

Economic Development – Objectives and Supporting Evidence for NPSG Objective 3

To identify a range of spaces on both existing and new sites which attract businesses and create employment opportunities, particularly in skilled and creative industries and in tourism.

Summary of Evidence Gathered

Evidence Theme	Reference in Supporting Evidence
Demand for industrial spaces	Section 3
Designating existing B1 unit sites	SOA report. Economic Development team Section 6. Section 9 a & b for existing B1 sites
Designating land and buildings for B1 units including studios and workshops	Discussions with ESC economic development. Section 3 Surveyor information Section 3
Encouraging tourism including holiday accommodation	Section 11
Possible change of uses for present car showroom sites	Section 8 and the Site Options and Assessment report referenced in section 6
Promoting the creative industries	Section 10
Importance of supporting retail in the Thoroughfare	Section 3 and 12. A separate Chapter in the NP on the Town Centre will pick up issues of retail and sustainability.
Supermarket plans	Use of long-term car park Section 4
Developing the educational and skills base of residents – brought up by employers	Discussion with large employers Section 3; socio economic data set out in Halesworth Today section of the Plan; cross referenced with Community Infrastructure section of the Plan

1. Initial ideas following the first round of Consultations

Objectives we might want to develop	People/Organisations we need to consult
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designate the station workshop site for economic development and encourage expansion B1 units ● Designate Miles Ward Court as B1 ● Designate potential sites as mixed use so they can include spaces for economic development - MRKings site on Quay Street including the old maltings building, Hammonds. ● Consider Maker Spaces, shared/managed office space and Work/Live Units particularly in the development in the long term car park site ● Look into any land and buildings that could be used for hotel to encourage tourism – Maltings building at Station, Patrick Stead ● Site Options and assessment (AECOM) in relation to MR Kings, station workshops, Huggies/long term car park, Triple Plea and Old Station Road sites – turn the principle of designating / utilising these sites for either employment or mixed use into clear policy. ● Encourage unused land on already allocated economic land to be utilised e.g. site next to Ridgeons, owned by Hew Gray. NB the Triple Plea land although in the Local Plan as economic land is outside the NP area. It could provide a possible solution to a cycle track at that end of Norwich Road. ● To commission a Master planning report to build on the connectivity and the site assessment report bringing in the ‘cultural hub’ around the Cut/Museum, the potential community hub on the Badgers site and the old centre around the Church and Halesworth Gallery. This should propose ways of making the town more attractive for visitors and boosting retail businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land/estate agents ● Firms such as Spectre and Hammonds (rumours are that they are closing their petrol station) ● Owners of Station workshops ● Owners of Quay Street site ● Halesworth Tourism Group ● Thoroughfare traders, Town Centre group ● The Cut ● SCC Arts Manager (report on Art for Economic Growth) ● LEP ● ESC economics team ● Long term car park site owner) ● Triple Plea and Old Station Road site owners ● ESC Economic Development Team

2. Objectives following Evidence Gathering.

1. Expansion of industrial estates

To meet demand for industrial units, unused land on the existing industrial estates gives a good opportunity for expansion. The Broadway Farm site at the northern edge of the town, as referenced in the Local Plan WLP4.6, would expand the industrial estates but incentives may be needed to compensate for the difficult access to the site.

2. Designate existing B1 units/enterprise spaces to protect them as economic spaces

- Miles Ward Court and
- Station Yard workshops

3. Encourage provision of B1 units, networking/flexible working, studios, workshops in:

- Patrick Stead hospital if it comes forward for development on closure
- The Maltings building within the M R King site on Quay Street if the site comes forward for mixed use development.
- As part of the development of the long-term car park site to help support the economic sustainability of the Thoroughfare

4. Support Tourism growth in Halesworth

- Encourage provision of hotel/tourist accommodation – Patrick Stead, Maltings, Long-term carpark as part of mixed-use developments.
- Connectivity and signage – see section on Town Centre

5. Designation of potential future development sites as the economics of the Motor Trade in particular, changes. This cross references with the Housing section.

