

5. County Strategy



Ipswich Waterfront

- 5.1 This section sets out the county strategy policies, reflecting the scale and location of development outlined in section 4.

Distribution of New Development and the Provision of Associated Infrastructure

- 5.2 Policy CS1 carries forward the strategic aims into the county strategy. It also seeks to ensure that appropriate provision is made for new infrastructure and services to accompany all areas of new development.
- 5.3 Much new development will require significant infrastructure provision, including transport and access improvements, drainage, water supply and sewage disposal facilities, community, school and social facilities, and public open space. Development will not be acceptable unless the infrastructure which is directly required to service it will be made available when necessary. The need for additional school capacity and proposed new provision will be a high County Council priority in this respect. Where appropriate, such provision will be made by or with the financial assistance of the developer. Conditions may be attached to planning permissions or legal agreements may be sought to ensure the required infrastructure is provided.
- 5.4 Further advice on this issue is given in the Guidance Note 'Planning Obligations' published by the Suffolk Planning Authorities in 1993 and revised and re-issued in 1999 in the light of revised Government guidance in circular 1/97 and Structure Plan policy. The revised note, where possible, sets down explicit and objective criteria for assessing where infrastructure and facilities will need to be provided for by development and the scale of contributions that will be required, and will help to achieve consistency in the application of such requirements across the county.
- 5.5 The provision of affordable housing under policy CS9 may also be achieved through the mechanism of planning obligations. Further guidance specifically in relation to transport is set out in paragraphs 8.61-8.62 and policy T14.

CS1 Provision will be made for development which helps sustain the economic and social well-being of Suffolk, providing that the environment is safeguarded and development does not give rise to problems of transport or service provision. Development will only be acceptable where the community facilities and infrastructure necessary to serve it already exist or will

be made available at the appropriate time. In the latter case, conditions will be attached to planning permissions and/or legal agreements entered into to ensure that the necessary provision is made.

- 5.6 The Plan concentrates housing and employment development at towns on the basis of the approach outlined in paragraphs 4.19-4.41. Policies CS2 and CS3 provide the necessary guidance. Local plans should consider in detail the potential for further development at towns and larger villages and make appropriate allocations, having regard to the factors referred to in paragraph 4.25. They should also take into account opportunities for regeneration and the recycling of land; opportunities for increased densities of development to help maximise the contribution of the existing urban areas to development needs; and the potential for creation of "urban villages" and mixed use developments.
- 5.7 For the purposes of interpreting policies CS2 and CS3 as a whole, towns are regarded as consisting of a generally continuous built up area and may include existing or committed development within adjoining parishes. The precise settlement boundary should be defined in local plans.
- 5.8 Policy CS2 seeks to encourage economic growth across the county, particularly at the major settlements but also at market towns. Local plans should seek to identify economically vulnerable towns and include development proposals encouraging their regeneration. At Lowestoft, for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.28, it would be appropriate for the scale of employment growth to be greater than that of housing. Transport proposals for the town are being considered through the Lowestoft Partnership, while realisation of significant brownfield opportunities, probably involving mixed-use development, would contribute to regeneration. The economic and social needs of Suffolk's rural communities are also recognised through the Rural Priority Area and Rural East Suffolk Objective 2 Transitional Area designations and the Rural White Paper Market Towns Initiative. This issue is examined in more detail in paragraphs 7.15-7.24.
- 5.9 The size of the Ipswich built-up area (including new housing development), the scale of the existing employment base, its role in the sub-region and its locational advantages, mean that in absolute terms the greatest growth should take place at the town. Bury St Edmunds, also with major housing development proposed in this Plan, will require commensurate growth in employment. The towns mentioned in policy CS2(c) where

provision for housing development will be made, Stowmarket, Sudbury and Haverhill, currently have low unemployment rates. The first two of those towns have a good balance between workforce and jobs within their immediate areas and local plan policies should seek to ensure that this continues. While Haverhill has a well established manufacturing sector, it appears that recent housing completions have not been matched by growth in employment, leading to increased out-commuting from the town. Action will need to be taken to ensure that the scale of employment growth in the town matches the future growth in the workforce associated with housing development, alongside seeking to diversify the employment base.

