



The Planning Inspectorate

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# Report to East Suffolk Council

**by Philip Lewis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Date 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

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Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

(as amended)

Section 20

## **Report on the Examination of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan**

The Plan was submitted for examination on 29 March 2019

The examination hearings were held between 20 August and 20 September 2019

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## Abbreviations used in this report

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
DtC	Duty to Co-operate
Framework	National Planning Policy Framework
FPAAP	Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan
HMA	Housing Market Area
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
MM	Main Modification
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PPTS	Planning Policy for Traveller Sites
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SAASP DPD	Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SHELAA	Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SOCG	Statement of Common Ground
SSGNHIA	South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood Heritage Impact Assessment

## Non-Technical Summary

This report concludes that the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the former Suffolk Coastal District, now part of East Suffolk Council, provided that a number of main modifications [MMs] are made to it. The Council has specifically requested that I recommend any MMs necessary to enable the Plan to be adopted.

Following the hearings, the Council prepared schedules of the proposed modifications and, as necessary, carried out sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment of them. The MMs were subject to public consultation over a ten-week period. In some cases, I have amended their detailed wording where necessary to correct factual errors. I have recommended their inclusion in the Plan after considering the sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment and all the representations made in response to consultation on them.

The MMs can be summarised as follows:

- Adjusting and clarifying the strategic policies to accord with national policy;
- To remove the reference to the Ipswich Northern Route from the strategic infrastructure priorities;
- To adjust the local housing need figure so that it is calculated consistent with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- To adjust policy to apply a strategy of mitigation measures to deliver modal shift and mitigate impacts on the wider Ipswich highways network;
- To adjust Policy SCLP5.4: Housing in Clusters in the Countryside so that it would be effective;
- To adjust Policy SCLP5.17: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople so that it is consistent with the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS);
- To make detailed adjustments to particular site allocations;
- To delete Policy SCLP12.35: Land at Innocence Farm, as it is not justified or effective;
- To delete Policy SCLP11.9: Areas to be Protected from Development as it is not justified; and
- A number of other modifications to ensure that the plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

## Introduction

1. This report contains my assessment of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan in terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). It considers first whether the Plan's preparation has complied with the duty to co-operate. It then considers whether the Plan is compliant with the legal requirements and whether it is sound. The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (the Framework) (paragraph 35) makes it clear that in order to be sound, a Local Plan should be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
2. The starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local planning authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan - Final Draft Plan, submitted in March 2019 is the basis for my examination. It is the same document as was published for consultation in January 2019.

## Main Modifications

3. In accordance with section 20(7C) of the 2004 Act the Council requested that I should recommend any main modifications [MMs] necessary to rectify matters that make the Plan unsound and thus incapable of being adopted. My report explains why the recommended MMs are necessary. The MMs are referenced in bold in the report in the form **MM1, MM2** etc, and are set out in full in the Appendix.
4. Following the examination hearings, the Council prepared a schedule of proposed MMs and, where necessary, carried out sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment of them. The MM schedule was subject to public consultation for ten weeks. I have taken account of the consultation responses in coming to my conclusions in this report and in this light, I have made some amendments to the detailed wording of the MMs where these are necessary for consistency or clarity. None of the amendments significantly alter the content of the modifications as published for consultation or undermines the participatory processes and sustainability appraisal/habitats regulations assessment that has been undertaken. Where necessary I have highlighted these amendments in the report.

## Policies Map

5. The Council must maintain an adopted policies map which illustrates geographically the application of the policies in the adopted development plan. When submitting a local plan for examination, the Council is required to provide a submission policies map showing the changes to the adopted policies map that would result from the proposals in the submitted local plan. In this case, the submission policies map comprises the set of plans identified as Policies Maps as set out in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Final Draft Plan (A1), the Suffolk Coastal Policies Map and the Rushmere St Andrew (Village) (Corrected Map - March 2019) (A2).
6. The policies map is not defined in statute as a development plan document and so I do not have the power to recommend MMs to it. However, a number of the published MMs to the Plan's policies require further corresponding changes to be made to the policies map. In addition, there are some instances

where the geographic illustration of policies on the submission policies map is not justified and changes to the policies map are needed to ensure that the relevant policies are effective.

7. These further changes to the policies map were published for consultation alongside the MMs in the Schedule of Proposed Policies Map Modifications and Appendix 2, Parts 1 and 2.
8. When the Plan is adopted, in order to comply with the legislation and give effect to the Plan's policies, the Council will need to update the adopted policies map to include all the changes proposed in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan - Final Draft Plan (A1), the Suffolk Coastal Policies Map and the Rushmere St Andrew (Village) (Corrected Map - March 2019) (A2) and the further changes published alongside the MMs.

## **Plan Context**

9. The Plan has been prepared for the former Suffolk Coastal District Council area, which in April 2019, became part of East Suffolk Council, a new Council for the former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council areas. The Plan replaces adopted development plan documents relating to the former Suffolk Coastal District area.

## **Public Sector Equality Duty**

10. I have had due regard to the aims expressed in S149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This has included my consideration of several matters during the examination including the provision of sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, older people and the provision of accessible and adaptable housing.

## **Assessment of Duty to Co-operate**

11. Section 20(5)(c) of the 2004 Act requires that I consider whether the Council complied with any duty imposed on it by section 33A in respect of the Plan's preparation.
12. The Council has published a Duty to Co-operate (DtC) Statement which sets out how the Council sought to fulfil the duty in the preparation of the Plan. The DtC Statement is supported by a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) with the Councils which make up the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) which is contiguous with the Ipswich Housing Market Area (HMA). In addition, a number of SOCGs have been made with prescribed DtC bodies and others.
13. It is clear from the DtC Statement that substantial and effective co-operation has taken place between the Council and others in the Ipswich HMA along with other prescribed bodies during the preparation of the Plan. Evidence of co-operation includes meetings of the ISPA Board and extensive joint evidence preparation for the emerging development plans in the HMA. There is also clear evidence of outcomes of cooperation. Of particular note is the preparation of a joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and work undertaken to calculate the Objectively Assessed Need and subsequently the Local Housing need across the HMA. Strategic, cross boundary matters

addressed include assessment of housing need in the HMA, Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs, employment land needs, a Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study, Transport Modelling and the agreement of transport mitigation proposals across the HMA. Specifically, the allocations SCLP12.23: Land off Lower Road and Westerfield Road (Ipswich Garden Suburb Country Park) and SCLP12.24: Land at Humber Doucy Lane were prepared in co-operation with Ipswich Borough Council as part of cross boundary proposals. In addition, the Council has worked with neighbours and the DtC bodies in the assessment of environmental and other cross-boundary impacts of the Plans proposals.

14. It has been argued by representors that the then Suffolk Coastal District Council had not cooperated with its neighbours in regard to alternative locations for meeting off port land requirements relating to the Port of Felixstowe. Such concerns were not made by any prescribed bodies. However, the ISPA SOCG (A13) sets out that the ISPA authorities agreed that the specific needs for off port land requirements identified through the Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study (2018) will be met within the then Suffolk Coastal District. I am satisfied that the duty has been met in this regard.
15. In regard to infrastructure provision, there is also substantial evidence of effective and on-going cooperation between the Council and the DtC bodies as reflected in the SOCGs with Suffolk County Council, Highways England, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership and Historic England.

*Unmet housing need*

16. The ISPA local authorities have agreed the local housing need for the HMA and it is common ground that each local planning authority will meet its own housing need. Since the hearings closed, the Ipswich Borough Local Plan has been submitted for examination. I have not been made aware of any request by Ipswich Borough Council for East Suffolk to accommodate unmet need arising in Ipswich. The Ipswich Plan is at an early stage in its examination and the question of whether the Plan will meet the housing needs of Ipswich will no doubt be determined through the examination. There is not at this point in time, any substantive evidence of unmet housing need arising in the HMA for any of the ISPA local authority areas in the current round of local plans. Furthermore, there is no agreement in place that any authority should take on unmet need from another area.
17. The Plan is proposing a level of housing significantly above the minimum local housing need for the area and should any unmet need be identified in the wider HMA, this level of provision would in any event contribute towards meeting it and provide some 'head room' prior to the next round of Plans being put into place. However, the evidence is such that it is not necessary for me to consider the issue of unmet need through specific provision being made above the minimum local housing need figure.
18. I am satisfied that where necessary, the Council has engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in the preparation of the Plan and that overall, the duty to co-operate has therefore been met.

## **Assessment of Other Aspects of Legal Compliance**

19. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme.

### *Consultation*

20. The Suffolk Coastal District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted in September 2014 (A11). A number of representations were received to the effect that the Council had not followed its SCI in the plan making process and that there were inadequate opportunities for people to make representations, with the first opportunity for commenting on some proposals being at the Final Draft Plan stage, prior to its submission for examination.
21. It is not unusual for proposed allocations to be put into or taken out of an emerging local plan as it is produced, and the Council provided opportunities for people to make representations on potential sites at various stages in the plan making process. The proposed allocations before me were published for formal consultation prior to submission in accordance with the Regulations and the opportunity to comment was provided in respect of the Publication Plan. The Council has followed the adopted SCI in the preparation of and consultation on the Plan.
22. The MMs were published for consultation during a time when the Government had introduced various restrictions to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. These included the closure of public offices and libraries where consultation documents are normally made available for inspection, restrictions on the movement of people and on gatherings.
23. The Procedure Guide for Local Plan Examinations, produced by the Planning Inspectorate, sets out that many of the detailed procedural aspects of the examination are not prescribed in legislation, which allows an Inspector a degree of flexibility in conducting the examination, enabling them to adapt the procedures to deal with situations as they arise, so as to achieve positive outcomes in a range of different circumstances. The Procedure Guide says that the precise arrangements for public consultation will vary from case to case but will follow a number of general principles. These include that 'the scope and duration of the consultation will reflect those of the consultation held at Regulation 19 stage: this means it will last at least six weeks'.
24. In this case, due to the restrictions in place because of Covid-19, it was not possible to undertake the MM consultation in exactly the same way as the Regulation 19 consultation. In particular, the Council office and other venues where people would normally be able to access hard copy documents were shut and face to face meetings in person were not possible between interested persons and Council Officers, or for bodies such as parish councils.
25. Consequently, the Council undertook a temporary suspension of parts of its SCI and made a number of adjustments to how the consultation should proceed. It kept the process under review to ensure it was effective and to take account of changing national guidance. In holding the consultation over a ten week period and putting specific measures into place including to ensure



access to the documentation, both electronically and in hard copy form, along with bespoke arrangements to enable people to make representations, I am satisfied that in terms of the Franks principles of openness, fairness and impartiality, the MM consultation was adequate. In addition, I conclude that interested persons were not prejudiced and that the consultation followed the general principles set out in the Procedure Guide in being reflective of that for the Regulation 19 consultation.

26. Therefore, I conclude that consultation on the Plan and the MMs was carried out in compliance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

### *Sustainability Appraisal*

27. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been undertaken through the preparation of the Plan, identifying and addressing relevant economic, social and environmental objectives. The broad methodology for the SA meets the requirements of the SEA Regulations.
28. The SA of the Plan was carried out by the Council at the Scoping Report, Initial Site Assessments, Draft Plan, Final Plan and MM stages, with consultation undertaken. SA Objectives were developed from those used by the Council for previous development plans and were subject to consultation in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The assessments undertaken in the subsequent Interim Sustainability Appraisal of the First Draft Local Plan and the SA of the Final Draft Plan considered all sites, including existing allocated sites proposed to be carried forward on a consistent basis, against the identified objectives. Where negative effects have been identified with respect to the preferred policies and site allocations, mitigation of these negative effects has been identified wherever possible and incorporated into the plan where appropriate. I am satisfied that the Council has not applied mitigation prior to the selection of the sites which have been considered on a consistent basis.
29. In respect of the Plan spatial strategy and allocation of sites, the Council has considered a range of reasonable alternatives, which are sufficiently different from each other. The proposals in the plan and the alternatives have been considered on a like-for-like basis in the SA process against the SA objectives. A number of sites have been referred to me by representors raising issue with the SA. The SA process is not a precise science, it will always encompass differences of professional opinion on individual points and I do not see such differences of opinion as identified to me as demonstrating that the SA is flawed.
30. Having regard to *Calverton PC v Nottingham CC* [2015] EWHC 1078 (Admin), the Council has considered reasonable alternatives, and reported on those alternatives and the reasons for their rejection. Whilst in some cases, the reason for rejection stated is very brief, nevertheless, the legal requirement has been met. The Council has addressed inconsistency in reasons given for alternative sites at Rendlesham in the SA published at MM stage. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the Council have considered a sufficient range of alternative strategies and sites to those it selected.
31. I conclude therefore that Sustainability Appraisal has been carried out and is adequate.

