



Stowmarket Area Action Plan

Mid Suffolk's New Style Local Plan

Adopted February 2013



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1 Introduction

Purpose and status of this document

1.1 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan (SAAP) is a formal planning document. The content conforms with the aims for sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Stowmarket Area Action Plan sets out relevant planning policies to guide future development in Stowmarket and the nine settlements that abut the town's existing Plan boundary. It also allocates specific sites to ensure that there is sufficient land for future growth in employment, housing, retail and recreation within the identified area.

1.2 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan is in conformity with the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy, and sets out the plans for Stowmarket for 15 years from 1st April 2012.

Background

1.3 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan was subject to previous public consultations including; draft planning policies in December 2008 / January 2009, site specific proposals in April / May 2009, and an earlier 'Proposed Submission' version in October / November 2009. Due to the nature of the representations received at this earlier 'Proposed Submission' stage the Council took the opportunity to provide further clarity, justification and evidence for their position. This resulted in a 'revised' Proposed Submission document (April 2010) which was submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2010, Examined in Public during August 2012 and adopted including modifications by Mid Suffolk District Council on 21st February 2013.

Planning Context

Mid Suffolk's Local Plans

1.4 The existing Mid Suffolk Local Plan (adopted 1998) is being replaced by new style local plans. The first document of these local plans is Mid Suffolk's Core Strategy which was adopted on 4th September 2008. Mid Suffolk's future local plans will also include documents consisting of Site Specific Allocations, and Development Management Policies that apply across the whole District. A number of new terms and abbreviations have been introduced as a result of the new planning system and they can be found in the Glossary in Appendix E.

1.5 Until such time as all local plans are completed and adopted, the 'saved' policies from the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) will continue to form part of the Development Plan for planning decisions. The list of 'saved' Local Plan policies, plus the documents and related reports that are produced by Mid Suffolk District Council can be found on the Council's website at www.midsuffolk.gov.uk under the heading 'Planning and Building'.

The Stowmarket Area Action Plan

1.6 As Mid Suffolk's principal town, Stowmarket remains one of the District Council's key priorities. The focus of this document will be on implementation and delivery of a plan which seeks to:

- deliver planned growth;
- stimulate regeneration;
- protect areas particularly sensitive to change and promote good design principles;
- resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures;
- focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

1.7 The adopted Core Strategy (2008) establishes the planning context for the whole of Mid Suffolk. It identifies Stowmarket as the main location for development in the District and suggests two broad locations as being appropriate for that development. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan offers further detail through policies and identified sites within a defined area. It addresses issues such as the scale and location of new shopping facilities, housing and employment uses in the plan area, improving transport into and around the town centre, and enhancing and protecting environmental design quality. It is the strategic planning policy document for Stowmarket and its surrounding villages and performs the following functions:

- define a spatial vision for the defined Stowmarket Area;
- set out strategic objectives to achieve the vision and to guide and control the overall scale, type and location of new development;
- identify the key development and conservation issues and opportunities for the defined Stowmarket area;
- identify areas of opportunity for biodiversity and habitat conservation in the defined Stowmarket area;
- allocate land for development;
- provides the context for a sustainable transport package for the town, including buses, cycling and walking provision;
- emphasise the importance of quality design;
- set out planning policies to resolve these issues;
- set out a Proposals Map;
- establish an infrastructure delivery programme; and
- set out a monitoring and implementation framework.

1.8 The map work within the document includes identifying: new and existing areas for housing and employment; important areas for protection; and retail issues within the town centre. In line with the required regulations, once adopted, the revisions made through the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will be incorporated and updated onto the previous Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 Proposals Map.

1.9 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan has been derived from a wide range of sources that planning regulations require, such as the NPPF and regional planning guidance, the existing Mid Suffolk Local Plan, the adopted Mid Suffolk Core Strategy, Sustainability Appraisals, and Employment Land Review work and housing studies. The document is also supported by the Council's related work on the Stowmarket Masterplan (June 2008), which has been developed with the community to identify issues and priorities for the Stowmarket area.

Relationship to the Stowmarket Masterplan

1.10 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan establishes the planning policy framework for Stowmarket and the identified surrounding villages. The Stowmarket Masterplan is a non-statutory planning document that concentrates on Stowmarket and establishes key issues and possible areas for future growth of the town.

1.11 The Stowmarket Masterplan built upon work started for the Local Plan Review in 2002. The process has involved the residents, businesses and visitors to the town. It has helped identify areas of opportunity for making positive changes or conserving valuable social and environmental assets, while increasing awareness of, and understanding, the planning issues. This arrangement, by which the Masterplan has informed the Area Action Plan has satisfied the public participation requirements under the regulations.

1.12 The Stowmarket Masterplan remains an integral piece of evidence to the Stowmarket Area Action Plan. The Stowmarket Masterplan has made a significant contribution to the Stowmarket Area Action Plan by identifying issues in advance thereby producing a robust and credible document.

Core Strategy as amended by the Core Strategy Focused Review

1.13 In accordance with the Core Strategy Focused Review Mid Suffolk District Council proposes that Stowmarket provides for a minimum of 1,925 new dwellings. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan must allocate enough land to accommodate this number of new dwellings.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.14 All local plan documents must contribute to the delivery of sustainable development. The economic, environmental and social effects of emerging policies and potential development sites have been assessed during the preparation of the SAAP. A final sustainability appraisal report including how it has influenced the SAAP is available from the Council's website (www.midsuffolk.gov.uk).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.15 The Sustainability Appraisal also meets the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) required by the European Directive EC/2001/42. The SEA is an environmental assessment of plans and programmes prepared by Local Authorities that are likely to have significant effects upon the environment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

1.16 A Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) is required to determine whether a plan or project affects a Natura (European) site. The HRA refers to the whole process, including the appropriate assessment step which is only necessary when a plan or project has been determined as affecting a Natura site. After assessing the Stowmarket Area Action Plan it was not considered necessary to conduct an Appropriate Assessment because it was not considered that the plan will have a significant effect on the integrity of any Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area or Ramsar site (Natura Sites) and development will be resisted that does not conform to Core Strategy Policy CS6 and Stowmarket Area Action Plan SAAP Policy 9.1.

1.17 The HRA process to reach this conclusion involved assessing the additional growth, hydrological connectivity, distance from Natura Sites and potential for visitor number increase resulting. Natural England were involved from the onset of the HRA. This approach and the findings received full support from Natural England.

Mid Suffolk's intentions for the plan area

1.18 The aim of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan has been to prioritise and select which sites should be made available, and produce a phased programme of development to ensure the delivery of infrastructure in a timely fashion. Future reviews of this document will consider infrastructure requirements and allocations as part of the required monitoring process.

1.19 An allocation identifies that a site is deemed acceptable for its allocated use having been assessed by the policy making process. However, sites which are allocated will still need to obtain planning permission. Allocation will assist with the progress of any future application, and this approach conforms with the Council's moves towards 'Development Management' rather than Development Control.

2 Stowmarket and Surrounding Area - Past and Present

2.1 Stowmarket is located in a rural area dominated by agriculture in the County of Suffolk. It is heavily influenced by large centres of population, and lies to the south of the A14, mid-distance between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. Stowmarket is the largest town in Mid Suffolk, and is located at the confluence of the Rivers Gipping and Rattlesden and is on the mainline railway to London and Norwich.

2.2 Stowmarket will continue to be the focus of further housing growth in the District, as the town has the majority of services and facilities. Further development contributions will assist with providing more community infrastructure, services and facilities to meet requirements to support additional housing development. Stowmarket has approximately 8,000 households with an estimated population of 19,000. The population is projected to rise to 20,520 by the year 2020.

Historical Development

2.3 Stowmarket is surrounded by the boulder clays of 'High Suffolk' and the town is built on alluvial deposits over the underlying strata of chalk and Pleistocene crags exposed by the river Gipping's action since the ice ages. The town has developed between the two river valleys and originally arose around a junction, where the old route from Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds has been crossed by roads from Finborough in the west and Stowupland in the east.

2.4 Stowmarket is thought to date back to Anglo-Saxon times, the name Stow meaning 'principal place'. The town was listed in Domesday as 'Torria', a royal manor later known as Thorney Hall. It grew in importance in the medieval period thriving on the wool trade and was granted market charter in 1347. Today the central core of the town retains much of its medieval character and the street pattern and market place are reinforced by numerous listed buildings including the church of St Peter and St Mary dating back to the 14th century and the medieval timber framed tithe barn at Abbots Hall.

2.5 The town saw considerable industrial growth beyond its medieval core in the 18th and 19th centuries with the opening of the canal to Ipswich in 1793 (Ipswich to Stowmarket Navigation), and later the railway (1846). These transport routes enabled business and trade to grow. Consequently, an industrial area to the east of the town centre grew along the Gipping river corridor and included warehouses and maltings, remnants of which still remain today. Significant events in Stowmarket during this period included the 1868 Bury Street Fire and the 1871 Prentice Gun Cotton factory explosions, both destroying a number of buildings in the town. Nevertheless, the structure of the town has remained largely unaltered - the historic routes intact, and the urban extent of the town contained well within the river valleys.

2.6 Although the navigation of the river ceased in 1932 the industrial use of this area of the town has continued, albeit with changing industries. Associated with this industrial growth the number of people living in the town has increased. Areas of Victorian terraced housing and streets around Pickerel Bridge, south of the town centre and around Violet Hill Road, became the first residential suburbs of the town. Between the Victorian period and the 1950's the town remained relatively compact focusing on the growth of the historic medieval core and the Victorian suburbs. At the same time there was also moderate

growth of the industrial areas within the River Gipping Valley, and some limited housing expansion to the northwest and south. There was also infill development in some of the older Victorian town house plots to the south of the town centre.

2.7 In the 1960s and 1970s a significant phase of change occurred with the growth of substantial suburbs to the south and north of the town, as well as the growth and consolidation of industry and employment along the River Gipping floodplain. Former halls and rural farming estates were brought into the urban fabric of the town, such as Chilton Hall and Chilton Hall Farm. Perhaps the most significant alteration to the setting of the town was the construction of the A14, which skirts to the north and east and brought with it a new access road (A1120) to the south east of the town. Recent highways improvement to the A14 around the town have been the 'A14 Haughley New Street to Stowmarket' improvements.

2.8 In the 1980s and 1990s the town continued to grow, particularly to the northwest. It was in this period that the town expanded onto the higher plateau landscape above the river valleys. The Gipping Way relief road was also constructed between the town centre and the River Gipping to relieve congestion through the town centre. More recently, the implementation of the Strategic Development Area at Cedar's Park has brought considerable change and residential growth to the east between the river and the A14. Previously, Stowmarket was relatively narrow, the centre of the town remaining close to rural countryside. However, the development of Cedar's Park has broadened the town and has increased the importance of the remaining green corridors which continue to penetrate the urban structure. The population of Stowmarket has expanded rapidly in the last 20 years, and has been increasing a rate of four times above the national average.

The Villages within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan

2.9 Villages which surround Stowmarket comprise small rural settlements located on elevated land above the river valleys. These settlements include: Badley (population 79); Combs (population 966); Creting St Peter (population 245); Great Finborough (population 755); Harleston (population 150); Haughley (population 1,710); Onehouse (population 947); Old Newton (population 995); and Stowupland (population 1,962). All contain historic buildings which reflect the local vernacular of Suffolk, however, the larger villages also contain notable areas of more recent housing. All of these settlements have their own individual identity.

2.10 Haughley is three miles north of Stowmarket and eleven miles east of Bury St Edmunds. It is situated on the claylands of High Suffolk, which are soils that help to make East Anglia the 'granary of Britain'. Haughley is classified as a Key Service Centre within Mid Suffolk's Core Strategy. The village centre is situated away from the river and railway connections, and essentially has north-south and east-west road connections that centre around the village green. It also has a church and a castle at its western end.

2.11 Stowupland is also a Key Service Centre containing similar services to Haughley, except it does not have a GP surgery. It is located on higher plateau land to the northeast of Stowmarket, and is separated from the town by the A14. It comprises two village greens arranged at right angles to each other, with a number of listed buildings around them. This arrangement reflects the early origins of the village as a 'dispersed' pattern of buildings. In the 1960s and 1970s the village witnessed considerable growth with the

introduction of the A14 and development of housing estates to the south and north. These developments have significantly altered the character of the village, the nature of the lane network connecting the village to Stowmarket, and the village's setting.

2.12 Great Finborough is 3 miles south-west of Stowmarket, and **Old Newton** is 5 miles north of Stowmarket, they are both classified as a Primary village within Mid Suffolk's adopted Core Strategy (2008), as they contain fewer services and a smaller population than Haughley and Stowupland. They are therefore capable of limited growth where local need has been established.

2.13 Combs and Onehouse are classified as Secondary villages within Mid Suffolk's adopted Core Strategy and are unsuitable for growth, but capable of taking appropriate residential infill and development for local needs only. Although Combs has a large population, it has relatively few services and facilities for a village of this size and this is the justification of its Secondary Village classification. Onehouse is a small village located on higher plateau land to the north west of Stowmarket. Historically, it comprised of just a few scattered houses associated with a number of farm estates including Onehouse Hall and Lodge. This settlement form was altered in the 1970's with the construction of housing estates, including the Northfield Estate, which changed the once dispersed character of the settlement. Despite this change the rural context of the village - narrow tree lined lanes, lime avenues and Northfield Wood (managed by the Woodland Trust), remain intact and characteristic of the village setting.

2.14 Harleston, Badley, and Creting St Peter are identified as Countryside Villages in Mid Suffolk's Adopted Core Strategy (2008) because of their small populations and limited services and facilities provision. Only specified types of development will be permitted in accordance with Adopted Core Strategy (2008) Policy CS2 which include: affordable housing on exception sites; agricultural workers dwellings; possible conversion of rural buildings; replacement dwellings; and sites for Gypsies and Travellers and travelling show people.

3 Vision and Spatial Strategy

3.1 The Vision for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan provides the overall focus for the policies and objectives contained in this document. It has been derived from the previous visions put forward in the Stowmarket Report by the Civic Trust 2002 and then the Stowmarket Masterplan 2008, with the emphasis now concentrating on “those who live, work, visit, and study in the town”.

3.2 The Vision for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan is:

Stowmarket Area Action Plan Vision

“Stowmarket will strive to achieve its full potential as the leading market town within the District by: encouraging economic prosperity; improving transport and accessibility; mitigating and adapting to climate change; protecting and enhancing its heritage and biodiversity; and encouraging healthy living for those who live, work visit, and study in the town and its rural hinterland.”

3.3 The table below sets out the key factors that are influencing the future of Stowmarket. It contains a brief analysis of the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Strengths	Opportunities
Good location along A14 / rail corridor	Good communication / transport links on which to build
Attractive areas and features	Improved pedestrianisation and accessibility
Solid retail base on which to build, with good anchor stores	More larger retailers in the town centre
Strong manufacturing and employment base	Positive and balanced community
The town benefits from the maturity of its trees that are interspersed amongst the urban fabric of the town	Enhancement of existing visitor attractions, including the Museum of East Anglian Life needs an upgraded setting based on quality in urban design and the public realm
Weaknesses	Threats
Lack of sports facilities	Traffic congestion
Limited use of the Museum of East Anglian Life	Lack of footfall in the town centre
Physical barriers to accessibility e.g. the Gipping Way	Pedestrian accessibility along Ipswich Street
Lack of comparison goods e.g. clothes, footwear, electrical	Lack of connectivity across town and to the surrounding villages
Limited vacancy levels to offer areas for improvement	Competition from other centres and out-of-town retail stores
Buildings in the town centre of average quality	Lack of varied floorplate sized buildings for retail
Poor evening economy	Anti-social behaviour connected with the evening economy

Table 3.1 SWOT Analysis of Stowmarket (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)

Strategic Objectives:

3.4 Following extended and ongoing consultation, the Strategic Objectives below provide the basis and direction for the more detailed policies that feature within subsequent chapters of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

Strategic Objective 1

Town Centre enhancement

To protect, encourage and promote an appropriate mix of land uses to support the vitality and viability of the day and night time economy of the town centre.

The Council will seek to improve the shops available in the town centre and encourage complementary mixed uses including: offices, cafes, bars and restaurants, open spaces, museums, cinemas, places of worship interspersed with residential accommodation. This will protect and support the vitality of the day and night time economy of the town centre. The public realm and street scene will also need to be enhanced to create an attractive shopping environment that will draw people to the town centre.

Strategic Objective 2

Priority to town centre activity and viability

To protect, encourage and promote an appropriate mix of land uses for the edge of the town centre, which are complementary to town centre uses and contribute to the vitality of the town centre.

The sensitive interconnection between the town centre and the edge of town centre should be managed to maintain a vital town centre whilst allowing complementary uses that are mutually beneficial to the town. Direct competition for town centre activity will be discouraged but an appropriate complementary mix of land uses for the edge of the town centre, that contribute to the vitality of the town centre in particular and the town as a whole will be supported.

Strategic Objective 3

Enhancing the River Valleys

To protect and enhance Stowmarket's two main river valleys, the Rivers Rattlesden and Gipping, by maintaining and enhancing their biodiversity, landscape, and accessibility to the public.

The protection of the river valleys safeguarding and improving the habitats they contain will encourage wildlife and support and extend important ecological green corridors. Improving public access where this does not conflict with biodiversity gives opportunities to improve the quality of life and foster the health and well-being of residents and visitors. Protection of the River Valleys includes improving the river frontages and the widening the riverside footpaths and cycle ways including the Mid Suffolk Long Distance Route.

Strategic Objective 4

A broad stock of quality homes, jobs, recreation and other facilities

To achieve a successful and appropriate mix of high quality residential, employment and leisure uses that are complementary and contribute towards the success of the town.

The Council will promote a complementary mix of residential, employment and leisure uses that contribute towards the success of the town and discourage the town becoming a dormitory for other places. The mix of uses will contribute to increased tourism, the delivery of improved recreation and leisure facilities and enhance the biodiversity potential of the River Gipping Valley and the safety and quality of life and of new and existing neighbourhoods.

Strategic Objective 5

A "green" town transport system

To provide a transport system worthy of a "green" town in the 21st Century that will improve accessibility and connectivity by a variety of means into and out of the town centre and between Stowmarket and its surrounding villages.

An early upgrade of the public transport, walking and cycling provision will make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping and leisure facilities without the need to travel by car. It will improve access within the town centre and its linkages to the railway station, reduce local journey trips on the A14 trunk road and reduce the impact of the town's growth on the free flow of traffic on the A14.

Strategic Objective 6

Protecting and enhancing the environmental heritage

To protect, manage and where possible enhance Stowmarket's natural and built environment and ensure its continued contribution to the town's heritage, culture, environment and economy.

The environment is valued as an attractive setting for the settlements, its contribution to quality of life and sense of well-being and indirectly the economy of the town. The historic, natural and built environment in particular will continue to act as a draw and the action plan will ensure a continued contribution to the District's culture, environment, and economy. Protection and enhancement will be supported through designation of important areas, features and structures, planning policies and required quality of design.

Strategic Objective 7

Providing improved employment opportunities

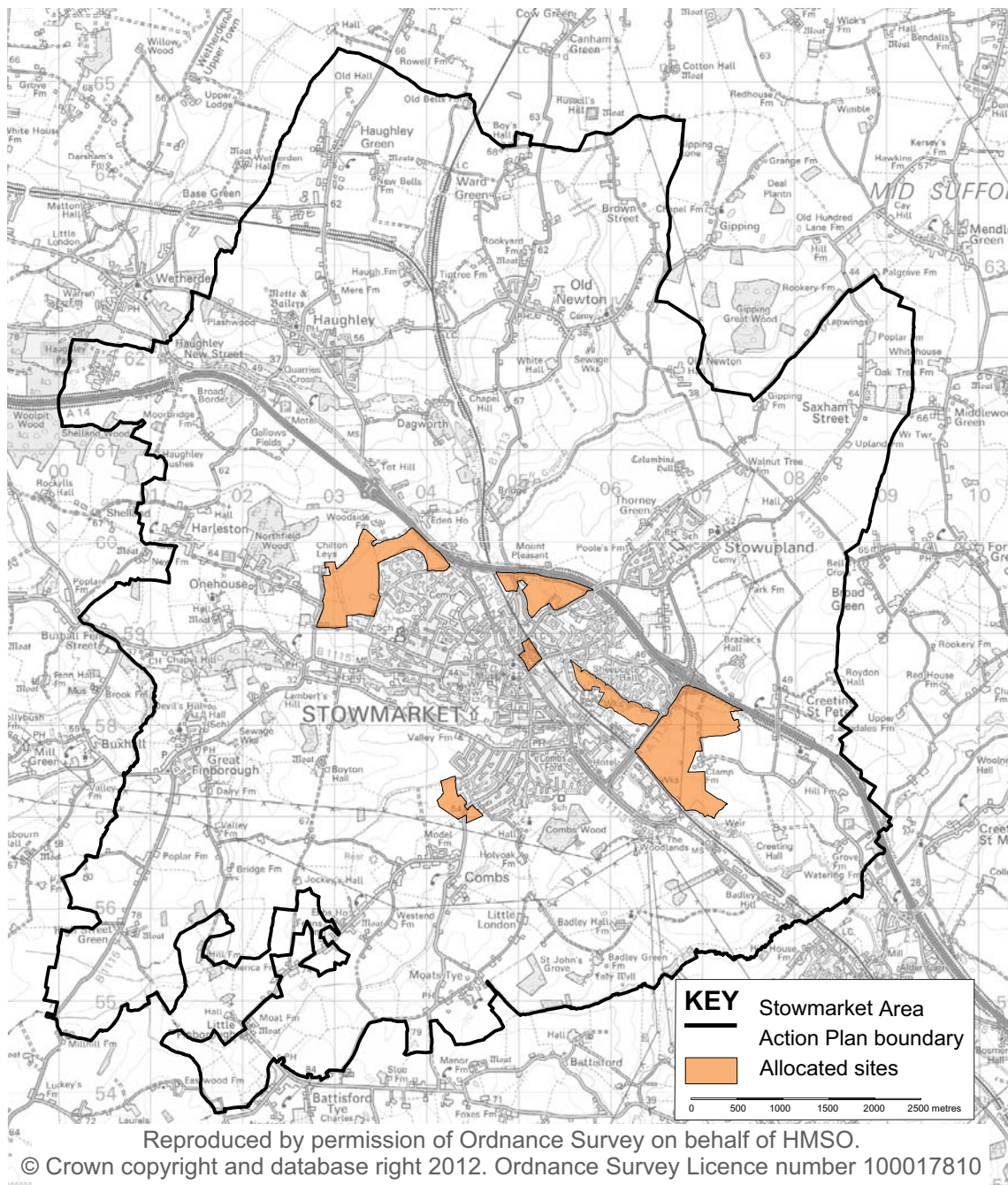
To ensure the success of existing employment areas and to propose new sites to maintain a balance between new homes and work opportunities.

An innovative approach to the delivery of employment opportunities will be sought to achieve a better balance of new homes and jobs than currently exists in the Local Plan Area. Schemes for employment or enterprise must offer direct linkages with the town centre and new and existing residential areas to help businesses locating in the town to create "Green Travel Plans" that have a positive impact on traffic and travel in the area.

4 General Policies

Extent of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan

4.1 Map 4.1 (below) and the Proposals Map (Appendix F) define the geographical extent of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan, which includes the villages and parishes that have a common boundary with the town of Stowmarket. For the sake of clarity, the boundary of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan follows the relevant parish boundaries. The policies within this document are to be applied to all development that takes place within the Area Action Plan boundary.



Map 4.1 Stowmarket Area Action Plan Boundary and sites for allocation

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

4.2 The NPPF contains 12 core principles that are supportive of the vision, objectives and policies of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan. This approach to sustainable development is underpinned by the Model Policy below:

SAAP Policy 4.1

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Best Use of a Development Opportunity

4.3 The Council will ensure that development proposals represent the 'best use of a development opportunity'. This will include a review of relevant national, regional and local policies and pre-application discussions, in order to deliver high quality development and design. Development briefs and Masterplans will help to determine the best use of a site. The Council will consider alternative uses of sites that would contribute more fully to meeting the strategic objectives of the SAAP, which may sometimes protect sites for their optimum use.

Development Briefs

4.4 The Council will require a 'Development Brief' to be produced, before an application is submitted, for SAAP allocations and other proposals in the SAAP area that have significance beyond their site boundary. The purpose of the development brief is to aid the coordinated delivery of infrastructure and provide a framework for the evaluation of

future planning applications for all phases of development to ensure the overall vision and development objectives, and associated infrastructure requirements for the site, are delivered comprehensively.

4.5 The Stowmarket Masterplan was adopted by the Council in June 2008. This, alongside current and future work on the Stowmarket Masterplan phase 2 and the illustrative layouts and policies in the SAAP should be considered before producing a Development Brief (Note: The illustrative layouts are taken from the documents listed under 'Concept Statements' in Appendix E Glossary).

4.6 NPPF paragraph 189 encourages developers to engage with the local community before submitting applications. The Council considers that the preparation of a Development Brief (in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders) offers the best means of meeting the NPPF requirements for strategic sites.

4.7 The process for preparation of development briefs is set out below:

- Development briefs will be prepared by the developer(s) for the entire site. Prior to commencing work on a development brief, developers or landowners should ask for agreement in writing from the Council about the form, content and level of detail required in the development brief;
- Developers will be responsible for undertaking an agreed form of public consultation which should be in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Part 5 - Supplementary Planning Documents and other sections where applicable;
- Developers will respond to the representations received which will form the basis for a Consultation Statement to be submitted to the Council. Officers will then assess whether the Development Brief has responded adequately to consultation responses, including those of the Council. If not the document will require further amendment and consultation, to be led by the developer;
- The Council will then recommend the document for adoption as SPD or material consideration for Development Management purposes as appropriate.

4.8 The required Development Briefs should take account of the following:

- the adopted Stowmarket Masterplan (2008) where it is pertinent;
- the objectives and policies of the SAAP including illustrative layouts; and
- the previously produced concept statements (see glossary) which are available from the Council's website (<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk>).

Phasing of housing development

4.9 In larger housing developments (10 or more dwellings), phasing may need to be subject to agreement between the Council and developer to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure can be provided at an agreed stage in the development.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

4.10 Where it is felt necessary the Council will consider the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) towards meeting the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

Sustainable Development

4.11 There is a clear framework throughout national and regional policy for inclusion of carbon dioxide reduction targets, renewable energy targets, and energy and carbon performance standards that are higher than existing Building Regulations requirements. Higher renewable energy targets and sustainable construction standards are further justified by announcements such as the Climate Change Act, the Energy Act and the UK's share of the EU Renewable Energy target.

4.12 Suffolk's Community Strategy, "Transforming Suffolk", aims to make Suffolk an exemplar in tackling climate change and sets out an aspiration that Suffolk should become the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions - a reduction of 60% by 2025 from a 2004 baseline. The Strategy encourages the development of higher level sustainable construction policies in local development documents.

4.13 Changes to Building Regulations in 2010, 2013 and 2016 are expected to bring in tough carbon dioxide emission reduction targets for dwellings and renewable energy targets for both residential and commercial development. However the planning system needs to go beyond the traditional policies on dwelling emissions rate and proportions of renewable energy if it is to meet EU, national, regional and local targets to reduce all emissions including transport emissions.

4.14 Mid Suffolk District Council believes that it has a particular responsibility to offer measures to counter balance the excessive levels of emissions which are caused by high levels of car ownership of the resident population and to address future water scarcity to which Mid Suffolk may have a particular vulnerability. The Council will welcome and propose initiatives that enhance opportunities for the use of hybrid and electric powered vehicles.

Specific Sustainable Design Issues for Stowmarket

Enhancing the wider Green Infrastructure Network

4.15 Consequently, development proposals should be assessed for their potential to provide opportunities to enhance or extend the wider green infrastructure network and thereby maximising the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, while increasing the accessibility and community value of the network.

Landmarks and the Skyline

4.16 Landmark buildings or features will be sought for developments in appropriate locations across Stowmarket, including street corners, entrances and historic and urban gateways to the town (identified in the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment (2008)).

4.17 The location of Stowmarket lies within two river valleys, which will have an impact on acceptable building heights within different locations across the town. Stowmarket's skyline will be protected to ensure that the views in, out and across the town identified in the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment (2008) are not harmed. The onus will be on

a developer to demonstrate that the built form and massing of development proposed will enhance the setting of Stowmarket and maintain the distance views across the valley to the town ridge line.

