

Topic Paper



The North Norfolk Economy

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Purpose

This document has been produced to support a public consultation exercise being undertaken by Opera Community Research on behalf of the Authority and to inform the process of policy formulation. It is not a definitive statement of future policy. It provides a general overview of the issues which the Authority has identified as being important to address in the Local Development Framework. It sets out our evidence and we welcome your comments.

This document is one of five similar documents covering;

- Development Strategy.
- Housing.
- Environment.
- The Economy.
- Transport.

The consultation will be undertaken by questionnaire with the objectives of;

- examining the robustness of the evidence base which the Authority has prepared;
- gauging the level of consensus about draft objectives in key policy areas;
- testing the realism and soundness of the options under consideration; and
- gathering feedback on the likely implications of various alternative approaches to assist in the choice of appropriate options.

The five topic papers have been prepared to provide more detailed background information for those interested in exploring the issues in more depth. In Sections (1) to (3) the document provides a summary of the available evidence looking at the issues raised in previous consultation exercises, recently commissioned studies and a review of existing policy. From this evidence, Sections (4) and (5) identify what the Authority considers to be the main issues and identifies some draft policy objectives and alternative approaches to future policy. The overall aims are summarised in Table 4 at the beginning of section (4) and Appendix 1 includes summaries of issues and the aims for the key areas of emerging policy.

The Council will also prepare a Site Specific Proposals document drawing on the same evidence which will set out the proposed uses for different areas of land and will follow a similar consultation process to the Core Strategy.

The document is not intended to include all the evidence, most of this is published on the Authorities Web site (www.northnorfolk.org/ldf/) In addition a Sustainability Scoping Report provides a summary of all issues. This is also on our web site. The intention is to encourage debate and discussion at an early stage before decisions are made. We welcome your comments and have included a reply form at the back of this document.

- Do you think the correct issues have been identified?
- Are there any significant omissions?
- Do you agree with the aims of policy which are being suggested?

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is one of five topic papers which have been prepared by North Norfolk District Council (the Council) to inform the production of its Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) – which will be one of the local development documents (LDDs) that make up the new North Norfolk Local Development Framework (LDF). This forms part of the new planning policy system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The contents of the LDF will eventually replace all the policies and proposals in the current North Norfolk Local Plan. As with the North Norfolk Local Plan, the LDF will cover the whole of North Norfolk District except that part administered by the Broads Authority for planning purposes.
- 1.2 The purpose of this topic paper is to inform consideration of preferred options for dealing with those issues relating to the preparation of economic policies for North Norfolk which have been identified through the development of an evidence base which is contained in the Council's LDF Scoping Report (Scoping Report). The Scoping Report also includes the preparation of the LDF Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 1.3 The Government's Planning Policy Statement 12 sets out the policies that should be taken into account by local planning authorities (LPAs) in the preparation of LDFs. The Plans should include a Core Strategy as well as policies and proposals applicable to specific sites. (Site Specific Proposals)

The Core Strategy

- 1.4 PPS12 makes clear that the purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. It should set out the long-term spatial vision and strategy for the authority's area and the strategic policies required to deliver them.

Development of an Evidence Base

- 1.5 PPS12 requires that the contents of a Core Strategy must be founded on a thorough understanding of the needs of its area and the opportunities and constraints which operate within that area. Therefore, the first stage in the Council's preparation of the Core Strategy has been to gather evidence about its area. This has included:
- preparing up-to-date information on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics;
 - commissioning a number of studies by consultants on a variety of topics including a Retail and Commercial Leisure, Open Space and Recreation, Tourism and the Rural Economy, and Travel to work Study;
 - noting the relevant provisions of a large number of national, regional and local strategies affecting North Norfolk District; and
 - seeking the involvement and securing inputs of the community and relevant groups and organisations (stakeholders). In particular, a number of issues were identified as a result of recent exercises which were undertaken to inform the review of the North Norfolk Local Plan and, more latterly, the preparation of the LDF. These are:
 - (1) the Council's preparation of Whole Settlement Strategies for the towns of Cromer, Holt, Fakenham, North Walsham, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-Next-The-Sea. These were prepared in 2001 and 2002 and involved extensive stakeholder participation and public consultation;

- (2) the Council's two 'Rural Planning Workshops' for representatives of parish councils covering areas outside the seven towns, held in June 2004; and
- (3) the Council's seven LDF Workshops, based on each of the seven towns and their surrounding areas, held in June and July of 2005.
- (4) Meetings with a range of special interest groups and statutory agencies covering thematic topics.

(The full contents of the Whole Settlement Strategies, and details relating to the Rural Planning Workshops and LDF town-based Workshops can be viewed on the Council's website www.northnorfolk.org.)

Community Strategies

- 1.6 Another consideration in the development of the evidence base has been the statutory requirement for the preparation of the Core Strategy to have regard to the relevant Community Strategies for the area. PPS 12 states in paragraph 1:10:

'The local development framework should be a key component in the delivery of the community strategy setting out its spatial aspects where appropriate and providing a long-term spatial vision. Local development documents should express those elements of the community strategy that relate to the development and use of land.'

- 1.7 The relevant community strategies for the Council to consider are:

- the community strategy for North Norfolk District (entitled "North Norfolk Community Partnership – Our Community Strategy 2004/2009") published in 2004; and
- the community strategy for Norfolk (entitled "Norfolk Ambition – The community strategy for Norfolk 2003 – 2023"), published in 2003. In 2005 the North Norfolk Community Partnership carried out a public consultation exercise, undertaken by the Opera, to inform a review of the Community Strategy.

The current Community Strategy has three main aims:

- Ensuring decent housing for all residents
- Developing the local economy to provide better job, career and training opportunities for local residents and those who want to come and live in north Norfolk
- Maintain the high quality of life and attractive natural environment that exists now and makes North Norfolk unique

In August 2005, Opera Community Research held ten group discussions with members of the public as part of a joint exercise to review the community strategy and inform preparation of the Core Strategy. They found that the current priorities remain key areas of concern across all age groups and locations.

National Policies and Guidance

- 1.8 The final consideration in the development of its evidence base has been the statutory requirement for the preparation of the Core Strategy to have regard to:

- national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister); and
 - the Regional Spatial Strategy for the region in which the area of the local planning authority is situated.
- 1.9 Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes and Circulars set out the Government's national policies and principles on different aspects of planning. Policies in a current PPS or PPG are intended to complement, not replace or overrule, other national planning policies and should be read in conjunction with other relevant statements of national planning policy.
- 1.10 There is presently no approved Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England Region. Instead, for the purposes of informing the current preparation of the Core Strategy, the Council is relying on The draft East of England Plan. This was published in December 2004, and is formally a draft 'Regional Spatial Strategy' (RSS) which, once finalised, will provide the statutory strategic framework for the preparation of the Council's Local Development Documents.
- 1.11 It should be noted that in response to the statutory consultation exercise on the East of England Plan (which closed on 16th March 2005), this authority submitted representations to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) in respect of certain policies and in particular feels that the suggested housing allocation will limit its ability to deliver affordable housing and ensure that sufficient workers are available to support the local economy.
- 1.12 The East of England Plan saves a number of existing Structure Plan policies which will continue to be part of the Development Plan until at least September 2007. In respect of Employment these are:
- Policy EC.2 – Locational Guidance on Employment Growth.
 - Policy EC.6 – Re-use of Buildings in Rural Areas.
 - Policies EC.9 and EC10 – Tourism Policies.
 - Policy TCR1 – Town Centres and Retail Developments.
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2. The Evidence base: Issues identified through Consultation

2.1 The first stage in the process is to identify the key issues affecting the area which need to be addressed in the Core Strategy. This has been undertaken having regard to a number of existing and commissioned studies and by completing a range of stakeholder consultation exercises. The findings of the main studies are summarised in Section 3. The following have contributed to the preparation of the evidence base.

- Consultation with Government departments and agencies.
- Review of relevant plans.
- Census data and population forecasts.
- Public participation and consultation (for example through Whole Settlement Strategies, rural issues seminars, Urban Housing Capacity Study consultation, and district Town Centre Health Checks and Workshops across the District with key interest groups.
- Council Member working party contributions.
- Stakeholder consultations.

2.2 A wide range of issues have been identified ranging from site specific comments about the potential of individual sites to the wider strategic concerns which face the entire District. The principal themes which emerged in respect of economic issues are listed below. Further details are published on the Authority's web site.

- **Peripheral location.** The District is located a long way from other significant economic centres in the South East and the rest of the Country and transport connections are relatively poor. Consequently it is difficult to attract inward investment from national and international companies.
- **Narrow economic base.** The local economy relies too heavily on agriculture, tourism and manufacturing and will need to strengthen in knowledge based sectors.
- **Low wage economy and seasonal trends.** Particularly apparent in the coastal resort towns which can be very busy during a relatively short holiday season.
- **Low skills base.** Education and skills levels are below that of many other areas of the country
- **Changes in farming** needs and practice / agricultural diversification. Predicted to be further declines in agricultural production and employment.
- **Infrastructure issues and lack of premises.** Whilst industrial land may be available it is often serviced buildings which are required. These are in short supply. In some locations there has been limited take up of land reserved for employment use possibly due to the lack of infrastructure.
- **Commuting patterns.** Some settlements are poorly served by public transport and employment opportunities are not always available locally. Attracting key staff to some remote areas is difficult for some service and public sector employers (particularly identified as an issue for Wells).
- **Lack of affordable housing** and high property values act as a disincentive to those wishing to relocate to the area for jobs with a perception that increased values are related to a high percentage of second homes in some areas.
- **Service concentration** / rationalisation / withdrawal from smaller settlements. (loss of village shops)
- **Coastal erosion.** In the longer term coastal erosion may impact on tourism and other sectors of the economy.
- There is a **need to extend the tourism season** and provide year round attractions and some of the attractions and accommodation are of poor quality.
- Need to **support small businesses** which are a significant contributor to the economy.