- Quay Street (S1 in the SOA, 0.72 ha) – mixed use, including the Maltings building at the Station Yard end of the site. Housing fronting onto Quay Street, sympathetically designed would improve the conservation area.
- London Road (ST2 in the SOA, 0.25-0.35ha) – Housing on the London Road frontage would enhance the entrance to the town. Small workshops at the back of the site.
- Diesel Direct between 41 & 43 Holton Road – Housing to blend with the residential nature of the surroundings
- Hammonds – a large site on the east of Norwich Road near to the industrial estate on the other side. Employment, community infrastructure

6. To support the potential of the creative industries to provide economic growth.

Studios spaces, workshops, places to network and exhibit and retail options should be encouraged on sites in the town or in buildings with development opportunities. Potential places are Patrick Stead Hospital, The Maltings and in the long term car park site.

7. Retail

To help support and promote the retail sector within the town centre to ensure economic sustainability and the tourism industry the NPSG and the Town Council commissioned a Town Centre Connectivity study: The findings are considered in Chapter 10 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Green and nuclear energy expansion

Considerable investment is coming to the coastal areas of Suffolk with the building of Sizewell C and the development of the wind farm sector. These will offer a range of jobs including many skilled occupations.

Changing agriculture

There are some farms within the town boundary with many more in the surrounding parishes. As a result of Brexit, climate change and the needs to increase biodiversity, changes to agricultural practices are expected, both more highly mechanised solutions as well as returns to older farming methods. This will impact on the jobs in this sector maybe increasing the skills required and reduce the overall job numbers.

Skills

The growth of the employment base needs to be linked to the skills base of the residents. The skills base is low and there is a shortage of skilled employees for local businesses.

Education at the sixth form level has never been provided in the town and the middle school closed a decade ago. Children must travel to neighbouring towns for secondary education.

Suffolk New College, offering further education, has recently opened on the Healthy Neighbourhood site. The development of Sizewell C nuclear power plant may both provide education and training opportunities to residents. The facilities being built on the Halesworth Healthy Neighbourhood will offer skills training in social care and sport and leisure

The Community Infrastructure section considers the provision of a school.

Evidence Gathered

3. Need for employment/economic development spaces

Meeting with Fennels, 20th August 2020

Fennels is the main local chartered surveyor and commercial estate agent in Halesworth.

- Very strong demand from developers.
- Only the cheaper level of industrial rents will get snapped up e.g. on the Norwich Road site but not on the Blyth Estate on Bramfield Road. The former was built by the landowner some time ago so the development and land costs are not as relevant whereas on the Blyth estate, the rents are higher and there are some empty units. The site at Triple Plea (outside our area) it was doubted would ever sell as the development costs, because of the electricity pylon and access, could not be recouped by the rent level that would be applicable for the area.
- Not being on the A12 reduces scope for major developments.
- Demand for small office spaces is coming back e.g. 3 person spaces at 100 sq ft per person, rent £10/£12 per sq foot. A good example is the conversion of the White Hart at Saxmundham which houses such things as therapists, care agency, landscape designer etc. The spaces at the Old Creamery at Angel Link are considered to be too expensive and are not letting.
- Old Station Road site – this is on Fennels website for development and they reported a very strong interest from a developer. The connecting piece of land out onto Norwich Road is under the same ownership.
- The Miles Court spaces are much needed. Need for some subsidised rental spaces for start ups and charitable occupiers.
- Comparing Beccles and Halesworth, parking is the key to town centre sustainability. The free parking at Tesco has had a big beneficial effect for the rest of the town.

Meetings with larger employers re employment and any development plans

Hammonds, 9th July 2020:

- They try to recruit locally first but cannot necessarily find the requisite skills so have to go further afield. Feel the loss of the training that used to be provided at the Skills Centre.
- Whilst the motor trade is expected to change considerably, they had no plans to move from their current site.

