

Suffolk

Strategic Partnership

Transforming Suffolk
Suffolk's Community
Strategy 2008 to 2028
Suffolk Strategic Partnership

All those of us who live and work in Suffolk know that it is a uniquely special place.

"Transforming Suffolk" is the first twenty year community strategy for the county as a whole. It is based on the widest public consultation ever undertaken here, and aspires to improve and to transform, to create the conditions necessary to make the quality of life for all the people of Suffolk truly exceptional.

The next twenty years will be a time of great change. We face not only international uncertainty and conflict, which will affect us all, but new challenges at home providing for the needs of an ever more diverse population.

This strategy is the first step in planning how to meet and respond to those challenges. It will mean working with everyone in Suffolk which already has a fine tradition of genuine partnerships. We are all involved in taking this strategy forward. We welcome your views.

Clare Euston
Chair of the Strategic Partnership Board

June 2008

Further information on the Suffolk Strategic Partnership and Suffolk's Community Strategy is available at:

www.onesuffolk.co.uk or by calling on 01473 260105

Preface

Writing in 1941, Arthur Mee, in trying to entice the traveller to Suffolk, described the county as 'a little apart'. The visitor has the consolation 'that it is a county little spoiled – and with a people of whom that also that might be said, for they are naturally friendly folk, full of helpfulness, good neighbourliness and courtesy'.

Although Mee is describing a bygone age, when Suffolk's population was only 400,000 and roads such as the A12 and A14 ran through the middle, rather than bypassed Suffolk towns, his words should resonate today as we try to envisage a county 20 years from now.

Our plan should enshrine the spirit of Suffolk, capturing a sense of its people and place.

Whether it is the deep forest of the Brecks, the snaking estuaries of the Alde or Ore or the gentle horizons of Constable Country, our surroundings shape who we are. Suffolk has a smooth, rural landscape yet its coast is buffeted by the bracing winds of the North Sea. The combination of long horizons tempered by habitual, brutal storms engenders a sense of inevitability amongst its people. A desire to maintain calmness and a good life has at times been at the expense of aspiration. The Suffolk of the next 20 years should retain what its people hold dear while encouraging a renewed sense of ambition.

Economic, social and cultural life is intrinsically influenced by place, whether it is Adnams' beer, the music of Benjamin Britten or the array of timber-framed buildings that pepper our towns and villages, each is a product of, or has been inspired by, the landscape. Each is of Suffolk.

Arthur Mee picked on a grain of truth by highlighting the separateness of Suffolk. It was not always the case. The Romans mostly ignored Suffolk, but the seafaring Saxons made it the centre of their kingdom of East Anglia. The great Sutton Hoo burial site on the banks of the Deben for King Raedwald attested to their belief in the vitality of links across the North Sea.

Gippeswic, later to become Ipswich, was the first Anglo-Saxon town of any size and built its wealth as a trading post. Entrepreneurialism reached a peak during the Middle Ages as the wool trade brought great prosperity to Suffolk. Fleeces and cloth were prepared and exported through the great ports of Ipswich, Dunwich and Lowestoft. Until the late 1200s, the now lost city of Dunwich played the role that Felixstowe does today as the most important centre for trade import in the country. For 400 years, Suffolk was the centre of the English economy, and that wealth is still recognisable in the grand 14th century churches at Lavenham and Long Melford.

The Industrial Revolution heralded the end of East Anglia

as the nation's wealth-creator, as production centres shifted to the towns in the North. However, Suffolk's economy continued to prosper as it led technological advances in agriculture that were to impact on the rest of the world. Ransomes in Ipswich, Smyth's in Peasenhall and Garrett's in Leiston exported agricultural machinery all round the globe.

Smyth's was a small enterprise specialising in the manufacture of seed drills. It never employed more than 50 people; it never expanded its works from the village of Peasenhall which at its largest had a population of less than 800. Yet the Smyth name was a byword for quality and innovation, 'acknowledged throughout Europe as the most Perfect Drill in the Market'.

Today, firms like OrbisEnergy in Lowestoft are developing technologies that will lead post-carbon industry. Taking strength from our proud industrial heritage, we must envisage a vibrant Suffolk economy, outward-looking and leading technological development.

Images of Suffolk as a comfortable, stable society have prevailed through the years, yet scratch the surface and the picture is cracked in places. There is an evident Suffolk tradition that injustices should be corrected. In the early 19th century, Suffolk was a centre of the 'Captain Swing' riots which saw labourers smash machinery that they believed was making them redundant.

From the 1870s, following a depression in agriculture, liberal and radical politics took hold within some rural communities, ensuring that the voice of working people was heard. The people of Leiston were known for occasionally returning a Communist elected member to its town council.

By the time Ronald Blythe wrote *Akenfield* in 1969, his imagined rural community had accepted that the modern world had begun to end traditional certainties. Here was a community, for years umbilically linked to farming, whose aspirations were being rapidly extended by exposure to the opportunities in the wider-world.

Young people in 1960s rural Suffolk decided that the future did not lie on the land. One farm worker, Derek, noted that, "A lot of my friends have left the village. They've all got jobs away. (They got married and their wives took them away). Kelsale, Leiston, Ipswich – they've all gone away". Today, young people in Suffolk tend to travel a little further afield, although they still perceive a lack of opportunity within the county. Rather than confronting a new world, the Suffolk of 20 years' time should seek to enhance its benefits and create new opportunities.

Nor was Suffolk a homogenous society. Its coastal towns ensured that people from all over Europe would pass through the county. Saxons lived side by side with Danes in Ipswich during the 10th century. The Danes even had their own

council – the Thing (after which Thingoe ward is named).

During the Middle Ages, trade with the Low Countries led to the establishment of Dutch and Flemish communities in most of the large villages and towns. Huguenot refugees settled in Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich during the 18th century, and it was these refugees who helped develop the production of Lowestoft porcelain. Ipswich was the first town in Britain to have an Asian mayor in Kalash Badsah, and its Caribbean community pre-dates the Second World War. Today, about 70 different languages are spoken in the county, and while immigration may cause uncertainty, we should recall the Suffolk traditions of welcoming incomers who have enlivened its society.

It is perhaps the Suffolk landscape which remains the most cherished amongst its people. In truth, the Suffolk littoral belies the stereotype of flat prairie lands. Aside from its well known Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the Deben Vale and the Coasts and Heaths, there are many other gems. Bradfield Woods, near Bury St Edmunds, is identified by the celebrated landscape historian Oliver Rackham as one of the best examples of ancient woodland in the whole of England. The pine forest in Elveden, clinging to its thin layer of soil, disguises the largest expanse of 'desert' in Britain that is the sandy Brecks. The river valleys of the Lark and the Rat nurture rare species of animals and plant – especially the Oxlip, a pretty yellow, simple flower which the Suffolk Wildlife trust has adopted as the Flower of Suffolk.

The Suffolk landscape has produced rare breeds of animals that are as loved as the countryside itself. The beautiful russet Red Poll cattle, Large Black pigs, handsome Suffolk sheep and above all, the sturdy Suffolk Punch Horse are synonymous with the county – the Suffolk Punch is the proud emblem of the Ipswich Town Football Club.

To ensure that our precious landscape and animals are protected we must ensure that we live within our means. Sustainable development means that economic profitability should not be at the expense of degrading our environment. There is a huge challenge, beyond recycling more waste, to make Suffolk 'The Greenest County.'

The community strategy must enshrine 'Suffolkness'. It must provide us with a sense of who we are, in order to realise what we want to be. It should give us the courage to plough our own furrow in order to sustain our varied communities and help us create a good society.

Tony Butler

Director, Museum of East Anglian Life

24th October, 2007

1. Transforming Suffolk: our ambition

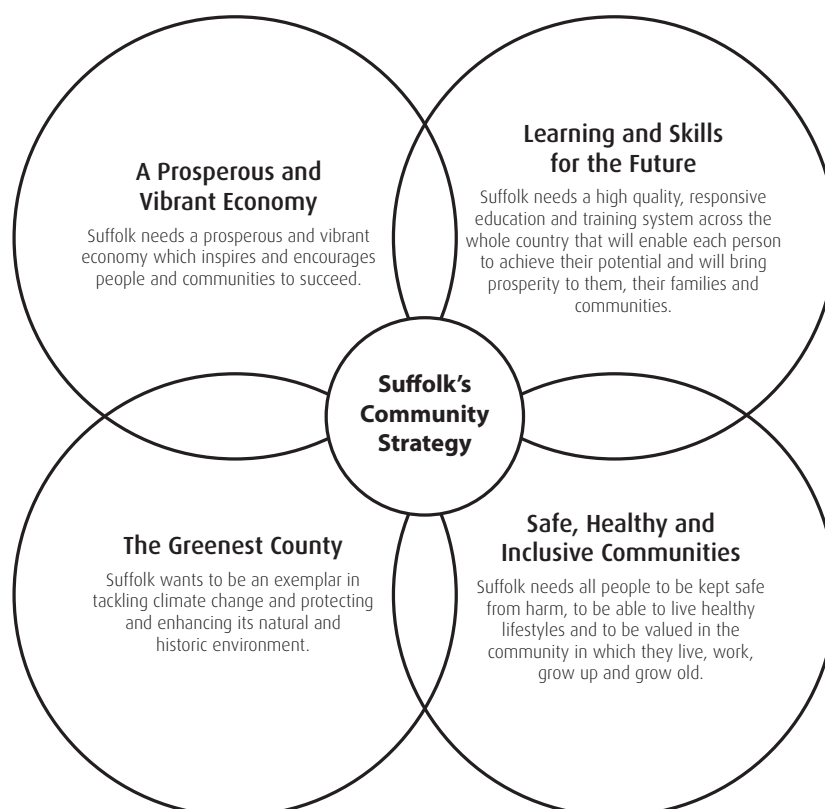
Suffolk is a diverse county made up of a mosaic of different places. There are densely populated urban areas like Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds, thriving market towns, small villages and rural communities. Each of these communities has its own identity, concerns and issues. Needs, opportunities and challenges vary across the county.

Suffolk's Community Strategy is ambitious. The Suffolk Strategic Partnership and the organisations that form it (see Section 10: Suffolk Strategic Partnership) will work together to deliver improvements to the quality of life in Suffolk, for its people and for its communities. The strategy will engage the energy, aspirations and support of Suffolk's people.

Our ambition:

'By 2028 we want Suffolk to be recognised for its outstanding environment and quality of life for all; a place where everyone can realise their potential, benefit from and contribute to Suffolk's economic prosperity, and be actively involved in their community.'

We will achieve this ambition through four identified themes:



In devising a community strategy, the Suffolk Strategic Partnership has acknowledged that a shift in thinking is required. There needs to be a clear distinction between those results that require a step change and those results where performance is already good and continuous improvement should be the focus.

The Suffolk Strategic Partnership has identified the following four outcomes to support Suffolk's four key priorities:

- To become the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England
- To have learning and skills in the top quartile in the country
- To be the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions
- To create a place where everyone is safe, healthy and involved, no matter who they are, or where in the county they live.

For each identified outcome there are 15 focus areas that will provide the focus for improvement and change.

This is the core of Suffolk's Community Strategy, giving a strong sense of where we want to be in 20 years' time. There are, however, a number of issues that cut across the four themes which are also critical to our success.

Theme	Outcome	Focus Areas	Cross Cutting Principles
A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy	Suffolk — the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England	Use Suffolk's unique selling points to capture emerging markets Reduce economic inequalities across the country Transport and infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth	A strong Suffolk identity Affordable, quality housing for all Cohesive communities Active citizenship and civic pride Access and opportunities for all Increased participation in culture, sport and recreational activities
Learning and Skills for the Future	Suffolk — learning and skills levels in the top quartile in the country	A workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy High aspirations and opportunities to realise them through quality learning opportunities	
The Greenest County	Suffolk — the county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions	Reduce Suffolk's carbon footprint and adapt to the changing climate and geography Retain, enhance and value Suffolk's natural and historic environment	
Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities	Suffolk — a place where every one is safe, healthy and included, no matter who they are or where they live	Reduce crime and disorder Reduce fear of crime People and communities are safeguarded from harm Minimise impact from drugs and alcohol on communities People are able to pursue a healthy lifestyle Reduce the gap in health inequalities People with choice and control to enable them to live independent lives A sense of belonging in communities that are valued, engaged and supported	

2. Challenges and choices for Suffolk

Suffolk is a beautiful rural county with a glorious heritage, often characterised as a good place to bring up families or to retire to. However, the county has on occasion been perceived as slow-moving, insular, without ambition and 'get up and go'.

Jewels of excellence, quiet but real achievement and huge pride of place characterise Suffolk: a physical environment among the best in the country, a high quality of life, and outstanding cultural events. There are strengths and weaknesses to these characteristics. Insularity can produce a sense of security and even complacency, which can erode ambition.

However, Suffolk people include some extraordinary, highly motivated, dynamic and successful individuals, and they, along with companies that foster a sense of ambition, need to be nurtured. Diversity, flexibility and community strength are excellent resources for building our future together.

Suffolk has not been destroyed by growth, as has been the case with many other historic counties, and there is a strong sense of community and partnership amongst Suffolk organisations. There is a real sense of unparalleled change in the county.

Developing a stronger sense of ambition was a feature of the Suffolk's Community Strategy in 2004. There has been real progress in many areas since then, including the remodelling of public services and the building of new relationships between organisations that should form the base for sustained high performance.

Strategy is about choices and about informing action. A strategy has to recognise and tackle these fundamental challenges.

In Suffolk's journey of change we have reached a crossroads; the last five years have seen the first steps in a new direction, and we will now seek to reinforce what we have already done.

Our choices include:

Do we perpetuate a low skilled, low earning economy? Or do we seek the transformation of skills and educational outlook, starting at the level of aspiration, and encourage the development of economic sectors which are in tune with Suffolk's past but give a competitive edge for the future?

Do we regard the major changes in the age profile of the county (communities with an increasingly elderly population and a declining young population) over a 20 year period as inevitable? Or do we take steps to create more demographic cohesion by retaining and attracting young people to live, work and study in Suffolk, and

provide new models of support and engagement for other people? One cannot operate without the other.

Do we regard the significant recent increase in migrant and other workers in the economy as a temporary and peripheral development? Or do we see it as an opportunity to strengthen our economy with new skills, encourage entrepreneurial talent and try to remove some of the insularity which has been a feature of Suffolk for generations?

Do we remain complacent about the unique environmental qualities of Suffolk with its biodiversity? Or do we face up to the reality that the physical shape of Suffolk will change over the next 20 years with coastal erosion? If the latter, do we wish to tap into the expertise and passion that will naturally spring up in the county, to make Suffolk a leader in tackling the long term issues of climate change?

Do we recognise that there are significant inequalities across a whole range of indicators, health, the economy, crime, etc - between different Suffolk communities, and try to ensure a more systematic approach to these inequalities? Suffolk is a mosaic of places with different standards; do we want to change this?

Do we become complacent about the relatively high standards of health and safety in the county? Or do we wish to promote a leading-edge approach to improving them further?

We could pretend that these choices are not there. We could do nothing, but 'doing nothing' in these areas would see Suffolk standing still while other counties continue to make progress. We would lose economic competitive edge; we would have unsustainable age profiles in our communities; and we could lose our beautiful and unique environment.

We are already laying the foundations for future success through projects like University Campus Suffolk; the prospect of creating The Greenest County; the opportunities arising from the Olympics; controlled housing growth and transforming education within our community.

Organisations in Suffolk are committed to meeting these challenges head on and turning them into opportunities for everyone who lives in, works in or visits Suffolk.

3. A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy

Suffolk needs a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy – an economy that inspires and encourages people and communities to succeed.

Priority 1: The most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England

By 2028 we want Suffolk to have:

- Used Suffolk's unique selling points to capture emerging markets
- Reduced economic inequalities across the county
- Improved transport and the infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth.

The wider picture

The balance of economic growth has shifted away from the UK, Western Europe and the US to Brazil, China, India, Russia, Mexico, Taiwan and South Korea. Not only are they growing faster, but India and China in particular are strengthening as knowledge-based economies: 75% of new multi-national research and development facilities are planned in India and China, and together these two countries produce four million graduates annually, compared to 290,000 in the UK.

Emerging European Union regions such as Prague and Bratislavsky, along with Scandinavia, are performing strongly as knowledge-based economies. The East of England can benefit from the growth of these emerging markets as mass markets for goods and services, collaborators in science and innovation, and sources of highly skilled workers.

The East of England is the fourth largest and one of the fastest growing regional economies in the UK. It is the most research and development-intensive region in the UK, and is one of the net contributors to the UK economy, even though productivity is lower than London and the South East.

The UK's cities play an important role in driving economic growth. Outside London the share of job growth is fairly evenly divided between the primary urban areas versus the towns and rural areas. In fact, towns and rural areas have been showing a higher ratio of job growth compared to the share of jobs overall.

