

# Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036



Adopted  
July 2023

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Development Plan will provide the first ever statutory planning policy document specifically for the parish of Saxmundham. Neighbourhood Plans such as this were made possible by powers contained within the 2011 Localism Act which sought to decentralise policy making to the local level and give more powers to communities and the right to shape future development where they live.
- 1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Area covers the entire Parish of Saxmundham (as it was at the time of Neighbourhood Area designation)<sup>1</sup> and was formally designated by East Suffolk Council on 29th August 2017.

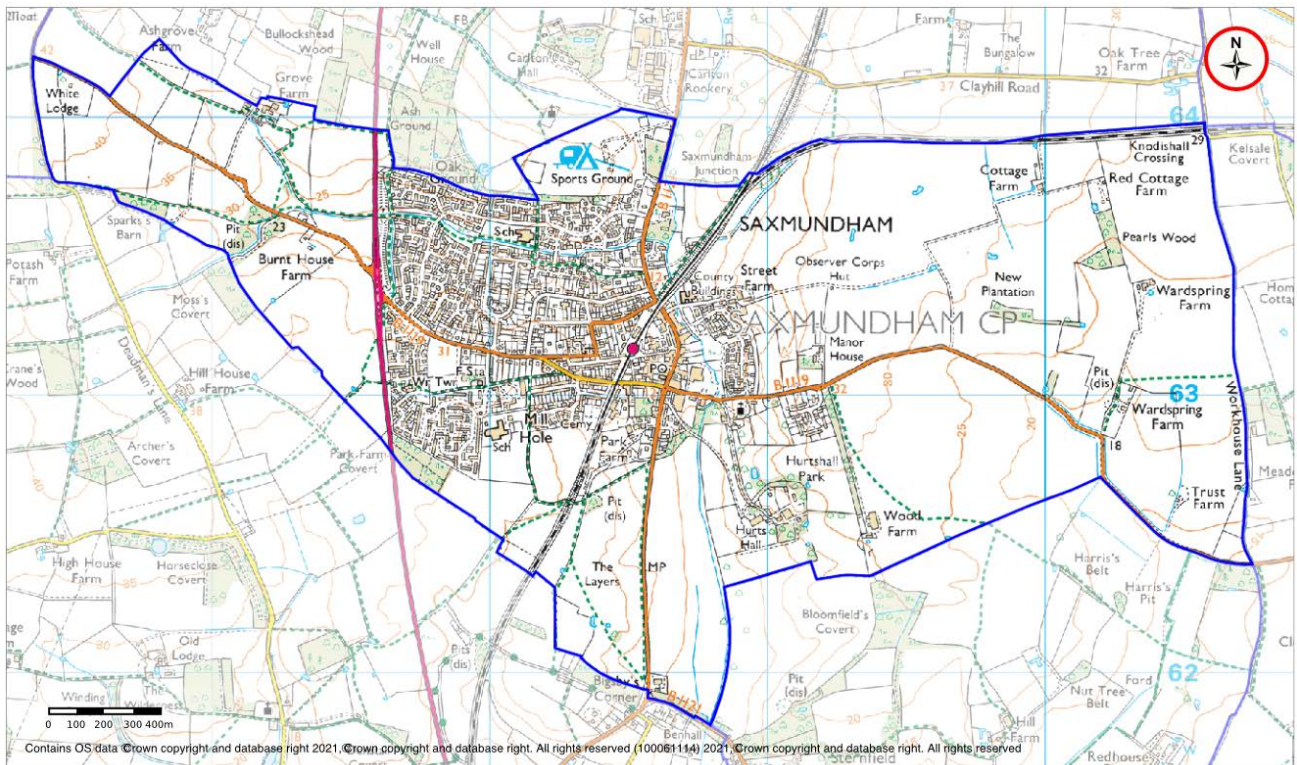


Figure 1: Saxmundham parish (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

<sup>1</sup> In this Plan, references to the parish of Saxmundham and its boundaries are to the parish and its boundaries prior to 1st April 2023; changes in boundary which took effect on that date are not relevant to the Plan or its policies



- 1.3 The Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led document for guiding the future development of the parish. It is about the use and development of land between 2022 and 2036. Once the Plan is made and adopted, East Suffolk Council will use it to determine planning applications. Saxmundham Town Council will use the Plan to respond to planning applications.
- 1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan for Saxmundham has been prepared by a volunteer team on behalf of Saxmundham Town Council (STC), comprising a mix of town Councillors and other community volunteers. The process of preparing the plan has involved wide public consultation, involving around 1000 people. (See **Appendix A** for Steering Group members).
- 1.5 The Plan looks ahead to 2036, which is consistent with the Local Plan. It recognises that the town had changed significantly in recent years and will continue to do so. It also recognises, however, that as an ancient market town with a strategic location, it is important to maintain those features of its heritage which continue to make it an attractive place as well as a functional place in which to live and to visit. The key issues facing the town, which have been highlighted through public participation, include concerns about the long-term viability of the town centre, about the quality of the town centre environment and facilities, about poor provision for pedestrians and cyclists, inadequate long-term parking, a lack of green public open spaces and the need to protect and enhance the natural environment. People wish to see the town centre performing social and cultural roles in addition to being a retail and business centre for the local district.
- 1.6 The Plan operates in the context of the East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan's vision and objectives will be realised through policies, projects, promotions and advocacy. Most policies will guide new development across the whole plan area, some are specifically tailored to the needs of particular zones. The Town Council will promote, and collaborate with others, to realise projects which will further the vision for the town.
- 1.7 The Plan's policies and proposals will rely on investment in the town by private, public, and voluntary agencies. Many of the specific proposals will only happen through partnerships and collaboration. Part of the purpose of the Plan is to give the sense of direction and momentum which will build confidence and commitment.



1.8 By undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group aims to improve and protect Saxmundham, in the interests of its people, as a lively, attractive, successful, and sustainable 'heritage' market town:

- playing its full role as employment and service centre for the surrounding area, and gateway to east Suffolk's attractions,
- promoting and implementing future-looking policies for economic development, social cohesion, and enhancement of our local environment
- ensuring the successful physical, environmental and social integration of new development in the Garden Neighbourhood with the existing community
- working with partners in public, private and community sectors to ensure coherent policy making and delivery for our town, and access to the required resources and infrastructure.
- addressing the challenges posed for our future by climate change and the need for environmental protection and improvement, across the range of policies and activities.

1.9 The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). Figure 2 outlines the stages the Steering Group has completed.



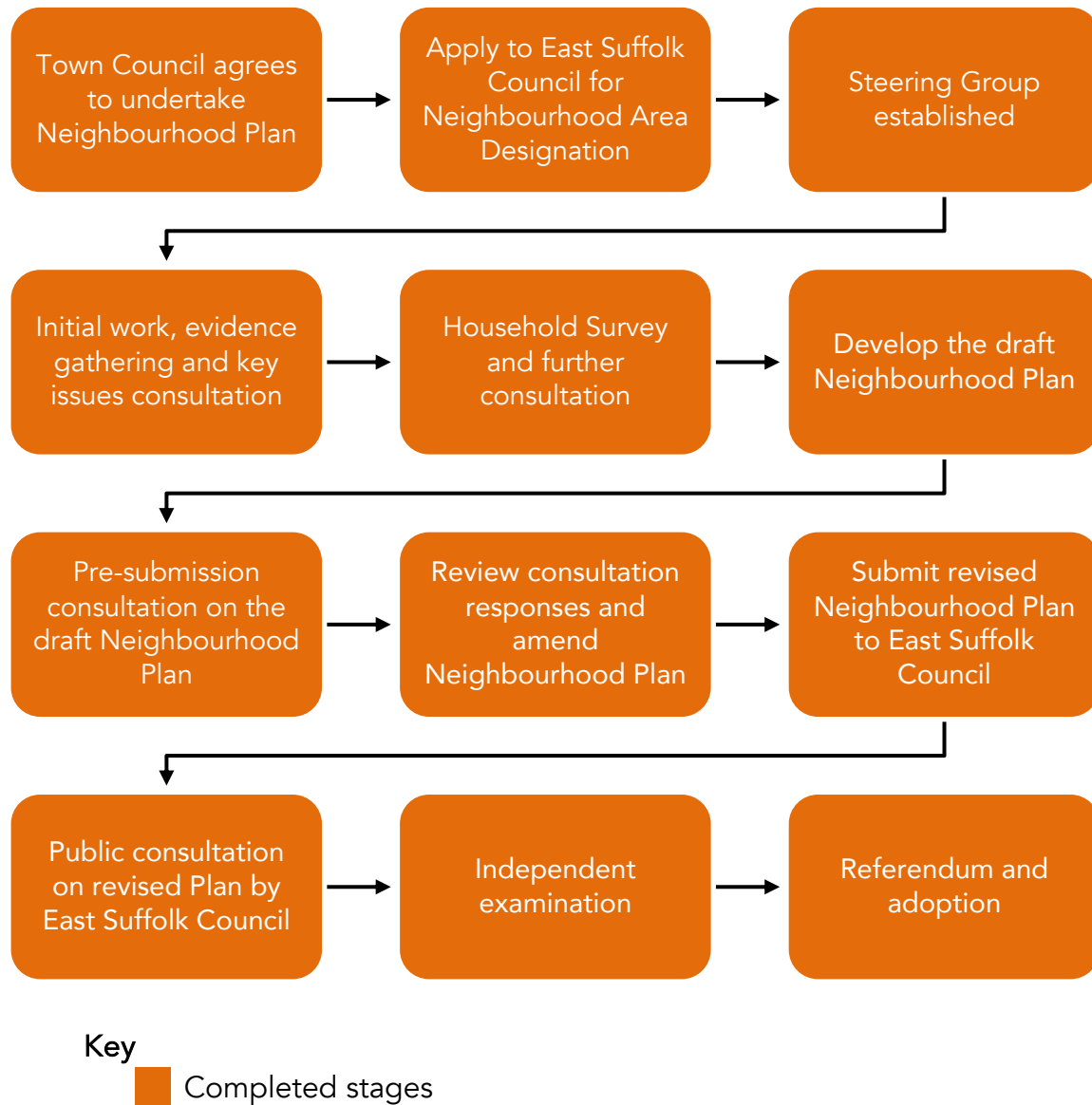


Figure 2: Stages of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.10 The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan is there to ensure that development takes place in an appropriate way for the parish. It has been positively prepared, with the purpose of supporting and managing Saxmundham's growth, not preventing it. In practice, higher level planning documents such as the Adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan cannot feasibly deal with all of the issues particular to every town and village across the entire district, whereas the Neighbourhood Plan can by providing additional details which reflect specific local circumstances and conditions. Whilst many residents felt that the amount of growth proposed in the Local Plan for Saxmundham was excessive, it is recognised, now the Local Plan is approved, that the Neighbourhood Plan



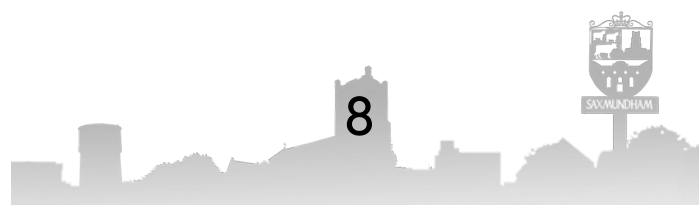


has the responsibility to ensure that growth is well managed and beneficial, and in accordance with the Local Plan.

- 1.11 The Neighbourhood Plan provides clarity, through its policies, on what will be expected from development proposals in the parish, and ensures that the impact of development is anticipated and planned for in Saxmundham. A Neighbourhood Plan is a significant document and will carry legal weight so that developers have to take note when considering future developments in the parish. Policy SCLP12.1 (Neighbourhood Plans) of the Local Plan sets the framework for housing growth in Neighbourhood Plan areas within the District.
- 1.12 The Neighbourhood Plan Area includes the relevant areas (within Saxmundham) of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood site which is defined and allocated in the Local Plan (policy SCLP 12.29, and see below), and is to be delivered through a masterplan approach brought forward “through landowner collaboration and community engagement”. Though an important part of the site presently falls within the parish of Benhall, the whole development adjoins the existing urban settlement and will have a major relationship with and impact on Saxmundham in its roles as “market town, employment and service centre” (see SCLP 12.28). To ensure that the Plan promotes the achievement of sustainable development, in all of its dimensions, it is vital that the new community is well integrated into and linked with the existing community, and that its development is coherent with the overall (physical and social) fabric and development of the town. The Neighbourhood Plan’s policies supplement, within its area, the strategic policies in the Local Plan, but are (and are required to be) consistent with them.
- 1.13 Local Plan Policy SCLP12.29 provides the overarching allocation for the Garden Neighbourhood and sets out the key issues that will need to be addressed in order for the development to be brought forward successfully. The Local Plan places considerable emphasis on the need for the development to be delivered through a masterplan approach brought forward and informed by landowner collaboration and community engagement. Saxmundham Town Council believe that such a masterplan, produced with both the input of the landowners and through meaningful engagement with the community is essential to the ensuring that the development of the Garden Neighbourhood is a success, in its own right and for the town as a whole. The Neighbourhood Plan policies (consistent with the Local Plan’s policies) seek to influence and shape proposals that come forward for the development of the Garden Neighbourhood through the collaborative masterplan process outlined in the Local Plan.



- 1.14 Critical to the success of the Garden Neighbourhood will be its successful integration with the existing community of Saxmundham (and Benhall). In order to create a full sustainable Garden Neighbourhood consistent with the objectives of the NPPF, this integration needs to be:
- Physical – in terms of the relationship between the new development and the existing built-up area of the town, high quality connections – pedestrian and cycle – to promote easy, safe and quick access between the town and the development and also the development and the facilities of the town e.g., the town centre and the railway station.
  - Environmental – in terms of high-quality green infrastructure connections and links between the Garden Neighbourhood and the town; design and layout of the Garden Neighbourhood to reflect local character.
  - Social – A strong connection and interaction between the Garden Neighbourhood and the rest of the town, services to meet the needs of local people, provision of primary school and early years facilities, housing that provides for a mixed and balanced community and ensure integration and cohesion between new and existing communities.
- 1.15 Saxmundham Town Council believes that any future development in the Garden Neighbourhood site should take the name of the site literally and aim to create a rural countryside feeling for the area.
- 1.16 Thus, the vision for the site is to create a high quality, well designed, distinctive new development in line with 'Garden City' principles which is valued by its residents and recognised as an asset to the Town. The green infrastructure would contribute to this vision in the form of informal green spaces, parks, public squares, sports pitches, community gardens, large street trees, hedgerows and so on. There will be a strong connection and interaction with the existing settlement to the north.
- 1.17 This is the made (adopted) version of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. This follows pre-submission consultation which took place during the seven-week period from 5th November to 22nd December 2021 and Independent Examination between November 2022 and February 2023. The Plan has been amended following the Examination in accordance with the Examiner's recommendations.



## Accompanying supporting documents

- 1.18 When the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan was submitted for independent examination, it was accompanied by the following documents:
- **Basic Conditions Statement** – outlines how the statutory basic conditions have been met.
  - **Consultation Statement** – outlines how and when the public have been consulted on the content of the Plan.
  - **Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report** – to determine whether the Neighbourhood Plan requires a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.
  - **Habitat Regulation Screening Report** – identifies any potential impacts on protected species or habitats.
- 1.19 In addition, the following two supporting documents, which have provided technical input in developing some of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies, are included as Appendices, their guidance to be drawn upon as set out in the relevant policies. These relate to the design of future development, throughout the parish and some specific guidance for the town centre.
- **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area** – undertaken by consultants AECOM in July 2021. A focus on design elements to inform policy making and application determination across the Neighbourhood Area.
  - **Saxmundham Concept Masterplan for the High Street** undertaken by consultants AECOM in July 2021. Notional masterplan used to inform discussions and policy development in relation to the Town Centre.

## Examination and referendum

- 1.20 The Neighbourhood Plan was subject to independent examination which concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.
- 1.21 At referendum, every resident of Saxmundham who was entitled to vote in the Council elections had the opportunity to vote on whether or not they agreed with the Neighbourhood Plan. At referendum, residents were asked, '**Do you want East Suffolk Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Saxmundham parish to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood area?**'. The referendum took place on 29th June 2023. 86.9% voted in favour of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' (adopted) by East Suffolk Council in July 2023.



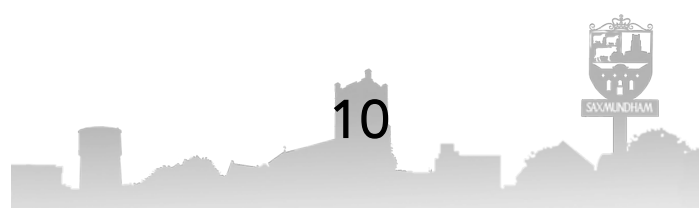


## National and local planning policy context

- 1.22 Every local planning authority in England is required to prepare a Local Plan. Local Plans include all of the local planning policies for the district's area and identify how land is used, determining what will be built and where. The relevant Local Plan for Saxmundham is the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which was adopted in September 2020. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, along with any Neighbourhood Plan, provides the basis for determining planning applications and future development in the local area and should be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.23 The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and revised in July 2018, February 2019, and July 2021. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with the revised NPPF, in particular, taking a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 1.24 Development is defined as 'the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land'.<sup>2</sup> Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 emphasises that the planning system continues to be a 'plan-led' system and restates the requirement that 'determination must be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise'.
- 1.25 The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan once 'made' (adopted) will form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area and future planning applications for new development in the parish will be determined using its policies.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.



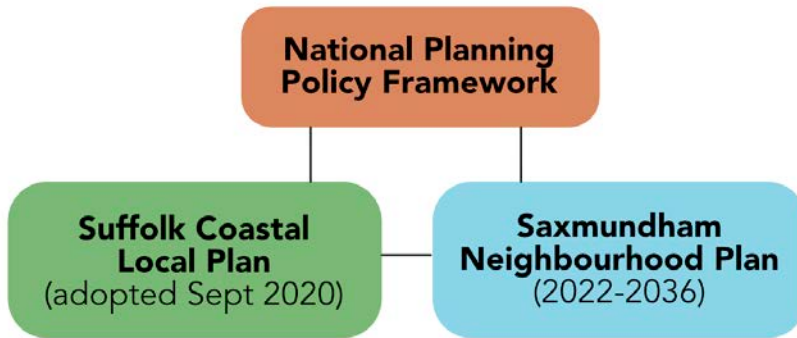


Figure 3: Spatial and strategic policy context: relationship between the NPPF, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan. Own diagram.

## Policy framework for Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.26 Saxmundham is identified as a 'Market Town' in the settlement hierarchy of the adopted Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (SCLP 2020). The Local Plan (through Policy SCLP 12.28) indicates that Saxmundham will be enhanced as a market town, employment and service centre, serving a key role in meeting the needs of residents, surrounding rural communities and visitors, recognising the opportunities offered by its road and rail connections. The following Local Plan policy provides the context for the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

### Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy SCLP12.28: Strategy for Saxmundham

Saxmundham will be enhanced as a market town, employment and service centre, serving a key role in meeting the needs of its residents, surrounding rural communities and visitors, recognising the opportunities related to the connections offered by the rail and A12 transport corridors.

The strategy for Saxmundham is to:

- a. Enhance the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, including through protecting and enhancing the historic core of the town and the railway station.
- b. Utilise opportunities related to the presence of the railway and the proximity to the A12.
- c. Diversify and expand employment opportunities.
- d. Enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity around and beyond the town, particularly to the town centre and the railway station.
- e. Promote quality of life including through enhancements to networks of green infrastructure.

- f. Increase the provision of housing and affordable housing and providing greater choice in the mix of housing available.
- g. Provide for a safe and inclusive community; and
- h. Protect and enhance the natural environment.

The creation of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will provide new opportunities for housing, employment and community facilities, focused around the principles of an inclusive community and integration with Saxmundham and the surrounding countryside through enhancing green infrastructure networks.

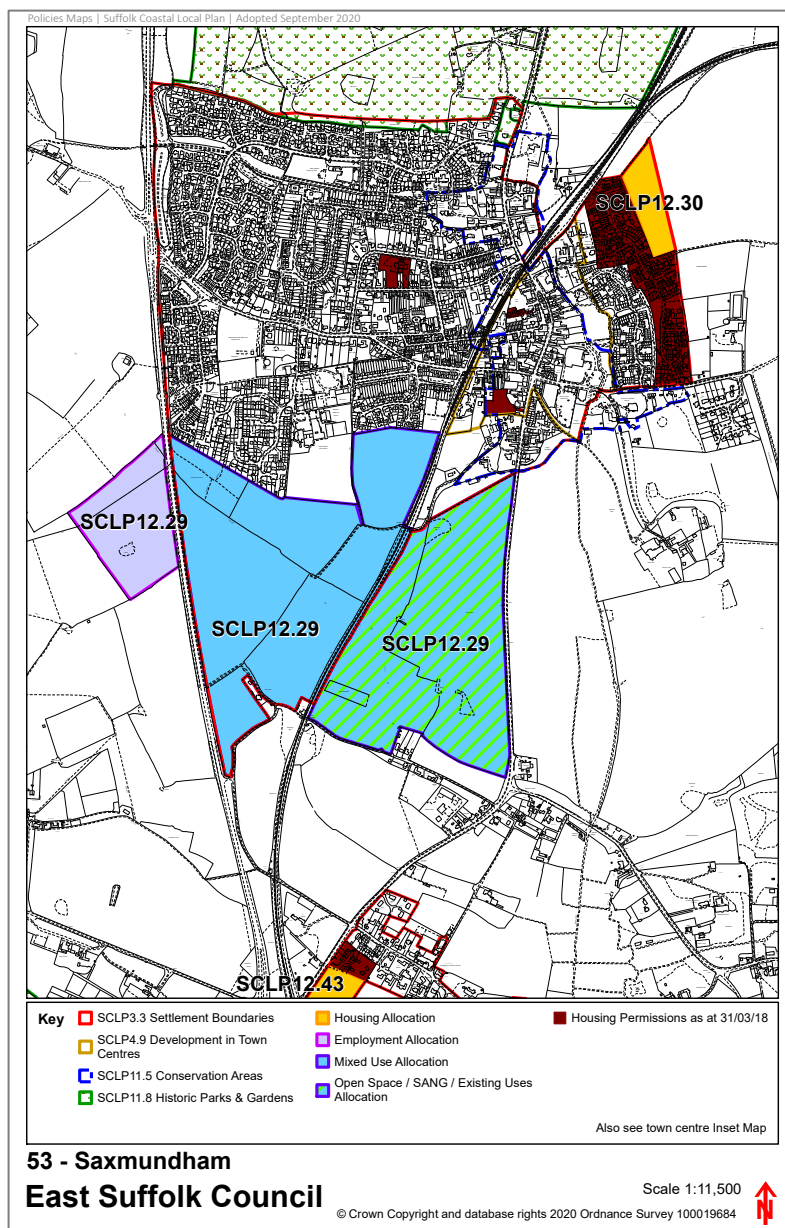
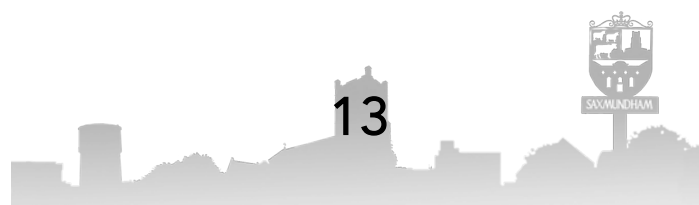
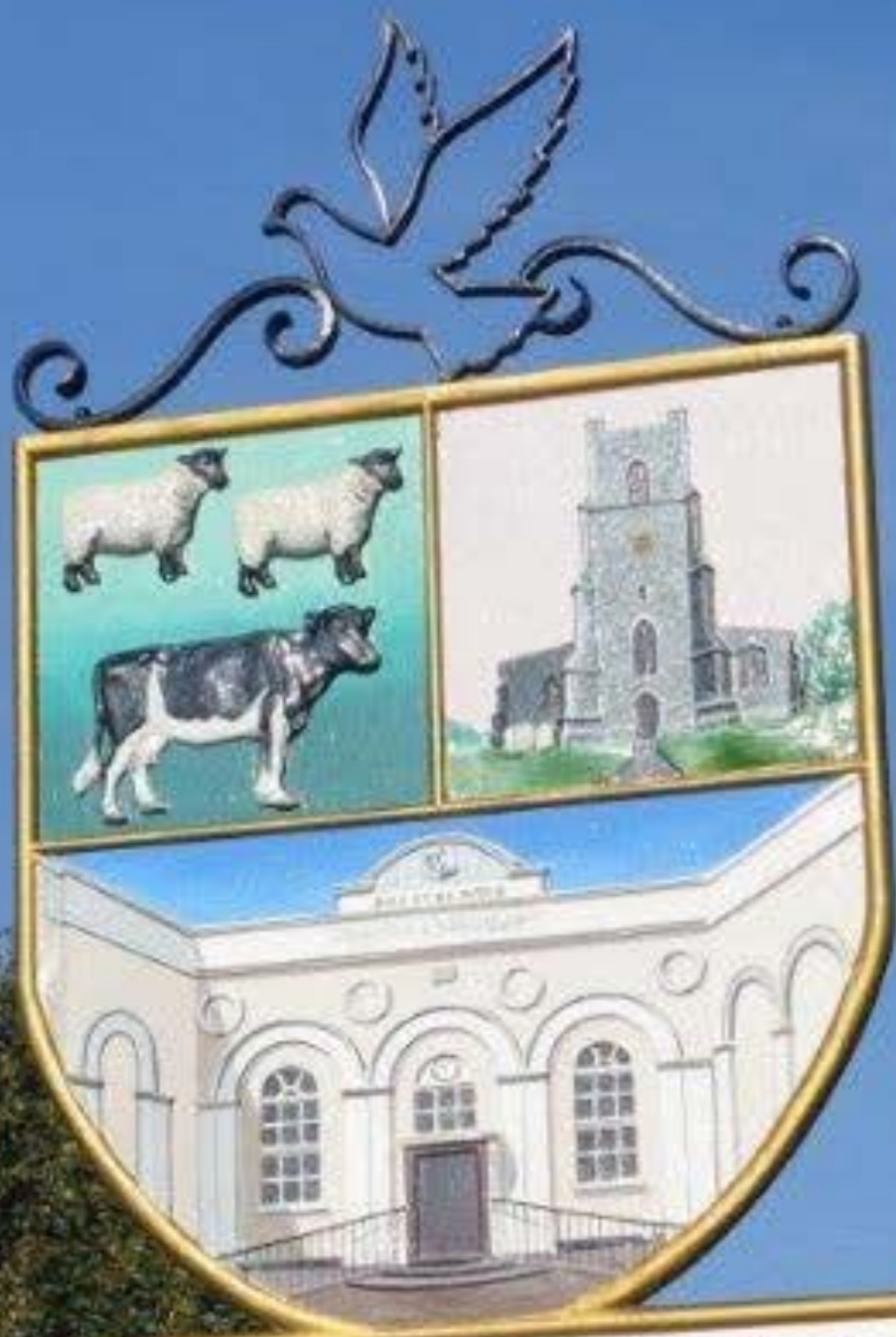


Figure 4: Saxmundham policies map, Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted 2020).



- 1.27 The Local Plan identifies an area of 66.6 hectares for development as the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood which is expected to provide an education led scheme of approximately 800 dwellings, community facilities and employment land. Significantly for this Neighbourhood Plan, not all of the land identified as the Garden Neighbourhood, presently falls within Saxmundham Parish (and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan area). A significant part of it stretches south and west into Benhall Parish. At the time of writing there is no anticipated Neighbourhood Plan for Benhall. The requirement from the District Council as set out in the Local Plan policy is that the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will be brought forward through a Master Plan approach informed by public engagement and multiple landowner collaboration to deliver a sustainable garden neighbourhood as an extension to the existing built-up area with a seamless relationship between the existing communities and the new development, with connections that can be easily navigated through a choice of walking, cycling and vehicular routes. Such a masterplan is expected to inform individual planning applications for parcels of land as they come forward over the plan period.
- 1.28 Whilst not all of the Garden Neighbourhood falls within Saxmundham parish, the Neighbourhood as a whole will form part of and relate to the main urban settlement of Saxmundham, including use by its residents of the town's commercial, public and community facilities and services. It will therefore have a significant impact upon Saxmundham in a wide variety of ways, so that the overall quality of the development, its conformity to the Local Plan policy and criteria, and how it connects to the town, are of great importance to Saxmundham.
- 1.29 In addition to the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, the Local Plan makes a further allocation which is SCLP12.30: Land North-East of Street Farm, Saxmundham. This allocation is for 2.18ha and approximately 40 dwellings northeast of Street Farm, to the east of the built-up area of Saxmundham. This has now largely been developed.
- 1.30 Due in particular, to the level of new housing growth proposed in the Local Plan, the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan is not allocating any further specific sites for development. Instead, its proposed policies will focus on managing the impacts of the proposed growth and ensuring that the community benefits are realised. A number of areas are however identified as offering future potential for a range of types of development that it is considered would benefit the parish (See **Opportunity Zones policies** section).

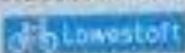




SAXMUNDHAM



Kelsale B1121





## 2. Saxmundham parish

- 2.1 Saxmundham is in a strategic location being roughly equidistant from Ipswich and Lowestoft, the two principal economic centres of East Suffolk district. It is served both by the A12 and the East Suffolk line of Greater Anglia railways. It also acts (largely due to its station) as a 'gateway' to the Suffolk Heritage Coast, the tourist resorts of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness and the international music venue at Snape Maltings.



Figure 5:  
Location of  
Saxmundham  
(source:  
Parish  
Online, with  
own  
annotations).