Advance Landscape Planting

4.18 It has been recognised for a long time that in larger scale developments, landscape planting made, protected and maintained prior to the commencement of the main development has many advantages. It allows early establishment of planting, lessens the impact of development on neighbouring landscape, environment and users, reduces vandalism, enhances the setting of buildings and increases their subsequent value.

4.19 It is accepted that it may not always be feasible or viable to put landscape in place prior to other parts of the development but this will be sought where failure to do so would have significant negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity, landscape, amenity or economic health of neighbouring uses and the town in general.

Protecting Visually Important Open Space (VIOS)

4.20 Visually Important Open Spaces were identified in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998). Those relevant to Stowmarket are indicated on Map 6.1 and the Proposals Map (Appendix F) for the Area Action Plan and may include garden land, allotments, recreation areas, amenity open space and features such as ponds, wooded areas, and hedges. They will continue to be protected from development for their visual or amenity value and their contribution to local character and distinctiveness. This protection is extended to encompass detrimental impacts from development on neighbouring sites. Three new Visually Important Open Spaces are proposed below.

4.21 Social and economic factors require the Visually Important Open Space around Chilton Fields to be redefined (Please see SAAP Policies 6.5 to 6.12). A new area has been added to include the Paupers Graves to provide an appropriate gap between Onehouse and Stowmarket. A second Visually Important Open Space will protect the tributary of the River Rattlesden at Combs Lane. A third Visually Important Open Space is identified on land adjoining the Church Meadows development. These VIOS are identified on Map 6.1 and the Proposals Map in Appendix F.

SAAP Policy 4.2

Providing a Landscape Setting for Stowmarket

The Council will require that:

- 1). Where appropriate, development proposals extend and enhance the quality of the wider green infrastructure network to maximise the conservation and enhancement of its biodiversity and increase its accessibility and community value.
- 2). Proposals for sites in key locations that would benefit from landmark buildings or features incorporate designs appropriate for the site.
- 3). New development that may impact on the existing skyline and on views throughout Stowmarket takes the skyline into account. Developers must demonstrate that the built form proposed will enhance the setting of the town and maintain the views across the valley to the town ridge line.
- 4). Where feasible and practicable key elements of proposed landscape improvements are put in place prior to the commencement of building works. Determination of required landscape improvements for development will include consideration of the environment, biodiversity, landscape, amenity or economic health of neighbouring uses and the town.

Advanced planting will be particularly relevant for developments that may impact on:

- i. views in, out, and across Stowmarket;
- ii. the 'gateway' role of an area;
- iii. buffer areas between industrial and residential areas and around 'nuisance neighbours', such as sewage works.

- 5). The Council will resist development that would have a harmful effect on the value of a Visually Important Open Space and will require developments that may have a detrimental effect on the quality of a Visually Important Open Space to be sensitively designed to minimise these effects.

5 Shopping and Town Centre

Context

5.1 Suffolk has a low population density with a limited number of large scale shopping centres and many more smaller 'local shopping centres'. Stowmarket provides an intermediate level of shopping for Mid Suffolk and its surrounding rural area. Any improvements to Stowmarket's retail offer should complement, but not look to compete, with the existing larger retail centres at Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds.

5.2 Stowmarket has the largest number of shops in Mid Suffolk and provides the main shopping centre for the district. The current retail floorspace within the town centre is approximately 28,000 sqm, comprising 173 units. The predominant use is A1 'shops' with almost 15,000 sqm, making up approximately 46% of the total floorspace (Mid Suffolk Retail Survey August 2009). The catchment population for the town is set to increase by 12% by 2021, and as a consequence the town centre and adjoining non-central areas should look to accommodate an increase in both convenience and comparison goods. There is a need and capacity for additional retail floorspace in the town centre, and there is a forecast potential for additional comparison and convenience floorspace. Changes will continue to be monitored through Mid Suffolk's annual Retail Survey.

5.3 The health and vitality of Stowmarket's town centre is considered a good indicator of the condition of the local economy, and evidence indicates that Stowmarket is trading at a reasonable level for a market town with a low vacancy rate, although this could still be improved. The town has some good points on which to build upon, but lacks a sufficient critical mass of comparison goods shops (non-food items, e.g. clothes, furniture or electrical items). It requires a full variety of shop sizes in order to attract the full range of retailers, including national as well as local retailers. As a result, an increase in town centre floorspace is being promoted by the Council, although no single store should be allowed to threaten the remainder of the town centre.

5.4 The increasing challenge from out-of-centre shopping, and the potential threat from website shopping, has focused attention on the need to enhance all characteristics of Stowmarket's town centre. A complete range of appropriately sized and located activities must be provided in order to enhance the town centre's retail offer and prominence. Mid Suffolk District Council will continue to follow the national sequential and 'town centre first' approach to retail development within Stowmarket Area Action Plan boundary. The Council remains opposed to the subdivision of retail units, particularly within the town centre, and this can now be controlled through planning conditions.

5.5 The policies set out in this chapter are specific to the Stowmarket Area Action Plan, and current national, regional and other local policy will continue to provide the policy basis for all retail issues that are not specifically set out below, for example in relation to edge-of-town centre or out-of-town centre retail.

5.6 An overall 'Town Centre Management Strategy' is currently emerging through the Council, which along with any future funding that may become available for the town centre, could influence future reviews of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and in particular the

town centre. Advertising remains a sensitive issue for the Council, and particularly the town centre, and will also be explored further in the 'Town Centre management Strategy' and other future Council documents.

5.7 Map 5.1 currently shows the 'Town Centre Boundary', 'Principal Shopping Area' and both the 'Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages'. The 'Town Centre Boundary' is centred around the locations where retail should be concentrated. It has also been drawn to include the Museum of East Anglian Life, while taking account of the natural barrier of the existing Gipping Way. To the north-east the railway station and the River Gipping are both recognised as being important to the diversity and vitality of the town centre and could be incorporated into any future reviews of 'Town Centre Boundary' in subsequent years.

5.8 For the purpose of this document, the term "shopping frontage" refers to all of the sides of the building where a defined area is applicable, either the Primary or Secondary Shopping Frontage. Any gaps in the building line will also be covered by the defined frontage area in question, therefore any future building will also fall within this defined frontage.

SAAP Policy 5.1

General Retail Policies for all of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan

- 1). The Council will maintain and when possible increase the number of shops (A1) within the Principal Shopping Area, provided that the increase is not based on the sub-division of property that will reduce the availability of larger retail shops in the town centre. (Note: Permission for all new retail units, including retail warehouses outside the principal shopping area will be subject to conditions that will prevent sub-division and where appropriate to protect the town centre planning conditions may restrict the goods to be sold or the hours of operation).
- 2). The vitality and viability of Stowmarket's town centre will depend on the refurbishment and / or redevelopment of Ipswich Street. Any proposals for new development or redevelopment in Stowmarket's town centre will be required to contribute towards public realm improvements, including the provision of new signs to assist and inform visitors with movement through the town.
- 3). There must be no unacceptable levels of traffic, or other activity, generated by the development within close proximity of the site to the detriment of highway safety or local amenities.
- 4). All retail proposals inside and outside the town centre must be readily accessible by public transport, cycle or on foot, and by disabled people.
- 5). High quality, appropriate and inclusive design must be achieved for all new retail related development. This must include appropriate provision for utilities, such as:
 - i. refuse storage;
 - ii. servicing storage;
 - iii. adequate servicing access, and the associated hours used;
 - iv. air conditioning, including extractors for cooking;
 - v. sound insulation, where there are recognised un-neighbourly use
- 6). Amusement arcades will not be permitted:
 - i. in Stowmarket's Principal Shopping Area;
 - ii. close to housing, schools, churches, hospitals or hotels;
 - iii. where they would harm visual amenity, cause noise or disturbance;
 - iv. where they would harm the character, appearance and/or setting of Conservation Areas, listed buildings or buildings of local importance.
- 7). The Council will support changes of use from residential to A1-A3 uses within the town centre, in appropriate locations. New residential development will not be encouraged in the town centre where it could compromise any future retail development.

8). The vitality and viability of the town centre will be assisted by promoting appropriately located complementary uses, such as offices, residential, and leisure uses, which can increase the towns day and evening economy and activity, and can make it more attractive to residents, businesses and visitors. In some areas it may also be appropriate to allow extended hours of operation through approved conditions in order to stimulate Stowmarket's evening economy, although this will be subject to advice from the Police and other relevant bodies. Ultimately, a balance of shops and other complementary uses in a safe and attractive environment is sought for Stowmarket.

SAAP Policy 5.2

Principal Shopping Area (Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages)

- 1). Additional retail floorspace will only be permitted if the proposal demonstrates it does not harm the vitality and viability of the existing Principal Shopping Centre.
- 2). The change of use or redevelopment from a ground floor retail use (A1-A5) to non-retail uses will not be permitted within the Principal Shopping Area. Mixed-use redevelopments will be allowed, subject to other policies, where the level of retail floorspace is maintained, and where retail uses are proposed on the ground floor. The permanent loss of retail floorspace at ground floor level to non-retail uses within the Principal Shopping Area will be resisted.
- 3). To increase the amount of floorspace for non-bulky comparison goods in the Principal Shopping Area by a target of at least an additional 6,650 sqm net by 2021 (as per Core Strategy / Stowmarket Retail Study).
- 4). To increase the amount of convenience floorspace in the Principal Shopping Area by a target of at least an additional 650 sqm by 2021 (as per Core Strategy / Stowmarket Retail Study).
- 5). In order to improve the visible appearance of the town centre no refuse bins, residential or trade, will be permitted to be stored on shopping frontages or public highways, except for designated collection times.

Primary Shopping Frontages (parts of: Ipswich Street / Market Place / Bury Street / Wilkes Way / Tavern Street)

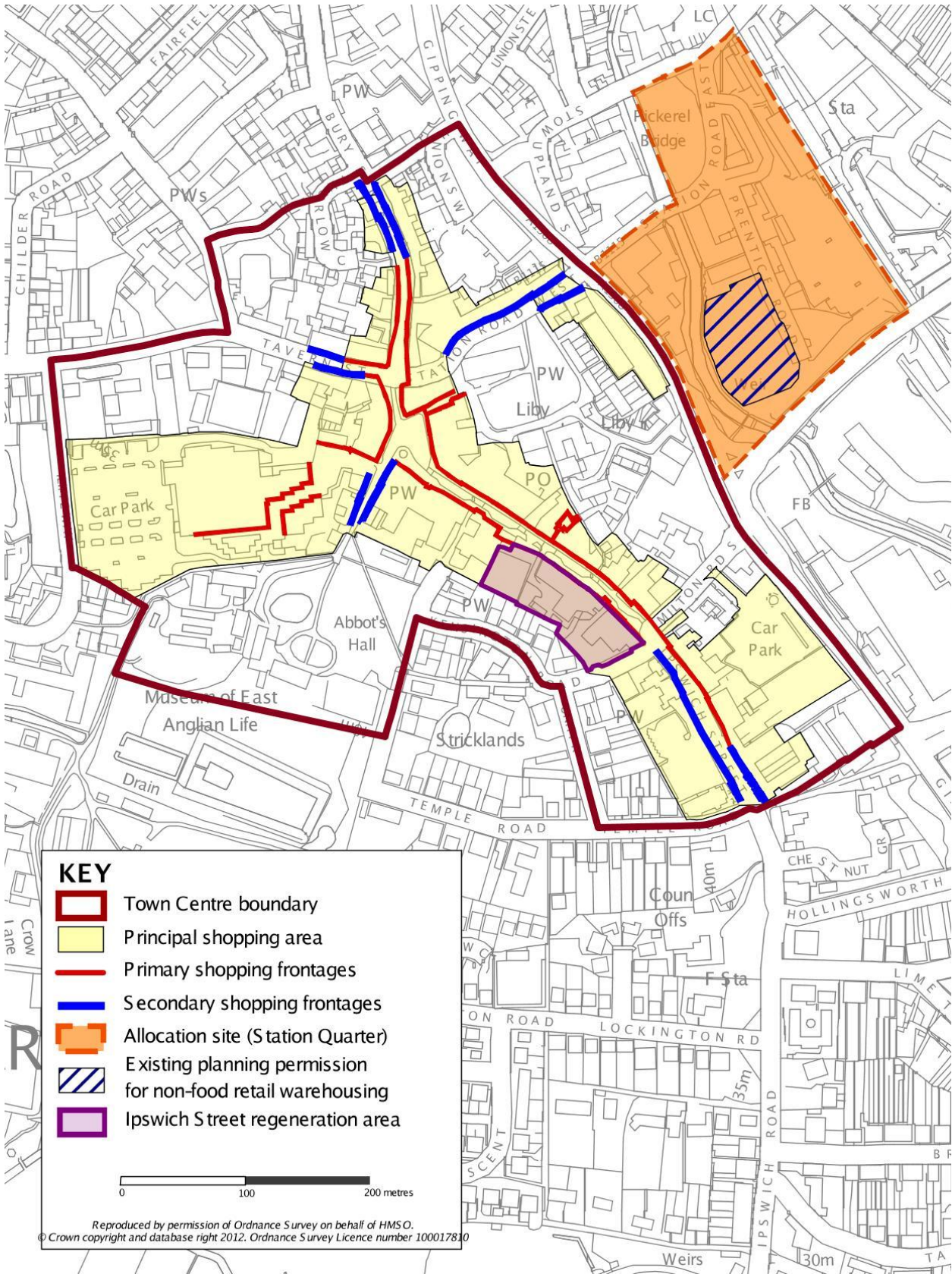
- 6). In order to promote a busy and vibrant shopping town centre, the Council will seek to protect, where practicable, the extent of the Primary Shopping Frontage for predominantly A1 retail use at ground floor level. Within the extent of the whole Primary Shopping Frontage a target of 75% A1 retail use is sought at ground floor level (This target relates to the total ground floor retail floor space for the Primary Shopping Frontage).
- 7.) Groupings of non A1 retail uses will require careful consideration. Proposals for non A1 retail uses will be resisted in Primary Shopping Frontages where the proposal would result in a collective detrimental impact away from the desired A1 frontage 75% target.

Secondary Shopping Frontages (parts of: Ipswich Street / Market Place / Crowe Street / Bury Street / Tavern Street / Station Road West)

- 8). Within the whole extent of the Secondary Shopping Frontages only A1-A5 uses and appropriate D1 uses will be considered for ground floor use. B1, D2 and Sui Generis uses may be acceptable where they can demonstrate they will not undermine the vitality and viability of the locality or adversely impact on surrounding amenities.

9). The permanent loss of A1 retail use within the Secondary Shopping Frontages will be resisted.

10). For the purposes of development, within the defined town centre any retail frontage (A1-A5) that is not within the Primary Shopping Frontage will be considered as being within a Secondary Shopping Frontage.



Map 5.1 Town Centre

SAAP Policy 5.3

Ipswich Street

The Council will actively support and encourage appropriate sustainable regeneration, notably for retail, along Ipswich Street in order to provide a vibrant and distinctive focal point for the town centre, in accordance with other local, regional and national policies.

Following any significant regeneration improvements along Ipswich Street, subsequent servicing and access will look to be restricted on market days between the hours of 10.00am and 4.00pm, except for public transport (including buses and taxis) and disabled badge holders. This situation will be monitored and could be extended to other periods. The overall aim is to gradually discourage vehicular traffic within the town centre, and particularly along Ipswich Street. The idea of pedestrianisation will be considered at subsequent reviews of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

Any development along Ipswich Street must have regard for the wider aspirations of the town centre.

SAAP Policy 5.4

Complementary Uses

Markets

1). The Council will continue to promote and support the market(s) at appropriate locations within the town centre. The Council will consider the impact of traffic movements in the Principal Shopping Area and the requirements of SAAP Policy 5.3 when considering any changes or extension to the existing market(s).

Restaurants and Cafes (A3)

2). Restaurants and cafes (A3 uses only) will be encouraged in the town centre where this does not conflict with the objectives of SAAP Policies 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. Outside tables and chairs serving restaurants and cafes will also be encouraged where this does not prejudice highway safety, the movement of all pedestrians, emergency vehicles, or residential amenity. Appropriate non-permanent planting and screening may also be considered.

Drinking establishments (A4) and nightclubs (sui generis)

3). In order to protect the sensitive areas of the town centre, the Council will generally only permit proposals for new establishments within Use Class A4 (drinking establishments) and nightclubs (Class sui generis), in Secondary Shopping Frontages or the Station Quarter. These uses may replace existing facilities within the same Use Class in the Primary Shopping Frontage, where there is no adverse impact on residential amenity, highway safety, or the character of an area. Proposals for A4 drinking establishments will be permitted where this can be justified by evidence to demonstrate that the proposed development will not conflict with or compromise the objectives of SAAP Policies 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, and other policies of the development plan.

Hot food takeaways (A5)

4). In order to protect the sensitive areas of the town centre, the Council will only permit proposals for new A5 uses (hot food takeaways) within the town centre in Secondary Shopping Frontages.

5). Applications for new A5 uses (hot food takeaways) which fall outside the town centre boundary will be resisted where the proposal falls within 400m of the boundary of an existing school or leisure and recreational facility.

SAAP Policy 5.5

Retail in the Surrounding Villages and Local Shopping Centres

1). Within the surrounding villages and 'local centres' of Stowmarket, retail, post offices, public houses, garages and other service facilities will continue to be protected and encouraged where it is appropriate and viable. The loss of these facilities and services in these areas will be resisted.

2). Applications for change of use from retail facilities (A1-A5) to other uses within the villages or 'local centres' will only be approved where it can be demonstrated :

- i. that the local need for the existing use no longer exists; and
- ii. that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the village or 'local centre'.

3). New retail development, including the change of use to retail, in surrounding villages or 'local centres' will be approved where:

- i. the proposal meets local need; and
- ii. falls with Use Classes A1 - A5.

4). The Council will safeguard and improve the viability of village and local facilities, and ensure a mix of retail to serve the local needs that must complement and not compete with the retail offer in Stowmarket.

Allocation for Mixed Use Development - The Station Quarter

The Station Quarter

5.9 The 'Station Quarter' is the area of land located in front of Stowmarket's railway station, identified to the north-east of the town centre as shown on Map 5.1. The following policies apply directly to the Station Quarter site and its immediate area. Map 5.2 shows an indicative layout plan for the Station Quarter taken from the Stowmarket Masterplan (May 2008) highlighting how some of the key issues with this site could be overcome. The area affected by flood risk must be of a compatible use with page 6 of the Technical Guidance to the NPPF.

SAAP Policy 5.6

Allocation

The Station Quarter has been specifically identified for transport improvements, notably the need for a bus/rail interchange and linkages to the town centre. At the same time the area has also been allocated for mixed use purposes, which must include appropriately located and proportional: residential, retail and employment uses. Open space, car parking provision and hotel use must also be fully and properly explored. Any proposed development within the area affected by flood risk must comply with the sequential and exception tests in the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework

SAAP Policy 5.7

Guidelines and Principles

Any future development within this identified area must consider the following criteria:

1. the adopted Stowmarket Masterplan (June 2008) where it is pertinent;
2. the Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Station Quarter Concept Statement (MSDC, 2009);
3. providing a bus/rail interchange, including potential access considerations;
4. any proposed development within the area affected by flood risk must comply with the sequential and exception tests in the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework;
5. the areas ability to contribute to Stowmarket's evening economy;
6. integrating and improving the River Gipping, (including contributions towards River Gipping shared cycle and footpath);
7. improving pedestrian and cycle linkages, including signage, from the station to the town centre;
8. reducing the amount of private car parking provision, through schemes such as 'Controlled Parking Zones'; and
9. any outstanding planning permission(s).

SAAP Policy 5.8

Wider Setting

Any development within or directly adjoining the Station Quarter must have regard for the wider aspirations of the whole of the Station Quarter site.

5.10 There will be the possibility of incorporating the Station Quarter area within the town centre boundary (as in Map 5.1) through future reviews of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.



Map 5.2 Illustrative layout for the Station Quarter (extract from Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Station Quarter Concept Statement - see glossary for details)

6 Housing

Context

6.1 Stowmarket is the largest town in Mid Suffolk and is the main centre for housing development, employment and shopping in the district. This role will continue in line with national and regional planning policies for sustainable development, providing new housing in places with a good range of services and local employment and reducing the need to travel.

6.2 There will be some opportunities to make use of previously-developed or 'brown field' sites in the centre of Stowmarket but there will also be a need to allocate further areas of green field land on the fringe of the town in order to meet future housing requirements.

6.3 The NPPF (paragraph 37) anticipates that a proper balance between new homes and jobs will be created through the planning process. This Area Action Plan tries to achieve such a balance, whilst creating a network of transport and social facilities that enhance the future "sustainability" of the town.

6.4 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy has established minimum housing requirements and the broad locations for the main housing allocations.

6.5 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy identifies a need to allocate green field sites for at least 1,525 homes at Stowmarket. The Core Strategy represents a "floor" or starting point for this process, rather than an upper limit or "ceiling" to the actual number of homes that can be agreed through the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

Proposed Housing Site Allocations

6.6 The broad locations for the main housing allocations, on green field land, were established in the adopted Core Strategy (2008) and are areas to the north and the north west of Stowmarket. The Core Strategy Inspector, in his report, emphasised that these are not the only possible locations for future development. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan proposes three allocation sites, in order to meet the needs in different areas of the town, to provide housing near to existing services and employment and to provide an element of choice in the housing market.

6.7 The proposed site allocations are:

- North West Stowmarket - Chilton Leys Estimated capacity for 1000 homes during the plan period. There is estimated capacity at Union Road / Finborough Road for a further 200 homes which may be considered at the first review of the SAAP.
- North Stowmarket - The Ashes, between Newton Road and Stowupland Road. Estimated total capacity for 400 homes
- An additional, smaller housing allocation is proposed on the south side of Stowmarket, off Farriers Road, where there is the opportunity to meet local housing needs, including the needs of elderly and disabled people, and to meet needs for additional public open space. The estimated capacity of this site is 125 houses, taking account of the

lower density of the proposed type of development, including bungalows, plus provision of sheltered housing.

6.8 These sites, when developed to their full extent, could provide 1,725 houses. By phasing the North West location to 1000 houses within the 15-year Plan period and 200 beyond, the allocations during the Plan period would provide for 1,525 houses.

6.9 Most of the allocated green field sites are open arable fields which have limited biodiversity value. However, there will be opportunities for new development to contribute new habitats through the introduction of new hedgerows and other landscape features such as the community woodland and strategic planting proposed in the Plan.

6.10 Table 6.1 below shows the estimated overall housing capacity of the allocated sites and indicates possible phasing over three five-year periods.

SITE	YEARS 1-5	YEARS 5-10	YEARS 10-15	TOTAL	AFTER YEAR 15
ASHES FARM	200	100	100	400	
CHILTON LEYS	400	300	300	1000	200
FARRIERS ROAD		125		125	
Total green field housing allocations	600	525	400	1,525	
Previously-developed land	300	100	0	400	
TOTAL	900	625	400	1,925	200

Table 6.1 Proposed Housing Site Allocations

6.11 The arrangements for managing the release of housing land will take account of market considerations and input from the development industry through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. It is proposed that this should be arranged by phasing development into 5 year periods.

6.12 These phases will also help govern delivery of the Infrastructure Delivery Programme. For example, planning agreements may set "trigger points" for developers to provide agreed facilities or funding contributions after a certain number of houses have been built.

6.13 The housing proposals are part of an integrated approach, to also provide for employment growth, reduce the need for out-commuting, provide improved services and infrastructure and encourage enhanced shopping and town centre facilities to cater for a growing local catchment population.

6.14 The Core Strategy includes provision for housing allocations in key service centres and primary villages. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan does not propose any allocations in its villages, because they are close to Stowmarket, which is the most sustainable location in relation to local employment and services.

6.15 There will be scope for smaller scale housing development in some of the adjoining villages which have local services. These smaller scale development opportunities will be expected to share a fair proportion of the infrastructure delivery cost and the Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP) set out in Chapter 11 and Appendix A will explain how and what contributions will be sought from all developments.

Viability and Deliverability

6.16 The proposed housing allocations in the Stowmarket Area Action Plan have been derived from “land bid” sites put forward by landowners and developers as being available and suitable for development and the broad locations identified in the Core Strategy as the most suitable areas for the main housing allocations. Further work has been carried out with potential developers to assess the housing capacity of the sites, the infrastructure required, viability and deliverability, and to prepare development briefs.

6.17 Developers have indicated that the potential rate of house building on individual large sites, that could be built and sold under normal market conditions, would be in the range of 50 to 100 houses per year, per site. Table 6.1 has lower estimated annual rates to allow for two or three sites being under construction over the same period.

6.18 The recent rates of housing development achieved in Stowmarket have been an average of 94 houses built per year between 1991 and 2001 and 172 houses per year between 2001 and 2011. Based on a past rates of development the total number of houses that could be built over the 15 year plan period would be about 2,000. There are existing (2011) planning permissions for 460 houses in Stowmarket, for 87 houses in the adjoining villages and remaining Local Plan (1998) allocations for a further estimated 306 houses in Stowmarket.

Brownfield Development

6.19 There are some opportunities for brownfield in Stowmarket. The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy allowed for at least 400 homes to be provided on brown field (previously developed) sites. Particular sites were identified in the Mid Suffolk Urban Housing Capacity Study in 2006, which has been updated and superseded as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The Stowmarket Masterplan (2008) has highlighted opportunities for regeneration of brown field sites in Stowmarket, near the river and railway station, for mixed uses including housing.

6.20 The sites are within the existing settlement boundary for Stowmarket (established in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan, 1998), so could be brought forward for redevelopment by planning applications, without the need for specific allocations. The estimates of potential housing capacity take account of flood risk constraints on parts of some sites.

6.21 Depending on the outcome of the County Council's School Organisation Review further sites could come forward if schools are found to be surplus to the needs of education, following consultations in the autumn 2012.

6.22 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan proposals for the Station Quarter area are for mixed uses, including some housing development on previously developed land, such as flats above ground level commercial uses. It is hoped that proposals for this area and completion of the B1115 relief road and bridge will encourage development of other brown field sites in central Stowmarket.

6.23 The Core Strategy has a general policy to make best use of land by achieving average densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare, unless there are special local circumstances that require a different treatment. Higher densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare may be achieved in more sustainable locations in towns, close to a good range of services and facilities. This would apply to some central areas of Stowmarket. Design policies will control the height of buildings, such as flats, to take account of the surrounding townscape and the provision of space for waste and recycling facilities. It is intended that this flexible approach to housing density can be responsive to market requirements and the distinctive character of an area or settlement, including community views set out in village or town design statements.

Housing Evidence

6.24 Evidence of local housing needs is provided by Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), Housing Needs Surveys, Parish Plans, Village Appraisals and Village Design Statements. Population and household projections indicate an increasing need for housing suitable for older residents.

6.25 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) are required by Government policy to be part of the evidence base. They provide information on the need and demand for housing and the opportunities that exist to meet it.

6.26 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (November 2008) has been prepared by consultants as a joint assessment for Mid Suffolk, Ipswich Borough, Babergh District and Suffolk Coastal District. . An update of the SHMA has been carried out by Suffolk County Council in late 2009.

6.27 A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has been prepared jointly by Mid Suffolk, Babergh, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils, with a panel of stakeholders, including house builders, developers and agents.

6.28 Housing Need Surveys for Mid Suffolk have indicated a substantial need for affordable housing in the District. The Core Strategy retains the target of 35% affordable housing in new housing developments as set out in the Local Plan Alteration adopted in 2006. It also takes account of RSS policy and evidence of market viability, provided by

the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Sustainability appraisals have been carried out to provide evidence for selecting the most suitable locations for development. The Mid Suffolk Urban Housing Capacity Study, 2006, assessed the scope for housing on previously-developed land, and this has now been updated and superseded by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Affordable Housing

6.29 Provision of more affordable housing remains a high priority for the District Council. Planning policies for affordable housing in Mid Suffolk were updated by an Alteration to the Mid Suffolk Local Plan adopted in July 2006 (Policies H4 and H5). Continued use of these policies was supported by the Inspector at the Core Strategy Examination and will continue to be applied through the saved Mid Suffolk Local Plan policies, taking account of viability considerations.