- 5.10 In summary, under the terms of policy CS2, the Ipswich Policy Area, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft are intended to take the leading strategic role in accommodating new employment as part of the county development strategy. Such an approach is fully consistent with policies 15, 18 and 20 of Regional Planning Guidance. Stowmarket, Sudbury and Haverhill are expected to make a more modest but nevertheless important contribution.
- 5.11 Sustainable development in respect of policy CS2 means development including sufficient provision for employment to meet expected change in the size and characteristics of the workforce and the needs of new and existing businesses, where this is consistent with policy CS1. Priority will need to be given to new employment land allocations and other appropriate initiatives where there is a need to regenerate the local economy because of:
- (a) consistently high unemployment rates;
 - (b) particular problems associated with the scale and composition of the unemployed, including the long term unemployed, new entrants to the workforce and ethnic minority unemployment;
 - (c) a limited range of job opportunities;
 - (d) dependence on a small number of companies;
 - (e) a high proportion of declining industries;
 - (f) the needs of new industries.
- 5.12 New employment land allocations will also have to take account of the need and the opportunities to diversify and modernise the economic base and the needs of emerging and existing business clusters.
- 5.13 From a regeneration perspective, two key policies of Regional Planning Guidance are policy 11 on Priority Areas for Regeneration (PAR); and policy 20 on the development and implementation of a vision for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. The PARs in Suffolk are Lowestoft and the inner urban areas of Ipswich; and the remoter rural areas,

which include the Rural Priority Areas and those areas designated under the European Union (EU) Objective 2 and transitional Objective 2 programmes. In Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the regional vision is to strengthen the economic base of the area and make it more attractive to inward investment; to protect and enhance its attractive historic and natural environment; and achieve the redevelopment of under-used industrial sites. To this end, a programme for the new Objective 2 area has been prepared by partners in Waveney and Great Yarmouth, while the County Council and Waveney District Council are jointly preparing a regeneration strategy for south Lowestoft.

- 5.14 The East of England Development Agency was formed in April 1999 in order to give a new focus to building the prosperity and well being of the region. An updated Economic Development Strategy was published in 2001. The Agency's vision is to make the East of England a world class knowledge-based economy, renowned for creativity, enterprise and the quality of life and work in the region. At the county level the Suffolk Development Agency has been formed bringing together the County Council, District and Borough Councils, the Suffolk Learning and Skills Council, the private sector and other bodies to work with EEDA in implementing its strategy and to promote Suffolk's economic development priorities.
- 5.15 The County Council shares the aspirations of EEDA and the Suffolk Development Agency (SDA) and recognises the benefits of continued economic and employment growth throughout Suffolk. The Structure Plan has an important part to play in promoting growth and competitiveness, by guiding the scale and location of new housing and employment development and fostering a high quality environment within which to encourage investment. The Plan also contributes to a framework within which measures can be taken to address the problems of parts of the county performing less well in economic terms. Such measures will both benefit the areas themselves and help them make a more significant contribution to achievement of EEDA's vision for the region.
- 5.16 Since the first Structure Plan was prepared in the mid 1970's, outmigration from London and the south-east to Suffolk has continued to drive population and employment growth. Over the same period, major investment has taken place in the A12 trunk road and in electrification of the London-Norwich rail line, leading to an increase in commuting to London. The effect has been to enhance economic links between Suffolk and the capital.

- 5.17 More recently, the high technology and knowledge-based components of the Cambridge economy have developed rapidly. Resulting shortages of development land and capacity problems on the transport network are beginning to encourage the dispersal of investment from Cambridge into Suffolk.
- 5.18 These strengthening links with the south-east and Cambridge are likely to play an increasing role in economic development and employment growth in the county. It will be important for local plans to ensure that adequate land is allocated for these purposes, taking into account the guidance in policy ECON5, and that where necessary, other measures are implemented to encourage a level of growth consistent with policy CS2.

- CS2 (a) Action will be undertaken to strengthen the economy and encourage employment throughout the County. Most employment development will be located in or adjoining towns, at a scale consistent with the potential for sustainable development at each town.**
- (b) In accordance with clause (a), major employment development will take place in the Ipswich Policy Area, at Bury St Edmunds and at Lowestoft.**
- (c) In accordance with clause (a), provision for significant employment development will also be made at Stowmarket, Sudbury and Haverhill.**
- (d) At other settlements, employment development may be located within or, where indicated in the local plan, adjoining the built-up area, at a scale consistent with the potential for sustainable development at each settlement.**

Outside settlements, employment development will only be acceptable where consistent with policies ECON2 and ECON4.