3. The Evidence Base: Issues Identified in Studies Context

- 3.1 The performance of the North Norfolk economy is dependent upon local, national, and international factors. The powers of the District Council and its partners are relatively limited and should be seen in the context of providing business with the best possible environment in which to expand and prosper and, where necessary, by taking remedial action where problems of business closure and high levels of unemployment exist. Planning can assist this process by ensuring that sufficient land is identified and retained for employment uses and by adopting a range of policies to facilitate employment growth.
- 3.2 Responsibility for economic development at Regional level, including allocation of resources in support of economic objectives is devolved to the East of England Economic Development Agency (EEDA). This was established in 1999 with the remit of supporting and contributing to wider productivity, employment and sustainable development objectives. The Authority works closely with EEDA via its Economic Development staff. The East of England Plan (Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies) outline the regional planning Framework. This is reviewed in section four.
- 3.3 The East of England has a £76 billion per annum economy employing 2.7 million people. The region covers the counties of Bedfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. It stretches from the edge of London in the south to coastal and rural areas to the north and east. It is a new region with an area of 19,120 square kilometres and a population of some 5.5 million. It contains 17 medium-sized town and city conurbations, each with populations in excess of 50,000.
- 3.4 The economy of the East of England is closely related to, and dependent upon, the London economy. The Region also adjoins the East Midlands and South East regions, and there are links to all three through infrastructure and cross-boundary business sectors, clusters and supply chains. The East of England has a higher proportion of rural and coastal market towns and villages than other UK regions, and more than a third of its residents live in settlements of fewer than 10,000 inhabitants.
- 3.5 The Norfolk economy still lags behind that of the rest of the East of England. The North Norfolk Economic Development Strategy, adopted in July 2005, recognises that the economy of North Norfolk is relatively narrow which was historically reliant on a number of declining sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing. Retailing, health and social care and public administration are increasingly important sectors and tourism is, and will continue to be, a significant sector in terms of its value to the local economy.
- 3.6 North Norfolk has the lowest economic activity rates of the seven Norfolk Districts. The workforce of North Norfolk has higher proportions of the population with no qualifications than the national average and unemployment is about 4% compared with 5% nationally (2001 Census). In relation to earnings, North Norfolk does not perform well, compared with the County and national averages. (See key statistics table)
- 3.7 Employment in knowledge based industries is currently recognised as a key measure of economic competitiveness, which is a determinant of current and future prosperity. Compared with the East of England, where 17% of jobs are in the knowledge based

industries, North Norfolk has only 6%. North Norfolk is also characterised by having a large number of small businesses (86% employ 10 or few employees). However, the District has a large number of self-employed people (22% compared with 12% nationally) and a higher proportion of VAT registered firms per 10,000 working age population (487 compared with 409 nationally) indicating a high level of entrepreneurship.

- 3.8 Assessment of where people travel to work indicates a high level of self containment within the District. Around 81% of jobs in the District are taken by residents and approximately 70% of the population travel less than 20km to work. Approximately 44% of the available jobs are located in the rural areas outside of the seven market towns. Nearly 20% of the jobs in the District are provided by just 11 companies. In terms of the number of people it employs, retailing is the largest sector providing 17% of total employment.
- 3.9 Over 21% of residents in the district are retired compared to a national average of 14%.
- 3.10 Tourism is one of the key sectors and the District has a strong and diverse tourism attraction. Over the past decade considerable success has been achieved in extending the tourism season beyond the traditional “summer” seaside holiday, attractive to young families and the older generation. Research on the Economic benefit of Tourism to North Norfolk in 2003 undertaken by the East of England Tourist Board on behalf of the District Council identified that total tourism expenditure amounted to £357 million.
- 3.11 High numbers of second homes in North Norfolk and the attraction of the area to visits by Friends and Family staying with local people provide further income within the District. Income from these two sources was valued at £1.9 million and £11.7 million respectively in 2003.
- 3.12 The North Norfolk District covers an area of 960 sq km, much of which is high quality agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) supporting mostly arable production – particularly cereals, sugar beet and potatoes. Agriculture is the predominant land-use in the District. As well as being an important element of the economy in its own right, the farming community makes a significant contribution to maintaining the character of the area, much of which is designated as being of high landscape value and Outstanding Natural Beauty, thereby underpinning the district’s attraction as a major tourist destination.
- 3.13 The North Norfolk district is one of the most rural in the East of England and has agricultural employment above the regional and national averages. Whilst agriculture continues to be a key element of the district’s economy, increasing mechanisation and the contracting out of landholdings / key activities means that fewer people are now employed in the sector than in the past. Changing trends in production and the demands of food processing companies are also impacting on farm businesses, resulting in surplus agricultural labour and buildings being released by some farm businesses. At the same time other farm enterprises are investing in new and larger buildings (e.g. potato stores, poultry sheds) and workers with different skills sets as part of a re-focussing of their businesses to take advantage of new opportunities and / or as part of diversification / down-sizing strategies.
- 3.14 The break down of jobs by Employment Sector and other key economic indicators are illustrated in the tables below.

Table (1) Employment Profiles in North Norfolk (all residents)

Employment Sector	% of those in work	Number of workers
Agriculture, hunting, forestry, fishing, quarrying	6.2%	2,567
Manufacturing	14.0%	5,798
Power supply and construction	8.8%	3,644
Wholesale, retail and motor vehicle repair	17.2%	7,123
Hotels and catering	7.3%	3,023
Transport, storage and communications	4.4%	1,822
Financial services, real estate and business	11.9%	4,928
Public administration and defence	6.2%	2,567
Education	7.0%	2,899
Health and Social Work	11.6%	4,804
Other	5.7%	2,360

Source: ONS Census data 2001, Table KS11a.

Average Gross Weekly Earnings¹:

- North Norfolk: £342
- Norfolk: £353
- England and Wales: £419

Table (2) - Employment Activity

Economic Activity types by % (all residents aged 16-74)	North Norfolk	Norfolk	East of England	England and Wales
Employed Part Time	12.83	13.20	12.48	11.78
Employed Full Time	32.88	37.89	42.61	40.55
Self-Employed	11.72	9.45	9.25	8.28
Unemployed	2.57	2.97	2.60	3.35
Full-time student (working)	1.48	2.10	2.32	2.57
Retired	21.82	16.92	13.99	13.61
Student	2.34	3.31	3.61	4.7
Home / Family carer	6.63	6.59	6.74	6.51
Permanently sick / disabled	5.27	4.96	3.91	5.52
Other	2.46	2.61	2.50	3.12

Source: ONS 2001 Census data, Table KS09a.

Employment Activity (from 2001 Census data):

- All people of working age (16-74yrs) in North Norfolk: 70,438.
- All people in employment (16-64yrs) in North Norfolk: 41,411.
- All people listed as unemployed (16-74yrs): 1,808.

¹ 2004 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS 2005. www.nationalstatistics.gov.uk.

The largest town in the District in terms of resident population is North Walsham with 12,000 residents. Sheringham, Fakenham and Cromer each have 7 - 9,000 residents and Stalham, Holt and Wells-next-to-Sea have 2 - 4,000 residents. Resident economic activity levels in the towns are generally between 55% and 65%. This will be in part due to the high proportion of retired residents in North Norfolk as a whole (21.8% compared to 14% in East of England and 13.6% in England and Wales) and particularly within the towns in the District (23.6%). Resident economic activity is particularly low in Holt (47.7%) which is explained by its high proportion of retired residents (31.2%) and economically inactive students (7.1%).

Table (3) Population and economic activity in the towns

Town	Population (2001)	Population aged 16-74	Proportion of population aged 16-74 - economically active	Proportion of population aged 16-74 - economically inactive
Aylsham	5,504	3,917	65.1%	34.9%
Cromer	8,836	6,212	58.3%	41.8%
East Dereham	17,779	12,421	69.4%	30.6%
Fakenham	7,730	5,596	65.6%	34.4%
Great Yarmouth	66,788	47,245	62.72%	37.26%
Holt	3,550	2,321	47.7%	52.4%
King's Lynn	40,921	29,211	67.5%	32.5%
North Walsham	11,845	8,278	64.5%	35.5%
Norwich	174,047	143,314	66.0%	34.0%
Sheringham	7,143	4,889	56.1%	43.9%
Stalham	3,870	2,813	65.0%	35.1%
Wells-next-to-sea	2,451	1,740	59.7%	40.3%

Source: Census 2001

Table (4) Number of Employees in Ward areas

Ward	Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Companies with 250+ Employees
Astley	386	55	
Briston	144	34	
Chaucer	258	44	
Corpusty	312	59	
Cromer	2522	250	North Norfolk District Council (350) Morrisons (250)
Erpingham	235	79	
Gaunt	172	51	
Glaven Valley	564	74	
Happisburgh	191	50	
High Heath	460	56	
Holt	1590	238	
Hoveton	1737	116	Roys of Wroxham (400)
Lancaster North	542	75	
Lancaster South	3324	217	Heinz Frozen Products (320) Kinnerton (600)
Mundesley	764	110	
North Walsham East	326	85	
North Walsham North	360	30	
North Walsham West	3259	256	East Coast Nursery Products (300)
Poppyland	396	44	
Priory	862	153	
Roughton	202	55	
Scottow	2256	47	RAF Coltishall (2000)
Sheringham North	1369	213	
Sheringham South	429	37	
St Benet	295	55	
Stalham & Sutton	936	137	
Suffield Park	614	59	
The Raynhams	1002	55	Listerwood (300)
The Runtons	312	65	
Walsingham	510	76	
Waterside	998	121	Trend Marine (300)
Waxham	268	54	
Wensum	402	57	
Worstead	577	63	Heinz Frozen Products (250)
Totals	28,574	3,170	11 companies employ over 250 people: 5,420 employees / 19%.