The performance of the UK's transport networks will be an essential part of sustained productivity and competitiveness. A 5% reduction in travel time for all business travel could generate around £2.5 billion of cost savings some 0.2% of gross domestic product. A sophisticated mix of better use of infrastructure, and carbon and congestion charging offers considerable benefits.

There is a strong economic and environmental case for ensuring users of all types of transport face the true costs associated with their journeys, in line with the Stern Review of the economics of climate change.

Suffolk's economy

Suffolk has a below average size economy, and is small by British standards. However, economic change in Suffolk is positive as highlighted by the increase in the number of jobs. Mid Suffolk District attained the highest growth in the county, with Forest Heath the lowest. Despite this, Suffolk remains behind its regional counterparts of Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire in relation to productivity. In order to expand Suffolk's economy above the leading counties in the Eastern Region, major change is needed.

Suffolk's economy is characterised by a high proportion of small businesses, a tendency towards rural industries and activities, and dependence on declining manufacturing activities in particular areas of the county. Unemployment levels are low.

The proportion of jobs in knowledge-driven sectors in Suffolk is low, but growth in this area has exceeded the average both nationally and regionally. Labour market performance in Suffolk is very good, with high employment rates, higher than both national and regional averages.

However, Suffolk saw a significant increase in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit in 2006, with the biggest increase in St Edmundsbury. There has also been an increase in the number of people claiming benefits for more than six months. Despite this, Suffolk has seen an above average increase in the employment rate.

Average earnings in Suffolk are below the national and regional averages, and Suffolk is one of the lowest earning counties in the country. Waveney and Babergh have the lowest average gross earnings in the county at £303.20 and £322.10 per week, respectively. Suffolk Coastal sees the highest weekly earnings in Suffolk at £402.30, but even this falls below the £412.90 average for the region.

The rate at which new businesses are formed in Suffolk falls below the national and regional averages, although business survival rates are slightly higher than the East of England, with Waveney seeing an 88% survival rate compared to 82.8% in the region. Forest Heath has a high rate of new business formation, but survival rates after two years are low.

The knowledge industry is well represented and growing faster in Suffolk than anywhere in the region. Services remain the fastest growing sectors in the county. Manufacturing and food processing are important employers in market towns and rural areas.

The Haven Gateway in the south east of the county is an area identified for growth in the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy. Felixstowe Port is the largest container port in the country. 15,000 people derive their livelihoods from Suffolk's ports (Felixstowe, Ipswich and Lowestoft) and related industries. Felixstowe's planned port expansion is projected to result in a net growth of 1,360 jobs through port operators, logistics and a range of professional and support businesses.

Agriculture remains an important part of Suffolk's economy, worth £330 million in crops and livestock output in 2004. There is potential to add value through the high quality food and tourism sectors.

Good transport networks are important to support economic growth and regeneration. 28% of the UK's economy is dependent on international trade, and Suffolk is a major entry point to the UK through the Port of Felixstowe, with its links to the economies of China and South East Asia. Transport corridors through Suffolk link Felixstowe to London, the Midlands, and the rest of the UK.

The East of England Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) notes that Suffolk must increase growth in housing and jobs to provide 62,000 new homes and 53,000 jobs by 2021. The Haven Gateway in the south east of Suffolk, along with the Cambridge Sub Region and St Edmundsbury, have been identified as key growth points, with strategic investment to help meet these targets.

There are some worrying disparities across the county. The south of the county has seen substantial growth in housing and jobs over the last five years, while Waveney has experienced a net loss of jobs and slow housing growth. There are fewer people living in rural parishes than five years ago.

What people have said

Through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation, respondents identified the need to develop our economy for the benefit of local people and communities.

'It's the quality of businesses which will attract and retain younger people in Suffolk, and the businesses need the support and better infrastructure to want to move or develop here.'

Suffolk business representative

'One of the specific ambitions for Suffolk should be the generation of an economy that can sustain decent wages, driving us from amongst the lower reaches of average earnings.'

Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO)

Housing growth is an area of particular concern, especially in rural areas, small villages and market towns. Several members of the public stated that they want carefully planned development that would not spoil the nature of Suffolk or have a detrimental affect on the unique character of the towns and villages in Suffolk.

Consultation responses identified a need for more support for existing business to develop and grow in Suffolk.

'Maximise the economic potential of Suffolk's key assets within the context of sustainable economic growth (renewable energy potential, food production/tourism, new university).'

Creating Prosperity for All Theme

The need to attract new business and inward investment into the county was also identified along with supporting entrepreneurship, improving business start up and survival rates, and social enterprise.

The role of transport and transport infrastructure in supporting the growth of Suffolk's economy was a particular issue raised through the community strategy consultation. Respondents identified the need for transport provision to be sustainable to ensure that it does not damage the county's environment or Suffolk's ambition to be The Greenest County.

'Transport – not only looking at 'cross-county' link roads such as the A12 and A14, but to address market town congestion and also to look at sustainable transport as well as encouraging investment in increasing freight onto rail.'

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

What we will do

In arriving at our goal of being the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England, we will focus on our current strengths in sectors that are important and unique to Suffolk.

These include our proximity to Europe, a high quality environment, the presence of BT in the county, the high quality of the arts in the region and the newly established University Campus Suffolk (UCS).

Many of the aspirations and objectives in the community strategy relating to the economy and skills are spelled out in the 'Expanding Suffolk's Horizons' economic strategy, led by the Suffolk Development Agency (SDA).

As the Sub-Regional Economic Partnership for Suffolk, one of the primary roles of the SDA partnership is to bring together local authorities, businesses and organisations such as the East of England Development Agency in a mutually beneficial way to support the economic development of the county as a whole.

Focus area: Use Suffolk's unique selling points to capture emerging markets

Suffolk has the opportunity to become the European leader in the renewable energy market. The north Suffolk coast provides ideal conditions for generating offshore wind energy and is strategically positioned between the two major development areas of the Thames Estuary and the Greater Wash. The industry could bring over £6 billion investment to the Eastern region.

By collaborating with Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, which also have enormous potential to develop offshore wind energy in the North Sea, we can expand the opportunities for developing and marketing our specialist renewable energy generation technologies.

A large wind farm is already operating at Scroby Sands, off Great Yarmouth, and others are planned, including Greater Gabbard, off the Essex coast. From 2008, OrbisEnergy at Lowestoft will operate as a national focus for businesses in the renewables industry.

There will be a focus on information technology and associated knowledge-based industries in the east of Suffolk and along the Ipswich to Cambridge corridor. Negotiations are underway to develop the Martlesham Innovation Park next to the BT headquarters at Adastral Park. This will accommodate up to 80 knowledge-based businesses, creating 1,700 direct jobs.

Suffolk will be a key player in the developing biotech industry. Haverhill's proximity to Cambridge and the research and development aspects of the biotechnology industry have not yet been fully capitalised. There are opportunities to encourage manufacturing companies in the life sciences/biotech fields to locate to west Suffolk.

West Suffolk College (as University Campus Suffolk, Bury) is keen to develop a proposal for an 'Aerospace Centre of Excellence'. This presents an important opportunity to attract the aerospace industry to West Suffolk and the potential for up to 1,000 high quality jobs in this industry.

The East of England Development Agency is backing the Suffolk Development Agency and Suffolk County Council to investigate the potential for developing a food hub in Suffolk to create better links between producers and local and regional markets. This could reduce food miles while boosting the rural economy, and would provide Suffolk with the opportunity to become a national leader in quality food and food tourism. Local food is an important sector for Suffolk. It supports our ambitions to create The Greenest County and plays an important role in Suffolk's brand.

Creative industries in the broadest sense are a key sector for Suffolk over the next 20 years in terms of job creation, business growth and development, leisure opportunities, and reinforcing our strong tourist reputation. ¹

Newmarket is internationally famous as a centre for horse racing and breeding, and attracts many visitors and major investment to the town. Other related activity in the area includes the Animal Health Trust. There are opportunities to link Newmarket to the Suffolk brand more effectively and to promote the equine sector as a niche opportunity.

Suffolk's proximity to London and the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games offers both economic and social benefits going forward. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is estimated to be worth a potential £66 million to Suffolk. In addition to the economic benefits, the Games will provide an opportunity to inspire people across Suffolk to engage with voluntary and community activity, and to increase their participation in creative and sporting activities. This is discussed in more detail in Section 7: Principles for the community strategy.

Social enterprises are businesses with a social purpose at their core, and usually thrive on a desire to address social issues. There are many opportunities for social enterprises to develop in Suffolk, including communities working to improve access to local services. In many cases the private and public sectors can't or won't provide these services because of deprivation or rural isolation, and so the work of these social enterprises

¹ The Department for Culture, Media and Sport defines the creative industries as including advertising, architecture, art/antiques trade, crafts, design, designer fashion, video, film and photography, music, visual and performing arts, publishing, computers, software, electronic publishing, and broadcasting.

can create employment opportunities for individuals who are otherwise isolated from the labour market.

Social enterprises do not distribute profits to shareholders, but instead invest surpluses raised through trading back into the enterprises' social aims. This is important in Suffolk because of its rurality and, with low levels of unemployment but low skills and wages, it is important that those isolated from employment and training are given the opportunity to contribute to the economy and their local communities.

Improving skills will be a key area if we are to ensure that Suffolk has the most innovative and diverse economy in the East of England. Suffolk's Economic Strategy reinforces the link between these themes. 'Expanding Suffolk's Horizons' sets out the short-term strategy for improving Suffolk's economy and cites developing skills as an essential element in Suffolk's economy. Detail on Suffolk's long-term aspirations for learning and skills are set out in Section 4: Learning and Skills for the Future.

In developing Suffolk's economy, the challenge will be to accommodate necessary growth alongside the protection and enhancement of the environment. Development in Suffolk needs to be sustainable, and opportunities exist to achieve this through carbon neutral housing and the development of the renewable energy sector. Further work is needed to ensure that development and planning policies in Suffolk support the ambitions of both 'The Greenest County' and 'a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy'.

Focus area: Reduce economic inequalities across the county

The gap between the stronger and weaker economies of Suffolk needs to be reduced. 1st East Urban Regeneration Company has already brought businesses and public agencies together to develop specific plans for transforming 1,500 acres of waterfront in Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth. The aim is to co-ordinate investment in housing, employment and leisure, providing new jobs and a better living space. All these improvements will have direct links to the OrbisEnergy and University Campus Suffolk initiatives.

Earnings and skills levels are lower in West Suffolk than for the rest of the county because the workforce is largely dependent on the declining sectors of agriculture, food processing and manufacturing. Half the Haverhill workforce commutes to Cambridge.

West Suffolk needs to attract knowledge-based companies into the area and build on its proximity to Cambridge and Essex. The national growth trend for the biotech sector is high and Cambridge lacks space and has high wage costs. Haverhill, Sudbury and Newmarket already have successful clusters of the biotech sector, with

seven companies employing almost 700 people.

Agriculture is still an important part of Suffolk's economy, worth £330 million in crops and livestock output in 2004. There is good potential to add value through the high quality food and tourism sectors.

As the more traditional approaches disappear, we need to find new and innovative ways to establish services in rural areas and to develop small business units in market towns and rural areas. The 21st Century Village idea, being promoted by Rural Action East and National ACRE, involves all relevant agencies signing a protocol to contribute towards making their village a model of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

The links between housing and the economy were highlighted through the consultation process. It was felt that affordable housing formed a major part of developing a prosperous economy. Without affordable housing Suffolk can neither attract nor retain a workforce to support the economy.

Housing also links to the other themes within this strategy – see Section 7: Principles for Suffolk's community strategy.

Focus area: Transport and infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth

The growth of Suffolk's economy will require investment in infrastructure: utilities, transport, schools and learning facilities, and health facilities. Integrated development programmes, which align infrastructure provision to housing and employment growth, will be prepared for all sub-regions and areas in Suffolk.

Our strategy will focus on the need to transport people and goods to and from their destinations in the most efficient and sustainable way. This will require a range of solutions that provide viable alternatives to building roads and use of the private car. Modern communications technology will help reduce the need to travel.

Reducing congestion in the main towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft will be essential to promote their economic vitality. Improving public transport networks, supported by feeder services from rural areas, will help to encourage the move from private cars to public transport. Workplace, school and residential travel planning all have a role in reducing demand for peak-time road capacity, particularly in main towns and on strategic networks, and walking and cycling will be promoted for shorter journeys. This will also help to reduce our carbon footprint, as set out in Section 5: The Greenest County.

We need to ensure that the strategic routes into and out of Suffolk – to Europe via the ports as well as to London and the Midlands by road and rail - have sufficient capacity

to support the county's economic development. We need substantial improvements to the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail line and the A14, as well as increasing capacity on the A12 and rail line between Ipswich and London.

The estimated value of the county's existing transport infrastructure is £2.6 billion. We need to manage these assets carefully, and to ensure that any new transport infrastructure is maintained to a good standard in the long term.

In recognising the region's growth agenda, the importance of city regions, and how Suffolk as a business location can be positioned more prominently, the Suffolk Development Agency will seek to commission some independent research into transport connections between the main urban growth areas and gateways that have an impact on Suffolk, primarily the links between Haven Gateway, Lowestoft/ Great Yarmouth, Greater Norwich, Greater Cambridge and Stansted, and their respective links with London.

4. Learning and Skills for the Future

Suffolk needs a high-quality, responsive education and training system that enables everyone to achieve their full potential, and which brings prosperity to themselves, their families and communities.

Priority 2: Learning and skills levels in the top quartile in the country

In 2028, we want Suffolk to have:

- A workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy
- High aspirations, and opportunities to realise them through quality learning opportunities.

The wider picture

The UK's skills are not world class and could undermine the UK's long term prosperity. Productivity continues to fall behind some main international competitors. Despite recent progress, the UK has serious social disparities with high levels of child poverty, poor employment rates for the disadvantaged, regional variations and marked income inequality.

Improving skill levels can help to solve all of these problems.

There is a direct correlation between skills, productivity and employment. Unless the UK can build on reforms to schools, colleges and universities and make its skills base one of its strengths, UK businesses will find it increasingly difficult to compete. As a result of low skill levels, the UK risks increasing inequality, deprivation and child poverty, and risks a generation cut off permanently from opportunities in the labour market.

Building Schools for the Future is a major investment programme for buildings and information and communications technology aimed at rebuilding or renewing every secondary school in England. Its purpose is to bring about an improvement in the quality of educational provision across England and to act as a catalyst for the wider educational reform agenda, including national academies, the curriculum for 14 to 19 year olds, provision for children with special needs and the extended schools initiative.

Subject to future decisions on public expenditure, the aim is that by 2011 every English local authority will have received enough funding at least to renew the schools in greatest need, and by 2016 major rebuilding and remodelling projects will be underway in every local authority area.

Learning and skills in Suffolk

Education and training in Suffolk is good compared with many other parts of the country. In our schools, colleges and at work, achievements are generally higher than the national levels and show steady improvement; however, this picture hides geographical variations in both the range and quality of education available. It also masks relatively low levels of participation in non compulsory learning for both young people and adults.

Too many people in our communities are held back by poor literacy and numeracy skills. Levels of educational attainment are a key determinant of future success for children and young people and have direct links with their future health and well being as adults.

High-quality early years provision has contributed to good results in the Foundation Stage Profile, and the pattern of performance above national expectations continues in assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 (age 7), Key Stage 3 (age 14) and Key Stage 4 (age 16). However, there is a need to continue to improve education across the board and especially in areas where Suffolk under performs, including Key Stage 2 (age 11) and post 16 achievement.

The current focus on under performance at Key Stage 2, especially in the three tier system, brought attainment levels in English back to the national average in 2006, and a greater improvement in mathematics than seen nationally, but this is still not sufficient.

In March 2007, Suffolk County Council agreed to move away from the current mixed two and three tier pattern of schools to a uniform system of two tier provision across the whole county.

This School Organisation Review represented the largest single review of school provision in Suffolk for over 30 years. The programme is closely linked to the Building Schools for the Future initiative – both are aimed at helping children and young people to realise their full potential.

The programme will be implemented in three phases – these began in Haverhill and Lowestoft in the summer of 2007 – and will take account of provision for 14 to 19 year olds and those with special needs as well as related issues such as school transport and the impact on the environment.

Analysis of data over several years led to the decision to investigate factors affecting educational performance as part of a fundamental review of school organisation in Suffolk, and subsequently prompted the decision to move away from the three tier system which exists in parts of the county.

The results of school inspections in Suffolk compare well with the national picture, with 19 'outstanding' schools, three 'outstanding' Pupil Referral Units, and few schools

found to need significant improvement or special measures.

However, schools need to adapt and respond to the rapid changes taking place in society. School structures are therefore being reviewed and will be reconfigured through the 'Transforming Learning with Communities' programme to ensure that our learning systems are more appropriate for the developing needs and aspirations of children, young people and communities in Suffolk.