SAAP Policy 6.1

Housing and Waste Storage

- 1) All new dwellings (houses) should include within the design an area sufficient to accommodate three x 240 litre wheeled bins. Bin siting on frontage will be unacceptable where the proposed site would be highly visible, in a small garden, or where there is a change in levels from street to frontage. Bins should be sited to the side or rear of a property so that the bins do not have an impact on visual amenity and should be located so that waste does not need to be taken through a building.
- 2) Where groups and/or clusters of new dwellings are proposed provision of communal waste storage areas, in addition to facilities required by each individual dwelling forming part of the group or cluster, should be considered.
- 3) For most flats and apartments storage areas will need to be provided in grouped form to allow sufficient space for waste storage close to a communal waste collection point.

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

6.30 The Core Strategy requires Mid Suffolk to deliver a total of 111 pitches by 2011 and then an increase of 3% per annum (compounded) to 2016, which is approximately 129 pitches. The Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2006 (GTAA) credits Mid Suffolk with 69 pitches in 2006 and therefore the district is tasked with providing an additional 42 pitches by 2011. Mid Suffolk has made good progress so far through permitting the extension of existing sites and a previously unauthorised site so that the current shortfall for the district to the 2011 target is now 14 pitches. Analysis of

unauthorised encampments and developments shows that the majority are in the north-west and north-east of the district, and this is where the Council is concentrating its search for new sites rather the Stowmarket area.

6.31 The largest existing site in the district is in the Stowmarket area at The Forge, Combs Lane. This has permission for 19 pitches, but in recent times occupation levels have fallen sufficiently to question its continuation as part of the Mid Suffolk provision. The current owner has indicated that they would prefer alternative uses on the site. However, the Council's position is that it is unwilling to lose the site from the Mid Suffolk provision and that the permitted use as a Gypsy and Traveller site should be safeguarded in line with Core Strategy Policy CS10. The Council will also seek to refuse planning permission for the site for uses other than as a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site. Some redevelopment of the site is essential if it is to fulfil its potential and this can only be ensured if the Council holds a controlling interest. Consequently, the Council will seek to safeguard its future initially by negotiation but potentially through compulsory purchase of the land, if required. The Council will seek the redevelopment of the site in line with the Homes and Communities Agency guidelines for grant-aiding such projects., including the necessary partnership working, management systems, consultation processes, design and subsequent tenure options.

Existing Residential Areas

Context

6.32 The overall objectives for considering planning policies and proposals for existing residential areas are to protect, encourage and promote an appropriate mix of land uses and to maintain the quality of life and safety of the existing neighbourhoods.

6.33 Planning policies are needed to provide guidance and to inform decision making on development proposals such as extensions, change of use or redevelopment. They are intended to protect the character and appearance of existing residential areas and to protect residential amenity and avoid nuisance from noise, traffic and pollution and to protect important open spaces.

6.34 The Stowmarket Area Action Plan includes proposals to improve facilities in existing residential areas, such as cycle routes and footpaths, improvements to public transport, links to open space, 'green corridors' and the countryside. Some small businesses can operate successfully in residential areas without harming residential amenity and can enable people to live closer to their workplace.

Urban Fringe - New Communities

6.35 Stowmarket has been identified previously as the intended location of development land for both industrial/commercial and residential development. Land bids put forward by land owners have been assessed in terms of their impact on the town's environment and transport networks. Proposals on the western and southern edges of the town are furthest away from the town centre, while sites to the north and north-west relate better to the town centre, its shops and other amenities.

6.36 Up to 50% of these new homes will be delivered on previously used land across the District. The remainder will need to be put forward on green field locations some of which will need to be located around the edge of Stowmarket. The Highways Agency has expressed some concern that the town's new growth should not give rise to unacceptable growth of traffic between the town's two junctions on the A14 trunk road. The Council believes that for this situation to be avoided, development should be connected with a package of public transport, cycling and walking schemes. These schemes should ideally extend to the villages beyond as and when the situation allows. The Council is therefore proposing residential development to the North-East, North-West and South-West, with a major allocation of employment to the East, linked via a series of hubs in each development and at the town's railway station.

6.37 Careful controls need to be placed on these development areas if they are to become sustainable communities in their own right and for them to relate properly to the existing core of the town. The Council also recognises that the number of green field sites being made available at any one time may influence the ability to deliver the redevelopment of other brown field sites in the town. The Council will therefore monitor progress with the programme of development to ensure that the council's commitment to brown field sites is maintained and that the impact on the A14 is to be minimised.

6.38 The Council will require an acceptable level of separation from the surrounding villages, whose character and appearance should be safeguarded through the application of good design and landscape design principles. The Council notes that the village appraisals for both Stowupland and Onehouse recognise the important contribution made to the character of their villages by the open farmland between them and the existing edges of Stowmarket.

Development in the Urban Fringe and Design Principles

6.39 Each of the larger sites suggested for development can offer a different contribution to the town's stock of homes and house types. They will also be expected to make appropriate contributions to the town's infrastructure and services, to help integration with the social and transport networks that are already present in the town. The developers will also be expected to help establish good travel patterns and practices as new residents (and employers in the case of industrial development) come to the town. This will, in turn, help to show that the changes to the transport network in Stowmarket are taken seriously and the Council is committed to reducing the impact of town growth on the A14.

6.40 Urban fringe green field sites are likely to be easier to develop than brown field sites that may require clearance and decontamination. In order to meet the targets for Previously Developed Land the Council therefore proposes a phased approach to the development of green field sites during the plan period and monitor progress being made with the remaining brown field sites in the town.

6.41 An enhanced commitment to strategic planting will be needed to ensure the natural softening of developments on the edge of town and visual integration with their rural setting. Secondly, the density of development proposed must achieve the minimum of 30 homes per hectare in all cases. Some sites are capable of achieving higher densities but these should not be delivered at the expense of designs that respects their edge of town location. Here, the rural setting naturally suggests a reducing density appropriate to the

merging of town with its surrounding countryside. Wherever possible the design and layout should utilise natural measures, such as the planting of local native species to enhance the softened edge of the urban area.

6.42 The larger sites around the existing settlement of Stowmarket have been the subject of environmental assessment and their character and relative importance to the town's landscape setting has been considered. Village appraisals have been undertaken for Stowupland, Onehouse, and Haughley and an Urban Housing Capacity Study and the more recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment have been undertaken to identify the opportunities that exist within the town for the redevelopment of brown field sites. This work, coupled with Sustainability Appraisal, shows that the following key issues need to be addressed if development is to prove acceptable:

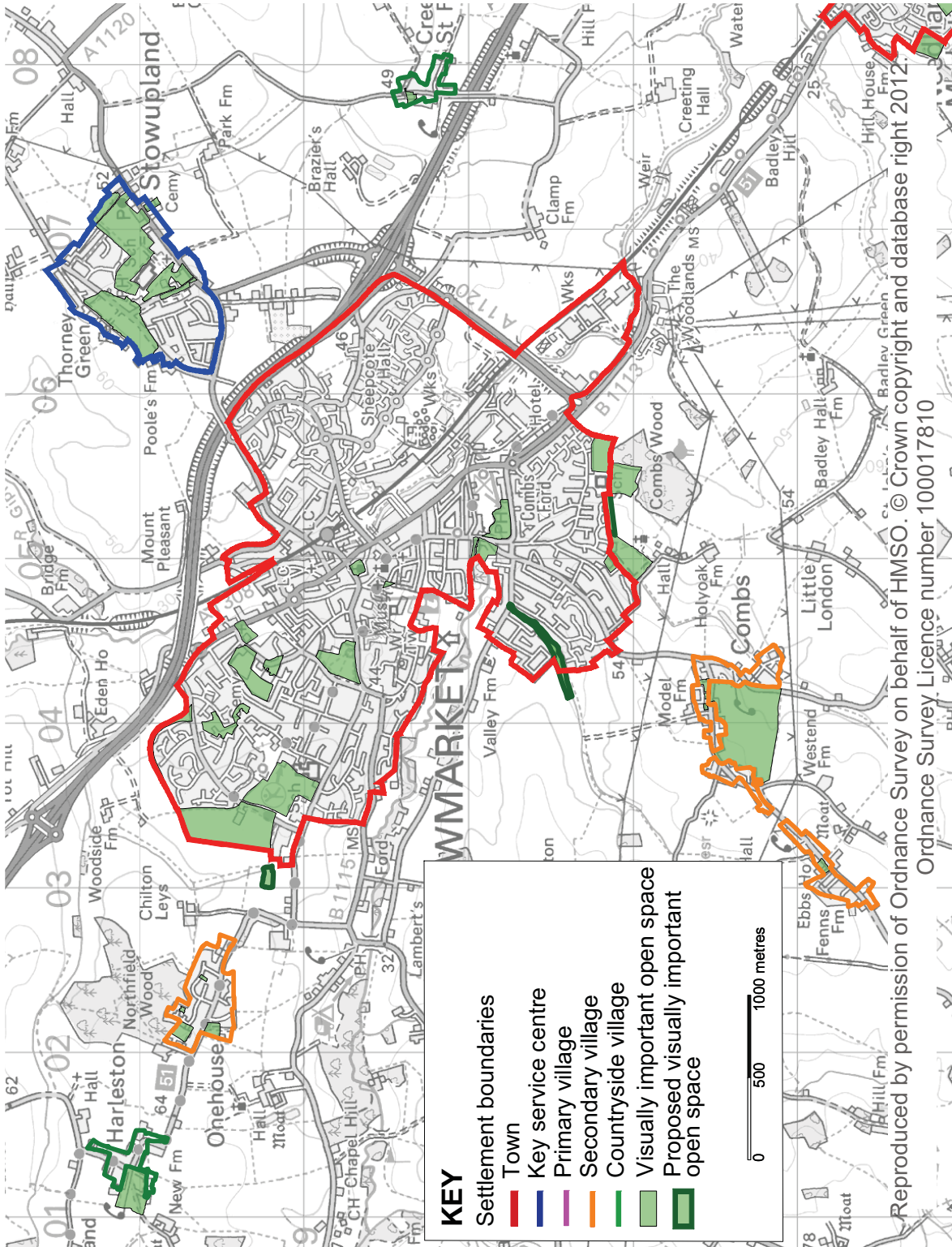
- The character and feeling of openness between Stowmarket and Needham Market is important to prevent the two towns from gradually merging.
- Gaps between Onehouse and Stowmarket should be reinforced, while allowing public access via linked cycle and footpath networks through open space, community woodlands and strategic planting schemes.
- The River Rattlesden valley needs protection to ensure its attractive character is maintained.
- Further opportunities for open space exist to the south of the A14 around Ashes Farm and for amenity land to the west of Newton Road.
- Recreation space will be sought for formal and informal play proposals between Stowmarket and Stowupland, Combs and Poplar Hill, Stowmarket and in the Ashes Farm development area.
- Additional public cycling and walkways will be required as part of a programmed approach to the delivery of new services and facilities to complement enhanced bus services which link new allocated sites with existing residential development and the town centre.
- In fringe areas not identified above, the existing land uses will be maintained and the countryside setting of the town protected.
- The importance of maintaining the separate identity of Stowupland and Stowmarket.

Connecting new communities

6.43 An important aspect of development in the fringes of the town must be to establish excellent public transport and cycling / walking connections with the town centre to encourage new residents moving into the town to live, work and shop locally, therefore reducing the need to travel. The town centre must also offer an interesting mix of shopping and other facilities in an attractive environment and this plan proposes new initiatives elsewhere. The Council will make provision of the new transport infrastructure a priority in its Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP). The IDP will include funding for publicity and an awareness campaign that encourages the take-up of new 'greener' transport facilities.

6.44 The design and layout of the new communities also need to provide good access to local services and facilities. In appropriate circumstances the principles of 'home zones' may be applied in new community design, especially where links to bus and cycle routes can be achieved. New housing development will be expected to provide pedestrian and

cycle routes and allow space for bus services in the form of bus stops and shelters while contributing to the infrastructure package which delivers passenger support services such as real time information systems (Real Time Passenger Information, RTPI). This will be controlled via the Infrastructure Delivery Programme set out in Chapter 11 and Appendix A, while the network and extent of the new transport arrangements are explained further in Chapter 8 on Transport and Connectivity.



Map 6.1 Visually Important Open Spaces

NORTH / WEST STOWMARKET

Development around Chilton Leys, Stowmarket

6.45 The land bounded by Onehouse Road, the village of Onehouse and the land known as Chilton Fields and Gallows Fields to the south east of the A14, (see Map 6.2), is comprised of open arable farmland with occasional hedgerows interspersed with individual mature and semi-mature trees. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan proposes the use of this land for the development of a series of linked communities in the section 'Sites pursued for housing', that can be found later in this chapter. The development of this area will provide excellent bus cycle and footpath links with the town centre. Each part of the development area will also offer complimentary social and community facilities which will encourage people to take advantage of local facilities.

6.46 The design and layout of the development area will provide for public open space, space for formal and informal recreation and other structural tree planting to enhance existing woodland for community use in the area around the Paupers Graves, off Onehouse Road. This will provide a framework of open space that will help to preserve the separation and character of Onehouse. Similar techniques will be used to safeguard the spaces leading out to Harleston and Haughley. The northernmost boundary of the area abutting the A14 will need to include properly landscaped sound attenuation barriers to maintain the rural character of the area when viewed from the North.

SAAP Policy 6.2

Land Adjoining Paupers Graves, Union Road, Stowmarket

The Stowmarket Area Action Plan will help to maintain the important character of this attractive stand of trees and open space by designating space for additional tree planting around The Paupers Graves site. This will emphasise the contribution made by the area to the gap between Stowmarket and Onehouse. Agreements will be sought with affected landowners to bring about the proposed land use and funding made available for land acquisition (if required) and tree planting from the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

EAST STOWMARKET

Maintaining a gap between Stowmarket and Needham Market

6.47 Representations have expressed concern that the River Gipping valley sides and the valley floor should be protected from development. There would be significant impacts on the Special Landscape Area in the area below the weir and the village of Creting St Peter should be kept as a separate rural village. The Council must therefore reconcile its wish to maintain its commitment to preserving a gap between Stowmarket and Needham Market and allowing both economic growth and improved access to the countryside around the town.

6.48 Some development has occurred in the gap between the settlements identified in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan, following redevelopment at Ernest Nunn Drive. The Council also wishes to support improved access to the Countryside and River Gipping walks, while facilitating economic growth with an industrial / commercial allocation in the land bounded by the A14, the A1120 Cedars link road and the railway to the South, (see Map 7.2). This important gap will be emphasised by strong landscaping proposals being built into the emerging development proposals for land to the East of Stowmarket.

SOUTH STOWMARKET

Combs Wood

6.49 Combs Wood to the south of the town is ancient woodland that is already safeguarded as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area of land leading West and North from the wood and towards Combs Church, Poplar Hill and Church Road is designated as a Special Landscape Area and is characterised by its field patterns, hedgerows and the feeling of enclosure offered by Combs Wood. The Council will also seek to offer a supplementary planting scheme in the vicinity of Church Meadows to offer community access to alternative woodlands and thus reduce potential pressure from encroachment in the SSSI, under section 37 of the Countryside Act 1968.

SAAP Policy 6.3

Land adjoining Church Meadows, Stowmarket

The Stowmarket Area Action Plan will help to maintain the important character of Combs Wood and its setting by designating it as Visually Important Open Space and by creating alternative "community" woodlands on land adjoining the existing settlement boundary to the South of the town. Agreements will be sought with affected landowners to bring about the proposed land use and funding made available for land acquisition (if required) and tree planting from the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

Maintaining a gap between Combs and Stowmarket

6.50 Development proposed between Poplar Hill and Farrier's Road, (see Maps 6.7 and 6.8), will provide benefits to the mix of housing and transport services in the town, but its visual effect must be mitigated by an appropriate planting scheme. The feeling of openness and long distance views from the top of Poplar Hill looking South and West will need to be maintained. Suggested open space provision will help in this process.

Surrounding Villages

6.51 With only three designated towns in the District (Stowmarket, Needham Market and Eye), the majority of Mid Suffolk's population live in villages. These villages are an essential part of our rural way of life and their unique character and local distinctiveness needs to be maintained and protected. This is especially the case for the villages surrounding Stowmarket where the future growth of the town may require the use of land.

6.52 There are nine villages identified within the plan area and the individual needs and requirements of the villages must be taken into consideration. Evidence, including the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment and the Mid Suffolk Parish Profile has helped to highlight important issues that must be addressed. Several village appraisals have identified concern for the effects of encroachment from Stowmarket, the need for housing, retention of community facilities and services, the conservation of historic cores and the need for improving linkages between the villages and Stowmarket.

6.53 The Core Strategy provides for 800 homes to be provided in the villages throughout the district. In the plan area Haughley and Stowupland have been identified as Key Service Centres wherein some allocations for development may be considered acceptable. The remaining villages are either primary or secondary villages where more limited forms of growth are anticipated.

6.54 In response to the consultation received the Council has accepted that at this time there is no need for any planned growth of the Key Service Centres as both villages have already accepted growth in recent years. Subject to funding being made available, affordable housing schemes are capable of being delivered via the existing policy structure in each of the nine villages. Accordingly, for the first five-year period of the plan, no allocations will be made for residential development in the villages of the plan area.

6.55 The Council will therefore expect to determine any planning applications submitted in accordance with the Development Management Policies document, which will apply to village and countryside development. (The saved Mid Suffolk Local Plan [1998] policies will apply for the interim period until this Development Plan Document is produced). To complete the interpretation of policy the Council will maintain the existing Settlement Boundaries previously approved for the purposes of Development Management, on the Proposals Map set out in Appendix F.

Village facilities and amenities

6.56 The Council will maintain its commitment to the protection of the existing facilities and amenities in the villages of the plan area. The Council will also continue to make the villages more sustainable by encouraging new and innovative approaches to the use of existing / future village facilities, the protection of local employment and the delivery of improved transport links to Stowmarket by a variety of means, including public transport, cycling and walking.

6.57 In support of these objectives, the Council will identify specific initiatives in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme as part of an ongoing programme that will be funded by all development that occurs during the plan period.

SAAP Policy 6.4

Development in the Villages

Planning applications for residential development within or abutting the village settlement boundaries of the Action Plan Area will conform to existing Development Plan policies. Approved development will be expected to contribute to the Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP). The IDP requirements are set out in Chapter 11 and Appendix A.

Allocations for Housing

STOWMARKET NORTH AND NORTH-WEST - development around Chilton Leys

6.58 The large area identified on Map 6.2 is in several land ownerships, but for the purposes of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and for future planning it has been identified as a single area and is collectively known as 'land around Chilton Leys'. It is located to the west of Stowmarket, and encompasses land from Finborough Road, Union Road and up to the A14. It is bounded by Onehouse Road and the village of Onehouse, Starhouse Lane, and also includes the existing sports pitches and Stowmarket High School site, with much of the area being comprised of open arable farmland with occasional hedgerows interspersed with individual mature and semi-mature trees. Map 6.2 indicates land between Union Road and Finborough Road which will be considered for future development at the first review of the SAAP.

6.59 This area has been identified in Mid Suffolk's adopted Core Strategy (September 2008) as a 'broad location' for housing allocations. Through the Stowmarket Area Action Plan this area has been specifically identified for mixed use development, including residential, employment and open space. The Council proposes the use of this area for the development of a series of linked communities that will provide excellent bus, cycle and footpath links with the town centre. Each part of the development area will also offer complementary social and community facilities which will encourage people to take advantage of their local facilities and town centre, from the time that new residents first move in. These measures are designed to encourage the revitalising of the existing town centre and the self containment of home to work and leisure trips within the town.

6.60 The development proposals will have a major effect on the character and appearance of the land to the North and North-West of the town. Although this land may have less landscape constraints than the River Gipping and Rattlesden valleys and the designated Special Landscape Areas elsewhere its character remains important. Public access for this area would be achieved via linked cycle and footpath networks around woodlands, other natural recreation such as 'green gym' activities and open spaces.

6.61 The Council has always accepted the concern expressed by Haughley and Onehouse for their gradual loss of identity and their need for continued separation from Stowmarket which has again been emphasised in the recent consultation. Sensitive design and careful layout will be needed to maximise the benefit of the identified gaps between

the settlements and allow for their realistic long term protection. The gap between Onehouse and Stowmarket should be properly managed and reinforced with strategic tree belts and/or community access woodlands and open space secured for future generations. This is why it is considered especially important to protect the Paupers Graves.

6.62 It was previously anticipated that development in the area around Chilton Leys would require the inclusion of a link road for traffic travelling from the villages to the west of Stowmarket to the A14 (Junction 49a) for Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich. While such a link road would allow access to the A14 without traffic entering the town centre road network, the Highways Agency has indicated concern that this should not cause disruption to the working of the A14 following the completion of the Haughley Bends Improvements. The recent improvement scheme has created an indirect connection between the A14 and Stowmarket via an existing residential area distributor road and mini roundabout. This connection in conjunction with the sustainable transport measures (referred to in Chapter 8 and the IDP in Appendix A), may provide sufficient capacity in the town so that a direct link is no longer required. This matter will be kept under review.

6.63 The "Luck" Planning appeal decision (see glossary) provided for restraint on development near Union Road. The protection this offered the town centre road network will be maintained until the alternative transport arrangements, discussed in chapter 8, have been properly implemented. The last thing that an emerging and improved public transport system needs is to operate in unnecessarily congested streets. The land between Union Road and Finborough Road is currently used for arable farming and parts of the site provide a rich habitat. Due to local topography there are important views through the site which contribute to the character and appearance of the river valley. The topographical issues can be addressed through strategic planting and transport issues can be addressed following the implementation of the sustainable transport measures for the town. Proposals for Union Road will be held over until a review has confirmed that development is acceptable.

6.64 As part of any road improvements associated with the development of this area of Stowmarket, Starhouse Lane offers the opportunity to be upgraded and made safer for pedestrians and cyclists, while maintaining its essential rural and visually attractive 'sunken lane' character. This will be a matter for review.

6.65 The implications of brownfield schemes and the Schools Organisational Review are difficult to predict, but will be monitored to ensure the opportunities they represent are fully realised in relation to the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

6.66 The Infrastructure Delivery Programme will provide for the early funding and delivery of key infrastructure elements which will be important to the successful implementation of development of this large site and strategically important site. The current Schools Organisation Review (SOR) must remain an important consideration, as the possible outcome may lead to a relocation of playing pitches, open spaces, areas for residential development, or the relocation of a larger school. Therefore, the phasing of this area must not be allowed to compromise the future decision of the Schools Organisation Review, or any possible relocation of the existing leisure centre in the future. The existing sports facilities on Chilton Fields may become subject of development proposals. If the design of the new development requires their removal, alternative facilities will be made available.

6.67 It is estimated that this collective area could yield up to 1,000 dwellings during the plan period with the potential for 200 additional dwellings at Union Road which is subject to the first review of the SAAP.

6.68 The area for allocation is shown on Map 6.2. Maps 6.3 and 6.4 show illustrative layouts for potential development that could take place both with and without a relocation of the Stowmarket High School and the Stowmarket Leisure Centre, which is taken from the "Stowmarket North and North-West - Land at Chilton Leys Option B, Concept Statement" (Taylor Wimpey, 2010). The uncertainty with the Schools Organisation Review has necessitated that two options are produced at this stage, which must be considered with any phasing for this site although the exact disposition of land could be subject to change.

6.69 The Council anticipates that it may approve housing development of the Chilton Fields playing field in part or comprehensively at a point during the Plan period. The land is currently designated VIOS for its recreational value. If the development is to take place then saved policies RT2 and RT3 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan will apply. They provide for the replacement of the recreational facilities "of equivalent community benefit" on the basis of obligation or S106 agreement. In these circumstances the VIOS designation will become the subservient material consideration. This matter is set out in Policies 6.5 – 6.11.

SAAP Policy 6.5

Allocation

The site shown in Map 6.2 (and illustrated in maps 6.3 and 6.4) is allocated for mixed use, including residential, employment and open space.

SAAP Policy 6.6

Development Briefs

A development brief will be produced before an application for planning permission is submitted. This development brief should follow the principles set out in paragraphs 4.4 - 4.8 and take into account the Stowmarket Masterplan (where it is pertinent), the objectives and policies of the SAAP and other policies of the development plan.

SAAP Policy 6.7

Paupers Graves

The Paupers Graves will be protected as Visually Important Open Space, (see Map 6.1 and Proposals Map).

SAAP Policy 6.8

Link to the A14

The Council is pursuing sustainable transport measures to improve transport in and around the town of Stowmarket. The need for a link road to the A14 (junction 49a) will only be reviewed after transport improvements (such as the B1115 link road and bridge), and the proposed sustainable transport package (including improvements for buses, cycling and walking) have been given sufficient time to become established and used.

SAAP Policy 6.9

Transport - buses / cycle / walking

The development of this site must include:

1. The appropriate provision for new bus services. This must include two Town Edge Bus Stops and standard bus stops each with Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), that link with existing residential areas, the town centre and places of employment and where possible the outlying villages in the plan area.
2. The early delivery of footpath and cycle routes to and from the town centre, including contributions for improvements: between Onehouse and Chilton Leys; Chilton Way through to the town centre; a shared path along Chilton Way from A1308/Bury Road; and footway widening on Bury Road south of roundabout with A1308 to A14 link road.

These will be required through the earliest phases of the development, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

SAAP Policy 6.10

Stowmarket High School / relocation of the Leisure Centre

Any development in this area must consider the possible relocation of Stowmarket High School with the Leisure Centre. The high school and leisure centre currently offer a very successful and mutually supporting relationship. The leisure centre is due for redevelopment and is likely to be relocated within the Plan Period, and the High School could be relocated depending on the outcome of the Schools Organisation Review. Appropriate phasing of development in this area would allow for the these two facilities being relocated together as shown in Map 6.4.

SAAP Policy 6.11

Other site issues

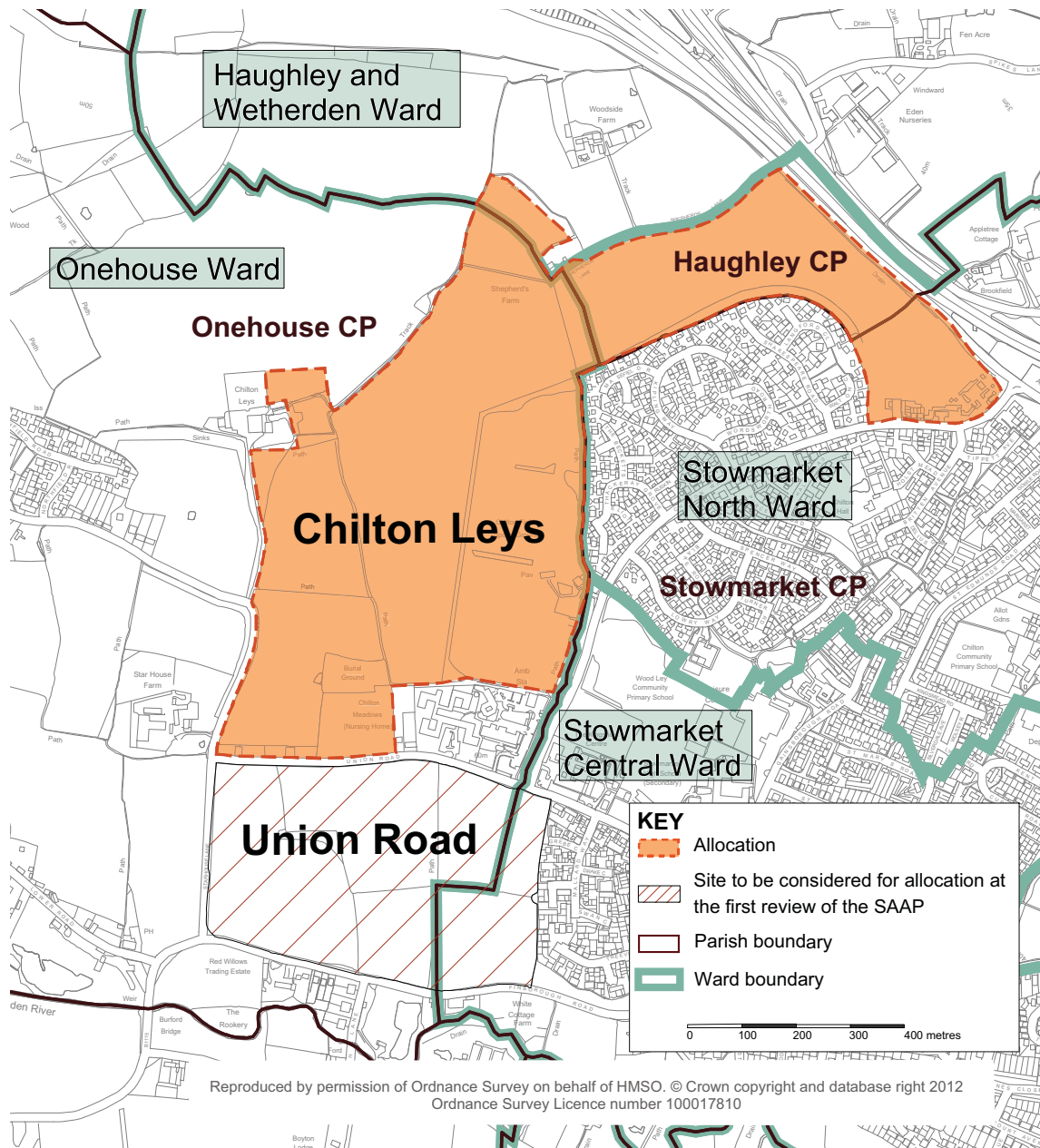
Any future development within this area must consider:

1. noise attenuation from the A14;
2. the possible need to divert or underground existing overhead electricity cables;
3. the Council's requirement to seek to secure support for, Police and other social infrastructure for the future residents of the area;
4. opportunities for the allocation of employment land;
5. provision of a Primary School;
6. the Council's requirement for healthcare infrastructure and related funding; and
7. alternative recreation provision prior to development of the Chilton Leys playing fields in line with Local Plan Policies RT2 and RT3.