Source: Market Measures Business Directory

Review of Studies

- 3.15 To help inform the Authority's policy formulation the Council has commissioned a number of consultants to produce reports identifying the key policy issues which the Local Development Framework should seek to address. There are also a number of earlier reports and publications which provide useful information. The principal amongst these are:
- Economic Development Strategy to 2007. A report produced by the Economic Development unit of North Norfolk District Council.
 - Norfolk Employment Growth Study. Roger Tym and Partners. May 2005.
 - Retail and Commercial Leisure Study. DTZ Pieda Consulting. May 2005.
 - Tourism Study. Scot Wilson. Awaiting publication.
 - Rural Economy Study. Acorus.
 - Whole Settlement Strategies for each of the Districts market towns. NNDC
 - North Norfolk Local Plan. NNDC 1998.
 - East of England Plan. Regional Spatial Strategy.
 - Draft Sustainability Scoping Report. NNDC 2005
- 3.16 The detailed findings of many of these are published on the Authorities Web site. (www.northnorfolk.org).
- 3.17 The **Norfolk Employment Growth Study** prepared by Roger Tym and Partners aims to:
- 3.18 clarify the level of job growth required in Norfolk and Lowestoft to meet the needs of the population in the period to 2021, taking account of the desire to achieve reasonable alignment, improve activity rates and improve economic performance generally;
- 3.19 advise on the feasibility of achieving such growth and the interventions required;
- 3.20 indicate how these jobs should be distributed between each sub-region (Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft, King's Lynn, Norwich) and the remaining parts of Norfolk; and
- 3.21 advise on job targets at the District Council level if considered feasible.
- 3.22 It provides a detailed commentary on statistical models for predicting the growth in jobs and how this is related to Housing growth. It is suggested that the regional economy will move from a position where there is currently a surplus of employees to jobs resulting in a low wage economy to a position of a surplus of jobs to employees.
- 3.23 In August of 2005 a final update report was prepared which looked at additional projections produced by Anglia Polytechnic University. Unlike previous projections this was able to consider not just the rate of immigration but also the age profile of immigrants. This in turn allows for a production of more robust predictions of labour force increase. As a consequence it is now projected that population in Norfolk will increase by 8% (previously 13%) and labour force will increase by 6% rather than the 14% previously predicted. This is mainly attributed to the older age profile of migrants in to Norfolk and would equate to 31,000 fewer workers than was previously projected.
- 3.24 Nevertheless it is predicted that the housing targets and the jobs targets of the Regional plan are broadly in balance at regional level.(although this may not be the case for North Norfolk.)

- 3.25 The **Market Towns Survey** produced by Norfolk County Council for all of Norfolk in 2004 found that whilst the number of comparison retailers and services has remained relatively constant, there has been a general decline in the number of convenience stores cross the County². Stalham, with 9 convenience stores, has the second-lowest amount in all of Norfolk, and is “clearly under-represented by convenience outlets”, whereas Sheringham (22), Cromer (19) and Holt (17) have the highest numbers. Holt’s reputation as a specialist retail centre is built on having the most comparison outlets; 110 units comprising 55% of all retail space. Cromer, with the highest number of total retail units in all Norfolk’s Market Towns (230 units) was found to have the second highest number of comparison units (95), which make up 40%³.
- 3.26 The ‘strength’ of North Norfolk’s towns as retail locations was crudely indicated through assessing the number of ‘Significant Multiples’ that have taken-up residence within the town centres. These significant multiples are six national firms known for being attracted to towns which have a strong retail draw⁴. In this assessment Fakenham is seen as North Norfolk’s strongest centre having four of the six, and Cromer is also strong (three). However, the indicator’s rudimentary nature depicts Holt as being a very weak town centre because it contains none of the significant multiples, yet it is clearly a well-regarded specialist comparison retail centre with a good number of convenience retailers and service provision, a finding supported by the Retail and Commercial Leisure Study. The present health of retailing within North Norfolk’s towns is illustrated through Table (5) showing that Fakenham and Holt had the lowest vacancy rates across the District (8%) in 2004, but Stalham experienced the highest rate of unit vacancy at 14%.

Table (5) : Vacant units in North Norfolk’s towns (2004)

North Norfolk Town	Vacancy Rate (%)	North Norfolk Town	Vacancy Rate (%)
Fakenham	8	Holt	8
North Walsham	9	Sheringham	9
Wells	11	Cromer	12
Stalham	14	Town Average	10.1

Source: Market Town Survey, Norfolk County Council (2004)

- 3.27 The **Retail and Commercial Leisure Study** suggests that commercial leisure and retailing opportunities are limited due to the attraction and customer base of other neighbouring towns in the region (Norwich, Kings Lynn, GYarmouth). North Norfolk’s towns lack the critical mass of retail facilities and populations to support new leisure and significant retail developments. The key challenge will be to promote, manage and facilitate opportunities for more diverse, sustainable, year-round attractions in the District centres to enable tourism and locals to be less reliant on fluctuating seasonal markets.
- 3.28 The report identifies the main issues as:
- Ageing population and lower incomes affects types of service/facilities demanded/provided.

² ‘Market Towns – Town Centre Survey Report’ – Draft, Norfolk County Council (2004).

³ It should be noted that this survey was carried out in peak tourist season when towns with a significant orientation to tourism will have more outlets available.

⁴ These six significant multiples are Argos, Boots, Stead and Simpson, Superdrug, WH Smith and Woolworths.

- Mobility: - Greater car ownership and increased retail developments in Norwich and Kings Lynn lead to higher levels of commuting out of the District for shopping particularly for comparison goods such as clothes and electrical items.
- Attractive town centres, conservation areas, listed buildings limit opportunities for redevelopment.
- Some centres are heavily dependant on seasonal tourism.
- Smaller shop units dominate. There is a restricted supply of good quality large units and poor provision of National chain stores.
- Lack of comparison goods range e.g. fashion & clothing makes the retail choices 'one-dimensional', mid-range and value.
- Lack of space for out-of-town centres to accommodate retail warehousing.
- Insufficient quality eating and drinking opportunities for all people which would improve both daytime and evening economies.
- Vacancy levels are generally below the national average of 11%.
- Car Parking is too limited and expensive at peak times.

- 3.29 Cromer, Fakenham, North Walsham have capacity for new growth in comparison goods with up to 20,000 sq. m of new floor space potential and a residual spend of £65m as a baseline scenario. With higher population growth this could be as much as £126m with 26,400 sq m potential new floor area.
- 3.30 Some areas are less able to accommodate new floor space growth, ie Holt. Greater efficiency would likely be achieved through allocating growth to locations where catchment areas overlap, though significant proportion given to growth areas (Fak, NW and Cromer) where 'critical mass' already exists. This would stem leakage out of the District and build reputation for district centres.
- 3.31 No great potential for increased convenience goods retail development. Larger developments on outskirts could be detrimental to vitality and viability without strong pedestrian linkages.
- 3.32 Leisure is very difficult to predict floor space needs. Increased leisure spending offers potential for successful development, and developers will be flexible and innovative and keen to move in.
- 3.33 Commercial leisure should be encouraged through flexible pro-active policy that promotes leisure use in town centres and management of an appropriate evening economy format that can encourage town centre use and social inclusion.
- 3.34 Mixed use development incorporating health and fitness facilities which is a growing sector should be encouraged.
- 3.35 The following key recommendations should be taken into account.
- DTZ's forecasts indicate 'significant capacity for new comparison goods retailing (in the District) up to 2016' (para 7.11).
 - There is 'more limited forecast capacity for new convenience goods retailing in North Norfolk up to 2016' (para 7.17).

- 'DTZ recommend that any major new retail and commercial development should be concentrated in the District's principal centres – namely Fakenham, North Walsham and Cromer. They are the natural foci for locals and visitors to purchase convenience and mainstream comparison goods before visiting other parts of the District. They are also the only centres that have the necessary scale and character of existing facilities and catchment populations to support the forecast capacity for new comparison goods retailing across the District' (para 7.100).
- 'The attraction of multiple/branded retailers and businesses in these principal centres will help to create vitality and a stronger 'year round' economy. A stronger retail, service and leisure offer will also help to make the centres more attractive out of season. This would help some of the District's centres to break out of its current "peak-trough" annual holiday cycle. New development in these centres will also need to comprise larger and more flexible shop units to accommodate the needs of modern retailers for more space' (para 7.101).
- 'Finally, DTZ recommend that the District's smaller centres maintain and enhance their niche and specialist offer. DTZ see little point in trying replicate Norwich's mass market multiple offer, as the District's centres do not have the physical capacity, catchment populations, nor the infrastructure to achieve the necessary critical mass to be competitive. These centres should build on their niche role and function, and look to satisfy the demands and the needs of their local residents, whilst also marketing their offer to a wider audience' (para 7.103).

3.36 The **Rural Economy Study** of North Norfolk identifies the three main trends as further rationalisation of farm businesses, a broadening of farm based operations to add value to primary produce, and further farm diversification.

3.37 Rationalisation is likely to lead to:

- A requirement for larger more centralised purpose built agricultural buildings to become more competitive and adapt to new and changing markets.
- A surplus of outdated buildings both traditional and modern becoming available for re-use.
- A further reduction in labour employed full time in agriculture, which will in turn lead to houses with agricultural occupancy conditions no longer required for agricultural labourers.
- An increase in the employment of seasonal workers in areas associated with high labour cropping i.e. vegetables, fruit etc.
- An increase in grassland but reduction in livestock.
- IPPC Regulations will lead to loss of pig and poultry units but others will need to improve facilities, expand or relocate.

3.38 Adding value may lead to:

- an increased requirement for smaller high labour specialist enterprises producing high quality products for niche markets e.g. organic. These may require on site supervision and specialist buildings which would require planning permission.

- Products could be marketed through farm shops and farmers markets on farms.
- Products could be processed and packaged on farm e.g. organic milk processing or biofuels prior to being directly distributed to the customer where appropriate.

3.39 Further Diversification

- Diversification of the whole rural economy is already taking place. This trend is likely to continue in North Norfolk through a variety of initiatives. These diversified enterprises utilise redundant land, buildings and rural labour force in addition to stimulating the rural economy as a whole. Opportunities for farm diversification in North Norfolk exist in the following areas:
 - Tourist accommodation
 - Activity holidays
 - Package holidays
 - Outdoor pursuits
 - Equine Industry

3.40 The tourism season needs to be extended in order to create more permanent employment, higher levels of pay and improved employment conditions.

3.41 There are opportunities within North Norfolk to improve upon bridleways and tourism/accommodation based upon the equine industry.

3.42 Organic production, alternative crops and bio fuels are likely to increase within the United Kingdom although growth within the organic sector has slowed down within recent years..

3.43 Bio fuels offer a number of benefits towards the environment and opportunities for farm businesses. Hundreds of new jobs could be created through producing bio fuels on England's farms.

3.44 At the time of writing this report Scott Wilson had not published its final **Tourism Study**. However drafts identify the following themes and issues.

- Accommodation is focussed around the seaside resorts with 53% of hotel accommodation centred on the sea side resorts of Cromer and Sheringham. This may have implications if the holiday market changes away from these areas. There are only three hotels with over 100 bed spaces and no 5 star facilities. Some recent losses of facilities are not regarded as critical as these have been mainly smaller establishments.
- There is a need to be able to facilitate change into emerging markets such as healthy lifestyles, activities, special interest etc.
- There is spare capacity in the east of the District which could be developed.
- There are no major attractions and the area relies heavily on natural assets and small scale attractions combined with Market Towns. There has been a gradual decline in attendance at attractions.