## Demographic profile of Saxmundham<sup>3</sup>

- 2.2 The population of Saxmundham parish/ward in 2020 is estimated by the Office of National Statistics (ONS)<sup>4</sup> at 4,723. This represents a 30 per cent increase over the 2011 census figure of 3,644. The town has grown by nearly one-third over a decade. The population is 54 per cent female, 46 per cent male. Data from the 2021 census will not be available until at least March 2022. As a result of the large growth of population over the decade, some of the 2011 data will be considerably out of date. The 2011 census data was summarised in the socio-economic profile report from Navigus consultancy for the Saxmundham NP Steering Group (2017)<sup>5</sup>. Further information can be accessed from the East Suffolk Saxmundham Town Profile which will be updated as Census 2021 information becomes available.<sup>6</sup>

## Population

- 2.3 The 2011 census showed that there were then 1,623 households in the parish, with an average size of 2.2 residents. If household size has not materially changed, then the town would have around 2,200 households today. The age profile for the 2020 population is shown in this chart (also from Suffolk Observatory). Saxmundham is broadly in line with the Suffolk age profile, though with a slightly higher percentage of under 15s, and lower percentages of 35 to 50 and of 60–70-year-olds. Compared to all-England data, Saxmundham has a lower percentage in the 15 to 50 age groups, and significantly higher proportion in the 70+ age groups.

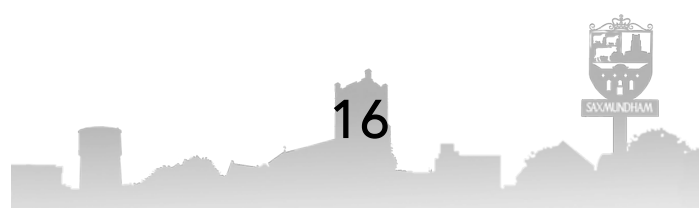
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<sup>3</sup> Data from the Suffolk Observatory website.

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan Socio-economic profile: <http://www.saxplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Navigus-Saxmundham-socio-economic-profile.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Town-and-village-profiles/Saxmundham-Town-Profile.pdf>



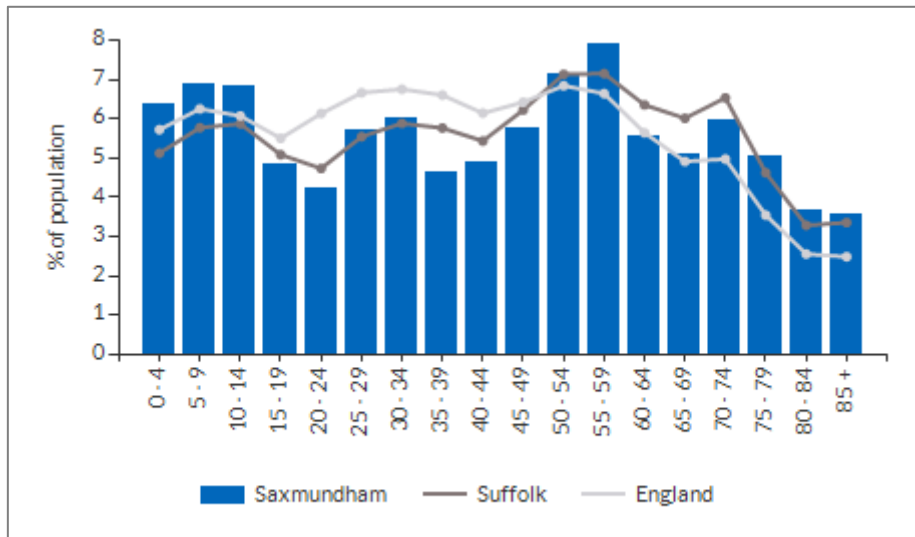


Figure 6: Age profile of Saxmundham, Suffolk and England 2020 (source: ONS).

## Housing

2.4 Looking at types of housing, in 2019 (Valuation Office Agency data, via Suffolk Observatory):

- Terraced houses formed 30 per cent of the stock (Suffolk 24 per cent).
- Detached houses 29 per cent (Suffolk, 23 per cent).
- Semi-detached houses 19.5 per cent (Suffolk 22 per cent).
- Flats 10.5 per cent (Suffolk 12.5 per cent).
- Bungalows 10 per cent (Suffolk 17 per cent).

2.5 As regards tenure, and with 2011 census data:

- Owned outright 35 per cent (Suffolk 36 per cent).
- Owned with mortgage/loan 30 per cent (Suffolk 31.5 per cent).
- Social rented 21 per cent (Suffolk 15 per cent).
  - of which rented from council 1.5 per cent (Suffolk 8 per cent).
- Private rented 10 per cent (Suffolk 14 per cent).

2.6 In 2011 Saxmundham was generally in line with the trend of occupancy ratings (for spare or too few bedrooms) in the district and county. 42 per cent of properties had an occupancy rating of +2 or more (i.e. at least two spare bedrooms based on the size of the household). 'Overcrowding' on this measure was low.

## Health

2.7 On health of the population, the 2011 census gives self-assessments of health quality, which were as follows for Saxmundham:

- Very good health 43 per cent (Suffolk 46 per cent).
- Good health 36 per cent (Suffolk 36 per cent).
- Fair health 15 per cent (Suffolk 14 per cent).
- Bad health 5 per cent (Suffolk 4 per cent).
- Very bad health 1 per cent (Suffolk 1 per cent).

2.8 The proportion in Saxmundham of those with 'day to day activities limited a lot' was 11 per cent, somewhat higher than for Suffolk and England (each 8 per cent). The percentage of those whose day-to-day activities were 'limited a little' was the same as for Suffolk (10 per cent).

## Education

2.9 Educational qualifications are generally below the national and Suffolk averages, which may in part be due to the age profile of the population. Data is from the 2011 census. Level 1 is e.g. for 1-4 GCSEs or O levels, Level 4 for university degree, and so on:

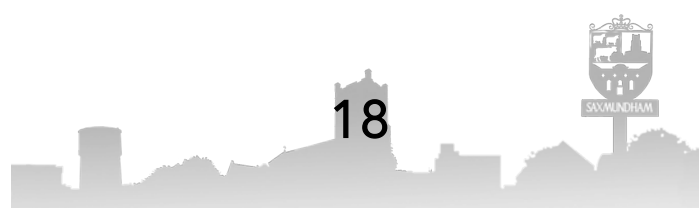
- Level 1 qualifications - 17 per cent (Suffolk 14 per cent).
- Level 2 – 15.5 per cent (Suffolk 16.5 per cent).
- Level 3 – 11 per cent (Suffolk 12 per cent).
- Level 4 – 23 per cent (Suffolk 23.5 per cent).
- No qualifications – 25 per cent (Suffolk 24 per cent).

2.10 There is also recent data for those 'Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)', for September 2020 to August 2021. While the monthly figures are unpredictable for Saxmundham, local statistics are higher than for Suffolk or England, showing around 5 per cent in recent months, compared to around 4 per cent for county and country.

## Employment

2.11 For employment and economic data, the 2011 census data is the most robust available. The 'economically active' were 66 per cent of the 16+ population. Those in full-time employment formed only 33 per cent of the population, compared to around 39 per cent for Suffolk and England as a whole. Those defined as retired formed 20 per cent in Saxmundham, compared to 16.5 per cent and 14 per cent for Suffolk and England. Of the nine occupation categories, the largest four for Saxmundham in 2011 were:

- Skilled trades (14 per cent).
- Professional occupations (13.1 per cent).
- Caring, leisure, other service occupations (12.5 per cent).



- Elementary occupation (12.4 per cent).

2.12 These are each higher than the respective Suffolk and England percentages, except for Professional occupations. The Navigus report (see above) includes this chart showing the industries in which Saxmundham residents were employed:

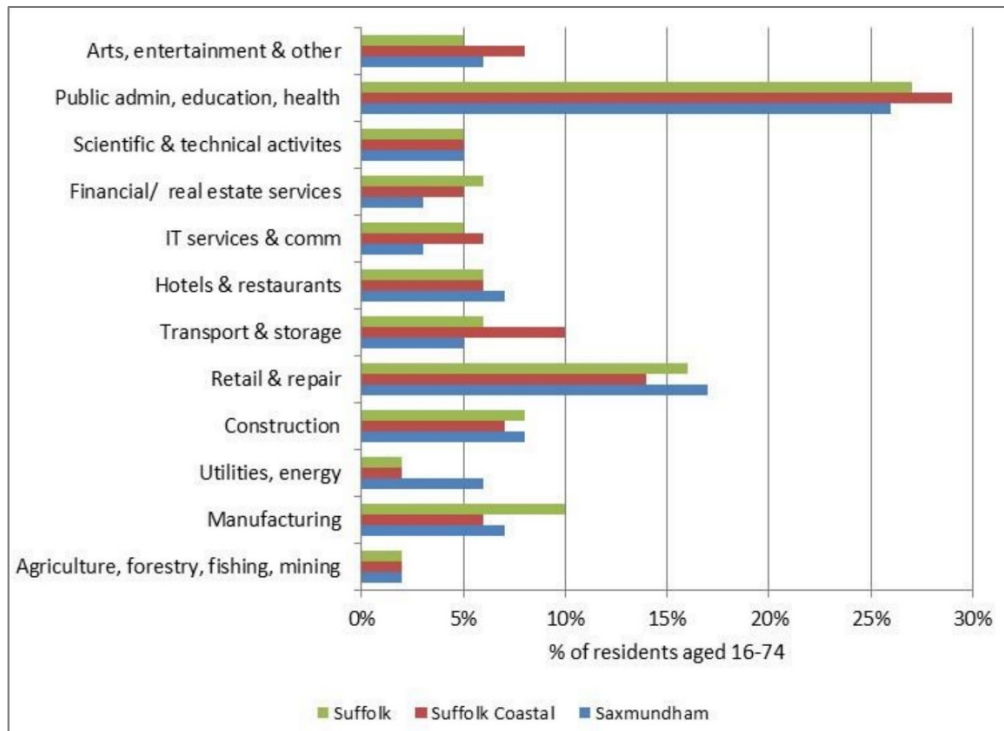


Figure 7: Types of industries in which Saxmundham, Suffolk Coastal and Suffolk residents were employed, 2011 (source: Navigus report).

2.13 Saxmundham has for some time been a net 'exporter' of commuters, with more travelling from Saxmundham to other places to work, than those coming into Saxmundham for work. In 2011, there were 1,805 out-commuters, and 886 in-commuters, giving a preponderance of out-commuting. The average distance to work was 19.1 km (approximately 12 miles).

## Deprivation levels

2.14 Saxmundham comprises two 'Lower Super Output Areas' (LSOAs) for which official data is gathered. Each forms part of the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. Saxmundham's LSOAs for the Index of Deprivation fall into deciles 5 and 6, which are in effect at or about the national average (decile 1 is the most deprived tenth of areas, and decile

10 the least deprived tenth). This data is for 2019, from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

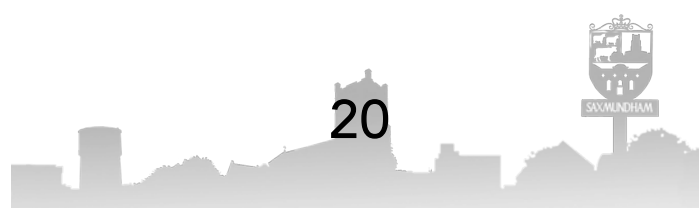
- 2.15 Within Saxmundham's 'score', however, one of the LSOAs falls in decile 3, near the more deprived end, for 'domains' relating to (a) low income, (b) employment, i.e. the proportion of the working-age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market, and (c) education, i.e. the lack of attainment and skills in the local population (looking at both young people and adults). Saxmundham has a much higher than average level of fuel poverty, according to government data. In 2018, 15 per cent of households were in fuel poverty, compared to around 10-11 per cent for Suffolk and England.

### **The local economy – jobs, businesses and shops**

- 2.16 A survey<sup>7</sup> conducted for East Suffolk Council in 2019 found that there were 79 businesses operating in the town centre of which 43 are retail, including 2 national chain supermarkets (Waitrose and Tesco). There are 12 food and drink establishments ranging from the Bell Hotel to restaurants, cafes, and takeaways. Seven businesses fall into the financial and professional services sector. There is a bank in the town centre. Although still relatively small, there is also a growing arts-connected sector, including the (not-for-profit) Art Station, plus galleries.
- 2.17 Within the rest of the town there are a number of small businesses, including garages, a care company, accountancy, hardware and engineering and carpet shops. There are numerous small businesses operating from residential properties. Just outside the plan area, Carlton Park Industrial Estate is home to a range of businesses providing employment and services for the town and wider area.
- 2.18 Despite its rural location and proximity to the coast, the town does not have a significant tourism economy. There is a single hotel, which advertises itself as a 'restaurant with rooms.' In Spring 2021, there were 11 properties in the town which are marketed as holiday lets, but there may well be more let on an informal basis. The Happy Days Trailer Park and Escape Room is situated on the Leiston Road and the Carlton Park Camping and Caravan site is just outside the town, although within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Farming, which used to be a bedrock of the town, now employs a mere 3 per cent.

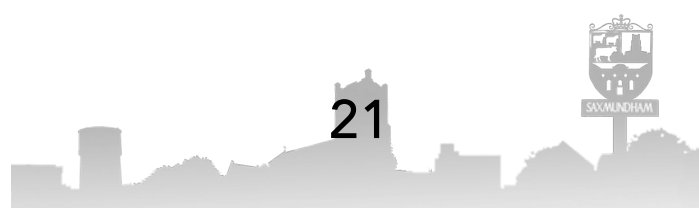
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<sup>7</sup> 'Saxmundham, Understanding the Heart of Our Town, Town Centre Baseline Report September 2019', <https://eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Saxmundham-Heart-of-Our-Town-Report-September-2019.pdf>



## Transport, movement and access

- 2.19 The town is by-passed by the A12. The former A12, now the B1121, runs through the town from north to south and intersects in the centre of the town with the B1119 to Framlingham (west) and Leiston (east), together they form the basis of the road network. The High Street section of the B1121 is very narrow at its northern point causing congestion at times and making servicing of the shops difficult. It is also particularly dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. The whole length of the High Street is characterised by narrow and uneven pavements. There is a traffic light-controlled junction with the Leiston Road (at Church Street). This junction is heavily used as it gives access to the two supermarkets on Church Street and at busy times of the day it can become congested. There is a zebra crossing facilitating pedestrian movement between the supermarkets and nearby shops.
- 2.20 The B1119 snakes its way through residential areas of the town and does not provide a clear east- west route, to the confusion of visitors to the town. In practice, much of the east/west-bound traffic uses the traffic-light controlled junction with the B1121 to use Chantry Road (very narrow at the junction) as the main route to or from the west. The railway station, although centrally situated in the town, has been described as 'geographically challenged'. The access routes, Station Approach, New Cut and Albion Street, are very narrow and involve tight turns making it difficult for larger vehicles and buses which need to serve the station.
- 2.21 Cycling is challenging in and into the centre of town mainly because of narrow roads, absence of earmarked routes, parked cars and heavy traffic at times. There are cycle racks at the supermarkets, the station and at the north end of the High Street. Cycling out of the centre towards the surroundings villages is dangerous because of fast traffic and a lack of dedicated cycle lanes or cycle tracks.
- 2.22 In general, the pavements in the older parts of the town are very narrow and walking two abreast is not possible, this is a particular problem in the centre of town where there is more pedestrian movement and where more space is needed for people to be able to interact socially. Those with mobility issues are also disadvantaged by the narrow and often uneven pavements.
- 2.23 Outside the town there are public footpaths and other Public Rights of Way, out into the countryside, these are mainly to the west and involve crossing the A12,





which is hazardous, given the speed of traffic. The parish also features in the East Suffolk Line Walks, a series of promoted long-distance trails between railway stations between Ipswich and Lowestoft.

- 2.24 The town has a central car park with long stay spaces and short stay free spaces and disabled spaces, it operates a pay and display charging system. The two supermarkets have car parks, both operate on the basis of free parking for the first 2 hours. There is free short stay on-street parking in the Market Place and at the north end of the High Street. The station has a pay and display car park for railway users only.

### **Social, cultural, community and leisure**

- 2.25 The largest meeting place and events venue in the town is the Market Hall which can seat 200. The Fromus Centre is currently being relocated to Street Farm Road and will become the main community centre. In addition, the Gannon Rooms, Sax'cess House and the two church halls are used for a variety of leisure and social groups. The Social Club is a meeting place for its members. Informal socialising takes place in the cafes and bars in the town.
- 2.26 The Museum and the library are important to the cultural life of the town. The Art Station, housed in the former telephone exchange, is developing as a significant local centre for the arts and creative industries. The annual (until Covid-19), SaxMusicFest is a vibrant community event.
- 2.27 The town has both a primary and secondary school. The primary school is close to capacity in terms of pupil numbers; the secondary school has spare capacity.
- 2.28 Medical services are provided by the GP surgery, a dentist, an optician, and the pharmacy. There are several residential homes for the elderly, a sheltered housing complex and mental health services.
- 2.29 Leisure activities are provided by a large number of clubs and societies. Outdoor sport takes place at Carlton Park. The Memorial Field includes a skate park and there are several children's playgrounds around the town.



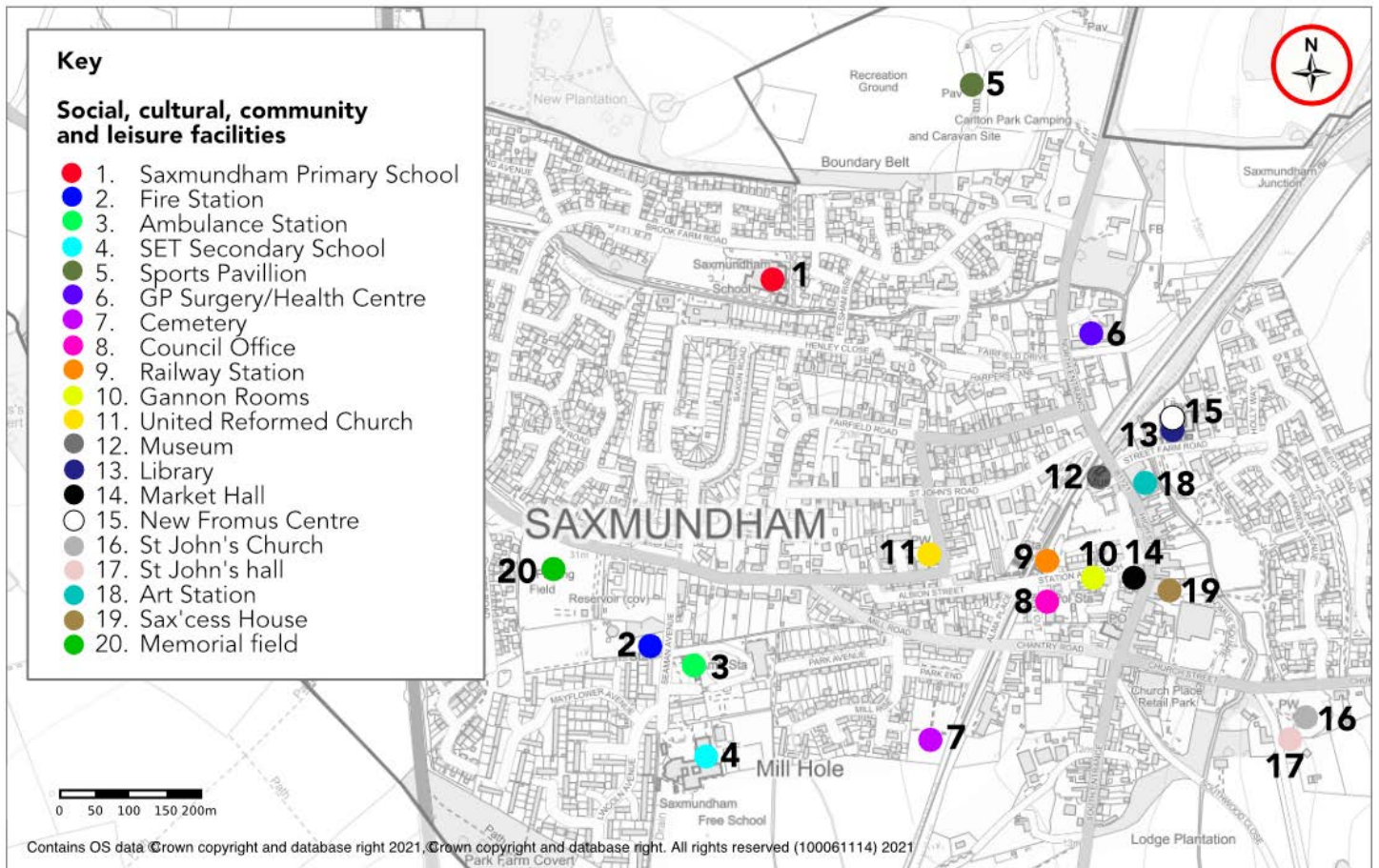


Figure 8: Location of social, cultural, community and leisure facilities (source: parish online, with own annotations).

## Built heritage

2.30 The town originally grew up to the west of the River Fromus and developed in a linear form along the turnpike, which was the main road from London to Lowestoft. The town was granted a market in 1272, signifying its importance as a market town serving the surrounding agricultural and rural area, a function which it still fulfils. The buildings in the centre of town are mainly 16th, 17th and 18th century. With the coming of the railway the town expanded westwards largely in the form of typical Victorian brick-built terraces. The construction of the by-pass in the 1980s has led to large scale residential development between the existing town and the by-pass. More recent development has extended the town eastwards to the skyline.

2.31 The approach to the town from the south along the B1121 is spacious, it is flanked by The Layers to the west and Hurts Hall Park to the east with views across to Hurts Hall itself and the church. The town sits below the rising land to the east. The approach from the north is wooded and enclosed and opens out on arrival at the built-up area. Approaching on the B1119 Leiston Road from the east, the town is not visible until the boundary when the road dips down towards the Fromus, and there are glimpses of the roofs of the town ahead. From the west the approach from the by-pass is unremarkable.

2.32 Saxmundham Conservation Area covers the historic heart of the town and includes most of the land between the River Fromus and the railway and extends north of the railway bridge to include Fairfield House and Langley Manor. Saxmundham boasts 50 listed buildings, most of which are in the town centre. St John's Church is listed grade II\* as is The Beeches at 5, North Entrance.



Figure 9: Saxmundham Conservation Area (source: East Suffolk Council, Saxmundham Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2016).



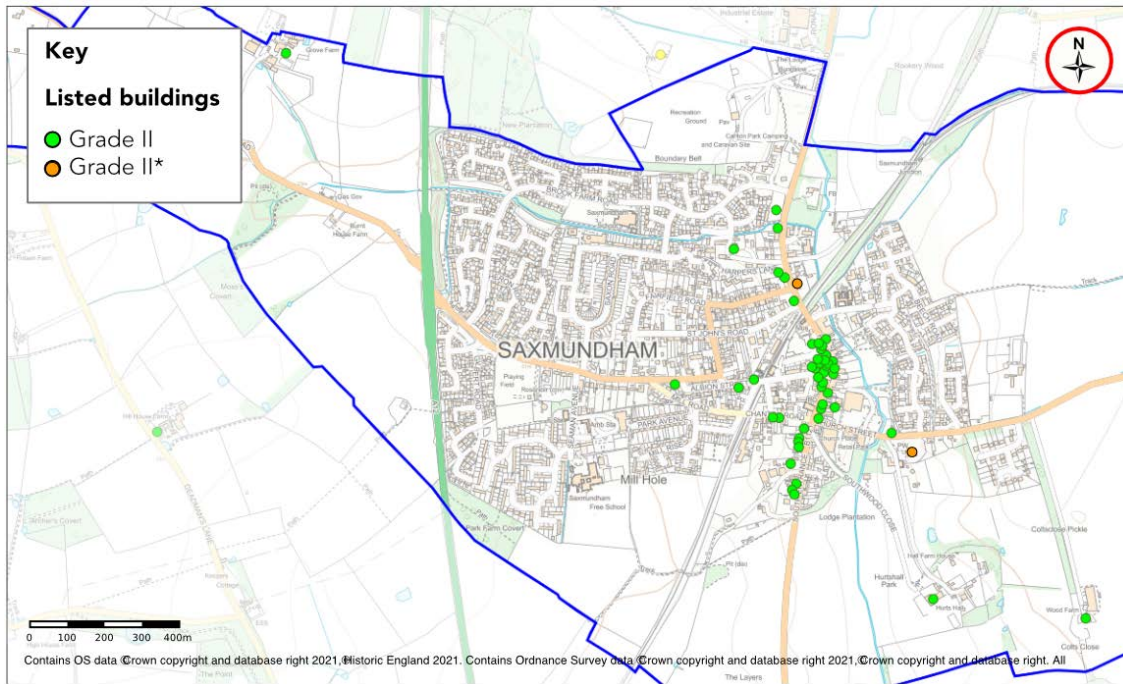


Figure 10 below: Listed buildings in Saxmundham parish (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

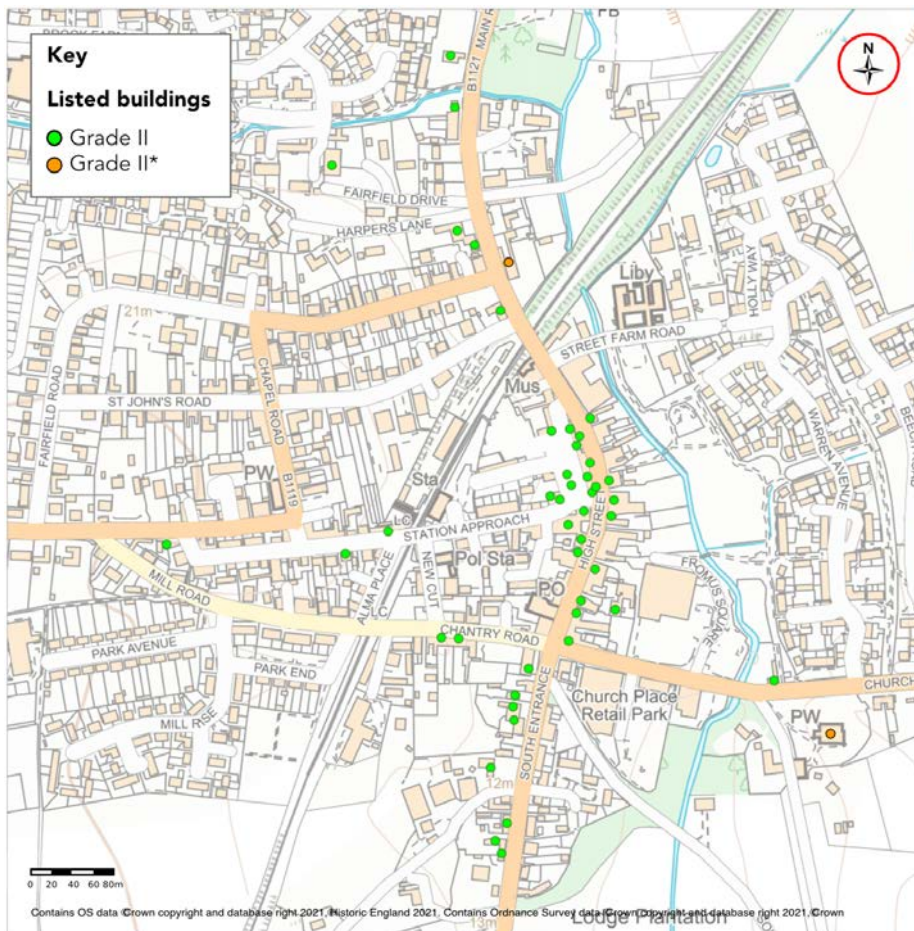


Figure 11: Listed buildings in Saxmundham town centre (source: Parish Online, with own annotations).

## Archaeology

2.33 Information on the archaeology within the parish is held within the County held Historic Environment Record (HER), which is maintained by the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS). Of particular note have been the archaeological investigations at Land East of Warren Hill, Saxmundham which revealed evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon settlement. The archaeological evidence recorded included a significant phase of Saxon activity which included a large rectangular post-built structure representing a hall, two additional post-built structures and nine sunken feature buildings. Furthermore, evidence for Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age occupation and further Iron age and Saxon settlement has also been identified in the vicinity. Further information on the archaeology of the parish can found on the Suffolk Heritage Explorer.<sup>1</sup>

## Natural environment and green spaces

2.34 There are no designated nature conservation sites within the parish, however the parish is in relatively close proximity to the extremely sensitive Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Saxmundham is situated in an area which has several road links to areas of open countryside and the coast. However, it only has a few open green spaces in the town centre and several smaller green spaces that create an open setting within the more recently developed housing estates. There are also footpath links to Carlton Park to the north which, although not wholly within the boundary of Saxmundham, is used by its residents. With the planned expansion of the town, it is necessary to safeguard existing green space and increase it for the benefit of the community.