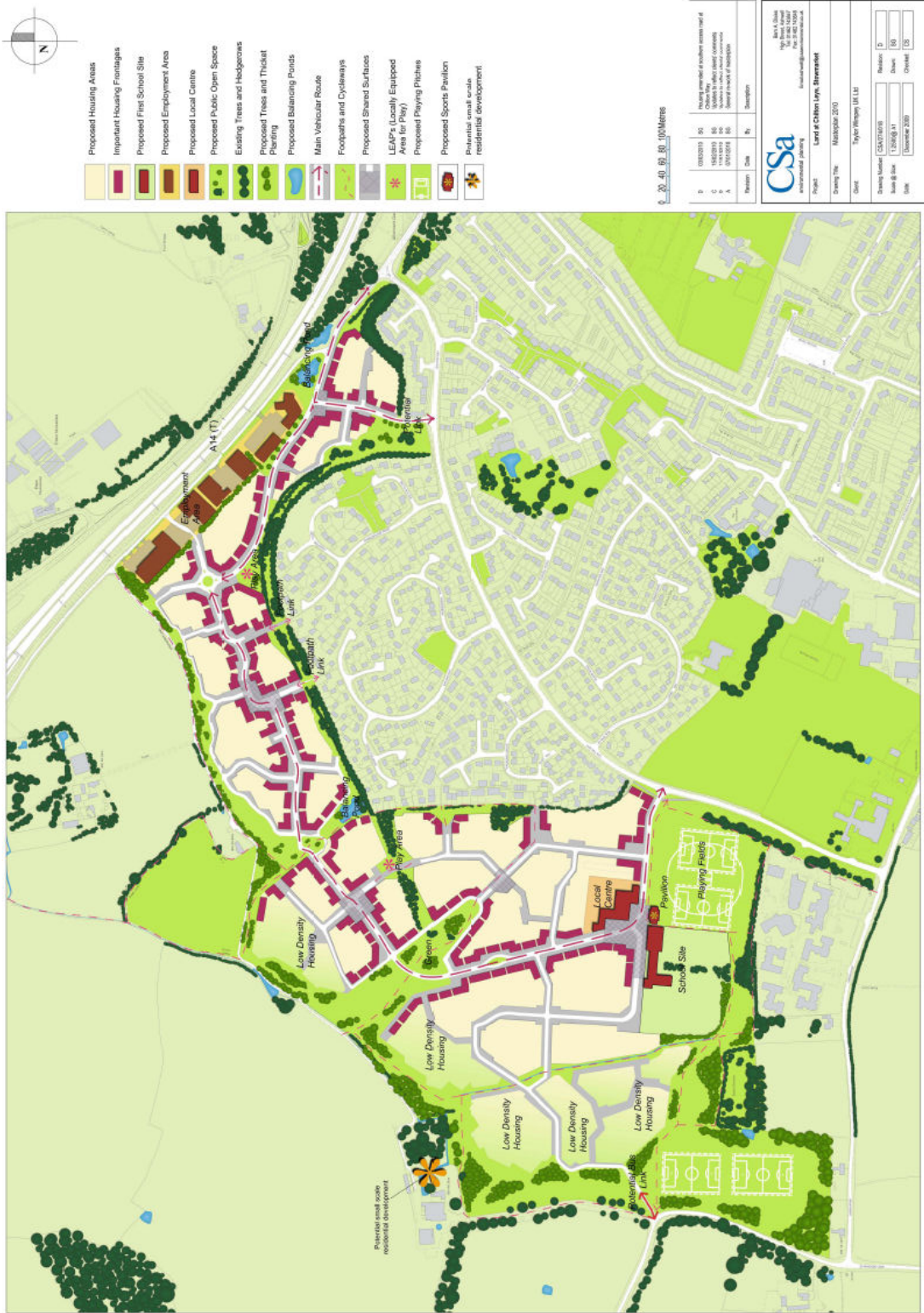
SAAP Policy 6.12

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP)

All development within this area will be expected to contribute to the appropriate specific on-site and/or general requirements of the IDP (set out in Appendix A) as necessary.



Map 6.2 Stowmarket North and North-West



Map 6.3 Illustrative layout for Chilton Leys Option A (extract from Stowmarket North and North-West - Land at Chilton Leys Option A, Concept Statement (Taylor Wimpey, 2010) - see glossary for details).



Map 6.4 Illustrative layout for Chilton Leys Option B including the high school land (extract from Stowmarket North and North-West - Land at Chilton Leys Option B, Concept Statement (Taylor Wimpey, 2010) - see glossary for details)

STOWMARKET NORTH - The Ashes

6.70 The area identified on Maps 6.5 and 6.6 as 'The Ashes' is located to the north of Stowmarket, on land bounded by Stowupland Road to the east, Newton Road to the west, and the A14 to the north. The area is in several land ownerships, but for the purposes of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and for future planning it has been identified as a single area. This area has also been previously identified as a 'broad location' for housing allocations in Mid Suffolk's adopted Core Strategy (September 2008). The Stowmarket Area Action Plan now identifies this area for a mix of residential and open space.

6.71 Due to the prominence of the site and its steep sloping nature, generally on the rising valley sides to the River Gipping, the land for this area is highly visible in appearance. Landscaping and treatment of these visual issues will therefore be of paramount importance for any development of this site, and significant strategic tree planting belts and/or community access woodlands and open space will be required at the heart of the area. There is a significant need to provide suitable screening between Stowupland and Stowmarket - this will run generally East to West. The site's location is also considered to be a 'gateway' to Stowmarket. This will act as a back-drop for the development when viewed from the town but to soften it further and recreate the special character found elsewhere in the town, solid planting will be required in strong belts within the site. A 55m contour line has been identified through Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Concept Statement Ashes Farm (MSDC, 2009), and this will be taken as the general starting point for future discussions about how far development should extend up the site. Due to this sensitive ridge line there may be the need to 'cut-and-fill' some development in order to break up the harmful visual effects of roof lines on the skyline.

6.72 The top part of the site will be designated for 'open space', which will include either formal or informal recreation space. This will help to retain separation between Stowmarket and Stowupland. The land furthest west at the bottom of the site, bounded by Newton Road and Spring Row, could be used for further open space, and could possibly accommodate either new allotments or a wetland habitat centre. At the same time the Council will also seek to secure support for health and other social infrastructure for the future residents of the area. There is also the possibility of improving the provision of the existing farm shop.

6.73 Appropriate transport linkages to the town must be developed and the proximity to the A14 considered. Any development should include an internal distributor from the B1115, with appropriate access to the area along both Newton Road and Stowupland Road. Public access would be achieved via linked cycle and footpath networks, both to existing and proposed networks.

6.74 It is estimated that this area could yield up to 400 homes during the plan period, provided that the appropriate screening, open space, affordable housing and other infrastructure requirements are met and provided.

6.75 Map 6.6, below, shows an illustrative layout for potential development that could take place, which is taken from the "Stowmarket North - Ashes Farm Concept Statement" (Peacock Short, 2010).

SAAP Policy 6.13

Allocation

The site shown in Maps 6.5 and 6.6 is allocated for residential and open space.

SAAP Policy 6.14

Development Briefs

A development brief will be produced before an application for planning permission is submitted. This development brief should follow the principles set out in paragraph 4.4 - 4.8 and take into account the Stowmarket Masterplan (where it is pertinent), the objectives and policies of the SAAP and other policies of the development plan.

SAAP Policy 6.15

Landscaping, setting and views

Any future development on this site must address the:

1. important visual nature of the area, and retain distant views to and from the site;
2. need for appropriate structural landscaping and screening across the site;
3. need to protect, or as a minimum soften, the impact of development on the skyline;
4. provision of open space to the top of the site;
5. land to the far west of the site, bounded by Newton Road, Spring Row and the A14, which is designated for open space uses;
6. retention of existing hedgerows and mature trees;
7. 'gateway' to Stowmarket on the Stowupland Road;
8. part of the site within Flood Zone 3b;
9. areas affected by flood risk must be of a use compatible with the NPPF Technical Guidance (page 6); and
10. presence of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species.

SAAP Policy 6.16

Transport - buses / cycle / walking

The development of this site must include:

1. Improved transport linkages between the site and the town.
2. Appropriate and agreed access to the area from both the Stowupland Road and Newton Road.
3. The appropriate provision for new bus services, including a new Town Edge Bus Stop with Real Time Passenger Information.
4. The need for cycle and footpath improvements, both on site and linked to other existing networks. Contributions will be sought for improvements along Stowupland Road and Newton Road.

These will be required through the earliest phases of the development, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

SAAP Policy 6.17

Allotments

Development will be resisted on the existing allotments on the corner of Newton Road and Stowupland Road.

SAAP Policy 6.18

Other site issues

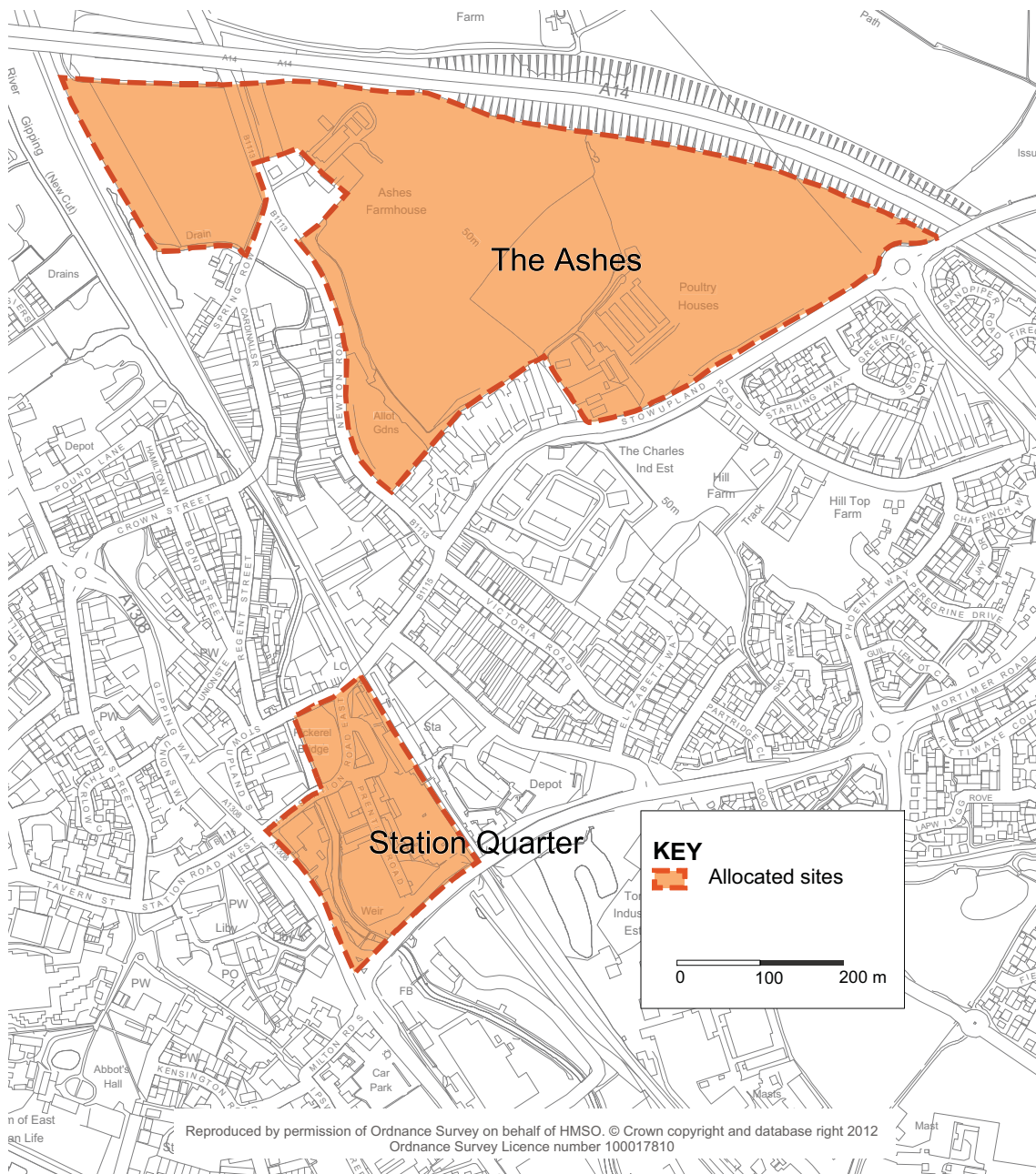
Any future development must consider:

1. noise attenuation from the A14;
2. the possible need to divert or underground existing overhead electricity cables;
3. the Council's requirement for healthcare infrastructure and related funding.

SAAP Policy 6.19

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP)

All development within this area will be expected to contribute to the appropriate specific on-site and/or general requirements of the IDP (set out in Appendix A) as necessary.



Map 6.5 Stowmarket North and Central

6.76 Policies for the Station Quarter can be found in Chapter 5, Shopping and Town Centre.



Map 6.6 Illustrative layout for Ashes Farm (Extract from Stowmarket North - Ashes Farm Concept Statement (Peacock Short, 2010) - see glossary for details).

STOWMARKET SOUTH - land off Farriers Road and Poplar Hill

6.77 The site on the southern edge of Stowmarket has been identified on Maps 6.7 and 6.8, and described as 'land off Farriers Road and Poplar Hill'. The site has been allocated for residential and open space.

6.78 These green field sites offer a favourable opportunity to meet the need for additional housing and open space on the southern side of Stowmarket. Other opportunities on this side of Stowmarket are more severely limited by landscape and other constraints, such as areas designated as Special Landscape Areas and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, such as Combs Wood.

6.79 In this location there is a specific need to protect the landscape and to maintain the separation between Stowmarket and Combs. This can be achieved through careful advanced planting and structural landscaping. The need to control the visual impact of any development in this area will remain paramount, and development must limit any impact on the visual appearance on the skyline and respect its very rural setting. This area offers the opportunity to explore the possibility of providing different types of housing to fit in with the environment, such as sheltered housing, care homes or bungalows for older people, which are also likely to generate less traffic than general housing development.

6.80 Transport and access issues must be carefully considered and addressed. Any development will be subject to a programme of off site works that help the road system in the Combs Ford area to cope with any additional traffic arising from new housing development. This will require contributions to off-site road and transport improvements. It is likely access will be explored via Edgecombe Road and Farriers Road, and a simple priority junction on Poplar Hill. New links will be expected to the emerging and existing cycle, footpath and bus routes, set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme. There are currently two proposed cycle enhancement schemes that development in this area would be expected to contribute towards, Combs Ford Meadow and Combs to Poplar Hill, Stowmarket. These sites will also be expected to deliver contributions to and form town edge bus stops, complete with Real Time Passenger Information systems.

6.81 It is estimated that this area could collectively yield up to 125 homes, a 40-60 unit sheltered housing scheme, and a significant amount of open space. This would be subject to meeting the requirements for affordable housing, appropriate landscaping, transport improvements and linkages, to conform with the Infrastructure Delivery Programme set out in Chapter 11 and also in Appendix A.

SAAP Policy 6.20

Allocation

This site shown on Maps 6.7 and 6.8 is allocated for residential development and a sheltered housing scheme on the western side of Poplar Hill, and for public open space on the eastern side of Poplar Hill.

SAAP Policy 6.21

Development Briefs

A development brief will be produced before an application for planning permission is submitted. This development brief should follow the principles set out in paragraph 4.4 - 4.8 and take into account the Stowmarket Masterplan (where it is pertinent), the objectives and policies of the SAAP and other policies of the development plan.

SAAP Policy 6.22

Landscaping, setting and views

Any future development on this site must address:

1. The need to protect the landscape and maintain the separation between Stowmarket and Combs, including provision of strategic advanced planting and structural landscaping.
2. The need to protect the impact on the skyline of any development that takes place on the ridgeline along Poplar Hill.
3. The protection of the River Rattlesden tributary as Visually Important Open Space.
4. The need to retain the existing mature trees and hedgerows in the area.
5. The need to explore the possibility for screening the impact of the existing housing on the side of Poplar Hill on long distance views.
6. The provision for on-site public open space.

SAAP Policy 6.23

Transport - buses / cycle / walking

The development of this site must include:

1. Improved transport linkages between the site and the local facilities at Combs Ford and the town centre.
2. Appropriate and agreed access to the area from both the Farriers Road and Poplar Hill.
3. The appropriate provision for new bus services, including a new Town Edge Bus Stop with Real Time Passenger Information.
4. Footpath and cycle improvements: the Combs Ford Meadow; and Combs to Poplar Hill Stowmarket scheme.
5. The need to address the capacity of the road system in the Combs Ford area to cope with any additional traffic arising from new development, which must be agreed with the appropriate bodies. This may require contributions to off-site road and transport improvements.

These will be required through the earliest phases of the development, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

SAAP Policy 6.24

Other site issues

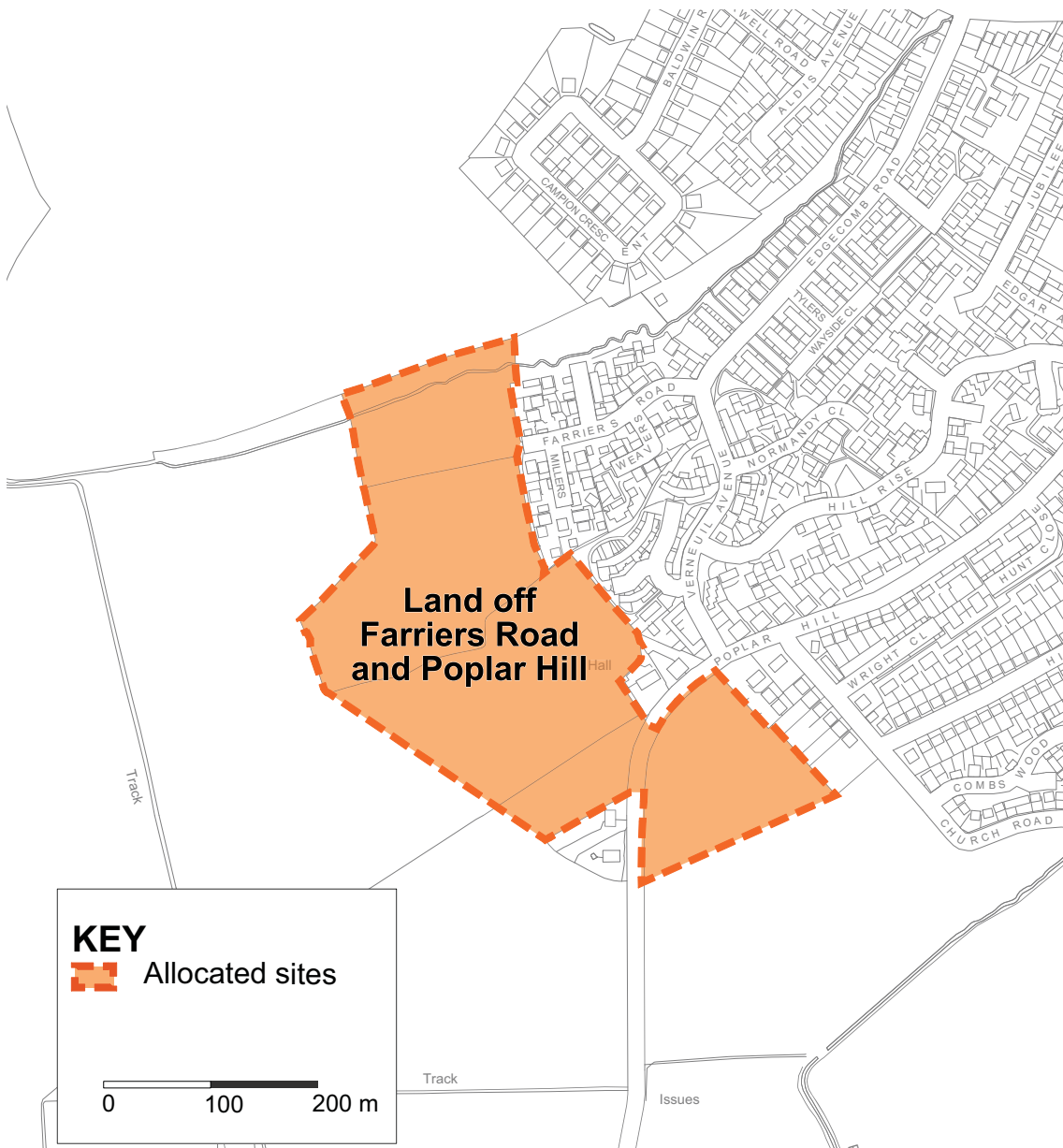
Any future development must consider:

1. the possible need to divert or underground existing overhead electricity cables;
2. the Council's requirement for healthcare infrastructure and related funding.

SAAP Policy 6.25

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP)

All development within this Plan area will be expected to contribute to the appropriate specific on-site and/or general requirements of the IDP (set out in Appendix A) as necessary.



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Map 6.7 Stowmarket South



Map 6.8 Illustrative layout for Farriers Road / Poplar Hill (extract from Stowmarket South – Land off Farriers Road and Poplar Hill Concept Statement (Pegasus Urban Design for Construct Reason and E W Durrant and Son, 2010) - see glossary for details).

7 Employment

Context

7.1 This section establishes the background to employment allocations in the Stowmarket area and provides a framework for the policies.

7.2 Following the revocation of the East of England Plan in January 2013 it is for the Council to define the approach to development in both the district and the town in its Local Plans.

7.3 Mid Suffolk District Council's Core Strategy (2008) Policy CS11 sets out the Council's proposals to provide a supply of good quality employment land and the additional jobs in industry and commerce. The policy allows for the incorporation of the findings of the Western Suffolk Employment Land Review (ELR). The outcome of this ELR is now available and those parts relevant to Stowmarket are summarised below.

7.4 Other employment issues considered in the Core Strategy include the rural economy, farm diversification and tourism. Core Strategy (2008) Policy CS2 specifically accepts the need for small scale employment sites in the countryside subject to operational justification and the satisfactory control of consequential impacts.

Economic background

7.5 Although Mid Suffolk generally has high levels of employment and low levels of deprivation, it is noted that the most deprived wards in Mid Suffolk are within Stowmarket. There is concern that current high levels of employment in the District may be reliant on out-commuting from the District to higher wage areas in Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.

7.6 Stowmarket has a sound employment base of larger employers clustered along the Gipping Valley, founded on agricultural related industries, food processing, traditional manufacturing and goods distribution. These local industries have stood up well to global competition, which indicates that Stowmarket offers these industries some locational advantage and the District Council is committed to retaining this type of employment in the town. As elsewhere, employment in agriculture has declined, but this may reverse with increasing world food prices.

7.7 Stowmarket lies close to the A14 trunk road that links the Port of Felixstowe to Ipswich, Cambridge and the motorway network beyond. It is generally well located in relation to transport infrastructure and even more so since the revision of the A14 to eliminate the 'Haughley Bends' and create a new east/west junction (Junction 49) just north of Stowmarket. This provides potential for the inclusion of some employment within the proposed new development sites to the North and North West of the town without encouraging additional employment related traffic through the central town areas. While this potential for delivering jobs close to housing on the northern side of town is welcomed, it is recognised by the Highways Agency and Western Suffolk Employment Land Review (ELR) that sites on the other side of Stowmarket close to the junction of the A14 and A1120 (Junction 50) are better located for strategic employment allocations.

West Suffolk Employment Land Review

7.8 The Western Suffolk ELR was commissioned jointly by Mid Suffolk, St. Edmundsbury and Forest Heath District Councils in response to the East of England Plan (May 2008) and covers the period to 2026. The Western Suffolk ELR is the key background evidence document for employment policy although it should be noted that it covers the whole district rather than just Stowmarket, and only considers jobs in the 'B Use-Classes', which usually represent about half of all jobs in an area.

7.9 The Western Suffolk ELR notes the locational advantage in Mid Suffolk for agriculture/forestry, manufacturing, food processing and transport related industries. It then goes on to consider current trends, potential drivers of growth and the most likely growth sectors. While there is likely to be growth in the areas of the economy in which Mid Suffolk (and Stowmarket) excel, growth in job numbers in 'B' Use-Classes in Mid Suffolk is expected to be most closely linked to growth of the 'Haven Ports', particularly Felixstowe.

7.10 The Western Suffolk ELR sets out a base case ("business as usual") analysis and then projects future need for employment land across the district according to 2 growth scenarios for the port: 1) a lower level of growth requiring approximately 14.7ha of additional land; and 2) a higher level of growth requiring approximately 57.5ha of additional land. These projected employment land requirements are not targets, but indicative of the market pressures for employment land to which the Council should respond through annual monitoring and the allocation of land to meet future port-related growth.

7.11 This port related growth is most likely to be on sites adjacent to and readily accessible from the A14, which in Mid Suffolk means employment centres in the Ipswich Policy Area and at Stowmarket. The Western Suffolk ELR expects that in general sites closer to Felixstowe will be preferred over those more distant so that the full influence from the Port may not be apparent in Stowmarket until later in the plan period.

7.12 However the employment situation in the Ipswich Policy Area is complicated by pressures from the growth and aspirations of Ipswich as well as the permitted proposal for a very large leisure facility ('Snoasis') that has the potential to make nearby areas more attractive for higher value, (non-B8) employment uses. The Western Suffolk ELR proposes that the policy for the Ipswich Policy Area should be determined in discussion with Ipswich Borough Council and other interested parties.

7.13 Other major employment centres in Mid Suffolk at Needham Market, Woolpit, Mendlesham and Eye are seen as serving more local markets and do not compete to any significant extent with Stowmarket for the same business. Expansion at Stowmarket is therefore unlikely to prejudice future growth at these other locations in the district.

7.14 Chapter 7 of the Western Suffolk ELR contains the relevant recommendations together with the explanatory text. Those relevant to Mid Suffolk and Stowmarket include:

- R7 - ensure the delivery of employment land keeps pace with housing land;
- R16 - the existing employment allocations should be retained to provide sufficient land for growth (in the short term);

- R19 - the existing allocation site at Cedars Park is strategically well placed and should remain the main focus for employment growth in the town;
- R13/14 - Mid Suffolk should look to allocate more land at sites in Stowmarket and/or the Ipswich Fringe to meet future port-related growth;
- R11 - the council provides high quality mixed use business parks with a range of sizes and uses, to provide greater choice and higher grade units.