Spectra, 9th July 2020:

- Spectra came to Halesworth because the owner lived nearby and there were competitors located in Beccles. ; Beccles had more development land, but his competitors were there; got planning in 2002 but took until 2011 to build. Prior to that it was farmland but linked to the airfield
- Infrastructure hinders more than helps. Most staff (160 at Spectra and 45 at Broadway Colours) drive. The odd customer will use the train. Lack of public transport is an issue.
- Has many local staff but a number come from Beccles and Lowestoft. The business needs engineering and tool makers and maintenance engineers. Used to use the Skills Centre for level 3 aviation.
- Staff use the Town Centre or other Halesworth facilities infrequently. Has used the Cut for AGM and management meetings.
- Only half of the land on site is used at the moment but the remainder has developments planned.

A number of other landowners/businesses were written to and either did not reply or said that they had no plans to move or change their business in the near future.

Thoroughfare and Market Place traders, summer 2020:

- All spoken to say the Thoroughfare is busier than before lockdown. The restrictions on traffic seem to be very popular.
- There is strong demand for units (although note that by the end of April 2021 there were 3 empty properties). One owner of units is setting criteria for the traders who occupy their units – no charity shop, no café, new product line, etc.
- People and Places and Smart Towns – lots of activity going on. The Smart Towns will bring free town Wi-Fi but also lots of data for businesses to use, including abilities to order goods on Instagram, help with websites, shopping data etc. This development could have real importance to the economic sustainability to the town centre and how it should become a part of the connectivity concept.
- People and Places update, April 2021. This all went on hold again because of lockdown. Now becoming active again and we are tuning them into the Town Centre Connectivity appraisal report from WMT. V. enthusiastic. NPSG work has been incorporated into their action plan and we are part of the planning group.

Meetings with Business Groups

There are three business groups in Halesworth. Business Connections with businesses from all over the town including the larger employers, Women in Business and Halesworth Business Group which focuses on the town centre businesses and shops. The latter came to the fore during and post pandemic, after the first round of consultations. Their email list was made available for consultations during the later stages of evidence building.

Women in Business: On the 5 June 2019 a member of the HNPSG attended a Women in Business group meeting. The eleven people present represented a wide range – wine producers, plant nursery, childcare trainer, retail, graphic designer, alternative therapies. Following a discussion on neighbourhood planning nine completed the questionnaire.

Results were:

Of the 9, 5 were in the 35-44 age bracket and 4 in the 45-64.

Their likes and concerns about the town raised no new issues. The improvements they wished to see were:

- Help to advertise their businesses within the town. e.g., on the HTC central notice board.
- Improving the PR about the town and its identity
- Improved signage into the town
- Support the Market Place traders by getting it linked to the Thoroughfare
- Car parking – some differences of view as to whether charging in the town centre car park would make that much difference but easier parking administration needed
- Saxon's Way could be improved (not representative of heritage town) to give a better image of the town for those passing through.

Halesworth Business Connections: On the 30 October 2019 a member of the HNPSG attended a meeting of the Halesworth Business Connections. 20 members were present covering a wide range of businesses from IT company, farmer, and car dealership. A presentation was given but as there

was little engagement at the meeting a questionnaire, based on the presentation, was sent afterwards.

NPSG Business Questionnaire November 2019

Question	Yes	No	Comment
Is there a demand for more employees now and / or if the population increases significantly and if so, what kind?			
Are there skills shortages and if so, what are employers looking for?			
Are there a lack of sites / premises in the town?			
Are there site owners in the town who would consider bringing their land forward for employment-based uses?			
Do you think there is a disconnect between the Thoroughfare and Market Place? If so, what do you think would improve it?			
Would you be willing to work with us on specific business related issues, as and when they arise (eg. employment needs consultancy brief)?			

This highlighted the need for skilled employees.

East Suffolk Council (ESC) economic development department

They shared their thinking and research that economic growth would come from support for micro-businesses, SMEs and creative industries. Tourism is also significant, with the Thoroughfare being fundamental to this. They supported the refusal of the planning application to change Miles Ward Court into residential (appl ref DC/19/3914/FUL) and subsequently arranged a meeting with Menta (a social enterprise) that develops and supports workspaces. The team's response to the planning application sets out the supporting evidence:

Economic Development Team Consultee Response Date: 25/10/2019

To: Planning Support [name redacted]

From: Economic Development Team

Reference: DC/19/3914/FUL Miles Ward Court Proposal: Miles Ward Court, Market Place, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 8AY Alterations to and change of use of business units to create 5 no. residential dwellings for over 55.

