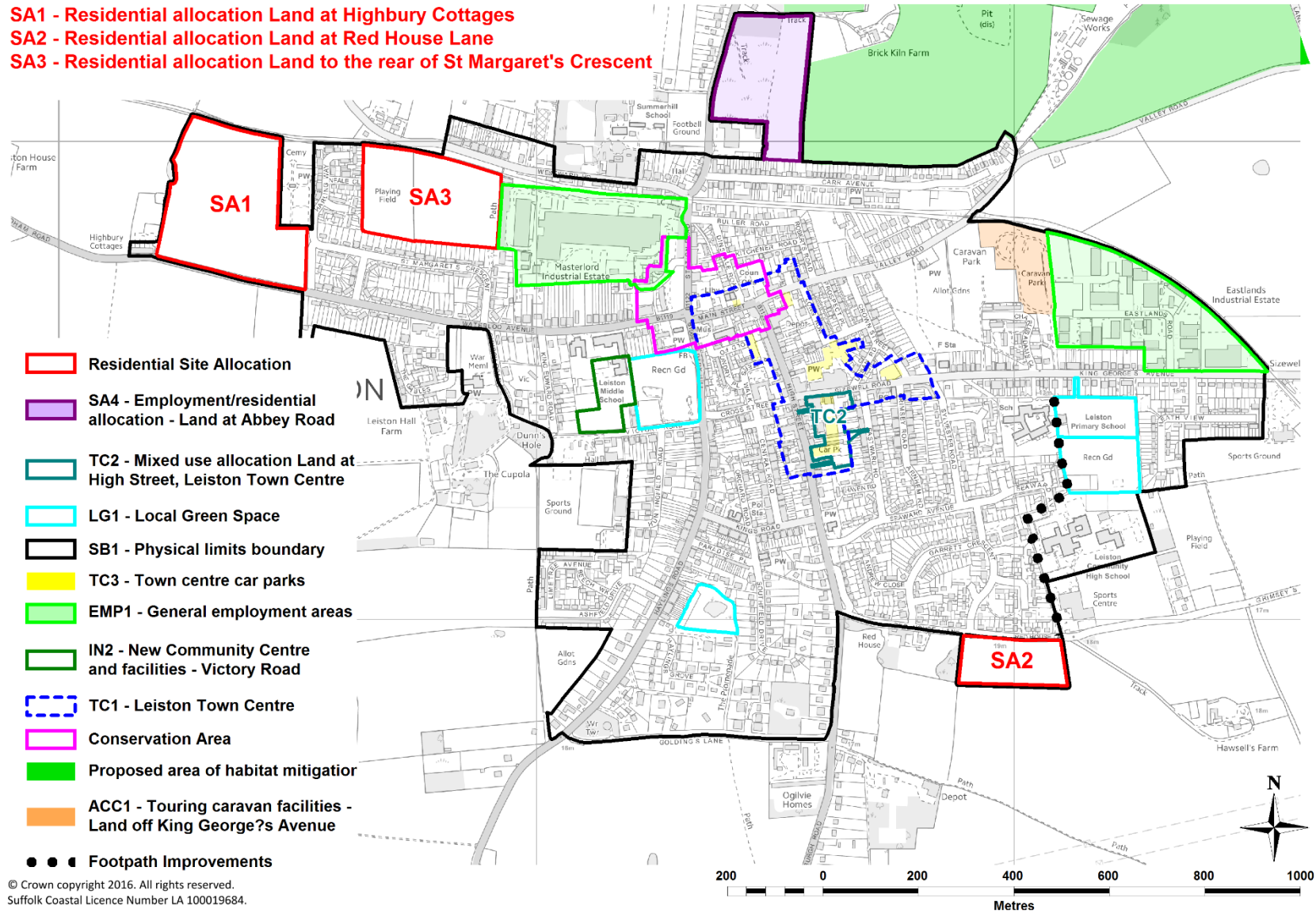
### **Public Consultation and Involvement**

- 14.30 Proposals that could have a major impact upon the parish of Leiston, and in particular within the built-up area of Leiston town, should be subject to a fully transparent and inclusive public consultation. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the local community, via Leiston Town Council, before a planning application is submitted. This is so that plans can fully reflect the views and local knowledge of the community.
- 14.31 Over the plan period, Leiston parish will potentially be subject to some significant issues, including coastal erosion and the proposals for a new nuclear power facility (Sizewell C). As a result, there are expected to be a number of working parties and other such groups that will be assembled to consider these issues. The community of Leiston should be given the opportunity to be part of such structures. In particular, the community should note that Leiston Town Council is a member of the Sizewell Stakeholder Group which monitors current nuclear issues and the associated emergency planning.