7.15 While the anticipated growth of the ports may require large parcels of land for warehousing and distribution along the A14 corridor it will also provide opportunities for additional jobs in many other sectors and Use Classes such as offices, financial and other services. Mid Suffolk is receptive to development proposals of all types in support of the growth of the Port of Felixstowe, providing they are strategically sound having duly considered alternative sites and premises inside and outside of Mid Suffolk and operationally justified having taken account of their impact on the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

7.16 The Suffolk Haven Gateway Employment Land Review (2009) covering Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Council areas has provided further useful information regarding the availability of the sites outside of Mid Suffolk and the influences likely to arise from the future growth of the port and from Ipswich.

7.17 The findings of the Western Suffolk and the Suffolk Haven Gateway ELRs are considered in more detail in the Employment Topic Paper.

Tourism and growth in other non-industrial employment

7.18 Jobs in non 'B' Classes, such as the retail, finance, media, information and tourism sectors, are likely to receive an additional boost from the regeneration of the town centre, which will make Stowmarket more attractive as a tourist destination and as a location for modern high quality employment sectors. The town's growing population will increase opportunities for jobs in health services, education and the leisure and recreation industries and the Council will support growth in employment in all sectors of the town's economy and all sizes of business.

7.19 The Core Strategy notes the relatively small contribution that tourism makes to the district economy compared to areas with a coastline or other holiday attraction. However, Stowmarket is better located than many areas of Mid Suffolk to increase employment levels in the tourism sector. The regeneration of the town centre, and the presence of the Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL) will improve the town's attractiveness as a destination, while its readily accessible central location within Suffolk makes it a convenient base for trips to attractive countryside and other attractions in the county and beyond.

7.20 The Museum of East Anglian Life is considered to be the major tourism asset within the town. Consultation has indicated that this asset would be more effective as a focal tourist attraction if it had greater visibility and accessibility within the town. There is a specific policy for the MEAL below, (SAAP 7.4).

7.21 Stowmarket is currently lacking in the good quality, short-stay accommodation necessary for a tourist destination, both at the hotel and B&B ends of the spectrum. The Council will support appropriate extensions to existing short-stay facilities that will benefit the town's economy and will encourage and support the provision of new serviced accommodation near the town centre, particularly in sustainable locations close to rail and other public transport.

7.22 The high quality of the landscape and environment of Suffolk is a major tourist attraction and it is important that growth in tourism should not be detrimental to the environment, landscape or other tourism assets nor to the amenity of residents. Growth in tourism related development should protect and enhance the character of the town, the surrounding villages and the landscape, environment and biodiversity in a way that benefits both visitors and the local population.

7.23 The Core Strategy supports appropriate tourism related development in rural areas where it will benefit the rural economy. It is equally important for the sustainability of villages that they retain sources of local employment and that they are open to opportunities for new types of employment. Employment in rural areas will be targeted to the better serviced, more sustainable 'Key Service Centre' villages. However, Core Strategy policy permits businesses of an appropriate scale and size to be located in smaller villages and in the countryside where there is operational need and where this need cannot be met in more sustainable locations.

7.24 The Taylor Review on the Rural Economy and Affordable Housing (July 2008) forecasts that in rural areas 'home-working' will be of increased importance over time. Similarly the provision of 'live-work' units may benefit both the local economy and housing. A revitalised Stowmarket will contribute to the attractiveness of the wider area for both home-working and live-work units.

Employment Overview for Stowmarket

7.25 Stowmarket is identified as the major centre for growth in the District and it is important for sustainability and the reduction in out commuting that a better alignment of jobs and houses is provided in the town and particularly jobs in sectors that have a sound future. The long-term objective for the Stowmarket Area is to retain and support growth in existing employment sectors and to create opportunities for many new jobs in both the industrial and non-industrial sectors. The traditional approach to plan allocation has not resulted in the expected number of jobs and a more innovative solution which offers a range of sites that are geared to the delivery of attractive places to work will be provided.

7.26 Availability of sites for employment use will be considered against existing Development Plan Documents. This will include:

- The Council will ensure that a range of good quality sites and premises is made available for employment to meet the future needs of business in the Stowmarket Area through a variety of means, including:
- protection of existing business premises and employment sites from loss to other uses where this would be detrimental to the delivery of the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan or the regeneration of the town;

- allocation of existing employment sites where the Western Suffolk ELR shows that the site continues to meet the future needs of business;
- allocation of new sites to increase choice and achieve a better balance between housing and employment for each settlement;
- support the updating of existing sites where this facilitates the retention of an equivalent number of full-time jobs on site;
- support and encourage a mix of uses on vacant employment land where this mix of uses supports the regeneration of Stowmarket, the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan;
- retention of outstanding employment allocations promoted in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan will be kept under review;
- refusing permission for proposals for other types of development within or adjacent to existing areas with significant industrial / business uses, where the proposal would be likely to prejudice the continuation of these areas for industrial or commercial uses either in whole or in part.

SAAP Policy 7.1

Sustainable Employment Sites

The Council will encourage and support the sustainability of new and up-rated employment sites. Subject to meeting the requirements of other policies of the development plan, the Council will:

1. support the location of new employment sites on brownfield land in preference to greenfield land where this is practicable and viable;
2. support development in locations that balance good access (including by walking, cycling and public transport) with economic viability and operational efficiency;
3. support development in locations that allow adequate control of impacts on local transport, landscape, environment, biodiversity and residential and public amenity;
4. support and promote types of employment that are identified as having potential for growth locally;
5. require the provision of affordable starter and grow-on units for new and expanding businesses wherever practicable and viable;
6. require site layouts and building designs that are capable of adaptation to meet future needs;
7. require sustainable methods of construction and incorporation of renewable energy technology, with high standards in regard to energy consumption, lighting, water use and waste disposal;
8. require the provision of adequate bin space and recycling facilities.

SAAP Policy 7.2

Employment on Mixed Use Sites

Where a development proposal for housing requires a development brief, the development brief should consider what area of the site should be given over to employment uses if the proposal is to represent the 'best use of a development opportunity'.

SAAP Policy 7.3

Tourism

- 1). The Council will seek to increase the contribution of tourism to the local economy and the levels of employment within the industry where this is compatible with the other policies of the development plan and the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.
- 2). The Council will support and promote development proposals that will increase the attractiveness of the area for tourism, such as those that:
 - i. protect and enhance the area's natural and historic assets, the character of the town and surrounding villages, the area's landscape, environment and biodiversity;
 - ii. improve accessibility and connectivity within and around the town for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - iii. extend existing and/or provide new short-stay accommodation, particularly in locations accessible to the town centre by pedestrians, cyclists or public transport.
- 3). Development proposals for tourism should be accessible and appropriate for use by the local community and should not be detrimental to the amenity of the local population.

SAAP Policy 7.4

Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL)

- 1). Initiatives to increase the 'visibility' of MEAL within the town centre will be supported and encouraged, such as improved signage and linkages, and improving the view from Crowe Street towards Abbot's Hall. Where possible and practicable, the Council will seek to remove 'visible and physical barriers' between the museum and the rest of the town centre.
- 2). The improvement of the car parking and entrance arrangements to MEAL is a priority for the area. These should be incorporated as part of any redevelopment proposals to the Meadow Centre / Wilkes Way.
- 3). Improvements will be sought to enhance cycle and pedestrian access routes between the museum and town centre.

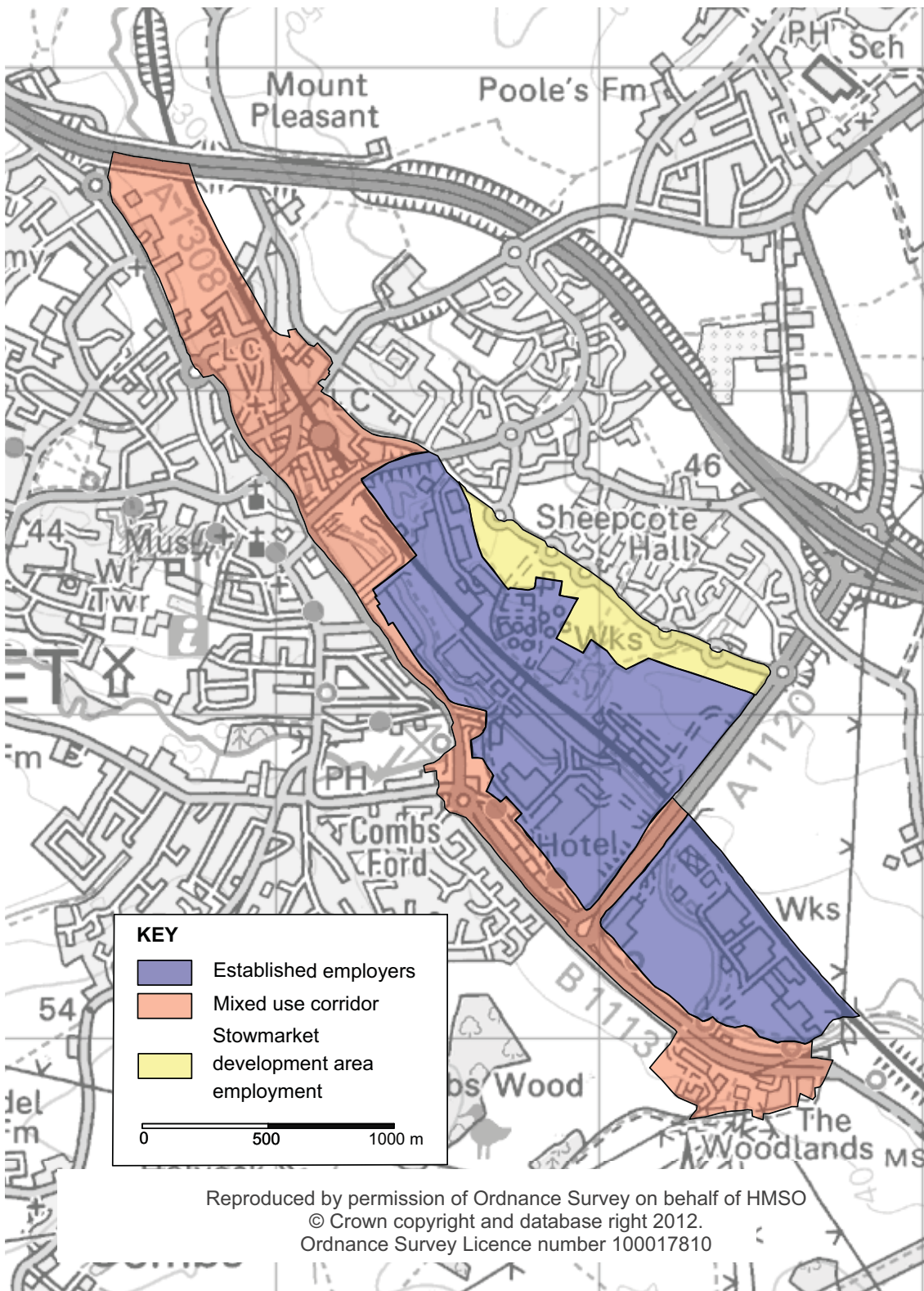
Industrial Commercial Corridor

Context

7.27 This section applies to the area identified as the 'Industrial Commercial Corridor', as set out in Map 7.1. This important area is made up of 3 sub-areas: 1) Area of significant established employers and industrial estates of the Gipping Valley; 2) Narrow mixed use corridor adjacent to the River Gipping Valley Floodplain; and 3) Allocated employment site at Cedars Park under the Stowmarket Development Area. This section identifies policies relevant to each of these sub-areas with a particular focus on employment policies.

7.28 Stowmarket is the largest town in Mid Suffolk with the largest retail centre, and consequently regeneration of the town centre has the potential for making a positive impact on both small businesses and jobs outside of the B Use-Classes such as in shops, financial services, food and drink establishments and hotels. Similarly, a growing population will increase the opportunities for jobs in health services, education and the leisure and recreation industries. This section will consider employment in all types and sizes of business and therefore goes beyond the scope of the Western Suffolk ELR, which only considers B Class employment and sites in excess of 2ha.

7.29 The Industrial Commercial Corridor includes important 'gateways' to the town, identified in the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment as locations that need to be enhanced so that the entrance to the town can be made more welcoming. This in turn will improve the vitality of the town, its attractiveness to visitors and tourists, and its desirability as a destination for the relocation of business. The Gipping Way and the Station Quarter are such areas within the Industrial Commercial Corridor, and policies in this section include consideration of their gateway role.



Map 7.1 Industrial and Commercial Corridor

Area of Significant Established Employers and industrial estates

7.30 Major employment uses in Stowmarket have been derived from an historic base of agriculturally related industries that expanded with the navigation of the River Gipping and the railway system. This attracted other industrial uses to locate along the floor of the river valley, and is identified on Map 7.1 as 'Established Employers'. These traditional

industries have evolved with changes in the agricultural production, food processing and distribution industries and more recently the pressures from the global economy. Many are internationally significant employers, and make a major contribution to employment not only in the town, but also in the District and beyond.

7.31 The ever increasing need for efficiency has resulted in some of these employers relocating to a smaller footprint on the same site, which has released land for development. In this sub-area the Council will seek to:

- Protect large scale industrial / commercial types of employment from loss to other uses;
- Maintain a flexible approach to meet the needs of employers, facilitating their evolution within the national and regional aspirations and their competitiveness in the global economy;
- Ensure that any development of land released through company reorganisation makes the 'best use of the opportunity' created, in line with the policies and objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

SAAP Policy 7.5

Established Employers and Industrial Estates

The Council will seek to protect employment uses within this area, identified on Map 7.1. Development proposals in this area for 'mixed-use' and 'non-B Class' uses will be permitted where they represent the best use of a development opportunity having regard to the requirements, policies, and objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and other policies in the development plan.

Narrow Mixed Use Corridor adjacent to the River Gipping Floodplain

7.32 The area identified on Map 7.1 as 'Mixed Use Corridor', stretches for almost 4 kilometres from Stowmarket Football Club in the north to the former TXU electricity site in the south. It lies either side of the Bury Road/Gipping Way/Needham Road corridor that connects the town to the A14 at either end. This area has a complex pattern of development, which is bounded in different places by various established uses such as large scale employment, the town centre, the railway and in other places by residential use, agriculture, and the River Gipping and its floodplain.

7.33 Almost every 'Use Class' is represented within this narrow corridor, however not every use is considered to be equally appropriate in every part of the area. The Stowmarket Masterplan and the Environmental Assessment have helped to establish the different objectives and priorities in different parts of the corridor, so that they may make an important contribution to the vitality of the town, the Station Quarter area and identified 'gateway' areas.

7.34 In broad terms the mixed use corridor can be considered in 3 parts:

1. The northern section adjacent to Bury Road has some residential, employment, institutional, amenity and leisure uses and retail of a type appropriate 'close to but not in' the town centre. In some areas it is compromised by the River Gipping floodplain.
2. The central section along the Gipping Way is close to the town centre and presents an opportunity to provide closer links between the town centre and the railway station while creating recreational opportunities alongside the River Gipping. It is also an important 'Gateway' to the town for rail passengers and those approaching via the Gipping Way.
3. The southern section adjacent to Needham Road and the B1113 has some residential uses, agriculture, and both large and small scale industrial uses. The open aspect of this area makes consideration of landscape impacts particularly important, irrespective of any 'gateway' role.

7.35 The Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Station Quarter Concept Statement (MSDC, 2009) identifies the key role that the 'Station Quarter' plays in the regeneration of the town and the potential for a mix of uses that will make the best use of this development opportunity (Chapter 5 - Allocation for Mixed Use Development - The Station Quarter).

7.36 Policies for this area will seek to ensure that best use is made of opportunities that arise, so that future development contributes to the town centre regeneration while remaining compatible with its neighbours.

SAAP Policy 7.6

Narrow Mixed Use Corridor

- 1). Development proposals in the area defined as the 'Station Quarter' will be determined according to the policies applicable to that area as identified in Chapter 5 and elsewhere in the document.
- 2). A development proposal for any other area within the mixed use corridor will be permitted if it:
 - i. takes account of existing town centre uses;
 - ii. is compatible with neighbouring land uses in terms of design, layout and operation;
 - iii. will advance pedestrian and cycling facilities within the plan area;
 - iv. will make a positive contribution to the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan; and
 - v. It is consistent with other policies of the development plan.

Allocations for Employment

Cedars Park

7.37 The employment site at Cedars Park (see Map 7.1 under 'Stowmarket Development Area Employment') was allocated in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) for B-class industrial / commercial uses to balance the increase in housing with additional jobs. There is a commitment through a planning permission for 1.7 hectares of trade counters and small units, which so far has not been implemented. The rest of the site is available for employment related development.

7.38 As an existing allocation, the Cedars Park employment site is within the scope of the Western Suffolk ELR, which identifies it as an attractive location for both office and industrial uses, having good strategic transport links and being close to existing employment clusters. The Western Suffolk ELR notes that this allocated site has a difficult topography that should be addressed to make it more attractive for development. Despite this qualification, recommendation R19 of the Western Suffolk ELR states that this allocated site should be the main focus for employment development in the Stowmarket area.

7.39 The lack of development on the Cedars Park site has allowed colonisation by a variety of rare and valuable species of flora and fauna including pyramid orchids, lizards and slow worms. In March 2010 the County Wildlife Site panel, having established that the site meets the necessary criteria, designated 3.1 hectares at the eastern end as a 'County Wildlife Site'. The location is indicated on the Proposals Map attached to this document.

7.40 This new constraint had not been identified at the time that the Western Suffolk ELR was produced and is not included in the considerations for the site. It is also noted that the Western Suffolk ELR does not include consideration of unallocated employment sites to avoid prejudicing the outcome of the Local Plans process.

7.41 The issues relating to realising the full potential at the Cedars Park employment site are set out in SAAP Policy 7.8 below.

SAAP Policy 7.7

Local Plan Employment Allocations

Existing employment allocations at Cedars Park, set out in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (saved policy SDA 6) will be retained to allow for the employment market to return and the allocations to be taken up. The situation will be monitored and once the employment market has returned the future use of the Cedars Park employment allocations will be reviewed.

SAAP Policy 7.8

Cedars Park Employment Site

1. The Council will actively promote and encourage development in appropriate use classes on the allocated employment land at Cedars Park, where this is:
 - i. likely to meet the future needs of business in the district;
 - ii. consistent with other policies of the development plan; and
 - iii. where proposals will make a positive contribution to relevant objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

2. Development proposals in this area will also be determined according to any other policies applicable to the defined area. The Cedars Park site should be reallocated for employment uses on a transitional basis (see SAAP Policy 7.7). As a key development opportunity future development proposals for the Cedars Park site will require a development brief that must address in particular:
 - i. its role as a 'cordon sanitaire' separating the sewage treatment works from the residential areas;
 - ii. the need to screen the employment use from nearby residents;
 - iii. the contribution to views in, out and across Stowmarket;
 - iv. the compatibility of proposed uses with the amenity of nearby residential use;
 - v. the need to incorporate high standards for sustainable development;
 - vi. the need to provide flexible design for employment spaces; and
 - vii. the retention and appropriate management of biodiversity, habitat and protected areas and species.

Stowmarket Business and Enterprise Park

7.42 This site came forward through various stages of consultation into a combined site capable of allocation and delivering primarily employment, but also a wider range of improvements for the town as governed by the Infrastructure Delivery Programme, (see Chapter 11 and Appendix A). This proposed allocation is made in SAAP Policy 7.9.

7.43 Maps 7.2 and 7.3 show the location of the site on the east side of the A1120 (Mill Lane) between the A14 to the north and the railway line to the south, it extends west into open countryside to the limits of the various landowners interests. The total area is approximately 79 hectares, with about half of this (39.5 Hectares) for employment and the rest proposed for other non-employment uses such as public open space, screening and a 13 hectares wetland centre.

7.44 It is noted that the proposed entrance to this site lies directly opposite the access to the Cedars Park site, from the roundabout on the A1120 adjoining the Tesco store, and that it shares similar strategic advantages to the Cedars Park employment land for ease

of access to the A14 from Junction 50. Unlike the Cedars Park site, this proposal would require a break into open countryside and issues related to this have been included in SAAP Policies 7.9 - 7.14 below.

7.45 The Mill Lane site presents opportunities to deliver a wider range and number of employment opportunities than the Cedars Park allocation, more in keeping with the housing growth in the town. The site is better situated to relocate inappropriately sited local businesses (freeing up brownfield land for redevelopment) and the port related growth scenarios anticipated by the Western Suffolk ELR within the plan period.

7.46 In addition to its advantages for employment, the land occupies a strategic location abutting the Tesco roundabout which can offer the opportunity to provide a direct link from Creting Road to the A1120 and then the A14. This will allow the closure of the current unsatisfactory Creting Road access to the A1120 across a slip road of the A14. The Council believes that the site warrants allocation provided this is coupled to additional social, cultural and recreational benefits that are designed into a development brief and that the site is linked to the town's residential areas by the proposed new public transport system.

7.47 A development brief for future development of the site will require the provision of a Town Edge Bus Stop with 'Real Time Passenger Information' (RTPI) as part of a business community centre. Enhanced cycling and walking facilities through the site linked to Cedars Park and the emerging residential areas across the rest of the town will help to deliver the sustainable transport objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

7.48 The site presents a wide variety of concerns both in its open countryside location and in the potential for impact on traffic flows, landscape, visual amenity, the residential amenity of near neighbours and noise and light pollution along the Gipping valley affecting the wider town. There have also been long-standing concerns expressed by the Town Council and others regarding the infrastructure provision for the town as a whole and for the adjacent Cedars Park residential development in particular. Any development opportunity on the east side of the A1120 should be designed to help to resolve these existing issues rather than add to the problems.

SAAP Policy 7.9

Allocation

The site alongside the A1120 shown as the 'Stowmarket Business and Enterprise Park' in Map 7.2 and 7.3, is allocated for employment use (expected to be predominantly port related as indicated below), and open space, leisure and recreation.

	Total Area in Hectares (Ha)	Total Employment Area (Ha)	Area of B1 Offices (Ha)	Area of Other Business Units (Ha)	Area of Warehouses (Ha)
Phase 1	58	29.0	2.0	6.0	21.0
Phase 2	21	10.5	2.0	4.5	4.0
Total	79	39.5	4.0	10.5	25.0

Table 7.1 Indicative Land Uses

Other uses including Sui Generis Use and those within Use Class D commonly found on business parks will be considered.

SAAP Policy 7.10

Development Briefs

A development brief will be produced before an application for planning permission is submitted. This development brief should follow the principles set out in paragraph 4.4 - 4.8 and take into account the Stowmarket Masterplan (where it is pertinent), the objectives and policies of the SAAP and other policies of the development plan.

SAAP Policy 7.11

Landscaping and setting

Development of this site must address the following:

1. The need for both formal and informal public open space, including formal playing pitches to the north of the site, and a designated ecological wetland area to the south-east of the site.
2. Public access to the countryside and to the Gipping Valley path in particular, and contributions to the River Gipping improvements.
3. Areas affected for flood risk must be of a use compatible with the NPPF Technical Guidance.
4. Landscape proposals must satisfactorily address:
 - i. the 'urban gateway' role of the site;
 - ii. limiting its visual intrusion into the open countryside, including a minimum of 40m of structural landscaping along the length of Cedars Link A1120 for each phase of development;
 - iii. views in, out, and across the site;
 - iv. the important 'edge of town' setting;
 - v. potential light pollution issues;
 - vi. the needs of the NPPF Technical Guidance; and
 - vii. a designated wetland area to the south-east and provision of a planting scheme to the north-east of the site (phase 2).

SAAP Policy 7.12

Transport - buses / cycle / walking

1. The development of this site must include:
 - i. improvements to the local road system.
 - ii. appropriate and agreed access improvements to the site, including from the A1120 roundabout.
 - iii. the appropriate provision for new bus services. This must include a Town Edge Bus Stop with Real Time Passenger Information at the heart of the park, that links with existing residential areas, the town centre and places of employment and where possible the outlying villages in the plan area.
 - iv. access to the site for pedestrians, cyclists and by public transport links to the town centre, including cycle link improvements between Creting Road and Mill Lane, and a link between Tescos (Cedars Park) to Mill Lane.

These will be required through the earliest phases of the development, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

SAAP Policy 7.13

Other site issues

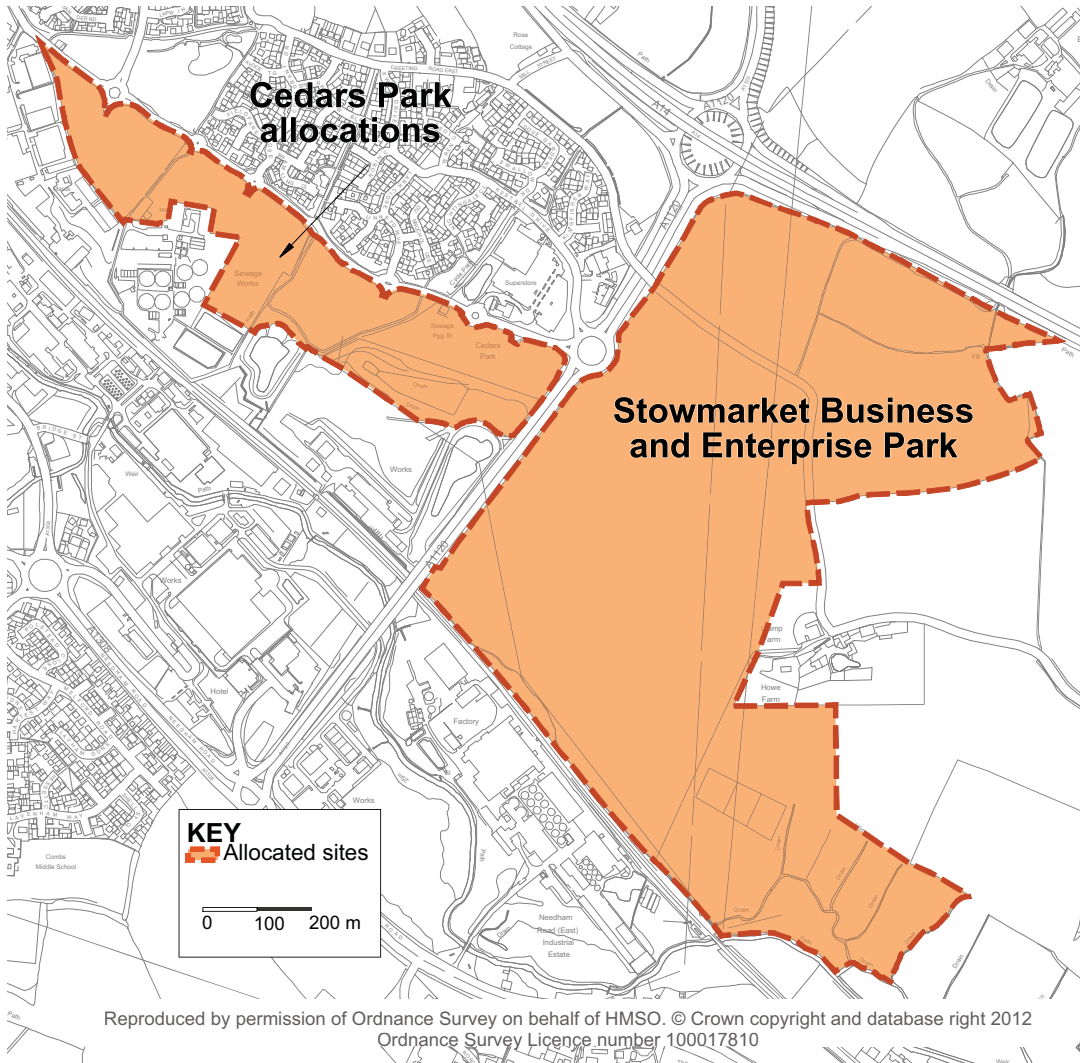
Any future development within this area must consider:

1. possible environmental mitigation measures required, including air quality, water quality and noise attenuation measures;
2. the possible need to divert or place underground the existing overhead electricity cables;
3. the Council's requirement to seek to secure support for Police and other social infrastructure for the future residents and employees of the area; and
4. Off-site road improvements including to the A14 (junction 50) phased in accordance with Highways Agency requirements.

SAAP Policy 7.14

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP)

All development within this area will be expected to contribute to the appropriate specific on-site and/or general requirements of the IDP (set out in Appendix A) as necessary.



Map 7.2 Stowmarket East



Map 7.3 Illustrative layout for land off Mill Lane (extract taken from Stowmarket East - Land off Mill Lane Concept Statement (Stowmarket Mill Lane Development Ltd, 2010) - see glossary for details).