The proportion of young people who continue their education and training beyond the age of 16 is too low and has been relatively static in recent years. In 2005, there was a 1% increase in participation rates for 16 to 18 year olds to 71%. In 2006, participation stabilised at 71.1%, remaining significantly below the national average of just over 76%. Although the participation rate of 16 year old school leavers is improving more quickly, with rises as significant as 10% in some local areas, the drop out rate at age 17 is holding back the overall participation rate for the 16 to 18 age group.

Good progress is being made towards guaranteeing an appropriate learning offer for every school leaver, thought to be the result of the new 14 to 16 programmes developed under the Suffolk 14 - 19 Strategy.

Post 16 participation in structured learning has seen small increases since 2004, and increased numbers in further education have been sustained alongside some growth in numbers attending school sixth forms.

By contrast, fewer young people are opting for Government sponsored training or work-based learning with an employer. Despite this, apprenticeship success rates for 16 to 18 year olds in Suffolk are the highest in the Eastern Region.

The number of young people aged 16 to 18 not in education, employment or training (NEET) remains a significant challenge for Suffolk. Although NEET is a post 16 measure, more needs to be done to support full commitment to education for the under 16s.

In November 2006, the proportion of young people in the NEET group was 8.3% compared with 8.4% in 2005. This represents approximately 1,700 young people in Suffolk.

A further 3,300 young people aged 16 to 18 years are in jobs without training. These are often low paid, low skilled jobs with few career prospects, making this group particularly vulnerable to the risk of becoming NEET. The highest levels of NEET correspond with high levels of deprivation (e.g. Lowestoft, Ipswich and Haverhill).

Levels of skills, participation and achievement are not evenly distributed across the county. The wide variance and concentration of deprivation and underachievement in some areas suggests that investment should be targeted in areas of greatest need, including

Forest Heath, Haverhill, Lowestoft and Ipswich.

The evidence also points to a strong correlation between the 'hot spots' identified for the adult workforce and those identified for young people, with patterns emerging in terms of pre and post 16 attainment, participation in education and training and local NEET rates.

Suffolk is making good progress towards raising the basic levels of numeracy and literacy within the county and towards the national Skills for Life target, but there is still a good deal to do. An estimated quarter of Suffolk's population has a problem with literacy skills and a slightly higher proportion (27%) has difficulty with numeracy.

What people have said

Education and learning was identified as a key issue through the community strategy consultation. Particular concern was given to the low skills base in Suffolk, identifying a need to ensure that local people have the skills necessary to take up local jobs, particularly in new and emerging sectors.

Local schools and the education system in Suffolk were generally acknowledged as already being at a high standard.

Life long learning was highlighted as a key area for future focus to ensure that adult and community learning is also seen as an important factor in learning and skills, and that life-long learning is much broader than just skills and qualifications.

In other community strategy focus areas, education was also frequently mentioned. For example, the need for education relating to:

- Drugs and alcohol, to reduce substance misuse
- The environment, to raise awareness of environmental issues and the need to reduce waste and emissions
- Healthy eating and exercise, to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Lack of ambition and aspirations is seen as a key issue in Suffolk in regard to learning and skills. Young people in particular were identified as having low aspirations and as being unlikely to take opportunities to achieve their full potential in life. Low aspirations were not, however, only limited to young people and learning, but also applied to the ambitions and aspirations of the communities and organisations in Suffolk.

'SAVO believes that for a 20 year vision it is vital to address stimulating aspirations amongst all those who live in Suffolk.'

Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO)

A number of opportunities to transform learning and skills exist in Suffolk.

'Building Schools for the Future and the School Organisation Review ... have a vital role with University Campus Suffolk in increasing the education and skills base in Suffolk.'

Suffolk County Council

What we will do

If Suffolk is to achieve its ambitions for our residents and for our economy, we must increase the number of young people and adults who achieve higher level skills and qualifications at each stage of their lives. We must also eliminate the geographical variations that limit access to high quality opportunities.

Over the next five years there will be a learning renaissance in Suffolk. The establishment of University Campus Suffolk will spearhead a series of developments that will bring the highest quality learning facilities into the county. This will include new and refurbished school facilities through Building Schools for the Future, a new college and a new centre for 16 to 19 year olds serving south Suffolk, and the modernisation of the Lowestoft and West Suffolk College campuses.

Investment in new modern facilities for post 16 education and training will ensure that all students have access to the best possible learning environments, in particular a new Further Education College in Ipswich, new 16 - 19 centres and the substantial modernisation of further education facilities in both Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

Suffolk children and young people generally achieve well compared to regional and national standards, including Foundation Stage Profile and Key Stages 1, 3 and 4. However, there is a need to continue to improve educational results across the board, and especially in areas where Suffolk falls below national averages, including Key Stage 2 and post 16 achievement.

Particular attention needs to be given to those people who under achieve in education, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Most black and minority ethnic (BME) groups perform in accordance with national expectations, and there have been encouraging gains by some groups. There is a continuing need to tailor BME group resources to boost achievement, and to support the increasing number of schools with pupils whose first language is not English.

Other groups who are targeted for particular support include children with learning difficulties or disabilities and children in care.

The 'Transforming Learning with Communities' programme is developing a vision for education in Suffolk which will be guided, in part, by the aspirations set out in this community strategy. The programme builds on and brings together opportunities provided by a range of inter-related developments in learning:

- The Building Schools for the Future programme, which offers a unique opportunity to transform the way in which education is delivered by providing over £500 million of capital investment to create 21st century teaching and educational facilities across Suffolk
- The phased implementation of the School Organisation Review will ensure that our educational system delivers the best package for Suffolk's children and young people
- The implementation of Suffolk's 14 - 19 Strategy will create quantifiable improvements in performance and participation through an integrated, sustainable system of education and training for that age group
- University Campus Suffolk will attract and retain well educated and highly skilled young people and adults, and could in time boost the local economy by £500 million a year.

Focus area: A workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy

Current population forecasts show that Suffolk will have an ageing population. There will be a growing number of people over the age of 65 and fewer younger people. The opening of the University Campus Suffolk in 2007 was a key partnership achievement which presents an opportunity to attract and retain more young people in Suffolk.

More work is now necessary to ensure that suitable jobs are available for graduates once they complete their university course, enabling Suffolk to retain highly qualified young people.

Through the Suffolk Strategic Partnership, University Campus Suffolk will work closely with partners to ensure that the university provides courses that meet the needs of Suffolk's employers so as to maximise the potential of graduates staying in the county. Renewable energy is one example of a growing sector in Suffolk that could be supported through the university.

There are nearly 400,000 adults of working age (19 to 64) in Suffolk. The level of qualifications among economically active adults (everyone of working age) is below the regional and

national averages. We need to encourage more employers to take up the support available to train their workforce, especially those with few qualifications or basic skills. The Skills Pledge for employers will help to achieve this.

Additionally, Suffolk needs to develop the responsiveness of both colleges and training providers to the needs of employers.

The Suffolk 14 - 19 Strategy provides the central focus for ensuring that young people achieve economic well-being. It is led by an effective and proactive local partnership of the Learning & Skills Council, Suffolk County Council and 12 local provider partnerships/consortia. Local partnerships involve schools, colleges and the training network to plan specialised courses based on local needs analysis. Suffolk is a pilot for the Department for Children, Schools & Families, 14 to 19 funding and organisation initiative.

Employers have a central role to play in ensuring that employees in Suffolk have access to high quality training and educational opportunities, and education and skills will play a vital role in achieving Suffolk's ambition to have a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy.

Focus area: High aspirations, and opportunities to realise them through quality learning opportunities

The 'Transforming Learning with Communities' programme will ensure that children and young people in Suffolk receive a rich and varied education, and that through the quality of its provision, education in Suffolk will raise expectations, extend opportunities, and improve prospects.

Success will be measured across the community in higher levels of attainment, higher levels of employment and higher levels of continuation in education post 16.

Providing high quality adult education will support individuals and their families, and help the most vulnerable towards autonomy and positive social engagement.

This will be achieved in a number of ways, including:

- Excellence in performance and participation
 - Personalising education so that it is tailored to the needs of individuals
 - Increasing choice and variety in the education system to develop more distinctive cultures and ethos' and to encourage innovation
 - Ensuring education is inclusive so that all students, whatever the barriers before them, have the opportunity to become successful and to achieve their potential
- Placing schools at the heart of the community to create successful educational partnerships and 'learning communities'
 - The development of a network of Learning and Enterprise Access Points will raise awareness of educational and skills opportunities at all levels and improve access to information and local education. This will be built through a partnership between University Campus Suffolk, Suffolk County Council, Learning Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, colleges and schools
 - Building on young people's hope and commitment to continue their education, the 14 - 19 Strategy will help them direct their ambitions
 - The commitment of key agencies and employers to education and skills as an investment in Suffolk's economy will be fundamental to improvement in this area. This will be done through the success of Suffolk's education and training sector and a focused campaign to raise commitment: 'Suffolk's future - it's in our hands'.

5. The Greenest County

Suffolk wants to be seen as an example in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing its natural and historic environment.

Priority 3: The county with the greatest reduction in carbon emissions

By 2028, Suffolk will:

- Reduce its carbon footprint and adapt to the changing climate and geography
- Retain, enhance and value its natural and historic environment.

The wider picture

Suffolk is well aware of the global implications of climate change. Internationally, news reports show us melting glaciers and ice caps, the evacuation of homes on low-lying islands because of rising sea levels, extreme weather conditions leading to devastation, and the potential extinction of many species. In England we have seen extreme weather events such as the floods in the summer of 2007.

It is predicted that the East of England will see winter rainfall increase by 30%, summer rainfall decrease by 45-60% and the sea level rising by between 22 and 82 cm.

Suffolk's environment

Suffolk has an exceptionally rich and varied environment. This includes the coast and estuaries, the culturally important landscape of the Stour Valley, the ancient hedged landscape of the clayland heart, and the forests and heath of the Brecks.

The importance of the Suffolk environment is shown through the wealth of national and international landscape and wildlife designations. The Suffolk Coasts and Heaths and Dedham Vale are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Broads has National Park status, areas such as the Sandlings and estuaries are internationally important for wildlife, and Suffolk has over 31,000 hectares of land designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Suffolk's landscapes and wildlife habitats, supporting species such as stone curlew and bittern, are the result of excellent stewardship of land and water. The protection and management of this environment is important for its intrinsic value and for the economic prosperity that it brings, through attracting both tourists and businesses.

Increasingly, Suffolk's 'offer' is expanding into new aspects of the environment, for example, into a strong reputation for quality food and becoming the home of important environmental business sectors, such as offshore wind energy.

Suffolk has a good track record of leading on a number of environmental issues. The county has an excellent record in waste management; Suffolk councils have been awarded Beacon Status for having one of the best waste and recycling services in the country. In 2004/05, Suffolk was the second-best recycling and composting county in the country. Suffolk met the demanding Government target to achieve 35% recycling and composting, and is already meeting the 2008 target of 39% of waste recycled or composted.

Climate change poses one of the most severe and immediate threats to Suffolk's environment. Its long, low-lying coastline makes Suffolk particularly at risk from climate change. Water and coastal management are likely to be the most serious issues relating to climate change in Suffolk. It is one of the driest parts of the country and many of the available water resources are already overstretched. Farmers will have to adapt to new conditions and deal with new diseases, as demonstrated by the outbreak of blue tongue in 2007.

Extreme weather conditions could have a huge impact on people, especially on the elderly and the most vulnerable. In the summer, heat stress could be a particular issue, as seen in France in 2005 when many thousands died. Longer term we may also see an increase in skin cancers.

During the winter, older people will be vulnerable to extremes of cold weather and fuel poverty could be a particular issue for the increasing older population in Suffolk. (Fuel poverty is discussed in more detail in Section 6: Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities.)

In 2007, CRed Suffolk (the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership) published research into establishing a carbon footprint for Suffolk. This study estimated that the carbon dioxide emission for Suffolk in 2004 was approximately 4.8 million tonnes, equating to an emission of 7.7 tonnes per head of the population.

In Suffolk, domestic carbon dioxide emissions make up the majority of the county's emission. Transport was shown to be the second largest producer of emissions, closely followed by industry and commerce.

The rural nature of Suffolk, with limited local facilities and few public transport services in rural areas, means that many people are reliant on private cars. The main towns of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft provide opportunities for more sustainable modes of travel. Traffic levels have increased in Suffolk, but at a lower rate than the national average. Ipswich Park and Ride schemes remove approximately 1 million cars from the town centre every year, and sustainable travel to work has increased in recent years.

What people have said

The issue of climate change and the impact that this could have on Suffolk was a key issue highlighted through the community strategy consultation. The need to reduce emissions, improve air quality and conserve water were also identified as key actions for the future.

'Action needs to be focused on... mitigation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (for example, projects such as energy use and minimisation, travel reduction – generally involving attitudinal and behavioural change as well as technological or infrastructure improvements).'

Ipswich Borough Council

The risks of flooding, coastal erosion and drought were some of the concerns raised through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation in relation to climate change. Although reducing Suffolk's carbon footprint was seen as having an important contribution towards holding off climate change, it was acknowledged that Suffolk is still likely to suffer from the effects of the changing climate. Responses were therefore clear that, as well as needing to reduce our impact on the environment, Suffolk also needs to ensure that communities are able to deal with the effects that climate change may have on the county.

Responses from Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation also showed that people are very concerned about the impact of development and growth on Suffolk's unique environment and landscape, as set out in Section 3: A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy.

Suffolk's rich architectural heritage and the natural environment were identified as being positive assets that need to be preserved and promoted. They provide a major attraction for tourists and visitors and benefit the county's economy, as well as making Suffolk a high quality environment in which people choose to live and work.

What we will do

Focus area: Reduce Suffolk's carbon footprint and adapt to the changing climate and geography

Suffolk is not following a pre-determined formula but is 'raising the bar' in designing its own approach towards achieving sustainable communities, economic prosperity and a high quality environment.

By 2025, Suffolk aims to achieve a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. The Suffolk Strategic Partnership aims to achieve this target through the Climate Action Plan for Suffolk. Cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 60% from the 2004 baseline equates to reducing emissions to around 1.93 million tonnes – an immense challenge given population growth and current trends in energy consumption.

Establishing and reducing Suffolk's carbon footprint is an important aim for the county. With all sectors tackling initiatives such as energy efficiency, water consumption measures and reducing business mileage, this may be achieved.

University Campus Suffolk and public sector campus developments in Lowestoft, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds offer the opportunity to develop a 'green building network' as a national model for sustainable buildings. It also serves as a showcase for new technologies, renewable energy sources and the knowledge economy. This is in addition to the excellent buildings already completed or under construction by Adnams, the National Trust, OrbisEnergy, the Greenlight Trust and recent school developments.

The development of OrbisEnergy, as set out in Section 3: A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy, also provides Suffolk with the opportunity to become a European leader in the renewable energy market and deliver the ambition of becoming The Greenest County.

Support for environmental education in Suffolk's schools is essential if the next generation is to be more environmentally aware. Targets for development of eco-schools, school travel plans, school recycling, and developing schools as an eco-hub for their surrounding communities will be pursued.

Although no 'carbon neutral' homes have yet been built, Suffolk remains committed to maintaining a sustainable approach to development. The Three Gardens housing scheme in Elmswell, proposed by the Orwell Housing Association, is a good example of this commitment. Using extremely low-carbon emission building materials and energy-efficient design, the project will provide 26 dwellings that are low-carbon in construction and running.

These principles need to be established across all important planning documents, in particular the Local Development Frameworks. Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing will also be a focus for future work to reduce emissions.

Support for communities wishing to reduce their carbon footprint will require close partnership between local authorities, utility companies and the communities themselves over issues such as land purchase, planning requirements, finance and technical issues.

Given the availability of the raw materials in a mainly rural agricultural county, Suffolk has particular opportunities with regard to biomass and biogas, and this fits with a strong desire to recycle and reduce waste.

Creating The Greenest County initiative has set out to attract the positive support of innovative businesses across Suffolk. Awards will highlight best practice across Suffolk in businesses, schools and communities. Major businesses and small/medium sized enterprises will be central to the development of the awards.

Our efforts in this area contribute to achieving a 'prosperous, diverse and vibrant economy' and to creating substantial opportunities for the business sector. Advice and information for businesses will be offered in partnership with the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. The support for the development of a 'green fund' to aid environmental improvement across Suffolk will be explored across the private, public and voluntary sectors.

The urban centres of Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds provide a focus for improving sustainable travel: walking, cycling and public transport. See Section 3: A prosperous, diverse and vibrant economy, for more detail. National experience shows that positive steps can be taken even in rural areas.

Workplace and school travel plans, and locally based car clubs can all reduce the use of private cars in rural areas. Smaller cars and those with higher fuel economy can also help in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. Suffolk County Council's joint work with Suffolk ACRE to develop a countywide car-sharing scheme, Suffolkcarshare.com, can provide an alternative to the individual use of cars in urban and rural areas.