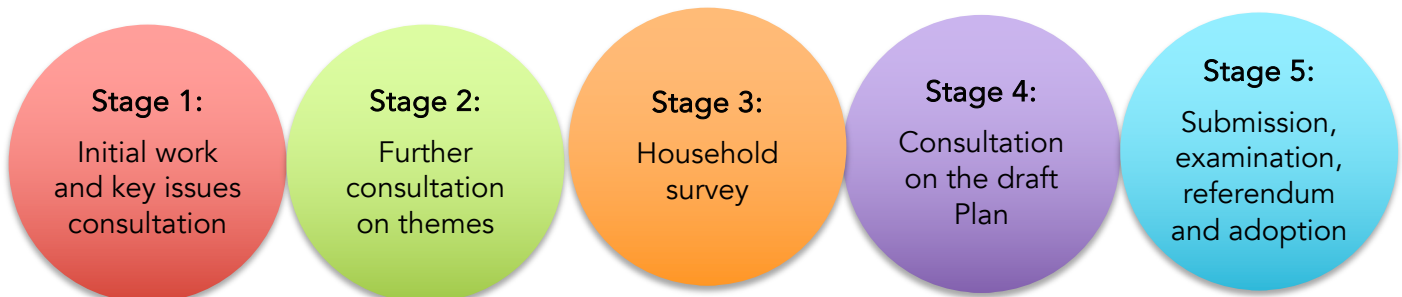
## 3. How the Plan was prepared

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- 3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been responsible for the preparation of the Plan and in the latter stages has been supported by a small team of independent consultants. The process began in August 2017 when the Neighbourhood Area was designated by East Suffolk Council.
- 3.2 The Plan has been commissioned by Saxmundham Town Council. Most of the funding for its production has come from a central government Locality grant and the Town Council's own funding.

### Community engagement and consultation

- 3.3 The Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan has been undertaken with community engagement and consultation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Steering Group had to be innovative in their approach, using Zoom meetings instead of face-to-face meetings during 2020 and 2021. However a considerable amount of public engagement was carried out between 2017 and early 2020 and therefore robust evidence was in place from which the draft Plan could be written. More details of all the consultation will be outlined in the Consultation Statement, accompanying the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to East Suffolk Council in 2022.
- 3.4 Below is a summary of each of the community engagement and consultation stages undertaken for the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.



### Stage 1: Initial work and key issues consultation (Autumn/Winter 2017 to April 2018)

- **Initial meeting** (4th September 2017): 30 local community representatives in Market Hall to discuss 20-year future of Saxmundham and what should go in Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Open meeting** (4th November 2017): Held at Saxmundham Free School, the Neighbourhood Plan process and purpose was explained, and attendees were then asked to work in small groups to answer the following questions: (a) What are the main issues and challenges facing Saxmundham, present and future? (b) What needs to be done to create the necessary changes? The session was written up and key issues were identified. The results of the meeting were published in April 2018.



Figure 12: Open meeting at Saxmundham Free School, 4th November 2017.

### Stage 2: Further consultation on themes (June, July and September 2018, and January 2019)

- **A series of themed public meetings** (June, July and September 2018): Held at the Market Hall, meetings to build upon the key issues already identified and seek feedback from the public – Housing (27th June 2018), general drop-in information morning (14th July 2018), Town Centre and Local Economy (19th

September 2018). The results of each meeting were written up and posted on the Neighbourhood Plan website.

- **Student engagement:** A visit to the Free School by Steering Group Members to receive a presentation from the students on the results of their survey filled in by 135 students. 'The Future of Saxmundham - A Students' Eye View'.



Figure 13: Themed public meeting at the Market Hall, Summer 2018.

### Stage 3: Household survey (June 2019)

- **Household survey (June 2019):** devised by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members. Approximately 2200 surveys were hand delivered to every household in the town, each with a pre-paid envelope. The form allowed for up to 4 members of the household to respond. 550 forms were completed by close to 1000 residents. This represented a return rate of approximately 25 per cent.

The survey contained a series of questions covering issues such as the location and type of new housing, new community facilities, environmental issues for new housing, town centre and high street, the market, the station area, transport and mobility. The survey also recorded where in the town those that responded to the survey lived, their gender, their employment status and general information about their household.

*Note: due to the Covid-19 pandemic the results of the survey were not reported back to the community until July 2020, when they were published on the website in full and also a useful summary of the key findings.*

#### Stage 4: Consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (Autumn 2021)

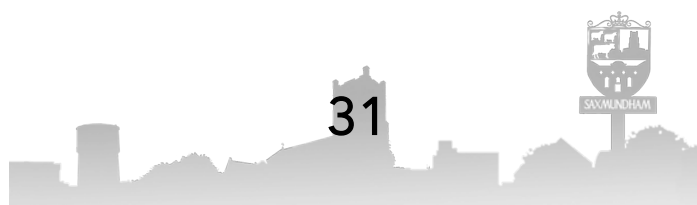
- **Pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Plan:** issued for consultation (5th November to 22nd December 2021). Sent to statutory agencies and available for residents to comment. 91 responses received from local residents and a wide variety of statutory consultees.
- **Consultation launched** with an exhibition on 5th November (6pm-9pm) and 6th November 2021 (10am-4pm) at the Market Hall.
- All documents were available on the Neighbourhood Plan website and in the Saxmundham Library and the Town Council offices.

#### Stage 5: Submission, examination, referendum and adoption (January 2022 to Summer 2023)

- **Modifications** have been made to the Neighbourhood Plan following pre-submission consultation.
- **Submission** of the Neighbourhood Plan to East Suffolk Council with supporting documents, Spring 2022.
- **Examination**, Autumn 2022 to February 2023.
- **Referendum and adoption**, June and July 2023.

### Summary of key Issues from consultation

- 3.5 The various stages of consultation resulted in a rich harvest of views and information. For full details please see website and the summaries of the individual consultation events [www.saxplan.org/news](http://www.saxplan.org/news). The points expressed in the consultation meetings have been relatively consistent and were reinforced by the household survey and the Regulation 14 responses. Full details are included in the Consultation Statement.



## Communication

- 3.6 Communicating with residents and businesses through the development of the Neighbourhood Plan was particularly important during the initial stages of forming an evidence base and the dedicated website contained regular news updates, [www.saxplan.org/news/](http://www.saxplan.org/news/). The website provided the opportunity to sign up to the newsletter and there were regular Facebook, twitter and Instagram postings. Full details of all the communication methods used is included in the Consultation Statement.





# EAST ANGLIAN

DAILY TIMES

EAST ANGLIAN  
DAILY TIMES

**S'MUNDHAM:  
TOWN'S  
FUTURE IN  
SPOTLIGHT**

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**WEDNESDAY**





## 4. Vision and objectives

### A Vision for Saxmundham (to 2036)

- 4.1 It is important that any Neighbourhood Plan contains a simple vision statement which sums up the community's aim for the future of the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan vision is an overarching statement describing what Saxmundham should be like at the end of the Plan period i.e. 2036. It has been developed with local people and has been refined and adapted through consultation. The result is a vision statement which captures the overarching spirit and ambition of the local community and the Neighbourhood Plan.

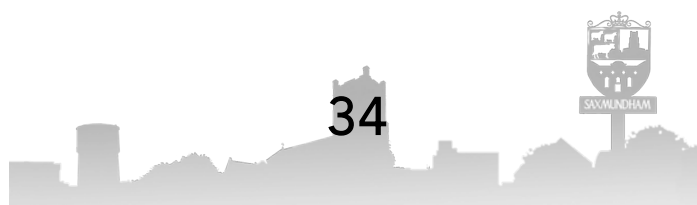
#### VISION 2036

##### **A thriving and prosperous town**

- which acts as a key service centre and transport hub for the town and surrounding area
- with the physical and community infrastructure to support growth
- with new and varied employment opportunities, including in new and growing sectors, which take advantage of the connections offered by rail and the A12
- with a vibrant and viable town centre and a bustling weekly market, with strong retail, cultural, energy and hospitality sectors
- and adequate and convenient parking provision.

##### **A safe and healthy town**

- with good social, cultural and leisure provision contributing to the health and wellbeing of all ages
- with well used green open spaces and an enhanced network of green infrastructure providing access to nature and improvements to biodiversity
- with ease of movement throughout the town
- with safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- with good quality housing which meets the current and future needs of residents
- enjoying enhanced medical and educational facilities, which support healthy lifestyles
- where services and employment choices are local.



### An attractive and distinctive town

- which is friendly and inclusive
- where new and existing development is successfully integrated forming a holistic and sustainable community
- which has a strong, wide-ranging cultural identity with well-equipped public venues and programmes of events and activities
- with a well maintained and valued historic town centre, enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

4.2 The vision underpins the objective and policies of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to throughout.

4.3 From the vision flow the different objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and from there, the policies. The diagram below outlines this relationship.

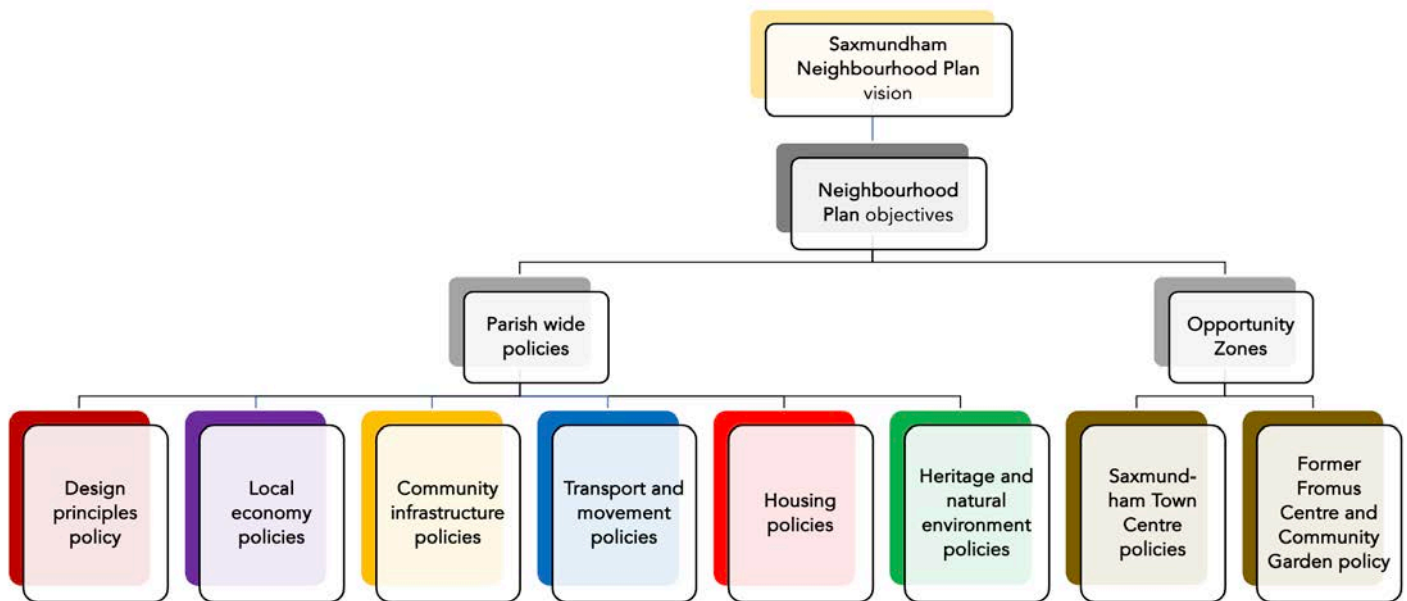


Figure 14: Structure of the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan.

4.4 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are broad statements of intent which are there to help deliver the vision and link to the issues that Saxmundham is seeking to address. They have been drafted using themes picked up at an early stage and have been refined through the community consultation exercises.

## Area wide Objectives

Objective 1: To promote a strong and diverse forward looking, local economy, building upon the town's advantages as a service centre market town with a strategic location.

Objective 2: To secure for the community of Saxmundham a full range of physical and community infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the town and its environs.

Objective 3: To improve transport and safe accessibility for the people of Saxmundham by foot, bicycle, mobility scooter and public or private transport, resulting in environmental and health benefits.

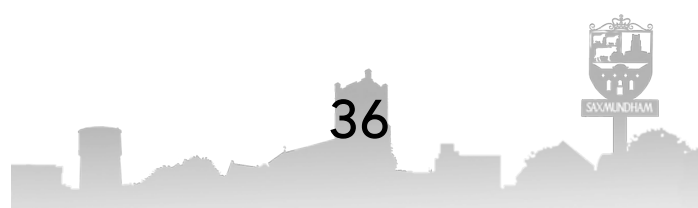
Objective 4: To successfully integrate - physically, environmentally, and socially - the new neighbourhood with the existing town and community of Saxmundham.

Objective 5: To promote the development of high quality, energy efficient housing to meet the needs of the people of Saxmundham.

Objective 6: To protect and enhance the conservation area, the town's heritage, green spaces, natural features and rural setting, and to address the challenges of climate change.

Opportunity Zone Objectives: Saxmundham town centre (including High Street, station area, Street Farm Road and Fromus Square)

Objective STC1: To create an attractive and welcoming town centre with space to gather and socialise, with a pedestrian friendly environment stretching from the station to Fromus Square and along the length of the High Street.



Objective STC2: To reduce the non-essential use of the High Street by motor vehicles and to prioritise pedestrian movement and safety in the centre, whilst improving and encouraging parking provision in accessible locations within walking distance of the town centre.

Objective STC3: To protect and enhance the historic core of the town as defined by the Conservation Area.

Objective STC4: To support the economic and environmental regeneration of the station area via a masterplan led approach, which encourages mixed-use development of underused and derelict land, and improves the attractiveness of Station Approach as a route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Opportunity Zone Objectives: The former Fromus Centre and Community Garden

Objective FFC1: To support a high-quality development for specialist and other housing purposes including community use, which safeguards the community garden, and offers improved pedestrian access to, and permeability within, the site.



## 5. Planning policies

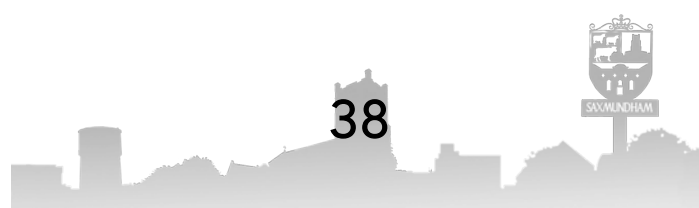
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### Introduction to policies

- 5.1 The vision and objectives have provided the framework to develop the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Each policy relates to a particular objective under the following five area wide themes: the local economy; community, social and recreation provision; transport and movement; housing and heritage; and the natural environment. In addition, there are zonal policies for the identified Opportunity Zones, for the town centre, station area, Street Farm Road, Fromus Square and the former Fromus Centre. The Opportunity Zones are not intended to be site specific allocations but indicative areas within which specific proposals and actions will be encouraged.
- 5.2 The Neighbourhood Plan is first and foremost a land-use document for planning purposes. All policies in the Plan have been derived from a series of consultation exercises, stakeholder engagement and desk research, which provide the justification and evidence base for their selection.
- 5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan policies follow the government's guidance. They exist to:
- Set out locally led requirements in advance for new development in the parish.
  - Inform and guide decisions on planning applications.
  - Ensure that the multitude of individual decisions add up to something coherent for the area as a whole<sup>8</sup>.
- 5.4 To aid interpretation for decision makers and planning applicants, each policy is accompanied by supporting text, which includes context for the theme, the views of residents, guidelines and reference to strategic plans. This is set out before each of the policies.

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<sup>8</sup> Tony Burton, Writing Planning Policies, Locality.





## Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan policies

### Parish wide: **Design principles**

SAX1: General design principles

### Parish wide: **Local economy**

SAX2: Expansion of existing businesses

SAX3: New businesses

### Parish wide: **Community infrastructure**

SAX4: New community facilities

### Parish wide: **Transport and movement**

SAX5: Improving connectivity

SAX6: Public rights of way

SAX7: Parking provision

### Parish wide: **Housing**

SAX8: Windfall and Infill development

SAX9: Tenure blind Housing Development

### Parish wide: **Heritage and natural environment**

SAX10: Historic town centre and Conservation Area

SAX11: Non-designated Heritage Assets

SAX12: Gateways, views and landscape setting of Saxmundham

SAX13: Protection and enhancement of natural assets

SAX14: Community gardens and allotments

SAX15: Protection of existing Local Green Spaces

### Opportunity Zone: **Saxmundham town centre**

SAXTC1: Town centre overarching strategy

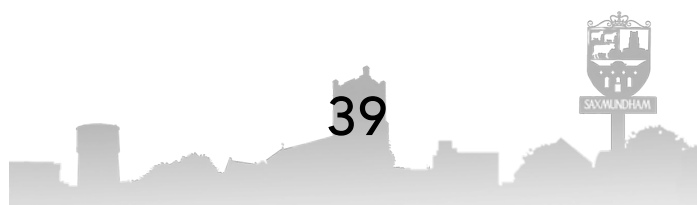
SAXSA1: Station area

SAXSFR1 Development and environmental enhancement opportunities at Street Farm Road

SAXFS1: Fromus Square

### Opportunity Zone: **Former Fromus Centre and Community Garden**

SAXFC1: Former Fromus Centre site and Community Garden



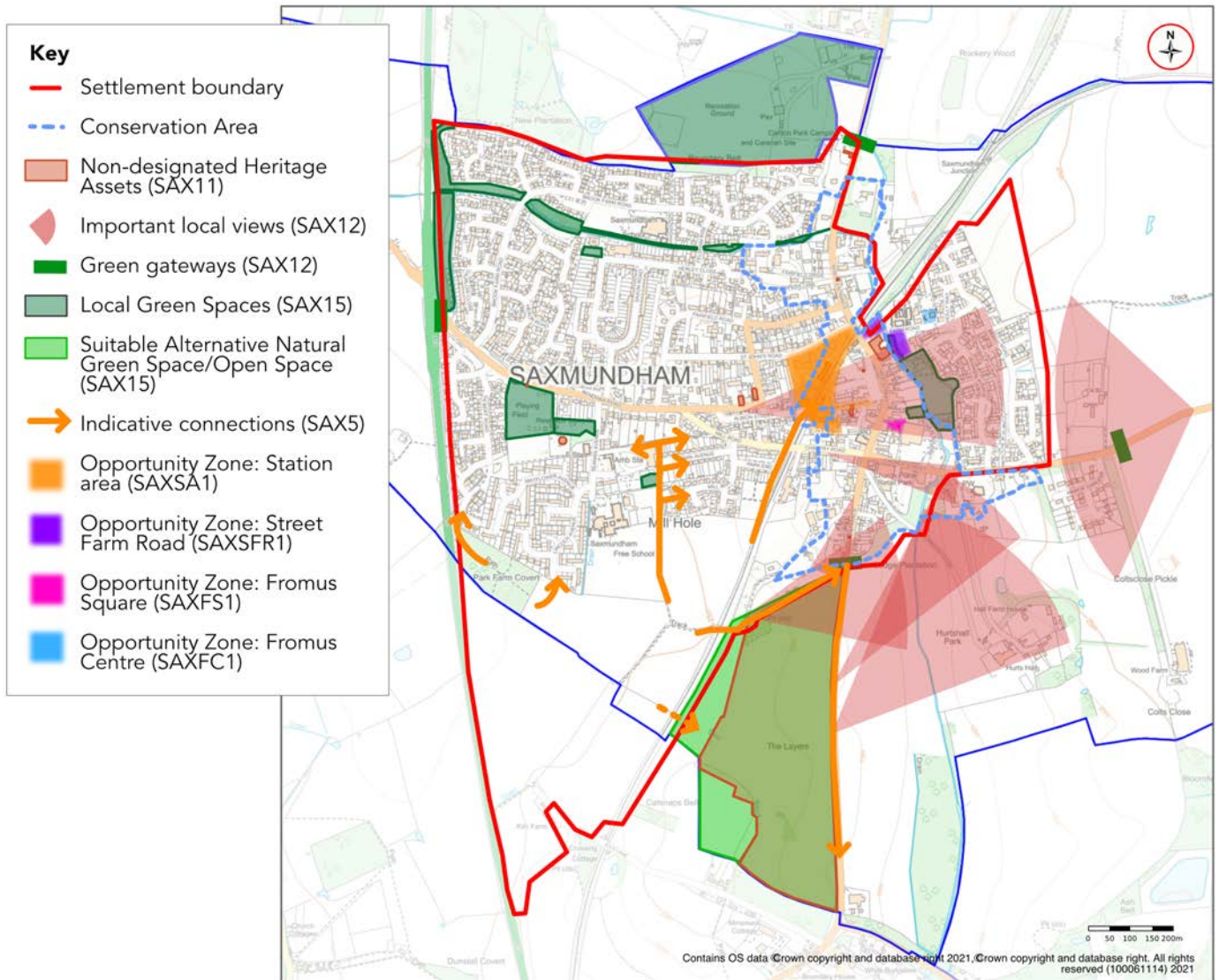


Figure 15: Composite policies map (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Please refer to individual policy maps for more detail.



## 6. Parish wide: Design principles

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### High quality design

- 6.1 Among the key determinants of whether any new development, irrespective of scale or use, is successful is how well it is considered to integrate with its surroundings. Matters such as design, materials, form and massing, the impact on local character, layout and scale are the most common issues that will cause the local community concerns about any proposed new development.
- 6.2 If a community believes that it has been involved in and been able to influence the design of a development at an early stage, the higher the likelihood that the development will be considered to be acceptable.
- 6.3 Whilst to an extent design and impact on local character are subjective judgments, these can be influenced by breaking design elements down into component parts and attempting to address them. Whether a proposed new development is acceptable and appropriate and relates well to its surroundings, is one of the most common judgments to be made, yet there is often very little evidence or guidance to assist local people (or decision makers) in making that judgement.
- 6.4 A key purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is not only to help influence the designers and proposers of development at an early stage of formulating their proposals, but also to help promote an understanding of what elements make up the character of the area and what constitutes good design that respects local character.
- 6.5 Government guidance places considerable emphasis on achieving well-designed places and this has been reinforced in the most recent revision of the

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021. Paragraph 126 of the NPPF describes it as fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work, and helps make development proposals acceptable to communities. Effective engagement between applicants, communities and local planning authorities is essential.

- 6.6 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF states 'Design policies should be developed with local communities so that they reflect local aspirations and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics.' Neighbourhood Plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and how they should be reflected in development.
- 6.7 In addition, the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should ensure that visual tools such as design codes and guides are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences. They should provide a framework for creating high-quality places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design to inform development proposals. It also makes clear that the level of detail and degree of prescription within design codes and guides should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.
- 6.8 Design coding is one tool available to local planning authorities, communities, and developers to define and deliver design quality, in addition to design guides, planning briefs, heritage characterisation studies, standards and masterplans as set out in the NPPF and planning practice guidance. A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area.
- 6.9 The Government is heavily advocating the use of design codes and expects all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code and which reflect local character and design preferences.
- 6.10 The Town Council commissioned consultants AECOM to produce Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area. This work was completed in July 2021 and is contained in **Appendix E** of this Neighbourhood Plan. The Design Code reflected a detailed analysis of the local character of





the parish, developed some strategic design guidelines and identified a palette of materials which should influence the design of future development. The Code's principles have informed and are reflected in **Policy SAX1**, and its more detailed guidance should be drawn upon as appropriate in the design of future development, in the Neighbourhood Plan area. In addition, the report provided specific guidance to be used by the Town Council when assessing and responding to consultation in future planning applications for new development.



Figure 16: Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan area. (Appendix E).

- 6.11 The Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey conducted in June 2019 asked residents for their views on which design elements they considered to be important in future developments. 889 people responded to this question and 2107 preferences were expressed. The most supported concepts were 'highly energy efficient' (79 per cent of respondents) and 'landscaping of high visual and ecological quality' (57 per cent). In relation to house building style, 43 per cent express support for 'Traditional Suffolk', 18 per cent for 'Innovative design' and some support also for 'dementia friendly', 12 per cent. Further information on dementia friendly design can be found in the Royal Town Planning Institute Guide.<sup>9</sup>
- 6.12 Given the increasing importance that both local people and national Government are placing on design, it is considered that achieving well designed places and promoting high quality design should also be fundamental to this Neighbourhood Plan and go to its heart. The Plan therefore sets out its key design principles at the beginning of the policies

<sup>9</sup> RTPi | Dementia and Town Planning: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/practice/2020/september/dementia-and-town-planning/>

section, recognising that good design should be a theme that flows throughout the plan, and sets the tone for other policies to follow in terms of its importance for all new development of any scale, form or use. **Policy SAX1** below applies throughout the Neighbourhood Area.

6.13 Suffolk County Council has also produced a range of guidance which may be helpful to prospective applicants when designing their proposals, These include:

- The Suffolk Design Streets Guide.
- Suffolk Guidance for Parking.
- The Suffolk Flood Risk Management Strategy, particularly Appendix A.

6.14 The criteria in the policy below are informed by the **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area (July 2021)**. It is important that new development is not viewed in isolation and consideration of design and layout should be informed by the wider context, considering not only the buildings immediately adjacent but also the townscape and landscape of the wider locality all of which will contribute to the character of the area. The pattern of streets, spaces, building styles and types, materials and the natural environment will all help to shape the character and identity of a development, of any scale. Proposals for new development should take full account of the local context and innovative, eco- friendly and contemporary designs that add interest and embody the general 'sense of place' are encouraged.





POLICY

**SAX1: General design principles**

The design of all new development in Saxmundham should reflect the town's local distinctiveness and character and seek to enhance its quality.

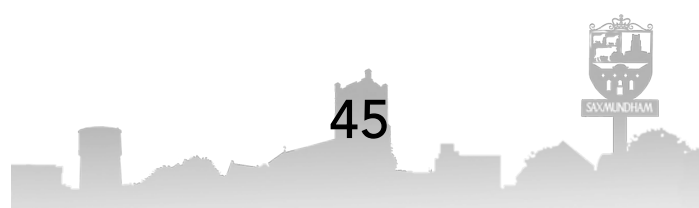
Proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Design Guidelines for the Neighbourhood Plan area as set out in **Appendix E**.

Proposals that incorporate eco-friendly, innovative or contemporary designs whilst respecting the architectural heritage and character of the area will be supported

Proposals for new development should accord with the following criteria, as appropriate:

- a. Respect the existing settlement pattern in order to preserve its character.
- b. Retain existing connections and ensure new connections integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks, as well as natural features such as tree groups, hedgerows, and public rights of way.
- c. Reinforce the established character of streets, greens, and spaces, where this provides a positive impact.
- d. Harmonise and enhance the existing settlement in terms of physical form and architecture.
- e. Retain existing natural and historic features within the new development.
- f. Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing.
- g. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details.
- h. Incorporate necessary services and drainage without causing harm to retained features.
- i. Ensure all component elements of a development, e.g., buildings, landscapes and access routes, parking, open space, are well related to each other.
- j. Enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address health and well-being needs

Consideration should be given to the specific guidance contained in the policies for the relevant Opportunity Zones. See also **Policy SAX10** which relate to the Conservation Area.





## 7. Parish wide: Local economy

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**Objective 1: To promote a strong and diverse local economy, building upon the town's advantages as a service centre market town with a strategic location.**

### Employment in Saxmundham

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can expand and invest and adapt. Weight should be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity taking into account local business needs. In rural areas planning policies should enable the sustainable growth of all types of business both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings. The use of previously developed land and sites that are well related physically to existing settlement should be encouraged.
- 7.2 The Adopted Local Plan (Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020) indicates that employment opportunities are limited in the town and that there is a high level of net out commuting for employment. A range of employment sites exist in close proximity to Saxmundham, but a significant proportion of residents travel for employment to locations such as Ipswich, Martlesham, Leiston and Lowestoft. Policy SCLP12.28 of the Local Plan which contains the Strategy for the town also refers to the need to diversify and expand employment opportunities.
- 7.3 The creation of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood will provide new opportunities for employment in the area; however it is acknowledged

that the area provisionally identified for employment in the Local Plan is west of the A12 and lies outside the Neighbourhood Area for Saxmundham.

- 7.4 The largest identified employment site is located just outside the Neighbourhood Area to the north of the town in the parish of Kelsale-cum-Carlton. This may be the reason that employment as an issue did not feature particularly strongly in the results of the Household Survey, where most comments relating to jobs and business tended to refer to the town centre. However, a strong theme was the need to do more for younger people in the town both in terms of employment and training opportunities but also social and recreational provision. The area known as the Carlton Industrial Estate (SCLP12:36) is expanding with planning consents already permitted or recently approved for an additional 97,000 square feet/ 9012 square metres which equals approximately 150-160 jobs for the local area. The site consists of a range of uses and sizes. Given the connectivity of the site with access to and from Saxmundham this development is expected to make a positive impact on employment in Saxmundham.
- 7.5 The Neighbourhood Plan also does not propose to make any traditional additional allocations for employment or business uses but where proposals for such uses as identified above come forward, they would be encouraged to existing areas insofar as room is available. The locational focus for new employment generation for the Neighbourhood Plan will be the existing built-up area of the town, the town centre and specific locations where there are areas of unused or underused land that lend themselves to commercial and mixed developments such as the station area or Street Farm Road (see also the **Opportunity Zones policies**).
- 7.6 In addition the Neighbourhood Plan will support the appropriate expansion of existing businesses, particularly where such proposals will strengthen the economy of the town either by retaining or increasing the number of jobs, where they increase the overall vitality and viability of the town and where they provide sustainable jobs and skills for younger people.



POLICY	<p><b>SAX2: Expansion of existing businesses</b></p> <p>Proposals for the expansion or intensification of existing businesses (including otherwise acceptable changes of use) especially those which retain or increase the number of jobs, and provide skills development particularly those for young people will be permitted where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They strengthen the economy of the town, particularly the town centre and station area, and</li> <li>b. They do not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the area or the amenity of local residents, for example, through their design, impact upon amenity or highway safety issues caused by traffic generated.</li> </ul>
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## New business

- 7.7 The Local Plan policies provide a clear steer on the need to diversify and expand the existing employment base in the town for the benefit of its existing young people but also the resident population more generally.
- 7.8 Consideration has been given to the potential for attracting new sectors of business e.g. the energy sector which already has a presence in the area thus broadening the employment base of the town and to building on those industries that already have a presence in the town but would benefit the town by increasing their impact (e.g. the growing arts/digital sector or specialist retail).
- 7.9 Successive revisions to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)<sup>10</sup> during 2019 and 2020, have meant that planning permission is no longer required to move from certain uses to others, such as employment uses to retail, or offices to houses, thereby resulting in a more limited scope for this area of planning policy.
- 7.10 The desire still exists to ensure that settlements that act as a focus for their surrounding rural hinterland and serve a key role in meeting the needs of its residents can still provide the range and depth of employment, cultural and retail opportunities that will enable them to continue to be attractive places to live and work and to thrive economically into the future. Therefore the

<sup>10</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1987/764/contents/made>.