Land to the North and North West of Stowmarket

7.49 As part of the Council's initiative to secure a broadened jobs base for the town and to create the opportunity for people to take advantage of public transport, cycling and walking links, the Council will promote the inclusion of 2.14 hectares of land for industrial / commercial activity in the major allocation around Chilton Leys (also see Chapter 6, "Allocations for Residential" in particular SAAP Policies 6.5 to 6.12 and maps 6.3 and 6.4).

8 Transport and Connectivity

Context

8.1 The Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change (2006) found overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is a serious global threat that demands an urgent response to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The findings have influenced national planning and transport policies, to be implemented through Local Plans. However, Government guidance acknowledges that the car will continue to have an important part to play and for some journeys, particularly in rural areas, it will remain the only real option for travel.

8.2 The Government's Carbon Reduction Strategy for Transport (July 2009) anticipates that by 2022 emissions from new cars will be reduced dramatically and there will be greater take up of alternative fuels, including electric vehicles.

8.3 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy accepted that action must be taken locally to adapt to climate change and to reduce the District's contribution to the problem. This will include coordinating policies for development and transport, to help reduce the need to travel and encourage alternatives to car use and so reduce the unwanted impacts of transport and traffic.

8.4 The Mid Suffolk Core Strategy also states that "the Council will help to reduce the need to travel, reduce journey distances and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling". Particular issues identified in the Core Strategy include rural accessibility and the capacity of the A14 road and rail corridor to cope with future development and the growing freight traffic between the port of Felixstowe and the Midlands.

8.5 Transport infrastructure will need to be improved to cater for the developments in housing, employment, shopping and leisure facilities envisaged in the Core Strategy. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan will help to reduce some of the need for travel by ensuring that new housing is close to work places, schools, shops and other services and by encouraging alternatives to car use.

8.6 Stowmarket is well served by road and rail transport, with the A14 trunk road and inter-city rail services on the London - Ipswich - Norwich line and cross country rail services to Cambridge and Peterborough.

8.7 Within the town the B1115 relief road and bridge links the Cedars Park development with the town centre and relieves traffic congestion at the level crossing. Improved pedestrian and cycle routes to serve schools, employment areas and shopping centres and to connect with the adjoining villages, such as Stowupland, Combs, Onehouse and Haughley, have been identified. There is a frequent bus service between Stowmarket, Needham Market and Ipswich, but improvements are needed to serve new housing areas and outlying villages.

Stowmarket's Transport Priorities

8.8 A Stowmarket Transport Strategy was produced in 2002 as part of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan, assessing the whole of the transport network for Stowmarket against the need for the B1115 relief road. The findings of the 2002 transport strategy have since been updated by further work and consultation for the Stowmarket Masterplan, and various studies of the A14 road corridor and rail links. The Stowmarket Area Action Plan has also taken account of the Regional Transport Strategy (East of England Plan, 2008), Suffolk Local Transport Plan, Mid Suffolk Transport Strategy (2006), Mid Suffolk Cycling Strategy (1999), Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (2008) and Stowmarket Masterplan (2008). A transport plan for Stowmarket is included in the Suffolk Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2031.

8.9 It has emerged through consultation that sustainable transport is seen as the main priority for Stowmarket, rather than major road schemes, especially in the first five years of the plan period. There is support for improved pedestrian and cycling facilities and for better bus services within Stowmarket as well as direct links between villages and towns and a better bus/rail interchange. Transport linkages to the town centre are important to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the shopping area and other facilities. Further details can be found in the Stowmarket Transport Strategy 2010 which has been produced jointly by the County and District Councils, and in the Suffolk LTP 2011-2031.

8.10 The Stowmarket Masterplan has identified opportunities for transport improvements at the railway station, known as the 'Station Quarter'. This includes: an improved transport interchange (rail / bus / taxi); new and improved pedestrian and cycle links between the station and town centre; a new civic space in front of the listed station buildings; a multi-level station car park with wrap-around mixed use / hotel development; and secure cycle parking. Proposals for the Station Quarter are set out in Chapter 5 on Shopping and Town Centre. Improvements are also needed for bus passenger facilities in the town centre, such as shelters, seats and real-time passenger information (RTPI).

Delivering Transport Infrastructure

8.11 Deliverability is a key consideration and a number of costed transport schemes are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP) with the Stowmarket Area Action Plan, (see Appendix A). With limited public funding for transport infrastructure, there will be a need for new development to contribute to the necessary transport improvements. Small-scale transport schemes are likely to be more deliverable, at least in the short term, under current difficult market conditions.

8.12 New development will need to contribute to provision of an overall network of improved cycle, pedestrian and public transport routes as proposed in the Area Action Plan and detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme and shown on Maps 8.1 and 8.2. Individual sites at the outer edge of town will be expected to deliver "Town Edge Bus Stops" that will act as termini for a new bus system, until they are brought into further connections with the surrounding villages.

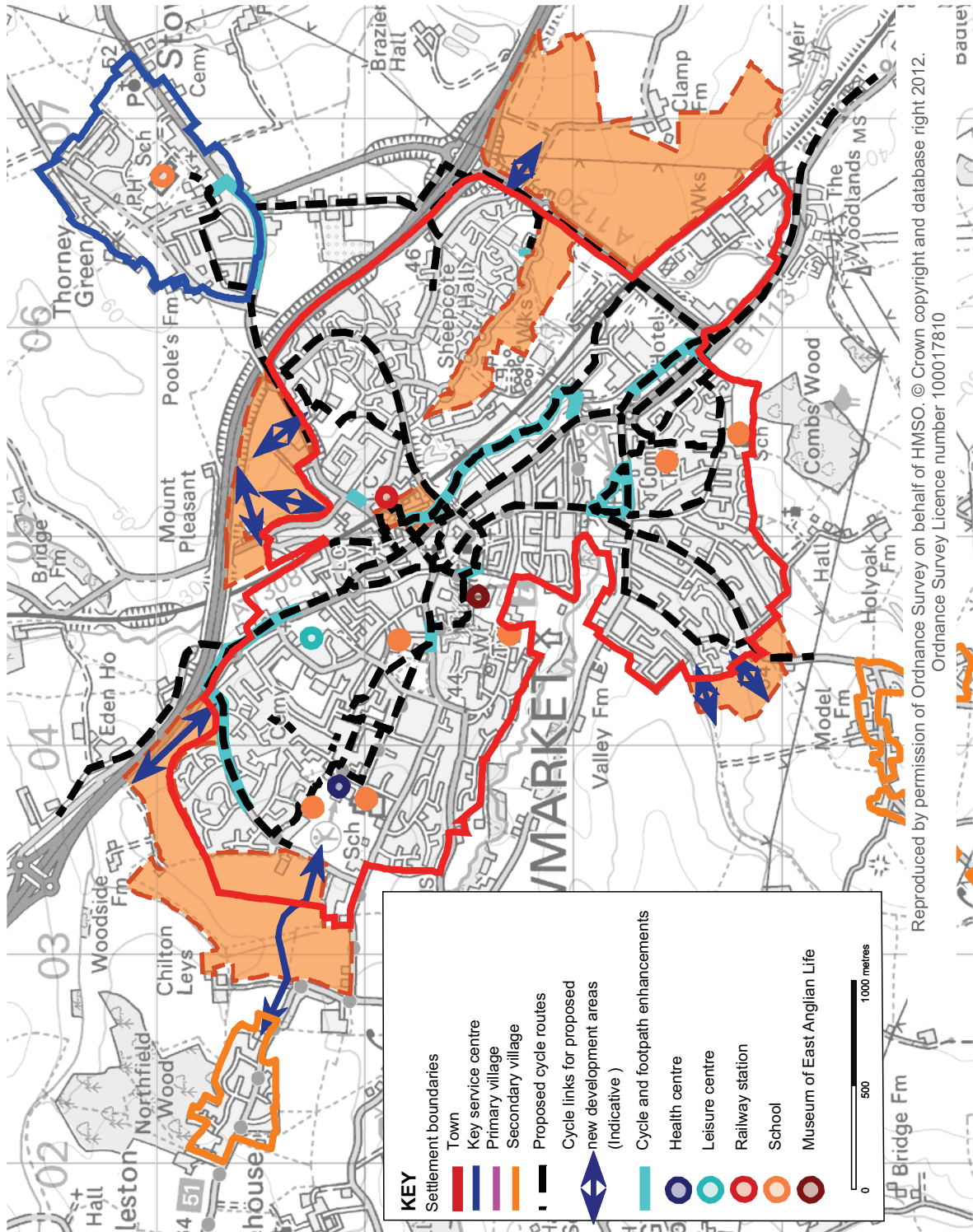
8.13 The Council will seek to ensure that new developments will have an acceptable impact on, and relationship to, existing transport infrastructure, and that suitable additional infrastructure is provided where necessary.

8.14 While it is not the role of the Plan or IDP to "pay for" the repair or making good of pre-existing problems in the transport network, the Council must attempt to create sufficient capacity in the local road network to allow the free flow of existing and future cross-town traffic.

SAAP Policy 8.1

Developer Contributions to a Sustainable Transport Network

- 1). Development and transport within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will be planned in order to reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes, in particular walking, cycling and public transport. New development will need to contribute to the provision of an overall network of transport infrastructure, including improved cycle, pedestrian and public transport routes as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme and shown on Maps 8.1 and 8.2.
- 2). Development proposals will be assessed in terms of impact on the road network, traffic capacity, highway safety, environmental impact of traffic generated, pedestrian and cycle accessibility and availability and access to public transport. The Council will require mitigating measures to be provided to the satisfaction of the highway authority where necessary.
- 3). Developers will either make direct provision of the necessary transport infrastructure relating to their site or will contribute to an overall fund for provision of identified transport improvements in the Stowmarket Area Action Plan area. A mixture of the two approaches may also be acceptable.
- 4). Contributions will be negotiated between the developer and the Council, taking account of viability of development at the time.



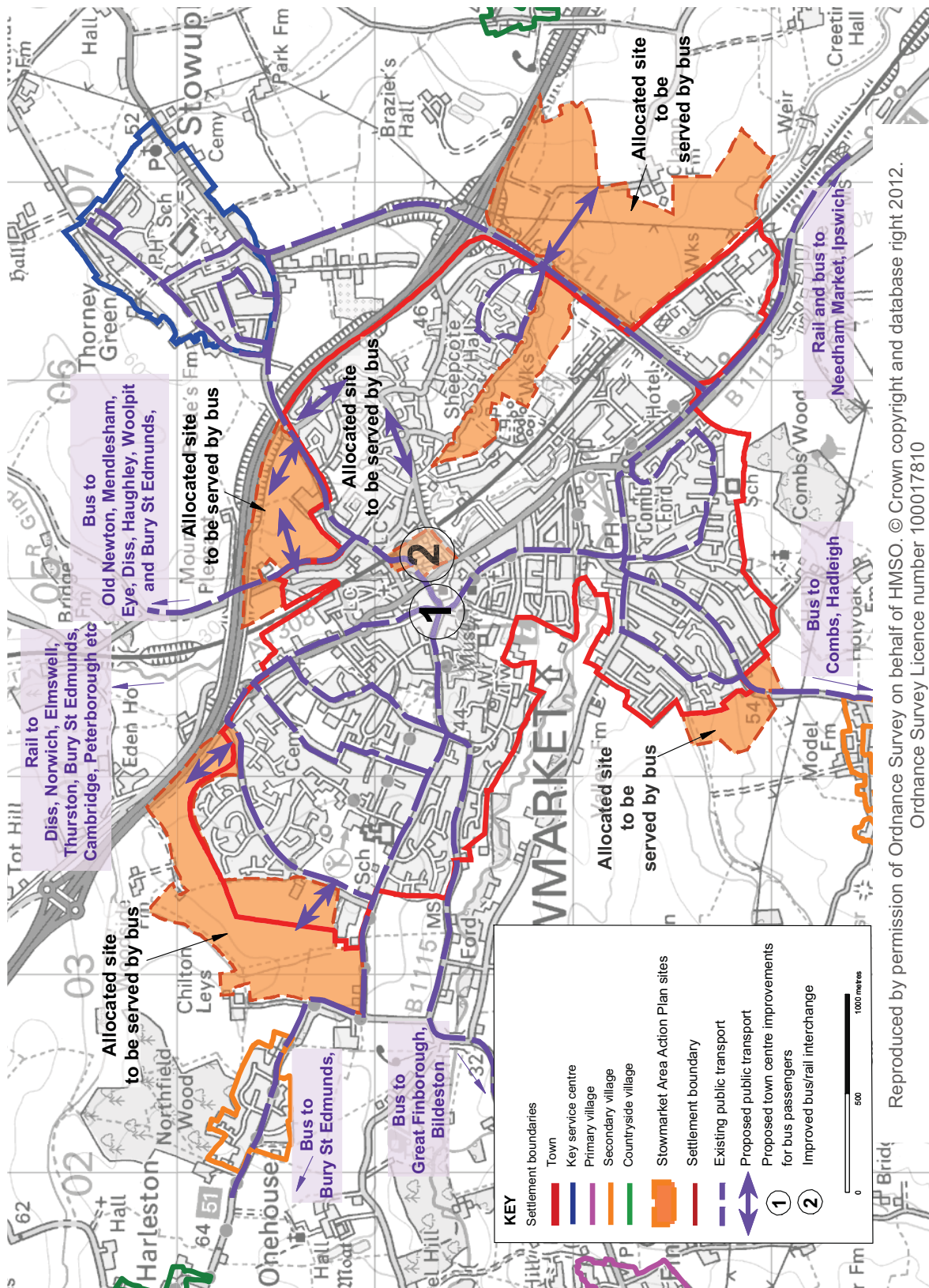
Map 8.1 Proposed Cycle Routes and Cycle and Footpath Route Improvements

Table 8.1 Stowmarket Cycle and Footpath Route Improvements (also see Map 8.1)

Suffolk County Council schemes included in Infrastructure Delivery Programme

1	Eastern (closed) end Needham Road	Cycle lanes both sides
2	Melford Road to A1308	Cycle track (3m wide) and Toucan crossing
3	Bridge Street and riverside path to rail station	2m most likely width available beside river
4	Pykes Meadow, Combs Ford	Convert footway to shared use along Needham Road and construct path across meadowlands
5	Camping Lands	Provide shared use path (3m) between Crowe Street and Kensington Road
6	Devon Road to Thorney Green Common, Stowupland	On-road signed route on Devon Road with off-road facilities to and across Common
7	Southern end Stowupland Road	Construct crossing point and widen footway. Convert to shared use
8	Bury Road south of roundabout	Continue shared use path towards town centre by widening footway
9	Improve crossing of Bury Road south of roundabout	Minor improvements
10	Provide shared use path along A1308 from Bury Road roundabout to Chilton Road	Widen footpath to 3m
11	Finborough Road - Iliffe Way to Recreation Ground	Narrow carriageway and widen footway to provide shared use path on south side and convert Pelican to Toucan crossing
12	Cedars Park, Tesco (MSDC amenity site)	Provide short link to existing crossing on adjacent road
13	Chilton Way	Widen footway and convert to shared use between Bury Road and Lowry Way

Table 8.1



Map 8.2 Public Transport Existing and Proposed

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans

Where a new development is likely to have significant transport implications, a Transport Assessment should be prepared and submitted by the developer with a planning application for the development. It will then be used to determine whether the impact of the development on transport is acceptable. The Transport Assessment should set out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme and to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling, and public transport.

8.15 Workplace and school travel plans are intended to promote more sustainable transport choices for journeys to work or school, for example by walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing, pool cars or home working. Suffolk County Council is promoting travel planning for schools and major employers.

8.16 The District Council will encourage the use of Travel Plans to ensure that genuine travel choices are available to and from proposed major developments in Stowmarket. Conditions may be attached to planning permissions requiring occupiers to implement Travel Plans with agreed targets. Preparation of these plans will be required for all non-residential developments over the thresholds for Transport Assessments.

Links to the A14

8.17 The A14 trunk road is an important route for freight traffic between the port of Felixstowe and the Midlands. The Highways Agency recognises the need for growth in Suffolk, including the housing requirements for the Stowmarket area. The Agency wishes to manage the impact of new development on the A14 and its slip roads, for example by encouraging sustainable transport options within Stowmarket rather than generating local traffic movements or “junction hopping” around the town onto the A14, which could lead to congestion in the future.

8.18 Consultants AECOM, in conjunction with the Highways Agency, Suffolk County Council, and Mid Suffolk, have considered how new development can be brought forward in Stowmarket in accordance with the Core Strategy, in such a way as to avoid “junction hopping” on the A14 or excessive traffic through the town centre and Combs Ford areas. Combinations of sustainable transport measures and a possible new link road to connect the north west side of Stowmarket to the new A14 junction between Stowmarket and Haughley have been assessed. The consultants have also considered the potential for the internalisation of trips within the town and the opportunity to reduce the share of trips taken by car in the town. The general conclusion is that it is preferable to concentrate short to medium term investment on sustainable transport and monitor its effectiveness before deciding whether there is a case for investment in a new link road to the A14 in the longer-term. (Please also see SAAP policy 6.8 and para 6.62)

SAAP Policy 8.2

A14 Trunk Road

The Council will work with the Highways Agency and Suffolk County Council to coordinate future development and transport in the Stowmarket Area Action Plan area with the requirement to minimise the effect of the planned growth in Stowmarket and ensure efficient use of the A14 trunk road.

9 Natural Environment, Biodiversity and the Historic Environment

Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Context

9.1 Local Planning Authorities protect existing designated sites ranging from international to local sites through control of development. Over recent years there has been a growing recognition that conserving biodiversity extends beyond this network of designated sites. A range of wildlife and habitats are found throughout the countryside and urban areas of Mid Suffolk, which is essential to the maintenance of Mid Suffolk's biodiversity.

9.2 The protection of biodiversity assets must have a broader focus than rare habitats and species alone. The educational, health, economic and quality of life benefits that come from regular contact with nature needs to be recognised and planning for the natural environment should enable these benefits to be realised. Protecting and enhancing spaces of biodiversity value within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan Boundary is a key element of the Spatial Development Strategy.

9.3 Stowmarket's biodiversity continues to be threatened by inappropriate land management, habitat fragmentation and development pressures as well as climate change implications. Stowmarket needs to protect its biodiversity as part of the urban renewal process by enhancing existing assets and reinstating biodiversity that has previously been lost to development.

9.4 The Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan (SBAP) identifies what steps need to be taken in order to protect threatened species and habitats. Developments within the Stowmarket area must demonstrate how they contribute to the SBAP targets, to ensure that development does not harm the existing biodiversity value of the area.

Natural connections

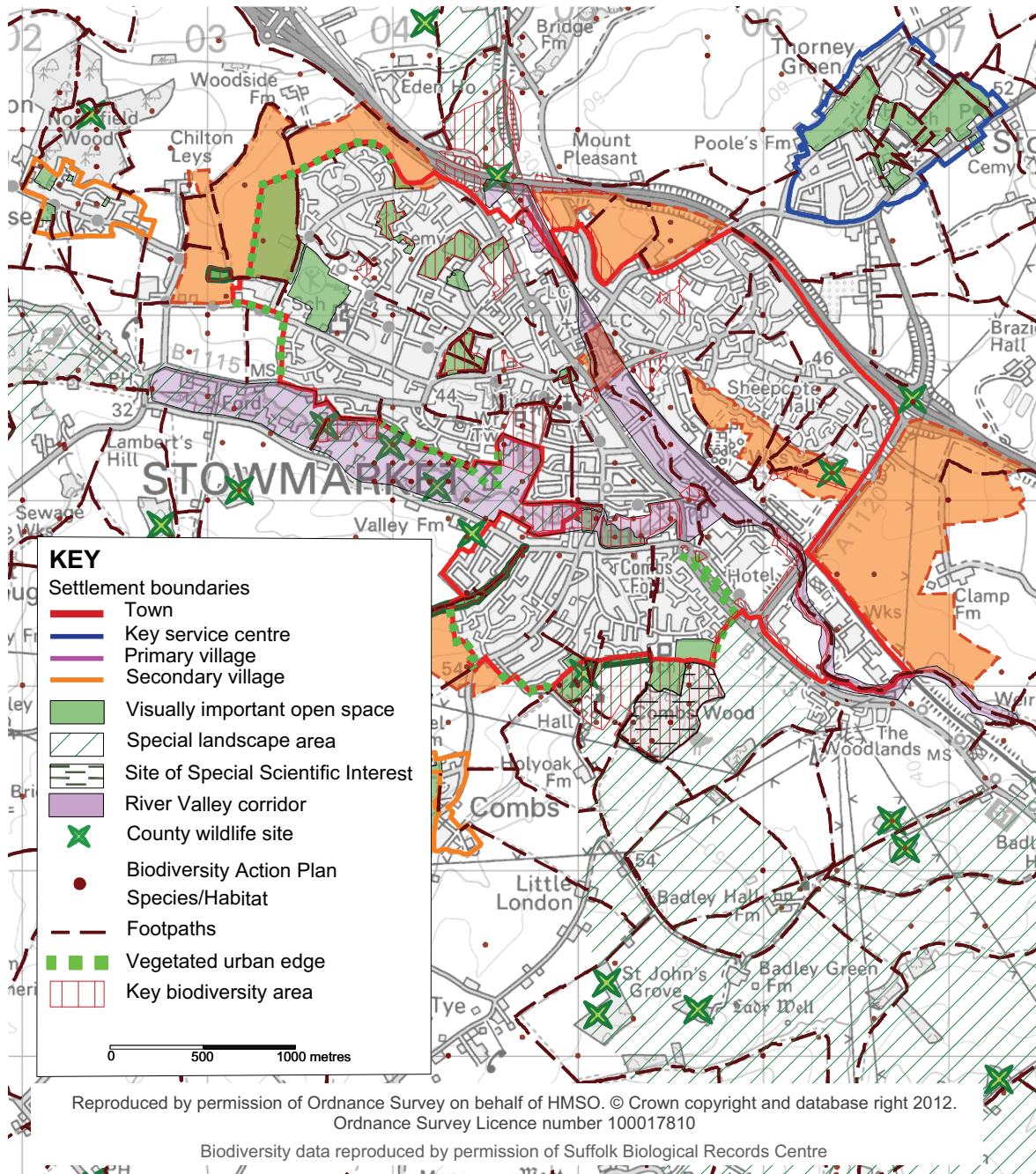
9.5 Ecological corridors link habitats together and provide routes or 'stepping stones' for the migration, dispersal, and genetic exchange of species in the wider environment. It is important that such corridors in Stowmarket are protected and enhanced in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 114).

9.6 Key Biodiversity Areas have been identified on the Strategic Biodiversity Areas, Map 9.1, to assist in demonstrating the need for natural connections through Stowmarket. 'Key Biodiversity Areas' are areas with a historical biodiversity value, and include key woodlands, ponds and areas of grassland within Stowmarket. There may be other areas in Stowmarket not identified on the map that also have biodiversity value, so development proposals should be subject to an ecological survey to determine what impact they will have on protected species and habitats.

SAAP Policy 9.1

Biodiversity Measures

- 1). Protect, manage and enhance Stowmarket's biodiversity and geodiversity based on existing policies and Map 9.1.
- 2). Conversions of barns and timber framed buildings within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan boundary will be required to include mitigating measures, such as bat and owl boxes.
- 3). All development proposals must:
 - i. integrate development to help form, and where present repair and strengthen, ecological corridors;
 - ii. not cause fragmentation or isolation of habitats;
 - iii. provide ecological surveys to determine what impact the proposed development will have on the existing habitats and protected species in particular, and implement mitigation / compensation measures ahead of commencement of any development where possible. If mitigation is not possible, a precautionary approach will be adopted in most cases;
 - iv. demonstrate how they will contribute, in full, to the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan targets;
 - v. demonstrate how the integrating biodiversity recommendations (contained in biodiversity survey supporting documents) for Stowmarket Area Action Plan sites are addressed;
 - vi. retain mature trees, woodlands, linear natural features, species rich grassland, areas identified as 'Key Biodiversity Areas' (as displayed on the Strategic Biodiversity Areas map 9.1) and any other protected habitats;
 - vii. ensure linkages within and to the Town Centre are retained as well as links to the Countryside through combined footpaths and cycleways which will also assist in creating strong ecological networks;
 - viii. implement appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, such as the ongoing maintenance of enhanced sites, to ensure that there is no net loss in biodiversity in the Stowmarket area, such as the ongoing maintenance of enhanced sites;
 - ix. plant treebelts where the site borders open countryside;
 - x. provide advance landscape planting to ensure the visual impact of future development is mitigated.



Map 9.1 Strategic Biodiversity Areas

River Valleys

Context

9.7 Within the town the river valleys provide: varied habitats and species; sites with biodiversity and geodiversity conservation interests; and a sense of tranquility and natural space. The Strategic Area for the river valleys is set out in Map 9.1. The historical influence of the River Gipping for navigation has the potential to become a renewed feature by creating safe walking and cycling routes, whilst the quiet solitude of the River Rattlesden provides a wildlife haven. The two rivers were once key approach routes to the town, but

now the valleys provide important views in and out of the town, provide character, and act as key gateways to the town. The river valleys are strategic biodiversity corridors and form part of a continuous recreation and wildlife corridor linking habitats together.

SAAP Policy 9.2

River Valleys

1). The environment within the river valleys, including the landscape, water environment, and wildlife habitats will be conserved and enhanced. Where possible provision will be made for increased public access for walking, cycling and horse riding, and will include:

- i. where practicable, widening of the eastern riverbank of the Gipping riverside walk to 5 metres so that there is sufficient space for a combined footpath and cycle way from Green's Meadow to Munton and Fisons;
- ii. where practicable, incorporating permanent set-aside 5m strips beside both branches of River Gipping on farmland adjacent to Cardinals Road;
- iii. seeking opportunities to upgrade the riverpath between Pickerel Bridge and Bridge Street to improve accessibility including disabled access;
- iv. managing the River Gipping banks to encourage wildlife by increasing native tree and hedgerow planting where appropriate to support the ecological corridors.

2). Planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development or associated mitigation measures would have an unacceptable adverse impact on:

- i. flooding and flood risk;
- ii. quality of ground or surface water;
- iii. biodiversity;
- iv. public access.

3). Non-conforming uses will be deterred from the river valleys.

SAAP Policy 9.3

River Rattlesden

1). Within the valley of the River Rattlesden, development proposals must make appropriate provision to accommodate the flood plain, protect biodiversity, and water quality. Development should be of an appropriate scale and form to integrate with the riverside environment. The Council will expect:

- high quality design and enhancement to the public realm; and
- improved pedestrian and cycle access in areas where this will not prejudice biodiversity.

2). The existing Mid Suffolk Local Plan has identified the flood plain and the river valley of the River Rattlesden as Special Landscape Area from the Combs Ford Allotments westwards to Wash Lane and beyond. In this area an extension to the Museum of East Anglian Life was anticipated. Although a new approach to landscape character protection may be expected across the County of Suffolk, development should be prevented unless it relates to the needs of the Museum.

SAAP Policy 9.4

River Gipping

1). Development proposals adjoining the River Gipping must make appropriate provision to accommodate the flood plain, protect biodiversity and water quality, whilst satisfying the following requirements:

- a well designed frontage adjoining all streets, gateways and other public spaces;
- provision of a clear definition, but seamless character between public and private space through the location of doors and entrances, principal windows, shop fronts, balconies or other features and;
- unrestricted public access to the waterside through the provision of pedestrian and cycle links and enhancements to the public realm where this is compatible with protecting biodiversity; and
- designs for the public realm including public art and furniture that are consistent in style with the town centre helping to integrate the town to river valley and attracting visitors.

2). There are also aspirations to make the River Gipping navigable for leisure purposes including lock preservation. The Council would support these aspirations where they are practicable.

Historic Environment

Context

9.8 Stowmarket has a conservation area and contains a number of listed buildings. This presents both challenges and opportunities in bringing forward new development through intensification and redevelopment that respects the built heritage of the town and enhances the appearance and character of the area.

9.9 The District is characterised by a gently rolling plateau of boulder clay dissected by undulating river valleys, with a predominantly arable random field pattern and some pasture land located on the valley floors. The historical landscape types predominantly include boundary losses from random and long co-axial fields. It is common in Mid Suffolk to see woodlands dominated by Oak and Ash and field boundaries, and road sides lined with hedgerows and verges. This provides a haven for wildlife, thriving in all areas of the district and along with other features, like settlement patterns, ancient woodlands and field enclosures, gives a unique landscape character to the area.