### *Habitats Regulations Assessment*

32. The Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment Report December 2018 (A4), with the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Supplementary Note (July 2019) (H27) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan at Final Plan Stage (incorporating Main Modifications) (J67) sets out that Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken and that the plan may have some negative impact which requires mitigation. The identified potential impacts on the integrity of European sites include recreational disturbance and the effects of urbanisation, such as increased fire risk or cat predation. Further Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) was undertaken in respect of the MMs which concluded that no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites would occur, subject to the recommended actions set out within the report being undertaken.
33. Mitigation has been secured through the plan (as modified by the MMs) in respect of a number of allocations. Policy SCLP12.3: North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood and Policy SCLP12.29: South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood require project level HRAs and provision of significant areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate potential impacts on European sites. The extent of SANG required in each case would be determined through the master planning and HRA processes. Provision of SANG is a requirement of Policy SCLP12.19: Brightwell Lakes recognising the mitigation measures identified in the HRAs undertaken for the Core Strategy and for the outline planning application.
34. Additionally, project level HRA is required to mitigate potential impacts on European sites through Policies SCLP12.24: Land at Humber Doucy Lane, SCLP12.27: Land rear of Rose Hill, Saxmundham Road, Aldeburgh; SCLP12.32: Former Council Offices, Melton Hill; SCLP12.33: Land at Woodbridge Town Football Club; SCLP12.38: Levington Park, Levington; SCLP12.41: Bentwaters, Rendlesham; SCLP12.43: Land to the east of Aldeburgh Road, Aldringham; SCLP12.51: Land to the South of Eyke CoE Primary School and East of The Street, Eyke; SCLP12.57; Land at Bridge Road, Levington; SCLP12.69: Land West of the B1125, Westleton and SCLP12.70: Land at Cherry Lee, Darsham Road, Westleton.
35. Furthermore, a number of the development management policies set out HRA requirements. These include Policies SCLP3.4: Proposals for Major Energy and Infrastructure Projects; SCLP3.5: Infrastructure Provision; SCLP6.2: Tourism Destinations; SCLP10.2: Visitor Management of European Sites and SCLP12.17: Tourism Accommodation in Felixstowe.
36. Natural England has confirmed that it has no objections to the HRA undertaken for the Plan and MMs. The HRA has been carefully examined and I find it to be robust and I am content that the Policies and allocations of the Plan will not affect the integrity of European sites.

### *Other aspects of legal compliance*

37. The Development Plan, taken as a whole, includes policies to address the strategic priorities for the development and use of land for the former Suffolk Coastal District part of the local planning authority's area.

38. The Development Plan, taken as a whole, includes policies designed to secure that the development and use of land for the former Suffolk Coastal District part of the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. In addition, the Plan identifies climate change as a key issue and strategic priority for the plan as a whole. Specific relevant Policies include SCLP9.1: Low Carbon & Renewable Energy and SCLP9.2: Sustainable Construction which support renewable energy development and sustainable construction. In addition, Policy SCLP9.4: Coastal Change Rollback or Relocation addresses the issue of coastal change and effects of climate change.
39. Appendix J of the Plan sets out the Schedule of Policies to be superseded. A number of Policies were omitted from the list and the Schedule of Policies should be altered to include these (**MM108**).
40. The Plan complies with all other relevant legal requirements, including in the 2004 Act (as amended) and the 2012 Regulations.

## **Assessment of Soundness**

### **Main Issues**

41. Taking account of all the representations, the written evidence and the discussions that took place at the examination hearings, I have identified 9 main issues upon which the soundness of this plan depends. This report deals with these main issues. It does not respond to every point or issue raised by representors. Nor does it refer to every policy, policy criterion or allocation in the Plan.

### **Covid-19 and changes to the Use Classes Order**

42. The examination hearings took place before the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of comments were made at the MM stage to the effect that potential economic and social effects would be so great that the examination should be suspended and the Plan reconsidered. Whilst the immediate effects of Covid-19 are here for all to see, there is no evidence that the fundamental assumptions and requirements of the Plan in respect of housing need, or any other strategic matter, will be affected to the extent that its soundness will be undermined. Any longer term effects would be addressed through subsequent local plan reviews, informed by evidence of the actual effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.
43. On 21 July, the Government published The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. These came into force on 1 September 2020, and none of the policies in the Plan prevent the new regulations taking effect in the Plan area. National policy remains unchanged, and whilst implementation of some of the policies in the Plan will be affected, the full implications are not yet clear and will need to be thought through over time.
44. These changes have come forward relatively late in the Plan making process. The Government believes that the planning system has a vital role to play in enabling the delivery of housing and economic growth that will support the UK's economic recovery. It therefore wants local planning authorities and the

Planning Inspectorate to drive the planning process forward and expects everyone involved to engage proactively. The relative certainty that will be provided by finalising the Plan will be beneficial in terms of encouraging sustainable development and helping the area to recover. Once adopted, the Council is required to monitor the implementation of the Plan and review whether it needs updating. The Council consider that to be the most appropriate way forward, and in the particular circumstances, I agree that to be so.

**Issue 1 – Whether or not the housing requirement figure is soundly based, whether the Plan makes appropriate provision to meet the objectively assessed need for housing and whether on adoption there will be a 5 year supply of housing land?**

*Housing need and the housing requirement*

45. The former Suffolk Coastal District area forms part of the identified Ipswich HMA and Ipswich Functional Economic Area (IFEA), defined as the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA). There is a long history of cooperative working between the Councils which make up the ISPA which has included the joint preparation of a SHMA and an Employment Land Needs Assessment. The ISPA Councils have agreed the minimum level of employment land provision and the minimum number of new dwellings for the IFEA and HMA for the plan period, to be provided through their respective development plans.
46. The Plan has been prepared using the standard method for assessing local housing need as set out in the PPG, which provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. The submitted Plan sets out an ambitious plan for growth over the period 2018 – 2036, with a minimum of 582 dwellings per annum, or 10,476 over the plan period. The Council reached this figure using the standard method, with the calculations in the submitted Plan using the 2016 based household growth projections. The PPG was amended after the publication of the Final Draft Local Plan stating that the 2014-based projections should be used to set the baseline in the standard method. The Plan should be altered so that the starting point is with the 2014 based projections consistent with the PPG (**MM4**).
47. Since the hearings closed, 2018-based household projections have been published (July 2020). However, the requirement as set out in the PPG in respect of the use of the 2014-based projections has not changed and consequently, the publication of the 2018-based projections does not alter my conclusions on the level of housing need.
48. The 2014 based projections give a total household growth 2019 – 2029 of 3,390 households, as opposed to 4,445 households from the 2016 based projections. The Council's recalculation of the local housing need figure using the standard method, with the 2014 based projections as per the PPG and using the 2018 median workplace affordability ratio of 10.07 with an adjustment factor of 1.38, provides a minimum annual figure of 542 new homes per annum for the Plan area, or 9,756 over the plan period. These figures therefore provide the starting point in determining the minimum number of homes needed in the area.

49. The PPG sets out that there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates, such as where increases in housing need are likely to exceed past trends, for example, due to growth strategies, strategic infrastructure improvements and an authority agreeing to take on unmet need from neighbouring authorities as set out in a statement of common ground. Whilst I heard that there has been recent job growth in the HMA, there is no convincing evidence which justifies any need to 'balance' the labour and housing markets and to increase the local housing need figure above that derived using the standard method for the Plan area. In addition, whilst the Council is making provision for additional employment land above the baseline minimum, this provision is not to such an extent that persuades me that the minimum level of housing need should be higher than that derived using the standard method.
50. The Plan as modified by MMs sets out the need for housing for older people. Such need is a component part of the overall local housing need for the plan area and I have not been convinced that any uplift should be made to the housing need figure as a result of these changes.
51. Consequently, the Council is justified in not seeking to apply a higher housing need figure than the standard method indicates. I address the provision for the supply of housing later.
52. The Framework in paragraph 60 states that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. The local housing need assessment has been conducted using the standard method. Whilst some representors have argued that the Council should have employed an alternative method to determine the minimum number of homes and have disputed, amongst other things, future job growth forecasts, I have not been convinced that there are exceptional circumstances to justify deviation away from the standard method for this Plan.
53. The standard method simply takes the household projections, applies an affordability ratio and an adjustment figure to arrive at the level of housing need. Even if the representors who argue that the anticipated job growth is too ambitious were correct, that would not change the level of annual housing need derived using the standard method and consequently the minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in the area. Similarly, the modification of the Plan to remove the Innocence Farm employment allocation does not justify a reduction in the level of housing need, given that the provision of employment land is not a factor in the application of the standard method.
54. It is national policy set out in paragraph 59 of the Framework to significantly boost the supply of homes. The Framework in paragraph 11 b) says, amongst other things, that strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or

distribution of development in the plan area, or the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

55. The Framework in footnote 6 lists the policies that protect assets or areas of particular importance. Having regard to the evidence before me, which includes the SA, the HRA, the Heritage Impact Assessments and the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment, I conclude that the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the Plan area as a whole.
56. Turning to paragraph 11 b) ii. I have also considered whether any adverse impacts of providing for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The Plan in overall terms seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing, including affordable housing and housing for different groups in the community. In addition, it seeks to provide additional employment land and an updated framework for development management. These are significant benefits.
57. There will however be harm arising from new development such as through the loss of countryside, areas of best and most versatile agricultural land, increased urbanisation and increased pressure on transport systems. The Plan as modified has been subject to the iterative SA process, where potential harm such as loss of agricultural land was considered within the SA objectives, and includes a variety of mitigation measures including those arising from the HRA, provision of sustainable transport measures and specific measures set out in the allocations. Having considered carefully the evidence before me, I am satisfied that the adverse impacts of meeting the objectively assessed needs will not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.
58. The Plan should be altered to be consistent with national policy so that it sets a minimum housing requirement figure of 542 new homes per annum for the Plan area, or 9,756 over the Plan period (**MM4**).

#### *The supply of housing land*

59. The overall level of housing delivery to be provided by the Plan is anticipated at 11,353 homes (excluding windfalls) and 12,153 homes including windfalls at the rate of 50 per annum. The level of provision proposed which includes a significant contingency above the minimum level of housing need, (about 16% excluding windfalls or about 25% including windfalls) would ensure that the Plan has sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change as per national policy expressed in paragraph 11 of the Framework. The Plan is therefore positively prepared in this regard.
60. The Council's Statement of Housing Land Supply and associated appendices (H20) containing site assessments in terms of whether the sites are deliverable or developable, and the updated housing trajectory in the Plan, demonstrate that the Plan will supply specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the Plan period and developable sites for years 6-10 and 11-15.

61. The 5 year housing supply target is 2,846 dwellings, including a 5% buffer. In the Plan period to date, the number of housing completions has exceeded the housing requirement for that period, and consequently there is no shortfall to bring forward. The Council have applied a 5% buffer in its housing land calculations which is appropriate, given the Housing Delivery Test result of 128% (February 2019). The latest Housing Delivery Test result for Suffolk Coastal is 127% (February 2020). I find that the Council's calculation of housing land supply to be reasonable and appropriate. I am satisfied that in the terms of the Framework definition of deliverable sites, the 5 year forward supply identified by the Council is comfortably in excess of the target.
62. Consequently, the plan will provide a deliverable five-year supply of housing land measured against the housing requirement on adoption and I have reasonable confidence that a 5 year housing land supply can be maintained throughout the plan period. Furthermore, I am satisfied that at least 10% of the housing requirement will be met on sites of less than one hectare, as per paragraph 68 of the Framework. Later in my report I set out my conclusions in respect of the soundness of individual allocations.
63. As a consequence of a number of the MMs, the housing trajectory as set out in Appendix D of the Plan and table 3.5 needs to be amended and updated (**MM106**) and (**MM6**). I have changed the titles of the hyperlinks in MM6 and MM106 to reflect the consequential changes in page numbers resulting from the MMs. No party should be prejudiced by this change.

#### *Windfall housing*

64. Windfall sites are defined in the Framework Glossary simply as sites not specifically identified in the development plan. Both the Framework and PPG set out that a windfall allowance may be justified in the anticipated supply if a local planning authority has compelling evidence that they will provide a reliable source of supply.
65. Whilst the Council have included an allowance of 50 homes per annum to come forward by way of windfall on small sites, it is acknowledged that the number of dwellings coming forward by way of windfalls has been much higher in the past with a significant proportion of the existing commitments having arisen in this way.
66. I note that many of such windfall developments predate the adoption of the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD (SAASP DPD) and the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan (FPAAP). Before these Plans were adopted, the lack of allocated sites meant that it was more likely that sites not specifically identified in the development plan would come forward, given that most of the previous development plan allocations had already been implemented.
67. The 50 homes annual windfall allowance based on small sites of 0 – 4 dwellings is justified given the evidence of the number of historic completions on sites of 0 – 4 dwellings, the identification of potential sites through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) and that the Plan includes a number of Policies which would allow for small housing

sites to continue to come forward, such as in villages and the countryside. These include Policies SCLP5.1 to SCLP5.7.

68. An up to date development plan should see the emphasis in housing provision shifting from provision being made on unallocated sites as in the past, to the allocated sites. Whilst some larger scale redevelopment opportunities may occur, the evidence for such sites coming forward on a consistent basis in the future is not compelling and I do not consider that an allowance for such schemes in the supply of housing would be justified.
69. Whilst I have some sympathy with the view which has been expressed that the 50 homes allowance may prove to be a cautious figure given the particularly high windfall performance of the past, a justification for an alternative higher allowance has not been convincingly demonstrated. In any event, the housing requirement is expressed as a minimum figure and I am satisfied that the provision of housing in excess of the minimum local housing need would not give rise to development which would be inconsistent with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the Framework. Consequently, I find that the 50 homes allowance is justified and the Council's approach to calculating the windfall allowance is sound.
70. There was some discussion at the hearings about whether there were matters of soundness which warranted a change to the Plan to require an early review Policy. Such issues discussed included the emerging Ipswich Local Plan, unmet housing need and the now abandoned plans for the Ipswich Northern Route.
71. Given the circumstances now, with local plans in preparation for the other parts of the HMA and the Ipswich Northern Route not proceeding, the Plan is sound in not including a Policy requiring its immediate review. To be effective however, Policy SCLP2.1 Growth in the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area should set out the approach to be taken by the Council working collaboratively with its neighbours in the ISPA to address the matter of unmet housing need across the HMA should it arise, through a review of the strategic policies of the Plan (**MM4**) and (**MM103**).