Neighbourhood Plan contains the following policies aimed at protecting and retaining existing employment uses insofar as is possible within the framework provided by the Use Classes Order, but also those that enable mixed uses including employment, commercial and housing to come forward on key sites in order to safeguard and diversify the business base of the town and promote opportunities for regeneration and renewal. Support is given for a range of potential employment sectors including those relating to retail, hospitality and creative and cultural industries such as those already resident at The Arts Station.

POLICY

**SAX3: New businesses**

Development proposals which enable the establishment and growth of new businesses including small and medium sized enterprises particularly those within the following types, will be supported:

- a. Retail and hospitality.
- b. Traditional service industries.
- c. The energy sector (renewable energy, green energy, and carbon neutral energy) and those businesses associated with supporting those sectors.
- d. Creative and cultural industries including those that combine modern technology and the arts.
- e. Digital industries.
- f. Health, social care, and community support services.<sup>11</sup>

Wherever possible, development proposals for business or mixed uses within the parish should be located in the town centre, the station area, or Street Farm Road (see **Opportunity Zone policies**).

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix D: Glossary for more specific definitions of terms used in criteria a to f.





## 8. Parish wide: Community Infrastructure

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**Objective 2:** To secure for the community of Saxmundham a full range of physical and community infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the town and its environs.

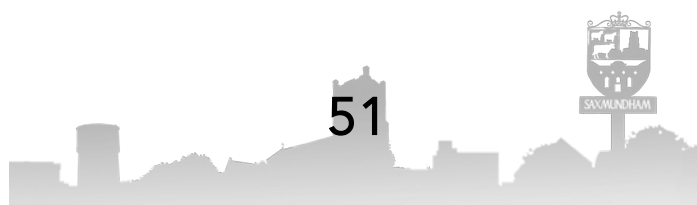
### Vibrant, healthy and integrated communities

- 8.1 The overarching social objective of the planning system as set out in the NPPF is to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support the health, social and cultural well-being of communities.
- 8.2 In order to achieve this, planning of new development must go hand in hand with planning for the community services and facilities that need to be in place to support development and meet the needs of residents. This includes green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, footways and cycleways, public transport, education, library provision, allotments, fire hydrant provision, health services and a range of cultural facilities. These together are often described as 'community infrastructure'. Housing and other development will be expected to contribute towards improving local services and infrastructure through either the payment of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); planning



obligations (via a Section 106 agreement/Section 278 agreement); or use of a planning condition.

- 8.3 The NPPF requires that the levels and types of infrastructure required to support growth should be set out clearly in strategic policies e.g., the Local Plan.
- 8.4 Presently Saxmundham is relatively well served by community infrastructure although there are some elements of fragility and gaps in provision. This infrastructure is also extensively used by the surrounding parishes. There are primary and secondary schools, a doctors' surgery, library, dentist, vets, supermarkets, local shops, a bank, garage, restaurants, takeaway restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs, community meeting venues, places of worship, day care facilities, play areas, and car parks. Saxmundham does not, on the other hand, benefit from an indoor sports centre, allotments, cinema etc. so its social infrastructure is more limited than most other towns in the area. However, as the population of the parish increases over the Neighbourhood Plan period, a number of these current services are either at or nearing capacity and will therefore require consideration as to how they will continue to serve the community without a significant decrease in the quality of service they provide. Therefore, with all the proposed growth in the Garden Neighbourhood and the allocation north-east of Street Farm, there will be a need for new, improved, or reconfigured facilities, in order to at least maintain the quality of life for the whole community.
- 8.5 As well as giving consideration to the potential for new community facilities it is important that the existing valued facilities in the town which have served the community over time continue to perform their relevant community function. Such facilities should be safeguarded and protected from development proposals that would lead to their loss or would adversely affect their ability to function as community facilities.
- 8.6 With the majority of future growth in Saxmundham taking place within the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, some consideration to future community infrastructure requirements has been given at a strategic level. Policy SCLP12.29 of the Adopted Local Plan refers to the Garden Neighbourhood development as being 'an education led development' and sets out some specific requirements for that development such as:
- A new primary school,
  - Early years provision,



- A community hub (to comprise a range of services and facilities in an accessible location),
- Green infrastructure provision (including informal and formal open space, walks etc.),
- A significant area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to act as mitigation for impacts on European Protected Sites,
- Formal recreation, for all ages including play space,
- Significant pedestrian and cycle connections.

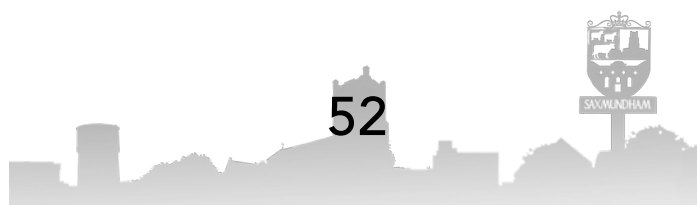
8.7 In addition the Local Plan policy acknowledges that there will be a need for off-site infrastructure contribution including towards health provision, police facilities, libraries and utility network upgrades, which will be met by developer contributions.

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

8.8 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, to help deliver in the infrastructure required to support the development of an area. The CIL is levied on practically all new development within a given area. East Suffolk Council has introduced CIL across its administrative area and has an adopted CIL Charging Schedule which sets out the charges levied on various forms of development. East Suffolk is responsible for levying and collecting the CIL payable and they retain 5% of the overall CIL collected in the District to administer the scheme.

8.9 **Neighbourhood CIL** is the percentage of the CIL that is payable to the parish or neighbourhood within which eligible development takes place. At present Saxmundham Town Council receives 15 per cent of the CIL levied on development in its area but this will rise to 25 per cent once the Neighbourhood Plan is 'made'. Saxmundham Town Council regularly reviews its priorities for spending the Neighbourhood CIL and consults with the community accordingly. In January 2022, after consultation, the following were agreed by the Town Council for Neighbourhood CIL expenditure on community infrastructure from the current CIL fund of £79,000.

- Purpose 1: Improving access from new housing areas to the town centre for pedestrian and cyclists.
- Purpose 2: Enhancing children and young people's recreational facilities.
- Purpose 3: A more attractive successful town centre to meet the needs of the growing population.



- Purpose 4: Improving community, entertainment, and cultural facilities in the town.
- Purpose 5: Improving facilities for non-fossil fuel modes.
- Purpose 6: Developing new or improving existing open or green spaces for the community.
- Purpose 7: Developing sports and recreational facilities.

Specific projects are identified and developed from this set of purposes.

8.10 **District CIL** is the remaining percentage of CIL that goes into the District Infrastructure fund which is pooled and allocated to infrastructure projects that make the development in the area sustainable, e.g. extensions to schools and health. This may be spent on infrastructure projects identified in the Local Plan's Infrastructure Delivery Framework, Neighbourhood Plans or through bids received.

8.11 Community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process identified the following priorities in respect of community facilities:

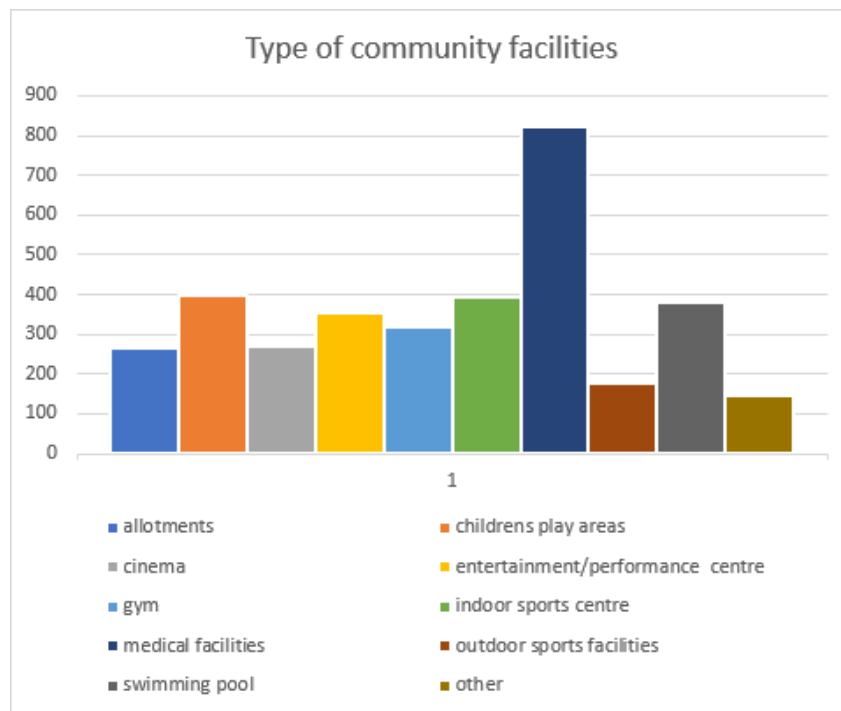


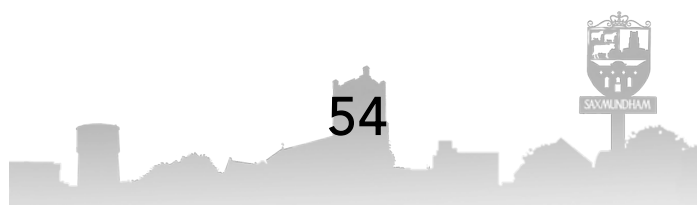
Figure 17: Community facilities identified as important through community consultation.

8.12 The top priority was medical facilities followed by the provision of an indoor sports facility which could also include outdoor sports provision, a gym and a

swimming pool which were also identified as priorities for the community. The cost of provision of such facilities is too great to be provided through Neighbourhood CIL alone and therefore the use of other funding streams such as the District Level (pooled CIL contributions) will be required. Given that these facilities have been clearly and consistently identified as priorities by the community, the Town Council is extremely keen to ensure their delivery. The Town Council classes these as 'Essential Infrastructure' for the purposes of the District Council's CIL spending strategy. The Town Council will work closely in partnership with other bodies such as the District Council, County Council and the private sector, as appropriate to enable the delivery of these facilities.

## Community Facilities

- 8.13 A range of community facilities are highlighted in the Local Plan policy as needing to be delivered to support the growth of the Garden Neighbourhood. The Local Plan provides an indicative draft masterplan layout. The proposed community hub (or local centre) is shown within Benhall parish but close to the parish boundary. It should however relate well to and be easily accessible from the rest of the entire development if it is to function successfully as a hub. The local centre could be located next to the main entrance to the site welcoming visitors and residents. It will need to offer a variety of shops, open spaces and visitor's parking attracting people from the new and existing community as well as from the employment area. In such a location it can be easily seen from the main road (A12) also attracting drivers passing by. It would also seem to offer advantages for the local hub/centre to be located close to the schools.
- 8.14 Community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process revealed that indoor sports provision was the key priority for a facility thought currently to be lacking in the town and therefore the development of the Garden Neighbourhood should consider opportunities to provide such facilities where they can easily serve the new and existing communities. (See **Policy SAX4** below).
- 8.15 **Policy SAX4** below seeks to reflect the expressed preferences of the community. It expresses support for proposals that would lead to the direct provision of new or improved community facilities and sets out the priorities for those facilities, including whether they are essential or desirable for the purposes of the District's CIL funding strategy. whilst ensuring that such proposals are acceptable in terms of their impact upon amenity, the environment and in highways terms. The policy is in the form of an area wide policy in order to reflect the needs for new infrastructure generated by the





incremental growth of the town and other allocations outside (as well as due to) the Garden Neighbourhood.

POLICY

**SAX4: New community facilities**

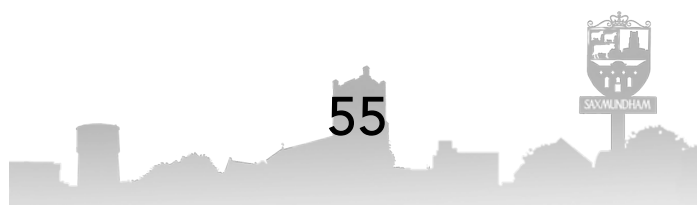
Development proposals for new or improved community facilities will be supported. This includes:

- i. Fully functioning indoor sport and leisure provision within the town
- ii. A fuller range of local health services, for example, new or expanded health and social care facilities.
- iii. Entertainment and cultural facilities.
- iv. Improved social provision, particularly for the young and the socially isolated.

Proposals should:

- a. Be accessible by high quality walking and cycling links.
- b. Avoid or mitigate significant impacts on the amenity of surrounding residents.
- c. Enhance the local natural environment and avoid or mitigate significant detrimental impacts upon the local natural environment.
- d. Avoid severe impact to highway function or safety and mitigate any significant impacts to highway function or safety.

(See also **Policy SAX14** relating to community gardens and allotments).





## 9. Parish wide: Transport and movement

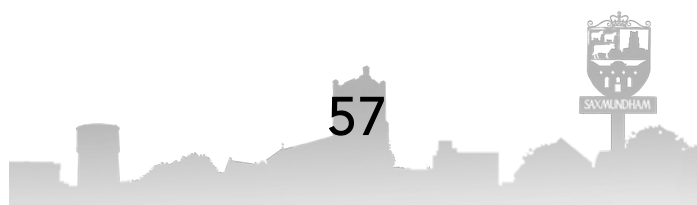
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### Strategic transport context

- 9.1 Saxmundham's strategic links are provided by the A12 to the west which provides road access to the town and much of the parish. The town has a railway station which provides good rail access on the East Suffolk Railway line providing passenger services to Ipswich and Lowestoft, from which onward connections can be made.
- 9.2 From the south, Saxmundham is primarily accessed by the B1121 'South Entrance' which provides an historic entrance to the town centre. It is at this end of the town that the proposed Garden Neighbourhood will be located. Vehicular access to the Garden Neighbourhood is expected to be from the west via the A12, and the creation of a new access point onto the existing road network. This access point will also serve the proposed employment area to be located west of the A12.
- 9.3 The household survey results revealed that 45 per cent of respondents used the train service and that they were largely satisfied with the service. A much lower percentage 16 per cent of respondents said they used the bus service and 56 per cent were dissatisfied with the service provided.
- 9.4 Rail users were also asked what improvements were required to the local train service. From 400 respondents, 147 identified the facilities at the train station itself as needing improvement and this was the most popular issue raised. Respondents were also asked about specific improvements with physical

improvements to the building itself, better catering facilities and improved waiting/seating area being the highest priorities.

- 9.5 Accessibility within the town itself for pedestrians and cyclists was also examined by the household survey with results revealing support for cycle routes, some pedestrianisation of the High Street, wider pavements and footpaths and cycle parking and storage.
- 9.6 As with many market towns, Saxmundham does have its share of traffic issues. Congestion in the town centre can occur at peak times and when HGVs are delivering to town centre businesses. The historic core of the town can become difficult to navigate which is not unusual for an historic town whose original street pattern was designed to accommodate considerably less and substantially different traffic levels and transport modes. Some pavements cannot accommodate the requirements of mobility guidelines.
- 9.7 Whilst concerns over traffic congestion, speeding and unregulated parking are often issue of concern to local communities, the planning process and Neighbourhood Plans more specifically are limited in the ability to address many transport issues as their policies are only enacted where development occurs. Neighbourhood Plan policies therefore cannot address issues such as speeding, congestion, or nuisance parking where these are already existing problems, but may be able to influence such issues for the future and ensure that new development does not exacerbate existing problems or cause new ones.
- 9.8 Government guidance in respect of plan making and transport issues tends to focus on promoting sustainable transport. Plans are urged to consider at an early stage the impacts of development on transport networks, realise opportunities for improvement, promote walking and cycling and public transport use and ensure that any adverse impacts of traffic are mitigated. It is also acknowledged that the pattern of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places.
- 9.9 The government advises that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes, which can help to reduce congestions and emissions and improve air quality and public health.



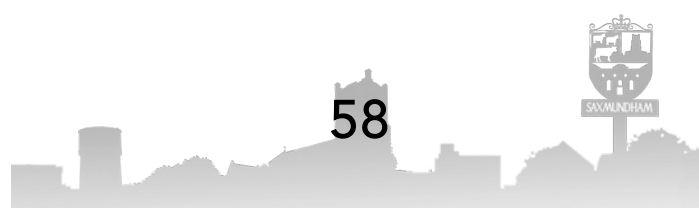
**Objective 3: To improve transport and safe accessibility for the people of Saxmundham by foot, bicycle, mobility scooter and public or private transport resulting in environmental and health benefits.**

### **Walking and cycling connectivity**

- 9.10 Opportunities to encourage and facilitate the use of sustainable transport in particular walking and cycling should be maximised. Government guidance encourages development proposals to provide for high quality walking and cycling networks and supporting facilities such as cycle parking. Suffolk County Council has produced a Green Access Strategy (2020-2030) <sup>12</sup>. This strategy sets out the council's commitment to enhance public rights of way, including new linkages and upgrading routes where there is a need. The strategy also seeks to improve access for all and to support healthy and sustainable access between communities and services through development funding and partnership working.
- 9.11 Such networks should be comprehensive and provide not only for recreational routes but also for meaningful routes that can realistically be used for commuting to work or school. In addition, new routes should connect to the existing network and be suitable for use by people with disabilities and reduced mobility. New cycling and pedestrian routes should be safe, secure, and attractive, maximise the scope for pedestrians and cyclists and respond to the character of the area and any relevant design standards. See **Policy SAXTC1** for more detail on the town centre/High Street.
- 9.12 Opportunities for improving connectivity between the town centre and the railway station (for commuting/business and recreational purposes) and also the town centre and the river frontage (for recreational purposes) should be given high priority.

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<sup>12</sup> Suffolk Green Access Strategy, <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/Roads-and-transport/public-rights-of-way/suffolk-green-access-strategy-2020-2030.pdf#:~:text=The%20Suffolk%20Green%20Access%20Strategy%20details%20why%20green,it%20can%20contribute%20to%20the%20council's%20corporate%20priorities.>

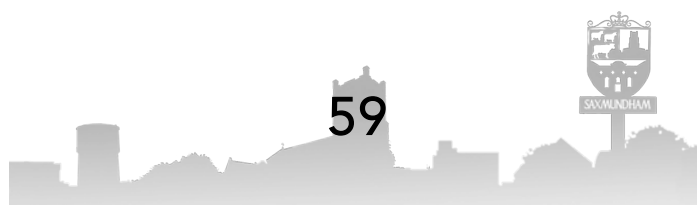




**Objective 4: To successfully integrate – physically, environmentally, and socially – the new neighbourhood with the existing town and community of Saxmundham.**

### **Connecting the Garden Neighbourhood to the existing town and community**

- 9.13 Since the only vehicular access route to and from the Garden Neighbourhood to the existing town is indirect, via the A12, direct, well sign-posted pedestrian and cycle connections to the town (including town centre, station, residential areas) must be provided that are sufficient in number and of high quality. Such links will also serve to further other aims, including promoting health and well-being.
- 9.14 Fundamental to the success of the development of the Garden Neighbourhood is to ensure that the local community can access existing town-based services and facilities as well as those which will be created over the plan period, e.g. the new primary school. At least three new and/or upgraded connections are supported – to the Station, the town centre, and the existing residential area to the north-west of the neighbourhood site. The development of the Garden Neighbourhood should facilitate access to public transport.



**SAX5: Improving connectivity**

Over the Plan period, opportunities will be sought to make the town safer and more accessible, and to contribute to the health and well-being of residents, through the provision of safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes, public rights of way and crossings, suitable for all users, in particular linking new and existing housing areas to the town centre and station. Development should maximise walking and cycling through its location and design.

New provision should be in the form of well-designed, attractive and safe to use routes (including appropriate lighting), and the enhancement of existing routes including making new connections and links where appropriate. New cycle linkages should be built to the standards set out in LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.

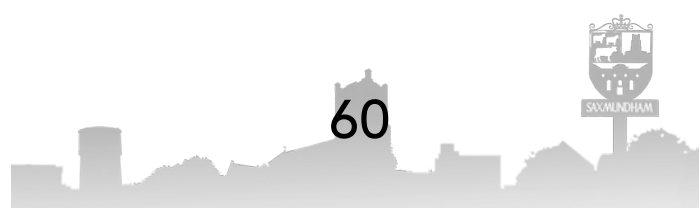
Development that will improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and users with a mobility impairment, both within Saxmundham, and in and out of Saxmundham to neighbouring towns and villages will be supported in so far as it relates to works within the plan area.

New routes, including new public rights of way, should form a cohesive network for users and allow for access both within the town and also to the wider countryside, where opportunities should be taken to create green corridors capable of connecting with neighbouring villages. New developments will be supported where they provide, or contribute to safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre, to community facilities (schools, library etc) and also to the wider countryside.

Proposals that would improve connectivity between the town and the river frontage, including those that would provide for a comprehensive riverside walk, will be supported.

Where major new development is to take place to the south of the town, support is given for the following new 'indicative' pedestrian and cycle connections within the Plan area as shown in **figure 18** below:

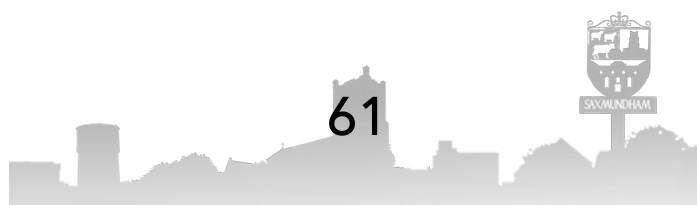
- i. Between new development and the railway station. To be achieved through a new cycle and pedestrian route from the development via the cemetery along the west side of the railway, or other route offering



similar direct linkage acknowledging that a segregated cycle path may not be achievable within highway land beyond the cemetery.

- ii. Between new development and the town centre (including supermarket area). To be achieved through an improved cycle and pedestrian route via the existing bridge over the railway to South Entrance to provide easy and swift access to and from shops and facilities.
- iii. Between new development and the surrounding residential areas and schools. To be achieved via:
  - a. the existing footpath to the east of the school playing field (footpaths 12 and 15 Saxmundham), upgraded appropriately, and leading to and from Seaman Avenue and Mill Road, and
  - b. a new cycle and pedestrian route to the west of the school playing field to forge a strong connection with the existing residential communities to the south and west of the Memorial Field (Montagu Drive, Gilbert Road, Franklin Road, Drake Close, Mayflower Avenue and Lincoln Avenue) together with access to and from other residential areas beyond.
- iv. Upgrading of the existing public footpath (Saxmundham 19) between Benhall and Saxmundham, (where it runs along the B1121) to provide a safe cycle and pedestrian route between the settlements.
- v. Consider opportunities to explore an indicative new footpath rail crossing over the railway to provide a safe and accessible connection for residents of all ages to the SANG and open space on the east of the railway and to Benhall.

See also **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area.**



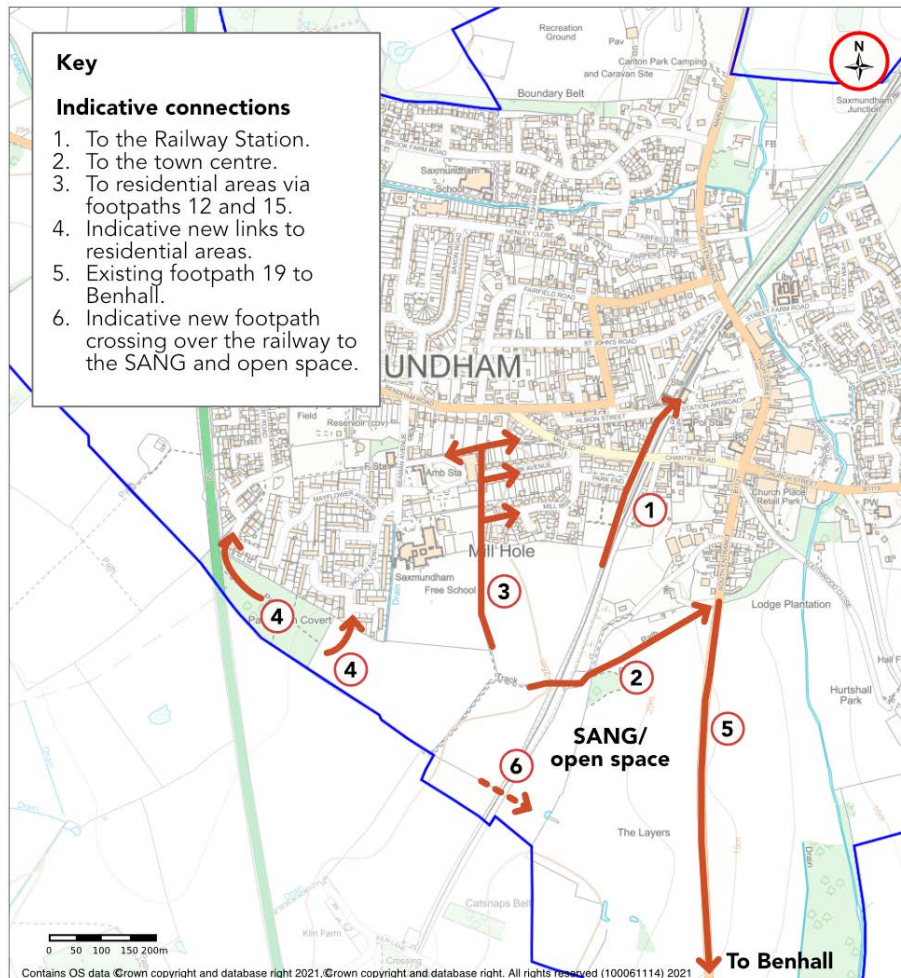


Figure 18: Indicative Connections (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes Neighbourhood Plan Area boundary.

## Existing Public Rights of Way

- 9.15 The NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance Public Rights of Way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails. Opportunities to improve facilities for walkers and cyclists in the parish would be supported.
- 9.16 Where development proposals are likely to affect an existing Public Right of Way, these should take account of its route and incorporate it into the overall layout of the scheme. Where this is not considered possible, this will need to be justified. Where Public Rights of Way may be unavoidably impacted or lost, appropriate diversions or new routes should be provided that are safe, equally accessible, and convenient for users.
- 9.17 Existing Public Rights of Way which are incorporated into new developments,

including bridleways and footpaths, should be protected and enhanced. Enhancement can take the form of new routes, connections, improved surfaces and/or signage increasing access to the countryside and connectivity between communities.

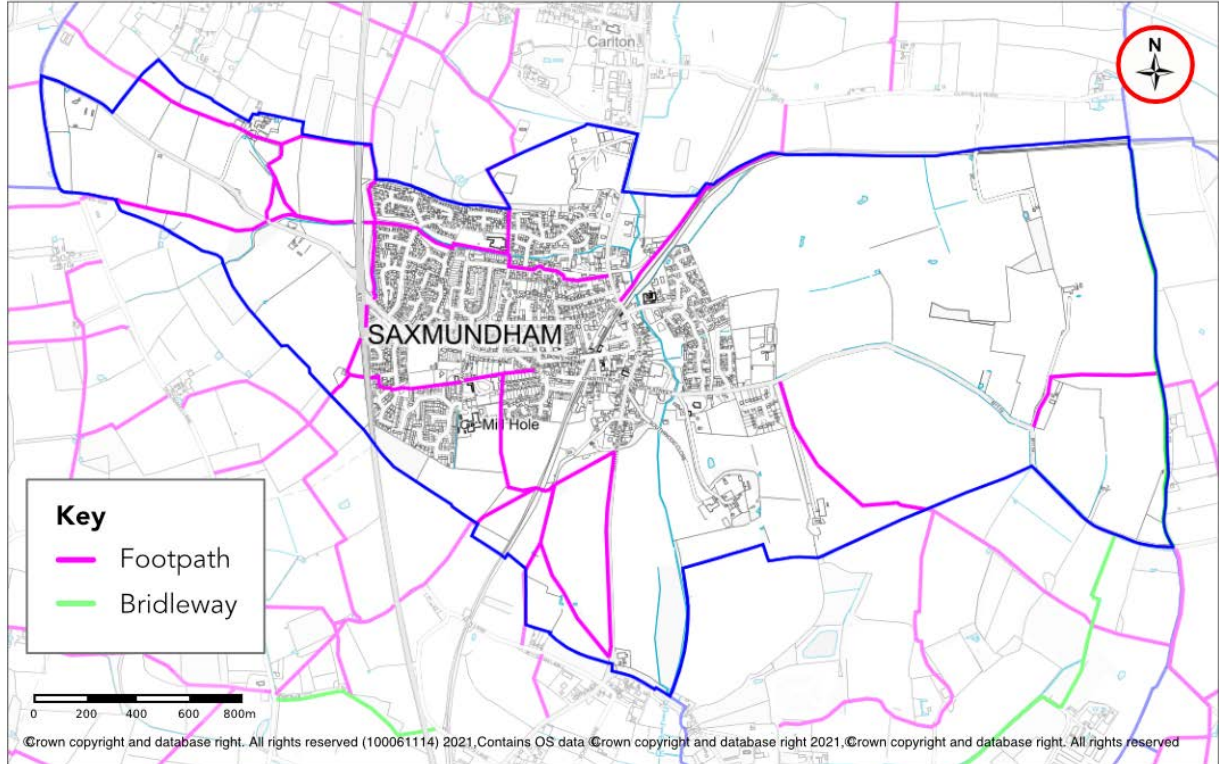


Figure 19: Public Rights of Way in Saxmundham parish (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.