9.10 Considerable evidence of Prehistoric and Roman settlements has been recovered during excavations in the environs of Stowmarket over the past two decades. The existing town has a likely origin in the 9th or 10th century as an important Saxon settlement and administrative centre situated on a vital communications corridor linking S.E. and N.W. Suffolk. Then known as Thorney, this royally-owned settlement had a market by 1086 and further developed as a town through the Middles Ages. In more modern times its growth as an industrial centre was aided by the opening of the turnpike road in 1711, the Gipping Navigation in 1793 and the railway in 1846. Considerable medieval sites are known throughout the town and extensive archaeological deposits are thought to exist beneath the current town.

9.11 There are two Conservation Areas relating to Stowmarket and its surrounding setting, namely Stowmarket (historic centre) and Badley Church Green (to the southeast) of the town. The more historic areas of towns tend to be highly valued as they can make a large contribution to the character of an area. Stowmarket's heritage is mainly evident in the heart of Stowmarket where there are 38 listed buildings within Stowmarket's Conservation Area. Stowmarket's Conservation Area appraisal was implemented in 1997. It is due to be reappraised in 2010 and will be used as an evidence document for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan, including a review of both locally important buildings and, if necessary, boundary adjustment. Detailed Development Control Policies relating to development in Conservation Areas, and the alteration / development of a Listed Building and / or effecting the setting of a Listed Building will be set out in other Development Plan Documents.

9.12 The townscape assessment undertaken within the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment (2008) divided the town into townscape character types and areas and includes the river valleys where they form part of the urban fabric. 'Townscape Character Types' are generic and may repeat across a town, and broadly contain similar building types and street patterns. In contrast, 'Townscape Character Areas' are geographically specific parts of the town, with their own individual character. Eight townscape character types and 21 townscape character areas have been identified for Stowmarket including: Historic Centres; Edwardian / Victorian Suburbs; 1920's/1950's housing; 1960's - 1990's suburbs. Town

character areas include: schools; institutions; public facilities; post 2000 development; valley floor and sides; mixed corridor development; and employment / industrial townscape types. The townscape analysis also identifies historic and modern Approach Routes and Gateways to the town that warrant a more careful approach to the design of development proposals.

SAAP Policy 9.5

Historic Environment

Development proposals should protect the historic landscape including natural and man-made landmarks and archeological features and safeguard our built heritage ensuring that the district's historic buildings are protected.

1). The Council will continue to protect its Listed Buildings and their settings, and Conservation Areas in accordance with Government guidance. Other categories of landscape or built features requiring protection may be designated by Supplementary Planning Documents. The Council will also take into account the historical dimension of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrating solely on selected areas, protecting the Districts most important components and encourage development that is consistent with maintaining its overall historic character.

2). The Council will ensure that all future development will:

- i. enhance the attractiveness of Stowmarket's Conservation Area including protecting the character and appearance of all buildings of architectural or historic interest. Opportunities include improvements to buildings and spaces in Ipswich Street, Crowe Street, the Station Quarter and re-emphasising the town's historic associations with the river and navigation. In Ipswich Street in addition to the masterplan proposal the Council will retain historic and reinstate traditional shop fronts including improving the small historic shops on the north side of Ipswich Street, for instance numbers 5, 7, 29 and 31;
- ii. protect the Historic Natural Environment including the Museum of East Anglian Life (See SAAP Policy 7.4), the Historic Landscape including the Gipping Valley and Regionally Important Geological / Geodiversity Sites;
- iii. protect the historic environment of Stowmarket and surrounding villages including archaeological sites, historic buildings and landscapes. Planning applications affecting historic environment assets will only be acceptable if accompanied by sufficient information as set out in the NPPF (Chapter 12).

10 Leisure, Recreation, Community Infrastructure and Green Open Spaces

Context

10.1 National and Regional guidance identifies culture and leisure as key to developing the economy and social fabric of our communities and lies at the heart of sustainable growth and regeneration. Like good quality housing, these facilities can provide gains for our personal well being for the benefits they bring to our mental and physical health.

10.2 Leisure, recreation, and community facilities are part of the Council's cultural agenda, which also includes heritage, libraries, conservation, design, community building, visual and performing arts.

10.3 Buildings and facilities for formal recreational functions, such as the sports centre, cinema, Museum of East Anglian Life (MEAL), church and village halls, parks, playgrounds, allotments and sports pitches will often require substantial resources to build, manage and maintain them. Planning policies are required to control location, use and impacts on transport, environment, landscape and the amenity of adjacent properties.

10.4 The need and demand for these facilities will continue to be identified through the Council's monitoring systems, Parish Profiles, and other evidence gathering exercises. Once 'need' is established the Council will work with local communities and their representatives to search for sites, opportunities for funding, and the means of implementation, including the means of providing for the long-term management and maintenance costs that are essential to sustainable solutions.

10.5 The recent growth of Stowmarket is causing concern for the capacity of existing facilities of all kinds and the need to deliver increased capacity and improved quality in accessible locations. In the absence of significant external funding it will be important to provide adequate, improved facilities alongside new development in the plan area. Future development briefs will include consideration of these needs, and developer contributions will be sought for this purpose as identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme in Chapter 11 and Appendix A.

10.6 As well as this structured approach, leisure, recreation and community infrastructure opportunities may arise from the use or adaptation of spaces for a wider variety of leisure and recreation purposes than those originally intended, such as the 'after-hours' use of schools for a wide range of activities. Similarly, community hubs such as pubs, shops, post offices provide opportunities for social interaction that enhances community cohesion and vitality.

10.7 The value of access to green open spaces is recognised by Natural England and the Council will follow the recommended guidelines for 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Model' (ANGSt), which seek to ensure that every home is within a specified distance of accessible green spaces of various sizes. Sustainable access to these open spaces is dependant on the provision of a network of footpaths and cycleways.

10.8 The public realm network of streets, footpaths, bridle paths, and cycleways that link the town centre to residential areas, green open spaces, woodlands and the countryside beyond provides convenient, low-cost opportunities for leisure, recreation and social mixing. This network provides opportunities for improved health and well-being and also creates links between elements of the wider green infrastructure making a significant contribution to biodiversity in and around the town.

10.9 In Stowmarket where there are few suitable buildings for large scale events, this network of the public realm is an invaluable resource for leisure and recreation and for community-building events. Where feasible, the Council will expect the design of development that impinges on the public realm to contribute to the provision of sufficient flexible space for these activities to take place.

10.10 Planning policy for the delivery of infrastructure for leisure, recreation and community opportunities in the network of the public realm will seek to:

- protect and enhance the existing resource where this is appropriate and feasible;
- ensure that sufficient flexible space for these opportunities is designed into (re)development proposals from the outset;
- promote integrated design of the public realm that increases sustainability through, respecting the natural environment, retaining local character, increasing accessibility, integrating areas visually, making possible the multiple use of spaces and encouraging their use;
- support activities such as public art that are potentially attractive to tourists with all the associated economic benefits.

10.11 Developer contributions towards spaces for leisure and recreation will be sought from relevant development as set out in Chapter 11 'Implementation and Monitoring', and Appendix A.

SAAP Policy 10.1

Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Facilities

1). The Council will monitor the provision of cultural facilities throughout the area covered by the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and seek to achieve a zero net loss of the quantity, quality and range of cultural facilities by a variety of means.

Cultural facilities include:

- leisure, recreation and sports facilities;
- arts and entertainment and museum facilities;
- village halls and other community venues;
- open space for amenity, recreation, sport, play areas and allotments;
- streets, footpaths, bridleways and picnic areas;
- visually important open spaces (VIOS).

2). Where there is need and demand for the existing cultural facilities, the Council will protect these facilities from loss to other uses. Where this is not practicable the Council will require replacement facilities to be provided that will be able to meet deficiencies in the current and anticipated future need.

3). Where existing facilities will not be able to meet current or anticipated future need in terms of quantity, quality or range of provision, the Council will seek to meet this need through:

- i. supporting the enhancement of existing facilities; and/or
- ii. supporting the provision of new facilities;
- iii. seeking developer contributions towards spaces for leisure and recreation from relevant development, as set out in Chapter 11 and Appendix A.

4). New facilities should be sited in the most sustainable location having regard to such considerations as meeting the identified need, accessibility by a variety of means, deliverability, long term viability, implications for provision elsewhere and impacts on the neighbouring area, residential amenity, the environment, landscape and biodiversity.

SAAP Policy 10.2

Provision of Accessible Natural Green Space

The Council will follow the recommendations of the Natural England guidelines for 'Accessible Natural Greenspace Model' (ANGSt) and seek to ensure that every home is within 300 metres of at least one accessible green space of 2 hectares area and within the distances outlined below for green spaces of each stated size:

<u>Distance</u>	<u>Area of Green Space</u>
• 300m	- 2 ha
• 2km	- 20 ha
• 5km	- 100 ha
• 10km	- 500 ha

SAAP Policy 10.3

Improving the Quality of Open Spaces

1). The Council will support, and where appropriate require, development to increase the provision, accessibility, connectivity, and quality of the open spaces of the built and natural environment where this is appropriate to the location and consistent with the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and other policies of the development plan.

2). In particular the Council will seek to provide:

- i. improvements to the network of green open spaces and the footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways and that link the town centre to the surrounding countryside.
- ii. improvements to the public realm that provides for a variety of cultural uses. These uses may include for example leisure, recreation, community activities, economic activity, public art or any other uses, or mixture of uses.

3). Provision may be sought through a variety of means such as development briefs, design and layout of development proposals, planning conditions and planning obligations.

11 Implementation and Monitoring

Context to the Infrastructure Delivery Programme

11.1 The policies and proposals of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan (SAAP) must be underpinned by sound delivery mechanisms. The Council has therefore set down its expectations, priorities and timetable for the delivery of key infrastructure in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP), which is set out in detail in Appendix A. The IDP shows how the effective implementation of the plan's main objectives can be achieved and sets out the expected times of delivery to ensure that infrastructure delivery keeps pace with the introduction of new homes, residents and businesses to the town. The IDP also stipulates particular requirements that contribute to making development more sustainable.

11.2 In supporting this work, Suffolk's public service providers have worked together to produce the [Section 106 Developers Guide to Infrastructure Contributions in Suffolk](#) (2012) which informs landowners, developers and members of the public with information on the type and scale of contributions, and other obligations, which the authorities may seek for defined types and scales of development.

11.3 The IDP provides the opportunity for a number of agencies to work in partnership to deliver shared goals. Partner Agencies have been informed about the progress and production of the IDP and provided input. The IDP (set out in Appendix A) represents the current understanding of the main proposals identified by those agencies through previous consultation. However, as new priorities are identified the IDP may need to be adjusted and therefore must be seen as a 'living document' that is capable of changing to meet the Council's responsibilities for joint working.

Partner Agencies

11.4 Include:

- Suffolk Local Enterprise Partnership
- Haven Gateway Partnership
- Suffolk County Council
- Stowmarket Town Council
- Parish Councils
- Suffolk Constabulary
- Fire Services
- Network Rail and Transport Operators
- Sport England
- Other Governmental Organisations

- Primary Care Trust
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Existing businesses and business organisations
- Landowners and potential developers and Investors
- Local resident organisations

Delivery Mechanisms

11.5 The Council has already begun to develop relationships and work with several of these partners for the provision of allocated site concept statements and an Infrastructure Delivery Programme to ensure delivery of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan.

11.6 The Council will expect to maximise the benefits from development through on-site provision and financial contributions to meet the emerging communities' needs. Where new development adds to the demand on existing services, IDP funding may be used to enhance those services to prevent any harmful effect on the quality of life for those who live, work or shop in the town. The Council will monitor progress against the targets set for delivery in the IDP to establish whether its aims for climate change, social and community improvements and sustainable development are being achieved. A review of the progress of the IDP will be made annually as described in the monitoring section of this chapter.

11.7 To ensure that the infrastructure required in relation to development proposals is delivered through the planning process, the Council will apply relevant conditions to planning permissions and developers will make direct delivery of infrastructure or enter into agreements for contributions towards the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan, as set out in SAAP Policy 11.1 below. The Council will also implement any mechanism of infrastructure delivery that may become available in the future, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the costings set out in SAAP Policy 11.1 below and the tables of Appendix A will be relevant.

11.8 The Council will continue to support and encourage discussions and negotiations with key stakeholders in developing and delivering the objectives of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan and will seek to work in partnership wherever possible. However, where the regeneration of Stowmarket and/or the delivery of the objectives of the Area Action Plan are significantly compromised and consideration of alternative courses of action have proved unsuccessful, the Council will seek to use Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) to bring forward any identified sites.

SAAP Policy 11.1

Developer Contributions to Infrastructure Delivery

1). All developments* within the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will be required to provide for the supporting infrastructure they necessitate. The Infrastructure Delivery Programme, as set out in this Implementation and Monitoring chapter and Appendix A provides a list of the infrastructure likely to be needed to support the delivery of the Area Action Plan. The specific schemes to which any given development will contribute will be determined upon the receipt of planning applications, having regard to the anticipated impacts of the development and, where relevant, viability. The tests of relevance for planning obligations are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 204).

2). The infrastructure to be delivered through planning obligations will be agreed after market viability appraisals have been prepared. Developers will be required to underwrite the cost of market viability appraisals and enter into agreements to cover the cost of compliance monitoring throughout the lifetime of the obligation. Where viability is a proven issue, the respective infrastructure providers will work together to ensure that any development still delivers the critical infrastructure at the appropriate time. Development phasing and claw back mechanisms are two available tools.

3). In advance of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), developers within the AAP area should demonstrate that the relevant infrastructure that is needed to support and service their proposed development(s) (an indicative list is set out in the IDP table in Appendix A), have either been incorporated into proposed schemes or is provided through other appropriate means. In line with Core Strategy Policy CS6 developers will need to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority, that adequate capacity either exists or that provision will be made to meet the necessary infrastructure requirements within an appropriate timescale. On adoption of a CIL, developers will be required to pay the CIL, though flexibility remains to use Section 106 agreements as well, where it is appropriate to do so.

* "All developments" excludes the third sector, such as charities, and householder extensions. This policy is specifically aimed at those developments that will be deriving a benefit and economic gain from developing within the Stowmarket area, and that will use and take advantage of local infrastructure, and should therefore be contributing towards this cost.

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP):

11.9 The principle for the approach that Local Development Documents, subsequent to the Core Strategy, contain IDPs was established through the examination process for the Core Strategy and is anticipated in Policy CS6 of that document. The needs of a particular development are set out in a detailed delivery programme of works to ensure these requirements are carried out at an appropriate time to ensure sound land use planning principles are observed. The IDP for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will include:

- Transport Initiatives - priorities for public transport, cycling / bus-rail interchange / footways;
- Town Centre enhancement package;
- Strategic Landscaping - 'advance' and on site planting schemes including new community woodland;
- Recreation - open space for formal and informal play, sporting and cultural facilities;
- Other needs that accord with the site specific requirements set out in site allocation Proposals and future development briefs;
- Healthcare – developers will be expected to contribute towards the provision of healthcare infrastructure and funding in accordance with the requirements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme.

DEVELOPMENT SITE	POLICY Nos.	TIMEFRAME IN YEARS Short-term = 0-5 Medium-term = 5-10 Long-term = 10-15	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	LEADERSHIP & KEY STAKEHOLDERS
Stowmarket North and North-West - development around Chilton Leys	6.9 - 6.18	0-15 years	Private Sector / possible education, highways, sport funding	Land owners / MSDC / SCC / HA
Stowmarket North - The Ashes	6.19 - 6.25	0-5 years	Private Sector	Land owners / MSDC
Stowmarket South - Land off Farriers Road and Poplar Hill	6.26 - 6.31	5-10 years	Private Sector / possible HCA funding	Land owners / MSDC / SCC
Stowmarket East - Stowmarket Business & Enterprise Park	7.9 - 7.14	0-14 years	Private Sector	Land owners / MSDC
Cedars Park Employment Site	7.8	0-3 years	Private Sector	Land owners
Station Quarter	5.6 - 5.8	0-10 years	Private Sector / Network Rail	Land owners / Network Rail / MSDC / SCC
Ipswich Street	5.3	0-5 years	Private Sector / MSDC	Land owners / MSDC

Table 11.1 Potential Phasing of Allocated Sites and the Town Centre

Monitoring Framework

11.10 Monitoring progress will be undertaken in two categories: (i) monitoring the application of policies and proposals; and (ii) monitoring implementation on allocated sites and areas (IDP).

11.11 A key component of the monitoring process is the Authority's Monitoring Reports (AMR), which is prepared annually based on the period 1 April to 31 March. The AMR is required to assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and the extent to which policies in the Local Plans are being successfully implemented. The AMR will therefore be extended to assess performance of the delivery mechanisms set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Programme. The AMR provides the flexible mechanism to update components of the Local Plans and the IDP to reflect changing circumstances.

11.12 The detail for monitoring the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will be set out in the first AMR after adoption of the SAAP.

Strategic Monitoring Objectives

1. To protect, encourage and promote an appropriate mix of land uses to support the vitality of the day and night time economy of the town centre.
2. To protect, encourage and promote an appropriate mix of land uses for the edge of the town centre, which are complementary to town centre uses and contribute to the vitality of the town centre.
3. To protect and enhance Stowmarket's two main river valleys, the Rivers Rattlesden and Gipping, by maintaining and enhancing their biodiversity, landscape, and accessibility to the public.
4. To achieve a successful and appropriate mix of residential, employment and leisure uses that are complementary and contribute towards the success of the town.
5. To provide a transport system worthy of a "green" town in the 21st Century that will improve accessibility and connectivity by a variety of means into and out of the town centre, and between Stowmarket and its surrounding villages.
6. To protect, manage and where possible enhance Stowmarket's natural and built environment and ensure its continued contribution to the town's heritage, culture, environment and economy.
7. To ensure the success of existing employment areas and to propose new sites to maintain a balance between new homes and work opportunities.

12 Appendix A - Infrastructure Delivery Programme

The Infrastructure Delivery Programme

12.1 The Infrastructure Delivery Programme or 'IDP' is a package of proposals that will contribute to the quality of life and the fundamental well being of existing and future residents of Stowmarket and its surrounding area. It itemises and rationalises the need for certain larger items of planned expenditure and proposes a timetable for their delivery.

12.2 This timetable will become the basis for monitoring progress toward the delivery of the tasks set by the programme.

12.3 Completion of tasks will be anticipated within periods of development to ensure the aims of the plan are achieved in a timely fashion. The periods indicated will be:

- **First Period - year 1 to 5 from 1st April 2012 to 2017**
- **Second Period - year 5 to 10 from 1st April 2017 to 2022**
- **Third Period - year 10 onwards from 1st April 2022**

12.4 The information provided in the IDP is correct as at July 2012. This information will be index linked and will be updated annually.

TASK	PRICE £	WHEN REQUIRED
Stowmarket Area Action Plan - Transport Plan		
Bus Provisions	3,200,000	
Cycle Enhancement and walking	1,223,500	
Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC)	300,000	
	4,723,500	First Period

Table 12.1

Ancillary Improvements (Specified)		
Violet Hill Road package (Health Centre related)	100,000	First period
Village connections – cycling and electric hook up	150,000	Ongoing
Green Infrastructure		
Access to the countryside incl. PROW	600,000	200,000 each period
River Gipping footpath enhancement	750,000	250,000 each period
Pickerel Project	500,000	Second period
	2,100,000	

Table 12.2

Other GI and environmental improvement provisions		
Informal Play Provision	1,460,000	c500,000 each period
Advanced Structural Planting schemes - General Support	50,000	Early first period
Advanced Planting Mill Lane Enterprise Park	50,000	Early first period
Combs edge community woodland (Land and trees)	40,000	Mid first period
Poplar Hill Extension (trees only)	6,000	Late first period
Paupers Graves (trees only)	6,000	Late first period
Allotments provision - land acquisition	50,000	Mid second period
Dog Waste and Waste bins	35,000	Ongoing
Town green enhancements	40,000	Mid second period
	1,737,000	

Table 12.3

Sports Formal		
Football	695,000	
Stowmarket - general need x 2 senior		Mid second period
Stowupland x 1 senior		Mid second period
Junior and mini	335,000	Mid second period
Cricket		
Stowmarket - general need 2 pitches	635,000*	Mid first period
(*sum to include ancillary facilities)		Late first period
Rugby		
Senior pitches x 2 (in conjunction with existing club)	230,000	Mid first period
Additional changing facilities	235,000	Mid first period
Sports general		
Floodlit synthetic turf pitch (to include Hockey) x 1	825,000	Late second period
Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with floodlights x2	230,000	Second Period
Six Lane athletics track	1,090,000	Late second period
Floodlit tennis courts x2	160,000	Late second period
Bowling green improvements	110,000	Late second period

Sports Centre(existing) refurbishment	5,000,000	Second Period
	9,545,000	

Table 12.4

Art and cultural facilities		
Regal Cinema	1,300,000	Mid first period
Community Centres x2	1,088,000	Mid second Period
Library Service Improvements	500,000	Third Period
Art and streetscape enhancement to match fund (yrs 1-4)	250,000	Early first period
Art and streetscape enhancement to match fund (yrs 5-8)	150,000	Second period
Art in development (including benches)	70,000	Ongoing from first period
Improved Arts provision - including Corn Exchange Arts Centre	500,000	Early third period
Elderly persons facilities (including Combs Centre)	200,000	Mid first period
Play and youth facilities	755,000	
Ditto - Reprovision during plan period	755,000	
	5,568,000	

Table 12.5

Special Residential and other provisions		
Specialist Housing - Very Sheltered Housing - Revenue and funding	500,000	Mid second period
Specialist housing - "Move-on" housing scheme	500,000	Mid second period
Policing facility, Chilton Fields development	250,000	Mid second period
	1,250,000	

Table 12.6

Other Infrastructure		
Stowhealth Centre improvement package	860,000	Ongoing from mid first period
Street Market infrastructure	60,000	Early first period
Additional CCTV coverage	60,000	Late first period

Green Infrastructure match funding incl.	600,000	Mid second period
River Rat / Gipping confluence		
Countryside access zones, Chilton leys		
Haughley picnic area		
River Gipping Country Park		
Household waste recycling site	450,000	Mid second period
A14 connection to junction 49(a) Stowmarket West, (see SAAP Policy 6.8)	1,000,000	To be agreed - mid first period
	3,030,000	

Table 12.7

Total (excluding education)	27,953,500	
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Table 12.8

Education and Other infrastructure

12.5 Education contributions are included on the basis of existing arrangements being maintained until the Schools Organisation Review (SOR) can be completed for Stowmarket. Apart from the new school to accompany the Chilton Fields development, prices shown relate to the maximum figure anticipated as necessary for the levels of development envisaged. The established multiplier will be used in the usual way expected by current arrangements until the Schools Organisation Review findings are known. Money collected during the intervening period will be audited for possible offset against future contributions to prevent double accounting issues.

Education		
Chilton Leys Primary School site and build cost	7,000,000	Mid second period
Nursery school places (dependant on growth)	858,000	Ongoing from first period
Primary school places (dependant on growth up to)	930,000	Ongoing from first period
Middle school places (dependant on growth up to)	3,200,000	Ongoing from first period
Upper school places (dependant on growth up to)	2,900,000	Ongoing from first period
Sixth form school places (dependant on growth up to)	500,000	Ongoing from first period

Table 12.9

Other Infrastructure for ongoing consideration		
Relocation of Police Station	1,200,000	Mid to third period

Table 12.10

12.6 Other Infrastructure requirements will continue to be the subject of ongoing consideration with partner agencies and stake holders. These include the possible relocation of Police and Fire services, improved civic centre facilities for Stowmarket and the need for a crematorium. As these proposals are costed and agreed they will be introduced into the IDP through the review process.

13 Appendix B - Mid Suffolk Local Plan policies superseded by the Stowmarket Area Action Plan

Superseded Policies

13.1 The policies contained in the Stowmarket Area Action Plan apply only to the area identified in extent of the Stowmarket Area Action Plan Boundary (Map 4.1). As the policies in this document are detailed and specific to Stowmarket they have no relevance beyond the plan area, where existing saved Local Plan policies and Core Strategy policies will apply. The policies that are superseded are set out in Table B.1 below.

Table B.1: Mid Suffolk Local Plan Policies superseded by the Stowmarket Area Action Plan

Local Plan Ref	Policy Subject	Stowmarket Area Action Plan Ref	Policy Title
Proposal 12	Non-food retail warehousing at Prentice Road	SAAP Policy 5.6 - 5.8	Station Quarter
Proposal 14	Environmental Enhancements along the River Gipping (Pickerel Bridge and Bridge Street)	SAAP Policy 9.2 SAAP Policy 9.4	River Valleys River Gipping

Table 13.1

14 Appendix C - List of Stowmarket Area Action Plan policies

LIST OF POLICIES

POLICY No.	POLICY TITLE
4.1	PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
4.2	PROVIDING A LANDSCAPE SETTING FOR STOWMARKET
5.1	GENERAL RETAIL POLICIES FOR ALL OF THE STOWMARKET AREA ACTION PLAN
5.2	PRINCIPAL SHOPPING AREA (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SHOPPING FRONTAGES)
5.3	IPSWICH STREET
5.4	COMPLEMENTARY USES
5.5	RETAIL IN THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES AND LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRES
5.6 - 5.8	ALLOCATION FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT - THE STATION QUARTER
6.1	HOUSING AND WASTE STORAGE
6.2	LAND ADJOINING PAUPERS GRAVES, UNION ROAD, STOWMARKET
6.3	LAND ADJOINING CHURCH MEADOWS, STOWMARKET
6.4	DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGES
6.5 - 6.12	STOWMARKET NORTH AND NORTH-WEST - DEVELOPMENT AROUND CHILTON LEYS
6.13 - 6.19	STOWMARKET NORTH - THE ASHES
6.20 - 6.25	STOWMARKET SOUTH - LAND OFF FARRIERS ROAD / POPLAR HILL
7.1	SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT SITES
7.2	EMPLOYMENT ON MIXED USE SITES
7.3	TOURISM
7.4	MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE (MEAL)
7.5	ESTABLISHED EMPLOYERS AND INDUSTRIAL ESTATES
7.6	NARROW MIXED USE CORRIDOR
7.7	LOCAL PLAN EMPLOYMENT ALLOCATIONS

7.8	CEDARS PARK EMPLOYMENT SITE
7.9 - 7.14	STOWMARKET BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE PARK
8.1	DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TO A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT NETWORK
8.2	A14 TRUNK ROAD
9.1	BIODIVERSITY MEASURES
9.2	RIVER VALLEYS
9.3	RIVER RATTLESDEN
9.4	RIVER GIPPING
9.5	HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
10.1	PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CULTURAL FACILITIES
10.2	PROVISION OF ACCESSIBLE NATURAL GREEN SPACE
10.3	IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF OPEN SPACES
11.1	DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TO INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

Table 14.1

15 Appendix D - Background Evidence

15.1 This is the 'evidence base' that has been used to inform the Stowmarket Area Action Plan. It comprises planning or relevant documents that have either been produced by national or regional government, directly by Mid Suffolk District Council, or by other organisations or interested parties. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Many of these can be accessed through Mid Suffolk's website: www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

15.2 National:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- Building a Greener Future; policy statement - DCLG (July 2007)
- Healthy Weight, Healthy Life: Commissioning weight management services for children and young people – Department of Health (Nov 2008)

15.3 Regional / Local:

- East of England Plan - Government Office for the East of England (May 2008)
- Suffolk Population Projections
- The A14 Trunk Road (Haughley New Street to Stowmarket Improvement and Detrunking) Order – Highways Agency (April 2007)
- A14 Haughley New Street to Stowmarket Improvement Preferred Route – Highways Agency
- Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2006 – 2011
- Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2001– 2006 - Summary
- Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2031
- Suffolk Cross-Boundary Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (May 2007)
- Suffolk's Community Strategy (2004)
- Suffolk Structure Plan (2001)
- Suffolk's Environment:
 - Five-year Review (Dec 2002)
 - Monitoring Report for 2003/4 – summary
 - Monitoring report for 2004/5 – summary
 - Monitoring report for 2005/6 – summary
 - Towards Sustainable Development (2006)
- Employment land reviews – guidance manual. EEDA / EERA / GOEast (March 2008)
- East of England Biodiversity Mapping Project (2005)
- Regional Cultural Strategies: Living East, A Better Life (2006)
- Mid Suffolk District Council Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Sep 2008)
- Mid Suffolk District Council Statement of Community Involvement (July 2006)
- Mid Suffolk District Council Annual Monitoring Report (Dec 2006)
- Mid Suffolk District Council Annual Monitoring Report (Dec 2007)
- Mid Suffolk District Council Local Development Scheme (Covering the period 2006 to 2009) (April 2006)

- Mid Suffolk District Council Social Infrastructure Including Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD (Oct 2006)
- Mid Suffolk Local Plan (Sept 1998)
- Sustainability Appraisal Report Atkins (2010)
- Stowmarket Masterplan (June 2008)
- Stowmarket Environmental Assessment - Alison Farmer Associates (July 2008)
- Stowmarket Retail Study - Donaldsons LLP (May 2007)
- Stowmarket Retail Planning Strategy, Policy Position Statement (Jan 2008)
- Stowmarket Report – The Civic Trust (March 2002)
- Stowmarket Employment Sites Survey (2006)
- Stowmarket Local Transport Action Plan - SCC and MSDC (Nov 2002)
- Emerging Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2008)
- Pickerel Project, Beyond the Bridge - SCC
- Suffolk Design Guide - SCC (2003)
- Stowmarket 10 minute contour map
- Draft Stowmarket Capacity Study - Alison Farmer (Sept 2007)
- Topic Papers on Housing, Infrastructure and Employment
- Mid Suffolk Parish Profile (Sept 2007)
- Housing Land Availability Report (Sept 2007)
- Urban Housing Capacity Study and Appendix 1 (March 2006)
- Housing Needs Assessments (2003); (update 2005); (2007)
- Core Strategy Housing Policies Evidence Base Document (Oct 2007)
- Housing Market Information for Mid Suffolk LDF (Oct 2007)
- Affordable Housing Alteration to Local Plan (July 2006)
- Inspector's Report, Affordable Housing Policies Inquiry (June 2006)
- Mid Suffolk Retail Monitoring Report (2007)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - Scott Wilson (March 2008)
- Mid Suffolk Employment Land Study (Nov 2006)
- Haven Gateway Employment Land Study (Dec 2005)
- Secured By Design
- Regeneration Strategy 2005 – 2009
- Infrastructure Capacity and Constraints Evidence Base (Oct 2007)
- Mid Suffolk Community Strategy (2004)
- Mid Suffolk Corporate Plan (2004 – 2009)
- Mid Suffolk Strategic Plan (2007)
- Mid Suffolk Cycling Strategy (1999)
- Mid Suffolk Transport Strategy (2006)
- Transport Evidence for Mid Suffolk Core Strategy, Faber Maunsell / HA (2008)
- Haven Gateway Ipswich A14 Corridor Study, Atkins (2007)
- Felixstowe Port Logistics Study, GHK (2008)
- Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy, Network Rail (2007)
- Suffolk Rail Strategy, SCC (2007)
- SnOasis Position Statement
- MSDC Position Statement on Monitoring
- MSDC Statement on Employment Take-Up

- MSDC Position Statement on Climate Change
- MSDC Housing Topic Paper (2010)
- MSDC Employment Topic Paper (2010)
- MSDC Draft Employment Land Study (2010)
- Western Suffolk Employment Land Review (2009)
- Suffolk Haven Gateway Employment Land Review (2009)

16 Appendix E - Mid Suffolk District Council's Glossary of Terms

Accessibility: The ability of people to move around an area and reach places and facilities, including elderly and disabled people, those with young children and those encumbered with luggage or shopping.