### *Conclusion*

72. The Plan, subject to the MMs, is positively prepared and makes adequate provision for new housing for the Plan period and the overall level of housing delivery proposed would support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. Furthermore, I am satisfied that the Plan, in seeking to exceed the minimum housing requirement over the Plan period is sound and that there is no justification demonstrated for a lower level of housing growth than that derived using the standard method. The Plan provides an adequate supply of housing to meet the identified need and will provide a deliverable five-year supply of housing land on adoption.



## **Issue 2 – Whether the plan adequately meets the identified housing needs of all the community?**

### *Housing for older people*

73. The Framework states that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).
74. The SHMA update (D16) sets out that the Local Housing Need projections indicate that the population aged 65 or over is going to increase dramatically in the HMA over the plan period. The PPG in respect of housing for older and disabled people recognises that the need to provide housing for older people is critical. This includes helping them to live safe and independent lives. The PPG also states that Plan-making authorities should set clear policies to address the housing needs of groups with particular needs such as for older and disabled people.
75. The Plan as submitted would not be effective in meeting the housing needs for older and disabled people in that it does not demonstrate that the needs of older and disabled people have been assessed, nor are these needs adequately reflected in the policies.
76. Further evidence from the Council regarding the assessment of needs for housing for older people and specialist accommodation is provided in document I8. On the basis of this evidence I am satisfied that the needs identified have been calculated appropriately, including using the Strategic Housing for Older People (SHOP) tool as per the PPG. The levels of need within general housing provision, which includes age restricted housing, sheltered housing and enhanced sheltered/ extra care housing have been assessed for both market and affordable housing. Net needs have been calculated taking into account the existing stock. Whilst the Plan does not separate out a need for age restricted housing from market housing, it nevertheless includes provision for that type of housing within the overall market housing provision, which is made considerably in excess of the overall local housing need figure.
77. The Plan should be altered so as to be clear as to the extent of need which would arise through the plan period for housing for older people, the forms of specialist accommodation required and how such housing will be provided, to include that proposals for new housing development will be expected to deliver the housing need for different groups in the community as identified in the SHMA, or latest equivalent document (**MM17**). I have updated the paragraph references set out in the MM and addressed a formatting error relating to the deletion of paragraph 5.46 which should not be shown in bold text. These are minor changes which will not prejudice any party.
78. In addition, the policy as amended includes that proposals for ten dwellings or more should demonstrate how they will contribute to meeting the needs of older people. To be effective in addressing the housing needs for older people requiring affordable housing, Policies SCLP5.10 Affordable Housing on

Residential Developments (**MM18**) and SCLP5.11 Affordable Housing on Exception Sites (**MM19**) and the accompanying text, should be altered to include the provision for affordable housing needs for older people. The Council suggest that the monitoring arrangements for the Plan should include housing for older and disabled people. Whilst that is something which the Council can do as a matter of course, the Plan though not requiring this is, nevertheless sound.

79. A number of the allocations included in the submitted plan include that consideration is given to provision for houses for older people, whilst that at Rose Hill, Aldeburgh (SCLP12.27) makes specific provision. Further provision is also made through Policy SCLP12.25: Suffolk Police HQ, Portal Avenue, Martlesham through **MM67**. Whilst the Plan does not typically make specific allocations for housing for older people and disabled people, its policies and allocations together reflect these identified needs as required in national policy and as amended I consider that the Plan is positively prepared and sound in this regard and should boost the supply of homes for older and disabled people. Consequently, I conclude that it is not necessary for the Plan to include a specific exceptions type policy for the provision of housing for older people and disabled people on land outside of settlements.

#### *Accessible and adaptable dwellings*

80. Having had regard to the evidence relating to the projected significant ageing of the population, the identified needs for specialist accommodation, the projected increase in population with a limiting long term illness and information on past applications for Disabled Facilities Grants, there is clear need for a significant proportion of new housing to meet the requirements for accessible and adaptable dwellings under Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations. Such provision would be of benefit to people across the age groups in the population.
81. To be effective, Policy SCLP5.8 should be altered to require all specialist accommodation, for which there is significant need as discussed above, to meet the requirements of Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations (**MM17**). This should be significant in helping to meet needs for accessible and adaptable dwellings in the Plan period. Nevertheless, given the overall level of need for accessible and adaptable dwellings identified, it is necessary for market housing to also make an appropriate contribution to meeting the need for accessible and adaptable dwellings. Market housing as already stated, would contribute to meeting needs for older people but provision of M4(2) compliant housing would not be a substitute for specialist forms of housing.
82. Due to the level of existing commitments with planning permission from which Part M4(2) housing cannot be compelled, the requirement for at least 50% of new market housing on sites of 10 units or more to meet the requirements under Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations from new development is justified and necessary to ensure that the identified needs are met. The 'at least 50%' figure addresses developments where an odd number of housing units would be provided to ensure that the minimum provision is achieved. The Policy should be altered so that it is clear as to how exceptions to the Policy would be applied such as where it is not feasible to do so, due to site characteristics or viability considerations (**MM17**). The at least 50%

requirement was assessed as part of the Councils Whole Plan Viability Study (D38). I have made a minor change to MM17 from that published for consultation (second new paragraph after paragraph 5.41) to correct an error in a paragraph reference. This minor change would not prejudice the interest of any party.

83. Policy SCLP5.8: Housing Mix as submitted in requiring proposals of 5 dwellings or more to provide for a mix and size of homes based upon the housing mix as per the current SHMA and to provide at least 40% to be 1 or 2 bed properties is not justified and would not be effective. It is not clear how the 5 dwelling threshold has been determined or why it is necessary to secure an appropriate housing mix. Furthermore, the housing mix requirement for the area would change over time, and a formulaic approach may not be suitable for particular sites, given their characteristics, viability considerations or indeed specific local housing mix needs. Consequently, the policy would be inflexible and ineffective in addressing changing requirements. The Policy and text should be amended so that it would be effective in providing for the housing needs of different groups in the community as identified in the SHMA throughout the Plan period (**MM17**).

*Policy SCLP5.9: Self-build and Custom Build Housing*

84. The Framework in paragraph 61 includes that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies, including for people wishing to commission or build their own homes. Policy SCLP5.9, consistent in broad terms with this national policy, sets out support for self-build and custom housing and expects that housing developments of 100 dwellings or more should provide a minimum of 5% serviced plots for self-build or custom build. Other policies of the Plan, such as Policy SCLP5.4: Housing in Clusters in the Countryside, provide the opportunity for self-build or custom build development in the countryside.
85. There were 271 applicants on the Suffolk Coastal Self-build and Custom Build Register at the end of March 2019, which have been transferred to a combined Register for the East Suffolk Council area. The Council has provided updated information on the Register in document J23. The preference expressed through the Register is for individual, detached self-build schemes spread across the plan area. Whilst it is likely that the number of people registered will continue to grow, the 5% requirement proposed would bring forward about 195 plots in the lifetime of the Plan and is reasonable given the apparent scale of demand. The 5% figure has been assessed in the Plan Viability Study (D38) and found viable.
86. Policy SCLP5.9 along with the other housing development policies of the Plan, including SCLP5.4 Housing in Clusters in the Countryside, should provide for a range of self-build opportunities. Given this, I am not convinced that it is necessary to make any specific policy provision or exception for self-build or custom build housing and I find Policy SCLP5.9 sound as submitted. However, the provision of self-build housing should be monitored to inform the subsequent review of the Plan.

*Accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople*

87. The Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment for Babergh, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney, May 2017 (ANA) identifies additional need for 15 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers households that meet the definition set out in the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) (the PPTS). The identified need relates to 10 pitches arising from two unauthorised 'New Traveller' sites which I understand have existed for 20 years or so, with an additional 2 pitches required by 2021 and a further 3 by 2036 relating to new family formations. No future need has been identified in Suffolk Coastal in the ANA for people who do not meet the PPTS definition.
88. The existing need is being met by the unauthorised sites, which are long established and may be considered as being lawful. In these particular circumstances, these sites could be included within the existing supply as they are meeting present needs. Furthermore, one of the sites has potential to accommodate the identified future need, which could be dealt with through the development management process against Policy SCLP5.17. Having had regard to the requirements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, I am satisfied that there is no need to make any specific provision in the Plan for Gypsies and Travellers through specific allocations.
89. In terms of travelling showpeople, the ANA identifies a need for 2 additional plots for households who meet the PPTS definition arising from occupation of the existing site and are required by 2021. The ANA indicates that the need could be addressed at the existing site through the provision of additional plots. Such provision of additional plots could be assessed against the criteria set out in Policy SCLP5.17 and consequently I do not consider that it would be effective or necessary to make a specific allocation.
90. Policy SCLP5.17 should be amended so as to be consistent with the requirements of national policy as set out in the PPTS to set down the level of need identified for the Plan period for permanent pitches and plots and short stay stopping sites. In addition, it should set out a commitment to address the planning status of the unauthorised pitches in terms of them being regularised (**MM23**).

*Policy SCLP5.10: Affordable Housing on Residential Developments*

91. The approach to affordable housing is set out in Policy SCLP5.10. In order to address the affordable housing need as set out in the SHMA update, the Policy seeks provision of 1 in 3 dwellings on sites of 10 dwellings or more, or 0.5 hectares or more, to be affordable dwellings. The Council's approach to assessing the need for affordable housing is reasonable and appropriate.
92. Consistent with paragraph 62 of the Framework which sets out that planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, the Policy and text should be amended to provide the up to date figures for the affordable housing mix as per the SHMA update (**MM18**).
93. The Council's Plan Viability Study (D38) found that flatted developments on brownfield sites would not be viable with any affordable housing contribution.

Whilst such development is not anticipated to be a significant component in the housing supply, applying the affordable housing requirement to brownfield flatted development would mean that the Policy would not be deliverable. The Policy should be amended so that it is effective by removing the affordable housing requirement for brownfield flatted developments (**MM18**).

### *Conclusion*

94. Subject to the main modifications described above, which are all required for soundness, the plan makes adequate provision to meet the identified housing needs of all the community.

### **Issue 3 – Whether the Plan sets out an appropriate strategy for the pattern of development consistent with national policy?**

#### *Spatial Strategy*

95. The spatial strategy as expressed in Policy SCLP3.1 Strategy for Growth in Suffolk Coastal District seeks to deliver growth through new Garden Neighbourhoods at North Felixstowe and South Saxmundham; focus growth in the A12 and A14 road corridors; make strategic employment allocations based around key transport corridors; to strengthen the roles and economies of market towns and to steer appropriate growth to rural areas to help support and sustain existing communities.
96. The Council worked collaboratively with Ipswich Borough Council at the Issues and Options stage, focusing on strategic cross boundary issues. At the Issues and Options stage, three alternative spatial delivery options were considered for Ipswich, and for Suffolk Coastal. These alternative strategy options for Suffolk Coastal have been considered in the SA. An adequate range of strategic options were considered.
97. The Settlement Hierarchy as set out in Policy SCLP3.2 identifies the categories of Major Centre, Market Towns, Large Villages, Small Villages and Countryside. East of Ipswich is identified as a Major Centre, the highest order designation in the hierarchy. The East of Ipswich Major Centre is made up of Kesgrave, Martlesham Heath, Brightwell Lakes, Purdis Farm and Rushmere St Andrew (excluding the village). Whilst this area has suburban characteristics, in terms of its function it is clearly distinguishable from the neighbouring town of Ipswich and given its role, function and scale, the strategy is justified in designating it as one of the two Major Centres, along with Felixstowe. This designation is consistent with Policy SCLP2.1 which sets out that the Plan will support the continued role of Ipswich as a County Town.
98. The East of Ipswich Major Centre does not have the same function as Ipswich as the County Town and the evidence before me, including that in the Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper (D34), does not suggest that the approach taken in the Plan is unsound or that the East of Ipswich area should be afforded a different designation in the settlement hierarchy of the Suffolk Coastal area. In addition, I have not been convinced that there should be an additional settlement category above that of Major Centre in Policy SCLP3.2.
99. The Plan makes provision for around half of all new homes in the plan period to be at the designated Major Centres of Felixstowe and East of Ipswich. In

the case of East of Ipswich, this is principally due to the existing commitments at Brightwell Lakes for a master-planned site of about 2000 homes. This represents a significant strategic commitment in terms of the overall provision of new homes to the East of Ipswich.

100. The Council's paper I19 concerning the distribution of growth indicates that Felixstowe would accommodate around 29% of the anticipated housing growth over the plan period. The Plan provides for significant provision of new homes at the Felixstowe Major Centre over that already made in the existing development plan documents. Felixstowe has a wide range of services and facilities as indicated in the Council's settlement hierarchy topic paper and as a consequence of the Port of Felixstowe, a large scale strategic business sector. I consider that its designation as a Major Centre is justified. Whilst the town is situated on a peninsula and access is largely derived via the A14 road, the Plan sets an appropriate strategy for the town. Although a significant proportion of the proposed housing provision being made in the Plan would go to Felixstowe, I am satisfied that the new houses would come forward during the plan period.
101. The Plan allocates housing development to a number of settlements across the settlement hierarchy, with allocations made to a number of Market Towns, Large and Small Villages. These include significant allocations at the designated Market Towns of Saxmundham and Woodbridge and the Large Villages of Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary. In overall terms, the approach to the distribution of development has been undertaken in accordance with the settlement hierarchy and is sound.