## POLICY

**SAX6: Public Rights of Way**

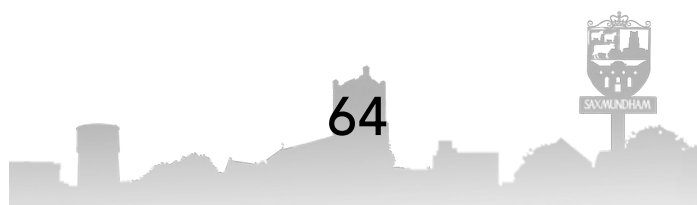
Existing Public Rights of Way, including bridleways and footpaths, should be protected and enhanced to promote walking and cycling.. Enhancement can take the form of new routes, connections, improved surfaces and/or signage increasing access to the countryside and connectivity between parts of the town.

Where new routes are to be provided and existing routes enhanced, careful consideration should be given to ensure their safety and attractiveness, for all users and for adjacent occupiers. Proposals should seek to minimise light pollution whilst remaining safe and attractive to users.

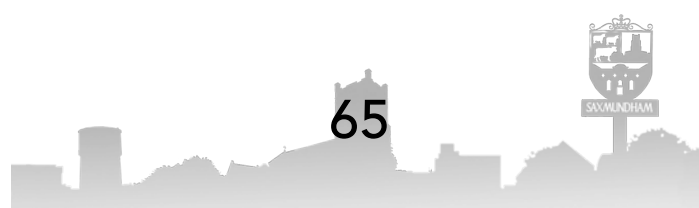
Public Rights of Way should be retained, except where it can be demonstrated that there is strong community support for it to be re-routed. Where Public Rights of Way are to be unavoidably impacted or lost, appropriate diversions or new routes will be provided that are safe and convenient for users.

**Parking**

- 9.18 Government guidance recognises that there continues to be a demand for parking in both residential and non-residential developments. The NPPF makes it clear that parking standards for residential and non-residential development should only be set where there are clear and compelling reasons for doing so that are necessary to manage the local road network. Parking provision for developments in East Suffolk will be made in order to satisfy the relevant adopted standards of East Suffolk Council as local planning authority.
- 9.19 Adequate and well-maintained parking provision is an important element of new development, whether it is for a single dwelling or for a major housing scheme or business premises. The Neighbourhood Plan encourages sustainable transport options, however, it is also a reality that private cars will be used to access services and employment either within or beyond the town.
- 9.20 Allocated parking in new residential development should discourage indiscriminate and on-kerb parking. As demand for electric vehicles is expected to increase over the plan period, opportunities should be taken to encourage and require the installation of electric charging points both in residential and non-residential developments.



- 9.21 In larger housing developments, unless parking provision is well designed it can either dominate or detract from the overall visual appearance of that development. Where parking is to be provided it should be an integral part of the design and layout and it should also be designed to meet the needs of residents it is intended to serve. East Suffolk Council uses the Suffolk Guidelines for Parking, and these are therefore applicable within the Neighbourhood Plan area.
- 9.22 Whilst it is recognised that the use of cars for personal mobility will continue and therefore provision for parking is necessary, the principles of high-quality design and the creation of a safe, attractive and liveable environment is still paramount. Detailed consideration should be given to the provision of new parking, which should aim to be discreet and not dominate the design of development. The **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area July 2021** provides useful guidance on the design of parking areas which the proposers of development are encouraged to follow.



**SAX7: Parking provision**

Parking provision (including cycle parking) for all new development in the Neighbourhood Plan area shall be in accordance with the adopted parking standards of Suffolk County Council.<sup>13</sup>

**Residential parking**

Parking in new housing developments should be located to be discreet, accessible, and appropriate to both the character of the proposed development and the character of the existing area. New parking surfaces will be expected to use permeable materials to minimise the occurrence of flooding.

Taking into account the proposal and its location, individual parking provision should include adequate off-street parking for the size of the dwelling. Where garages are proposed they should be a minimum of 4.95m in length with a width of at least 2.9m in order to accommodate and provide easy access to and from a range of modern vehicles.

Where parking areas are proposed they should:

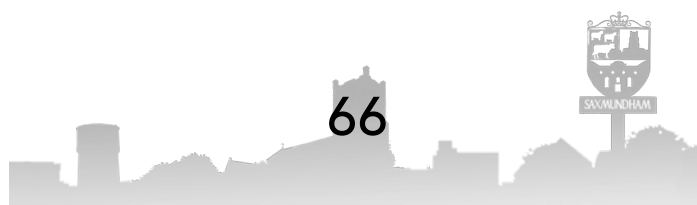
- i. Be located to promote natural surveillance and security
- ii. Where appropriate, make specific provision for layby parking and visitor parking.
- iii. Be well designed, including landscaping between parking bays.
- iv. Safe and convenient for users, including appropriate lighting.

**Non-residential parking**

Non-residential development including, commercial, retail and leisure development should provide adequate parking for the intended users of that development, including staff and customers to avoid creating parking problems such as parking on pavements and verges.

See also **Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Code for the Neighbourhood Plan Area July 2021.**

<sup>13</sup> Parking guidance, Suffolk County Council, <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/parking-guidance/>



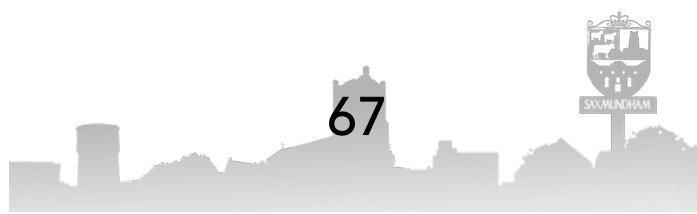


## 10. Parish wide: **Housing**

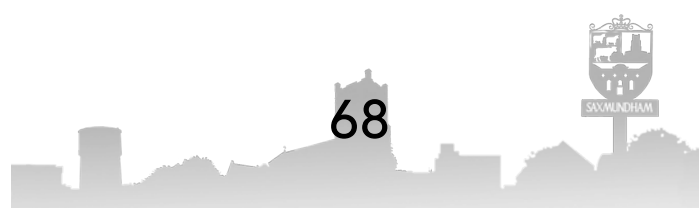
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### Scale and location of new housing

- 10.1 Government guidance advises that Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area. In addition, they should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans and should shape and direct development that is outside these strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies.
- 10.2 The issue of new housing is often a key determinant in the decision by a local community to embark upon the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. The issue of future housing development in Saxmundham is a key issue for the town over the next 15-20 years, particularly its potential impacts upon the people, services and environment of the town and parish.
- 10.3 As referred to in earlier chapters, the Adopted Local Plan makes a significant allocation of 66.6 hectares (approximately 800 new dwellings) in the form of the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. In addition, a further 2.18 hectares of land (approximately 40 dwellings) is allocated in the Local Plan, at land north-east of Street Farm. Between April 2001 and March 2020, 1,030 new homes were built in the parish with over 600 of these being constructed since 2011. The total quantity of dwellings in the parish in 2019 was estimated at 2,190 (source Valuation Office Agency). Data provided by East Suffolk Council indicates that on 31st March 2020, there were outstanding (unimplemented) permissions for a further 62 dwellings in the parish. The total as of March 2020 is therefore believed to be approximately 2,200 dwellings.



- 10.4 The adopted Local Plan has identified the housing requirement for the district as a whole and has made specific allocations within the parish. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in addition to these allocations, there will be 'windfall development' which will come forward during the Neighbourhood Plan period. Following early feedback from the community, the Town Council has therefore taken the view that the Neighbourhood Plan will not make further allocations for new housing development but instead will focus its policies on managing the impacts of this proposed level of development over the plan period.
- 10.5 The Neighbourhood Plan also does not intend to alter the current adopted Settlement Boundary for the town and therefore will use that in the adopted Local Plan for the purposes of the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. The settlement boundary will be expected to be the focus for new windfall development outside the specific Local Plan allocations. Proposals for development inside the settlement boundary including small scale infill development (e.g. individual houses or small groups of dwellings) will be supported subject to the proposals meeting certain design criteria such as not having adverse impacts upon the natural or built environment or highway safety and the design criteria set out in **Policy SAX1**. In addition, proposals that would lead to the development of new housing in existing back gardens, back land or tandem development will only be supported where they meet certain criteria in relation to impact on the natural and historic environment, highways safety and residential amenity. This form of development they should not result in a cramped form of development, or a density of development that detracts from the overall character of the area. The following **Policy SAX8** sets out the criteria for the consideration of proposals for new windfall and infill development.





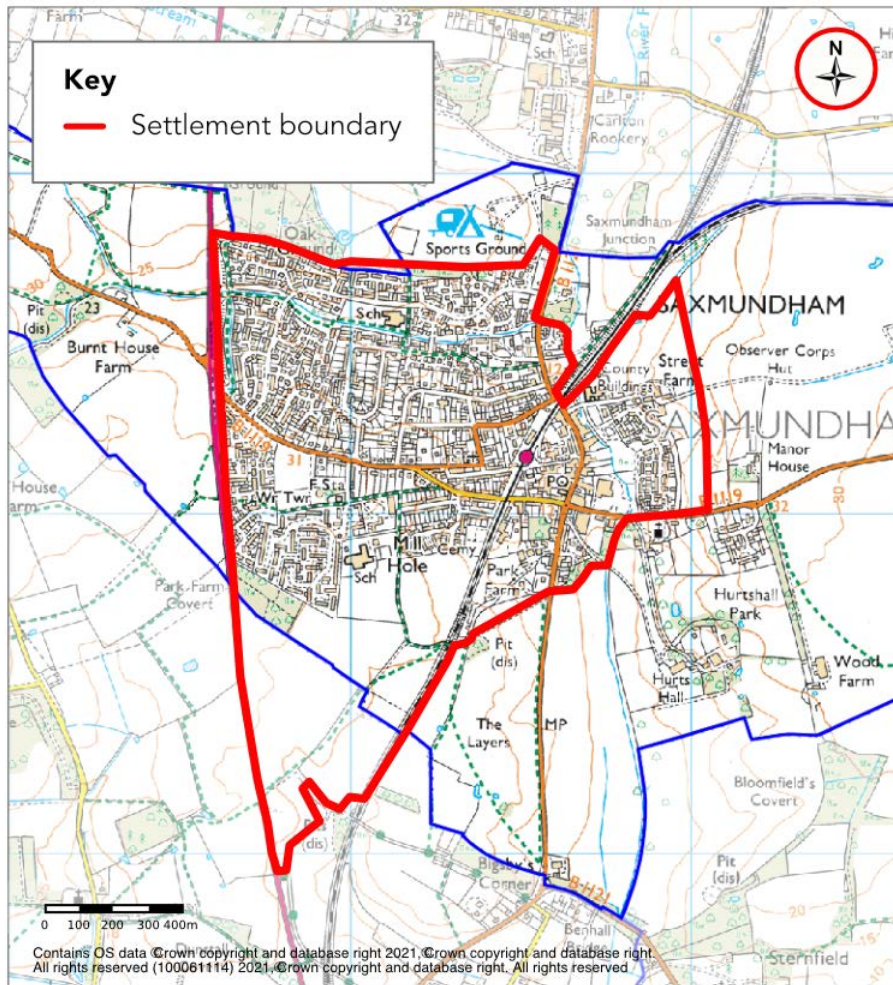


Figure 20: Settlement boundary (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

POLICY

**SAX8: Windfall and infill development**

Proposals for windfall and infill development should:

- a. be located within the defined settlement boundary and
- b. not have an adverse impact upon the historic or natural environment or highway safety and
- c. have a close functional relationship with the existing built-up area of the town and the existing pattern of development and
- d. be self-contained with logical, natural boundaries and
- e. be appropriate in size and scale to the site, its setting, and the town and
- f. not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of adjoining occupiers

Proposals for back land<sup>14</sup>, tandem<sup>15</sup> or the development of gardens will only be supported where they meet all of the above criteria, and where they would not result in a cramped form of development or a density of development that would detract from the overall character of the area. Both the existing and proposed dwellings should have sufficient outdoor amenity space.

**Objective 5: To promote the development of high quality, energy efficient housing to meet the needs of the people of Saxmundham**

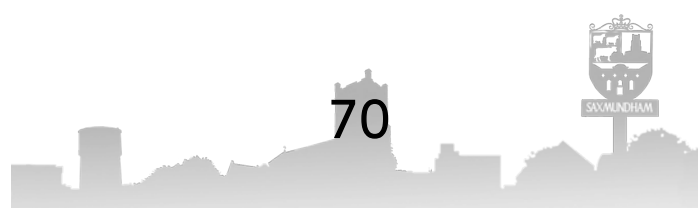
**Housing need and mix**

10.6 As well as housing numbers, the size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities in respect of new housing. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix.

10.7 Delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes is essential to support a sustainable, vibrant, and mixed community. Community consultation, including the results from the questionnaire revealed that residents want to have a range of types of accommodation to meet their changing needs and to cater for any needs that are currently not being met. 53 per cent of respondents felt that the

<sup>14</sup> Development involving the re-use of parts of a number of rear gardens to existing houses for further residential development.

<sup>15</sup> Tandem development refers to land set back behind existing properties often existing houses, utilising brownfield or garden land generally with limited street frontage.



share of affordable housing (for rent or ownership) should account for between 10 per cent- 25 per cent (of the dwellings proposed on a site), whilst 47 per cent felt it should be over 25 per cent. 73 per cent of respondents supported owner-occupied housing as a priority with 41 per cent in favour of social housing. Shared ownership homes and sheltered housing each had the support of around one third and there was also some support for bungalows. The survey also asked for respondents to indicate a preference of the size of dwelling to be provided in the town in the future and 80 per cent of respondents indicated support for 2-3 bedroomed dwellings.

## Affordable Housing

- 10.8 There is no specific Housing Needs Assessment for Saxmundham as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, however there is wider district data available to support the adopted Local Plan policies. **See Local Plan policies SCLP5.8 and 5.10.**
- 10.9 The new dwellings allocated in the Adopted Local Plan should deliver at least 277 units (33 per cent) of Affordable Housing. However not all of this will be within the parish as the Garden Neighbourhood Allocation extends into Benhall parish. There may be other opportunities that arise through infill, windfall, or redevelopment over the Neighbourhood Plan period. The Adopted Local Plan Policy SCLP5.10 requires that 1 in 3 dwellings should be affordable on sites over 10 units or 0.5 hectares. Of these affordable dwellings, 50 per cent should be for affordable rent/social rent, 25 per cent should be for shared ownership and 25 per cent should be for discounted home ownership. Provision is expected to be made on-site, unless it can be demonstrated in exceptional circumstances that it is not feasible or practical to provide the units on site in which case it may be agreed that a commuted sum could be paid towards provision of affordable housing outside the site.

## Dwelling size

- 10.10 The parish is expecting a substantial volume of new development during the Plan period. It would be unwise for this to be delivered in an unbalanced way (e.g. with too much emphasis on large homes). Those wishing to move within or relocate to the area will have a range of circumstances and preferences, and they should be offered a range of options. It is also overly simplistic to think about home sizes in terms of the number of bedrooms offered. There is a significant contrast between a 4 bedroom 'executive' home with a luxury specification on a large rural plot and a 4-bedroom townhouse suitable for a



large family on a lower income within walking distance of local schools.

- 10.11 Therefore the Neighbourhood Plan should encourage for all sizes of home to be provided in Saxmundham in future years. In particular, encouragement is given for additional provision of accommodation suitable for vulnerable people or those with special needs. Housing provision in the parish should be part of a dwelling size mix that is balanced overall and which meets the needs of a growing older population as well as those currently priced out of the market.

POLICY

**SAX9: Tenure blind Housing Development**

Where affordable housing is to be provided it should be indistinguishable from other tenures in external form, quality, and character. In order to encourage both physical and social integration, affordable housing should be spread throughout any new development.







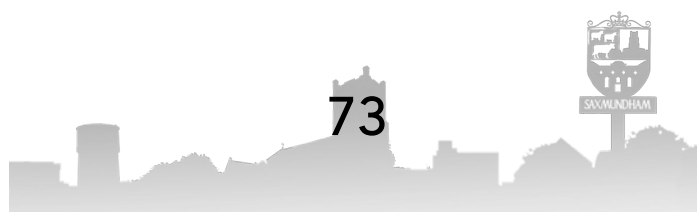
## 11. Parish wide: Heritage and the natural environment

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**Objective 6:** To protect and enhance the conservation area, the town's heritage, green spaces, natural features and rural setting and to address the challenges of climate change.

### Heritage protection

- 11.1 Saxmundham possesses a high quality and varied historic environment with a wealth of historic buildings and structures concentrated within the historic core of the town centre which is reflected in its designation as a Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was originally designated in 1970 by East Suffolk County Council; it was then extended by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1980 and redesignated in 1991. The designation and re-appraisal of Conservation Areas is an important process and one that is governed by the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Council has a duty to review its Conservation Area designations and in 2016, the District Council undertook a Conservation Area Appraisal resulting in the production of some management guidelines.
- 11.2 The Conservation Area Appraisal 2016, describes the overall character of Saxmundham as one of 'a reasonably well-preserved historic Suffolk market town of picturesque and attractive appearance. In particular the town centre and roads leading from the High Street retain the special characteristics that strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.' This Neighbourhood Plan





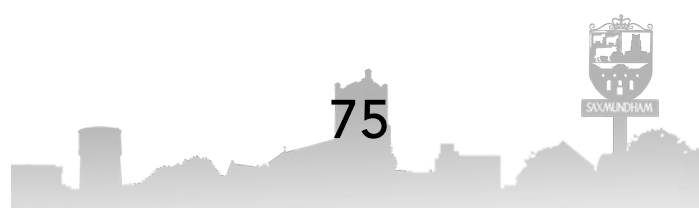
draws upon and affirms the Appraisal's contents and guidance in the following paragraphs.

- 11.3 At the heart of the Conservation Area is the historic Market Place. This area is located to the west of The High Street and hidden from the road by a row of commercial premises and dwellings. The High Street runs approximately north – south, and generally the most high-status buildings found in Saxmundham abut this road. Those premises located within the town centre are largely commercial (often with domestic accommodation above) whereas to the northern and southern extremities of the Conservation Area, as well as to the tributary roads to the east and west, domestic properties are found. Those dwellings located close to the railway station tend to be of nineteenth century date, smaller in scale and more concentrated in terms of spatial density. Scattered around this area are former commercial and industrial sites, including land once occupied by the gas works and the site of a maltings complex northeast of the station.
- 11.4 Closer to the Market Place buildings tend to be of sixteenth, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century date, whereas to the north and south extremities of the Conservation Area sizeable individual properties from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and set in private gardens and landscapes, are found.
- 11.5 The overall character of Saxmundham is very much one of an historic Suffolk market town which retains its traditional form and appearance. Despite some 20th Century development, some small-scale incremental change having taken place, the town centre retains the special characteristics which strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.
- 11.6 These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the number and quality of its traditional buildings and the fact that most still retain their traditional features; the shape, form and layout of the settlement itself; and the attractive relationship that exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.
- 11.7 Important landscape features such as trees, shrubs, hedges, old walls, and railings all make a major contribution. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.
- 11.8 Inappropriate development, neglect and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of any Conservation Area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill



with poorly designed new development to modern replacement windows and doors in old buildings.

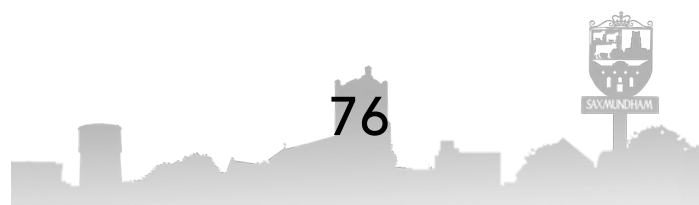
- 11.9 Other changes can include: inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale, form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details in the area, insensitive highway works and signage, unsympathetic shopfronts and advertising, the construction of intrusive non-traditional walls, fences, driveways, garages, outbuildings and other structures.
- 11.10 In terms of materials and finishes, the use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should all be avoided. So too should the use of brown stain on timber joinery, windows and doors as it invariably appears as a particularly discordant feature in an area where the tradition of using white paint forms an important unifying element in the street scene. Old facing brickwork should not be painted over and where this has happened in the past the Council will provide advice on the potential for its removal.
- 11.11 The surfaces between buildings also need very careful consideration. Special materials, including natural stone, bound gravel and exposed aggregate kerbs, paving slabs and blocks will normally be the most suitable. Certain types of concrete brick paving should not be used because they have a harsh modern appearance which is very much at odds with the traditional character of the Conservation Area. In order to protect the character and appearance of the Saxmundham Conservation Area the Neighbourhood Plan will, wherever possible, seek to prevent such inappropriate changes from taking place through a specific Neighbourhood Plan policy (**SAX10 below**).
- 11.12 When development is proposed within a Conservation Area, it can be a challenge to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development and whether this can include high quality modern design. Pastiche can be acceptable but is not always well delivered particularly where existing buildings contain a number of decorative features. Certain characteristics can be used as inspiration without resorting to copying. This approach can ensure that new design is both creative and contextual. New development should always respect the grain of the Conservation Area, including preservation of building lines, relationship to gardens, streets, parking and farmland, scale, density and uses.



- 11.13 Proper account should also always be taken of the impact that new development adjacent to a Conservation Area can have on its setting. Although a Conservation Area boundary represents a demarcation enclosing a special area of historic interest, changes immediately outside of it can still have a significant impact on character and appearance. The setting of the Conservation Area, therefore, has an intrinsic value that must be acknowledged in any proposals for change to it, and this protection is enshrined in the NPPF.
- 11.14 A key component of Conservation Areas that is afforded protection by their designation is that regarding trees, to ensure that the spaces they need to grow and thrive are preserved and enhanced. New boundary treatments to property can also provide enhancement to the Conservation Area and here the use of materials rich in character with the settlement should be considered. Walls, fences, railings and hedges (whether native or ornamental) can be carefully chosen to reflect local styles and respond/create a sense of local distinctiveness. The Conservation Area Appraisal makes a number of recommendations, and these are reflected in **Policy SAX10** below. In addition the District Council have recently adopted an Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document which contains a lot of useful advice on many heritage matters:  
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy- and-Local-Plans/Supplementary-documents/Historic-Environment-SPD/Historic-Environment-SPD- reduced.pdf>

### Shopfronts in the Conservation Area

- 11.15 By their very nature Conservation Areas tend to be focused on the historic core of a settlement, which will usually include the town or village centre which includes the centre of retail activity. The successful and sustained stewardship of historic retail is closely linked with the on-going health of the retail sector.
- 11.16 In recent years, out of town retail sites, changing shopping habits and the growth of online retailing have all challenged town centres. As the number of people visiting and the range of shops to be found in town centres has changed, there has been a related impact on the local historic character of town centre buildings, their range of uses and street patterns. These may well be permanent changes. The decline in use of a number of particular types of buildings (for example pubs, post offices and banks) has added to the problem. Reduced footfall and increased vacancy rates in some areas has led to under-investment and a deterioration in the quality of the environment. At



the same time, there have been changes to the planning system that have made it easier to transform retail and office buildings into residential properties. These changes can also have a major impact on the character of historic places. On the other hand, there is some evidence that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional smaller market towns may be attracting more, or losing less, shopping 'footfall' than larger cities.

- 11.17 Historic England has published a raft of useful advice on Historic Town Centres, including guidance on public realm<sup>16</sup>, Works to Highways and Public Realm: Streets for All<sup>17</sup> and highways improvements<sup>18</sup>. Such guidance advocates a collaborative approach to town centre management and a joined-up approach to transport (including the provision of the necessary services for town centre uses, such as loading bays) underpins a welcoming and attractive arrival experience for visitors.
- 11.18 Ensuring that public realm is designed to be in keeping with the surrounding built environment is important (controls over the use of signage and street furniture also contribute to the overall attractiveness of the public realm of a settlement). Reviewing and managing shop fronts as a collection rather than individually is also preferable.

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<sup>16</sup> Public Realm - all parts of the built environment where the public has free access.

<sup>17</sup> Streets for All, Historic England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all/>

<sup>18</sup> Historic Town Centres and High Streets, Historic England, <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/historic-towns-and-high-streets/>



## **SAX10: Historic town centre and Conservation Area**

The special character of Saxmundham Conservation Area and its setting will be preserved and enhanced. This will be achieved by:

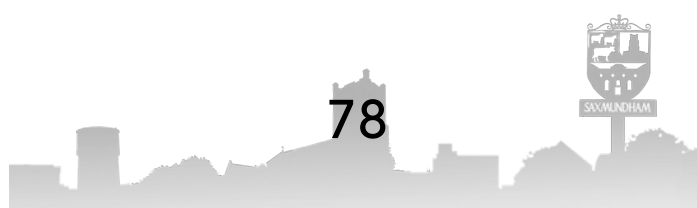
- a. Encouraging the retention and maintenance of traditional buildings and shop fronts which contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area, whether listed or not.
- b. Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to the special qualities, character and appearance of the Conservation Area and takes account of its historic significance.
- c. Protecting the setting of the Conservation Area from development which adversely affects views into or out of the Conservation Area
- d. Ensuring that new development complements the built form and layout of the settlement itself and the attractive relationship which exists between the older buildings and the spaces between and around them.
- e. Encouraging the maintenance and enhancement of features and details which contribute to the area's local distinctiveness e.g., shopfronts, important landscape features such as trees and shrubs, walls, and railings.
- f. Requiring the use of high-quality traditional building materials and detailing, including but not limited to:
  - i. Local Suffolk bricks, e.g., soft reds largely on the rear elevations and hard whites on the front facades).
  - ii. Lime render.
  - iii. Pantile roofs.
  - iv. Decorative details such as pargeting, or ashlar scored lines/stone blocks.

The use of non-traditional materials such as concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks, should be avoided.

All proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area as set out in **Appendix E** and where relevant the Concept Masterplan for the High Street (**Appendix F**).

### **Signage and shopfronts**

Where the need for new or reconfigured advertising signage (including shopfronts, highways and directional signage) has been established,





	<p>consideration must be given to its size, design, and siting to ensure that it enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Proposals that seek to rationalise or reduce the amount of signage within the Conservation Area will be supported.</p> <p><b>Street furniture</b></p> <p>Proposals seeking to enhance the streetscape and public spaces through appropriate use of street furniture and where practicable results in the provision of wider pavements which preserves and enhances the area will be supported.</p>
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*Please note that Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service advise that there should be early consultation with the Historic Environment Record (HER) and assessment of the archaeological potential of any area proposed for development at an appropriate stage in the design of new developments. The Archaeological service is happy to advise on the level of assessment and appropriate stages to be undertaken.*

## Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 11.19 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recognises that there are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some Non-designated Heritage Assets as 'locally Listed'. The PPG goes on to explain that these can be identified through Local Plans (and now most commonly through Neighbourhood Plans) and can be a positive way for the local community to identify Non-designated Heritage Assets against consistent criteria so as to improve the predictability of the potential for sustainable development.
- 11.20 The NPPF 2021 at paragraph 203 indicates that the effects of an application on the significance of a Non-designated Heritage Assets should be taken into account in determining the applications.
- 11.21 The household survey undertaken did not ask specific questions around Saxmundham's heritage although in answers to other questions it was clear that local residents valued the historic past of the town centre and felt that more could be done to improve it and to protect it.

11.22 Through their own work Steering Group Members have identified a number of potential Non-designated Heritage Assets in the town. All of the suggested nominations for Non-designated Heritage Assets have been assessed against criteria based on the Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7, page 9. The results of this exercise are shown in **Appendix B** and those buildings/structures that are considered to score well when measured against the criteria are included in **Policy SAX11** below.



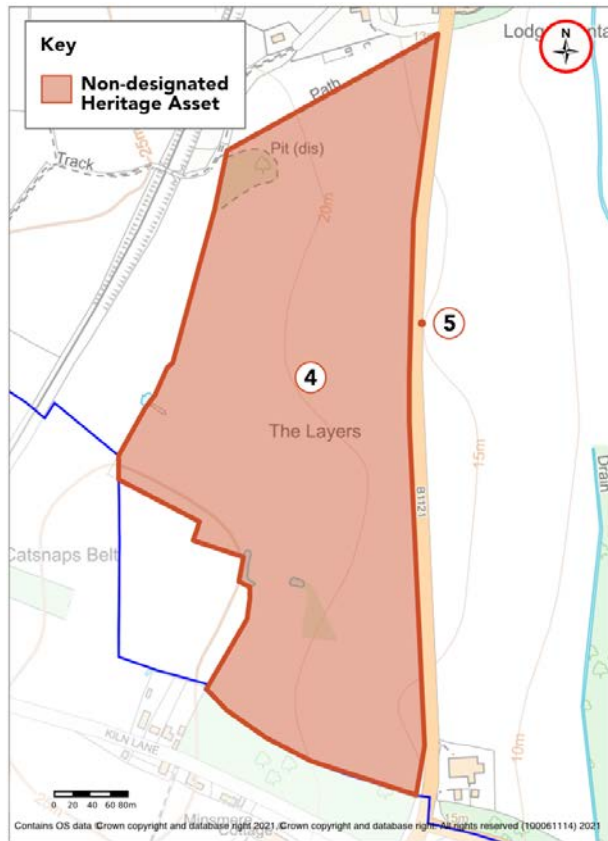
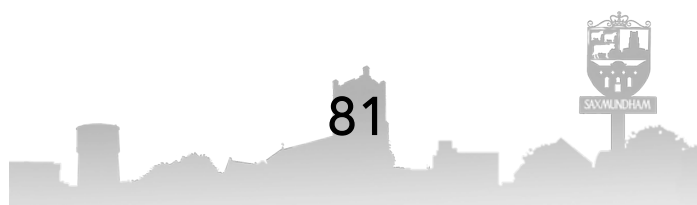


Figure 21 and 22: Non-designated Heritage Assets (source: Parish Online, with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary. Note: figure 20 and figure 21 have different scales.