- Walking and cycling trips are under promoted.
- Caravan sites are being upgraded and converted from touring to static but much of this accommodation (92%) is privately owned and used for short breaks rather than holiday letting.
- In general there is a good spread of accommodation type and amount.
- 39% of self catering holiday lets are within the heritage coast. Self catering is a growing market trend.
- Need to be aware that if self catering units are not profitable throughout the year there will be pressure to convert them to residential.
- Woodland lodges are included in static category but there does not appear to be huge demand for this in North Norfolk.(This may be because current policy would not usually permit this type of proposal)
- Youth study/activity centres are an important market. Kingswood is an important facility Day visitors have increased massively.

3.45 The report identifies four distinct zones

- Beach resorts and hinterland
- Broads NP
- Heritage coast
- Countryside

3.46 The report suggest that the main changes in the future are likely to be:

- An increase in activity and special interest short breaks ie cycling, walking, bird watching. These could be packaged up rather than being individual activities.
- An increase in 'exciting' activities ie go-karting, bungee jumping etc that appeal to stag weekend groups.
- An increase in natural/wildlife based breaks built on interest from TV shows etc
- An increase in pampering/spa health and well-being holidays/short breaks.
- Day visits are changing and people are now going abroad just for the day

3.52 The **Travel to Work** study produced by Land Use Consultants analyses travel to work data supplemented by other published statistics to describe the role and function of the Districts towns. It concludes that individual settlements can not be seen in isolation and that, in general, planning for particular settlements needs to consider:

- firstly, the '**big geography**' – where the settlement sits in relation to large urban areas and major infrastructure;
- secondly, the '**local geography**' – which other settlements are nearby that may have strong links to the settlement in question; and
- thirdly, the **nature of the settlement itself** and how this might affect its functions.

3.53 From a travel to work perspective, **Fakenham** appears to offer the greatest opportunities for sustainable development to build upon its high level of self-containment and role as an employment centre for surrounding settlements. The local network between **Cromer, Sheringham and Holt** also seems to have potential, but commuting to Norwich from these towns also needs to be acknowledged.

- 3.54 For both Fakenham and the network of Cromer, Sheringham and Holt new development offers the opportunity to reinforce and extend the existing relative localisation of travel to work. But it could also fuel longer distance commuting. Thus new development needs to be '**purposeful development**', with a clear expectation of the spatial outcomes it would produce.
- 3.55 The high proportion of trips to work made by bike or on foot in the towns is a sustainability strength of the District and should be encouraged by adding the right development to towns with existing high self-containment, and appropriate supporting transport policies.
- 3.56 The sustainability of **North Walsham** is compromised by the strong links to Norwich, but these should not entirely overshadow its significance as an employment centre for neighbouring local settlements. Thus development here could also assist the sustainability of the town were its clear purpose again to be to reinforce and extent local of travel to work, and avoid fuelling commuting. But this will be more challenging than in Fakenham and the network of Cromer, Sheringham and Holt.
- 3.57 **Stalham** offers less opportunity to promote sustainability through new development as its is already heavily functionally linked to Norwich and new development will be unable to change this. Development there should be to meet existing local needs only.
- 3.58 **Wells** also appears to be functionally weak, but it is a resort settlement and as such this work has been unable to capture the significance of its summer employment role. The same is true of **Cromer** and **Sheringham** (although in April their roles were strong in any case) and also **Happisburgh** and **Mundesley**. Whereas we cannot conclude that Wells is a location where development can increase sustainability on the basis of our findings but suggest that further tailored research is needed to better understand how seasonality affects the local economies of towns and villages on the coast, and therefore how they might be planned for to further sustainability in this context.
- 3.59 The remaining North Norfolk settlements examined in this study – **the villages** – have an essential strategic function as dormitories. Their employment roles are significantly weaker than those of the towns, and their travel to work performance is noticeably less sustainable. On this basis we cannot recommend them as sustainable locations for employment development. Also, most sorts of housing development there would also lead to direct increases in car use for travel to work. Thus for these settlements we recommend only modest development to meet existing local needs (such as for affordable housing).
- 3.60 Across a wide range of recent work we have come to the firm conclusion that new development can rarely assist the sustainability of smaller rural settlements where their existing functionality is relatively unsustainable. If the people currently living in these settlements are unable to make them sustainable, how would the addition of new people change this? The new people would have to behave quite differently from their neighbours, which is unlikely.
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4 Policy Context

4.1 **Government Policy** in respect of economic development is set out in a number of PPGs (Planning Policy Guidance) and PPSs (Planning Policy Statements). Local Authorities should take these into account when formulating policies for inclusion in their Development Plans and when determining individual planning applications.

4.2 Sustainable development is the principle objective underpinning planning. At the heart of sustainable development is the simple idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.

4.3 The Governments' four aims for sustainable development are:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- the prudent use of natural resources; and,
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

4.4 These aims should be pursued in an integrated way through a sustainable, innovative and productive economy that delivers high levels of employment, and a just society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal well-being, in ways that protect and enhance the physical environment and optimise resource and energy use. These themes are repeated throughout Government advice.

4.5 One of the Government's key aims is to encourage continued economic development in a way which is compatible with its stated environmental objectives. Economic growth and a high quality environment have to be pursued together. There is no contradiction in arguing both for economic growth and for environmental good sense. The challenge is to integrate the two. Development plans provide the policy framework, weighing the importance of industrial and commercial development with that of maintaining and improving environmental quality.

4.6 In allocating land for industry and commerce, planning authorities should be realistic in their assessment of the needs of business. They should aim to ensure that there is sufficient land available which is readily capable of development and well served by infrastructure. They should also ensure that there is a variety of sites available to meet differing needs.

4.7 The locational demands of businesses are a key input to the preparation of development plans. Development plan policies must take account of these needs and at the same time seek to achieve wider objectives in the public interest.

4.8 The **Regional Economic Strategy** (RES) was published by the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) in June 2001. It sets out how sustainable economic growth can be achieved throughout the East of England. Both the RES and the **Regional Spatial Strategy** (RSS) propose a total growth in employment across the region, for the period 2001 to 2021, of 421,500 jobs. They state that achieving this target will require productivity efficiencies, innovation, overcoming transport problems and both population and housing growth. The RSS sets a jobs growth target for the Norwich Sub Region, which includes significant parts of North Norfolk of 32,700. Figures for individual Districts are not published.

4.9 The RSS requires that Local development documents should allocate employment land to provide a range of sites and premises to meet the quantitative and qualitative needs of business within the sequential approach of the core spatial strategy, and job growth targets.

Efficient use should be made of existing employment land resources. Sites for industry and commerce should be provided in:

- urban areas and key market towns
- locations that minimise commuting, and promote more sustainable communities, and a closer relationship between jobs and existing or proposed labour supply.
- locations where the maximum use of sustainable (public) transport can be made
- locations and ways that minimise loss or damage to environmental and social capital, and so far as possible substitute for losses and secure positive enhancements. This will often mean giving precedence to the re-use of previously developed land and, wherever possible, the intensification of use on existing sites over the release of greenfield land
- locations which meet the needs of the region's significant clusters.

4.10 The retail strategy requires:

- new retail development will be located in existing centres and will be consistent in scale with the size and character of the centre and its role in the regional structure
- local development documents will propose a higher order provision only where a need is clearly established, it would result in a more sustainable pattern of development and movement, including a reduction in the need to travel, there would be no significant detrimental impact on other centres or the transport network, and there is environmental capacity. Any new regional centres will be subject to similar considerations, and will be brought forward only as part of a review of this RSS
- in the Sustainable Communities Plan growth areas, local development documents will propose development of retail and services in new and existing centres in accordance with sub-regional strategies and policies.
- local development documents will consider the role of retail within priority areas for regeneration and propose development and enhancement to implement regeneration strategies.
- EERA and Local Authorities need to plan more positively for retail in order to maintain and enhance the viability and vitality of retail centres and make proper provision for new forms of retail distribution.

4.11 Local development documents should address retail needs and present an analysis of their area designed to produce a coherent retail strategy in relation to their existing town centres, edge-of-town centre and out-of-town centre retail sites, and e-tailing growth. These strategies should be prepared from robust data and analysis and make provision for new retail development whilst ensuring the viability and vitality of existing centres. Generally new development needs to be of a scale appropriate for the centre to promote internal competition and linked trips and to ensure consistency with transport networks. Retail centres should aim to support and enhance their existing functions and absorb expenditure growth through higher quality development without changing the centre's position in the regional structure.

4.12 There is potential for radical change in retail technology in the RSS plan period as evidenced by increased use of internet retailing. The key impact of this is likely to be on the need for distribution centres and on existing town centre retailing functions. Policy needs to provide for strategic development in sustainable locations and to focus new development on existing town centres wherever possible in accordance with the sequential test.

- 4.13 The local sourcing of products can help to reduce 'food-miles' or distance travelled by products. Whilst it is recognised that in many cases local availability is not feasible, local development documents should consider how this can be encouraged.
- 4.14 Additional out of town retailing should be discouraged.
- 4.15 In respect of tourism the RSS advises that a sustainable approach to tourism development needs to reflect not only the physical impact of tourism on an area but also its potential economic and social value. Integration of tourism planning policies is vital between neighbouring authorities as destination areas and visitor movements rarely follow administrative boundaries.
- 4.16 The East of England Tourist Board (EETB) identifies five key principles of development: partnership, quality, sustainability, competitiveness and accessibility and inclusion. It is important to ensure that new tourism development meets the broad objectives of EETB along with the specific requirements of strategic and local planning policies.
- 4.17 Effective tourism development should not focus solely on destinations but should exploit opportunities from a range of tourism initiatives, including events, specialist activities, food and drink, shopping, leisure and recreation, not necessarily linked to places of interest.
- 4.18 Tourism is one of the East of England's key economic sectors and, with leisure and heritage, is projected to make among the highest contributions to absolute increase in the region's gross domestic product. A Regional Tourism Strategy is in preparation and will assist the preparation of local development documents and development proposals.
- 4.19 Careful management and sustainable development of tourism can create opportunities to boost local economies, enhance the natural and built environment and contribute to the social well-being of an area. Tourism can be a catalyst to stimulate investment, revitalise deprived areas and encourage growth in other employment sectors.
- 4.20 Particular attention should be given to tourism development in environmentally sensitive areas, e.g. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and conservation sites. These may include some 'honeypot' tourist areas. Such areas often attract large numbers of visitors due to their unique appeal as visitor destinations and it is important that these qualities are protected for future generations to enjoy. Significant growth in visitor numbers in such areas can have lasting effects on the natural and historic environment and it is in the interests of tourism developers to conserve the environment upon which they rely. This can be particularly important in locations such as the Heritage Coast and the Broads. Measures to disperse visitors away from sensitive tourist hotspots to areas that have the capacity to cope with larger visitor numbers can often be used as an effective tool for sustainable visitor management.
- 4.21 It is also important to consider the impact of tourism on areas that do not have the capacity or suitable infrastructure to accommodate large numbers of visitors such as some popular historic towns and villages and coastal resorts. Effective visitor management strategies are crucial to their sustainability.
- 4.22 Tourism has traditionally been focused on a limited season leading to potential for excessive pressures on the environment, host communities and seasonal employment. Reducing seasonality through the development of off-peak tourism can help to provide year-round employment, provide businesses with an incentive for retaining staff and spread visitor numbers. Improved facilities to cope with increased visitor numbers at existing highly utilised tourist sites, concentration of visitors in special areas to make better use of visitor management resources and enhancing host community relationships should be encouraged.