Thank you for inviting the Economic Development team to comment on the above planning application. The Economic Development team seeks to support those planning applications where the

application clearly supports the economic growth and regeneration of the economy within East Suffolk. We seek to comment on non residential floor space (increase/decrease), commercial demand, jobs (created, lost or sustained) and strategic fit.

We would not be supportive of any decrease in B1 space, and the subsequent loss of the businesses and people employed in the 6 small enterprise units known as Miles Ward Court. Any such approval for alteration and change of use would result in 6 businesses having to relocate and 9 people at risk of job loss.

Our Economic Growth Plan states the importance of supporting entrepreneurs, encouraging existing businesses to grow, and attracting businesses to the area. All of this requires suitable premises to be available in order to meet the needs of start-up businesses and growing businesses.

The market Town of Halesworth lacks B1 units. Of which there is a demand. Currently on the market are a very small number of B2 and B8 units which are not suitable for office type use or well being businesses.

Reference documents:

ED Team and Council strategies East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan (pages 17-18)

Source: <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/East-Suffolk-Growth-Plan.pdf> East Suffolk Business Plan – 2015 to 2023 Source: <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Your-Council/Business-Plan/East-Suffolk-Business-Plan.PDF>

Regional strategies Suffolk Growth Strategy (page 21) Source: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/our-aims-and-transformationprogrammes/Suffolk-Growth-Strategy.pdf>

Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy (page 18) Source: http://issuu.com/nakedmarketing1/docs/new_20anqlia_20economic_20strategic?e=30940372/55099812

Socio-economic data about people working in tourism/arts/admin etc.

The Halesworth Today section of the plan includes the socio-economic data available and the key messages will be incorporated into the narrative of the Economic Dev section.

4. Long Term Car Park

- Throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, the NPSG engaged with the developer that has an option agreement on the site and with the architect.
- Plans for a supermarket were being taken forward, reflecting matters raised by HTC and suggestions from NPSG members.
- Proposals include provision of other retail units and a public space, along with improved access, parking and improved connectivity for pedestrians.
- As at February 2022, a supermarket operator – Lidl - remained interested and design work was progressing directly with them although changes to the land available has made design more difficult.
- The supermarket was seen as a draw to those residents who now shop at Beccles and people in local villages. With a good design it was considered that it would support most of the businesses in the Thoroughfare.
- Car parking is an issue, with its requirements for a supermarket taking away space that would otherwise be given over to public realm and additional retail. However it is likely that parking will be increased with free parking associated with the supermarket.
- The importance of this space to the town centre as a whole and the economic development of the town is significant. Making spaces around a public 'square', with piazza feel and cafes and housing would support the creative industries, enhance the Thoroughfare and the vitality of the town centre.
- The work on connectivity by We Made That includes various options for connectivity within and through the site, depending on different development scenarios.

5. Relevant reports from SCC, Economic Dev at ESDC and LEP relating to economic development for market towns in the area. The main ones are:

- East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan (pages 17-18)
Source:
<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Business/East-Suffolk-Growth-Plan.pdf>
- East Suffolk Business Plan – 2015 to 2023
Source:
<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Your-Council/Business-Plan/East-Suffolk-Business-Plan.PDF>
- Regional strategies
Suffolk Growth Strategy (page 21)
Source:
<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/our-aims-and-transformationprogrammes/Suffolk-Growth-Strategy.pdf>
- Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy (page 18)
Source:
http://issuu.com/nakedmarketing1/docs/new_20anglia_20economic_20strategic?e=30940372/55099812
- Local Plan reports
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/waveney-local-plan/local-plan-background-studies/>
- 'Culture Drives Growth' The East's Cultural Strategy 2016-2022. A LEP publication supported by SCC and NCC. Evidence to support growth in culture and arts as economic development. <https://newanglia.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Culture-Drives-Growth-FINAL-web-version.pdf>

6. Site Options and Assessments Report and ESC Planners supporting mixed use and economic designations.

Report completed by AECOM October 2020. To be used to support the Plan development and policies. The Executive Summary reads:

The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan, which will cover the town parish of Halesworth, is being prepared in the context of the East Suffolk Local Development Framework and the adopted Waveney Local Plan (2019). Within the Local Plan, housing and employment provision has been made for Halesworth (and Holton) through site allocations and policies to deliver 8% of housing growth for the district and 15% employment land development distributed across Market Towns and Rural Areas (outside of Lowestoft and Beccles). Further to this the Local Plan supports Neighbourhood Plans in allocating additional growth to meet local needs at a scale which does not undermine the overall distribution strategy.