## POLICY

**SAX11: Non-designated Heritage Assets**

The following historic buildings and features (figure 21 and 22) are identified as Non-Designated Heritage Assets due to their locally important character and historic features:

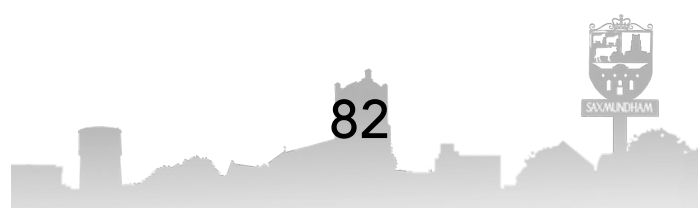
1. The United Reformed Church, Chapel Road including its graveyard.
2. The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road.
3. Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance.
4. The Layers.
5. Milestone on the B1121.
6. The pillbox in the Memorial Field.
7. The War Memorial in Fromus Square.
8. The Town Pump.
9. The Gannon Rooms.
10. The Water Tower, Rendham Road.
11. The Telephone Exchange, High Street.
12. Victorian Post Box at the Railway Station.
13. Saxmundham Goods Shed.
14. Victorian Post Box at South Entrance.
15. George V Post Box at North Entrance.

Development proposals affecting these non-designated heritage assets will be judged having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to their significance which may include its setting and relationship to its immediate surroundings and the contribution it makes to the character of the local area.

## Landscape

11.23 Saxmundham is an historic market town set on the bank of the River Fromus, which is a tributary of the River Alde that ultimately reaches the sea south of Orford Ness, after skirting past Snape, Aldeburgh and Orford.

11.24 The river valley locates Saxmundham just between two specific landscape character types - the Rolling Estate Sandlands and the Rolling Estate Claylands (to the west) as defined by the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment, which as a joint project between the County Council and the Suffolk Districts. Peripheral parts of the town also fall within the Ancient Rolling Farmlands character type. The underlying geology is essentially crag deposits, sands and



gravels laid down during the Pliocene period over the chalk, which underlies all of Suffolk at depth.

11.25 The key characteristics of the Rolling Estate Sandlands character type are:

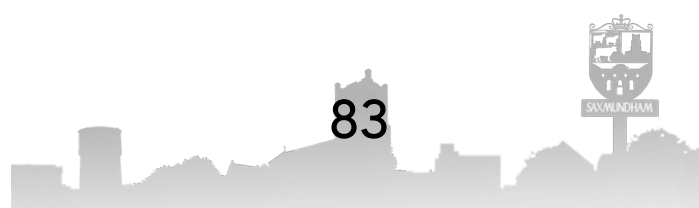
- Rolling river terraces and coastal slopes.
- Sandy and free draining soils with areas of heathland.
- Late enclosure with a pattern of tree belts and straight hedges.
- Landscape parklands.
- A focus of settlement in the Estate Sandlands landscape.
- 19th century red brick buildings with black glazed pantiles in the east.
- Tree belts and plantations throughout.
- Occasional and significant semi-natural woodlands and ribbons of wet woodland.
- Complex and intimate landscape on valley sides.

11.26 The Rolling Estate Claylands character type occurs in east Suffolk as linear bands in the middle reaches of the valleys of a number of rivers including the Alde and The Fromus around Kelsale and Carlton. The typical characteristics of this valley side landscape of clay loams with parklands and fragmented woodland include:

- Rolling valley-side landscape.
- Medium clay and loamy soils.
- Organic pattern of fields.
- Occasional areas of more rational planned fields.
- Numerous landscape parks.
- Fragmented woodland cover, both ancient and plantation.
- Winding hedged and occasionally sunken lanes.

11.27 This Neighbourhood Plan recognises the intrinsic value and special qualities of this area of landscape and proposes ensure that distinctive features of the two landscape character types are protected insofar as they contribute to the distinct landscape setting of the town.

11.28 The transition between rural landscape character and the urban form of the edge of the town is important not only for its landscape value appearance but because of the visual gateway it provides to the appearance of the edge of the town. Land to the south of the town and east of the B1121 with views to Hurts Hall and the town beyond was identified as sensitive by the Suffolk Coastal Settlement Sensitivity Assessment, which was undertaken to support the Local Plan.

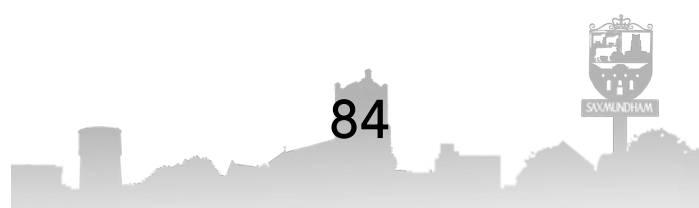




- 11.29 Representations made during the Local Plan Examination further expressed the sensitivity of The Layers to development. The Layers is an open area to the west of the B1121 and has some heritage significance –the land between the B1121 and the tree belt being considered particularly sensitive to built development. The Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken to support the Local Plan advises that built development here should be avoided. Local Plan policy SCLP12.29 clarifies that the land east of the railway, which is outside the settlement boundary, is 'identified for the provision of open space and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as part of the garden neighbourhood. The retention of existing [agricultural] uses on land to the east of the railway would be supported where this complements the delivery of open space and SANG.
- 11.30 Through consultation, the north, south, east and west entrances to the town have been identified as important entrances providing important 'green gateways' due to the soft edge they provide between urban area and the surrounding rural landscape character. Proposals that would enhance the visual appearance of an entrance or 'gateway' to the town will be supported, however where 'green' gateways or substantially undeveloped entrances currently exist, these should be maintained as 'soft' entrances to assist with the urban to rural transition.

### **Important public views**

- 11.31 In addition, the Steering Group have also identified a number of important views and vistas. The Group were mindful that any policy which sought to protect these views should focus on those that are 'important' to the overall landscape character of the parish and which can be enjoyed from publicly accessible locations, e.g., footpaths, public highway, an existing open space, or through a gap between buildings. The views identified are as follows:



1. **View from the B1121 looking across to Hurts Hall and St John's Church:**

The road undulates and at the top of two rises there are open views across to the Church and Hurts Hall which are both important landmarks.

- a) Looking north-east from a point approximately 200m south of the milestone. This is a panoramic view which includes open farmland in the foreground, Hurts Hall and St John's Church in the middle distance backed by wooded rising land.
- b) Looking north-east from a point approximately 100m south of the milestone. This view centres on the church, which is framed by a gap in the trees, and also encompasses the open farmland setting and the rising wooded land behind.



2. **View from the high point of The Layers looking across the River Fromus to Hurts Hall:** Looking due east from the tree line which marks the western edge of The Layers, across open farmland and the River Fromus.

This gives a wide view of Hurts Hall and its associated buildings, and the backdrop of rising wooded land. It demonstrates the contrast between the open landscape of the valley and the wooded ridge, below which the town sits.



3. **View along Chantry Road towards St John's Church:** Looking east from outside 7, Chantry Road the road dips away, then curves and rises towards the church. In summer trees fill the view, with the church tower visible above the trees, but in the winter the church is very prominent and dominates the view.



4. **View from Albion Street across the town to Church Hill.** From a point near the top of Albion Street opposite the Sax Club looking due east. This gives an interesting view across the rooftops of the historic centre of the town to the green ridge beyond topped by a line of trees. It emphasises the historic nature of the town and the close proximity of the countryside.



5. **View towards the town from the B1119 (Leiston Road).** The approach from Leiston is across a wide-open plateau. Looking west at a point about 400m east of the access to Wood Farm the view of the tree line along the ridge becomes conspicuous, the town below is hidden, but the view of the trees and the change in the landscape is the first clear indication that the town is nearby.



6. **View to towards open countryside from South Entrance:** This view shows the historic exit view from the town to the country, looking along the B1121 to The Layers and the treeline beyond, traditional settlement boundary.





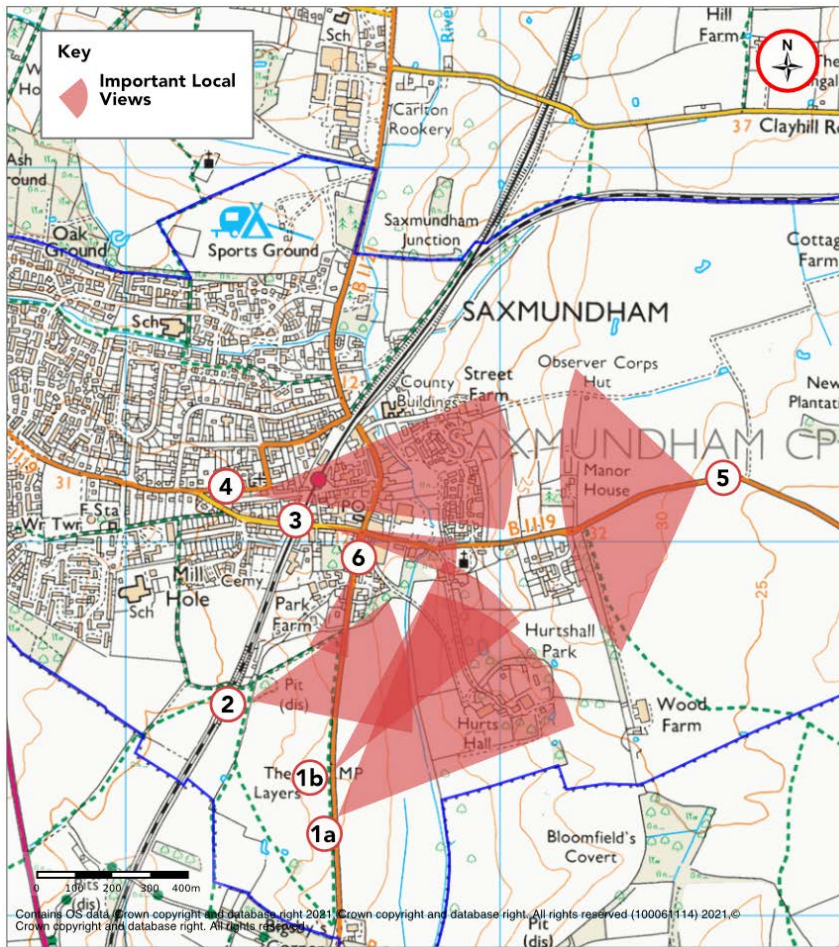


Figure 23: Important Local Views (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

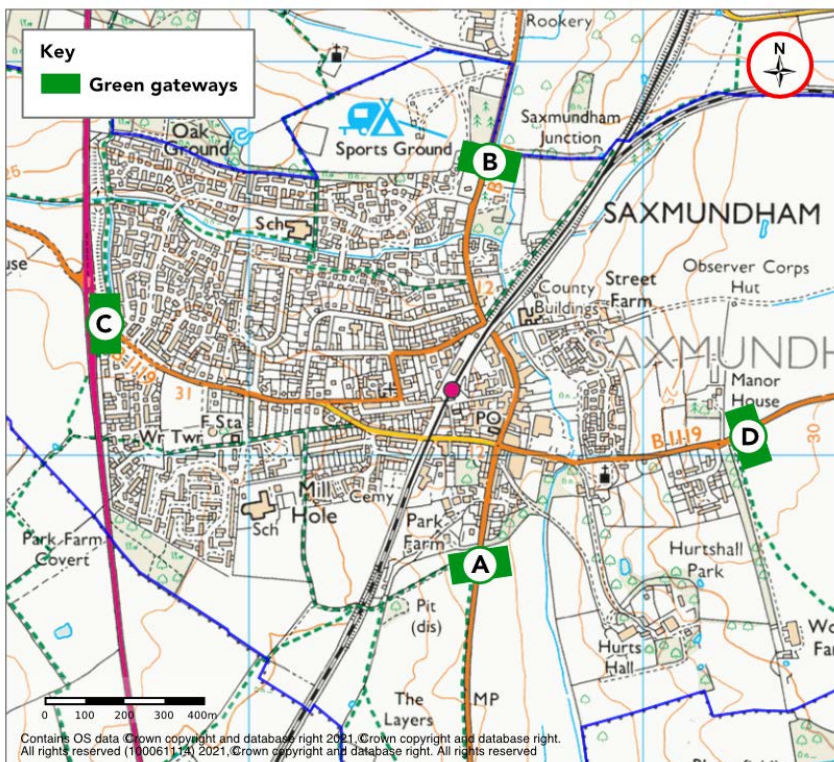


Figure 24: Green gateways (source: Parish Online with own annotations). Blue line denotes parish boundary.

- 11.32 Taking the above into account **Policy SAX12** has been developed which covers the distinct but related elements of landscape character, the protection of important public views and the enhancement of specific entrances to the town.

POLICY	<p><b>SAX12: Gateways, views and the landscape setting of Saxmundham</b></p> <p>The visual scenic value of the landscape and countryside in the parish outside of the defined settlement boundary will be protected from development that may adversely affect this character. The existing clear landscape break that physically separates different settlements shall be maintained in order to prevent coalescence and loss of individual settlement distinctiveness and identity.</p> <p>Development proposals within or which would affect the following important local views should take account of the view concerned. Developments, which would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape or character of the view concerned, will not be supported.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. View from the B1121 looking across to Hurts Hall and St John's Church.</li> <li>2. View from the high point of The Layers looking across the River Fromus to Hurts Hall.</li> <li>3. View along Chantry Road towards St John's Church.</li> <li>4. View from Albion Street across the town to Church Hill.</li> <li>5. View towards the town from the B1119 (Leiston Road).</li> <li>6. View to towards the open countryside from South Entrance.</li> </ol> <p><b>Green Gateways</b></p> <p>Proposals that would enhance the visual appearance of an entrance or 'gateway' to the town will be supported however where 'green' gateways or substantially undeveloped entrances currently exist, these should be maintained as 'soft' entrances to assist with the urban to rural transition.</p>
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The following are identified as important Green Gateways (**figure 24**):

- A. Southern entrance to be maintained as a green gateway to the town with the provision of accessible natural green space suitable for recreation.
- B. Northern entrance (on Main Road), proposals that would enhance the existing gateway feature adjacent to Tollgate Cottage will be supported in principle, subject to other criteria in this policy.
- C. Western entrance at Rendham Road. The existing landscape buffer north of this entrance between the built-up edge of the town and the A12 shall be retained and enhanced.
- D. Eastern entrance at Leiston Road. The existing landscape buffer and tree line at this entrance shall be retained.

Where gateway enhancements are proposed, schemes should be designed to ensure that gateway enhancements do not detract from highway safety and visual amenity and should minimise the need for non-essential lighting.

Opportunities to improve the public realm at entrances to the town, through the use of appropriate hard or soft landscaping measures will also be supported where they include the use of vernacular materials and native planting.

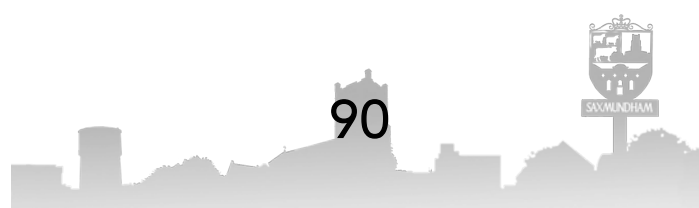
## Natural assets

11.33 In terms of nature conservation sites, the parish itself does not contain significant sites, however this area of East Suffolk is in relatively close proximity to the extremely sensitive Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Saxmundham falls within the 13 km Zone of Influence (ZOI) for the Council's Recreational Disturbance, Avoidance and Mitigation Scheme (RAMS). As evidenced by the Recreational Disturbance, Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy additional residential development within the ZOI could have a detrimental impact on the designations due to increased recreational disturbance. Natural England advises that consideration of 'off-site' measures (i.e., in and around the relevant European designated site(s)) is required as mitigation for predicted recreational disturbance impacts.

11.34 East Suffolk Council, together with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts and Ipswich Borough, are taking a collaborative approach to strategic mitigation to

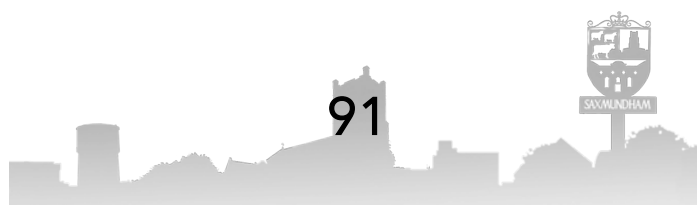
support development and avoid impacts on internationally important designated wildlife sites. The councils have produced a combined recreational disturbance, avoidance and mitigation strategy (Suffolk RAMS) for the area. This identifies and costs measures necessary to mitigate recreational impacts and confirms how they will be funded and delivered over the lifetime of the Local Plans. Such measures are to be delivered strategically through the Suffolk Coast RAMS, to make the sites more resilient to increased recreational pressures. A proportionate financial contribution should therefore be secured from proposed residential development in the Zone of Influence (ZOI) in line with the Suffolk Coast RAMS and all new housing development in Saxmundham is required to contribute to this scheme. The Habitat Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan identified the need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate the potential impacts of recreational disturbance on the above SPA sites from the Garden Neighbourhood allocation.

- 11.35 Nationally and internationally designated sites are protected through national planning policy in the NPPF and also in specific legislation. However, there is often less protection for locally designated sites or non-designated local sites which have a wildlife value or for specific features which may have a wildlife value. **Policy SAX13** below seeks to such features where they are typical of the prevailing landscape character types, such as woodlands, tree belts and plantations, straight hedges etc and where development would damage their wildlife value.
- 11.36 The Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent in Autumn 2021 and introduces a new system for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). In simple terms, BNG is an approach to development which aims to leave the natural environment in a *measurably* better state than it was beforehand. Planning policy that seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity is not new, but this latest approach focuses in more on the *measurability* aspect. Planning applications will need to quantify the different habitat types on site both before and after the proposed development using the latest Biodiversity Metric. A minimum of 10% gain in biodiversity will be required either on-site or via enhancement elsewhere. BNG is not mandatory until 2023 and its importance in the planning process will be elevated.
- 11.37 There are a number of veteran trees and areas of ancient woodland in the parish. A veteran tree is one that is of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of its age, or a tree in the ancient stage of its life or trees that are old relative to others of the same species. Ancient woodland takes



hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. The policy also seeks to protect veteran trees.

- 11.38 The policy also refers to 'wildlife corridors' which is a term used to refer to any linear feature in the landscape that can be used for the migration or dispersal of wildlife. Such corridors allow for the linking of habitats and reduce the isolation of populations. Linear features may vary and may also not be continuous however patches of natural habitat can benefit wildlife and occasionally the term 'steppingstones' is used to refer to them. The role of wildlife corridors is assuming greater importance and opportunities should be taken to create them as a consequence of new development.



POLICY

**SAX14: Protection and enhancement of natural assets**

Development proposals will be expected to protect and enhance existing ecological networks and wildlife corridors. Proposals should retain existing features of biodiversity value, associated with the Rolling Estate Claylands and Rolling Estate Sandlands Landscape Character types, where possible to do so, (including ponds, trees (including veteran trees), woodland, hedgerows, and verges).

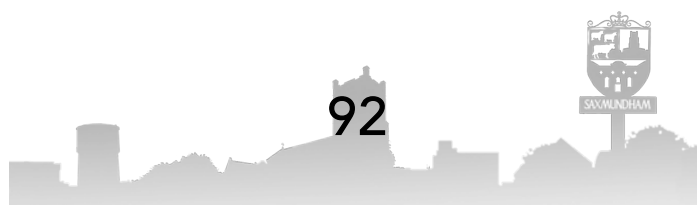
Development proposals will be supported where they provide a minimum 10 per cent net gain in biodiversity through, for example:

- a. The creation of new natural habitats.
- b. The planting of additional trees and hedgerows.
- c. The restoration and reparation of fragmented ecological networks.

Development proposals should conform to the mitigation hierarchy and seek initially to retain existing features and avoid loss or damage of biodiversity. Where loss or damage is unavoidable, the development shall provide for appropriate replacement planting or appropriate natural features on site together with a method statement for the ongoing care and maintenance of that planting. Where development proposals cause damage to identified natural features, wildlife corridors around the interruption will be constructed.

Proposals for new buildings (including non-residential development) should incorporate measures to protect and enhance wildlife species including the incorporation of wildlife friendly measures e.g., bat, swallow and swift boxes, hedgehog doors and insect bricks etc, new garden hedgerows and trees. Consideration should also be given to the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which can provide considerable benefits to wildlife.

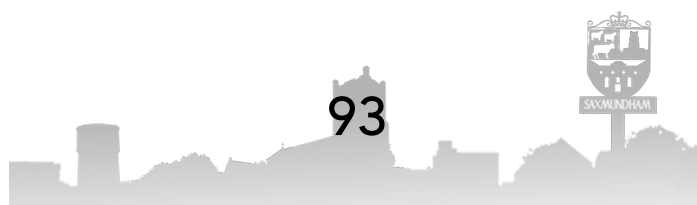
Proposals to enhance and increase the biodiversity of important spaces, including green spaces will be supported as will proposals to restore or enhance traditional hedgerows in the parish.



## Community Gardens and allotments

- 11.39 The NPPF at paragraph 131, highlights the important contribution to the character and quality of environments that can be derived from trees. They also help with mitigation and adaptation to climate change. The NPPF requires planning polices to ensure that opportunities are taken to to incorporate trees and other environmental features into developments such as parks, community orchards, community gardens and allotments. The NPPF also recognises the important beneficial contribution to health and wellbeing that access to open spaces such as communal gardens and allotments can bring to a community in addition to the opportunity to grow ones own food. New provision should be easily accessible to the community which it is intended to serve. The Neighbourhood Plan Household survey results revealed significant demand for allotments. (See paragraph 8.9)
- 11.40 As well as the provision of new community spaces, planning policies should also seek to safeguard and protect those already in existence, either because of the physical contribution they make to the character of the area or where they have a value to their community.
- 11.41 The existing community garden at the former Fromus Centre site is specifically identified for protection under **Policy SAX14** below.

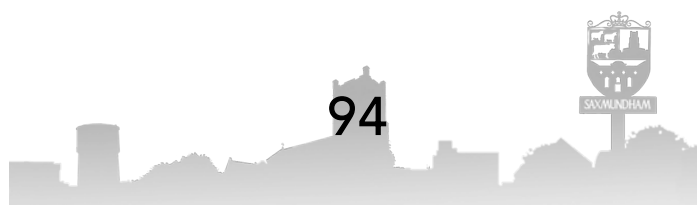
POLICY	<p><b>SAX14: Community gardens and allotments</b></p> <p>The existing community garden at the former Fromus Centre site within Saxmundham will be protected (see <b>Policy SAX15</b>).</p> <p>All new large scale residential developments should be strongly encouraged to make provision for a proportionate area of land for a community garden or allotments to allow for the opportunity for residents to grow their own food, Such spaces and any associated facilities (benches, paths) should be accessible to those with limited mobility in order to reduce the isolation of vulnerable groups..</p> <p>Where land becomes available, the provision of allotments will, in principle, be supported.</p>
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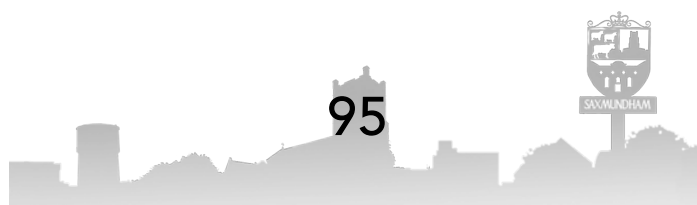
## Local Green Spaces

- 11.42 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021, at paragraphs 101-103 introduces the concept of Local Green Spaces which can be identified through neighbourhood plans by local communities and allows green areas identified as being of particular importance to be protected. Paragraph 102, sets out 3 broad criteria for identifying and designating such spaces as follows:  
'The Local Green Space designation should only be used when the green space is:
- a. in relatively close proximity to the community it serves.
  - b. 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) tranquility and richness of its wildlife: and
  - c. local in character and not an extensive tract of land'.
- 11.43 The NPPF at paragraph 103 then goes on to state that 'policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for green belts' and therefore affords them a very high level of protection. It is also clear that the designation of Local Green Spaces should not be used as a mechanism to try to block or resist development on agricultural land immediately adjacent to village development boundaries and that a successful designation must meet the criteria outlined above.
- 11.44 Such spaces can be viewed locally as equally as important as the landscape setting of an area. Such spaces are green spaces found within the built-up area that contribute to the character of a settlement. These can vary in size, shape, location, ownership and use but such spaces will have some form of value to the community particularly for benefits to mental and physical health and wellbeing and help define what makes that specific settlement what it is.
- 11.45 The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have identified a number of spaces that would meet the criteria and should be protected because of their value to the local community. Each space has been assessed against the NPPF criteria. The result is the 11 spaces shown in figure 24 and listed within **Policy SAX15**. Assessments for each one against the criteria set out in the NPPF have been carried out and these are shown in **Appendix C**.



## Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)

- 11.46 The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan identified the need for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) areas to mitigate the potential impacts of recreational disturbance on the Sandlings, Alde-Ore and Minsmere–Walberswick Special Protection Areas. The Local Plan Appropriate Assessment identifies the need for SANGS to be of high quality and design to deter visitors from popular sensitive sites, to be of a sufficient scale to deter driving to European sites and to accommodate circular walks that provide a varied and high-quality experience in terms of visual and other sensory factors. As mentioned in earlier sections, development within the District (and within the Neighbourhood Plan Area) will also be expected to contribute to the Recreation Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.
- 11.47 To reduce the impact of the proposed Garden Neighbourhood development and alongside providing for sufficient SANG areas, the Local Plan policies require significant green infrastructure provision and areas of natural green space for recreation to be integral to the layout of the Garden Neighbourhood. Reflecting the heritage sensitivities and requirements for SANG, the Local Plan sets out that any uses to be delivered on land to the east of the railway to the south of the town, are to be open space/SANG provision only, however the Local Plan does recognise that on the land east of the railway there is scope for some existing agricultural uses to remain. The Local Plan policy also indicates that the provision of open space and enhancements related to provision of SANG do not need to be confined to land to the east of the railway. Alongside this, the delivery of an integrated network of green infrastructure is expected to be provided throughout the Garden Neighbourhood.
- 11.48 The Neighbourhood Plan builds upon this strategic aim and seeks to protect an area of land to the south of the town and east of the railway line, which includes The Layers, as a significant area of SANG to perform the ‘avoidance’ function. The role of the SANG would be to provide avoidance measures for the potential impact of residential development of this kind on the SPA by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA. The effectiveness of SANG as mitigation will depend upon its location, design, and access. The SANG should be located to be easily accessible from the south of the town and access to it from the new housing area, will need to be in the north of the SANG area, where the only viable safe crossing point over the railway exists. The purpose of the SANG is twofold. It is required not only to ‘mitigate’ the new Garden Neighbourhood but also to ‘compensate’ for the change in access to the area that is currently enjoyed by residents of the town e.g. informal



recreation such as dog walking. The result must be such that the SANG is more attractive than the SPA to users of the kind that currently visit the SPA.

11.49 Natural England provides guidance on the identification and management of SANG. Given that the purpose is to make the SANG as attractive and accessible as possible for visitors there is an acknowledgement that there may be the need in the future for additional facilities to be provided, that are connected to the successful functioning of the SANG such as discreetly located car parking, visitor routes.

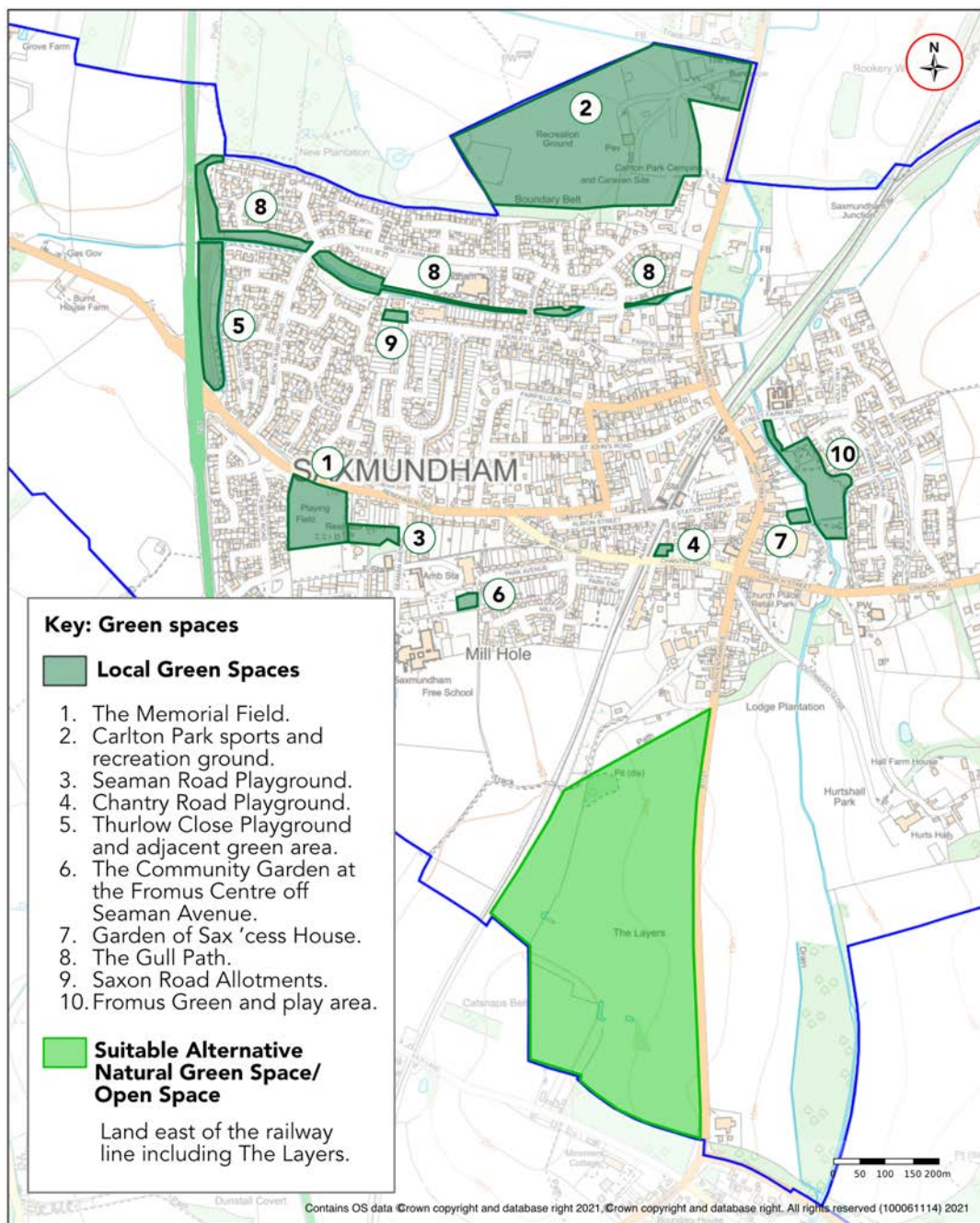


Figure 25:  
Local Green  
Spaces  
(source: Parish  
Online with  
own  
annotations).  
Blue line  
denotes parish  
boundary.