- 4.23 Tourism development can contribute to finding new uses for existing buildings whether in rural or urban locations, and so can help stimulate regeneration and investment. Sensitive adaptation of historic or locally distinctive buildings can capitalise on the region's unique qualities. Although new development is required to extend the tourism infrastructure, priority should also be given to investment by existing businesses to ensure that the quality of tourism products is maintained.
- 4.24 The **North Norfolk Local Plan** aims to encourage and support a wide range of employment opportunities in the District. It makes allocations of land for employment uses and incorporates key development objectives in respect of industry, retailing, tourism, farm diversification and the re-use of rural buildings.
- 4.25 Allocations are a mix of large sites in the main towns (General Employment Areas) and smaller sites in a number of the villages (Village Employment Areas). Policies 09 and 10 of the Local Plan discourage uses which are not within the Light Industrial, General Industrial and Storage and Distribution classes of land use on these allocated sites. The underlying purpose of these allocations is to try to maintain a reasonable balance between residential developments and employment opportunities. In the absence of such designations it is likely that land would be developed for purposes which would attract the highest values (residential development) possibly leading to pressure to release industrial land elsewhere in less desirable locations.
- 4.26 Retailing policies support the aims and objectives of government advice to protect the vitality and viability of town centres. The plan identifies the main town and village centres and designates Core Retail Areas within which alternative, non retail uses, are discouraged. Policies strictly control out of town retailing. The stated objectives are:
- to maintain and enhance existing shopping centres, in order to encourage new investment in shopping and associated facilities, and to provide attractive and pleasant shopping environments;
 - to protect the character of the historic town centres from unsympathetic development, but to promote uses compatible with the historic character of towns;
 - to control the introduction of non-shopping uses within the core shopping areas of town centres, although recognising the contribution of uses other than retail to the vitality and viability of centres;
 - to control the development of shopping schemes that are located on out-of-centre sites;
 - to support the retention of village shops; and
 - to allow the provision of local shops within residential areas to meet day-to-day shopping needs
- 4.27 The Local Plan seeks to promote the development of tourism in North Norfolk, in a way that is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of its environment. It is the present quality and distinctive character of North Norfolk's rural scene which is the main attraction for both its visitors and its residents.

- 4.28 The re-use of rural buildings for alternative uses, with the exception of residential conversion, is supported (policy 29) as are other forms of farm diversification (policy 76).
- 4.29 Whilst the plan is generally supportive of a wide range of economic activity the overall development strategy is to balance the need for the development with the desire to protect the natural and built heritage of the District. Development proposals are therefore mainly directed towards the most sustainable locations in accordance with a settlement hierarchy. Strict controls are applied to development in the Countryside.
- 4.30 Central Government advice and the regional guidance is produced to relate to issues at the National and Regional level. The principles of sustainability are more often than not incorporated into spatial policies which focus on urban areas. The emphasis on market towns in regional guidance is an example. Consequently the advice may, arguably, be less applicable in remote rural areas, such as North Norfolk. For example whilst it is agreed that it is usually appropriate to locate new employment development alongside main centres of population this need not always be the case. In North Norfolk there are a number of notable employers whose premises are in rural locations. (Cherryridge Poultry, Crisp Maltings and Catfield Industrial estate are examples of sites which on sustainability grounds would not be considered as appropriate locations for significant employers. The redundant air base at West Raynham and the announced closure of the Coltishall and Neatishead RAF facilities also need to be considered in this context.
- 4.31 It is therefore considered important for the District to take a flexible approach to the interpretation of National and Regional advice and develop economic policies which pay particular regard to local circumstances.
- 4.32 There is little evidence that the policies of the Local Plan have been a significant impediment to inward economic investment. Its policies are generally permissive within a general overarching constraint of protecting the character of the Countryside. Areas where there may be options to consider are discussed in Section (6)
- 4.33 The [North Norfolk Economic Development Strategy 2007](#) identifies ten key economic development objectives.
- (i) To maintain and, where possible, improve the environment which encourages the creation of new and sustainable businesses.
 - (ii) To support the development needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and to maximise the talents, products and services available in North Norfolk.
 - (iii) To identify the need for, and seek to provide and influence, the provision of training schemes which address the needs of North Norfolk businesses and provide residents with skills which enhance their opportunity to gain good-quality employment within the District.
 - (iv) To encourage the development of quality infrastructure to serve the needs of businesses and residents of North Norfolk, while recognising the high quality of the local environment and aiming to encourage sustainable development.
 - (v) To maximise external sources of funding from the public and private sectors for the benefit of businesses and local communities in North Norfolk.
 - (vi) To optimise the benefits of existing tourism facilities within the District and, where appropriate, support new tourism investment and pursue opportunities to develop new tourism markets that serve to lengthen the tourism season, improve employment opportunities and increase visitor spend whilst maintaining the high quality of the natural environment.

- (vii) To strengthen and widen partnership approaches to maximise the benefits of investment for the District with the engagement and support of local communities and interest groups.
- (viii) To ensure that the supply and stock of land and premises available within the District is promoted to new and expanding businesses, which will facilitate the creation of new jobs and broaden the North Norfolk economy.
- (ix) To develop and disseminate best practice in terms of market and resort town regeneration so the district's towns continue to meet the needs of local people and visitors, through facing up to modern retailing and service sector trends and building upon their historic role as important local service centres.
- (x) To be directly responsible for leading, supporting or influencing key issues from the strategy's priority objectives.

4.34 These objectives need to be taken into account when producing the spatial land use policies which will control the future patterns of development in the District.

5 Discussion of core issues and related aims

- 5.1 It will be noted that the various consultation exercises and existing studies highlighted in Section (2) identify a large number of issues. The purpose of the Core Strategy is to develop a framework of strategic policies. It is therefore necessary to focus on the main issues which will impact on the strategic planning framework for the coming years.
- 5.2 Table (4) lists the main strategic economic issues derived from the consultation exercises which the Authority considers the new plans should aim to address together with identifying what we consider should be the main aims of new policy. These main issues are developed in the latter part of this section through discussions of each, illustrated as appropriate with specific policy areas. This section is intended to identify the areas where possible choices of approach exist. It is not the intention to identify a Preferred Option.
- 5.3 Summaries which identify the key issues, main evidence, existing policy background and the main aims of policy and potential choices are reproduced in Appendix (A).
- 5.4 In many areas of economic policy the choices of approach are relatively limited. Clearly any policies which have the underlying aims of maximising employment opportunities should adopt a generally permissive approach towards development. Furthermore in some policy areas, such as retailing, national land use policy is well defined and there is little room for local interpretation. However any economic strategy should balance the need to create employment against the other aims of a comprehensive spatial strategy which attaches appropriate weight to issues such as landscape protection, maintenance of high standards of living and a sustainable distribution of housing and employment. Where this balance lies is a matter for local choice.
- 5.5 Some criteria need to be established to inform the preparation of a preferred Core Strategy and the preparation of detailed policies against which development proposals can be assessed.

Table 4) Summary of issues identified through consultation exercises and suggested aims for the Core Strategy

Summary of Core Issues. (See Discussion below)	Draft Aims	Policy Paper Summaries. (See appendix A)
<p>1. Local wage rates are generally low and the economy relies too heavily on agriculture and tourism which provide low paid seasonal jobs. There is a low skills base with some employers finding it difficult to attract key staff. The ageing population profile of North Norfolk suggests that the need for care and health services will grow – a key employment sector for the future.</p>	<p>To provide for a diverse local economy that provides well paid jobs in sustainable locations whilst protecting the built and natural heritage of the District.</p>	<p>Economic Strategy – Paper LE1</p>
<p>2. The relative remoteness of the District (especially in certain parts) is perceived to deter investors in traditional employment sectors.</p>	<p>To ensure a choice of sites are available for employment by allocating sites and retaining existing employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Employment Land Allocations - LE2</p>
<p>3. The wealth of small businesses that operate in the District make a vital contribution to the District's economy and should be encouraged. Structural changes in agriculture are likely to see a further loss of employment in this sector and possible changes to landscape character.</p>	<p>To enable the provision of premises and infrastructure to support small business development and rural diversification.</p>	<p>Range of Economy topic summaries on industry, tourism, retailing and the rural economy-LE3</p>
<p>4. With tourist accommodation dominated by second/ holiday homes and self-catering, and with the loss of serviced tourist accommodation and a short season the income derived from tourism in the local economy is limited, compared with other areas. The industry will need to respond to the growth in cheaper foreign holidays and short breaks.</p>	<p>To improve the range of visitor attractions and the quality of accommodation on offer and retain the best accommodation in holiday use.</p>	<p>Tourism – LE4</p>
<p>5. The health of the District's towns is highly dependent upon the vitality of their town centres, which in turn are dependent upon the strength of their retail offer. Opportunities exist for further comparison goods retailing and leisure developments.</p>	<p>To maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres whilst protecting their heritage and environmental assets.</p>	<p>Retail – LE5</p>
<p>6. Lack of affordable housing within the District makes it difficult to attract and retain young employees and key workers.</p>	<p>To provide additional affordable housing.</p>	<p>Affordable Housing – H3</p>

General Employment Strategy

What should be the aims of a general employment strategy?