New developments should in the future be located in areas within easy reach of existing local services, reducing the need to travel, and we should provide opportunities for sustainable transport within the development itself. All this will play a key role in reducing carbon emissions in communities.

Suffolk County Council, and the Borough and District Councils are working together to develop action plans to improve the air quality in Ipswich and Woodbridge, focusing on transport improvements to relieve both congestion and the resulting emissions.

Suffolk needs to plan ahead to avoid the worst impacts and take advantage of opportunities.

The Environment Agency and water companies have a key role to play in developing and updating their catchment and shoreline management plans, as well as area drought plans. Suffolk and its neighbouring counties have a great opportunity to bring together expertise in the form of universities, Cefas, the Environment

Agency and other educational/scientific establishments to provide integrated coastal zone management.

Suffolk Resilience Forum is working to ensure that climate change issues are included in work on emergency planning, as discussed in Section 6: Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities.

Primary Care Trusts will work to integrate the implications of climate change into their service delivery, and strengthen emergency planning.

Suffolk is well placed to maximise opportunities arising from responses to climate change. Suffolk is already leading the way with offshore wind energy, as discussed in Section 3: A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy.

Focus area: Retain, enhance and value Suffolk's natural and historic environment

Suffolk will protect and enhance the natural and historic environment and ensure that landscape, wildlife and historic features which are special and distinctive to Suffolk remain so in the future. £1 billion per year spent on tourism is also directly related to these attractive landscapes.

The Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership and others will work to protect and enhance Suffolk's wildlife habitats and species. This is especially important with respect to designated sites, as well as habitats and species within the Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan which are largely irreplaceable. The distinctive nature of Suffolk will be recognised, protected and enhanced. The record of sites and monuments will be used to identify historic sites which must be managed and protected.

Climate change is likely to have a profound influence on the future of Suffolk's environment. Appropriate land use strategies must be adopted across the county to reduce habitat fragmentation and create new habitats to replace those lost through coastal erosion and changing water levels. Regional and local landscape and biodiversity mapping initiatives are attempting to set guidance for targeting and managing land use change within the county.

Increased understanding of coastal issues can be achieved through stakeholder engagement in deciding the future of the coast.

Farming remains the main land use in Suffolk and it has created the distinctive cultural landscape and wildlife habitats. It is essential that sensitive agricultural policies and agri-environment schemes are developed across the whole of the county. The development of local food projects which promote wildlife sensitive farming will benefit Suffolk's wildlife as well as the climate. With farming one of the key business sectors in Suffolk, we have the potential to increase the market for locally produced high quality food.

Infrastructure, procurement, distribution and marketing of local food will benefit Suffolk with a reduction in 'food miles' and also reduce emissions from transporting food. It will also provide good quality food, which supports the aim of enabling people to make healthy life choices. Local food, the availability of abattoir facilities within the region and grazing are all intrinsically linked to maintaining the important landscapes of Suffolk.

Suffolk's Rights of Way Improvement Plan sets out key objectives for improving access to Suffolk's countryside. This plan will ensure that everyone can benefit from well managed and promoted routes. Access to natural green space (country parks, wildlife reserves, etc) is important in both urban and rural areas.

A green infrastructure strategy is being developed for the Haven Gateway Growth Area, which sets out a vision for improved access in the Gateway to complement development and to protect sensitive wildlife areas. Consideration is to be given to extending this approach across the county. Districts are developing green-space strategies at a more local level.

Suffolk has a strong record of working with local communities and schools. Initiatives which help local people to get involved in managing their local environment have other benefits, such as health, community cohesion, and development of skills. A wide range of sectors need to come together to maximise these opportunities.

Cross-sector partnerships (like the Great Fen Project in Cambridgeshire) are developing projects to return large areas of landscape to the wild. These exciting flagship projects will have multiple benefits, including tourism, recreation, wildlife enhancement, landscape, and adapting to climate change.

Suffolk currently has 13,187 listed buildings, which account for 22.7% of those found in the East of England. It also has 325 scheduled monuments and 18,000 other sites of archaeological importance – more than most parts of the country.

The 'Prosperous and Vibrant Economy' theme (see Section 3 for more detail) has already identified concerns about development and growth impacting on Suffolk's natural and architectural heritage, and planning policies will be used to ensure that development is in keeping with its surroundings and does not have a detrimental effect on the environment.

6. Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities

Suffolk's ambition is for all people to be kept safe from harm, to be able to live healthy lifestyles and to be valued in the community in which they live, work, grow up and grow old.

Priority 4: A place where everyone is safe, healthy and included, no matter who they are or where they live.

By 2028 we want Suffolk to have:

- Reduced crime and disorder
- Reduced fear of crime
- People and communities safeguarded from harm
- Minimal impact from drugs and alcohol on communities
- People pursuing healthy lifestyles
- A reduced gap in health inequalities
- Choice and control to enable people to live independent lives
- Communities where people feel a sense of belonging and being valued.

A. Safe

The wider picture

Reducing crime and disorder, the fear of crime, the impact of drugs and alcohol on local communities, and ensuring people are safeguarded from harm all reflect national priorities. These are expressed in the National Policing Plan: Safe Stronger Communities, but they should also be seen in the wider context of the Home Office Strategic Plan and Building Communities Beating Crime. Locally, they are expressed in crime and disorder reduction strategies, the Police Community Engagement Strategy and the Constabulary and Police Authority Strategic Plans.

National crime reduction priorities include:

1. Reducing overall crime, including violent and drug related crime
2. Responding to the needs of communities and individuals
3. Reducing concern about crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour
4. Targeting prolific offenders
5. Combating serious and organised crime.

Safety in Suffolk

Crime levels in Suffolk are lower than both the national average and the average for England and Wales. In 2006/07, British crime statistics showed that Suffolk has the 6th lowest crime rate among the 43 police forces in England and Wales. However, despite the probability of being a victim of crime in Suffolk being one of the lowest in the country, research shows that crime and disorder is still a key issue for Suffolk residents, and fear of crime is disproportionate to crime levels in the county.

Safety is not just about crime, and we should look at all the areas of our community where we can improve community safety in the broadest sense. This includes safety in the home, on the roads and in the community, and should take particular account of vulnerable groups. At the same time, we should provide our community with enough information to make them aware of how safe Suffolk actually is and to tackle the issue of negative perceptions.

From April to September 2007, 55.6% of antisocial behaviour was classed as rowdiness/nuisance behaviour. Although not a serious crime, this can have a huge impact on the quality of life of the people and communities it affects.

Crime in Ipswich accounts for almost 30% of all crime in Suffolk, with the remainder spread across the other six districts and boroughs. Crime in Suffolk during 2007/08 was most prevalent in central Ipswich and central Lowestoft, and in the future, attempts to reduce crime will be focused on these higher crime areas.

Although fear of crime may seem disproportionate to the rate of crime in Suffolk, it remains low compared to most similar police areas in England and Wales. Local variations can be significant, and while perceptions can be very difficult to influence, they are very real for the individuals who hold these views.

The British Crime Survey measures confidence levels in the Criminal Justice System. Within the surveyed population in Suffolk for the period March to June 2007, 46.3% are very or fairly confident that the system would 'effectively bring offenders to justice'. This puts Suffolk into the top three of the 42 Criminal Justice areas.

During 2006/07, Suffolk recorded 445 racist incidents, an increase of 3% on 2005/06.

Suffolk has a relatively good record for road safety. In 2005, 381 people were killed or seriously injured on Suffolk's roads, of which 23 were children. This compares well to a county average of 460 and 42, respectively. In 2006, the number of people killed or seriously injured on Suffolk roads reduced to 359, of which 25 were aged under 16.

In Suffolk during 2006/07, the number of fires per

10,000 dwellings was 11.00 (363 in total) with three deaths resulting from accidental fires.

Excessive alcohol consumption is a major cause of ill health and premature death. It is also the cause of a number of accidents and is an important factor in criminal offences and social issues in Suffolk. During the period April to September 2007, 21.4% of all crimes recorded were alcohol related, as were 38% of domestic violence incidents for the same period.

Of over 7,000 violent crimes recorded in a public place in Suffolk last year, about half were linked to alcohol and drugs. The number of serious drug offences (including production/supply and possession with intent to supply) has remained fairly constant in Suffolk for the last three years at around 350 offences per year. Although this level of offending is slightly above the average figure for counties similar to Suffolk, it reflects Suffolk Constabulary's proactive approach in dealing with this crime.

Social changes in drinking behaviour have caused increased levels of harm both in terms of health and crime, and also have wider effects in community. Estimates show that in Suffolk binge drinking is most prevalent in areas of deprivation in Ipswich and St Edmundsbury, and in areas with high proportions of younger residents, such as Pinewood Ward in Babergh and Moreton Hall in St Edmundsbury. Considerable change will be required to tackle levels of alcohol related crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour because of the demand this places on services such as the police and the NHS.

Over the last four years, an average of around 7% of deaths or serious injuries on our roads (23 casualties) had alcohol recorded as a contributory factor at the scene. The lowest percentage was 4% in 2004, with a high of 12% in 2006. As not all drivers can be breathalysed at the scene, however, the actual number of alcohol related casualties is likely to be higher. The Department for Transport estimates that nationally, as many as one in six road deaths (16%) are related to drink driving (about 500 per year).

Around 1,300 drivers are arrested every year for driving while under the influence of drink or drugs in Suffolk. This compares favourably to most similar police areas where the number of arrests ranges from 1,100 to 3,500 per annum. The figures suggest that drink or drug driving is a serious contributory factor to road collisions in Suffolk. ²

Mental health problems can often be associated with drug and alcohol abuse. This includes those people diagnosed with psychotic illness who use unprescribed drugs, or people with diagnosed depression who drink heavily. This is often referred to as 'dual diagnosis' and can lead to complications such as

determining the most appropriate form of treatment, which treatment should take priority and the stigmas of being a substance misuser as well as suffering poor mental health.

Suffolk has a good record of safeguarding children and young people. The independent

Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board is now established and oversees all safeguarding activity relating to children and young people. Groups of children and young people that are noted as being particularly vulnerable in Suffolk include Looked After Children (LAC) in public care, children on the Child Protection Register, children with disabilities, children with special educational needs (SEN), and children from hard pressed families living in disadvantaged areas.

The number of LAC has remained broadly the same in recent years at around 700, although there is a pattern of more children under the age of one coming into the care system. There are around 400 children on the Child Protection Register (of the under 18s, 27.5 per 1,000) a higher rate than in other similar areas. Performance measures in relation to LAC and child protection remain good. However, partnership initiatives, including the development of family support services and children's centres, are concentrating on work with parents to prevent removal and repeat removal of children.

Falls can account for a high proportion of the time older people spend in hospital. For those aged over 85, the majority of their time in hospital is because of a fractured femur, an injury that commonly results from a fall. Annually, the average number of individuals affected is 1,335, and they account for a total of 18,107 bed days. The average number of bed days per individual is 13.6.

What people have said

Suffolk has one of the lowest crime levels in the country. However, reducing crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour is consistently one of the highest priorities for Suffolk and is reflected in Suffolk Speaks and user satisfaction surveys. One of the key issues raised through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation in regard to crime and disorder was antisocial behaviour.

'Continued effort will be required to provide diversionary activity for young people to maintain or reduce the levels of crime and antisocial behaviour.'

Suffolk Coastal LSP

The lack of facilities for young people was cited as one of the key factors contributing to antisocial behaviour, with more activities and support needed to stop young people becoming involved in crime. Young people are not the only antisocial behaviour offenders, and this needs to be taken into account when looking at ways to address this area of work.

Responses from Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation recognised that the perception of crime was disproportionate to the relatively low crime levels in Suffolk.

'The use of terminology such as 'creating the safest county' does nothing to reflect how safe the area already is, and may prolong the misconception of high crime levels and therefore prolong the fear of crime.'

Mid Suffolk LSP

Tackling drug and alcohol misuse was identified as a key area during Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation. A number of respondents made the links between drug and alcohol misuse and antisocial behaviour, domestic violence and poor health.

'...the Constabulary is determined to tackle those offences which bring threats to people's health...most fundamentally tackling the supply of drugs into our communities.'

Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Police Authority

Reducing the number of accidents on the road, in the home and in the workplace were all identified as important tasks in Suffolk. Most children and young people in Suffolk feel safe, with over 80% reporting in the 2007 'Tell Us' Survey that they feel safe in school, when walking to school and in their local communities. However, bullying is considered to be a problem by 49% of young people, with 13% having experienced bullying 'often', and this is an area which is receiving particular attention through the development of a multi-agency anti-bullying strategy. In 2006/07, the number of racist incidents reported in schools has significantly increased to over 600, and much more needs to be done to ensure that all schools report racist incidents.

What we will do

Focus area: Reduce crime and disorder

Suffolk has a good record of tackling crime and disorder. This is an important issue for the people of Suffolk and for achieving the wider aim of a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy. Continuous improvement needs to be maintained to ensure Suffolk keeps its current record in this area, and that crime and disorder do not become a problem in the future.

There is good evidence that children and young people are protected from crime and antisocial behaviour, with a significant reduction across all age ranges in the number who are victims of reported crime. Positive co-operation between a range of agencies and organisations has led to an increased focus on awareness and understanding of children and young people concerning crime, antisocial behaviour, racism and bullying and their negative impact.

Suffolk Constabulary's development of 'safer neighbourhood' policing provides Suffolk with strong roots and foundations within communities. Working closely with other agencies helps to create safer neighbourhoods, involving multi-agency co-operation to identify and solve local problems.

Suffolk must not become complacent in this area. Even with low recorded crime figures and good detection rates, most comparisons with similar police areas show Suffolk to be performing in line with its peers. Suffolk needs to improve its performance so that it exceeds the performance of these peers.

People also need to take responsibility for their own behaviour for the good of the community. If people did not behave antisocially, the level and perception of antisocial behaviour would go down. Suffolk needs to encourage people to accept their responsibility to live within the law and to respect the rights of others.

The law-abiding citizen should be at the heart of policing. Policing should be tough on criminality at all levels, from antisocial behaviour to serious and organised crime, and community safety should be at the heart of Suffolk's police policy.

Achieving safety goes far beyond the role of the police. Crime and Disorder Reduction

Partnerships (CDRPs) are tackling issues at a local level, and will be the cornerstone of the future safety agenda.

Focus area: Reduce fear of crime

To ensure perceptions of crime remain positive in Suffolk, continuous improvement in reducing the fear of crime is needed. The work done by organisations to reassure

our communities is essential to bridge the gap between perception and actual crime levels. We need to ensure that public awareness is strengthened, and that communications are made through methods that are respected, understood and appreciated within the community. A good relationship with the media is essential and should be developed.

The Safer Neighbourhoods concept reflects the public's desire to be able to identify with a local police officer. The visibility of police, community support officers, special constabulary volunteers and accredited organisations within the community is essential. There are 47 identified neighbourhoods. This style of policing will create a new approach and be responsive to the needs of local communities.

Focus area: People and communities are safeguarded from harm

While good progress has been made in reducing the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on Suffolk's roads, more needs to be done to reduce the risk further. The Local Transport Plan for Suffolk sets out the approach to improving road safety in Suffolk between 2006 and 2011. Further work is planned to target the 16 to 19 age group, who are at the highest risk of death or serious injury on Suffolk's roads.

Suffolk has a good track record in dealing with major and critical incidents. The Suffolk Resilience Forum ensures that the county is ready and has planned and prepared for such events. Emergencies, such as outbreaks of avian flu and blue tongue, continue to test the county's resilience.

With a nuclear power station and one of the country's largest container ports in the county, Suffolk needs to be alert to the potential threat of terrorism. The county must remain ready to respond in a co-ordinated manner to terrorist threats and other emergencies at a moment's notice, irrespective of organisational responsibilities and geographic boundaries.

Policing relating to the following, is a challenge in all police areas, particularly the smaller ones. The Constabulary will co-operate with other police areas to ensure it has the capacity and capability to tackle these issues:

- Major crime
- Serious and organised crime
- Counter terrorism
- Public order
- Civil contingencies
- Critical incidents
- Strategic roads.

Agencies in Suffolk are also working together to protect the public. Initiatives include the Prostitution Strategy, which aims to eliminate street prostitution in Ipswich within five years by helping women involved in prostitution find a way out of this lifestyle and by tackling the issue of kerb crawlers.

Suffolk Constabulary has created a Public Protection Directorate to work with partner organisations to enhance Suffolk's ability to protect the public from registered sex offenders and other potentially dangerous individuals. The directorate identifies and assesses the risk of serious harm to the public and then manages that risk using Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

Suffolk will continue to develop a rigorous approach to dealing with domestic violence, with the aim of reducing the number of people, including children, who are killed, injured or abused. The Domestic Violence Court and multi-agency approach will be used as a model throughout the county.