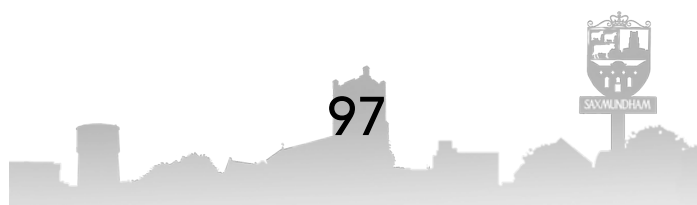
**SAX15: Green Spaces****Local Green Spaces**

The following are identified as Local Green Spaces (**figure 25**) where any proposals will be judged against the requirements which rule out development unless there are very special circumstances:

1. The Memorial Field.
2. Carlton Park sports and recreation ground.
3. Seaman Avenue Playground.
4. Chantry Road Playground.
5. Thurlow Close Playground and adjacent green area.
6. The Community Garden at the Fromus Centre off Seaman Avenue.
7. Garden of Sax'cess House.
8. The Gull Path.
9. Saxon Road Allotments.
10. Fromus Green and play area.

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)**

Land east of the Railway line and to the south of Saxmundham, including land known as The Layers is identified as an area of open space and SANG, in connection with the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood which will serve to meet the informal day to day recreational needs of both the new Garden Neighbourhood and the existing community whilst allowing for the retention of the existing uses of the land where it complements the delivery of the open space and the SANG, The location, design and access of the proposed SANG should take into account the purpose of the SANG, the need for easy and safe access to it together with potential impacts on landscape, nature conservation and heritage.





## 12. Opportunity Zones:

### Saxmundham town centre

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- 12.1 Saxmundham town centre is the historic heart of the town. It includes the High Street, Market Place and parts of North and South Entrances, together with Station Approach, Street Farm Road and Fromus Square plus Church Street which now gives access to two supermarkets. This is the centre of the town's economic and business activity, where a good variety of facilities are found.
- 12.2 The town centre is not unlike most market towns in Suffolk in that it has a range of issues and challenges to face in terms of reinforcing the retail role of the town centre in a changing retail environment, maintaining a good quality and safe environment for people to shop in and visit but at the same time catering for the demands of those visitors and local residents and businesses in relation to issues of parking, HGVs, traffic congestion, pollution and pedestrian safety.
- 12.3 Saxmundham however, does have some specific town centre issues of its own, which have been identified by the community through responses to consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan as it develops, and also reinforced as challenges by the technical work undertaken by AECOM.
- 12.4 The key physical and environmental issues for the town centre have been identified as:
- Traffic congestion in the High Street
  - Narrow carriageways making an unsafe pedestrian and cycle environment.
  - Lack of pedestrian crossings in the High Street.
  - Unauthorised on-street parking.
  - Lack of coherent signage.



- Lack of connection between High Street and surrounding open spaces.
- Station Approach feels disconnected from the town centre.
- Poor visibility at key junctions.
- Narrow pavements along the High Street hinder pedestrian flow.
- Narrow, uneven and inadequate pavements affect mobility, particularly for those with mobility difficulties.
- Limited street furniture and green elements along the High Street.

12.5 The Town Council engaged consultants AECOM in early 2021, to produce a concept Master Plan for the High Street and present some potential options and opportunities for addressing these issues that the Town Council could then take forward.

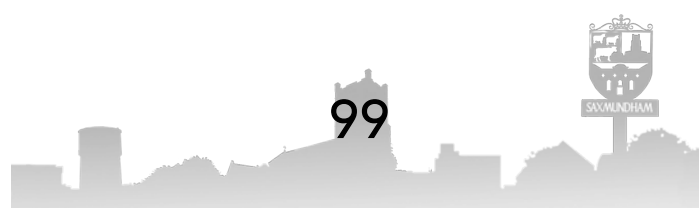
12.6 The following set of primary objectives have been developed to guide the future of the town centre and the identified Opportunity Zones.

**Objective STC1: To create an attractive and welcoming town centre with space to gather and socialise, with a pedestrian friendly environment stretching from the Station to Fromus Square and along the length of the High Street.**

**Objective STC2: To reduce the non-essential use of the High Street by motor vehicles and to prioritise pedestrian movement and safety in the centre, whilst improving and encouraging parking provision in accessible locations within walking distance of the town centre.**

**Objective STC3: To protect and enhance the historic core of the town as defined by the Conservation Area.**

12.7 Due to the interdependency of various areas of the town centre, and the wide scope of potential actors involved in potential development proposals, it is important that proposals in this area are co-ordinated. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the town centre as an 'Opportunity Zone' and proposals within the zone should contribute to the overarching town centre strategy as set out in **Policy SAXTC1** below and should be delivered having regard to this Master Planning framework.



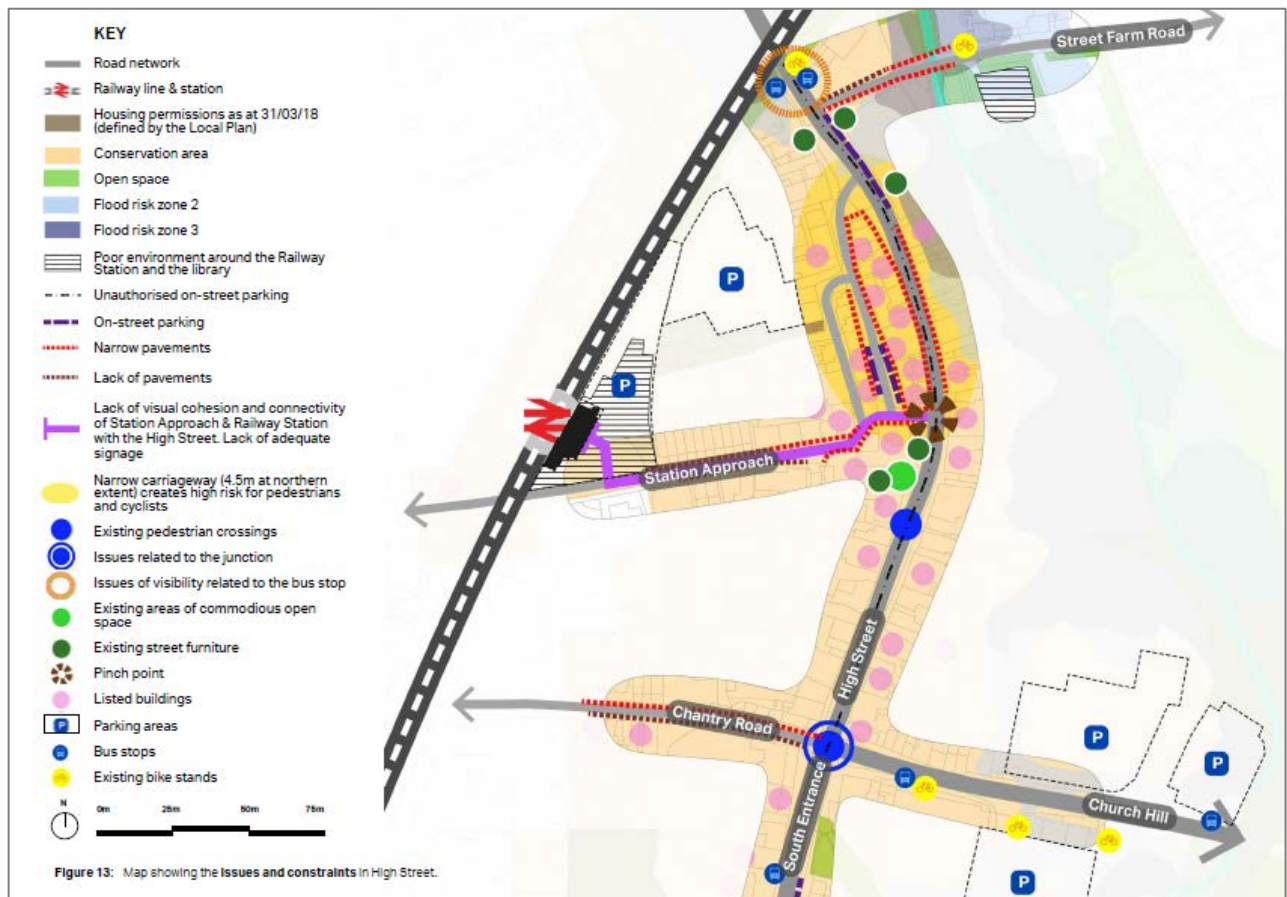


Figure 26: Issues and constraints around the High Street, Saxmundham (source: Concept masterplan for the High Street, AECOM).

### **SAXTC1: Town centre overarching strategy**

Proposals will be supported that contribute to achieving a vibrant and bustling town centre comprising a healthy mix of retail, service sector, business, entertainment, cultural and residential uses.

Proposals should have regard to the advice contained within the Concept Masterplan for the High Street as set out in **Appendix F**.

Development proposals in and around the High Street will be supported where (if otherwise appropriate) they contribute to the following aims, as appropriate:

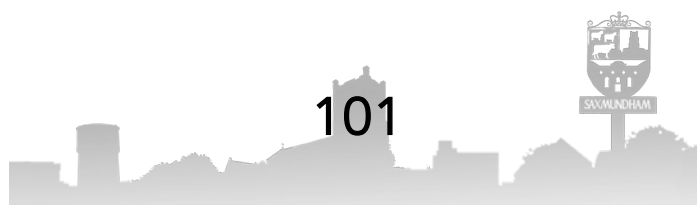
- a. Reinforce the area's distinctiveness and attractive character as a location where pedestrian activity is prioritised and users have a high sense of safety and belonging.
- b. Ensure the impact of vehicular traffic is relatively low and frontage servicing is minimised.
- c. Support good connectivity between the different areas of the town centre by creating a pedestrian friendly environment.
- d. Enhance the focal point around the Market Hall and The Bell Hotel as a desirable meeting place.
- e. Enhance of the appearance of the frontage of the Market Hall as an important landmark building, which contributes to the character of the town centre.

Development proposals that improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other town centre users will be supported that:

- f. Provide for parking within easy walking distance from the town centre to encourage walking.
- g. Improve provision for cyclists both in terms of access and for cycle parking.
- h. Enhance the visual appearance of the High Street through the use of an increased number of 'Street trees.'

Proposals will not be supported where they would be detrimental to these aims.

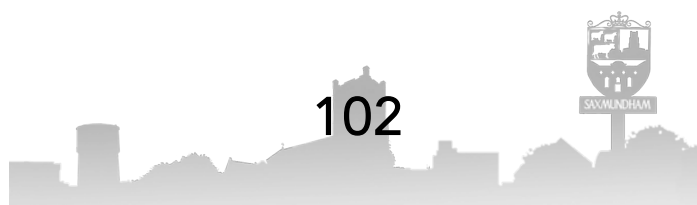
See also **Policy SAX10: Historic Town Centre and Conservation Area**.



## Station area Opportunity Zone

**Objective STC4: To encourage the economic and environmental regeneration of the station area Opportunity Zone via a masterplan led approach, which encourages mixed-use development of underused and derelict land, and improves the attractiveness of Station Approach as a route for pedestrians and cyclists.**

- 12.8 Saxmundham Railway Station sits to the west of the High Street and is linked to it by Station Approach. This area creates the impression of being slightly disconnected from the town centre and has historically suffered from poor public realm, although some significant environmental improvements have recently taken place in the immediate Station environs which address the latter issue.
- 12.9 The Railway Station will be treated as another type of gateway into the town centre offering a pleasant and welcoming environment with appropriate signage to navigate people around. The station area has significant potential to improve car parking within the town. The Station parking and the District Council's car parking area to the north could be connected or merged to increase public parking capacity in the town centre and also free up the outdoor space in front of the Railway Station building. The level difference between the two car parking areas will need to be taken into account in the design.
- 12.10 The area also provides the opportunity for a public square at the Railway Station with seating areas, shops and information centre and could form part of a wider development opportunity.
- 12.11 There are also opportunities in this zone to promote the regeneration of areas of brownfield, and underused land. An area of land around the station bordered by St John's Road to the north, which includes land either side of the Railway line, the station area itself, the unpaved private car park and the current Saxmundham Town Council offices to the south off Station Approach has been identified in **Policy SAXSA1** below as an 'Opportunity Zone' which has the potential for a mixed development opportunity for a broad range of uses including, housing, commercial, community and retail uses, together with environmental and public realm improvements. Detailed proposals would need to come forward through a holistic masterplan process (for the whole or substantial part of the area) involving existing landowners and economic



operators, and with community engagement. The area is partly within, and otherwise abuts, the Conservation Area, and appropriate design will be fundamental to any proposals in this area.

**POLICY**

**SAXSA1: Station area Opportunity Zone**

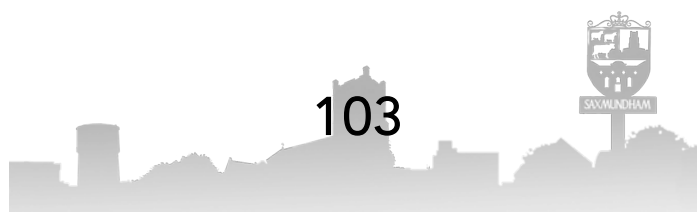
Development proposals in and around the station area (**figure 27**) should as appropriate, seek:

- i. To improve the overall setting of the station.
- ii. To enable people to easily transfer between sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, bus, rail and taxi).
- iii. To improve bus and coach access to the station area with the longer-term aim to divert heavy traffic away from the narrow streets around the station.
- iv. To create public access from St John's Road to the Station.
- v. To contribute to the economic vitality and viability of the town.

Proposals that would result in visual and environmental improvements in this Opportunity Zone will be supported together with proposals that would increase connectivity with the town centre and the other areas of the town.

Support is given for proposals that would, as appropriate:

- a. Include public realm improvements, including improvements to the carriageway and the incorporation of traffic calming measures that would enable the creation of a more comfortable and welcoming space.
- b. Provide improved connectivity to the town centre (see also **SAXTC1c**)
- c. Provide for an outdoor meeting space/sitting space/public square adjacent to the railway station.
- d. Improve provision for cyclists for example, by providing, safe, attractive and convenient links to the station, with secure and conveniently located cycle parking.
- e. Include new mixed uses (including commercial/office/workshops) and an information point adjacent to the railway station.
- f. Improve access to the station area for buses and coaches.
- g. Include visual improvements to the area in the form of increased provision of street trees, use of soft landscaping and rationalised signage.
- h. Improve directional signage to link the railway station and the town centre for pedestrians.





**Mixed-use development opportunity**

The Station Area Opportunity Zone, (figure 27) will be enhanced as a gateway to the town and promoted as a key development opportunity for mixed uses including housing, commercial and community uses. Subject to Master Planning, proposals for the development and enhancement for part or the whole of the area will be welcomed.

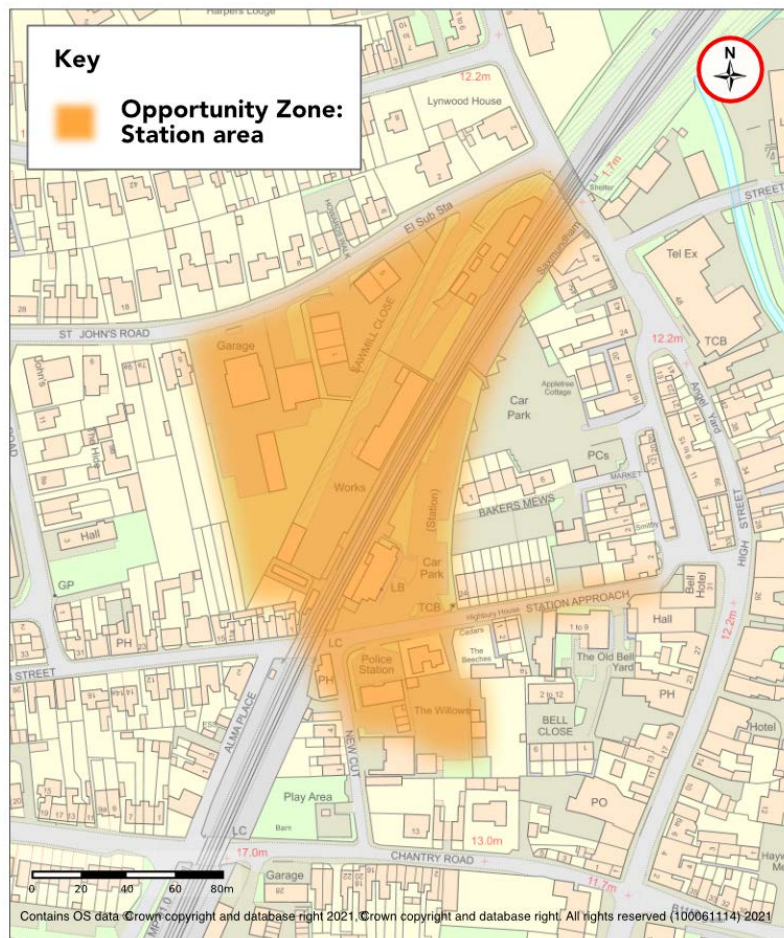
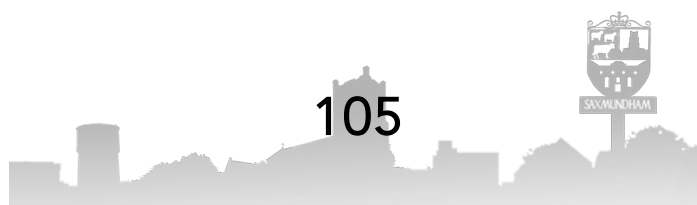


Figure 27: Station area Opportunity Zone (source: Parish Online with own annotations).

**Street Farm Road Opportunity Zone**

12.12 Street Farm Road lies to the north-east of the town centre and east of the railway line. The junction of Street Farm Road with the High Street is dominated by the former Royal Mail/BT building which sits on the south of the junction and fronts onto the High Street. On the north side of the junction is the Saxmundham Hand Car Wash which uses a range of buildings that were formerly part of the Bus Garage and a yard accessed from the High Street.

- 12.13 Street Farm Road is a narrow road of uncertain land ownership which runs east from the High Street along the side of the Royal Mail building. To the rear of the car wash is the library, forming part of the buildings owned and operated by Suffolk County Council, and immediately opposite, between the Royal Mail building and the Fromus Veterinary Group, is an area of undeveloped land owned by BT Openreach which is largely used as a temporary materials store and for informal car parking. These areas are identified as an Opportunity Zone with some potential for development particularly if that would bring about visual enhancements to the area. Both areas have some potential for flooding and therefore any proposals would need to take account of this.
- 12.14 The zone's location at the north end of the town centre and its visual prominence at the junction of the High Street, indicate that it could be suitable for a development comprising public car parking at the front and commercial and employment uses to the rear. It also offers scope for environmental and visual improvements.
- 12.15 The area opposite the library that is currently used as a materials store has significant potential to provide an overall visual and environmental enhancement to the area due to its proximity to the riverside walk and offering potential as open space and recreational benefits associated with the riverside. The area could easily provide a flexible communal space for events and picnics together with significant environmental benefits in the form of a visual enhancement to the area through public realm improvements, structural planting and landscaping.



## POLICY

**SAXSFR1: Street Farm Road Opportunity Zone**

Two areas are identified in Street Farm Road as having the potential to provide for development and environmental enhancement which would improve the visual appearance and character of the area (**figure 28**):

- **Site 1:** the site of the former Bus Garage, currently used as a hand car wash, is identified for development consisting predominantly of the provision of public car parking (including provision for electrical car charging) to serve the town centre at the front of the site, with commercial and employment uses to the rear.
- **Site 2:** the site opposite the library and currently used as a material store and informal car parking, is identified for a flexible community open space with links to the riverside walk providing environmental and visual enhancements.

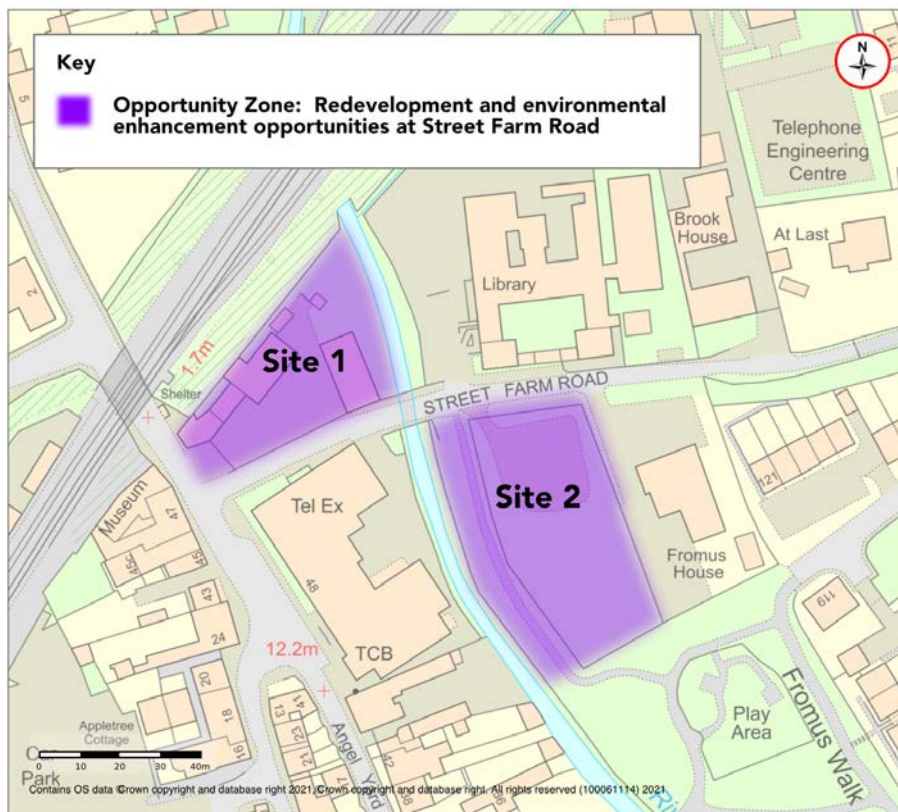


Figure 28:  
Development and environmental enhancement opportunities at Street Farm Road Opportunity Zone (source: Parish Online with own annotations).

## Fromus Square Opportunity Zone

- 12.16 Fromus Square is set well back and east of the High Street, adjacent to the Waitrose supermarket on Church Street. It provides a pedestrian 'cut through' from the Waitrose car park fronting Church Street, along the side of the supermarket building and onto the High Street. The area is not visually prominent and as it does not have a street frontage is potentially considerably underused. It is not sign-posted from either direction nor does the visual appearance of its direct access onto the High Street encourage pedestrians to use it. The area has archaeological potential, and there is high potential for the discovery of below ground heritage assets within the site. Proposals for development here may need to secure a programme of archaeological investigation and reporting. In addition the area lies within an area of floodrisk which will also need to be taken into account.
- 12.17 However it does provide a potentially attractive, area for retail or hospitality together with a safe and useable community space with a pedestrian priority. It has recently attracted important new retail and hospitality businesses. The area is identified as an Opportunity Zone which could accommodate a range of events including market stalls and seasonal events but could also be suitable for outdoor seating and dining for uses such as cafes, bars restaurants or galleries. The area would benefit from public realm improvements such as planting and paving, together with better signage and connections to enhance its presence and encourage users to find it.



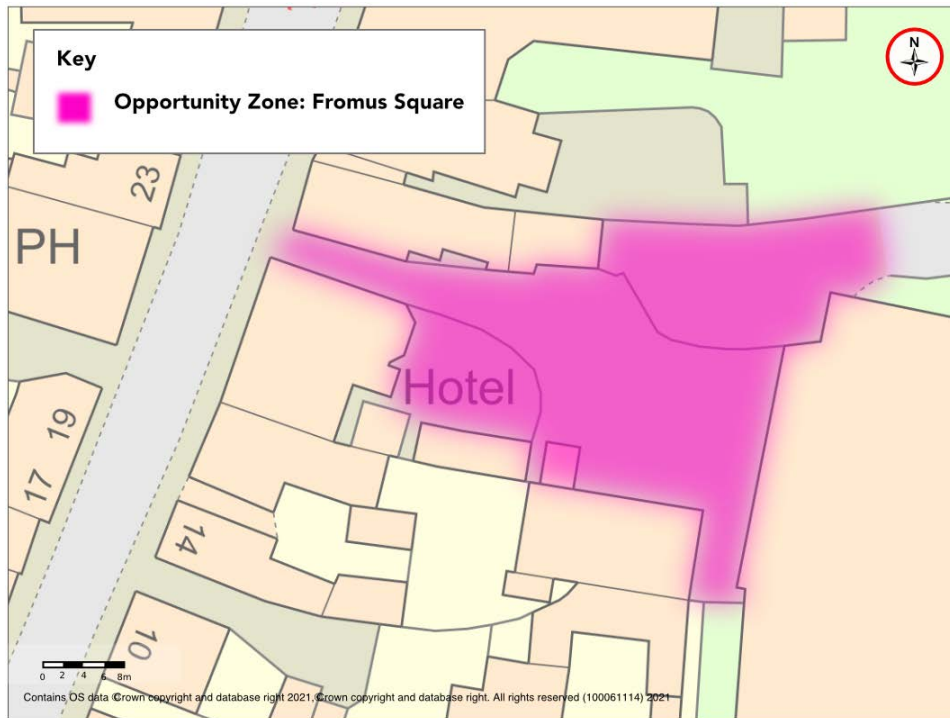


Figure 29: Fromus Square Opportunity Zone (source: Parish Online with own annotations).

POLICY

**SAXFS1: Fromus Square Opportunity Zone**

Proposals that would provide environmental and visual enhancements (including hard and soft landscaping improvements) to the overall character of Fromus Square (**figure 29**) will be supported.

Proposals which would enhance the retail, hospitality and leisure use of the area, whilst preserving its character, including those for provision of retail, restaurant, café/bar use, and/or facilitate its use for market purposes and enhance its overall visual quality will be supported.

Proposals to improve access to the square from Waitrose and its car park, to and from the town centre, and to and from the residential areas north of Church Hill, will be supported in principle.



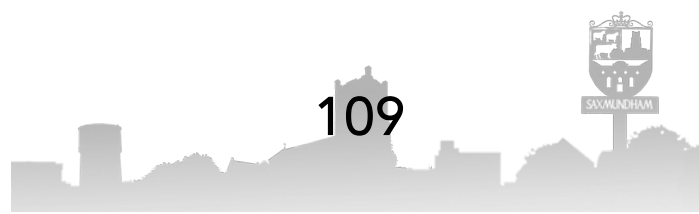


## 13. Opportunity Zone: Former Fromus Centre and Community Garden

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**Objective FFC1:** To support good quality development of the area for specialist and other housing purposes and for community use, in particular safeguarding the community garden, and offering improved pedestrian access to and permeability within the site.

- 13.1 The former Fromus Centre Site is located east of Seaman Avenue and to the rear of the Ambulance Station, which itself is located opposite the Fire Station. The centre currently consists of a community building set in an area of open space. It was originally a residential centre for people with special needs, run by Suffolk County Council, which still owns the site. The site includes a Community Garden, which has been created (from a former overgrown kitchen garden site) by local residents to grow food locally and for community benefit purposes.
- 13.2 Vehicular access to the site is from Seaman Avenue via a loop road next to the Ambulance Station, although it is bordered to the east by residential development on Park Avenue there is no vehicular access from this direction.
- 13.3 There is a public path immediately to the north of the site which runs east from Seaman Avenue across the top of the site and comes out on to Mill Road. It is a narrow footpath, relatively well used but not well waymarked. There is also a



second footpath of mainly poor quality at present on the eastern edge of the site and running north-south, also adjoining the Free School playing fields and into the area that is due to be the Garden Neighbourhood.

- 13.4 It is understood that the County Council is considering options for the re-development of the site mainly for housing purposes including specialist housing to accommodate people with a specific identified need, as well as private housing for sale. The County Council has in principle agreed to preserve the Community Garden with some vehicular access in its present location.
- 13.5 The area is identified as a potential Opportunity Zone where development of the site provides the opportunity to provide environmental benefits in addition to those social benefits that would accrue, in particular, from the development of specialist housing. Such benefits would include retaining the existing community garden (**See Policy SAX15**), offer greater public access and permeability through the site. Opportunities for greater connectivity between areas of the town could also be created through the improvement of the adjacent footpaths and their potential enhancement into a shared use cycleway, encouraging greater connectivity.
- 13.6 The zone has been identified as having archaeological potential and therefore any proposals will need to take this into account.