- 5.6 The evidence suggests that there will be a continued process of structural changes in the Economy. Employment in manufacturing and agriculture is likely to decline further and changes in some sectors such as retailing and tourism are more difficult to predict. The growth in public services, particularly health and social services, and a trend towards home working is likely to continue and there is further scope for farm diversification.
- 5.7 With average gross weekly incomes of around £342 those employed in North Norfolk earn less than any other Norfolk District and well below the England and Wales average of £419. This average figure does not provide the full picture and hides areas of real deprivation. Some of the main employment types in the District (retail, tourism and agriculture) are also amongst the lowest paid. The low wage economy has a direct relationship with housing affordability and the ability of employers to attract key workers.
- 5.8 The challenge for the Authority is to ensure that land use policies do not restrict worthwhile commercial investment. Economic policy should seek to maximise employment opportunities in well paid jobs particularly in the remote parts of the District. This can not be achieved through land use policies alone. However, the identification of potential development sites, retaining existing employment uses and adopting flexible approaches to economic policy can all play a role in supporting the economy. These economic considerations should be balanced with the aim of protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of the built and natural environment. The main aim of policy should therefore be:
- 5.9 To provide for a diverse local economy that supports the creation of well paid jobs in sustainable locations whilst protecting the built and natural heritage of the District.
- 5.10 There are considered to be no alternative choices to this general strategy. The Authority is unlikely to be able to attract significant large scale investment from national companies and its economy will continue to rely to a large extent on the growth of local businesses. The strategy should create the opportunities for these businesses to be retained in the District and grow. There are however some choices within individual areas of the economy. For example, where should industrial development be located? Should a more permissive approach be taken to the development of tourism facilities? How rigidly should retail developments be controlled? And, what types of economic development could be allowed in rural areas? These and other issues are discussed in the sections below.

Distribution of Employment Uses

Is there a need to make further allocations of land which should be reserved for Employment uses or is too much land already reserved for this purpose? How should employment sites be selected? What is the appropriate approach to employment in rural areas (barn conversions and village employment areas.)? Should the Authority control the loss of employment opportunities?

- 5.11 Predicting rates of business and employment growth is not an exact science, as a wide variety of local, national and international factors impact upon the performance / investment plans of business. Over recent years the District has seen changes in levels of employment within the manufacturing and distribution sectors of the economy with the loss of some long established employers eg General Trailers and HL Foods at North Walsham, Blakes Holidays at Hoveton and English Country Cottages at Sculthorpe – all of which were part of larger companies with little allegiance to North Norfolk as a business location. Over the same period however a number of locally owned/managed businesses have expanded and made significant investments in new premises and production facilities eg Trend Marine at Catfield; Eric Bates and Son at Hoveton; the Cromer Crab factory; Kinnerton Confectionary, Fakenham; and Listawood at Tattersett Business Park. In addition there has been new investments in supermarkets, DIY stores and retail warehousing.
- 5.12 It is acknowledged that the peripheral location of North Norfolk means that it is not seen as a significant location for mobile inward investment by large companies, the investment made by established local businesses over recent years will need to be further encouraged and supported in order that such companies can continue to prosper and provide a choice of employment for local people. It is therefore considered essential that through the Local Development Framework the District Council seeks to identify a *choice* of sites in locations across the district for future business development. These sites will be identified in the Authority's Site Specific Proposals document. Reflecting upon historic rates of development coupled with an understanding of future likely trends is considered to be a reasonably sound measure (although not the sole determining factor) upon which to predict future rates of demand for employment land. Since the adoption of the North Norfolk Local Plan in 1998 there has been little development on sites identified as new employment land allocations within the adopted Local Plan; the only exception being the opening up of allocation E2 at Fakenham through the provision of road and utility infrastructure by the District Council
- 5.13 Whilst a choice of sites is critical it is nevertheless important to ensure that land which is unlikely to be developed for commercial use is not retained for this purpose, particularly where it might be more productively used for other types of development, such as housing. In this respect some existing significant allocations which have seen little interest in recent years will need to be reviewed. New employment uses are only a small part of the equation. Most employment will be within existing businesses. Any policy on employment distribution should consider how to retain existing opportunities. This is reflected in the current Local Plan in the General Employment and Village Employment Area designations which presume against non employment uses, and in policies which aim to restrict the loss of village shops and public houses. This general presumption against the redevelopment of sites for non employment uses may need to be extended to a wider range of sites than is currently the case. There are, for example, many small business sites in villages and rural areas as well as the towns which could be retained in employment use.
- 5.14 Many buildings in the Countryside previously used for farming and other purposes are now no longer required for these uses. Many of these buildings are historically and locally important and are an integral part of the character of North Norfolk. It is generally agreed that it is important that they are retained. Re-use of such buildings for employment uses complies with Government advice and Policy 29 of the current Local Plan encourages

economic re-use of buildings including their conversion to holiday accommodation. Not all rural buildings are suitable for commercial re-use, and it could be argued that the remote location of some sites makes such uses unsustainable. Conversely, many buildings provide opportunities for small scale local employment.

- 5.15 There are a large number of small businesses in the District with many people working from home. This trend may increase and policy should facilitate this. The potential conversion of rural buildings to general purpose housing is discussed in the Spatial Strategy Topic Paper.
- 5.16 Employment distribution policy should aim:
- 5.17 To ensure a choice of sites are available for employment by allocating sites and retaining existing employment opportunities.

Where should sites be identified for new employment development?

- 5.18 The seven towns and the three large villages which are currently identified in the North Norfolk Local Plan are the main centres of population and provide the broadest range of services. In terms of sustainability and trying to ensure that employment opportunities are available close to where people live they are the most appropriate locations for significant new employment development. However each of these settlements performs a different role and has a different character and this should be reflected in the identification of employment sites. The following are considered to be some of the key determining factors which influence the quantity and location of employment land provision.

Fakenham

- At 61.7%, the town has the highest proportion of self-containment (i.e. the percentage of travel to work trips from the settlement that are contained within the settlement) of all the District's towns.
- It is a significant net importer of employees from elsewhere.
- It is considered suitable for retail growth in the Retail Study, demand has been expressed particularly for food retailing and a number of town centre sites appear suitable for development/redevelopment.
- There appears to be general community support for employment and residential growth, including a possible northern extension of the town.
- Road connections to Norwich, Kings Lynn and beyond are reasonable compared to other towns in the District.
- Geographically the town is well positioned to serve the needs of a wide catchment area.
- The Wensum river valley is sensitive but elsewhere there are few environmental constraints.
- Rates of employment development have been slow with the exception of retail, retail warehousing and car sales. Land remains to be developed on the main industrial estate and adjacent to Morrisons.
- In the longer term the town has significant capacity to grow.

Fakenham is a sustainable location for new Employment development. The town has high levels of self containment and offers a good range of employment opportunities to its residents and surrounding catchment. There are no significant environmental or infrastructure constraints to further growth. Consideration should be given to allocating additional employment land on the north side of the town. Opportunities for additional retail development exist in the town centre and such sites should be identified in the Site Specific Proposals document. The role of nearby Tattersett Business Park needs to be carefully considered to ensure that this does not compete with Fakenham as a preferred investment location.

North Walsham

- The town's proportion of self-containment is 50.5%.
- It is a net exporter of employees.
- It has a strong flow of residents travelling to work in Norwich (31.6% of out-commuting trips), the great majority of which travel by car in spite of the train service.
- It is considered suitable for accommodating retail growth by the Retail Study.
- There is community support for further employment growth following the closure of large local businesses, and concerns about the impact of the closure of RAF Coltishall.
- Existing employment allocations are difficult to access by commercial traffic.
- The town is well located geographically to serve the needs of a wide catchment area.
- In the longer term the town should aim to retain more of its economically active in jobs in the town.

North Walsham is a sustainable location for employment development. It has lower levels of self containment than many other North Norfolk towns primarily due to the draw of better employment opportunities in Norwich. The Authority should seek to address this by providing the framework for inward investment and the provision of attractive employment opportunities in the town. There is nevertheless a surplus of land allocated for employment purposes, the potential of which is limited by access constraints. The future designation of land at Laundry Loke, Marricks Ropes Site and HLfoods need to be carefully considered. The Town centre is historically important with many Listed Buildings particularly in Market Place. There are nevertheless opportunities for further retail development in edge of centre locations, for example, possible redevelopment of St Nicholas Court, which should be promoted. Measures to secure a better relationship between the Town Centre and Sainsbury's should be explored.

Cromer

- The town's proportion of self-containment is 53.5%.
- It is a slight net importer of employees.
- It has a significant flow of residents travelling to work in Norwich, but a negligible number are using the train service.
- It is considered suitable for accommodating retail growth by the Retail Study but there are perceived to be limited opportunities in the town centre.
- There is community resistance to expansion of the town into the surrounding countryside, much of which is designated as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with possible exception for employment-generating purposes.
- There are limited opportunities for further industrial developments within the town with the possible exception of redevelopment of the former crab factory site.
- There are strong functional relationships with Sheringham and Holt.

Tourism, Retailing and Public Services are important sectors in the Town. Employment land has been developed steadily over the previous decade and there is now a restricted supply of readily developable land. Opportunities to identify additional employment land on the edge of the town may be limited by environmental constraints. Consideration should be given to maximising the potential of existing allocated land prior to designating an additional green field site. Some employment needs could be met in Holt. As with North Walsham the potential in the Town Centre is restricted by the high number of Listed Buildings. There has been pressure for additional retailing development and sites within the Town Centre should be identified. The provision of additional convenient car parking, particularly at the eastern end of the town, should be a priority.

Sheringham

- The town's proportion of self-containment is 51.9%.
- It is a significant net exporter of employees.
- Approximately half of out-commuting is to Holt, Cromer and Norwich.
- The Retail Study has identified a qualitative need for a town centre supermarket and the need for qualitative improvements to the 'evening economy'.
- There is community resistance to expansion of the town into the surrounding countryside, much of which is designated as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The existing Employment allocation adjacent to Splash has had no commercial interest.
- There are strong functional relationships with Cromer and Holt.