The Neighbourhood Plan intends to allocate sites for mixed-uses on suitable sites within the settlement boundary and/or on sites well related with the urban form of Halesworth, that accord with strategic policy of the Local Plan, relevant evidence base such as the Halesworth Design Code (2019), and the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Planning Group are reviewing options to allocate brownfield sites for mixed-use regeneration, to protect employment sites and allocate new sites for employment use and/or mixed uses, to allocate sites for a potential secondary school, and to deliver housing to meet future local housing need. The Neighbourhood Plan currently has not identified a local housing need figure to be met through the allocation of residential sites.

In order to further shape the growth of Halesworth and allocate appropriate sites for a range of uses, a number of sites were identified by the Neighbourhood Planning Group and through review of the Waveney District Council Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

This site assessment considers twelve potential sites for development, taking into account Local Plan policy and national planning criteria to establish which, if any, of the sites are suitable for development. The assessment of sites is informed by a review of their policy constraints, the evidence base and site visits. The final assessment takes into account local assessment criteria which derive from Neighbourhood Plan objectives. The conclusions of the site assessment are that Site S3 is suitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan, subject to issues such as heritage, flood risk and community land uses being further considered. Sites S1, S2, S6, ST2 and 122 were found to be potentially suitable for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan subject to availability (S1, S2, S6 and ST2) and access (122) being found suitable. Sites 13, 14, 86, 106, 115 and 116 were found not suitable for allocation when considered against Neighbourhood Plan neighbourhood criteria.

This assessment is the first step in the consideration of site allocations. From the shortlist of potentially suitable sites identified in this report, the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (HNPSG), in conjunction with the Town Council, should engage with East Suffolk Council and the community to select sites for allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan which best meet the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and future housing need for the plan area.

Mixed use development - A 'Vision for the Future' planning brief was drawn up with the help of Planning Department and the Economic Development department of ESC to show how mixed-use, including housing, could support the regeneration of important buildings like the Maltings on the MR King site in Quay Street.

7. Patrick Stead Hospital

When the old hospital is finally closed by the NHS the registration as a community asset will be applied and there will be time for a group to come together to develop a business plan. The ACV registration runs until May 2023 and can be extended. A mixed-use designation by the NP would not inhibit any potential proposals. The SOA report says: Mixed-use (which could include community services, housing, education, supported housing, enterprise, live-work units).

There is potential interest from a social enterprise organisation called Menta who work with community groups to develop workspaces and purchase and manage others. H Town Council were to follow up on this and it is in their 4 year plan to encourage a group to come together to look into future uses of the hospital.

As of Feb 2022 nothing has materialised and the hospital is now up for sale.

Need to cross reference to Heritage section as designation of the building as a NHDA is planned. It is a difficult building to redevelop and in order not to put unnecessary blocks to potential developments, consideration will be given to just registering the front of the building which is its distinctive Victorian feature. (NB the building as a whole is put forward for designation as a NDHA)

8. Motor trade sites

Halesworth has been 'overendowed' with car showrooms given its size. It acted as a midpoint between larger towns of Norwich, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. This is changing as car dealerships consolidate on larger urban sites and online sales increase. Volvo, Land Rover and Vauxhall have gone. Two owners – MRKings on Quay Street and Kerridges on London Road have reverted to secondhand cars. Kings are actively considering housing/mixed use development and Kerridges have planning permission for 4 houses on part of their site. Diesel Autos on the Holton Road given diesels are to be phased out is likely to change and Hammonds a much larger site on the Norwich Road is in a state of flux with the owner very aware of the importance of his large site.