*Policy SCLP3.2: Settlement hierarchy*

102. The approach and methodology taken to the identification of settlements within the settlement hierarchy, based upon the provision of services and facilities as set out in the settlement hierarchy topic paper (D34) has been applied consistently. Whilst the Council acknowledge that there have been some minor scoring errors in the work undertaken to define the position of settlements within the hierarchy, I am satisfied that these should not result in a change in the hierarchy proposed. There are disagreements about whether certain settlements are within the 1km and 5 km distance buffers from larger settlements used by the Council in the assessments. However, the Council confirmed that to qualify, the whole of the settlement should be within the stated distance and that is a reasonable approach.
103. Overall, whilst there will no doubt be different ways of doing an exercise such as that undertaken to define the settlement hierarchy and there will be differences of professional opinion, the methodology is appropriate and would be effective in delivering sustainable development. The identification of settlements as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy SCLP3.2 is therefore justified.

*Conclusion*

104. The Plan sets out an appropriate strategy for the pattern of development and is consistent with national policy.

#### **Issue 4 – Are the proposed Area Specific Strategies, allocations and policies justified, effective and consistent with national policy?**

105. The Plan sets out in the spatial strategy the scale and pattern for development which is amplified for specific parts of the area through area specific strategies for the designated Major Centres, Market Towns and the Rural Area. A number of allocated sites have been brought forward from the existing development plan documents, the SAASP DPD and the FPAAP. These sites have been considered alongside the additional sites to be allocated in this Plan through the plan making process.

##### *Site selection process*

106. The Council undertook a site selection process to identify the sites to be allocated through the Plan. The process is set out in the Topic Paper: Site Selection (D36), with the sites also considered through the SA and HRA. Following consultation on issues and options, the Council identified a number of sites as reasonable alternatives for housing development. These were then assessed against a range of criteria, which I find to be relevant and appropriate. The alternative options were identified from sites assessed through the SHELAA, including those from a call for sites exercise in 2016 and further sites submitted through the Issues and Options exercise and consultation on the First Draft Local Plan. The approach to the site selection process is reasonable and the assumptions made are robust.

##### *Flood Risk Sequential Test*

107. The Framework states in paragraph 157 that all plans should apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development, taking into account the current and future impacts of climate change, so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property. This includes amongst other things, applying the sequential test and then if necessary, the exceptions test.

108. There has been some criticism of the approach of the Council taken in regard to the Sequential Test in respect of a number of the sites proposed, including, amongst others, SCLP12.60 at Peasenhall, with further comments being made at the MM stage.

109. It is clear from the SHELAA and the SA that the Council has considered a broad range of options in the site allocation process, taking flood risk issues into account through the site allocation and SA processes. In addition, it has sought to use the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to apply the Sequential Test. The Council has concluded in a number of cases that it is not possible for development to be located in zones with a lower risk of flooding after taking into account wider sustainable development objectives. This is consistent with national policy.

110. At the hearings, I requested that the Council provide further information to clarify how it had undertaken the Sequential Test, as the information was provided across a number of documents. Having considered the Council's Sequential Test Report March 2020 (J54), which details and confirms the consideration of alternative sites, I am satisfied that the Council's approach has been adequate and that the Sequential Test is met in respect of the

relevant proposed allocations (SCLP12.3, SCLP12.6, SCLP12.7, SCLP12.9, SCLP12.10, SCLP12.16, SCLP12.32, SCLP12.37, SCLP12.60 and SCLP12.72).

*Policy SCLP12.1: Neighbourhood Plans*

111. The Framework in paragraph 65 states that strategic policies should set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas. As submitted, Policy SCLP12.1 sets indicative housing requirements for designated neighbourhood areas which reflect the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development. Policy SCLP12.1 should be amended to make clear that the stated number of dwellings required are minimum figures, not indicative targets so as to be consistent with national policy (**MM50**). The level of development to be provided through Neighbourhood Plans would have to be consistent with the strategic policies as set out in this Plan and be in accordance with paragraph 29 of the Framework, which is clear that Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.
112. The amount of new houses proposed to be delivered through neighbourhood plans is not essential to the Plan in meeting the minimum dwelling requirement, given the overall level of housing proposed in the Plan is otherwise considerably in excess of the identified local housing need. But where neighbourhood plans do not come forward, the Policy should provide for allocations to be made as appropriate in a subsequent review of this Plan as the housing proposed to be delivered by neighbourhood plans is nevertheless part of the overall strategy for development for the Plan area (**MM50**). This review would be undertaken as a matter of course through the statutory requirement for the review of the Plan to see if it needs updating at least once in every five years. The Plan as amended by **MM3** is clear about the relationship of strategic and non-strategic policies and the neighbourhood planning process.

*Felixstowe*

113. Felixstowe is the largest settlement in the Plan area and is identified as one of the two Major Centres in the settlement hierarchy. The vision for Felixstowe is to retain its role as a thriving coastal resort and major centre with a comprehensive range of services and facilities. Significant housing growth is directed to the town, reflective of its role as a Major Centre, with a number of new allocations, along with existing allocations carried forward from the FPAAP. The level of housing provision in Felixstowe should not be changed as a consequence of deleting the Innocence Farm employment land allocation (SCLP12.35). This is because the provision of housing in the area is not dependent upon specific provision of employment land.
114. Policy SCLP12.2: Strategy for Felixstowe and text should be amended to provide for provision of sustainable transport consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 104 of the Framework and to be effective (**MM51**). To be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 170 of the Framework, paragraph 12.25 should provide for biodiversity net gain (**MM51**).



*Policy SCLP12.3: North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood*

115. The North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood is allocated for up to 2,000 dwellings, a leisure centre, primary school and open space, including provision for SANG, to be brought forward via a master planning process. The SANG is necessary as a recreation avoidance/mitigation measure identified through the HRA given the proximity of European sites. The site is situated close to the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and has value in terms of its contribution to the setting of the town. The allocation includes a significant area of land which has outline planning permission for housing.
116. The Garden Neighbourhood would be a significant strategic expansion of the town and it is important that the new community would be developed in a coherent fashion through the master planning process, with good internal access between the different components and connections to the existing transport network of the town. Whilst I am satisfied that this is feasible, an additional criterion should be included in the Policy to secure the internal connectivity within the different components of the site and to promote sustainable transport consistent with paragraph 104 of the Framework and to make the Policy effective (**MM52**).
117. Further amendments are necessary to the Policy for soundness (**MM52**) as follows. To be consistent with national policy for the historic environment, Policy criterion h) should be reworded to address the significance of heritage assets. A criterion should be included to require the master planning process to assess the potential effects of the scheme on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB to be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 172 of the Framework and to ensure that landscape considerations are assessed. To be effective, the Policy should also set out the requirements in respect of wastewater and in respect of whether sand and gravel resources on site may be utilised in the development.

*Policy SCLP12.4: Land North of Conway Close and Swallow Close, Felixstowe*

118. The allocation is carried forward from the FPAAP and is situated adjacent to the proposed Garden Neighbourhood. To be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 172 of the Framework, the Policy and text should be amended to ensure that the potential effects of the scheme on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB are considered, and to be effective the Policy should address the issue of foul drainage (**MM53**).

*Policy SCLP12.5: Land at Brackenbury Sports Centre*

119. The allocation for the redevelopment of the Brackenbury Sports Centre for housing is related to the development of the Garden Neighbourhood, where replacement leisure facilities would be provided. The Policy should be amended so as to be consistent with national policy for the development of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land as set out in paragraph 97 of the Framework. This is to ensure that development of the site would not take place before replacement facilities with equivalent or better provision are provided. Also, the Policy should address how the significance of the nearby listed building would be safeguarded to accord with national policy as expressed in the Framework. In addition, to be effective, the Policy should

also set out the requirements in respect of wastewater. These matters are addressed by **MM54**.

*Policy SCLP12.8: Land at Bridge Road, Felixstowe*

120. This employment allocation is brought forward from the FPAAP and relates to an existing employment area. The Policy should be amended to address a typographic error and separate the two distinct elements of criterion e) for clarity and to be effective. To be effective, the Policy should also set out the requirements in respect of wastewater (**MM55**).

*Policy SCLP12.9: Land at Carr Road/Langer Road, Felixstowe*

121. The site is also carried forward from the FPAAP and relates to an existing employment area. To be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 182 of the Framework, the Policy should be amended to ensure development would be integrated effectively with the ongoing use of the adjacent Water Recycling Centre in terms of odour risk and that any development would not give rise to unreasonable restrictions being placed on the activities of the existing water recycling centre (**MM56**).

*Policy SCLP12.14: Spa Pavilion to Manor End*

122. The Policy relates to an area of Felixstowe which hosts a number of traditional seaside business uses. The Policy and supporting text should be amended to be consistent with national policy for the historic environment through addressing the issue of the significance of the Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens and architectural heritage (**MM58**).

*Policy SCLP12.16: Felixstowe Leisure Centre*

123. The Felixstowe Leisure Centre site is allocated for redevelopment with the existing leisure facilities being replaced at the Garden Neighbourhood. Through **MM59**, the Policy should be amended so as to be consistent with national policy for the development of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land as per paragraph 97 of the Framework. This is to ensure that the replacement facilities would provide equivalent or better provision in terms of quality and quantity. The Policy should also address how the significance of the Conservation Area would be protected so as to accord with national policy. In addition, to be effective, the Policy should also set out the requirements in respect of wastewater. Criterion i) in relation to the provision of 'limited residential on upper floors' is not clear and should be deleted.

*Policy SCLP12.18: Strategy for Communities Surrounding Ipswich*

124. The East of Ipswich is identified as a Major Centre in the settlement hierarchy. A significant proportion of new housing development for the Plan period is proposed at the Major Centre, including the committed site for around 2,000 dwellings at Brightwell Lakes (SCLP12.19) with new housing allocations at Humber Doucy Lane (SCLP12.24) which would form part of the Ipswich Garden Suburb development, and at the Police Headquarters at Martlesham Heath (SCLP12.25). A new employment land allocation is also made at land at Felixstowe Road, Nacton (SCLP 12.20).

125. Whilst some participants have questioned the level of housing development proposed for the communities surrounding Ipswich, I am satisfied that a significant proportion of the overall dwelling requirement is allocated to the area consistent with the spatial strategy of the Plan. The overall level of development proposed reflects the position of the East of Ipswich in the settlement hierarchy and is justified.
126. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended to set out that development should contribute to sustainable transport and promotion of modal shift in order to contribute to the delivery of the proposed sustainable transport measures in and around Ipswich. These measures are necessary to enable development by mitigating the effects of new development on the transport network (**MM60**). The Policy and text should also be amended as a consequential modification to that in respect of Policy SCLP12.24; Land at Humber Doucy Lane (**MM60**).

*Policy SCLP12.19: Brightwell Lakes*

127. Brightwell Lakes is a master planned site with outline permission for 2,000 dwellings which was proposed as an area of strategic development in the Suffolk Coastal District Council's Core Strategy. The Policy and text should be amended to ensure that heritage assets, a number of Scheduled Monuments, within and in close proximity to the site, are conserved in an appropriate manner consistent with national policy as set out in the Framework in the detailed implementation of the site (**MM61**).

*Policy SCLP12.20: Land at Felixstowe Road*

128. The proposal is for the allocation of about 22.5 hectares of employment land adjacent to the junction of the A12 and A14 roads at the Seven Hills roundabout close to the AONB. The Policy and text should be amended to ensure that designated heritage assets and nearby Scheduled Monuments at Seven Hills Cemetery, are conserved in an appropriate manner consistent with national policy as set out in the Framework. In addition, to be effective, the Policy should set out requirements for sustainable transport, foul sewerage and in respect of whether sand and gravel resources on site may be utilised in the development (**MM62**).

*Policy SCLP12.21: Ransomes, Nacton Heath*

129. The site is allocated for 30 hectares of employment land in the SAASP DPD and has outline planning permission. Whilst the site is situated in the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB, it has been physically separated from the rest of the AONB by the A14 Road. Although the site is already committed, I nevertheless have regard to the duty imposed on me by Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act). Having regard to the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB, I consider that through criterion a) the Policy would be effective in conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty of the AONB. The Policy should however confirm requirements for foul drainage so as to be effective (**MM63**).

*Policy SCLP12.22: Recreation and Open Space in Rushmere*

130. The Policy seeks to provide protection to the open space between Ipswich and Rushmere village to prevent coalescence between the settlements. This continues the policy approach established in previous development plans. The land designated is primarily in sports and recreation uses. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended so that it is clear that the settlements would remain separated by green spaces, whilst allowing these areas to continue to contribute to meeting the recreational needs of the District and also the neighbouring Ipswich Borough. This would include provision of necessary development associated with the continued use of land for outdoor sports and recreation, provided that the separation of the two settlements would not be prejudiced (**MM64**).