- 5.19 Under the terms of policy CS3, the Ipswich Policy Area and Bury St Edmunds are intended to take the leading strategic role in accommodating new housing as part of the county development strategy, following the approach laid down by policies 15 and 18 of Regional Planning Guidance. Lowestoft, Stowmarket, Sudbury and Haverhill are expected to make a smaller but nevertheless important contribution.

- 5.20 Sustainable development in respect of policy CS3 means a scale and form of housing growth which is consistent with policy CS1 and which meets the needs of the immediate or wider area (according to the provisions of clauses (b) – (f) of the policy). It should also be consistent with the environment and transport policies of this Plan. Housing development at settlements identified under policy CS3(e) would normally comprise groups of houses or small estates. It is not intended that new housing in villages should play a major part in meeting Suffolk's housing requirements. To try to achieve a long term reduction in the proportion of all new housing being provided in villages, policy CS3(f) seeks to prevent housing development outside the built up area of most villages, and in some cases identified through the local plan process, within the built up area. Development which does take place would normally take the form of single houses or pairs of houses on infill plots within the built-up area. Provision of affordable housing is dealt with in policy CS9.

- 5.21 Paragraphs 5.6 and 5.20 and policy CS3(e) and (f) set out the Structure Plan approach to village housing in general terms. However the characteristics of villages vary considerably across the county and some are unique. Local plans have an important role in applying the Structure Plan guidance, not rigidly or mechanistically, but in a way which takes account of local characteristics and needs.

- 5.22 The overall approach seeks to strengthen market towns and villages, protect the open countryside, sustain local services and achieve a better balance between employment and housing in rural communities, thereby minimising the need to travel.

- 5.23 In considering the distribution of land allocations in accordance with policy CS3(e), District Councils should also have regard to measures being taken or planned to maintain the vitality of rural communities, in accordance with policy CS6.

- CS3 (a) Most housing development will be located in or adjoining towns, at a scale consistent with the potential for sustainable development at each town.**
- (b) In accordance with clause (a), major housing development will take place in the Ipswich Policy Area and at Bury St Edmunds.**
- (c) In accordance with clause (a), provision for significant housing development will also be made at Lowestoft, Stowmarket, Sudbury and Haverhill.**

- (d) Larger developments in the above named towns should incorporate a range of non-residential uses including community facilities, employment and appropriate transport infrastructure.
- (e) Other towns and villages with potential for housing development primarily meeting the needs of their surrounding area will be identified in local plans. At these settlements, new housing may be located within or, where indicated in the local plan, adjoining the built-up area. Settlements identified for new housing under this policy should have all of the following:
 - (i) primary school;
 - (ii) good journey to work public transport service to a town;
 - (iii) convenience goods shop;
 - (iv) community, leisure and social facilities; and
 - (v) a variety of employment opportunities which have potential for further development.
- (f) Housing development in most villages not identified under clause (e) will take the form of small scale infilling within the built-up area. Local plan reviews will assess whether this policy should be applied to those smaller settlements in which, by virtue of few or no local facilities, remoteness and poor public transport, additional housing development will be considered unsustainable.

5.24 A study is currently under way into alternative options for meeting the future housing needs of the Cambridge Sub-Region. If the results of this study, alongside Regional Planning Guidance, indicate that a significantly increased level of provision for housing and employment growth is required in the western part of Suffolk, above that envisaged in this Plan, this will be considered by way of an alteration to the Plan. Such an alteration would consider the scale and distribution of growth, alongside the status of the towns in policy CS3, and other implications for the policies of the Plan. Local Plan reviews will address any increases not justifying a Structure Plan Alteration.

- CS4 Housing and employment provision to meet the needs of the Cambridge Sub-Region as defined on the key diagram will be within or adjoining towns of the sub-region. Provision will be at a scale and in locations which meet the following requirements, while being consistent with other policies of the Plan:**
- (a) land for employment will be allocated in local plans to meet the needs of the towns, while taking account of the needs of the sub-region;
 - (b) provision of land for housing will:
 - (i) have regard to the findings of the sub-regional housing study commissioned to assess the options contained in policy 22 of Regional Planning Guidance for East Anglia;
 - (ii) be subject to the provision of sustainable transport measures both within the towns and linking the housing to major employment and service destinations in the sub-region;
 - (iii) be made in conjunction with the achievement of employment growth/diversification in the towns and adjoining parts of the sub-region; and
 - (iv) be required to make an appropriate contribution to community and other infrastructure requirements in line with policy CS1.