All the sites are hugely important to the town being on prominent sites on entrance roads. Other than Hammonds they are in the middle of residential developments with Kerridges and Kings in or adjacent to the conservation area with listed buildings opposite and/or at the side.

The Hammonds site is nearer to the industrial sites with some housing around and would lend itself to further economic development or community infrastructure more than housing in the future if it becomes available.

In discussion the Kerridge owners made it clear they would be developing at some point but having just agreed the 4 houses are not in a rush. They did comment that contaminated land and the requirement to provide affordable homes might not make it worth their while to develop the rest. (Jan 21 it was announced that they had sold the showrooms to another second-hand dealership).

[Name redacted], ESC planner, confirmed that the Kerridge Site and Diesel Auto sites would fit less than 11 houses so would be outside of the affordable homes requirements which might compensate for the cost of clearing polluted land. Given the important locations especially of Kerridges and Kings then we could designate for mixed-use with housing with special reference to design requirements. A mixed-use designation of the Kings site is supported by Planners based on the brief NPSG put to the owners. On 3 Nov 2020 the ESC planning department gave the following advice:

Kerridges, Diesel autos and Hammonds, are located within the settlement boundary and they are not designated as employment use, so a change of use to residential would be supported in principle by the Waveney Local Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan can allocate the three sites for a specific use such as employment, retail, residential etc depending on whether you want to support the current use or an alternative use.

The two smaller sites, Kerridges on London Road and Diesel Autos on Holton Road are both surrounded by residential development so a change of use to residential seems appropriate.

Please note part of the Kerridges site along London Road falls within the Conservation Area. You may wish to consider planning policies that allocate the sites for residential use subject to requirements such as the number of houses, density of housing, size and type of houses, provision of street frontages, distance set back from the road, and other possible design criteria.

Hammonds on Norwich Road is a very large site that appears to include several car dealerships and span a considerable length of Norwich Road. The Neighbourhood Plan could consider allocating the site for employment use or another use. Change of use of part or all of the Hammonds site would have a significant impact on the town due to the prominent location of the site.

By February 22 none of these sites had come forward for development but a policy to capture such major sites is needed if they do come forward in the future.

9. Securing present economic spaces for the future

a. Miles Ward Court.

Foundation East the charity owners of the site put in planning application to convert to 5 small units of accommodation for the over 55's. ESC rejected the application having heard evidence from the Town Council, District Councillor and from HNPSG. The site was immediately put up for sale for £260K and sold quickly and post covid restrictions these are being occupied with small enterprises a number of which are in the creative industries. Advice from the planning department stated:

The Planning Application DC/19/3914/FUL to convert the business units at Miles Ward Court to residential use was refused. The Neighbourhood Plan can allocate the site for employment use. As the owners of the site say it is financially unviable as business units it would worth considering under what circumstances a change of use would be acceptable and if there are any other uses that the Neighbourhood Plan might support.

Policy WLP8.12 Employment Areas in the Local Plan sets out requirements under which a change of use would be permitted and similar requirements could be included in Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site.

Designation as economic space (and consider listing as historical asset) will be important to include in the plan.

b. Station Workshops

Contact was made with the owners of the run down but cheap workshops in Station Yard. They have been present in Halesworth for many years. The elderly directors wish to pass on ownership to a younger generation. The tenants have been there for many years and include creative enterprises such as an artistic metal worker and a lampshade maker.

A meeting on site with [name redacted] from Economic Development in 2019 revealed that ESC was unaware of the site and that it was not designated for economic purposes. They recognised its importance given the need for workshop/B1 units in the town.

The owner is keen that the workshops are kept and recognised that improvements and expansion could be achieved. Informed of the plan to designate the workshops for employment use is accepted.

Regular contact has been kept with the owner. Delays have occurred in ownership transfer but is still the plan. Improvements to the workshops and the land around them have been made and the owner is aware of the importance of the site as the first impression of people coming to town on the train. He will work with the community to improve this.

10. Creative Industries as part of economic growth.

Data (in the Halesworth Today section of the NP) shows that Halesworth has a higher proportion of people working in the creative industries than other towns in the area and has a good art infrastructure to build on.