*Policy SCLP12.23: Land off Lower Road and Westerfield Road (Ipswich Garden Suburb Country Park)*

131. The Policy is concerned with the designation of two parcels of land for public open space to be provided in association with the new Ipswich Garden Suburb development within the neighbouring Ipswich Borough. To be consistent with paragraph 170 of the Framework, the Policy should be altered to seek net gains for biodiversity (**MM65**).

*Policy SCLP12.24: Land at Humber Doucy Lane, Rushmere St Andrew*

132. The proposed allocation is situated adjacent to the boundary with Ipswich Borough and has arisen as a result of cooperation between the two authorities as a cross border location for development. The land would be developed as part of a master planned approach with land in Ipswich Borough, from where it would be accessed. Given this, the Policy and text should be amended to make it clear that it would be developed only in conjunction with the adjoining land in Ipswich. Consequently, it would not be effective for the Policy to seek to phase the development, when its implementation would depend on development in Ipswich Borough (**MM66**). Should the adjoining land not be allocated in Ipswich Borough through the emerging local plan, which is at present at the early stages in examination, the site would be unlikely to come forward and this would be a matter to be addressed in a subsequent review of this Plan.

133. To be effective, the Policy criteria and text should be amended to be clear that adequate provision is made for primary school places and that development preserves the settings of nearby listed buildings. The Policy and text should also set out that a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment is required, given the findings of the HRA for the Plan (**MM66**).

*Policy SCLP12.25: Suffolk Police HQ, Portal Avenue, Martlesham*

134. The Suffolk Police Headquarters site is allocated for the development of 300 dwellings and it is anticipated that the site would come forward as part of a programme of re-provisioning of Police facilities in the county, the details of which are not yet determined. Whilst the Policy is amended to confirm this to be effective (**MM67**), it does not seek to impose any phasing requirements on the development relating to the cessation of Police use of the site. The made Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan (MNP) recognises the modern planned village

aspects of Martlesham Heath and its attractive low density housing areas. The allocated site is situated to the north of the planned village and whilst Policy SCLP12.25 will be effective in seeking to protect the wider context of Martlesham Heath, the text should be amended to state clearly that the scheme should incorporate a mix of housing which contributes to a high quality design (**MM67**).

135. The MNP also recognises a lack of housing choice and particularly of smaller properties and housing for older people in the area. This accords with the plan wide findings set out in the SHMA update. To be positively prepared, the Policy should be amended to include the provision for housing for older people to ensure that the scheme contributes towards meeting the significant local need identified for housing for this group (**MM67**).
136. The site includes a number of existing sports pitches and the Policy and text should be amended to be consistent with national policy for sport and recreation as set out in paragraph 97 of the Framework (**MM67**). The Policy and text should ensure that heritage assets, which include several Scheduled Monuments, are conserved in an appropriate manner consistent with national policy as set out in the Framework (**MM67**). Additionally, to be effective the Policy should include a requirement for an ecological survey and provision of any necessary mitigation (**MM67**).
137. The existing Police Investigation Centre (PIC) is anticipated to be retained in use by the Police. It has since been confirmed that some Police presence would also be retained at Rhodes House nearby, after the relocation of the Headquarters. Nevertheless, in accordance with paragraph 91 of the Framework, the Policy should be amended to ensure that the development of the Police Headquarters has regard to the continued use of the nearby PIC so that fear of crime does not undermine the quality of life for future and existing residents (**MM67**).

*Policy SCLP12.29: South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood*

138. The proposed South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood (SCLP12.29) is intended to provide approximately 800 homes, community facilities, employment land and open space, through a master-planned development. The development is one of the key elements in the strategy for growth expressed in Policy SCLP3.1. Saxmundham is designated as a Market Town in the settlement hierarchy, where, along with the Major Centres, the largest levels of growth are proposed.
139. The indicative draft masterplan illustrates an area of employment land to the west of the A12, residential development and a community hub between the A12 and the railway and open space, including SANG to the east of the railway. It is feasible to achieve the 'built elements' of the allocation, approximately 800 homes and a community hub on the land identified between the A12 road and the railway line with the employment land to the west of the A12. Whilst some representors have raised concern about the proposed access for the site onto the A12 road, I am satisfied that it is feasible to create safe and suitable access for the site and that this matter is addressed adequately in the Policy.

140. The site was considered through the HRA, including the appropriate assessment. The HRA recognises that the nearest European sites (the Sandlings, the Alde Ore and Minsmere-Walberswick) are approximately 5 to 7 km away and that SANG is required to be a viable avoidance/mitigation measure at the site. The HRA includes principles and good practice to inform the detailed master planning process and project level HRAs. The size of the SANG should be guided by the principles set out in the HRA, but be informed by locally relevant information through a project level HRA.
141. The area identified to the east of the railway as part of the allocation is indicatively illustrated for open space and SANG in the submitted Plan and is proposed to be included in the settlement boundary where Policy SCLP3.3 would apply. That is to say that development there would be acceptable in principle. Given that this land is not required for built development, its inclusion in the settlement boundary is not necessary. In addition, part of this area is an area of land known as 'The Layers', which has some significance to local people and provides an open rural setting for several listed buildings as confirmed through the Council's South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood Heritage Impact Assessment (SSGNHIA).
142. Whilst there is some disagreement regarding the amount of SANG required, this would be determined through the master planning of the site in a project level HRA. The land within the allocation to the east of the railway is included for SANG/open space only. This land has been promoted for development through the Plan process, with part of it being in a different ownership to that of the majority of the proposed allocation. The promoter and landowner who have been promoting their land separately, have stated that the land is not available for SANG/open space only and would not be available during the plan period for such use.
143. The actual requirement for SANG/open space will be determined through the master planning process and the project level HRA. The master planning process could result in a housing layout and amount of housing which could come forward with the necessary SANG/open space provision, without having to use the whole of the land to the east of the railway. In that case, the land which is not required would remain in its existing use.
144. If the SANG requirement as determined through the master planning process and project level HRA could not be otherwise met without the use of some of this disputed land, it would be open to the Council to consider whether it wished to use its statutory powers to acquire the necessary land or whether alternative SANG provision should be made. I consider it sound therefore to include all the land proposed to the east of the railway within the allocation.
145. It may well be that the issue of the provision of SANG/open space would mean that the site should be considered as being 'developable', rather than deliverable in terms of the Framework. However, given the level of existing commitments and development proposed through this Plan, along with the modest contribution that this site is expected to make in the first five years of the Plan period as indicated in the housing trajectory, should the site fall under

the developable category, this would only have a marginal effect on the five year supply of housing, which would be significantly above what is required in any event.

146. I find that the Policy is sound in making provision for a one form entry primary school on a 2.2 hectares site to meet educational needs. In addition, having considered the whole plan viability study, I am satisfied that the site is capable of being viably delivered during the Plan period and that the consideration of the site in the whole plan viability assessment was adequate.
147. Development of the Garden Neighbourhood has the potential to have an adverse effect on the settings of a number of designated heritage assets including the Grade II\* listed Church of St John the Baptist and the Grade II listed Hurts Hall, Crown House, The White House & Monks Cottages and Benhall Stores, and the Saxmundham Conservation Area. An assessment of the significance of these assets has been undertaken in the SSGNHIA. The proposed allocation as amended by MM68 would not include any built elements within the land to the east of the railway, with the land providing for SANG/open space, and for that not required, remaining in its present use.
148. The details of the SANG/open space provision are not before me. However, the land required for SANG/open space should provide an appropriate buffer to ensure that development could come forward without harm to the settings of the designated heritage assets. The final details would be agreed as part of the master planning and planning application processes including a site specific heritage impact assessment (HIA) as required by the amended Policy.
149. The development of the Garden Neighbourhood would bring forward considerable public benefits, including significantly boosting the supply of housing, provide community facilities and employment land to be weighed against any harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets. Consequently, I am satisfied that the allocation of the site is appropriate in terms of the Framework. The amendments to criterion j include that the design and development of the site should have regard to the SSGNHIA, which would provide a starting point in assessing significance and to clarify that a site specific HIA is required (**MM68**).
150. Policy SCLP12.29 should be amended so that it is clear that this area of land, through the proposed allocation, is intended to provide open space and SANG, or to remain in its current use and is not for built development, which is not justified (**MM68**).
151. The Policy and text should be modified to clarify how green infrastructure and access between different areas of the Garden Neighbourhood should be provided (**MM68**). In addition, to be effective, the Policy should be amended to show the corrected site area and to clarify the requirements for the provision for early years education facilities, foul drainage requirements and in respect of whether sand and gravel resources on site may be utilised in the development (**MM68**). I have addressed a formatting error in the MM where

the word 'adjoining' was shown in error in bold text in the changes to paragraph 12.288. This minor change will not prejudice any party.

152. On adoption of the Plan, the Council should adopt an amended Policies Map which excludes the area to the east of the railway from the settlement boundary and to clearly identify that the proposed use of that land is for open space, SANG and existing uses.

*Policy SCLP12.32: Former Council Offices, Melton Hill*

153. The allocation relates to the redevelopment of the former Suffolk Coastal Council Offices at Melton Hill. To be effective, the Policy should set out requirements for foul sewerage (**MM70**) and supporting text in paragraph 12.336 regarding the historic environment should be amended to refer to the prehistoric settlement and group of barrows at Sutton Hoo.

*Policy SCLP12.33: Land at Woodbridge Town Football Club*

154. It is proposed that 4.16 hectares of land at Woodbridge Town Football Club is allocated for approximately 120 dwellings. To be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 97 of the Framework, the Policy and text should be amended so that it is clear that the sporting facilities would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location. To secure continuity of use and security of provision, the replacement sports facilities should be available for use prior to the implementation of the allocated housing development. If this is not the case, this will need to be justified and an appropriate alternative timescale securing the delivery of the replacement provision proposed and agreed with the Council (**MM71**).

*Policy SCLP12.34: Strategy for the Rural Areas*

155. The strategy for the Rural Areas is broadly consistent with national policy through seeking to support and enhance the vitality of rural communities and the visitor experience, whilst protecting and enhancing landscapes and the natural and built environments. For internal consistency, to make the plan effective and to accord with national policy for the historic environment as set out in the Framework, Policy SCLP12.34 should be amended by the deletion of the word 'valuable' in criterion g) (**MM72**).

*Policy SCLP12.38: Levington Park, Levington*

156. The allocation is carried forward from the SAASP DPD and relates to an existing employment area. Due to the proximity of the site to the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB, the Policy should be amended to include a criterion requiring a landscape and visual assessment to ensure that the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB is conserved (**MM74**).

*Policy SCLP12.46: Land to the South of Station Road, Campsea Ashe*

157. Campsea Ashe is identified as a 'Small Village' in the settlement hierarchy. The allocated site is situated outside of the settlement boundary, in part of the village with a dispersed settlement pattern to the east of the railway. In accordance with paragraph 78 of the Framework, the site allocation should



assist in enhancing or maintaining the viability of this rural community. The Policy addresses the issue of the settings of nearby listed buildings. The effects upon the significance of the listed buildings would be addressed in the development management process by Policies SCLP11.3 Historic Environment and SCLP11.4: Listed Buildings. To be effective the Policy should be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM80**).

*Policy SCLP12.47: Land behind 15 St Peters Close, Charsfield*

158. The site is allocated for about 20 dwellings. Given the evidence of protected species, the Policy and text should be amended so as to require an ecological survey, to minimise impacts on biodiversity consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 170 of the Framework (**MM81**). To be effective, the Policy should also be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM81**).

*Policy SCLP12.48: Land to the South of Darsham Station*

159. The site is allocated for mixed use development of about 120 dwellings and employment uses. To be effective and to mitigate landscape impact, the Policy and text should be amended to clarify that the expected location for employment development is in the northern part of the site and that landscape planting should reflect the adjacent parkland. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended to reflect recent changes to the boundary of the Yoxford Conservation Area. In addition, the Policy should be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM82**).

*Policy SCLP12.49: Land North of The Street, Darsham*

160. Darsham is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy. Whilst I have taken into account the level of development which has taken place in the village in recent years, I find the proposed allocation for about 25 dwellings acceptable in principle. The Policy as submitted sought access either from the Street or via the adjacent Millfields development. However, there are uncertainties as to the deliverability of an access from Millfields. To be effective, the Policy criteria should be amended so that the site access requirements are consistent with those of other allocations (**MM83**) in seeking provision of a safe and suitable access. In addition, the Policy should be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage and paragraph 12.529 should be corrected to read 25 dwellings to be consistent with the Policy (**MM83**).

*Policy SCLP12.50: Land off Laxfield Road, Dennington*

161. Dennington is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy. The western part of the site, about 0.6 hectares, is currently allocated in the SAASP DPD for 10 dwellings. The submitted Plan seeks to allocate about 2.04 hectares of land for approximately 50 dwellings. Given the location of the site on the periphery of the village, within the settings of the adjacent Conservation Area and nearby Listed Buildings, and having regard to the prevailing grain of the village, the development of the site for 50 dwellings would give rise to a density of development unlikely to be consistent with the character and appearance of the settlement. The Policy and text along with table 3.3 should be amended to alter the number of dwellings to 35, along with alterations to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM84**). I am satisfied

that the net density of development would be such that the site, in terms of the Whole Plan Viability Study (D38) would be viable on this basis.