The Urban Fringe

5.25 Implementation of policy CS3 may involve development on the fringe of existing built up areas. In identifying such development areas through the local plan process, care should be taken to avoid the coalescence of settlements.

- CS5 The separate identity and physical separation of towns and villages will be maintained. In areas outside the settlement boundaries of towns and villages as defined in local plans, countryside policies will apply, except where provided for in other policies of this plan. Where necessary, strategic gaps between settlements will be identified in local plans.**

Rural Communities

- 5.26 Particular attention will continue to be given to the problems of maintaining jobs and services in the rural areas of Suffolk, through both land use planning, and regeneration measures drawing on national and European funding for disadvantaged areas. Although the County Council does not believe that new housing provision has a significant part to play in this process, some development will continue to take place through infilling, small allocations, and the implementation of existing commitments, as set out in policy CS3 above. Alternative means of maintaining the vitality of rural communities may need to be sought, as described in section 4, paragraphs 4.39 and 4.40. These may most readily be progressed through a process of involvement of the whole community alongside the local planning authorities and service providers.

CS6 Measures will be taken to maintain the vitality of rural communities, seeking

- (a) to reduce unemployment and diversify the range of jobs;**
- (b) to improve accessibility to jobs, services and facilities;**
- (c) to counter population loss in those areas experiencing decline;**
- (d) a better balance between the population of working and retirement age.**

Particular attention will be given to the East Suffolk Rural Priority Area.

Sequential Approach to Housing Location

- 5.27 It is the Government's intention that a high proportion of new housing development should be on recycled or "brownfield" as opposed to "greenfield" land. Application of a sequential approach by District/Borough Councils, identifying and giving priority to brownfield sites when making local plan allocations, is required by Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing". Policy CS7 promotes such an approach.
- 5.28 Policy CS7 is intended to apply to all built up areas, except where development is considered inappropriate under the terms of policy CS3(f), or where the take up of a brownfield opportunity would lead to a scale of development clearly contrary to the locational strategy as a whole. Local plans should provide further guidance on these issues, taking local circumstances into account. District Councils will need to ensure that

any redevelopment of employment land or premises will not result in unsustainable increases in outcommuting through loss of local employment. They should also avoid use of land where this would adversely affect the existing townscape or character of the settlement through impact on the built landscape or important open spaces. Significant nature conservation interests will be protected by the ENV policies, while policy REC1 states that existing recreational or sports facilities can only be developed in exceptional circumstances. Redevelopment should also have regard to the requirements of policy ENV3 on design standards.

- 5.29 While policy CS7 establishes a general principle to be applied in making new land allocations, there may be particular local circumstances in which the identification and development of greenfield land ahead of available brownfield sites would represent a more sustainable option. Any such variation from the sequential approach should be justified in the local plan.

CS7 New housing allocations will be made in local plans having regard to the following sequential approach:

- (a) Initially sites comprising previously-developed land and buildings or vacant or under-used land should be identified within built-up areas. Open land should not be allocated if its development would do unacceptable harm to the townscape or the visual or historic character of the settlement.**
- (b) Following a comprehensive assessment and appropriate identification of sites for housing under clause (a), further land may be required to meet the provisions of policy CS8. Under these circumstances, previously undeveloped sites should be identified immediately adjoining a built-up area, where development would not materially conflict with policies for transport or protection of the environment. Such sites should also be linked or be capable of being linked to shops, employment areas and community facilities by short trips on good quality public transport, walking and cycle routes.**

This policy will not apply in settlements where development is considered unacceptable under the terms of policy CS3(f).

In reviewing local plans and in considering the renewal of planning permissions, local planning authorities should examine existing commitments against the sequential approach in clauses (a) and (b) above.

5.30 Policy CS8 sets out the proposed increases in dwelling stock for each District and Borough, and for Ipswich Policy Area, on an annualised basis.

CS8 The Structure Plan provides for 2,650 additional dwellings per annum between 1996 and 2016, located as follows:

District/Borough	Dwellings pa
Babergh	345
Forest Heath	260
Ipswich	400
Mid Suffolk	405
St Edmundsbury	440
Suffolk Coastal	470
Waveney	335
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Suffolk	2,650
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Babergh (part)	55
Ipswich Borough	400
Mid Suffolk (part)	40
Suffolk Coastal (part)	160
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Ipswich Policy Area	655
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(Ipswich Policy Area figures included in District and Suffolk figures above)	

5.31 PPG3 refers to a sequence in the search for land to be identified for housing provision, starting with the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas, followed by urban extensions. Finally, it suggests that new development could be located around nodes in good public transport corridors. In terms of the scale of growth required, and the opportunities available in Suffolk, this last option is not part of the county strategy.