The number of accidental injuries resulting from fires is 1.73 for every 100,000 in the population, and this must be reduced further. The elderly are most at risk, and partnership activities are being strengthened to further reduce their risk. Efforts are being focused on 'hard to reach' groups and vulnerable people.

Focus area: Minimise the impact of drugs and alcohol on communities

Suffolk has an estimated drug using population of 2,600, and current trends suggest that this has stabilised with slower year on year increases. Substance misuse and crime are clearly linked, and Suffolk has a very good system to ensure that those engaged in criminal activity have access to drug and alcohol treatment, enabling them to make positive lifestyle choices.³

The work of the Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and partners in the areas of education and prevention is significant. Good education and provision of accurate information, advice and support will prevent today's young people from becoming tomorrow's adult substance misusers.

Work to educate young people ensures that although some of them do seek treatment for drug problems, the overwhelming majority of young people do not engage in harmful substance misuse. In 2006/07, 115 schools undertook drug policy training and 466 professionals working with young people have been trained in drug and alcohol awareness. Both these achievements were more than twice the target for the year.

For a county with a significant rural area, the challenge of preventing substance misuse in small rural communities

³ 'Drug using population' defined as those problematic drug users on heroin and crack cocaine.

as well as urban ones is an area that needs attention in the future. Combined with the strong prevention agenda is the need to continue to provide high quality and readily available substance misuse treatment services across the county. Events in Ipswich during 2006 demonstrate the impact that organised drug dealing can have on a community and agencies tackling this problem. Many of these dealers come to Suffolk from outside the county.

B. Healthy

The wider picture

The Wanless Report of 2002 identified a number of policy options focusing on health and well-being. The reform of public services by increased investment and devolved power to local communities was at its heart. There is a need to proactively prevent ill health by building a culture of choice of care in or close to home, and increasing co-operation between partners and local services

Services should be dictated by:

- The needs of populations, communities and individuals
- Increasing social inclusion
- Reducing health inequalities
- This can only be achieved if the majority of the population takes steps to improve their own health.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will enable both the primary care trusts in Suffolk, together with the County Council, to identify the future healthcare needs of local people and the way in which the service will be delivered. The evidence used to develop the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has also been used to develop the community strategy and the focus areas within it.

Health in Suffolk

When compared to England as a whole, Suffolk's population is relatively healthy. Life expectancy is higher for both men and women than it is nationally, and this is steadily improving. However, there is inequality across the county, with a difference of 12.3 years between the wards with the lowest and highest life expectancies.

Unhealthy lifestyles are leading to increased health problems and will eventually lead to an intolerable burden for our health and social care services. Preventable health problems related to lifestyle, such as coronary heart disease, some cancers and diabetes, and the variations in health across the county present a real challenge.

Health inequalities show a strong correlation with social deprivation. With signs that the poorest parts of Suffolk are falling further behind in terms

of gross weekly earnings, without significant action such inequalities are likely to increase.

People's well-being has an important role, not just in terms of health, but also in terms of personal prosperity. Well-being is about ensuring that people's basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and that they can play a role in strong and inclusive communities.

Traditional healthcare has focused on treating illness and ill health rather than promoting health and well-being. For example, care for people with long term needs has often been given in hospitals, and there have been very limited opportunities for people to make choices about their healthcare.

Work to improve health and well-being has been dispersed between many agencies, often with no common strategic direction. Education, the physical environment and economic improvement have not been acknowledged as being key to health improvement.

Significant changes to the demographic nature of Suffolk are predicted for the future. Suffolk already has the 8th highest proportion of people aged over 65 in Britain. By 2021 the proportion of people aged over 65 in Suffolk is expected to rise to about a quarter of the population.

This will present challenges and opportunities for Suffolk, and will require change in the way Suffolk responds. While the majority of people will be fit and active into old age, there will be pressure on services because of increased cases of dementia and other health problems associated with old age, as well as an increase in the number of families with care responsibilities. This may lead to increased numbers of older people working either within the paid economy, or as family carers or volunteers within the community.

Due to the ageing population, a 45% rise in cases of dementia is forecast over the next 15 years. In Mid Suffolk, that increase is likely to be as high as 86%, while there could be an increase of 41% in Ipswich.

The expanding older population is also likely to result in a growing number of family carers. National statistics show that many family carers provide more than 50 hours of care per week, saving taxpayers in the Eastern Region alone £7,048 billion.

Obesity in Suffolk is consistent with the rest of England, with obesity levels currently reaching epidemic level. The 2005/06 measurement of reception and year 6 children shows that 26.4% were obese. Adult obesity is below the English average of 21.8%, although there is variation across the county with 26.5% of adults in Waveney being obese.

Around one in four adults (22.4%) in Suffolk smoke, which is in line with the average for the East of England. Again, there is geographical variation, with smoking being most prevalent in Ipswich where 26.8% of adults are smokers. Smoking kills approximately 1,200 people every year in Suffolk.

In the female population aged 15 to 17, the teenage conception rate in Suffolk is 33.4 per 1,000 – well below the English average of 42.1. Ipswich, at 49.6 per 1,000, has teenage conception rates above the English average, while Suffolk Coastal is only 23.3 per 1,000.

The rate of teenage conception in Suffolk has fallen by 3.7%, but again, district level data shows significant variations across the county.

Between 1998/2000 and 2002/2004 Mid Suffolk saw an increase of 29.4% in the rate of teenage conception where as St Edmundsbury saw a decrease by 24.1%. In England as a whole, the rate of teenage conception fell by 6.6%, so while initial figures show that Suffolk is below the national average in terms of numbers of conceptions, it does fall behind in reducing those numbers, with large increases in some districts.

The numbers of those diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections increased by 1% between 2005 and 2006 in Suffolk and East Anglia as a whole, compared with a 2.4% increase in the East of England and a 2.6% increase nationally.

It is estimated that 300 out of every 1,000 people will experience mental health problems each year. Of these, 230 will visit their GP and 102 will be diagnosed as having a mental health problem. This means that 47,000 people in Suffolk are diagnosed with a mental health problem every year.

One in six adults experiences depression or anxiety at any given time and there are currently more people drawing incapacity benefit because of poor mental health than the total number of unemployed people or those on Jobseekers' Allowance. There are also strong links between mental ill health and physical ill health, as people with mental health problems are 1.5 times more likely to die prematurely.

Research suggests that poor mental health is more common in women than men and that people with mental health problems are often:

- Lacking formal qualifications
- Economically inactive
- From a lower socio-economic group
- Living in rented property
- Living in urban areas with higher levels of multiple deprivation.

Those with severe mental health problems also have poor lifestyles with higher levels of smoking and alcohol consumption, poor diet and a low level of exercise.

Stress levels reported by children and young people in Suffolk in previous surveys are a cause for concern, and it is increasingly recognised that all children from birth onwards need support for their emotional health and well-being. This mirrors the rise in demand for help with behavioural problems throughout all levels of education, including pre-school.

What people have said

Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation identified the key health issues as:

- Obesity
- Smoking
- Teenage pregnancy
- Sexual health.

A number of responses highlighted the need to promote healthy lifestyle choices and to provide more services to enable people to make healthier lifestyle choices rather than curing problems caused by unhealthy lifestyles. Links were also made between healthy lifestyles, well-being and the high quality natural environment that Suffolk enjoys.

'Invest in services and activities, as well as promoting healthy and active lifestyles, which will prevent the need for acute services and promote well-being.'

Valuing People Theme

Consultation responses have highlighted the importance of giving people in Suffolk, regardless of age or disability, the same chances to make choices about their lives, and to feel they have control over the decisions made

about the way they live. People want to understand the options, to be provided with information and support where needed, and to make choices about care and health services, housing, leisure, employment and transport.

'Provide choice, but with support where needed and safeguards if things go wrong.'

Valuing People Theme

Focus area: People are able to pursue a healthy lifestyle

Responses to Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation clearly indicated that Suffolk should be focusing on prevention in healthcare. In the short term it is difficult to monitor the impact of prevention given the timescales necessary to see improvements in the health of the population. However, the development of this 20 year strategy provides an opportunity to make changes and take actions that will see benefits over a longer period.

To ensure that people are able to pursue healthy lifestyles they need to be able to make healthy life choices, particularly in areas such as healthy eating and physical exercise. This will help to prevent ill health in the future.

Building activities such as walking and cycling into people's everyday lives is an effective way to obtain regular physical activity. Journeys to and from work or school provide excellent opportunities for this, but the infrastructure and facilities need to be readily available to enable people to choose these options. Encouraging children and young people to walk or cycle to school leads to their being more likely to walk and cycle as they grow older.

The rural nature of the county along with the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and award winning coastline also make Suffolk an ideal place for leisure activities such as walking and cycling. (See Focus area: Increased participation in culture, sport and recreational activity for more detail.)

Healthy eating is a key part of a healthy lifestyle and the good quality local food produced in Suffolk provides an opportunity to ensure that all communities have access to good quality, fresh produce. Farm shops in rural areas of Suffolk are becoming more and more popular. The focus will be to ensure the availability of affordable local produce in major food outlets in urban areas; this is particularly important in areas of deprivation and for people on low incomes, in order to encourage easy access to healthy foods.

The majority of individuals who contact their GP about mental health issues will be experiencing a problem such as anxiety or depression. Their care and support may be best given in both everyday and primary care settings. However, specialist services are essential for the 24 people in every 1,000 referred on to specialist mental health services each year.

Early intervention and preventative support for vulnerable individuals, families and schools is important to manage behavioural issues. Improving access to appropriate mental health services for children and young people who experience more serious mental health problems is also important.

Every Child Matters outlines five key priorities for children and young people:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being.

These will be achieved by bringing together resources across the county to enable all children and young people who live in Suffolk to develop and thrive. Services for vulnerable children will focus on early intervention and prevention. Integrated services will be delivered through children's centres and schools.

Educational attainment is one of the key factors in a healthy population, and pupils in Suffolk generally achieve well compared with national performance levels. Further details on education can be found in Section 4: Learning and Skills for the Future.

Raising the expectations and meeting the demands of the most vulnerable communities is seen as vital for improving health and well-being. To achieve this, tailored health and well-being services are needed along with dedicated resources supporting behavioural change. Actions and targeted resources are required to influence the complex reasons which contribute to poor health.

It is important to enable everybody in Suffolk to make healthy lifestyle choices, which will improve health and well-being across the county.

Focus area: Reduce the gap in health inequalities

Life expectancy in Suffolk varies between wards. The difference in mortality rates between those in the most deprived wards and those in the most affluent wards is widening. Although overall life expectancy is increasing, there is no increase for women who live in the most deprived areas of Suffolk.

Change is needed to ensure that inequalities in Suffolk are effectively reduced and that the least healthy sections of the community are provided with opportunities to improve their health.

Life expectancy is a common way of measuring health inequalities. However, extending life expectancy is no improvement if people have a poor quality of life in their later years. It is important to ensure that as people live longer they continue to live active and fulfilled lives.

Focus area: People have choice and control to enable them to live independent lives

Failing ability and ill health should not be an inevitable consequence of growing old. Preventing illness and promoting healthy lifestyles will help to ensure that the entire population of Suffolk enjoys a good quality of life and good physical and mental health.

For many ageing people, the question of where they should live becomes a pressing one. People should have the information and support they need to make choices about their home. Services that can adapt homes to meet the needs of people who are becoming increasingly frail or less mobile will be critical. A drive to eliminate fuel poverty and to ensure that all homes are adequately heated is paramount in order to reduce needless cold related winter deaths.

How services respond to the rise in cases of dementia will be a major issue in Suffolk. These services will need to work closely with families and communities to ensure that support and information is available to allow people with dementia and their carers to have dignity and control in managing their lives.

Continued support, including training, is needed for all family carers to ensure that they do not suffer from issues relating to their care responsibilities, including back problems, stress, depression and isolation.

In the future, older people will increasingly be expected to remain economically active well into retirement, and this provides Suffolk with an opportunity as well as a challenge. There may be fewer people able to act as unpaid family carers for older relatives, or for younger children and grandchildren. There may also be family carers who want or need to stay in employment. Employers will be encouraged to promote flexible working to support the role of family carer.

Everybody must have choice and control within their lives, and the demographic changes within Suffolk will require that we, as organisations, citizens and communities, act differently: as organisations we need to provide services that help people to retain independence and work with them to avoid the need for long term care or acute health provision;

as citizens we need to understand the factors that will help us to remain independent and take responsibility wherever possible for finding out how to manage our lifestyles and plan for older age; and as communities we need to understand the effect of the change in the Suffolk population and how volunteering and community action can support people who are vulnerable because of old age or disability. This will mean increasing information about options, helping people to make decisions, removing barriers that restrict choice and ensuring that people are treated as individuals, with dignity and respect throughout and at the end of their lives.

Economic and financial security is a primary means of providing people with the ability to make choices about their lives. A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy will help to make improvements in this area.

C. Inclusive

The wider picture

Since 1997, significant progress has been made in the UK in raising incomes, reducing crime and lifting almost two million pensioners and children out of poverty. Despite this increasing affluence, there remains a small minority of people who are excluded.

There is evidence of a 'cycle of disadvantage', with deprivation passing from one generation to another. This illustrates that the experiences people have early in their lives have a major impact on the pattern of their lives in the future.

Tackling social exclusion is important, not just because of the damage caused to individuals, but also because of its cost to society. Funding is often spent on managing the symptoms of social exclusion rather than addressing the causes, and there is a national move from 'treatment' towards 'prevention'.

Inclusion in Suffolk

Some of Suffolk's population, specifically in Ipswich and Lowestoft, lives in wards ranked in the 10% of most deprived areas in England. Statistics for individual wards can be misleading, as pockets of deprivation can be hidden by more prosperous areas within the same ward. Many of Suffolk's rural settlements appear to be affluent, quaint, typical English villages, while within them people are in fact suffering from social exclusion.

As the European Union has enlarged, there has been an increase in the number of migrant workers in areas of Suffolk in addition to workers from countries such as India and the Philippines. While many choose to settle in towns such as Ipswich, Lowestoft and Felixstowe, there are also migrant workers employed and settling in smaller towns such as Brandon and Sudbury. Schools in rural

areas are seeing increasing numbers of Polish children.

Children and young people who grow up in poverty or in care are far more likely to suffer from narrower life chances and from social exclusion as they grow older. Staying in this cycle of exclusion means they are less likely to achieve well in school, less likely to enter employment and more likely to have children that will grow up in poverty.

Above all, developing policies and processes that provide opportunities for everyone will ensure that migrants are not excluded from society. The Suffolk Strategic Partnership will support and encourage young people, help them to achieve, ensure that the ageing population remains independent and ensure that all people in Suffolk are able to take part within their community. Social inclusion is not simply a remedy, it is also about preventing the circumstances that lead to exclusion.

What people have said

The need to develop and support communities was a topic that came through strongly in the Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation. Community development was seen as a positive way of arriving at many desired results, such as reducing Suffolk's carbon footprint and increasing participation in culture and sport. It also helps to ensure that people are engaged and supported.

'Building socially inclusive, sustainable, thriving and supportive communities is vital in isolated rural areas... Community based initiatives, like good neighbour schemes and village links, should continue to be supported.'

Suffolk Coastal LSP

What we will do

Focus area: A sense of belonging within communities that are valued, engaged and supported

This focus area has strong links to other focus areas such as community cohesion, active citizenship and civic pride. A sense of belonging within communities, together with developing strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods are key elements of a cohesive community.

Our aims will be supported by increasing the opportunities for children and young people to influence decision making in matters that affect them and to be actively engaged with their communities. All schools are encouraged to have a school council, and in the 2007 'Tell Us' survey, 59% of young people said it was easy for them to have a say in the running of their school. Young people have also been trained to participate in Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital Fund panels.

Increased migration into Suffolk and the changing communities means that we must improve our understanding of the needs all people and ensure that our services are tailored to meet their needs.

7. Principles for Suffolk's Community Strategy

To achieve the ambitions set out in this strategy ('A Prosperous and Vibrant Economy', 'Learning and Skills for the Future', 'The Greenest County' and 'Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities') we must have a county where people are able to participate in and contribute to the community. The county must be a place where people can live more active and fulfilling lives, no matter what their circumstances.

A number of issues cut across these four themes and are critical to the community strategy priorities. In 2028, Suffolk will have:

- A strong Suffolk identity
- Affordable, quality housing for all
- Cohesive communities
- Active citizenship and civic pride
- Access and opportunities for all
- Increased participation in culture, sport and recreational activities.

It is important that these areas of work are not lost in the overall implementation of the community strategy and that sufficient emphasis is still placed upon their role in achieving the overall vision for Suffolk.

Focus area: A strong Suffolk identity

A strong identity and 'sense of place' is critical to transforming Suffolk. People who live and work in Suffolk value the good quality of life in the county, its high quality natural and historic environment and its rural nature.