The Art Manager from SCC and the Economic Development team at ESC see the creative industries as an important growth area for Suffolk.

A Creative Workshop Summit held on 20 April 2018, organised by ESC and attended by NPSG suggested many ideas about place making and maker spaces and how to cater for job creation in the sector.

November – January 2020/21 - Consulted [name redacted] the Director of a new initiative in Saxmundham called The Art Station and [name redacted] the leader of the Town Council and NP group. Both see the development of art spaces etc in the town as important to the economic sustainability.

The Art Station has taken on a building at the end of the High St and are creating work studios, networking spaces, dance studio, exhibition space. It is set up as a charity and had a limited opening at the end of 2020. [Name redacted] pointed to the evidence they collected on what artists needed as the basis of their success so far.

With the help of local artists, a survey monkey questionnaire was put in the Waveney and Blyth Arts Newsletter and Suffolk Cultural and Creative Newsletter asking those in the creative industries what if anything could support them to develop their work/business.

The article and survey questions are attached as an Appendix 1.

Results – the response was low with only 5 responses

In answer to the question: 'What more could be developed in Halesworth to support people in the creative industries? Tick any of the following you think are needed'. 80% said workshops/maker spaces, 60% individual studio spaces, 40% shared workspaces, networking spaces, retail outlets, 30% said outdoor performance spaces.

The majority of respondents were actively working in the industries.

The survey was supplemented by interviews with people involved in the creative industries as artists, curators, supporting venues/infrastructure, economic developers. They supported the findings of the survey in the need for studio/workshop spaces and places to exhibit and sell. They saw Halesworth as part of a network of towns and people throughout East Suffolk that were becoming more and more recognised for art, performance, film, music, festivals but it needed to be better marketed as such.

Celebrating Culture 2021* - demonstration of how important art is seen for the economy and tourism
Suffolk art newsletter March 2021: An exciting new seasonal PR and marketing campaign will launch in late May to celebrate our rich and diverse arts, culture and heritage sectors across Norfolk and Suffolk. Led by the New Anglia Culture Board (NACB) and supported by the New Anglia LEP, Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Interegg EXPERIENCE project, University of East Anglia and Visit East of England, 'Celebrating Culture 2021' aims to put the region on the map as a 'must see' UK cultural destination.

11. Tourism

A member of NPSG joined the Halesworth Tourism Group pre lockdown. Work completed on a new logo derived from the views of the group as to the tourism possibilities of the town. The strap line is Shopping, Arts & Culture and Wildlife. There will be a relaunch in 2021 and is being supported by People & Places. (affected by Covid)

A concern of the group was the shortage of hotel beds in the town. A festival had been lost to the town and lack of accommodation was one of the reasons.

National Cycle Route 1 puts the town on the map for cycling and the tourism group has been keen to expand the walking possibilities.

Better signage seen as essential to support visitors in exploring the town.

Railway - Contact made with Halesworth to Southwold Railway Group. They are keen to establish a tourist attraction for young children in the town based on the former railway. The Tourism Group supports this idea as a way of bringing people to the town. The site of their bit of track and engine shed in the Millennium Green is not suitable as the access is difficult and no parking and would conflict with flora and fauna although the MG trustees support the idea. They need land near to the centre of town.

Site 86 in the SHELAA off Saxons Way could work. In our SOA this land is not identified for development and it is outside the settlement boundary.

Contact has been made with the owners SFC Developers from Holt and follow up site meetings held including HTC member. The tourist attraction did not 'grab attention'. From a NP perspective we will not support development because the land is outside the settlement area and housing allocations are sufficient for the next 5 year period. However, some interesting community benefits were discussed and received well. Specifically, the provision of a pedestrian entrance to the MG off Saxons Way, help with a cycle track and 'gifting land for biodiversity – important part of the Tourism offer. They will pursue a small housing development and are prepared to wait until planning requirements change or the community benefits are seen to out-weigh objections

Walking and Cycling/nature reserve – benefit to tourism from improved walks and cycling routes and emphasis on biodiversity should be cross referenced. 2 x 3 Circular Walks maps being produced via the NP group working with Discover Suffolk/SCC. Tourism Group are helping write the town information on the leaflets.