*Policy SCLP12.51: Land to the South of Eyke CoE Primary School and East of The Street, Eyke*

162. Eyke is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy. The site is allocated for 65 dwellings with land for school expansion. The allocation falls within the AONB. I have had regard to the duty imposed on me by Section 85 of the CROW Act and to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. I consider that through the Policy requirements, the Policy would be effective in conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty. To be effective the Policy and text should be altered to address the potential use of on-site sand and gravel resources in the development (**MM85**).

*Policy SCLP12.52: Land to the West of Chapel Road, Grundisburgh*

163. Grundisburgh is identified as a Large Village in the settlement hierarchy and the submitted Plan includes the proposed allocation of around 3.47 hectares of land for around 70 dwellings, with vehicular access taken from Chapel Road. In principle, the scale of the proposed allocation is consistent with the position of Grundisburgh in the settlement hierarchy. The proposed access as set out in the submitted Plan, onto Chapel Road is not feasible, due to its narrow width, lack of footways and the inability for it to be suitably widened. The allocation as submitted is therefore unsound as it is inconsistent with national policy as expressed in the Framework as safe and suitable access cannot be achieved for all users.

164. The allocation site should be amended so that vehicular access can be taken off Park Road to the south, where sufficient width of public highway should allow safe and suitable vehicular access to be achieved (**MM86**). The number of dwellings indicated remains at 70 to reflect that the amendments to the site area are principally made to facilitate access for the site, allowing sufficient space for that, open space and to safeguard the setting of the nearby Grundisburgh Hall Historic Park and Garden.

165. The Policy should be amended to make clear that the provision of safe and suitable pedestrian access to services and facilities in the village is required so as to be consistent with national policy (**MM86**). The supporting text provides information on drainage requirements which requires clarification (**MM86**). The changes to the proposed allocation require a change to the Policies Map which does not form part of the MM which the Council should make separately on adoption of the Plan.

166. The proposal has attracted a considerable number of representations. The policy criteria as amended would be effective and should allow for the appropriate development of the site in terms of pedestrian access to the village services and facilities, provide for affordable housing, housing for older people and for public open space, ensure that the design and layout of the site is sympathetic to the setting of Grundisburgh Hall Historic Park and Garden, address flood risk issues and mitigate any ecological effects.

*Policy SCLP12.54: Land North of the Street, Kettleburgh*

167. Kettleburgh is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy. Whilst I have regard to the amount of development which has taken place in the village, the proposed allocation is consistent with the status of the village in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation in the submitted Plan relates to a part of a field which forms a gap in the built frontage along The Street. It is proposed that the site is allocated for approximately 16 dwellings. However, that would give rise to a higher density of development than the surrounding area which would not be reflective of the character and appearance of the area. To be effective, the allocation should be amended so that the site area is increased to 0.75 hectares to include the whole of the field (**MM88**). This requires a change to the Policies Map which does not form part of the MM which the Council should make separately on adoption of the Plan. In addition, to be effective, the Policy should be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM88**).

*Policy SCLP12.57: Land at Bridge Road, Levington*

168. Levington, is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy and the site is allocated for approximately 20 dwellings. To be effective, the text in paragraph 12.642 should be amended to refer to contributions being necessary towards facilities at Ipswich Library (**MM91**).

*Policy SCLP12.58: Land North of Mill Close, Orford*

169. Orford is a Large Village within the settlement hierarchy and the proposed allocation, which is carried forward from the SAASP DPD, is appropriate in scale with the village and its position in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation falls within the AONB. Whilst the site is already committed in the development plan, I nevertheless have had regard to the duty imposed on me by Section 85 of the CRoW Act and have had regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. I consider that through the Policy requirements, the Policy would be effective in conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty.

*Policy SCLP12.59: Land adjacent to Swiss Farm, Otley*

170. Otley is identified as a Large Village and the proposed allocation for approximately 60 dwellings is reflective of the position of the village in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation boundary bisects a cluster of farm buildings. The Policy and text should be amended to include provision for a contaminated land assessment given the potential for the site to contain contaminants, to be consistent with paragraph 178 of the Framework. In addition, the policy and text should address the future relationship between the proposed houses and any retained farming activities so as to ensure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and suitable mitigation employed so that new development can be integrated effectively with the existing farm use as per paragraph 182 of the Framework (**MM92**). To be effective, the Policy and text should also be amended to require a Transport Assessment of the effects of the proposed development and in particular on the junction of the B1079 and B1080 roads to the south of Otley due to

potential capacity issues. The transport assessment is also expected to address any wider transport effects of the development (**MM92**).

*Policy SCLP12.60: Land adjacent to Farthings, Sibton Road, Peasenhall*

171. Peasenhall is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy and the scale of development proposed, approximately 14 dwellings, is appropriate for the position of the village in the hierarchy. Concerns have been expressed regarding the effect of the proposal on the character of the village, about transport effects of the scheme and flood risk. These matters are addressed effectively by the Policy criteria. To be effective, the requirements for foul sewage disposal should however be clarified so that the requirement relates to the wider sewerage network (**MM93**).

172. The site was made available for development through a landowner submission to the First Draft Local Plan. Although representations question whether the site is available, on balance, I consider that it should be considered as being developable in terms of the Framework, as there is a reasonable prospect that it will be available and viably developed at the point envisaged in the housing trajectory. The issue of flood risk and the sequential test has been considered above.

*Policy SCLP12.61: Land between High Street and Chapel Lane, Pettistree (adjoining Wickham Market)*

173. Whilst the proposed allocation falls within Pettistree Parish, it immediately abuts Wickham Market which is identified as a Large Village within the settlement hierarchy. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended so that it is clear that the substantial landscape buffer would be provided at the southern boundary of the site to provide a 'soft' gateway to Wickham Market and to maintain a visual separation with the village of Pettistree (**MM94**). The requirements for foul sewage disposal should be clarified so that the requirements relate to the wider sewerage network, and the Policy amended in respect of whether sand and gravel resources on site may be utilised in the development to be effective (**MM94**). I have corrected a typographical error in the MM to criterion a) through the deletion of the words 'on a developed area'. This minor change will not prejudice any party and the consultation on the MMs adequately addressed this point in that the change was shown correctly in the track change version of the Plan which was published for consultation.

*Policy SCLP12.62: Land West of Garden Square, Rendlesham*

174. Rendlesham is identified as a Large Village in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation is proposed to be carried forward from the SAASP DPD for 50 dwellings. The site is close to the Rendlesham Water Recycling Centre and in accordance with paragraph 180 of the Framework, the Policy should ensure that the new development is appropriate for its location, taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health and living conditions. It is also necessary for the Policy to ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with the existing facility. The Policy as submitted refers to a 'minimum distance' from the Water Recycling Centre. This is not justified by evidence. To be effective, the Policy needs amending so that it is clear that

this matter should be addressed through the development management system by it being demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable effects on the living conditions of future occupiers and that the continuing operation of the Water Recycling Centre would not be affected (**MM95**). In addition, to be effective, the requirements for foul sewage disposal should be clarified so that it relates to the wider sewerage network (**MM95**). In this regard, it has been drawn to my attention in the MM consultation that criteria c and k are repetitious. I have therefore deleted criterion c. This does not change the meaning or effect of the policy and the interests of interested persons should not be harmed as a consequence.

175. The site is currently allocated for approximately 50 dwellings in the existing development plan with the same capacity proposed in this Plan. Having regard to the position of Suffolk County Council as Education Authority, it is clear that Rendlesham Primary School is close to capacity and that there is limited scope for new housing development, unless additional education provision is made. A further constraint in terms of housing numbers is presented by the capacity of Melton crossroads. Whilst I find the 50 dwelling figure sound, it would be for the development management process to determine the number of homes to be provided on site, following detailed assessments made of the circumstances at the time a planning application is made and decided. The policy provides sufficient flexibility for this.

*Policy SCLP12.64: Land opposite The Sorrel Horse, The Street, Shottisham*

176. This site is another carried forward from the SAASP DPD. Shottisham falls within the 'countryside' in this Plan, having previously been identified as a Service Centre in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation would fall within the AONB. Whilst the site is already committed in the development plan, I nevertheless have had regard to the duty imposed on me by Section 85 of the CRoW Act and have had regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB and consider that through the Policy requirements, the Policy would be effective in conserving and enhancing the landscape and natural beauty.

177. Whilst the Sorrel Horse is owned by a number of shareholders and I have had regard to comments from a number of them that they opposed the development of the site, on balance, in terms of the definition of 'developable' in the Framework, there appears to be a reasonable prospect that the site would be available and could be viably developed during the Plan period. To be effective, the Policy should clarify the requirements for sewage disposal (**MM97**).

*Policy SCLP12.66: Land adjacent to Reeve Lodge, High Road, Trimley St Martin*

178. The proposed allocation is for 8.59 hectares of land to accommodate approximately 150 dwellings, a primary school and open space. The site at present has a role in preventing the coalescence of the Trimley villages. Whilst Policy SCLP10.5 is concerned with preventing coalescence of settlements, it is necessary for effectiveness to amend Policy SCLP12.66 and text to address the issue of coalescence specifically in regard to this allocation given its location, which could otherwise give rise to coalescence (**MM99**). To be effective, the Policy and text should also be amended to clarify that the

provision of pedestrian/cycle links should be within the countryside and not the AONB and the Policy should clarify the requirement for sewage disposal (**MM99**). The site is located within a Minerals Consultation Area as defined by the Mineral Planning Authority due to the presence of sand and gravel deposits. To be effective the Policy and text should be amended in respect of whether sand and gravel resources on site may be utilised in the development (**MM99**). The principle of significant housing provision proposed at Trimley St Martin which is designated as a Large Village, is not inconsistent with the strategy for Felixstowe or that of the wider Plan.

*Policy SCLP12.69: Land West of the B1125, Westleton*

179. Westleton is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy and the proposed allocation of 20 dwellings is consistent with this designation. The highway network in Westleton, like that of many Suffolk villages, does not meet modern standards in terms of road and footway widths, but I am satisfied that in principle, safe and suitable access can be achieved for all users for the proposed development. In this regard the Policy specifically requires provision of a pedestrian connection to existing footpaths to the village.

180. To be effective and to be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 170 of the Framework, the Policy should include a criterion requiring an assessment of the impacts of the development of the site on the Westleton Common County Wildlife Site (**MM100**). The requirements for foul sewage disposal should be clarified so as to be effective (**MM100**).

*Policy SCLP12.70: Land at Cherry Lee, Darsham Road, Westleton*

181. Westleton is identified as a Small Village in the settlement hierarchy and the site is allocated for approximately 15 dwellings. To be effective and for clarity the landscaping requirements and the requirements for foul sewage disposal should be set out (**MM101**).

*Policy SCLP12.72: Land at Street Farm, Witnesham (Bridge)*

182. Witnesham is identified as a Small Village and the proposed allocation for approximately 30 dwellings is reflective of the position of the village in the settlement hierarchy. The allocation is carried forward from the SAASP DPD. The allocation boundary bisects a cluster of farm buildings. The Policy should be amended to include provision for a contaminated land assessment, given the potential for the site to contain contaminants so as to be consistent with paragraph 178 of the Framework. In addition, it should address the future relationship between the proposed houses and any retained farming activities so as to ensure acceptable living conditions for future occupiers and suitable mitigation employed so that new development can be integrated effectively with the existing farm use as per paragraph 182 of the Framework (**MM102**). To be effective, the requirements for foul sewage disposal should be clarified so that the requirement relates to the wider sewerage network (**MM102**).

*Policy SCLP12.10: Land at Haven Exchange, Felixstowe, Policy SCLP12.30: Land North-East of Street Farm, Saxmundham, Policy SCLP12.39: Land at Silverlace Green (former airfield) Parham, Policy SCLP12.40: Former airfield Parham, Policy*

*SCLP12.42: Riverside Industrial Estate, Border Cot Lane, Wickham Market, Policy SCLP12.44: Land South of Forge Close between Main Road and Ayden, Benhall, Policy SCLP12.45: Land to the South East of Levington Lane, Bucklesham, Policy SCLP12.53: Land South of Ambleside, Main Road, Kelsale cum Carlton, Policy SCLP12.55: Land to the rear of 31-37 Bucklesham Road, Kirton, Policy SCLP12.56: Land at School Road, Knodishall, Policy SCLP12.63: Land East of Redwald Road, Rendlesham and Policy SCLP12.65: Land off Howlett Way, Trimley St Martin*

183. To be effective Policies SCLP12.10, SCLP12.30, SCLP12.39, SCLP12.40, SCLP12.42, SCLP12.44, SCLP12.45, SCLP12.53, SCLP12.55, SCLP12.56, SCLP12.63, and SCLP12.65 and as necessary, the supporting text to the Policies should be amended to address the issue of foul sewerage (**MM57, MM69, MM75, MM76, MM77, MM78, MM79, MM87, MM89, MM90, MM96, and MM98**).

### *Conclusion*

184. Subject to the main modifications described above, the Area Specific Strategies, allocations and policies are sound.

### **Issue 5 – Whether the Plan adequately meets the business and employment needs of the Plan Area?**

185. The submitted Plan is seeking to make allocations of B class employment land to meet the needs identified in collaboration with the ISPA local authorities. The baseline minimum employment land for B class uses to be provided in the IFEA has been agreed by the ISPA authorities to be around 50 hectares for the period 2018 – 2036. This is reflected in Policy SCLP2.1, which states that at least 30,320 jobs/ 49.8 hectares of employment land will be provided in the ISPA. The Suffolk Coastal employment land requirement is for 11.7 hectares of new allocated employment land. In addition to a number of existing allocations which are proposed to be carried forward into this Plan, the Plan is proposing 29.62 hectares of new employment land allocations at Felixstowe Road, Nacton (Policy SCLP12.20) and at south of Saxmundham (Policy SCLP12.29).