The town has experienced significant residential growth in recent years. This has not been matched by improved employment opportunities and many people travel out of the town for work. Available jobs are often in the low paid sectors. Historically it has proved difficult to attract employment development to the town and this is likely to continue. A small scale supermarket would meet a qualitative need for food shopping and consideration should be given to identifying a preferred site. The weekly market is important and should be retained.

Holt

- The town's proportion of self-containment is 55.5%.
- It is a significant net importer of employees from surrounding towns and villages (second only to Fakenham).
- It participates in a clear 'network' of commuting between Cromer, Holt and Sheringham.
- The Retail Study recommends protection of its niche centre status and qualitative improvements to the evening economy.
- There is community support for some small extensions to the town to facilitate employment and residential growth.
- The northern extremities of the town are situated in the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Holts location and relative accessibility make it a suitable location for small scale employment expansion. Additional employment land could be allocated to contribute to the needs of both Holt and surrounding towns and villages. Large scale retail development should be discouraged but there may be scope for further small scale developments similar to those recently completed at Apple Yard. Prior to, or as part of any significant further retail development more public car parking should be provided.

Stalham

- The town's proportion of self-containment is very low at just 35.8%.
- It is a significant net exporter of employees, with almost 30% of out-commuting trips destined for Norwich.
- The Retail Study recommends promoting the role of the centre through increasing provision in the food and drink sector and by marketing its proximity to the tourist attractions of the Broads.
- There is community support for some small-scale residential and employment developments close to the town centre.
- Parts of the town and its setting are at risk from flooding.
- There is no land allocated in the Local Plan for Industrial development.

A large proportion of the towns economically active leave Stalham to find employment elsewhere. With the exception of the erection of a new supermarket there has been little economic

development in recent years. No sites are identified in the Local Plan for employment use. Opportunities to provide better quality employment should be identified. Significant residential development should not be permitted unless accompanied by additional employment. These opportunities could be provided at Catfield if suitable sites are not identified in Stalham.

Wells-next-the-Sea

- The town's proportion of self-containment is 55.5%.
- It is a net exporter of employees, with 21.3% of out-commuting trips destined for Fakenham.
- The Retail Study recommends that the town needs to build upon its status as a tourist destination but in a way which complements rather than competes with the seaside attractions on offer in Cromer and Sheringham. Again, there is scope for improving the food and drink sector.
- There is community support for some small-scale residential developments, especially for affordable housing, within the town.
- The whole of the town is situated in the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Parts of the town and its setting are at risk from flooding.
- There is no land identified in the Local Plan for employment development.

The economic prospects of the town are limited by its isolated and relatively inaccessible location, lack of high quality employment opportunities, and limited labour force. It is a major tourist attraction and growth in this sector could be encouraged. Land should be identified and retained for employment purposes but inward investment will be difficult to attract. Affordable housing should be a priority if key staff are to be attracted and retained. Significant residential growth would be inappropriate unless better employment prospects are provided.

The villages and surrounding countryside

- 5.19 There is strong community support for fostering small businesses in rural communities, including farm diversification proposals. The conclusions of the consultants undertaking the travel to work analysis are that North Norfolk's villages perform an essential strategic function as dormitories. Their employment roles are significantly weaker than those of the towns, and therefore they are not viewed as sustainable locations for employment development. Whilst the villages and the countryside are not regarded as suitable locations for new employment allocations these areas nevertheless provide in excess of 40% of the employment opportunities in the District. There are, for example, significant employment sites at Catfield, Bacton, Northrepps, Tattersett and Great Ryburgh. Where possible these opportunities should be identified and retained and in some cases further expansion could be supported.
- 5.20 There are further opportunities to support a successful rural economy, for example, the re-use of rural buildings, developments at former air bases, tourism and small home businesses.

The Rural Economy

- 5.21 Many of the economic problems in the rural areas arise from the traditional high dependence on agriculture, the draw of higher paid jobs in the urban areas and, particularly in recent years, the high price of housing. The impact of structural changes arising from reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is likely to further decrease both jobs and incomes in agriculture thereby further weakening the local rural economy. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the impact of the closure of RAF Coltishall and further decline in manufacturing. The possible reduction in the availability of job opportunities, coupled with the relatively low pay of many of the available jobs in the area, could lead to increased out migration and out commuting of the young and mobile to seek economic opportunities and an improved quality of life away from the remote areas. Falling incomes could result in a decrease in local spend in shops and community services which in turn will reduce further the sustainability of local rural communities. Any strategy for the rural economy should aim to minimise the impacts these trends. However it should be acknowledged that these macro economic issues are difficult to address at a local level. The objectives identified for the economy generally (LE1) are equally applicable to the rural areas. The general aim of rural economic policy should be:
- 5.22 To create the conditions to enable the provision of sites, buildings and other services to support small businesses and rural diversification.

Tourism

- 5.23 Tourism is an important part of North Norfolk's economy. In 2003 it was estimated to provide the equivalent of approximately 7000 full time jobs and to produce an annual spend of some £390 million. Visitors help to support leisure facilities and services, such as public houses and shops, which maintain and enhance the quality of life for local people. Tourism has the potential to expand although competition from other areas of the country and from abroad is strong. Some of the Districts tourist infrastructure is dated and of indifferent quality and needs to be improved, particularly in the coastal resorts. New opportunities also need to be sought to diversify the facilities currently available to tourists and to spread the economic and employment benefits, as well as increasing the appeal of the existing holiday destinations. Although any increase in tourism levels is likely to be gradual, visitor pressures could threaten the character of the countryside, the Undeveloped Coast, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and historic settlements and these areas will need to be protected. Whilst tourism development can add to the overall quality of visitor facilities, bringing economic benefits to an area, some forms of development may give rise to concern in environmentally sensitive locations. Any proposals which conflict with the conservation of Norfolk's heritage should not be permitted and new development must be carefully controlled and effectively integrated into the local landscape. The aim should be to maintain a balance between development, landscape, conservation and community interests. The tourism industry can contribute in a positive way to the social and economic well-being of the local community and also help to preserve the natural resource of the countryside. The overall aim for tourism should be:
- 5.24 To improve the range of visitor attractions and the quality of accommodation on offer and retain the best accommodation in holiday use.
- 5.25 In recent years leisure demands have changed markedly. Many people take several holidays a year, some of which may be short breaks, no longer just in the summer months. Much of this demand is for self-catering accommodation - whether new buildings (including

mobile homes) or converted properties - which may be constructed to a standard that would equally support permanent residential occupation. This accommodation may also be located in areas in which the provision of permanent housing would be contrary to national policies on development in the countryside and not in accordance with development plan policies.

- 5.26 A particular issue identified by studies and often referred to by stakeholders is the distinction between properties (including mobile homes) which are used as holiday homes and those which are used as holiday lets. It is widely considered that those properties which are used as holiday lets are more likely to bring greater economic benefits to the area. Such uses tend to require larger numbers of service staff and occupiers are thought to be more likely to spend larger sums of money at visitor attractions, pubs and other local businesses. For a number of years the Authority has imposed a condition on all forms of holiday accommodation which states that it should be used for 'holiday' purposes only. Much of this (in excess of 90% according to Scott Wilson) is occupied as second and holiday homes.
- 5.27 The Authority should consider introducing policies that aim to ensure that accommodation which is described as holiday accommodation is used for holiday purposes and not as a second home where residents are not on holiday.

Distribution of Retail Development

What is the appropriate distribution of retail uses in the District. How can the vitality and viability of shopping centres be protected? Are more shops required and where could these be provided?

- 5.28 The existing policy framework in respect of retail development is detailed and well established. Government advice, regional policy and the current local plan all include the same fundamental aim to protect and improve the vitality and viability of town centres. This is best achieved by concentrating shopping and other services close together in areas which are well served by public transport and by resisting retail development elsewhere. Policy based around this approach requires that town centre sites, where available, should be developed before edge of centre, out of centre and out of town sites. Some flexibility to this general approach is allowed for specialist forms of retailing which can demonstrate that town centre sites are not appropriate. (e.g bulky goods retailing). The Local Development Framework must comply with this general approach.
- 5.29 Developers will often argue that town centre sites are not available for development or will suggest that sites are not suitable due to the lack of convenient car parking. In the past the Authority has been poorly prepared to address such arguments. At Cromer for example planning permission was granted for Argos in an out of centre location and recent supermarket developments have arguably failed to deliver the benefits which they could have if they were either closer or better connected to town centres. A more proactive approach towards the identification of potential development and redevelopment sites in town centres could help to address this concern as the Authority would be in a position to direct developer towards appropriate development and re-development opportunities. Ideally this should include the preparation of development briefs for each site.
- 5.30 Existing policies tend to adopt a hierarchical approach to the distribution of retail uses with a presumption that most development should be in the two main towns, Fakenham and North Walsham and to a lesser extent five other designated town centres. This approach does not recognise the individual and distinct roles that these centres play or the relationships between towns. For example, the close geographical and functional relationships between Cromer, Sheringham and Holt suggests a retail strategy which recognises and builds on the different but complimentary roles that these centres play. Such an approach would underpin what is distinctive about each town.
- 5.31 The current Local Plan defines a number of town and village centres. These areas are subject to policies which aim to ensure that existing ground floor retail uses are retained and new retail developments supported. In a number of the towns the areas which are designated as Town Centres are widely drawn. Having large areas designated as town centres allows for new retail and commercial developments to take place. For example the Stalham and the proposed Fakenham and Sheringham supermarket proposals are all within the designated Town centre area. However as current policies aim to prevent the loss of shops in designated areas they can also be inflexible. For example, a number of permissions for residential development have been granted in town centres despite not complying with current policies which would insist on retail uses. The Site Specific Proposal document should include a review of existing Town Centre designated areas.
- 5.32 In some of the Districts towns concern has been expressed about the number of premises being used for purposes which are argued to make a lesser contribution to viability than other primary shopping uses. Hot food take aways, estate agents and charity shops are cited as examples of less desirable uses. These uses all contribute to the vitality of towns.

However it is possible to argue that an over concentration of such uses is damaging both to character and vitality and viability. Some Authorities already operate primary frontage policies which set an upper limit on the proportion of such uses in designated areas. (commonly 30%). This approach should be considered in the Site Specific Proposals document.

- 5.33 The shortage of good quality car parking is an issue in many of North Norfolks towns particularly but not exclusively in the busy holiday season.
- 5.34 The aims for retailing should be;
- 5.35 To support and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres whilst protecting their heritage and environmental assets by exercising control over the mix of uses, identifying opportunities for development within town centres, and controlling retail developments elsewhere.