12. Retail

Data (introductory chapters of the NP) show that retail jobs are important as a source of employment in the town and for local people. The economic sustainability of the Thoroughfare, the main shopping street is vital for the town's future. For that reason, the Town Council on the recommendation of the NPSG commissioned a Town Centre Connectivity study to look at how the centre can be made more attractive and functional for residents and visitors. This study was later extended to include a wider Master Plan, funded by a grant from Locality. There is a separate chapter on this given its importance.

Retail will form part of the Long-Term car park development.

Halesworth – an artistic and creative town

There are many wonderful creative things in Halesworth - The Cut, Halesworth Gallery, Library, Museum, INK, Suffolk Artlink, specialist shops and galleries, craft fairs, printing and design companies – to name a few.

Could there be more?

Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has formed a Vision for how the town might develop in the next few decades. The creative industries form a part of that.

Creative and internet-based enterprises have been attracted by Halesworth's status as a centre for the arts and biodiversity, its growing population and its accessibility, seeing the town as somewhere they can flourish

You can read more about what a Neighbourhood Plan can do and read the full Vision for the town here:

<https://halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan-steering-group/>

We need to know from artists and creative people, like you, whether this is a Vision you could share. What could help to make it happen, if not immediately then in the future? Is it developing a range of spaces and employment opportunities that might support those working in the creative industries for instance?

We feel sure you will have ideas as to what would work to help Halesworth develop into an even better creative town than it is today.

Here is a link to a short surveyYour input into our Neighbourhood Plan could make a real difference as to what we might achieve. The survey will be open until (set for a month after publication in the Waveney & Blyth Arts newsletter and one sent out by Suffolk CC arts manager).

If you want to know more contact Joyce Moseley on clerk@halesworthtowncouncil.or.uk

Survey of the Needs of People in the Creative Industries in and around Halesworth.

We know that Halesworth has an above average number of people like you working in the creative industries and we think they could make an even bigger contribution to the town's cultural and economic sustainability with the right infrastructure. But we need to know from you what would help your work develop or encourage you to make use of Halesworth.

Below are a few options that have been suggested to the Neighbourhood Plan, but we need evidence from you as to whether they are a good idea or not. There is space for you to register any other thoughts you might have.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in the survey.

1. Which creative activity best describes your involvement?

- Music
- Theatre
- Dance
- Visual arts
- Literature
- Combined arts - including festivals and carnivals
- Film & TV
- Fashion
- Graphic design
- Craft maker
- Games design and other internet-based enterprises
- Architecture

- Back stage services e.g., lighting, sound, costumes
- None
- Other - please describe here.

2. Which of the following best describes your relationship with the creative industries?

- Working full time
- Working part time
- Working in my spare time
- Not working at the moment
- Involved in a voluntary capacity
- Student

3. What kind of space does your creative activity takes place in?

- Home
- Garden
- Industrial unit
- Office
- Shared
- Not applicable
- Other please describe

4. Where do you sell, exhibit, promote your work?

- Art and Craft fairs
- Open Exhibitions e.g. The Cut, Halesworth Gallery
- Social Media
- Own Website
- Performance spaces
- Other galleries
- Commissions
- N/A
- Other please describe

5. What more could be developed in Halesworth to support people in the creative industries? Tick any of the following you think are needed.

Studio spaces for individual artist

- Workshop/Maker spaces
- Shared workspaces
- Place to meet others and network
- Exhibition spaces
- Outdoor performance spaces
- Retail outlets for your work
- Social media and website support
- Work/Live units

6. Are there other things you would wish to see? Write your ideas here or any other comments, or just say No:

Free form box

About You

We need to understand a little bit about you so we can properly analyse the survey. You will remain anonymous and we will not be able to identify you from your responses.

7. What age are you?

- Under 18

- 18 – 44
- 45 – 64
- 65 and over

8. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other please specify
- Rather not say

9. What is your postcode?

10. Is there anything more you would like to tell us?

Free form box

Thank you again for giving us this information, it really will be helpful. Your comments will contribute to the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan. A draft plan will be out for consultation in the Summer 2021.