Suffolk residents feel linked to the county and there is a strong sense of community and belonging. This was highlighted by the outbreaks of avian flu and blue tongue disease, and the murder of five women in Ipswich in December 2006. These issues were confronted as a community – as Suffolk.

Capitalising on this strong sense of local identity is essential to meeting the targets set in the community strategy. Clearly articulating and communicating 'Suffolk' locally, regionally, nationally and internationally will bring tangible benefits to local people.

A strong Suffolk image will benefit Suffolk's economy by attracting new and existing business to the area and by attracting students from elsewhere in the UK to study at the newly established University Campus Suffolk. A positive image will also help to promote Suffolk's ambition to become The Greenest County

and to lead in the field of renewable energy.

The Suffolk Development Agency's 'Choose Suffolk' brand continues to play a significant role in outwardly promoting the county as both a business location and a tourist destination, mainly within the UK, with differing messages depending on the target audience. Other Suffolk campaigns exist, such as 'Safer Suffolk', and it is important that the various Suffolk brands are effectively linked, whether addressing a local, national or international audience. Suffolk is also acquiring a well deserved reputation nationally for quality food.

Businesses and the community want to build on this reputation by creating an even stronger brand image and message for Suffolk.

Focus area: Affordable, quality housing for all

The East of England is currently the most affordable region for housing in the south of the UK, but this is likely to no longer be the case if current trends continue. In Suffolk, the average house price is now 7.9 times the annual income (up from 7.6 in 2005).

The Regional Spatial Strategy states that affordable homes should constitute at least 30% of total new housing. In 2005/06 just 17.4% of all completed new homes in Suffolk were affordable. There is huge variation across the county with Forest Heath exceeding the target at 39.5%. Babergh came very close to the target, reaching 29.6% of affordable homes, but Suffolk Coastal and Waveney only completed 9.4% and 6.6% affordable homes respectively.

21 respondents to the community strategy consultation identified affordable housing as a key issue for Suffolk.

'Affordable social housing must be a priority – the poor cannot afford even basic housing.'

Online Questionnaire

In 2004, consultation through Suffolk Speaks Community Panel found that 47% of people strongly agreed that their area needs more affordable housing. 45% strongly agreed that house prices are too expensive for local people, and 55% strongly agreed that local young people could not afford housing.

Appropriate accommodation for vulnerable people and specific groups was identified as an issue through consultation responses, particularly for:

- Migrant workers
- Young people
- Single parents
- Older people
- Romanies and travellers.

Particular aims relating to young people are the need to prevent homelessness and the need to improve the availability and quality of housing for those that are particularly vulnerable.

The links between housing and the economy, and with the health and well-being of individuals, were highlighted through the consultation process. There are also strong links between poor housing and crime levels. Affordable housing will play a part in achieving other community strategy outcomes, particularly in relation to Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities.

Access to childcare, employment and training for parents was identified as a barrier to developing our economy for the benefit of local people and communities.

Suffolk's population is set to increase by 9.5% by 2021. The Regional Spatial Strategy plans for development of 61,700 new homes by 2021. This provides an opportunity to ensure that these new developments include more affordable homes in line with the regional standard.

The County, District and Borough Councils will need to work together to ensure that approximately 20,000 new affordable homes are built across the county and this will be Suffolk's target over the coming years.

Good quality accommodation is important for people from all walks of life. Supporting people with specific needs and requirements will be important to ensure that everyone has access to such accommodation and can make informed and realistic choices about where they live.

According to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), there are approximately 4,000 Romany and traveller caravans in the region, which accounts for a quarter of all such caravans in the UK. In Suffolk, assessments have revealed that between 109 and 138 additional pitches should be identified by 2011, many of which have already been planned by local authorities.

Focus area: Cohesive communities

Community cohesion is about recognising the impact of change and responding to it. It is about people within communities coming together to interact and participate with one another.

A cohesive community is one where:

- Individuals and communities contribute to a future vision for the county
- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities - people know what is expected of them, and what they can expect in return
- Those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities and levels of access to services and treatment
- There is a sense of trust in local institutions to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a recognition of the contribution made by those who have newly arrived as well as those who already have deep attachments to an area, with the emphasis being on what they have in common
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and in other institutions.

Suffolk's diversity is developing – socially, culturally and economically. This has brought enormous benefits. For example, more than 70 languages are spoken in Suffolk schools, and this adds to the richness of the county. It also creates a challenge for schools and services in their capacity to support the speakers of these languages. The inward flow of migrant workers into Suffolk is supporting the economy in positive ways.

These factors will help us to strengthen community cohesion. Some people face barriers to social and economic inclusion, to good health, housing and employment, as well as access to other services. This may be because of who they are, where they live, their age, disability, faith, ethnic origin, gender and/or sexual orientation.

Community cohesion will create:

- Empowerment of local people to define the vision for their own communities
- The opportunity for individuals to contribute to the development and delivery of local services
- A reduction in social exclusion
- Improved understanding between different groups within our changing communities.

There are people in Suffolk who are excluded from the activities and opportunities open to mainstream society, and this weakens community cohesion. Those facing the most severe exclusion live in neighbourhoods experiencing multiple deprivations. Some of Suffolk's population lives in wards that are ranked in the 10% most deprived areas of England.

Such deprivation is not always confined to urban and densely populated areas. Often, those living in rural areas suffer deprivation with other challenges such as employment, transport and housing, and access to public services.

Faith communities in the county play an important role at all levels of public life. They greatly contribute to strengthening community cohesion through the values and activities that underpin citizenship, such as community solidarity.

Focus area: Active citizenship and civic pride

Success for all aspects of the community strategy requires the engagement and involvement of Suffolk's people through their ambition and application, their attitudes and behaviour, their support and championing. Developing active citizenship and civic pride in Suffolk is ultimately about people having a sense of responsibility and ownership towards the area in which they live, as well as giving people an opportunity to influence local decision making.

By promoting a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the place we live, it will be possible to build stronger communities throughout the county. The aim is to give Suffolk residents a bigger stake in the future of their area and to improve the quality of life in local communities.

The critical contribution that volunteer work makes in building strong communities has been recognised in Suffolk. Promoting volunteering is therefore an essential part of citizenship, a way to combat social exclusion, and an important contributor to high quality public services.

The Home Office Citizenship Surveys and the Suffolk Volunteering Federations 2006 Survey describe a strong volunteer base on which to build in Suffolk, but also a challenge to maintain and develop positive action from communities. A study of volunteering levels has shown that 11% of the general population in Suffolk undertakes regular formal volunteering. Bury St Edmunds and Sudbury fell significantly below the county average with 9.8% and 7.4%, respectively. An increasing number of young people are involved in volunteering.

The decline in the use of traditional channels to engage with communities and involve them has been replaced by an explosion in the participation of people in internet based forums. These prove that people within communities are willing to interact with each

other and the communities in which they live in.

Suffolk's challenge is to ensure that we can build on our communities' similarities rather than focusing on their differences. Identifying areas where communities and groups can come together to improve Suffolk as a county will be vital. Social cohesion is about developing communities that feel engaged and supported.

The Government recognises the significant role of faith communities in social cohesion, education, regeneration and social care. Faith communities can contribute to social cohesion, through:

- Establishing networks through activities at neighbourhood level
- Building up social groups as a resource
- Creating a sense of community in new housing developments.

The grassroots activity of faith communities, their long term presence (especially in small rural communities), their strong value base, inter-faith networks, services within the community, and their considerable resources in terms of buildings and personnel, all speak for their inclusion in the shaping of public policy along with other partners.

Everyone has an essential role to play in building a community. This will create strong, safe and self-supporting communities where people feel a responsibility to themselves, their families and other people, will seek to improve civic pride and encourage good citizenship at all ages and across the whole county.

Focus area: Access and opportunities for all

Being able to access jobs, education, food shops and healthcare is vital to the quality of life and economic prosperity of the people of Suffolk. Those who cannot easily access these services are at risk of social exclusion, which may lead to isolation, poor health, unemployment and low educational achievement.

Suffolk's level of unemployment is lower than the national level, but within the county there are marked differences. People on a low income often have to work longer hours in order to support their families.

Given the rural nature of the county, accessibility can be an important issue for people living in Suffolk. Long journey times to services which are often located in urban centres, and limited public transport in some areas of the county can create too much reliance on private cars.

'Equality of access to services for young and old, rural and urban settings, and people from settled and new communities.'

Creating a cohesive County theme

The long term transport strategy for Suffolk sets out the objectives and actions necessary to ensure that our transport systems and services can support the future development of Suffolk. Several indicators to measure access to services have been identified in the Accessibility Strategy and Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011. Targets established in these plans provide a short term vision for improving access to services.

Barriers to access can exist within both urban and rural communities, for example, for those with learning disabilities, or for Romanies and travellers. A focus on what people want from services and how they can access them in a way that meets their needs will be required.

Access for people with physical disabilities can also be difficult, particularly for those that rely on public transport. In rural areas, access to public transport is an important issue when there are limited bus services. Community and demand responsive transport has an important role to play in supporting people with disabilities and a coordinated countywide approach to transport is needed to ensure people are able to use services wherever they may live.

More flexible service provision can also improve accessibility. Areas such as healthcare can provide better access for those who are disadvantaged or who suffer from chronic conditions through walk-in and mobile centres, altering GPs' opening hours and providing wider clinics and services in local facilities. Locating services together can help to improve access to services for local communities.

Focus area: Increased participation in culture, sport and recreational activities

Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation responses identified that culture and sport can make a valuable contribution to a range of aims within the community strategy.

Responses acknowledge that culture and sport can make a positive contribution to the population's health and well-being, can provide economic benefits through tourism, and can provide educational opportunities for children, young people and adults.

Culture and sport in Suffolk is a major draw for visitors to the county. The natural environment attracts walkers and cyclists, and the architectural heritage also provides an attraction. UK

visitors bring an estimated £608 million to Suffolk's economy and in total, tourism contributes an estimated £1 billion.

The tourism, leisure and heritage industry in Suffolk employed 25,747 people in 2004/05, accounting for 9% of total employment in Suffolk. However, in the Eastern Region, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire attract the highest number of UK visitors, with Norfolk attracting 13.3 million as opposed to 6.2 million in Suffolk.

Although tourism is an important part of Suffolk's economy, Suffolk falls behind its Eastern Region counterparts in terms of the number of visitors it attracts and the amount of money that tourism contributes to the economy. Developing a strong image of Suffolk clearly links to improvements in this area, as well as a strong and vibrant economy. Cultural opportunities in Suffolk provide a positive opportunity for Suffolk to develop and improve in this sector.

Suffolk already attracts large numbers of visitors and tourists. Its proximity to London and the forthcoming 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will create an opportunity to draw in a larger number of international and domestic visitors from new markets. The East of England Development Agency estimates that tourism figures for business and international visitors are set to increase by 3% per annum over the period 2009 to 2016. The economic impact of the Games across all sectors in Suffolk could potentially reach an additional £66 million gross.

Given the anticipated population and economic growth of the sector, it is important that Suffolk maintains its cultural heritage and sense of place within its communities. If tourism is a key growth sector for the county, then Suffolk must be prepared to invest in maintaining and improving the value of these assets. The alternative will be that tourists go elsewhere. In an increasingly competitive market, distinctiveness counts.

There is little data for the cultural sector. From 2008/09, figures for participation in the arts, museums, libraries, will be available. Suffolk's libraries receive more than 4 million visits each year. National surveys (Department for Culture Media and Sport, Taking Part 2006) estimate that:

- 42.3% of adults attended museums at least once in the last 12 months
- 33.7% of adults attended two or more arts events in the last 12 months
- 23% of adults participated in two or more arts events in the last 12 months.

These figures hide the inequalities of access across the county and within communities. Given the impact the sector offers, we must seek to broaden access and participation.

Participation in cultural activity offers both value of a

fundamental nature to an individual, who grows and learns through taking part, and to the community by bringing people together. Cultural participation is the foundation for creativity, innovation and knowledge.

Physical activity contributes to the health and well-being of individuals. The results of the 2006 Active People Survey, which surveyed over 7,000 Suffolk residents, showed that 19.8% of adults in Suffolk undertake three sessions of 30 minutes moderate intensity exercise each week. This compares only slightly unfavourably with the regional average (20.5%) and the national average (21%). Within Suffolk there are significant differences between district areas. Residents in Ipswich and Waveney are the least active, with only 17% participating in 30 minutes exercise three times a week, in contrast to 24% in Forest Heath and 22% in Suffolk Coastal.

More worrying is the 52.7% of adults in Suffolk who do not participate in any moderate intensity exercise each week (zero sessions of 30 minutes). The highest levels of inactivity are again in Ipswich and Waveney, with figures of 54% and 57%, respectively. Overall, the figures show Suffolk in an unfavourable light compared with the regional average of 50% and the national average of 50.6%.

Lack of participation is strongly linked with age, economic status, and illness or disability which can prevent participation. This may explain the low participation levels in parts of Ipswich and Waveney, which are often the places with the highest scores for some of these indicators. They are also often the places with higher levels of mental and physical health problems.

However, comparisons with nearest neighbour authorities on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) show that deprivation factors alone cannot explain the lower figures for the Ipswich and Waveney areas. Of particular significance for Suffolk is the general decline in participation with age. For those aged 55 and over, participation in three sessions of 30 minutes moderate intensity exercise each week declines to 10.5%, just over a third of the level of 29.1% for adults under 34.

Taken as a whole, the figures have significant implications for the general well-being of the Suffolk population, the growing levels of obesity and obesity related illness, and ultimately the increasing demand on health and care services in later life.

Suffolk schools met their target for 2007 of 83% of pupils engaged in two hours a week of sport in the curriculum, which maintains the performance achieved in 2006, although this is below the reported national figure of 86%. On the three other measures, Suffolk performs above the national average:

- 38% of school club links compared to 29% nationally

- 18% of pupils have access to leadership and volunteering opportunities compared to 12% nationally
- 37% of pupils have access to competitive opportunities compared to 35% nationally.

These three factors are particularly important in making progress towards the 2010 target of all pupils having five hours of physical activity a week.

There are increasing opportunities for children and young people to be involved in informal learning, leisure and cultural activities, both in and out of school. Work to promote extended services within Suffolk schools has been recognised as one of the most advanced nationally, and a significant number of children and young people have engaged in the Suffolk Children's University initiative, which is providing 10,000 Suffolk students with activities outside the normal school curriculum and times. These will help develop skills and increase knowledge in a fun and entertaining way.

Culture and sport play an increasing role in community cohesion. Sport brings communities together, and our arts, museums and heritage sectors are a recognised way of highlighting and celebrating cultural diversity in the county.

8. Delivery

Suffolk's Community Strategy will be achieved by all the participants in many ways. Most of the community strategy's aims will be reached by co-operation, although some will be the concern of individual agencies.

Local Area Agreement

Suffolk's Community Strategy will be delivered in part through a three year Local Area Agreement (LAA). LAAs are statutory agreements between central government, local authorities and its partners, to achieve an agreed set of targets in an area.

Built on the long term vision set out in this strategy, the LAA will translate the identified priorities into short term actions that will help to deliver the 2028 ambition.

The community strategy shows that Suffolk is a mosaic of places. Needs, opportunities and challenges vary across the county. Change may be necessary in one place but not in another. The LAA will build on this.

Purpose of the Suffolk LAA

LAAs are designed to improve performance in an area. Although the results of Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation and the available data confirm Suffolk's performance is good overall, the results also show a range of differences and inequalities across the county. Suffolk's LAA will help to narrow this gap and give all the residents the same opportunities to improve their quality of life.

Through a negotiation process with the Government Office for the East of England, on behalf of central government departments, Suffolk will negotiate up to 35 targets from the national indicator set of 198. These will reflect the needs and ambitions for Suffolk.

Suffolk's LAA will be kept slim and practical, allowing partners to focus their efforts and resources on achieving improvements that will make Suffolk a better place to live, work and visit.

Reporting performance

Every June from 2009, the Suffolk Strategic Partnership will publish a performance report setting out its annual progress. This will be made available to all interested bodies and the general public.