Appendices

Appendix (A)

Core Issues – Summaries

Topic: **ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

LE1

A spatial vision for the distribution of employment uses in the District. There is a need to develop an overall economic development strategy which will take account of housing growth, the need to encourage balanced communities where well paid employment opportunities are available locally to all who seek them.

Related Topic papers – LE2,3,4,5,6 and Development Strategy SS3

Key Issues

- Difficult to attract inward investment.
- Low wage seasonal economy.
- Economy dependant on small number of key sectors.
- Agricultural and manufacturing employment is likely to decline further.
- Town centres provide reasonable local services but opportunities to accommodate further growth are limited. Some demand for additional shopping and potential to developed individual roles for each town.
- Many local small businesses which should be encouraged and supported.
- Tourism critically important sector which should be supported and encouraged.
- Aging population suggesting a likely growth in social and health care.
- Increased demand for farm diversification.

Policy Context

National	PPG4-Industrial, Commercial Development and small Firms. PPS7-Sustainable Development in Rural Areas. PPS6- Planning for Town Centres.
Regional	RPG6, RPG14 (draft)
County	Saved Structure Plan Policies – EC2,EC6,EC9,EC10 AND TCR1
Local	North Norfolk Local Plan. Policy 70

Background Information

Retail and Commercial Leisure Study – DTZ Piedad Consulting 2005

Norfolk Employment Growth Study – Roger Tym and Partners 2005 Updates

Tourism Study – Scott Wilson Associates. 2005

Rural Economy Study – Acorus. 2005

Draft Aim

To provide for a diverse economy that supports the creation of well paid jobs in sustainable locations whilst protecting the built and natural heritage of the District.

Conclusion

It is not considered that there are any alternative overall aims which would address the issues identified during consultation. The main areas of choice relate to how permissive the approach should be to new commercial developments particularly in areas outside of the main settlements. For example, should the Authority allow more tourism developments in the countryside or should the need to protect the character of the area take precedence over economic considerations.

Topic: EMPLOYMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS**LE2**

Distribution of Employment Land – How much land should be reserved for Industrial development and where should it be located? What approach should be taken to retaining existing employment opportunities.

Related Topic papers – Development Strategy(SS3), Employment Strategy(LE1), Housing Strategy(H1).

Main Issues.

There is a need to review existing employment allocations. Some allocations are nearing or are fully developed whilst others have seen little or no development. The Authority needs to consider if more land should be reserved for employment uses in some locations and if some existing allocations may be more productively developed for other purposes (housing). The main area of demand appears to be for serviced buildings rather than green field development sites. Some of the smaller towns in the District, Wells, Stalham and to some extent Cromer have few opportunities for Industrial development. The future of small sites in villages which are reserved for employment use needs to be considered.

Policy Context

Government	PPG4, PPS7
Regional	RPG6, RPG14(draft)
County	Saved Structure Plan Policy EC2
Local	North Norfolk Local Plan Policies 9,10 and 70,71,72,73
Other	

Background Information

WS Atkins
 ODPM – Employment Land Reviews
 Whole Settlement Strategies
 Community Strategy

Draft Aims

To ensure that a choice of sites are available for employment development by allocating land and retaining those sites which provide employment where they are needed across the district to help people gain access to work appropriate to their skills, potential and place of residence.

Conclusion

The stated aim is regarded to be sustainable and would comply with government advice. Allocations would be informed by an assessment of need and a detailed appraisal of site suitability as outlined in the Sustainability Scoping Report. Where sites are already in use for employment purposes they should be retained where they make a meaningful contribution to local employment. The allocation of specific sites for industrial use including small sites in villages and rural areas provides a clear framework for the location of such uses and ensures that amenity, traffic and visual impacts can be addressed. These sites will be formally identified in the Site Specific Proposals document

Each of the Districts towns performs differing roles and is more or less suited to employment development. Opportunities should be provided in all towns to ensure that worthwhile development is not prevented. Where there are environmental constraints to identifying appropriate sites within or adjacent to towns it may be appropriate to consider adjacent settlements.

The rural areas of the District provide significant amounts of employment and the Core Strategy should provide for a healthy rural economy.

Topic: RURAL ECONOMY**LE3****Main Issues**

Many of the economic problems in the rural areas arise from the traditional high dependence on agriculture, the draw of higher paid jobs in the urban areas and the lack of affordable housing. The impact of structural changes arising from reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is likely to decrease both jobs and incomes in agriculture thereby further weakening the local rural economy. This is likely to be further exacerbated by the impact of the closure of RAF Coltishall and further decline in manufacturing. The reduction in the availability of job opportunities, coupled with the relatively low pay of many of the available jobs in the area, could lead to increased emigration of the young and mobile to seek economic opportunities and an improved quality of life away from the remote areas. Falling incomes could result in a decrease in local spend in shops and community services which in turn will reduce further the sustainability of local rural communities.

See the Housing Topic Paper for discussion on the re-use of rural buildings for residential purposes.

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Statement 7- PPS7-Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Regional RPG6, Draft RPG14

County Norfolk Structure Plan – Save Economy policies EC2 and EC6

Local North Norfolk Local Plan Policies 05,29,and 76

Planning for Rural Diversification – A good practice guide.

Background Information

Tourism Study – Scott Wilson

Rural Economy Study – Acorus Consulting

The Housing Market and Affordable Housing. – Three Dragons

Draft Aim

- To create the conditions to enable the provision of premises and infrastructure to support small businesses and rural diversification.

Conclusion

Jobs in rural areas (outside of the seven towns) provide a significant number of jobs (around 40% of the total) in the District. Whilst many of these jobs are low paid, particularly those in agriculture and tourism, they are critically important both in terms of value to the local economy and the management of the natural and built environment. The closure of RAF Coltishall and Neatishead and the loss of some 2000 jobs will have a major impact on the area.

Topic: TOURISM**LE4****Main Issues**

Tourism is a critically important sector of the North Norfolk economy. It provides significant employment opportunities and brings substantial investment into the area through tourism expenditure. The sector is heavily dependant upon the quality of the countryside and beaches. Changes in the pattern of holidays, increased access to foreign destinations and a decline in the traditional sea-side holiday have, and will continue to have a major impact. Holiday makers expectations in terms the quality of accommodation and visitor attractions have risen and North Norfolk should respond to this. Areas of growth such as short breaks, wildlife and activity week ends could be promoted.

Policy Context

National PPG21- Tourism

Regional RPG6, Draft RPG14

County Saved Structure Plan policies EC9 and EC10

Local Local Plan Policies 120 - 128

Background Information

Tourism Study – Scott Wilson

Tourism Audit – North Norfolk District Council

Draft Aim

- To promote tourism and increase its value to the local economy by extending the season, improving the range of visitor attractions and the quality of visitor accommodation.

Conclusion

Tourism is one of the main areas of economic policy where there is potential for differing approaches to policy formulation. The existing local plan takes a comparatively restrictive approach to tourism particularly in terms of restricting new build development in rural areas. Consideration could be given to adopting a more permissive approach which allows a broader range of development particularly were it is associated with existing facilities and would improve the quality of accommodation or attraction.

Topic: RETAIL STRATEGY**LE 5**

Distribution of Retail developments. How should the distribution of retail uses be controlled?

Key Issues

- Ageing population and lower income levels affects types of service/facilities demanded/provided
- Mobility: - car travel to centres outside NNDC is high.
- Attractive town centres with Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings which limit opportunities for redevelopment.
- Tourism-dependent seasonal patterns of business
- Increased development in Norwich, Kings Lynn which draw fashion and bulky goods shoppers at the expense of NNDC
- Smaller shop units dominate. There is a restricted supply of good quality large units.
- Limited choice of national larger multiple retailers
- Lack of comparison goods range eg. fashion & clothing makes the retail choices 'one-dimensional', mid-range and value.
- Lack of space for out-of-town centres to accommodate retail warehousing.
- Insufficient quality eating and drinking opportunities for all people which would improve both daytime and evening economies (lingering factors)
- Car Parking is too limited and expensive at peak times.
- Potential for improved dining and drinking experience to boost evening economy.

Policy Context

Government PPG6, PSS6(draft)- Planning for Town Centres.

Regional RPG6(policy13), draft RPG14(policies SS5, E9)

County Structure Plan policies - TCR.1,2,3,and 4

Local North Norfolk Local Plan policies 07 and 79

Background Information

- Retail and Commercial Leisure Study 2005 – DTZ Pidea
- Whole Settlement Strategies
- Community Strategy
- Vitality and viability of town centres: Meeting the Challenge(DoE, 1994)

Draft Aim

- To support and enhance the vitality and viability of the Districts town centres whilst protecting their character and heritage.

Conclusion

The seven town centres and a small number of village centres provide a variety of retail and other services. They are the focus of employment, entertainment, tourism and public services. They are also important housing locations. The continued health and attractiveness of these centres is critical. Defining town centre areas provides a clear framework for the development of policies to guide the location of retail, commercial, tourism and residential development. The concentration of these uses makes efficient use of land and other resources and is the cornerstone of sustainable patterns of development.

By identifying town centre opportunity or improvement sites the Authority may be able to reduce the growth of edge of town and out of town retailing and thereby encouraging linked trips and focus enhancements to the appearance of towns to those areas where improvement is most desirable.

There is a need to take a proactive approach towards the provision of additional parking and the improvement of existing car parks which are the first impression of our towns and are critical to their economic well being.

North Norfolk



LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Topic Paper Feedback Form

The draft topic papers are technical summaries of evidence and issues covering **Development Strategy, Housing, Economy, Environment and Transport**. These have been produced by NNDC Planning Policy team drawing from national and regional policy, evidence gained through a variety of independent studies and consultation events with community representatives.

We welcome any comments or suggestions you have regarding these documents.

Name: <i>or</i>			
Organisation:			
Date:		Do you wish to be added to our LDF database?	YES / NO
Feedback regarding which TOPIC PAPER?	Development Strategy		The Environment
	Housing		Transport
	The Economy	✓	
Comments	Please make any comments below attach additional sheets if appropriate.		

Thank you for giving us your views.

Please send this form to: Maxine Collis, Planning Policy Section, NNDC, Holt Road, Cromer, NR 27 9PZ or alternatively e mail your response(s) to planningpolicy@northnorfolk.gov.uk