## **PROPOSALS MAPS**

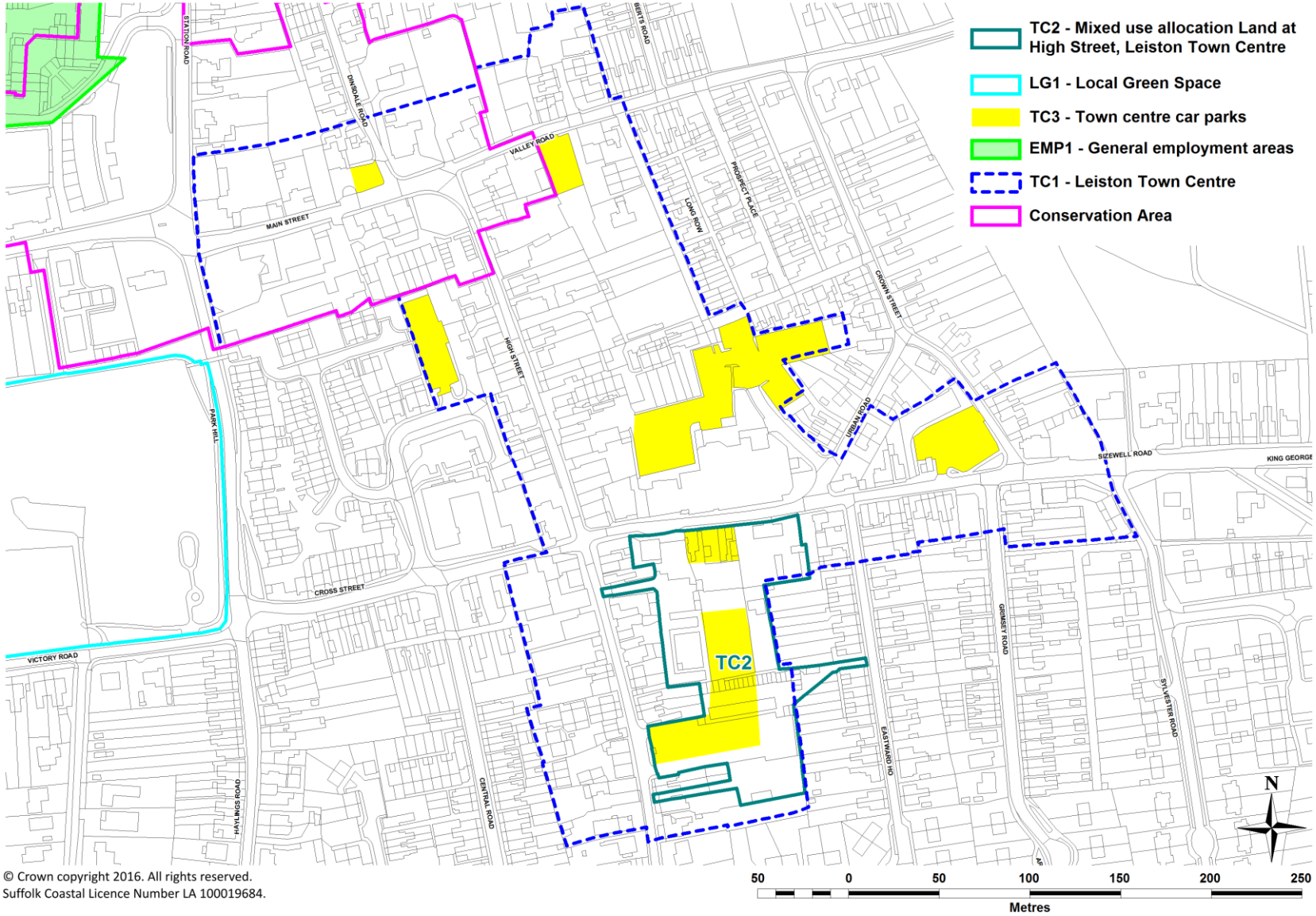
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**SA1 - Residential allocation Land at Highbury Cottages**  
**SA2 - Residential allocation Land at Red House Lane**  
**SA3 - Residential allocation Land to the rear of St Margaret's Crescent**