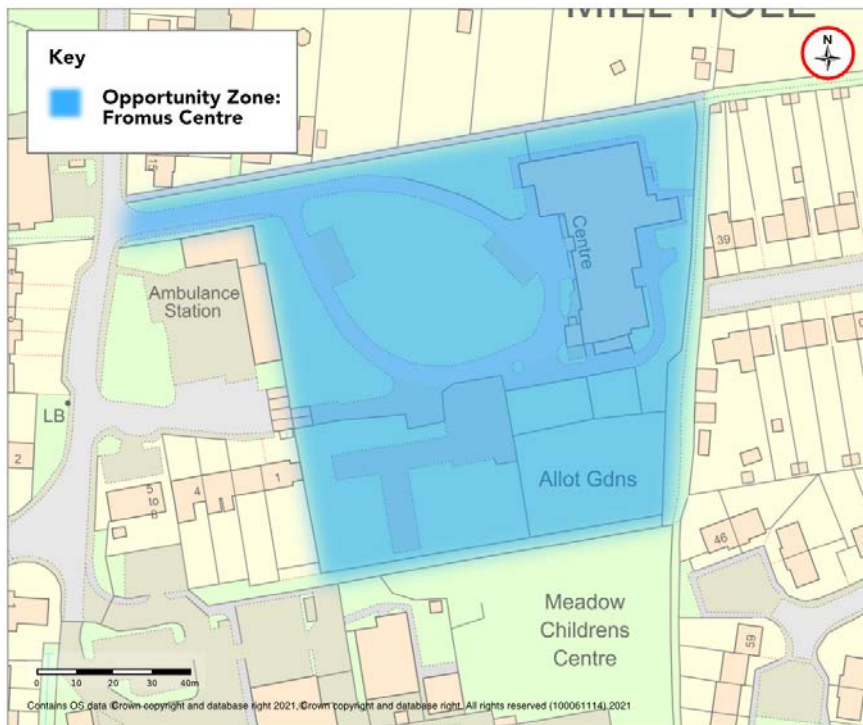


Figure 30: Former Fromus Centre Opportunity ZOne (source: Parish Online with own annotations).

POLICY

**SAXFC1: Former Fromus Centre site and Community Garden Opportunity Zone**

Proposals that would provide an area of housing and open space that includes provision for a significant element of specialist housing including for those with identified special needs will be supported on this site (**figure 30**).

Proposals should retain the existing Community Garden as an undeveloped open space.

Layout and design should provide for appropriate levels of public access and increased permeability by pedestrians and cyclists through the site.

Proposals should provide for improved foot and cycle links between the zone, the town and the Garden Neighbourhood.

In particular, support is given for:

- i. Improved pedestrian links, including public footpath improvements at the north and east of the zone .
- ii. Provision for cyclists at the southeast corner of the zone as far north as Park Avenue, with improvements to the current north-south public footpath.







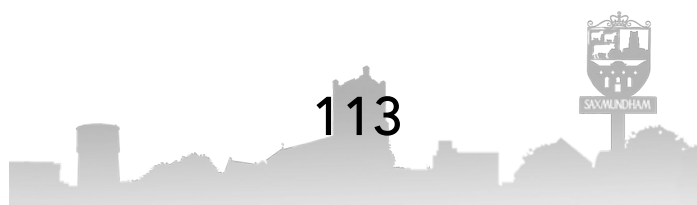
St JOHN'S  
WELCOMES  
YOU



# 14. Actions/statements of intent by Saxmundham Town Council

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- 14.1 These statements of intent are included in the Neighbourhood Plan to show the Town Council's commitment to taking action within its powers and resources, or bringing its influence to bear, on matters which are outside the planning system, but which are nevertheless vital to the achievement of the overall vision. They will be carried out over the lifetime of the plan.
- 14.2 For Saxmundham to be a **thriving and prosperous town** it needs a healthy business community, adequate public parking to support the local economy, and easy and reliable access for those without private transport. To this end the Town Council will:
- i. Promote and support a business network for the town in consultation with local businesses and East Suffolk Council's economic development team. It will also review the options for the historic weekly market. This includes the engagement of a part-time Town Centre Coordinator, to work with local businesses to promote the town's 'offer'.
  - ii. Promote a varied programme of events and activities in the town centre for all ages, to encourage its use and enjoyment by residents and visitors.
  - iii. Work with The District and County Councils to investigate a) improved short term parking in the town b) the provision of parking bays for quick pull in and deliveries and c) consideration of the introduction of residents' parking permits, where there is support from residents.
  - iv. Encourage East Suffolk Council and Greater Anglia to explore ways of linking their carparks to improve accessibility for commuters.
  - v. Encouragement and support will be given to improved bus services, and the possibility of a new intra town service will be investigated.
- 14.3 **A safe and healthy** Saxmundham requires adequate social, community and leisure provision to meet the needs of the residents. The Town Council will:
- i. Undertake consultation with the community on whether/what types of further indoor sports provision is required, what form(s) it should take, and where it might be provided. Work in partnership with public and private sector bodies to identify funding (including CIL) to support the delivery of the preferred option.





- ii. Lobby for and support initiatives for new or expanded medical facilities.
- iii. Support the establishment of The Layers and the land to the east of the railway as a public open space/country park/SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) as included in the ESC Local Plan, for use by the whole community, and (through the natural greening of the whole site) work towards increasing its biodiversity.
- iv. Develop an overall green infrastructure plan for the town and the rural parts of the parish. To be progressively implemented with support from local interest groups, landowners and ESC.
- v. Create a comprehensive circular walk around the town.
- vi. Investigate initiatives to improve facilities for cyclists, including, but not limited to:
  - a) a review of the three communities cycle route and its possible expansion to include additional routes through and around the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood.
  - b) the provision of a safe cycle link from Benhall to Saxmundham and on to Kelsale, using existing rights of way and/or inside the existing hedgerow along the B1121.
  - c) ensure that enough and safe cycle parking and storage facilities are available within the town.
- vii. Lobby for and, within resources, work to implement footpath widening and other relevant measures to improve pedestrian safety along Rendham Road.
- viii. Continue to support voluntary and other organisations which provide community and social facilities within the town, in particular for young people and children, and for those sections of the community who are vulnerable or isolated or have special needs. Where possible, the Council will seek to promote more effective coordination of such services for the parish
- ix. Work to secure or enhance for the community of Saxmundham a full range of public and community facilities and services to meet the growing population of the town and its environs.

14.4 To maintain Saxmundham's **distinctive character and attractive environment**, and further enhance it, the Town Council will:

- i. Support and promote proposals for traffic calming and environmental improvements in the town centre including the station area, in order to
  - a) reduce traffic speeds in the town centre, b) reduce the number of HGVs using the town centre (except for deliveries and loading) c) remove illegal parking particularly pavement parking, d) improve the



- safety and environment for pedestrians, cyclists and those with reduced mobility.
- ii. Support the renovation of 32 High Street commercial property and archway and creation of an attractive approach to the riverside in the town centre.
  - iii. Support improvement to and greening of the pathway connecting Fromus Square to the Fromus bridge and to the housing estate.
  - iv. Work for the upgrading of the Market Hall's frontage, seeking grant funding.
  - v. Implement agreed plans for the redesign and environmental upgrade of the Memorial Field.
- 14.5 Note: the above statements of intent are not intended to be comprehensive; the Town Council will seek to take the above and other steps as practicable and as prioritised, to support the full realisation of the Neighbourhood Plan's vision, objectives and policies, within its resources and competences.









# 15. Implementation and monitoring

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## Implementation

- 15.1 The Plan will be realised through a combination of policies, promotions and projects. The planning policies contained in the Plan will be enforced by the East Suffolk Council. The Town Council's role is to bring its influence to bear on matters which lie outside the control of the planning system, but which are of vital importance to the life of the town and the achievement of the vision. The Town Council will support and encourage proposals which further the aims of the plan, it will promote and encourage and facilitate co-operative working and partnership between public and private interests and lobby for change where this furthers the vision for the town.
- 15.2 Through the development of the Neighbourhood Plan a number of actions/projects have been identified which lie outside the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan policies but nevertheless are important issues to local residents and therefore require attention. These are outlined below:

## Monitoring

- 15.3 It is good practice for Neighbourhood Plans to undergo a formal review process in consultation with the local community and the relevant District Council at a minimum of every five years, to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan is still current and remains a positive planning tool to deliver sustainable growth. In order to determine when a review is necessary, the Town Council will monitor development in the parish along with local and national planning policy and in the appropriate legislative context.
- 15.4 It is anticipated the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan will require review during its life and that it will be the role of the Town Council to update the Neighbourhood Plan at the appropriate time. It is possible that further development will take place during the Neighbourhood Plan period (2020 – 2036).



- 15.5 Any review will provide an opportunity to reassess the town's housing and economic markets and to resolve some of the bigger issues surrounding development in and around the town including the Garden Neighbourhood and the Town Centre.







# Appendix

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## Appendix A: Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members

- **Christine Buttery (vice-chair)**, Local resident
- **Diana Eastman**, Town Councillor
- **John Findlay (vice-chair)**, Town Councillor
- **Lyn Jardine**, Local resident
- **Tim Lock**, Town Councillor
- **Stephen Palmer**, Local resident
- **Jeremy Smith (chair)**, Town Councillor

### Observer

- **John Fisher**, District and Town Councillor

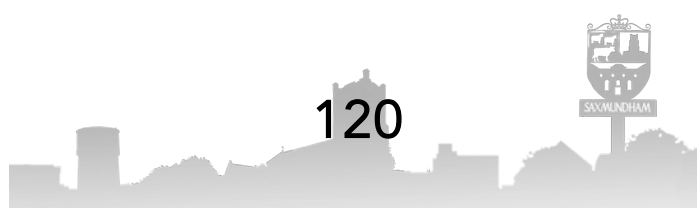
### Supported by

- **Roz Barnett**, Town Clerk
- **Jennifer Morcom**, Assistant Town Clerk

### Independent Consultants

- **Andrea Long**, Compasspoint Planning
- **Rachel Leggett**, Rachel Leggett & Associates

Thanks also to the following who have served as Members of the Steering Group:  
Peter Ewart, Roger Plant and Emma Ratzer.



## Appendix B: Justification for Non-designated Heritage Assets

The table below outlined the justification for the inclusion of important character buildings and historic features. The criteria is based on the 'Local Heritage Listing: Historic England Advice Note 7', page 9.

1. The United Reformed Church, Chapel Road and its graveyard	
Age	Founded in 1844, this building erected in 1850.
Rarity	NA.
Aesthetic interest	Local landmark.
Group value	NA.
Archaeological interest	Graveyard is on the Suffolk Monuments Record (SXM 025).
Historic interest	Originally a Congregational church, now United Reformed Church.
Landmark status	Imposing and prominent. Visible from outside the town.




Figure 31: The United Reformed Church , Chapel Road.

2. The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road	
Age	1915 with later additions up to WWII. Closed in 1995.
Rarity	Fairly rare survivor.
Aesthetic interest	NA.
Group value	Close to the United Reformed Church
Archaeological interest	None identified.
Historic interest	Town history.
Landmark status	Town history and WWII associations.





Figure 32: The Old Fire Station, Rendham Road.

### 3. Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance

Age	1785.
Rarity	Rare, surviving Toll Gate on the former London to Gt Yarmouth turnpike.
Aesthetic interest	Striking reddish exterior and wooden cladding construction; altered.
Group value	May have originally been part of a group.
Archaeological interest	None known.
Historic interest	A toll house operated by the Ipswich to South Town Turnpike Trust from 1785.
Landmark status	Marks the entrance to the town from the north.



Figure 33: Toll Gate Cottage, North Entrance.

4. The Layers	
<b>Age</b>	The Layers is so called because farmers would bring their livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens etc) to Saxmundham Livestock Market (which was situated on the current Waitrose site). Prior to going to the market, the livestock would be “laid up” on The Layers in an assortment of pens and enclosures.
<b>Rarity</b>	Potentially the largest area of unrecorded archaeological interest in the parish.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Provides important undeveloped southern entrance to the town and makes significant contribution to its rural setting.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	Archaeological finds across the site. According to the Historic Environment Record held by Suffolk County Council , Geophysical survey in The Layers provided evidence for significant archaeological activity in the east of the site. Anomalies relating to a trackway and adjoining settlement are present. There is evidence for enclosure ditches and possible sub-enclosures and there are discrete responses present that could be related to the remains of the structures or areas of burning or industrial activities. There is a change in the background magnetic responses in the east of the area that is suggestive of a change to, or an increase in the amount of alluvial deposits, presumably associated with the adjacent watercourse.
<b>Historic interest</b>	<p>The area of land where stockmen would ‘lay-up’ their stock prior to the biweekly livestock sale. From 1831 – 1939 , Saxmundham also hosted the annual Suffolk Show a total of 14 times. Used as a camping ground by the 6<sup>th</sup> Suffolk cyclists during the Great War. On the southern edge of the layers at Kiln Lane, Bigsby’s Corner, there still stands the former “Pest House”, originally known as “The Small-Pox House”. This is where inhabitants of Saxmundham were put in quarantine if they were suffering from infectious diseases.</p> <p>This was also used during WW1 for housing for Italian POWs. During the First World War, The Layers was used for temporary military accommodation by the army.</p> <p>In WWII, The Layers became an important landmark of national and international history when plans were put in place for the D</p>



	<p>Day Landings and the need to deliver armoured vehicles that could clear mines and other coastal defences</p> <p>Winston Churchill personally selected Major General Percy Hobart to head up the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division. Hobart chose to base the 79<sup>th</sup> Armoured Division at Hurts Hall. The peculiar looking vehicles became known as “Hobarts Funnies”. They were first tested on The Layers before being trialled at Fritton Lake, Orford and Shingle Street. It was because of this that Churchill, Montgomery and General Eisenhower (supreme allied commander of Allied Forces in Europe) all visited Saxmundham in January 1944. They came to inspect “Hobart’s Funnies” and to plan for the Normandy Landings.</p>
<b>Landmark status</b>	Historical associations from medieval times to WWII and acts as an important undeveloped entrance to the town and provides the setting of the south entrance.



Figure 34: The Layers.

5. Milestone/post on the B1121	
<b>Age</b>	18th or 19th century.
<b>Rarity</b>	Fairly rare.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Simple milestone. Alternative spelling of town’s name – Saxmundum. London 89. Woodbridge 12, Ipswich 20, Lowestoft 24.
<b>Group value</b>	NA.
<b>Archaeological interest</b>	At one time had a cast iron face made by Garretts of Ipswich, now lost. The stone may pre-date this.
<b>Historic interest</b>	On the Ipswich and South Town turnpike an historic coaching route from London to Lowestoft.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Associations with the historic route from London to Lowestoft.



Figure 35: Milestone/post on B1121.

#### 6. The Pill Box on the Memorial Field

Age	WWII.
Rarity	Noted as a last survivor.
Aesthetic interest	Hexagonal pillbox.
Group value	NA.
Archaeological interest	On Suffolk Monuments Record (SXM 027), 'pillbox at Saxmundham, the last survivor from the nodal point defences' (A guide to Second World War Archaeology in Suffolk – Guide 4, Stope Lines. Robert Liddiard and David Sims).
Historic interest	WWII interest.
Landmark status	Formed part of the coastal defences in WWII.



Figure 36: The Pill Box on the Memorial Field.

## 7. The War Memorial in Fromus Square

Age	2004.
Rarity	Not rare.
Aesthetic interest	Cornish granite.
Group value	NA.
Archaeological interest	NA.
Historic interest	WWI and WWII interest.
Landmark status	Focus of Remembrance Day Ceremony.



Figure 37: The War Memorial in Fromus Square.

**8. The Town Pump**

Age	1838 cast by Garretts of Leiston.
Rarity	Only recorded pump.
Aesthetic interest	NA.
Group value	None.
Archaeological interest	NA.
Historic interest	Given to the town by William Long of Hurts Hall.
Landmark status	Was the source of water for the town prior to the arrival of piped water.



Figure 38: The Town Pump.

**9. The Gannon Institute, but generally known as The Gannon Rooms**

Age	<i>Circa 1900.</i>
Rarity	Constructed specifically as a one off to benefit the town.
Aesthetic interest	Significant details on end gables and over windows.
Group value	None.
Archaeological interest	NA.
Historic interest	WWI interest, was used as a VAD hospital.
Landmark status	A charitable Trust founded for the benefit of the residents of Saxmundham.





Figure 39: The Gannon Institute, but generally known as The Gannon Rooms.

#### 10. The Water Tower, Rendham Road

Age	1952.
Rarity	One of the tallest water towers in East Anglia, standing at over 200ft.
Aesthetic interest	Constructed in concrete, but unique in design as all water towers are. No two are exactly the same.
Group value	NA.
Archaeological interest	An important part of Britain's engineering heritage.
Historic interest	Replaced the water pump as a means of storing water for the town and guarantees water pressure when demand increases at peak times.
Landmark status	Situated at the highest point in the Town. Visible from miles around, whether approaching Saxmundham from any direction by foot, bicycle, car or train.



Figure 40: The Water Tower, Rendham Road.



### 11. The Telephone Exchange, High Street

<b>Age</b>	1950s.
<b>Rarity</b>	An iconic example of 1950's industrial architecture.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Designed by Thomas Winterburn, one of the ten architects associated with the Festival of Britain movement.
<b>Historic interest</b>	Functioned as a busy working post office and telephone exchange until the 1970's.



Figure 41: The Telephone Exchange, High Street.

### 12. Victorian Post Box at the Station

<b>Age</b>	c1856
<b>Rarity</b>	Rare, has an unusual internal flap to keep the post dry, unfortunately damaged in recent refurbishment.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with VR and Crown
<b>Group Value</b>	One of a small number of prominent letterboxes in the town in key locations.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by Smith and Hawkes Broad Street, Birmingham
<b>Landmark status</b>	Integral part of the original station building



Figure 42: Victorian Post Box at the Station.

### 13. Saxmundham Goods Shed

Age	<i>Circa 1859.</i>
Rarity	Common at the peak of the railway era, however, has rarity value as many have been lost.
Aesthetic interest	Typical or railway architecture at that time.
Group Value	Part of the station complex, a key group of buildings in the town centre.
Archaeological Interest	NA.
Historical interest	Part of the station complex, a key group of buildings in the town centre.
Landmark status	Identified in the Conservation Appraisal as an unlisted building which makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.



Figure 43: Saxmundham Goods Shed.

**14. Victorian Post Box at South Entrance**

<b>Age</b>	Late 19 <sup>th</sup> Century
<b>Rarity</b>	Common at their peak of Victoria's reign however, rarity value increasing over time
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with VR and crown
<b>Group Value</b>	One of a small number of prominent letterboxes in the town in key locations.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by W.T. Allen and Co London.
<b>Landmark status</b>	Prominent location in a wall at the south entrance



Figure 44: Victorian Post-box at South entrance

**15. George V post-box North Entrance**

<b>Age</b>	1932
<b>Rarity</b>	Common at the peak of George V's reign.
<b>Aesthetic interest</b>	Embossed with crown and GR
<b>Group Value</b>	Built into a significant old wall. The wall is identified in the Conservation Appraisal as being of importance.
<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	NA.
<b>Historical interest</b>	Manufactured by W.T. Allen and Co London
<b>Landmark status</b>	Prominent location in a wall identified as having heritage value.




Figure 45: George V post-box at north entrance.





## Appendix C: Justification for Local Green Spaces

The table below outlines the justification for the inclusion of each Local Green Space identified. The criteria are based on paragraph 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021).

1. The Memorial Field	
<b>Description:</b> The Memorial Field is owned by Saxmundham Town Council and was established after the First World War as a memorial to those who lost their lives.	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Memorial Field is within a residential area of the town on the Rendham Road
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The Memorial Field is a well-used recreation ground with a skate park and scout hut. It is used for fun fairs and other one-off community events.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	It is in character with a town recreational space and is not an extensive tract of land
	
Figure 46: The Memorial Field.	

2. Carlton Park	
<b>Description:</b> Carlton Park is a sportsground owned and run by Saxmundham Sports and Recreational Club.	
<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Carlton Park is adjacent to the northern boundary of the built-up area of the town. It is only partly within the parish of Saxmundham.

<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Carlton Park is an essential feature of town life providing sports pitches, tennis courts, a bowling green and an adventure playground (NEAP standard). The site is designated in the East Suffolk Local Plan as 'historic parkland'
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Carlton Park is approximately 11 hectares in total which when considered in the context of the overall area of the town is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.
 <p>Figure 47: Carlton Park.</p>	

### 3. Seaman Avenue Playground

**Description:** Seaman Avenue playground is a Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) and is owned by Saxmundham Town Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The playground is within a residential area and close to the Free School.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The playground is an essential feature of town life, providing facilities for 8 -14-year-olds, including a teenage shelter.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The playground is in character with a town playground and is approximately 2 hectares in size.



Figure 48: Seaman Avenue Playground.

#### 4. Chantry Road Playground

**Description:** Chantry Road Playground is a Local Area for {Play (LAP) and is owned by Saxmundham Town Council.

In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	Chantry Road Playground is adjacent to the town centre.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	The playground is an essential feature of town life providing facilities for 4 – 6-year-olds.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	The playground is in character with a town recreational space and is approximately 0.5 hectares and not an extensive tract of land.



Figure 49: Chantry Road Playground.



### 5. Thurlow Close Playground

**Description:** Thurlow Close Playground is a Local Area for Play (LAP) and is owned by East Suffolk Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Thurlow Close playground is within a large housing estate.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Thurlow Close playground provides facilities close to home for 4–6-year-olds.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	Thurlow Close Playground is in character with a residential area recreation space and surrounding green area and is approximately 1.12 hectares in size and is not an extensive tract of land.



Figure 50: Thurlow Close Playground.

### 6. The Community Garden at the Fromus Centre

**Description:** The community garden has plots cultivated by local residents. It is owned by Suffolk County Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Community Garden is situated within a residential area and close to the school.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and</b>	The Community Garden was created by residents to help offset food miles and produce locally grown food.

holds a particular local significance	
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	It is local in character (approximately 0.1 hectares) and not an extensive tract of land.
 <p>Figure 51: The Community Garden at the Fromus Centre.</p>	

7. Garden of Sax 'cess House	
<b>Description:</b> The garden of Sax 'cess House is a community garden run by the Access Community Trust.	
In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves	The garden is in the town centre.
Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance	The garden is for all to enjoy and also provides support and activities for the disadvantaged and isolated.
Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land	The garden is in character with a town centre location and is not an extensive tract of land (Approximately 0.1 hectares).





Figure 52: Garden of Sax 'cess House.

## 8. Gull Stream path

**Description:** The Gull Stream path is an enhanced public footpath owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	The Gull Stream Path passes through a large area of housing
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	The Gull Stream path provides a wildlife corridor, areas of SUDS and an alternative route to the centre of town away from traffic.
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The Gull Stream Path is local in character and not an extensive tract of land.(Approximately 1 hectare)



Figure 53: Gull Stream path.

## 9. Saxon Road allotments

**Description:** Allotments owned by Housing Association for use by Housing Association tenants.

<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Located within the built-up area and surrounded by residential development
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Community value through their use as allotments by the Housing Association tenants
<b>Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land</b>	The allotments are local in character and not an extensive tract of land. Approximately 0.03 acres.



Figure 54: Saxon Road allotments.

## 11. Fromus Green and Play Area

**Description:** Fromus Green and Play Area is an open amenity space and includes a children's play area. It is owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council.

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<b>In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves</b>	Fromus Green is in the town centre between the High Street and Hopkins Homes housing estate.
<b>Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance</b>	Fromus Green is an essential feature of the town being the only open space for general community use in the heart of the town.

Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

Fromus Green is in character with a town recreational space and at 1.12 hectares is not an extensive tract of land when considered in the context of the area of the town a whole.



Figure 55: Fromus Green and Play Area.



## Appendix D: Glossary

Glossary of terms used and/or relevant to the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan and supporting submission documents.

**Affordable housing:** housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20 per cent below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of Plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) **Discounted market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20 per cent below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20 per cent below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.



**Ancient or veteran tree:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

**Backland Development:** Development that involves the re-use of parts of a number of rear gardens to existing houses for further residential development.

**Build to Rent:** Purpose built housing that is typically 100 per cent rented out. It can form part of a wider multi-tenure development comprising either flats or houses but should be on the same site and/or contiguous with the main development. Schemes will usually offer longer tenancy agreements of three years or more and will typically be professionally managed stock in single ownership and management control.

**Carbon Free:** Where the construction and operation of a development does not involve the use of carbon or its release into the atmosphere

**Climate change adaptation:** Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Climate change mitigation:** Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Commercial Development:** Retail, business uses, offices, workshops, light industrial

**Conservation:** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Deliverable:** To be considered deliverable, sites for housing should be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years. Sites that are not major development, and sites with detailed planning permission, should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that homes will not be delivered within five years (e.g. they are no longer viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans). Sites with outline planning permission, permission in principle, allocated in the





development plan or identified on a brownfield register should only be considered deliverable where there is clear evidence that housing completions will begin on site within five years.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

**Development plan:** Is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan, unless the local planning authority decides that the neighbourhood plan should not be made.

**Employment Uses** – Former B1 now Use Class E g) i-iii) – Offices, administration, light industry, research and development

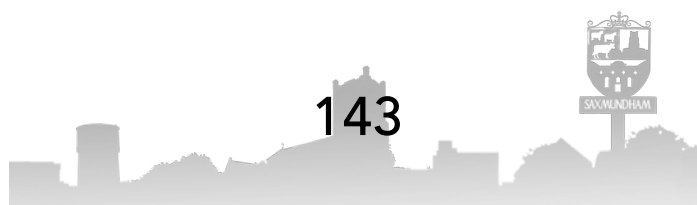
**Environmental impact assessment:** A procedure to be followed for certain types of projects to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

**Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

**Habitats site:** Any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites.

**Health and Social Care, Community Support Services :** Use Classes E e) . Medical services not attached to the premises of the practitioner.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).



**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Hospitality:** Use Classes E a), E b), includes Public Houses, bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels, etc

**Infill Development:** Development that takes place on small gaps between existing buildings.

**International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity:** All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

**Local housing need:** the number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance, or a justified alternative approach.

**Local planning authority:** The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority include the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority, the Mayor of London and a development corporation, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

**Local plan:** A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

**Major development:** For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floor space of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Neighbourhood Development Order:** An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and



neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

**Neighbourhood plan:** A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.

**Non-designated heritage asset:** Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, but which are not formally designated heritage assets. In some areas, local authorities identify some non-designated heritage assets as 'locally listed'. A substantial majority of buildings have little or no heritage significance and thus do not constitute heritage assets. Only a minority have enough heritage interest for their significance to be a material consideration in the planning process. (Definition from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment#non-designated-heritage-assets>)

**Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

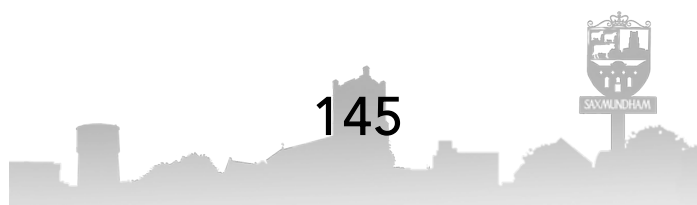
**Open space:** All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

**Original building:** A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

**Out of centre:** A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

**Out of town:** A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.



**Planning obligation:** A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Playing field:** The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

**Primary shopping area:** Defined area where retail development is concentrated.

**Priority habitats and species:** Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

**Ramsar sites:** Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

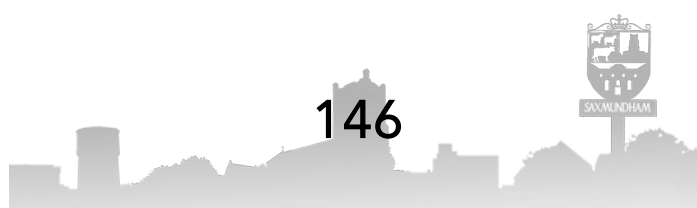
**Renewable and low carbon energy:** Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

**Retail:** Use Classes Ea, F1 and F2a – Shops, local commerce,

**Self-build and custom-build housing:** Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.

**Service industries:** Use Classes E c i), ii), iii ) Businesses not involved in manufacturing that provide a service e.g. finance, banking, estate agents, accountants, personal services, hairdressers, beauticians, opticians, etc

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.



**Significance** (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.

**Strategic environmental assessment:** A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Strategic policies:** Policies and site allocations, which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of Section 19 (1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

**Strategic policy-making authorities:** Those authorities responsible for producing strategic policies (local planning authorities, and elected Mayors or combined authorities, where this power has been conferred). This definition applies whether the authority is in the process of producing strategic policies or not.

**Supplementary planning documents:** Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

**Sustainable transport modes:** Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

**Tandem Development:** Development on land set back behind existing properties often existing houses, utilising brownfield or garden land generally with limited street frontage

**Transport assessment:** A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and measures that will be needed to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.





**Transport statement:** A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

**Travel plan:** A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

**Wildlife corridor:** Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations. Windfall sites: Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.

**Use Classes Order:** National classification of land uses as contained within The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2021 (source: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)).

**Windfall Development:** Development that takes place on sites not usually identified in the development plan. They typically include subdivisions, barn conversions or small infill plots.

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## Appendix E: Saxmundham Design Guidelines and Codes for the Neighbourhood Plan Area

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## Appendix F: Saxmundham Concept Masterplan for the High Street

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