9. Geographical priorities

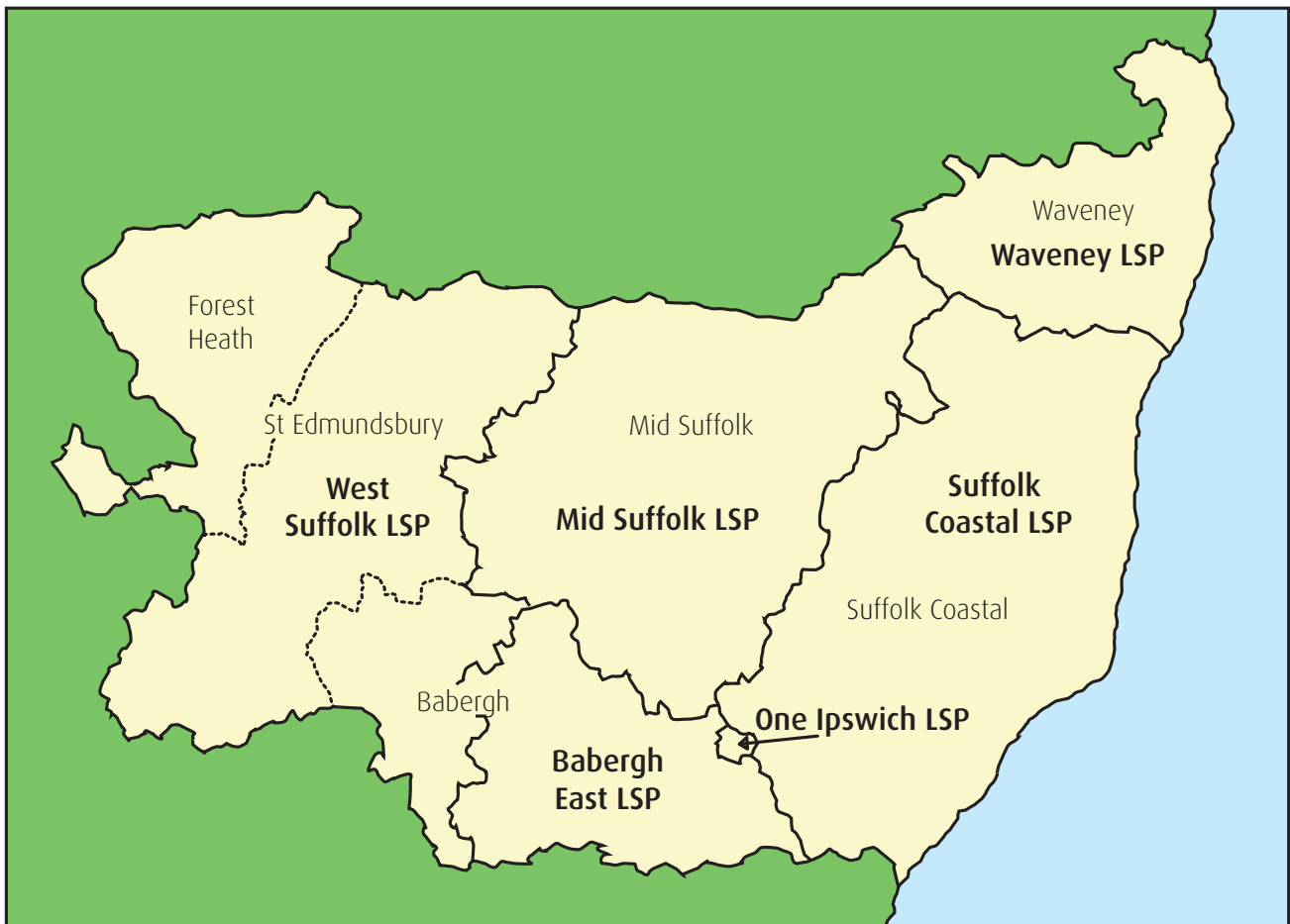
Suffolk is a very diverse county and, although we have identified a number of countywide priorities, there are geographical variations in terms of how important those priorities are for different parts of the county.

The six Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in Suffolk have all produced community strategies relevant to their local areas, which reflects their own ambitions, aims and objectives. These local ambitions have fed into and helped to identify the countywide priorities set out in this document.

This section sets out how the countywide priorities are reflected in Local Strategic Partnership areas and how these priorities link to the local community strategies.

Local Strategic Partnerships will have an important role to play in implementing both the countywide and local priorities identified within this strategy.

LSP Boundaries



Babergh East

1. Vision

'To improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the communities in Babergh East.'

2. Background

The boundary of Babergh East runs from Hitcham in the north to Nayland with Wissington in the south. Babergh East borders Mid Suffolk and Ipswich Councils to the north and Colchester Council to the south (Essex). The entire Local Strategic Partner (LSP) area falls within the Haven Gateway Partnership.

The population of the area covered by the LSP is approximately 44,400. The area is largely rural with only one small market town (Hadleigh). The rest of the area is made up of villages, some of which have a range of local facilities, but many people rely on either Hadleigh, Sudbury, or the major towns of Ipswich and Colchester for services.

The economy is largely agricultural with a range of small to medium sized businesses located in the larger villages and in the town of Hadleigh.

3. Babergh East LSP priorities

A range of issues in the LSP area are being addressed, including the environment, affordable housing, low level crime and disorder, and supporting elderly people. A shortage of facilities for young people and poor access to jobs and training remain areas in need of improvement. Babergh East's priorities are to:

Develop projects which engage with young people and promote active citizenship

Support and advocate projects which raise opportunities for people in local communities to access jobs and training

Through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation, the LSP and its associated organisations highlighted those areas that support the current Babergh East LSP priorities – specifically employment, skills and lifelong learning.

The consultation has raised several issues that are not currently reflected in the Babergh East Community Plan and these areas will be considered when the plan is revised in the near future. These areas are: diversity, waste, climate change, perceptions of crime, healthy lifestyles, and accidents.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

Based on the current objectives of the LSP, the following priorities around the 'Learning and Skills' and 'Safe, Healthy and Inclusive Communities' agendas will be important to the Babergh East area:

- A workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy
- A positive sense of well-being
- A sense of belonging within communities.

5. Delivery

The LSP has identified six projects to deliver its objectives. An impending review of the Community Plan will seek to reflect changes since it was adopted in 2005. The LSP will use its own research and the concerns raised through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation.

"The LSP will continue to seek opportunities to deal with emerging demands and challenges whilst retaining the character and environment of the area.

"Particularly challenging will be our desire to ensure that in 20 years' time the area is still safe, we have affordable housing for all who aspire to it and problems of rural isolation that affect people – whether it be the elderly or access to jobs and training or opportunities for young people – are a thing of the past."

CLlr Penny Clarke, Babergh East LSP Chair

One Ipswich

1. Vision

'Everybody matters'

We want Ipswich to be a vibrant, prosperous and thriving place. We will address deprivation and inequality in neighbourhoods and develop an economically dynamic and enterprising society so everyone in Ipswich can:

- Be healthy and stay well
- Keep safe
- Achieve their potential and enjoy life
- Have a greater say and better choices
- Be prosperous and have a place to live
- Live in friendly and supportive communities.

2. Background

Ipswich is an urban area of 118,000 people and is the largest town in Suffolk. Situated on the River Orwell, 12 miles from the North Sea, it has for centuries been part of East Anglia's gateway to Europe and beyond. It is an historic major regional centre for administration, financial services and hi-tech industries, and a hub for transport and distribution.

The town has experienced rapid growth over the past few years and is expected to grow even further over the coming decades with key developments such as the Ipswich Waterfront, University Campus Suffolk and Suffolk New College. Ipswich is also a key part of the Haven Gateway Partnership and the Regional Cities East initiative, which is supported by the East of England Development Agency and the Government Office for the East of England.

In addition to these, the Cambridge to Ipswich Hi-Tech Corridor and Ip-City initiatives are rolling out information and communications technology expertise across the region. However, Ipswich has significant levels of deprivation, crime, and areas of low educational attainment. It must be able to respond effectively to these issues as well as the growth agenda if it is to ensure a sustainable town and community for the 21st century.

Ipswich has long established African, Caribbean, Indian, Chinese, Bangladeshi, and Romany and traveller communities. The enlargement of the European Union and migration from Southern Europe and the Middle East has led to new and emerging groups being established, increasing Ipswich's diversity. The number of languages now spoken in the town has risen to 69.

3. One Ipswich LSP priorities

The One Ipswich LSP has identified the following six priority areas for the town:

- Everyone should have a roof over their head
- Everyone should enjoy good health
- There should be work for all
- The creation of a better environment for people in Ipswich
- People should be kept safe
- People should live in friendly and supportive communities.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

There is a close similarity between the outcomes in Suffolk Strategic Partnership's community strategy and those agreed for Ipswich. The focus areas for Suffolk also match up very well with the emerging priorities in the current draft One Ipswich community strategy. However, Ipswich will be prioritising:

- Working at neighbourhood level to tackle deprivation and address health, social and economic inequalities
- Community cohesion and integration of new communities
- Meeting the growing demand for affordable homes, social rented housing and a partnership approach to addressing deprivation, inequalities and environmental issues relating to housing
- Tackling drug related crime
- Environmental issues – making sure Ipswich grows in the right way
- Supporting business to grow and create more jobs.

5. Delivery

One Ipswich partners recognise that we need to work closely together to achieve the vision in our community strategy, which will contribute to delivering the overall vision for Suffolk. At neighbourhood level, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Children's Centres and the voluntary and community sectors are essential to finding local solutions to respond to local issues across the town. Area Forums offer a vital link with communities, and provide a platform for people to air issues of concern in their neighbourhood.

'Ipswich is entering an exciting phase. We want it to be a vibrant, prosperous and thriving place and to this end we are keen to work together to develop services that are more holistic, preventative and meet real needs. We see Ipswich as a major regional centre and a place where people want to live and work and can enjoy life.'

CLlr Elizabeth Harsant, One Ipswich LSP Chair

Mid Suffolk

1. Vision

'By 2020, to be a safe, healthy and prosperous community, living within thriving towns and villages with access to first class services, actively involved in providing a fairer society and a better social, economic and environmental heritage for future generations.'

2. Background

Mid Suffolk is situated in the heart of the Suffolk countryside to the northwest of the county town, Ipswich. The district covers 87,000 hectares and a population of 92,000 residents living in 37,000 households within 122 parishes.

Outside the towns of Needham Market, Stowmarket and Eye, the population is widely dispersed with an average of one person per hectare, making it one of the most rural districts in the county.

The main trunk road to the Midlands from the Haven Ports and London runs through the district, and the main London/Norwich railway line stops at several points throughout the district.

However, outside the towns, the transport and road infrastructure is less developed. As a result, more than 50% of local households have two or more vehicles, which demonstrates the dependence that the majority of the population has on private vehicles in order to live and work within the district.

There are several large, mixed residential developments under construction within the district which should improve the quality of life of our residents and provide more economic opportunities. These are located in Stowmarket North, Stowmarket West, Elmswell, Eye and Debenham.

The district is very popular with tourists, and tourism accounts for a significant part of the district's economic prosperity.

3. Mid Suffolk LSP priorities

The priorities of the present Mid Suffolk LSP are compatible with the objectives of the Suffolk's Community Strategy. This demonstrates a clear common need and purpose between the work of the Mid Suffolk LSP and the Suffolk Strategic Partnership.

There is a similarity between the issues at a county level and those at a district level. An example of this is affordable housing, which at a local level is a key priority for both the LSP and the District Council. This reflects a wider need across the county to improve the supply of affordable housing in a context of rising house prices, relatively low average wages and an increase in demand.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

Given the close match between the priorities of the Mid Suffolk LSP and the four outcomes in the Suffolk's Community Strategy, all of the focus areas of the Suffolk's Community Strategy are relevant to the Mid Suffolk LSP. However, there are three that have particular significance:

- Affordable, quality housing for all – there is a general need to improve the availability of affordable housing across the Mid Suffolk area. There are certain locations where this need has already been noted and in some cases, has been tackled. These include: Rickinghall and Botesdale; Palgrave; Redgrave; Badwell Ash; Gislingham; Hoxne; Fressingfield; Elmswell; Mendlesham; Old Newton; Cotton; Thurston; and Stowupland
- Less crime and disorder – crime levels across the Mid Suffolk area are generally low, but hot spots exist in some locations. These include: Stowmarket; Eye and Haughley
- More businesses attracted to the area – there is a general need to encourage business across the whole district to tackle the issues of a rurally dependent economy, and to place employment opportunities nearer to where Mid Suffolk residents live. The Stowmarket master plan is currently open to public consultation. The public is being asked to comment on the proposed locations for employment in and around the town.

5. Delivery

The LSP intends to tackle these priority areas by enhancing partnership working in a number of ways. It has established an action plan and commissioned projects to address these priorities across the district in partnership with community groups, the voluntary and charitable sector, town and parish councils, and public sector partners.

'If the outcomes in the Suffolk's Community Strategy are achieved, Mid Suffolk will maintain the high standards of living and excellent quality of life that it already enjoys. Mid Suffolk has been nationally recognised as one of the safest, cleanest and most picturesque places to live in the UK. We have long life expectancies for our population and low levels of crime and disorder. The Suffolk's Community Strategy should help to maintain the quality of life that Mid Suffolk residents are accustomed to.'

CLLr Tim Passmore, Mid Suffolk LSP Chair

Suffolk Coastal

1. Vision

'Building upon the best of the present, Suffolk Coastal should be a district where people want to live and to invest, and to care for others and the environment.'

2. Background

Suffolk Coastal is a diverse district of just over 122,000 people and nearly 90,000 hectares. It incorporates countryside, town, suburb, village and 30 miles of coastline. People are at the heart of the district and 94% of residents say they are satisfied with Suffolk Coastal as a place to live, making it one of the top-rated places in the country (MORI April 2005).

In 30 years, the district's population has risen by around 26,000, a 29% increase (among the higher rates of growth in the country). At just over 21%, the district has a higher proportion of people over the age of 65 than nationally or in Suffolk as a whole. There is a much lower than average number of people between the ages of 18 and 34, because young people leave the district for further education, training or work. The black and minority ethnic community is relatively small, but is growing.

Pockets of deprivation in both rural and urban areas across the district need to be addressed. Rural accessibility is a recurrent issue which requires action across a range of services.

The excellent quality of the environment is recognised in the substantial areas of countryside and coast that are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The architecture is of a similar high quality with numerous listed buildings, conservation areas and ancient monuments.

The district supports over 4,000 businesses, including large employers like the Port of Felixstowe, BT, Sizewell Power Station and Aldeburgh Music, as well as a high proportion of small and medium sized businesses that are vital to the local economy. Martlesham Heath, including BT's research and development headquarters, is a key part of the information, communication and technology cluster for the East of England. Tourism is also a major contributor to the local economy. Much of the district is within the Haven Gateway, which has been identified for significant growth.

3. Suffolk Coastal LSP priorities

The issues identified through the Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation are largely in line with the current priorities of Suffolk Coastal LSP. Given the high standard of the Suffolk Coastal natural environment, green issues had not previously featured as a key issue for improvement for the Suffolk Coastal LSP. Work is increasingly being

done to encourage and co-ordinate activities for carbon reduction and energy conservation across the district.

Suffolk Coastal LSP aims to concentrate on a number of significant issues, five of which were particularly identified:

- Young people – we will work with young people to meet their needs and help them to remain in the district
- Community development – we will support the development of voluntary and community groups who contribute so much to the life of the district
- Access to services – we will investigate new ways to address the decline in local services and the limitations of public transport, particularly in rural areas
- Healthy lifestyles – we will promote healthy living and support work to reduce the incidence and consequences of smoking, limited exercise and obesity
- Economy, learning and skills – we will investigate ways to maintain and enhance the prosperity of our rural areas. We will promote opportunities for people to develop the skills they need.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

The Suffolk Coastal LSP supports the Suffolk Strategic Partnership outcomes in the community strategy, and the following issues are of particular importance in the district:

The Suffolk Coastal LSP wants a Prosperous and Vibrant Economy and supports the identified need to focus geographically on the Ipswich policy area, Felixstowe, and Haven Gateway, as well as on affordable housing, transport infrastructure and tourism.

Skills for the future are vital in providing the right skills base. So too, is the need for suitable employment opportunities. A study in Suffolk Coastal has identified a lack of basic skills, and pressure within the high-technology industries and port logistics to find suitably qualified employees locally. It is also vital that enterprise is encouraged in both rural areas and market towns.

Suffolk's coastal area must continue to support strong communities and a high quality, bio-diverse and natural environment. With the potential impact of climate change and sea level rises on Suffolk's coastline, it is essential that integrated coastal zone management considers the needs of our communities and of the natural environment. Environmental management must also be reviewed in regard to both the Felixstowe Port expansion and the Haven Gateway growth area.

All sectors should focus on improving quality of life – especially for vulnerable people, including the growing population of older people, and those experiencing rural isolation where access to services is poor. Efforts should also be made to support the positive contribution that our young people can bring to our communities.

5. Delivery

The Suffolk Coastal LSP is already fulfilling its community strategy priorities and will continue to take the lead in meeting future challenges facing the whole of Suffolk and specifically Suffolk Coastal. We will concentrate on meeting the needs of individuals and ensure that they benefit from joined-up services and that our actions are sustainable.

'There is already much to celebrate about Suffolk Coastal, but there are some significant issues to be tackled and emerging issues that will need to be addressed. By supporting the Suffolk Strategic Partnership to devise and deliver the outcomes expressed in this community strategy, the Suffolk Coastal LSP fully recognises the part we can play to improve the well-being of all who live and work in Suffolk.'