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## GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing** - Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by the Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- **Local Plan** – the planning policy document adopted by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 2013, covering Leiston parish. This addresses strategic planning matters and the Leiston Neighbourhood Plan, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, must be in general conformity with the adopted Local Plan.
- **Intermediate tenure housing** - Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- **Lifetime Homes** - dwellings that incorporate 16 design criteria which can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. In particular, it ensures that many disabled or older people are able to live within their own home as opposed to a care setting.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – the national planning policy document which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **Social rented housing** - Housing owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
- **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)** – an evidence base exercise undertaken by all local authorities to determine the amount of land that has theoretical potential for housing development. All sites put forward are considered for their availability, suitability and deliverability for housing. If a site addresses all of these requirements then it is considered to have theoretical potential for housing development; however this does not mean that the site will be brought forward for development or that a planning application will be granted planning permission. All sites for consideration are collated through a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise which invites anyone to put forward land for consideration through the SHLAA process.

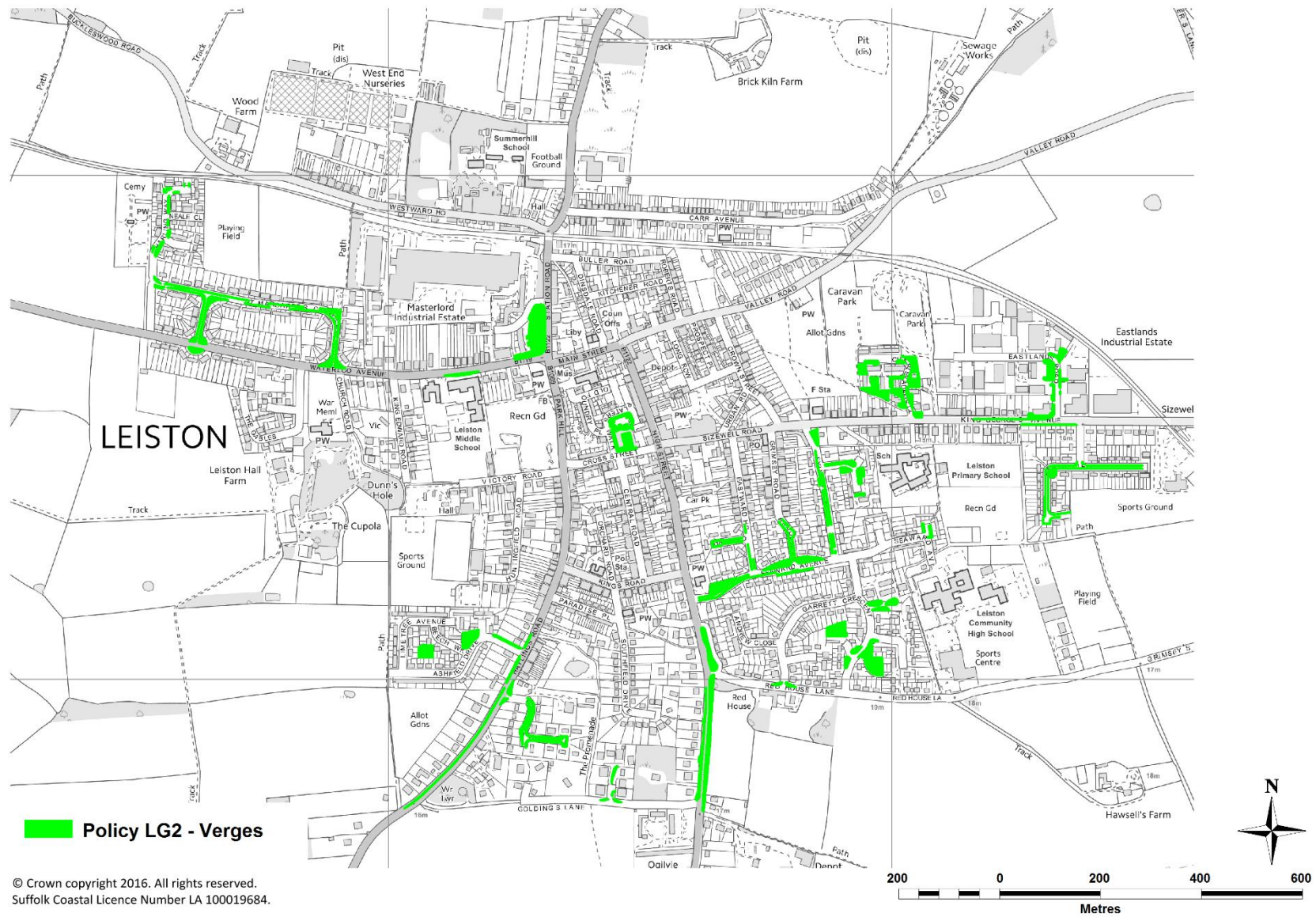


## **Appendix A      Verges and greens**

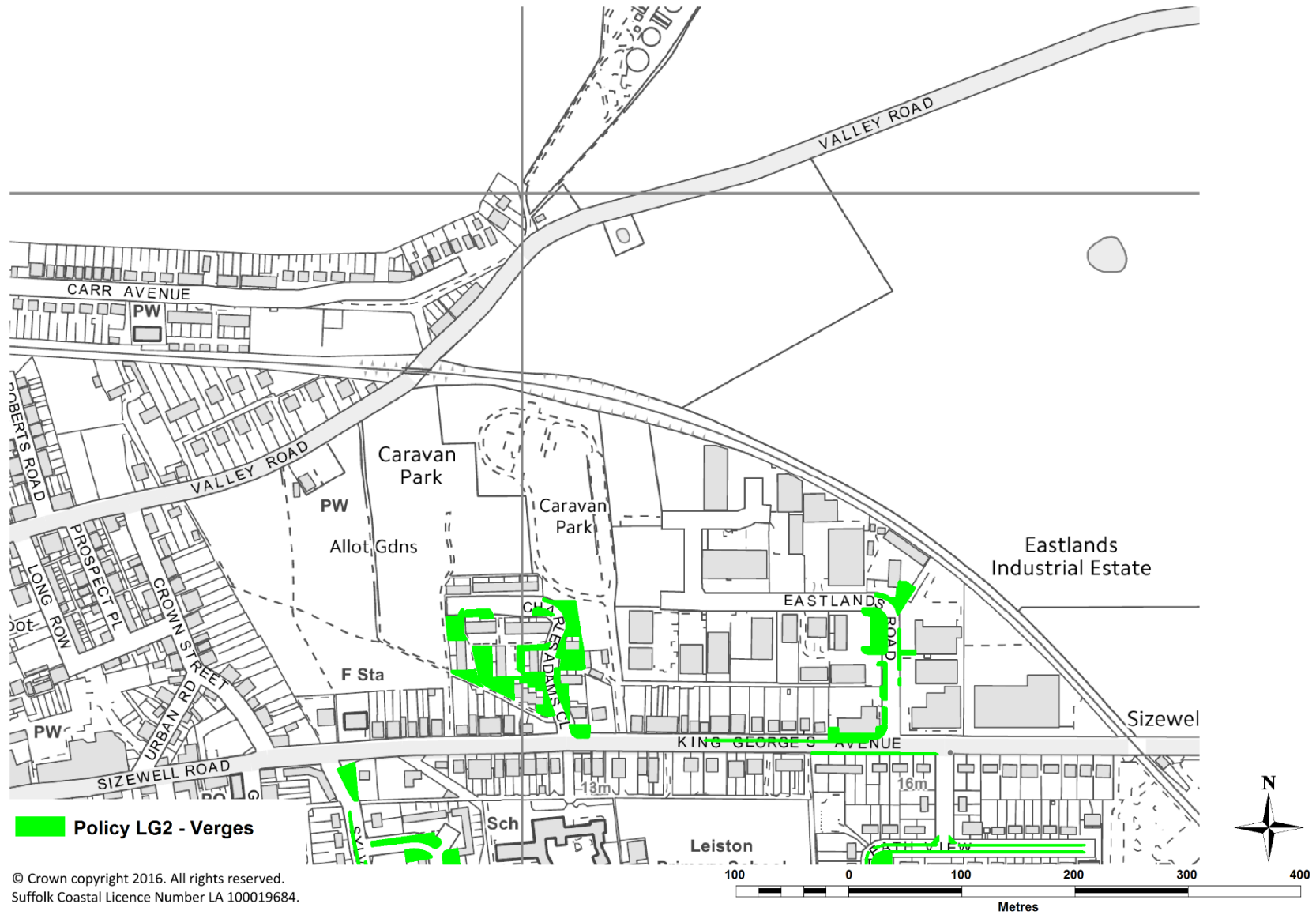
The following green spaces are relevant to Policy LG2 because they are considered to be important verges or greens that should be protected:

- Aldeburgh Road
- Andrew Close
- Arnhem Road
- Ashfield Drive
- Beech Walk
- Between Seaward Avenue and Leiston High School (caretaker's residence)
- Charles Adams Close
- Charles Miller Court
- Colonial House
- Eastward Ho
- Farrow Way
- Garrett Crescent
- Harling Way
- Heath View
- High Green
- Junction of Buckles Wood and Gypsy Lodge Road
- King Georges Avenue
- Leiston High School
- Lime Tree Avenue
- Neale Close
- Paxton Chadwick Close
- Quakers Way
- Seaward Avenue
- St Margarets Crescent
- Sycamore Close
- Sylvester Road
- The front of the old Grammar School

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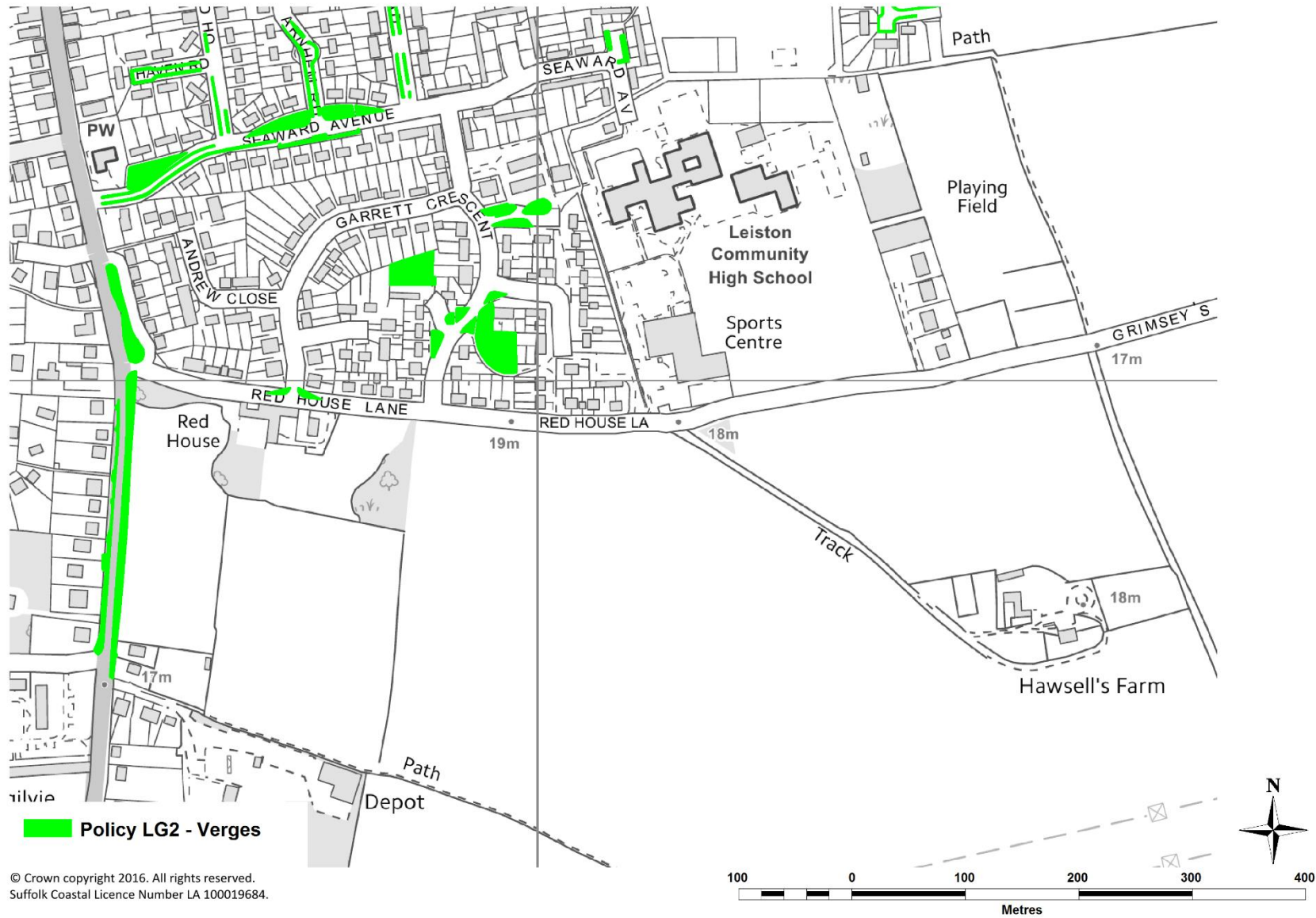