186. The assessment of the baseline minimum employment land needs has followed a reasonable methodology, consistent with the guidance set out in the PPG. Whilst some representors have questioned the employment growth assumptions, the evidence which underlies the baseline minimum employment land assessment is based upon reasonable assumptions for labour demand and job growth across different sectors of the economy for the Plan period. It is both proportionate and adequate.

187. Similarly, the assessment of employment land supply has been undertaken with a reasonable methodology, consistent with the PPG. It has considered the locational and premises needs for business and identified gaps in local employment land provision. The assessment of sites has been undertaken on a reasonable basis and has been subject to the requirements of SA and HRA.

188. The Nacton site (Policy SCLP12.20) is situated within the key property market areas for the business and professional services sectors in the Ipswich

Economic Area as defined in the Ipswich Economic Sector Needs Assessment (Document D3). The proposed allocation at Saxmundham (Policy SCLP12.29) would be in conjunction with the garden neighbourhood proposal. These sites together would meet the additional baseline need for employment land identified and allow some flexibility to ensure anticipated needs are met over the plan period. The approach to addressing baseline employment land needs is therefore sound.

*Policy SCLP12.35: Land at Innocence Farm*

189. The submitted Plan also includes an allocation of employment land specifically in relation to the Port of Felixstowe, for port related businesses and operations to support the continued viability of the Port. The site of about 67 hectares of land at Innocence Farm, Trimley St Martin (Policy SCLP12.35) would be for port related businesses and operations.
190. The Council's Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study: Final Report (D1) recognises the Port of Felixstowe as the UK's largest and busiest container port and it is clearly very important to the economy of the local and wider area. Container trade forecasts have been made and translated into requirements for off port employment land. These requirements range from 26.3 hectares (low case) to 103.8 hectares (high case). The report recommends that the Council consider planning for at least a Central case (i.e. just under 67 hectares of land), to ensure that adequate space is made available for port-related growth and activity, should it be needed over the plan period.
191. Some time was spent at the hearing sessions discussing the supply of and demand for land and warehousing for the Port. There was also some discussion of the likely future container numbers to be handled and where they are likely to be dealt with in the UK. From what I have heard and read, the assessment for the Council in regard to the likely demand for B8 employment land arising from Port related activities for the Plan period appears ambitious and optimistic, particularly having regard to the existing pipeline of employment land in the Felixstowe area and that there has been no new warehouse building in the area for many years.
192. The Report (D1) also found that there was an existing pipeline supply of employment land that is in close proximity to the Port of Felixstowe and considered suitable for port-related activities at just over 67 hectares. Following the hearings, it was confirmed that there is planning permission on land at the Port of Felixstowe Logistics Park and at Clickett's Hill for B8 uses. In quantitative terms, there is sufficient employment land provision now to meet the projected needs at the Council's preferred 'Central case' as set out in the report (D1) for the plan period. However, I agree that the existing supply, due to the scale, location and nature of some of the sites is unlikely to meet the full central case need for the whole of the Plan period. However, were I to accept the Council's position in terms of the employment land needed for the Port, it is apparent that the existing pipeline of provision would be capable of meeting needs in qualitative terms for a considerable part of the Plan period.



193. Paragraph 22 of the Framework includes that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities. The Plan is making provision above the minimum forecast for general employment land needs for the Plan period and in quantitative terms sufficient land would be available to meet the needs of the Port identified by the Council. I consider that the Plan is making sufficient provision for employment and commercial development as per paragraph 20 of the Framework. Given the legal requirement that policies in local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least every five years and then be updated as necessary, and having regard to the provision of employment land made in the Plan, I do not consider it necessary for soundness for the Plan to include a policy for the review of employment land provision. This is a matter which the Council will however no doubt keep under review through its local plan monitoring.
194. There was also some discussion at the hearings concerning the detail of the proposed allocation at Innocence Farm, including the proposed access, rail connection and potential environmental effects.
195. The Innocence Farm site is situated adjacent to the A14 road. Whilst Highways England considers that the site could be reasonably delivered without causing severe impacts on the A14, an all movement junction is required to serve the site. I agree with the Council, County Council and Highways England that this should be provided as early as possible in the development so as to prevent severe impacts on the highway network. Without such mitigation, the site could not be delivered as proposed. There is however, little evidence before me, as to the feasibility or costs of such a junction, how it would be funded, whether the site would be viable with the necessary junction provision or whether the site could be phased so that safe and suitable access could be achieved prior to an all movement junction being provided. In the absence of such information, I cannot conclude that the proposed allocation would be deliverable. The Council's Plan Viability Study (D38) provides me with no comfort in this regard.
196. The allocation also includes provision for rail infrastructure, which is identified as an opportunity for the site, rather than a requirement. The Innocence Farm site is not dependent upon the provision of the rail connection and infrastructure, but due to limited information, I cannot determine that this part of the proposal would be practical or achievable within the extent of the area proposed as shown on the Policies Map.
197. I have had regard to the Framework which in paragraph 80 includes that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, and in paragraph 82 includes that planning policies should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors, such as making provision for storage and distribution operations. However, I find that the Innocence Farm allocation is not adequately justified and it has not been shown that the proposal can be delivered over the plan period. Consequently, the Innocence Farm allocation (Policy SCLP12.35) should be removed from the Plan and consequential changes made (**MM73**). Given the provision of employment land otherwise being made being sufficient to meet the baseline employment land requirement and the extent of land available to

meet port related needs, there is no need to provide an alternative site to Innocence Farm.

*Conclusion*

198. Subject to the main modifications described above, the Plan adequately meets the business and employments needs of the area.

**Issue 6 – Are the strategic policies for Major Energy effective and justified?**

*Policy SCLP3.4: Proposals for Major Energy Infrastructure Projects*

199. Policy SCLP3.4 is concerned with proposals for major energy infrastructure projects and to set an effective overall strategy, the Policy and the text should be amended to include the decommissioning of existing plant and facilities, particularly the ongoing project at Sizewell A Power Station (**MM8**).

200. Proposals for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) are considered against the designated National Policy Statements in a specific consenting process, rather than through the Town and Country Planning process. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended so that it is clear as to how the Policy would be applied in the NSIP process (**MM8**).

201. The Policy as submitted is not consistent with national policy for planning obligations as set out in paragraph 56 of the Framework. The Policy criteria should be amended so that community benefit would be sought as mitigation of harm, rather than to 'compensate burden' and to seek, rather than require positive outcomes, so that it is consistent with the tests for planning obligations as set out in the Framework (**MM8**). In addition, the Policy and text should be amended so that the Plan sets a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, consistent with paragraph 185 of the Framework. Furthermore, the text should address the consideration of alternative sites for major energy infrastructure outside of the AONB, so as to be consistent with paragraph 172 of the Framework (**MM8**). I have made a change to the wording of the MM to paragraph 3.57 to address a typographical error. I am satisfied that this change is minor in nature and will not give rise to prejudice to any party.

*Conclusion*

202. Subject to the alterations above, the Plan provides effective strategic policies for major energy.

**Issue 7 – Does the Plan make sufficient provision for infrastructure?**

203. The Plan contains a number of strategic policies which address the provision of infrastructure. Policy SCLP2.2 sets out the overall strategic approach to the provision of infrastructure and community facilities whilst Policy SCLP3.5 is concerned with the mechanisms for the delivery of infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Framework sets out in detail the infrastructure required to support the proposals for growth set out in the Plan.

204. Policy SCLP2.2 as submitted supports the timely delivery of a number of key strategic infrastructure projects, including the Ipswich Northern Route, a new road intended to improve connectivity between the A12 and A14 road corridors. Suffolk County Council has since decided not to take forward the next stages of work on the Ipswich Northern Route and as the scheme is no longer to progress, the Policy and text should be modified accordingly removing references to the scheme (**MM1**). The text in paragraph 2.15 should be amended to delete reference to the Upper Orwell Crossings as that project is also not proceeding (**MM5**).
205. The ISPA authorities have assessed the potential impacts of growth proposed in the HMA on the highways network using the Suffolk County Transport Model. The modelling undertaken has identified that there would be a number of locations where the highways network is likely to experience issues related to capacity by the end of the Plan period in 2036, including the junctions on the A14 within the ISPA. The broad mitigation measures to address these identified impacts are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Framework, which indicates funding from a variety of sources, including from new development, as required by Policy SCLP3.5.
206. The development proposed in the Plan if not mitigated, is likely to give rise to significant impacts on the transport network within the HMA. To be effective, the Plan should set out how the transport impacts of growth in the plan area will be addressed and mitigated (**MM5**). This would be through a package of incentives and sustainable transport improvements to routes, providing 'smarter choices', infrastructure and services, enabling and encouraging significant modal shift, along with a funding mechanism.
207. I conclude from the evidence that impacts on the highway network in terms of capacity and congestion outside of Ipswich arising from the development proposed in the Plan would be significant, but of a scale which could reasonably be viably mitigated to an acceptable degree consistent with paragraph 108 of the Framework, and that the Plan as amended by the MMs would address these matters adequately. As a consequence of **MM5** and to be effective, the Appendix I - Glossary and Acronyms needs to be amended to explain what is meant in the context of the Plan by the terms 'modal shift' and 'smarter choices' (**MM107**).
208. Policy SCLP3.5 is concerned with ensuring that necessary infrastructure is delivered in a timely way. To be effective and to be consistent with national policy for planning obligations and conditions as set out in paragraph 56 of the Framework, the Policy should be amended so that it is clear that development will be expected to contribute as necessary to infrastructure provision, rather than all development contributing, and whether this would be necessary or not. The Policy should also be amended to clarify the requirements in respect of water infrastructure as the Policy as submitted is unclear in this regard (**MM9**). The supporting text should include the recommended mitigation from the HRA in respect of the required infrastructure and treatment capabilities for phosphate, ammonia and nitrogen in order to ensure that there are no significant effects on European sites (**MM9**).
209. As consequences of the MMs to the Plan, a number of further alterations are needed to update the Infrastructure Delivery Framework as set out in

Appendix B of the Plan (**MM104**) and the Monitoring Framework in Appendix C of the Plan (**MM105**). I have amended the title of the hyperlink in MM104 to address changes in page numbering. This minor change will not prejudice any party.

210. Subject to the MMs set out above which are required for soundness, the Plan makes sufficient provision for infrastructure.

**Issue 8:- Whether the Plan identifies Strategic Policies in accordance with national policy?**

211. The Framework, in paragraph 21, sets out that Plans should make explicit which policies are strategic policies. These should be limited to those necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area (and any relevant cross boundary issues), to provide a clear starting point for any non-strategic policies that are needed. National policy is clear that strategic policies should not extend to detailed matters that are more properly dealt with through neighbourhood plans or other non-strategic policies.

212. It is stated in paragraph 1.46 of the submitted Plan that all policies in the Plan are strategic policies. However, there are a number of Policies, such as SCLP4.10 Town Centre Environments and SCLP5.13 Residential Annexes, which are clearly non-strategic by being concerned with detailed matters which are not necessary to address the strategic priorities of the area. The Plan should be amended to set out strategic and non-strategic policies as per national policy (**MM3**). I am satisfied that the strategic policies look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from the anticipated adoption of the Plan consistent with paragraph 22 of the Framework.

213. Subject to the main modifications set out above, the Plan identifies strategic policies in accordance with national policy.

**Issue 9 – Are the development management policies clear, justified and consistent with national policy and will they be effective?**

*Policy SCLP3.3: Settlement Boundaries*

214. The Plan identifies settlement boundaries to define the built-up areas of settlements, with the areas falling outwith the defined settlements being defined as 'Countryside'. Settlement boundaries underpin a number of the Policies in the Plan and Policy SCLP3.3 is consequently a key strategic policy. The level of provision of new development through the Plan is such that the identified housing and employment land needs would be catered for in full, with adequate buffers to provide flexibility. The approach taken in the Plan in defining settlement boundaries to show the extent of settlements as identified in the settlement hierarchy is sound in principle and is necessary to identify where policies relating to the countryside apply. To be effective, the Policy should be amended to clarify that land allocated for development in the Plan which is outwith defined settlement boundaries is not defined as being in the countryside, and that development in the countryside would be carefully managed rather than being strictly controlled in order to be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 11 of the Framework (**MM7**).

*Policy SCLP4.2: New Employment Development*

215. Policy SCLP4.2 is concerned with the delivery of new employment development. The Policy as submitted is overly prescriptive and to be effective should be amended so that it is clear that development which would cause unacceptable adverse impact would not be supported, rather than development which would have an adverse impact. Additionally, to be effective, the assessment of schemes should also include the effect upon the living conditions of local residents. The policy should also clarify that applications for office development on sites which are not allocated in the development plan would be subject to sequential test requirements for main town centre uses to be consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 86 of the Framework (**MM10**).

*Policy SCLP4.3: Expansion and Intensification of Employment Sites*

216. Policy SCLP4.3 is concerned with making effective use of employment land. To be effective, the Policy should be amended so that it is clear that development which would cause unacceptable adverse impact would not be supported and that the assessment of schemes should include the effect upon the living conditions of local residents. The policy and text should clarify that applications for office development on sites which are not allocated in the development plan would be subject to sequential test requirements in respect of main town centre uses to be consistent with national policy (**MM11**).