Accessible Natural Greenspace Model (ANGST): Natural England's model used to identify levels of provision, distribution, and composition of accessible natural greenspace.

Affordable Housing: Housing accessible to households who cannot afford to rent or buy homes generally available on the open market. It includes social rented housing and intermediate housing. Intermediate housing is housing at prices or rents above those of social rent but below market prices or rents.

Amenity: A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

Area Action Plan (AAP): Used to provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation. Adopted Area Action Plans will become part of the Development Plan for Mid Suffolk.

Authority's Monitoring Reports (AMR): Part of the Local Plans process, the Authority's Monitoring Reports will assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies Local Plans are being successfully implemented.

Biodiversity: Biodiversity encompasses the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, but also their genetic variation, and the complex ecosystems of which they are part. It is not restricted to rare or threatened species but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): A strategy prepared for a local area aimed at conserving and enhancing biological diversity.

Brownfield: See Previously Developed Land (PDL).

BREEAM: It is an Environmental Assessment Method (EAM) that is a voluntary measurement rating for green buildings. It was established in the UK by the British Research Establishment (BRE), hence, BREEAM.

'Building for Life': This is the national standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods. The 20 Building for Life criteria are used to evaluate the quality of schemes at both the pre-planning and post-construction phases.

Code for Sustainable Homes: This is an environmental impact rating system for housing in England, setting new standards for energy efficiency (above those in current building regulations) and sustainability, which are not mandatory under current building regulations but represent important developments towards limiting the environmental impact of housing.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): The Government's preferred approach to a levy system, which will ensure that all development makes a contribution to general infrastructure requirements, such as highways, education, and social facilities.

Community Strategy: This sets out a local authorities aims for improving the social, environmental and economic well being of their area. Through the Community Strategy, authorities are expected to co-ordinate the actions of local public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Responsibility for producing Community Strategies may be passed to Local Strategic Partnerships, which include local authority representatives.

Comparison Goods: Goods that are required on an infrequent basis, such as clothes, footwear, furniture and electrical equipment.

Concept Statement: Concept statements are a clear expression of the kind of place that development should be creating, not in technical terms but in simple, everyday language that anyone can understand. The product of a meaningful debate between the community, developer and the local authority, they are a brief explanation of how development should contribute to the SAAP. Initial SAAP concept statements were available at the Planning for Stowmarket Day (June 2009) upon which they were reviewed and published on the Council's website in June 2010. SAAP concept statements have not been adopted by the Council but provide the background to development possibilities and considerations. The SAAP concept statements are available from www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

Concept Statements referred to in the SAAP are listed below:

- Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 1 (MSDC, 2008);
- Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Concept Statement Ashes Farm (MSDC, 2009). *Previously known as "Stowmarket Masterplan (Phase 2): Ashes Farm Development Brief" (May 2009).*
- Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Concept Statement Chilton Fields (MSDC, 2009). *Previously known as "Stowmarket Masterplan (Phase 2): Chilton Leys Farm Development Brief" (May 2009).*
- Stowmarket Masterplan Phase 2 - Concept Statement Station Quarter (MSDC, 2009). *Previously known as "Stowmarket Masterplan (Phase 2): Station Quarter Development brief".*
- Stowmarket North and North-West - Land at Chilton Leys Options A, Concept Statement (Taylor Wimpey, 2010). *Previously known as "Land at Chilton Leys, Stowmarket Development Brief" (March 2010).*
- Stowmarket North and North-West - Land at Chilton Leys Options B, Concept Statement (Taylor Wimpey, 2010). *Previously known as "Land at Chilton Leys, Stowmarket Development Brief" (March 2010).*
- Stowmarket North - Ashes Farm, Concept Statement (Peacock Short, 2010). *Previously known as "The Ashes - Development Brief" (March 2010).*

- Stowmarket South - Land off Farriers Road and Poplar Hill, Concept Statement (Pegasus Urban Design for Construct Reason and E W Durrant and Son, 2010). *Previously known as "Stowmarket South Development Brief" (March 2010).*
- Stowmarket North - Land off Mill Lane, Concept Statement (Stowmarket Mill Lane Development Ltd, 2010). *Previously known as "Stowmarket Mill Lane Development Brief" (March 2010).*

Conservation Area: An area of special architectural and/or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is a recognition of the value of a group of buildings and their surroundings and the need to protect not just individual buildings but the character of the area as a whole.

Contaminated Land: Land that may have been polluted or harmed in some way making it unfit for safe development and usage unless cleaned.

Controlled Parking Zones: This is an area where on-street parking is controlled. Parking is only permitted in designated parking bays for certain periods of time, and the remainder of the kerbside space can be controlled subject to restrictions. The main aim is to discourage commuter and long-stay parking by people from outside an area.

Convenience Goods: Retail stores selling everyday essential items, such as food and newspapers.

Cordon Sanitaire: Protected / buffer zone e.g. to keep residential areas away from nuisances such as noise, fumes, smells from industrial or commercial premises.

Core Strategy for Mid Suffolk: Part of Mid Suffolk's Development Plan, which sets out the vision and strategic spatial objectives for the development of the District. The Core Strategy was adopted on 4th September 2008 after it was found 'sound' by an independent Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

County Wildlife Site (CWS): CWS designation is non-statutory but is recognition of a site's high value for wildlife with many sites being of county and often regional or national importance for wildlife.

Countryside Villages: These are villages identified in Mid Suffolk's Core Strategy (2008) where only types of development specified in Policy CS2 may take place.

Cultural Facilities: These include buildings or structures where a wide range of culturally related activities can be held on one-off or a regular basis. These include: leisure, recreation and sports facilities; arts and entertainment and museum facilities; village halls and other community venues; open space for amenity, recreation, sport, play areas and allotments; streets, footpaths, bridleways and picnic areas; visually important open space.

Curtilage: The area of land surrounding a building that is within the property's boundaries.

Development Brief: The purpose of the development brief is to aid the coordinated delivery of infrastructure and provide a framework for the evaluation of future planning applications for all phases of development to ensure the overall vision and development objectives, and associated infrastructure requirements for the site, are delivered comprehensively. The format of development briefs is set out in paragraphs 4.4 - 4.8.

Development Plan: Includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

East of England Plan: Was revoked in January 2013.

Employment Land: That which is in use for the following purposes – office, industrial and warehousing.

Employment Land Review (ELR): An assessment of the demand for and supply of land for employment purposes. The suitability of sites for employment development are assessed to safeguard the best sites in the face of competition from other higher value uses and help identify those which are no longer suitable for employment development which should be made available for other uses.

Energy Hierarchy: The Government's energy hierarchy, in order of preference, is: 1) Energy Conservation; 2) Energy Efficiency; 3) Renewable, Sustainable Energy Supplies; 4) Other Low Carbon Energy Supplies; and 5) Conventional Energy Supplies.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA): A process by which information about the environmental effects of a project is collected, whether by the developer or others, and taken into account by the local planning authority in determining planning applications. Project types which should be subjected to EIA, are listed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

Evidence Base: The information and data gathered by local authorities to justify the "soundness" of the policy approach set out in Local Plans, including physical, economic, and social characteristics of an area.

Examination in Public: An Inspector is appointed by the Secretary of State to test the 'soundness' of Local Plans through an Examination in Public.

Gateways: These refer to the important entrances to Stowmarket that have been identified through the Stowmarket Environmental Assessment (February 2008), which indicate an important change of character such as that between urban and countryside environment and may include historic or urban gateways.

Geodiversity: The variety of rocks, fossils, minerals, landforms and soils along with the natural processes that shape the landscape.

Greenfield: Land which has not been developed before. Applies to most sites outside built-up area boundaries but also includes residential gardens.

Green Gym: Provides people with a way to enhance their fitness and health while taking action to improve the outdoor environment.

Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP): Comprises the boroughs of Ipswich and Colchester and the districts of Tendring, east Babergh, the southern half of Suffolk Coastal and a small part of Mid Suffolk. The Haven Gateway area has recently been awarded Growth Point status, and over the coming years there will be a focus on employment, housing and sustainable growth linked to the ports, logistics and shipping and construction sectors.

Hectare: A unit of land area equivalent to 10,000 square metres or 0.01 of a square kilometre. One Hectare is approximately equal to 2.5 acres.

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

Home-working: Where people have the opportunity to work from home instead of a centralised office.

Home Zones: Residential areas where traffic calming measures are provided to reduce traffic speeds and improve safety for children, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Housing Needs Assessment: An assessment of the housing needs in the local area in particular in the need for affordable housing. This assessment plays a crucial role in underpinning the planning policies relating to affordable housing. In addition, the information on local needs is required to determine the location of such housing and guide new investment.

Illustrative Layout: An illustration displaying the proposed layout of development which may include: the development proposal boundary, proposed land uses, access, main vehicular routes, landscape planting, pedestrian and cycleways. (see also entry for 'Concept Statement')

Infrastructure: A collective term for services such as roads, electricity, sewerage, water, children's services, health facilities and recycling and refuse facilities.

Infrastructure Delivery Programme (IDP): A list of infrastructure requirements needed for a specific area, and the needs of a particular development are then set out in a detailed delivery programme of works to ensure these requirements are carried out to an appropriate timescale. The principle of this was established with the Planning Inspector at Mid Suffolk's Core Strategy Examination in Public. This should not be confused with the *Integrated Development Programme* which have been established through the Haven Gateway Partnership in order to allow the associated partners to plan and manage for growth and any subsequent funding across different areas in a co-ordinated approach.

Inset Maps: These are individual maps that show specific information from the Proposals Map (Appendix F) in a more clear and detailed manner.

Ipswich Policy Area (IPA): Ipswich Policy Area originated in the Suffolk County Structure Plan as a means of planning for possible future growth in and around Ipswich. It covers the Borough of Ipswich and parts of the surrounding Districts of Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. This includes six parishes in Mid Suffolk: Akenham, Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Great Blakenham and Whitton. Ipswich Policy Area continues to be used in

regional and sub-regional planning as part of the Haven Gateway sub-region and officers and members meet regularly to coordinate development proposals and other strategic planning issues.

Issues and Options: Produced during the early production stage of the preparation of Local Plans and may be issued for consultation.

Key Biodiversity Areas: Locally identified areas of mature trees, woodlands, linear natural features and species rich grassland, which form natural connections for biodiversity.

Key Development Opportunities: These are sites or areas that have been identified through evidence at a strategic level that are key to the delivery of development that would be beneficial to Mid Suffolk and not solely to the Area Action Plan.

Key Service Centres: These places are identified as the main focus for growth outside Mid Suffolk's towns and often contain: a permanent food shop; school; surgery; post office; 5 days a week public transport; recreational facilities; and a hall/meeting place.

Land Bids: The term used by Mid Suffolk to describe sites submitted for possible future allocation. See Site Specific Allocations.

Landscape Character Assessment: A national method of assessment to identify different landscape areas which have a distinct character based on a recognisable pattern of elements, including combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.

'Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods': This is a national strategy with standards for housing in an ageing society from the Department for Communities and Local Government that will be made a mandatory part of the Code for Sustainable Homes to encourage progressively increased take-up in new build projects. These Lifetime Homes Standards will be mandatory for all public sector funded housing from 2011 and are supported and encouraged in the private sector.

Live-work: Accommodation that is specifically designed to enable both residential and business use, often with work accommodation on the ground floor and living accommodation above. This differs from ordinary home working in its nature, and particularly in the higher intensity of business use that may be involved.

Listed Building: A building of special architectural or historic interest as designated by English Heritage on behalf of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): Sets out the programme (timetable) for preparing Local Development Documents. All authorities must submit a Scheme to the Secretary of State for approval within six months of commencement of the Act.

Local Distinctiveness: The particular positive features of a locality that contribute to its special character and sense of place. Distinguishes one local area from another.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): Wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

Local Needs: Includes employment, amenity and community facilities, as well as small-scale infill housing and “rural exception” sites for affordable housing. Local needs may be identified through annual monitoring or in locally generated documents such as Parish Plans or Local Needs Surveys.

Local Plan: Mid Suffolk's Local Plan was adopted in 1998 and will be replaced by Mid Suffolk's Local Development Framework.

Local Plans (new style): The NPPF now uses the term 'local plans' to describe the plans for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): Partnerships of stakeholders who develop ways of involving local people in shaping the future of their neighbourhood in how services are provided. They are often single non-statutory, multi-agency bodies which aim to bring together locally the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

Local Transport Plan (LTP): Strategy prepared by each local transport authority for the development of local, integrated transport, supported by a programme of transport improvements. It is used to bid to Government for funding transport improvements.

The "Luck Decision": This is a previous appeal decision dating from the 1980s. It stipulated that there should be no development on land between Union Road and Finborough Road on the west side of Stowmarket to prevent unacceptable congestion at the market square and Gipping Way junctions. This traffic situation will need to be kept under review.

'Manual for Streets': This is a document produced by the Department for Transport that aims to establish a common reference point for all those involved in the design of residential neighbourhoods and to give clear guidance on how to achieve well-designed streets and spaces that serve all members of the community in a range of ways.

Material Consideration: A matter that should be taken into account in deciding a planning application or on an appeal against a planning decision.

Masterplan: See Stowmarket Masterplan.

Mitigation Measures: These measures are required in relation to a planning application in order to make the development acceptable.

National Planning Policy Framework: The NPPF was published on 27 March 2012 and replaces Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance as well as a number of ministerial circulars. It is a key part of the Government's reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth.

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

Parish Plans: A Parish Plan is a statement of how the local community sees itself developing over the next few years, often based on a Village Appraisal. They should reflect the views of all sections of the community, identify character and features which local people feel are important. Local problems, opportunities and priorities are identified and the residents explain how they want the community to develop. An Action Plan is usually prepared following this exercise. A number of parishes in the District have produced, or are producing Parish Plans/Action Plans.

Planning Obligation: A legally enforceable obligation entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Previously Developed Land (PDL): Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Primary Shopping Frontages: Shopping frontages include the main shopping streets of a town centre that will be mainly reserved for retail use (especially those uses in Class A1 of the Use Classes Order). For this purpose the 'frontage' is described as the whole front elevation of a building as at ground floor level, including any sides of the building that may go around a corner.

Primary Villages: These are villages considered capable of limited growth where local need has been established. These are villages that have basic local services, including a primary school and food shop.

Principal Shopping Area: A compact area designated within each town, where shops are expected to locate, allowing a more economic provision of supporting facilities like short stay car parking.

Proposals Map: An adopted proposals map illustrates on a base map (reproduced from, or based upon a map base to a registered scale) all the policies contained in Mid Suffolk's Development Plan. It must be revised as each new Local Plan is adopted, and it should always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area. Proposals for changes to the

adopted proposals map are set out in Appendix F. The current Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 Proposals Map will be updated once the Stowmarket Area Action Plan has been adopted.

Public Art: Works of art in any media that have been planned and executed with the specific intention of being sited or staged in the public realm.

Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI): Electronic information displays at railway stations or bus stops to give current information about services, delays, and anticipated running times.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): See East of England Plan.

The Regulations: These include the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and subsequent updates, and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites (RIGS): RIGS are in the category of Local Sites (as defined by DEFRA), and resemble County Wildlife Sites in their status. (See 'Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management' (DEFRA 2006).

Rural Diversification: A term relating to improving and sustaining the quality, range and occupational mix of employment in rural areas in order to provide wide and varied work opportunities for rural people, including those formerly or currently employed in agriculture and related sectors.

Rural Exception Site: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Saved Policies or Plans: The majority of MSDC Local Plan policies have been saved and will continue to be used within development control until they are replaced by 'new style' Local Plans.

Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM): A building or structure above or below ground whose preservation is of national importance, in a schedule compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Sports and Recreation.

Secondary Villages: These are villages that are unsuitable for growth, but capable of taking appropriate residential infill and development for local needs.

Secondary Shopping Frontages: Shopping frontages adjoining the Primary Shopping Frontages. Restrictions on use still apply, but these are much more flexible than those applied to Primary Shopping Frontages, such as non-retail uses wishing to locate within the town centre.

Section 106 Agreement: See Planning Obligation.

Sequential Approach: A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. For example, brownfield sites before greenfield sites, or town centre retail sites before out-of-centre sites. In terms of employment a sequential approach would favour an employment use over mixed use and mixed use over non-employment uses.

Settlement Hierarchy: Settlements are categorised in a hierarchy, based on the services and facilities in the settlement. See Mid Suffolk's Core Strategy (2008) for further details.

Shopping Frontages: Refers to all of the sides of the building where a defined area is applicable, either the Primary or Secondary Shopping Frontage. This includes the main frontages for units that are contained within the middle of a parade of shops, and all of the exposed frontages for units that are on corner plots of parades of shops, or double-frontage units. Any gaps in the building line will also be covered by the defined frontage area in question, therefore any future building will also fall within this defined frontage.

Site Specific Allocations: Allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development to be contained in Local Plans. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are the best examples of our natural heritage of wildlife habitats, geological features and landforms. An SSSI is an area that has been notified as being of special interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Small-Scale Development: To meet local needs provision in 'Secondary' Villages.

SnOasis: A major recreational and indoor ski facility proposal, including hotel, residential main line rail station situated in Great Blakenham and has been subject of a 2006 Public Inquiry.

Special Landscape Area (SLA): Local areas of land specifically identified for its special landscape qualities that do not have national recognition but are still worthy of protection. These include river valleys, areas of heathland, historic parklands and gardens, and other areas of countryside where the topography and natural vegetation produce an area of special landscape quality.

Stakeholders: Groups, individuals or organisations which may be affected by or have a key interest in a development proposal or planning policy. They may often be experts in their field or represent the views of many people.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving local communities in the preparation of local development documents and development control decisions. The Statement of Community Involvement is not a development plan document but is subject to independent examination.

Stowmarket Masterplan: The Stowmarket Masterplan was adopted in June 2008 following extensive consultation, to provide (where it is pertinent) an outline for the use of land and the design and layout of development proposals.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): A generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use'.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): An assessment of the likelihood of flooding in a particular area so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA): Evidence document that provides a list of potential housing sites that may be suitable and available for housing development over a 15 year period.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): A study of housing needs and demand across a market area, both affordable and market housing, which reflects the strength of the housing market in an area.

Suffolk's Sustainability Appraisal Group (SSAG): This is a partnership project involving eight local planning authorities and other relevant organisations (such as the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency). The partnership monitors a range of social, economic and environmental indicators, which enables them to assess Suffolk's progress toward sustainable development (producing the annual Suffolk's Environment ... towards sustainable development document).

Sui Generis: In a category of its own, land use not covered by a planning Use Class.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): Provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS): Sustainable drainage systems offer an alternative approach to traditional drainage. SuDS employ a whole suite of techniques to effectively manage drainage at source including dry ditches (swales), detention/attenuation ponds, and integrated constructed wetlands, all of which aim to detain run-off and release it slowly into watercourses or to ground.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): Tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Act to be undertaken for all Local Plans.

Test of Soundness: To be sound, Mid Suffolk's Stowmarket Area Action Plan must pass the 'Tests of Soundness' defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 182).

Townscape Character Types: These refer to the similar building 'types' and street patterns found across a town, such as 'Victorian suburbs' or '1930's housing'.

Townscape Character Area: These are geographical 'areas', or specific parts, of a town with their own individual character, such as 'valley floors' or 'employment corridors'.

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

Transport User Hierarchy: This sets out the a preference for more sustainable forms of transport when considering development proposals. The hierarchy is: Pedestrians; Cyclists; Public Transport Users; Specialist Service Vehicles; other Motor Users.

Use Classes Order: The Town and Country Planning Use Classes Order, define various classes of use for buildings or land. Changes of use within a specified class do not require planning permission but changes between classes normally require planning permission. There are however, exceptions to this general rule.

Visually Important Open Space: Areas designated for protection in the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) because of their importance to the local community for their visual or amenity value, may include village greens, garden land, playing fields or allotments. Their undeveloped form, which may be characterised by 'openness' as grassed areas, village greens or gardens or the presence of natural features such as trees, hedges, shrubs or ponds, make them an important part of the local scene. A saved Local Plan (1998) proposal which is compliant with the NPPF (paragraph 77).

Waste Management Hierarchy: This sets out an accepted approach towards waste management, with in preferential order: Reduction; Re-Use; Recycle & Composting; Energy Recovery; Disposal.

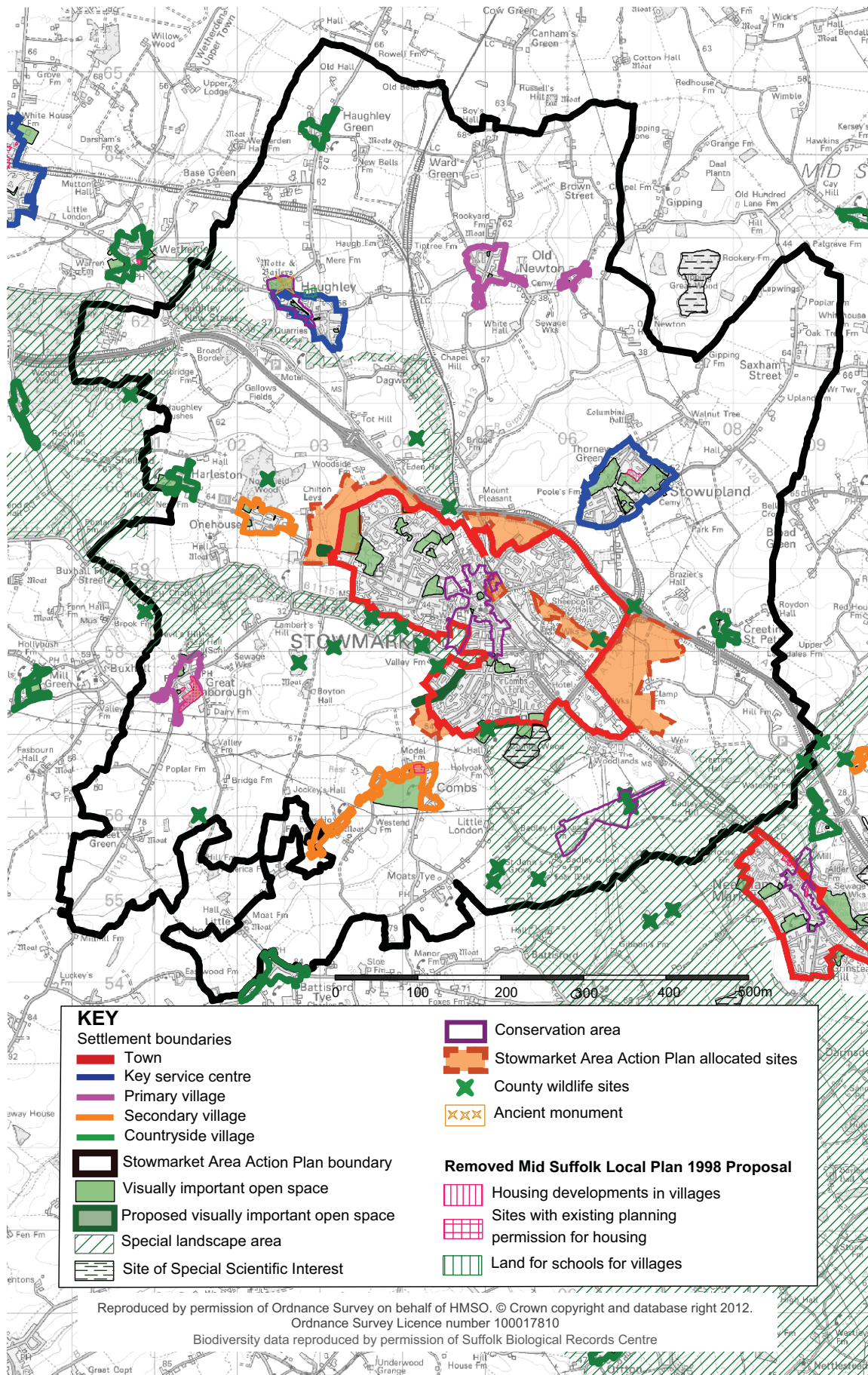
Windfall Site: Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

17 Appendix F - Stowmarket Area Action Plan Proposals Map

17.1 The overall Proposals Map, sets out diagrammatically the policies and specific areas for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan in a single map. Reference is made on the Proposals Map to specific inset maps (e.g. "See Map 7.1") that identify specific sites or areas, which can be found in different chapters of this document.

17.2 In line with the required regulations, once adopted, the revisions made through the Stowmarket Area Action Plan will be incorporated and updated onto the previous Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 Proposals Map.

Important Note: There is a considerable amount of detail contained on this map and it may be necessary to view this document separately. Please see the Mid Suffolk website to view the Proposals Map separately: www.midsuffolk.gov.uk



Map 17.1 Stowmarket Area Action Plan Proposals Map