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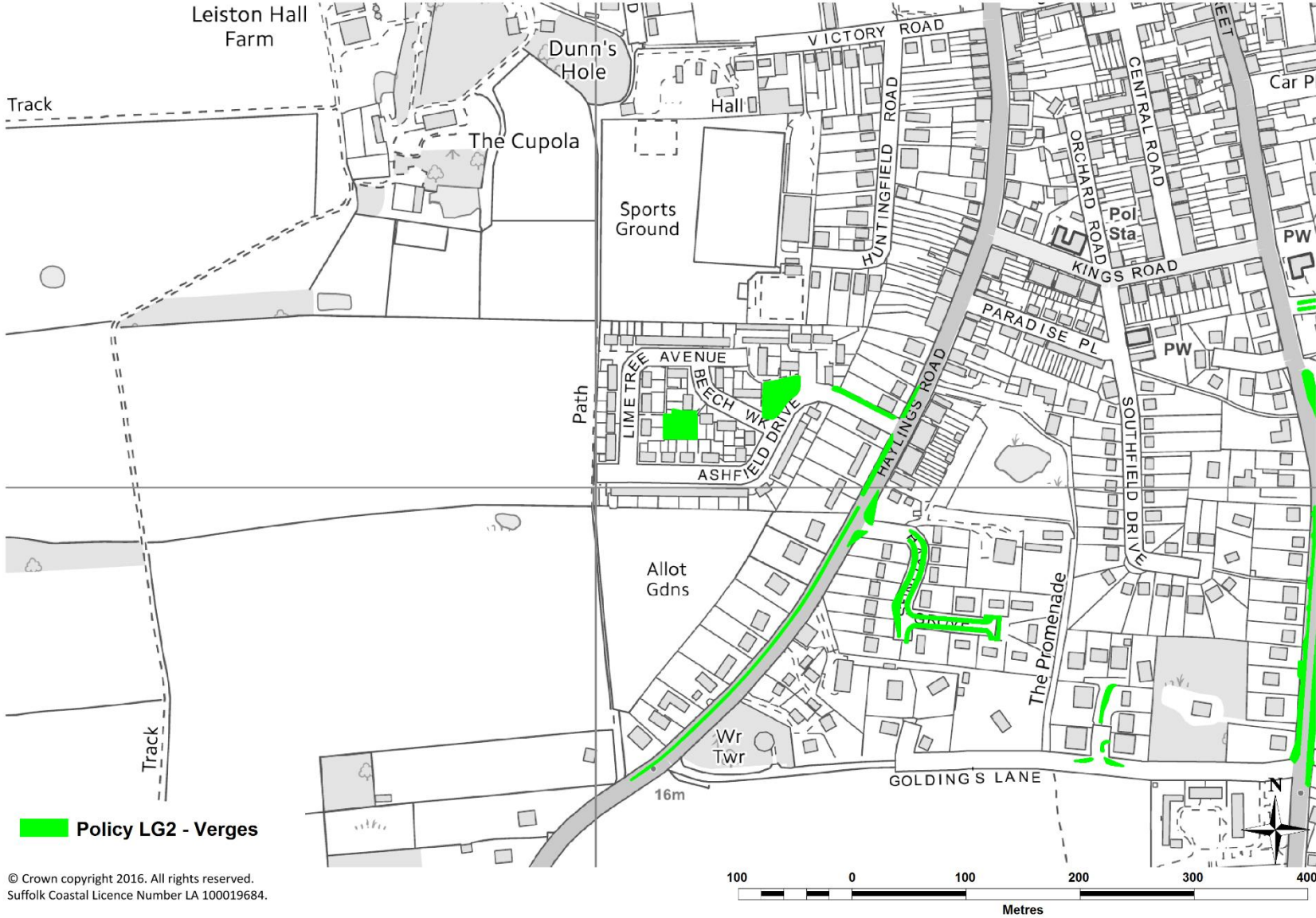


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## **Appendix B      Suffolk Coastal Local Plan saved policies to be superseded by the Neighbourhood Plan**

Policy AP56 (Town Centre)

Policy AP146 (Leiston: Town Centre Car Parks)

Policy AP147 (Leiston: Town Centre Environmental Improvements)

Policy AP142 (Eastlands Industrial Estate)

Policy AP145 (Abbey Road)