*Policy SCLP4.5: Economic Development in Rural Areas*

217. Policy SCLP4.5 is consistent with the aim in national policy of supporting a prosperous rural economy. To be consistent with paragraph 83 of the Framework, the Policy and text should be amended to refer specifically to agriculture. To be effective, the policy should be clear as to when additional community, cultural or tourism benefits would be sought (**MM12**). I have corrected a typographical error in MM12 by deleting 's' after the word 'function' in the last paragraph of the Policy. This minor change will not prejudice any party.

*Policy SCLP4.6: Conversion and Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment Use*

218. The Policy is concerned with the employment use of rural buildings and would enable the growth and expansion of rural businesses. However, as submitted it is not consistent with paragraph 109 of the Framework in respect of effects on highway safety, or clear and effective as to the requirements for the conversion and replacement of rural buildings for employment use. The Policy should be amended accordingly (**MM13**).

*Policy SCLP4.7: Farm Diversification*

219. Whilst the Policy should enable the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based businesses, as submitted, it is overly prescriptive. To be effective, the Policy should be amended so that it is clear that development which would cause unacceptable adverse impact would not be supported, rather than development which would have an adverse impact (**MM14**).

*Policy SCLP4.9: Development in Town Centres*

220. The Policy, amongst other things, seeks to safeguard the retail function of Primary Shopping Areas consistent with the national policy of ensuring the vitality of town centres. As submitted, the Policy and text are unclear as to how the Policy would be applied in the development management process. To be effective, the text should be amended to set out how the baseline percentages of retail units in town centres would be applied in considering development proposals in primary shopping areas (**MM15**).

*Policy SCLP5.4: Housing in Clusters in the Countryside*

221. The Policy would bring forward small developments in rural areas and help provide a good mix of sites, contributing to the provision of at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, consistent with paragraph 68 of the Framework. Whilst the Plan is clear in paragraph 5.21 as to the size definitions of clusters of dwellings, to be effective, the Policy should be amended so that it is clear as to how it would be applied in the AONB and the supporting text should be amplified so that it is clear as to what constitutes a 'close group of dwellings'. The requirement in the Policy for development to be supported by the local community is not justified and is inconsistent with national policy which, whilst requiring planning policies to be responsive to local needs, does not require such development to have community support. The Policy should be amended to refer to meaningful and effective community engagement having taken place (**MM16**).

*Policy SCLP5.12: Houses in Multiple Occupation*

222. The Policy supports proposals for houses in multiple occupation where specified development management criteria are met. To be effective, it should be amended to clarify the transport requirements and to be consistent with paragraph 102 of the Framework, in that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued (**MM20**).

*Policy SCLP5.13: Residential Annexes*

223. Policy SCLP5.13 provides development management criteria for proposals for residential annexes. The policy and text should be amended to clarify the requirements of the Policy in regard to planning conditions and planning obligations to be effective and to ensure consistency with national policy as set out in the Framework (**MM21**).

*Policy SCLP5.15: Residential Moorings, Jetties and Slipways*

224. Consistent with paragraph 61 of the Framework, the Policy addresses the specific requirements for residential moorings, jetties and slipways. Given the potential for such developments to affect habitats sites, to be effective, paragraph 5.81 of the text should be amended to clarify all the consenting bodies and the requirements under the Habitats Regulations (**MM22**).

## *Chapter 6 Tourism*

225. To be consistent with national policy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment set out in the Framework, paragraph 6.2 of the text should refer to the historic environment (**MM24**).

### *Policy SCLP6.2: Tourism Destinations*

226. The Policy is consistent with national policy as expressed in the Framework in that it helps create the conditions in which tourism businesses can invest, expand and adapt. To be effective, the Policy should be amended to clarify the requirements under the Habitats Regulations (**MM25**).

### *Policy SCLP6.3: Tourism Development within the AONB and Heritage Coast*

227. The Policy is concerned specifically with tourism development in the AONB and Heritage Coast, where the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty apply. The Policy as submitted includes a criterion that development should be of an appropriate scale for its surroundings, setting a threshold of 10 pitches or units of tourist accommodation. This threshold is not justified and should be deleted. The Policy and text should be amended so that they would be effective in conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and to be consistent with national policy (**MM26**). I have addressed a formatting error in the MM by removing bold text from the word 'an' in criterion b. This minor change will not prejudice any party.

### *Policy SCLP6.4: Tourism Development outside of the AONB*

228. The Policy seeks to support the growth of the tourism industry, which is an important sector in the local economy. To be effective and consistent with national policy as expressed in the Framework in paragraph 170, the assessment criteria in part c), should include the effects on landscape character (**MM27**).

### *Policy SCLP6.5: New Tourist Accommodation*

229. The Policy is concerned with the provision of accommodation for tourism, and to be effective, should be amended to clarify that outside of settlement boundaries, new tourism accommodation would be permitted through the conversion of buildings. In addition, to be effective, the Policy and text should be amended to clarify the use of occupation restrictions for tourist accommodation and to ensure compliance with national policy as set out in the Framework in regard to the use of planning conditions and planning obligations (**MM28**).

### *Policy SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport*

230. Policy SCLP7.1 sets out specific development management criteria in respect of sustainable transport. The Policy and text should be amended as a result of consequential changes arising from the amendments to Policy SCLP2.2 (**MM1**) regarding the delivery of the necessary transport mitigation measures identified (**MM29**). To be consistent with paragraph 102 of the Framework, the Policy and text should be amended in respect of opportunities to promote

sustainable transport and clarify that improved provision to public transport would be sought in both urban and rural areas (**MM29**).

*Policy SCLP7.2: Parking Proposals and Standards*

231. Policy SCLP7.2 is concerned with vehicle parking. To be consistent with national policy in paragraph 16 of the Framework which states that Plans should contain policies that are clearly written and unambiguous, the requirement for compliance with the Suffolk Guidance for Parking should be amended in the Policy and text as this document is not part of the development plan (**MM30**). I have amended the reference to the Suffolk Guidance for Parking in the MM to paragraph 7.16 to reflect the latest version of the document. I am satisfied that this change does not give rise to prejudice to any party.

*Policy SCLP8.2: Open Space*

232. As submitted, the Policy is inconsistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 97 of the Framework, which sets out the circumstances when existing open space, sports and recreational buildings including playing fields may be built on. It should be amended to be consistent with national policy (**MM31**). To be effective, the term 'open space' in Appendix I – Glossary and Acronyms should be clarified (**MM107**).

*Policy SCLP8.3: Allotments*

233. The Policy is consistent with paragraph 91 of the Framework in enabling and supporting healthy lifestyles. To be effective, the Policy should be amended to delete criterion d) which is a duplication of criterion a) (**MM32**).

*Policy SCLP9.1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy*

234. The Policy is concerned with the provision of low carbon and renewable energy and the Plan has been prepared consistent with paragraph 151 of the Framework. It sets out criteria for the consideration of low carbon and renewable energy schemes, except for onshore wind proposals which should be located in an area identified as being suitable for such development in a Neighbourhood Plan. To be effective as a strategic policy, the Policy and text should be amended to provide a clear starting point for non-strategic policies to be set out in neighbourhood plans and it should be amended to include the assessment of effects on the AONB to be consistent with paragraph 172 of the Framework. Criterion c) which is concerned with community benefits is inconsistent with national policy for planning conditions and obligations as expressed in the Framework and should be deleted (**MM33**).

*Policy SCLP9.3: Coastal Change Management Area*

235. The Policy is concerned with coastal change management consistent with national policy on coastal change as set out in the Framework. To be consistent with national policy in paragraph 16 of the Framework, the requirement for compliance with Shoreline Management Plans and/or endorsed Coastal Strategy should be amended in the Policy and text as these documents are not part of the development plan (**MM34**).



*Policy SCLP9.5: Flood Risk*

236. To be effective and to manage flood risk from all sources consistent with national policy set out in the Framework, the Flood Risk Policy should address the issue of surface water which gives rise to sewer flooding (**MM35**).

*Holistic Water Management*

237. The text in paragraph 9.61 should be amended to ensure that the conclusions of the HRA are fully addressed to accord with the Habitats Regulations. In addition, to be effective, the requirements for the phasing of development in relation to provision of wastewater infrastructure should be confirmed (**MM36**).

*Policy SCLP10.1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity*

238. The Policy is broadly consistent with paragraph 170 of the Framework in seeking to contribute to and enhance the natural environment. The Policy would adequately distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites through its application. To be effective, the Policy and text should be amended so that it is clear as to what is required regarding the Habitats Regulations and the reference to the Recreational Disturbance Avoidance Strategy updated, now it is in place (**MM37**). Additional text should be inserted after paragraph 10.26 to ensure that the conclusions of the HRA are properly incorporated into the Plan (**MM38**). The text in paragraph 2.17 and in the key issues for the plan in paragraph 1.32 should also be amended to seek net gains in biodiversity consistent with paragraph 170 of the Framework (**MM2**).

*Policy SCLP10.4: Landscape Character*

239. So that they are effective, the Policy and text should be amended so it is clear as to how development proposals affecting the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB would be assessed and to provide clarity regarding the matter of the 'setting' of the AONB (**MM40**). I have made a minor change to MM40 in respect of the new paragraph to be inserted after paragraph 10.34 by clarifying that it refers to the assessment criteria in paragraph 172 of the Framework. This change is factual and would not give rise to prejudice to any party. The text in paragraph 10.32 should be amended to clarify that a large part of the AONB is defined as the Suffolk Heritage Coast (**MM39**).

*Policy SCLP11.1: Design Quality*

240. The Policy seeks the use of Building for Life 12 in the assessment of all major residential developments to inform the decision making process and I am satisfied that this assessment framework is relevant to the context and character of the area. The change to paragraph 11.8 takes into account possible changes to the guidance in the future, but the Policy however should not be prescriptive about its use and the Policy and text should be amended accordingly (**MM41**). To be effective, the Policy should also be amended so that criteria in parts c) relating to the relationships between buildings and materials and h) relating to sustainable transport are clear (**MM41**).

*Policy SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity*

241. The Policy is concerned with safeguarding the living conditions of people who may be affected by development. To be effective, the Policy should be amended so that the living conditions of future occupiers of new development are covered in addition to existing occupiers (**MM42**).

*Policy SCLP11.3: Historic Environment*

242. The Historic Environment Policy and text should be amended so that it relates to heritage assets rather than historic assets to be effective and consistent with the Framework and to ensure that the Policies of the Plan are consistent with each other (**MM43**).

*Policy SCLP11.4: Listed Buildings*

243. Whilst the Policy is consistent with national policy as set out in the Framework, to be effective, the Policy and text should be amended so a clear understanding of the significance of a listed building and its setting is required and the text amended to state the statutory duties imposed on decision makers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (**MM44**).

*Policy SCLP11.5: Conservation Areas*

244. In order to be clear and effective in regard to development proposals affecting the setting of a conservation area and non-designated heritage assets within a conservation area, the Policy should be amended to clarify the policy criteria and how they should be applied (**MM45**).

*Policy SCLP11.6: Non-Designated Heritage Assets*

245. The Policy and text in paragraph 11.34 regarding non-designated heritage assets should be amended so as to be effective and consistent with national policy as set out in paragraph 197 of the Framework, and to provide clarity for the preparation of neighbourhood plans in the identification of non-designated heritage assets (**MM46**).

246. The text should be altered to address non-designated heritage assets of archaeological significance which are of equal significance to scheduled monuments and to confirm the criteria against which historic parks and gardens would be assessed (**MM47** and **MM48**).

*Policy SCLP11.9: Areas to be Protected from Development*

247. Policy SCLP11.9 seeks to carry forward policies from existing development plan documents which protect defined areas from development. The submitted Plan includes a significant number of areas identified on the Policies Map to be so designated. These include a broad variety of sites and land uses, such as gaps and gardens, areas identified to prevent coalescence between settlements and open spaces as identified in earlier Plans. Policy SCLP11.9 sets out that development in these areas will be severely restricted.

248. Whilst the Council and representors point to the importance the community places on these designations as expressed through responses to the Issues and Options document (A10) and the MM stage, there is minimal or no evidence to justify why each of the areas has been designated, or as to how the boundaries have been defined. Furthermore, the severe restriction on development in the areas is unsupported by national policy. These areas have not been considered for designation as Local Green Space as per paragraph 99 of the Framework in this Plan. Such designation can be sought through a subsequent review of this Plan or the preparation of a neighbourhood plan. The Policy should be deleted and consequential amendments made (**MM49**) and the Council should amend the Policies Map accordingly on adoption of the Plan.

### *Conclusion*

249. Subject to the main modifications described above, the individual policies are sound.

## **Overall Conclusion and Recommendation**

250. The Plan has a number of deficiencies in respect of soundness for the reasons set out above, which mean that I recommend non-adoption of it as submitted, in accordance with Section 20(7A) of the 2004 Act. These deficiencies have been explained in the main issues set out above.

251. The Council has requested that I recommend MMs to make the Plan sound and/or legally compliant and capable of adoption. I conclude that the duty to cooperate has been met and that with the recommended main modifications set out in the Appendix the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan satisfies the requirements referred to in Section 20(5)(a) of the 2004 Act and is sound.

*P C Lewis*

Inspector

This report is accompanied by an Appendix containing the Main Modifications.