Ray Herring, Suffolk Coastal LSP Chair

Waveney

1. Vision

'By 2010, to have prosperous, attractive and vibrant communities with good access to jobs, services and facilities and where everybody can feel safe, and be healthy and happy.'

2. Background

Waveney is situated in north-east Suffolk and is the most easterly district in Britain. Administratively it is linked with Suffolk County Council in Ipswich, and it is also closely connected with Great Yarmouth, Norwich and the Waveney Valley towns to the west.

The River Waveney forms the northern boundary, and Lowestoft links the Broads (the UK's only water-based national park) with the sea through Mutford Lock at Oulton Broad. Waveney has the advantage of being close to mainland Europe, exploiting its proximity to two seaport harbours at Lowestoft and neighbouring Great Yarmouth.

Waveney has a beautiful natural and built environment, which draws over 400,000 staying visitors and over 3.5 million day visitors each year. This contributes over £150m to the local economy and supports 10.1% of all jobs in Waveney. Both visitors and residents value the quality of life experienced in the area, with its access to the sea, countryside and Broads. Lowestoft, Kessingland and Southwold have some of the finest beaches in the country and much of the coastal strip is valued for its wildlife importance.

Waveney has some established employers of national and international repute and, while employment has declined in certain traditional areas, others such as retail, the service industry and construction sectors, have seen improved job prospects. Lowestoft is uniquely placed to capitalise on the growth of the offshore renewable energy industry, a position that will be enhanced by the opening of the £9m OrbisEnergy in 2008.

Lowestoft's relationship with Great Yarmouth has been strengthened by working on joint initiatives. The two towns, which share common economic and social needs, have established a joint Urban Regeneration Company which commits to working in partnership for the next ten years or more. Such co-operation will continue to bring mutual benefits, including educational (both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Colleges are partners within the new University Campus Suffolk) as well as new employment opportunities from major capital developments such as Eastport and OrbisEnergy.

The district covers 37,041 hectares with a coastline of 26km and a population of 16,500.

Lowestoft is the largest town in Waveney, situated in the north-eastern corner of the district and with a population of 74,280, making it the second largest town in Suffolk.

The rural part of the area gains its identity primarily from the four historic towns of Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and Southwold. Outside these towns the countryside is characterised by one large community in Kessingland and by small hamlets and scattered communities. 32 out of 58 parishes have populations of fewer than 300 people. Many villages lost their shops and services some time ago.

Between 2002 and 2007, Waveney had the largest number of incomers of all the Suffolk districts. Only the 16 to 24 age group shows a net outflow, primarily because of a lack of educational and employment opportunities.

Waveney is divided in two by the East Suffolk railway line, which runs through Halesworth and Beccles to Lowestoft. This is also the terminus of the Wherry Line that runs to Norwich.

The A12 and the A146 are the main highways in the district. The A12 runs through Lowestoft and is the main link from London to Yarmouth. A local campaign for improvement to the A12 southwards, has arisen from difficulties for the community caused by the remoteness and generally poor transport infrastructure in the district. In contrast, a relative lack of through traffic results in a good quality of life for residents and visitors.

The district has a rich architectural heritage, with 1,599 listed buildings and 14 conservation areas covering the market towns and many of the villages.

3. Waveney LSP priorities

Waveney's vision is for:

- Children and young people – to enable all children and young people in Waveney to aspire to and achieve their full potential, giving them the basis for a successful life as active members of their community.
- Safer, stronger and sustainable communities – to make Waveney an area where people feel safe, can contribute to the community and want to live
- Healthier communities – good health and well-being for people in Waveney and for everyone to enjoy the district's quality of life and to be happy.
- Economic development and enterprise – a place that is full of vitality where: businesses and entrepreneurs want to be located; there is a strong sub-regional partnership with Great Yarmouth; economic growth and investment is supported through joint working; the rural economy is thriving;

there is economic growth and inward investment; and an emerging sector is developing and traditional industries are diversifying. To be one of Europe's leading centres of expertise in renewable energy.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

The issues highlighted through Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation broadly support the current priorities for Waveney LSP, including lifelong learning, climate change, reduction of antisocial behaviour, communities, employment, the sub-regional agenda and housing.

Waveney seeks to achieve: affordable housing for all; a strong, vibrant economy; more businesses attracted to the area; a workforce with the skills to meet the needs of Suffolk's economy; a reduced carbon footprint; minimal impact of climate change on communities; a healthy lifestyle; a positive sense of belonging within communities where everyone is valued; minimal impact from drugs and alcohol on communities; people and communities safeguarded from harm; and cohesive communities.

Waveney LSP's ambitions and those of the Suffolk's Community Strategy are largely the same. The priority of coastal protection is a significant issue for Waveney, with the defence of Lake Lothing at the heart of Lowestoft and the Blyth Estuary to the south being specific concerns.

5. Delivery

Waveney is working on its local priorities through LSP theme groups. The LSP welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the wider Suffolk's Community Strategy to make Suffolk a place where people want to live, to work and to visit.

'Waveney LSP supports the county's ambition to encourage lifelong learning to achieve a good quality of life, where there is less deprivation and poverty, and greater equality of opportunity and shared prosperity.'

Cllr Mark Bee, Waveney LSP Chair

West Suffolk

1. Vision

'Make life better for the people of West Suffolk by 2016.'

2. Background

West Suffolk is at the heart of East Anglia in the East of England, bordered by Cambridgeshire, Essex and Norfolk. It is one of the safest places to live in the country.

The area is renowned for its scenery, environment, forests and heaths and has a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other conservation areas, such as the Brecks and Dedham Vale. It also has a number of historic market towns such as Lavenham and Bury St Edmunds.

The area is mainly rural with low population density, with about half of the population living in rural areas. There are also 9,000 USAF personnel in the area, and a growing population of migrant workers who make a significant contribution to the economy.

West Suffolk has two major road routes (A11 and A14) which provide good access to the region, the rest of the UK and to northern Europe. The A14 is an important link both to the port of Felixstowe and the city of Cambridge, which has been identified as a growth area, and most of West Suffolk is included in the Cambridge sub-region.

London and the Midlands can be reached by road within 90 minutes. There are also rail links to London, Cambridge and Peterborough with stations at Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury, Newmarket and Brandon. West Suffolk is close to Stansted Airport, with Sudbury and Haverhill just 40 minutes away by road.

Bury St Edmunds is a significant tourist centre, and the town of Newmarket is a world renowned centre for horseracing. Center Parcs at Elveden Forest is an important visitor attraction which employs around 1500 local people. West Suffolk also includes the towns of Brandon, Mildenhall, Haverhill and Sudbury which are centres for employment and local services.

Small businesses are important within the district and contribute to a generally prosperous area. There is generally good health and low unemployment, but there are pockets of deprivation. Some small areas have health inequalities, high unemployment, low educational attainment and relatively high crime levels. The skills base and wage levels are low in parts of the area, with some communities reliant on a single large employer.

Economically, the area is changing and the lack of appropriate skills could affect the ability of IT industries to prosper and expand. However, the constantly changing nature of

agriculture should also allow new opportunities to develop.

3. West Suffolk LSP priorities

The West Suffolk LSP priorities are to:

- Encourage achievement in children and young people
- Make West Suffolk a safer place and build a stronger community
- Protect our natural and built environment and local bio-diversity, and ensure sustainable development
- Reduce avoidable early deaths by providing education and support on health and well-being
- Alleviate poverty and reduce health inequalities
- Create a prosperous, sustainable economy
- Encourage sustainable tourism
- Improve skills and educational opportunities.

The Suffolk's Community Strategy consultation has reinforced many of the priorities West Suffolk is working towards. The consultation also raised other issues, such as housing and transport that are not priorities for the LSP. The LSP is committed to the emerging agendas around climate change and the Olympics, and to improving tourism, tackling substance misuse, developing skills, and improving health through physical activity.

The LSP aspires to a prosperous and sustainable economy where improved and new skills are essential for West Suffolk to benefit from the Greater Cambridge Partnership. Community engagement remains an issue for continued development and improvement.

4. Suffolk's Community Strategy priorities

All the priorities identified through the consultation are relevant to some extent in West Suffolk. Attracting more businesses to the area is important, but to achieve this, additional work is required to increase the skills of the workforce.

Climate change is high on the agenda, as is the importance of retaining the attractive environment and open spaces we already have, especially the Brecks, West Stow, Lakenheath Fen, Dedham Vale and Nowton Park.

The LSP is keen to promote healthy lifestyles among all the population especially with regard to physical exercise, warmer homes, and the reduction of falls. It also aims to reduce the impact of alcohol abuse in all areas and address particular problems associated with the night time economy in Newmarket.

Community engagement and community cohesion remain an area for improvement and future investment.

5. Delivery

The LSP is working closely with a number of partnerships to achieve the priorities set out in West Suffolk's community strategy.

By 2016 we want:

- West Suffolk to be a strong, sustainable and safe community
- The people of West Suffolk to have healthy lifestyles and a sense of well-being
- New and older communities to be living together in harmony
- West Suffolk to be a vibrant part of the 'greenest county'
- Work skills to match the market needs of employers.

'West Suffolk is a beautiful, vibrant and growing area. Towns like Bury St Edmunds, villages like Lavenham and the horseracing centre at Newmarket are just some examples of the many historic, cultural and environmental assets we are so fortunate to have here – not to mention our other major towns, wonderful villages and rural areas.

'However, we face many challenges and pressures ahead, not least addressing our relatively low levels of skills, our pockets of deprivation and our desire to help build community cohesion. We are working in partnership within Suffolk to improve these, and many other, aspects of West Suffolk to make life better.'

John Griffiths, West Suffolk LSP Chair

10. Suffolk Strategic Partnership

The Suffolk Strategic Partnership (SSP) was formed in 2001 to develop a vision for transforming Suffolk and to tackle issues affecting the county, as dictated by the Local Government Act 2000. The countywide partnership brings together the expertise and experience of partners from the public, voluntary, community and private sectors to co-ordinate the contributions that each can make to improve local areas.

In two tier local areas such as Suffolk, there are also Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) primarily based on District/Borough Council boundaries, which contribute to setting the long-term strategic vision for the county through their own local community strategies.

'The essential ingredients of successful partnerships are a common vision, shared values and mutual respect'

(Local Government White Paper - Strong and Prosperous Communities 2006).

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act identified the need for strategic leadership in communities, to bring together local partners to improve local services and quality of life.

Communities need this leadership to build a vision of how to address and respond to the problems and challenges of a locality in a joined-up way. Local authorities and partner organisations are therefore central to this 'place shaping' agenda aimed at generating local accountability and leadership.

The LGWP challenges local authorities and LSPs to 'seize the opportunity' to shape places and communities within a common framework which includes:

- A duty for the local authority to prepare a sustainable community strategy in consultation with others (Local Government Act 2000)
- Sustainable community strategy and regional plans to be drawn up with regard to each other
- A new duty for the upper-tier authority to prepare a Local Area Agreement in consultation with others
- A new duty for the local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other to agree the targets in the Local Area Agreement
- A new duty for the local authority and named partners to have regard for relevant targets within the Local Area Agreement.

Suffolk's Community Strategy

Suffolk's Community Strategy provides the overall, long-term vision for the county of Suffolk. It has been developed in partnership with public, private, community and voluntary sector representatives through the Suffolk Strategic Partnership (SSP).

By planning and working towards the outcomes that will achieve the aims of the community strategy, the SSP will act innovatively and work differently to increase efficiencies, cost savings and service improvements for the benefit and well-being of our local communities.

As stated in the Local Government Act 2000, 'councils will use their well-being powers to enter into arrangements or agreements which promote or improve the economic, environmental and social well-being of their area'.

The community strategy is a platform for new and exciting improvements, setting out the combined vision for Suffolk as a county over the next 20 years. Regular reviews of the strategy will take place to assess what has been achieved and to identify new challenges in an ever-changing environment.

The following members make up the Suffolk Strategic Partnership:

Suffolk Strategic Partnership Board

Clare Euston, Independent Chair

Alastair McWhirter, Chair, Suffolk Primary Care Trust (Vice Chair)

Bob Anderson, Pro Vice Chancellor, University Campus Suffolk

Cathy Arbon, Fred Olsen Freight (Business Representative)

Simon Ash, Chief Constable, Suffolk Constabulary

David Barker, Suffolk Agricultural Association and Environment Spokesman

Jane Basham, Director, Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality

Cllr Mark Bee, Leader, Waveney District Council (SLGA District/Borough Council Representative) and Chair, Waveney Local Strategic Partnership

Kathleen Ben Rabha, Community Affairs Adviser, Diocese St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Dr Peter Bradley, Director of Public Health, Suffolk

John Budd, Chair, Suffolk Criminal Justice Board

Rona Burt, Chair, Suffolk Association of Local Councils

Tony Butler, Director, Museum of East Anglian Life

Terry Clark, Chair, Suffolk Development Agency

Cllr Penny Clarke, Chair, Babergh East
Local Strategic Partnership

Tim Clarke, Customer Innovation Ltd (Business Representative)

John Clough, Partnership Director, Suffolk
County Sports Partnership

John Dugmore, Chief Executive, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Tina Ellis, District Manager (Cambridgeshire
& Suffolk), Job Centre Plus

Cllr John Fields, Mid Suffolk District Council (SLGA
District/Borough Council Representative)

Johanna Finn, Chair, Suffolk Learning & Skills Council

Cllr John Griffiths, Chair, West Suffolk
Local Strategic Partnership

Cllr Elizabeth Harsant, Chair, One Ipswich
Local Strategic Partnership

Cllr Ray Herring, Chair, Suffolk Coastal
Local Strategic Partnership

Lina Hogg, Picasso HR Ltd (Business Representative)

Sally Hogg, Head of Health Improvement
Partnerships, Suffolk Primary Care Trust

Geoffrey Jaggard, Leader, Forest Heath District Council
(SLGA District/Borough Council Representative)

Gulshan Kayembe, Chair, Suffolk Police Authority

Jacqui Martin, Chief Executive, Suffolk Family
Carers (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Jonathan Moore, Chief Executive, Suffolk Association of
Voluntary Organisations (Voluntary Sector Representative)

Cllr Tim Passmore, Chair, Mid Suffolk
Local Strategic Partnership

Cllr Jeremy Pembroke, Leader, Suffolk County Council

Richard Perkins, Richard Perkins and
Associates (Business Representative)

David Redhead, BSP International Foundations
Ltd (Business Representative)

Cllr Nick Ridley, Leader, Babergh District Council
(SLGA District/Borough Council Representative)

Jo Searle, Chief Executive, East Suffolk Mind
(Voluntary Sector Representative)

Stephen Singleton, Chief Executive, The Suffolk Foundation

Dr Ann Williams, Principal, West Suffolk College

Bernard Williamson, Chairman, Great Yarmouth
and Waveney Primary Care Trust

Suffolk Strategic Partnership Chief Executive Panel

Simon Ash, Chief Constable, Suffolk Constabulary

Stephen Baker, Chief Executive, Suffolk Coastal District Council

Shona Bendix, Chief Executive, Suffolk
Association of Local Councils

David Burnip, Chief Executive, Forest Heath District Council

Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive, St
Edmundsbury Borough Council

Tina Ellis, District Manager (Cambridgeshire
& Suffolk), Job Centre Plus

Glen Garrod, Chief Executive, Waveney District Council

Andrew Good, Chief Executive, Mid Suffolk District Council

Steve Green, Suffolk Lead, Government
Office – East of England

James Hehir, Chief Executive, Ipswich Borough Council

Jacqui Martin, Chief Executive, Suffolk Carers

Penny McVeigh, Chief Executive Norcas

Judith Mobbs, Area Director, Suffolk Learning & Skills Council

Jonathan Moore, Chief Executive, Suffolk
Association of Voluntary Organisations

Mike More, Chief Executive, Suffolk County Council (Chair)

Julian Munson, Chief Executive, Suffolk Development Agency

Pat Rockall, Chief Executive, Babergh District Council

Mike Stonard, Chief Executive, Great Yarmouth
& Waveney Primary Care Trust

Carole Taylor-Brown, Chief Executive,
Suffolk Primary Care Trust

Suffolk Strategic Partnership Theme Champions

Simon Ash, Police Constable, Creating the Safest County

David Barker, Environmental Representative,
Creating The Greenest County

Peter Bradley, Director of Public Health,
Creating the Healthiest County

Cllr Wendy Mawer, Chair of the Suffolk
Cultural Network Culture and Sport

Julian Munson, Chief Executive, Suffolk Development
Agency, Creating Prosperity for All

Daphne Savage, Chair of the Older Peoples
Partnership Board, Valuing People

Julia Stephens-Row, Assistant Director for Social
Inclusion and Diversity, Creating a Cohesive County

Rosalind Turner, Director for Children and Young
People, Creating the Best Place to Grow and Learn