5.32 Population and household projections suggest that the provision for additional development should be spread evenly across the plan period. In drawing up local plans, District and Borough Councils should review Structure Plan estimates to judge the contribution likely from existing commitments, small infill sites and brownfield schemes and then identify sufficient greenfield sites (those consistent with policy CS7(b)) to provide for the level of development identified in

policy CS8. The release of such sites should be controlled so that they are not all given permission in the early years of the local plan period. Regular monitoring of starts, completions and the scale and location of outstanding planning permissions will be required to ensure that appropriate housing provision is made for the forthcoming five year periods. It is recognised that actual construction rates will be affected by wider economic factors including market demand. In July 2001, DTLR published guidance on the managed release of housing sites through the local plan process.

5.33 If higher densities are achieved on existing commitments in line with PPG3, if a higher rate of development on small windfall sites is achieved or if more brownfield sites come forward than initially identified, then it may be unnecessary to grant permission for development on allocated greenfield land as soon as envisaged in the local plan. Alternatively, if the reverse is the case, the release of allocated sites may need to be brought forward. The DTLR guidance referred to in paragraph 5.32 gives advice on the way in which such changes should be handled.

5.34 For major greenfield development where substantial new infrastructure is needed, it may not be possible to limit permissions to the quantity of housing required for the next phase of the local plan. In these circumstances, consideration should be given to phasing the release of housing on such sites, taking into account the contributions likely to come forward from other sites complying with policy CS7(a) in succeeding years. The rate of release of housing on the greenfield site should be governed by condition and/or legal agreement.

5.35 Of the provision for Ipswich Borough, approximately 1,500 units are proposed in north Ipswich, immediately adjacent to the built up area, in line with the background set out in paragraph 4.45. This should take the form of a comprehensive development which would also include other land uses to meet the needs of new residents and which would accord with the principles set out in policy CS1.

Affordable Housing

5.36 Affordable housing can be defined as housing for local households whose incomes are insufficient to enable them to purchase or rent accommodation locally on the open market. Government guidance in circular 6/98 indicates that appropriate policies may be included in local plans to seek to ensure that provision for such housing is made. Policy

CS9 provides a framework for these local plan approaches. In preparing local plan proposals and in determining planning applications, District Councils should in particular try to achieve the provision of housing which by virtue of its type and size is likely to contribute to meeting local housing needs, including special needs where appropriate. Policy ENV3 on design standards addresses this issue.

- 5.37 Clause (b) of policy CS9 sets out the principle of allowing development of affordable housing on sites which would not normally be allocated for general market housing - the so called “exceptions policy”. The policy would most frequently apply in villages identified under policy CS3(f) as those where general market housing should be limited to infilling only, or in some cases precluded altogether.

CS9 Where a local need for affordable housing is identified to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, the authority will:

- (a) on local plan housing allocations and in determining development proposals, seek an appropriate proportion of affordable housing;**
- (b) give favourable consideration to affordable housing on appropriate small sites adjoining villages which would not be allocated for general market housing; and require prior agreements ensuring continued availability of such housing to meet the needs of those requiring affordable housing.**

With the exception of village development under clause (b) above, provision for affordable housing will form part of the overall provision for housing specified in policy CS8.

- 5.38 The definition of what constitutes “local need” and “affordable housing” in any particular area will be a matter for District Councils to address in local plans, which PPG 3: “Housing” and circular 6/98 indicate are the primary mechanism for dealing with this issue, and in the consideration of individual proposals. The Circular also gives advice among other things on the site size thresholds below which local plans should not seek a proportion of affordable housing under policy CS9(a). In accordance with PPG advice, provision for rural affordable housing will be regarded as additional to the Plan provision for general housing demand. This is because it is impossible to predict how much housing will be provided in this way.

- 5.39 At mid-2000, there were approximately 14,900 Housing Association dwellings and 32,400 Local Authority dwellings in Suffolk, comprising 16% of the total housing stock of 295,300.

Transport

- 5.40 The strategy for the scale and location of housing and employment development is expected to reduce the rate of growth in demand for travel compared to past experience, and to increase opportunities for the introduction and use of sustainable transport modes. It should also maintain or improve access to jobs, services and facilities for the maximum number of people. In accordance with the philosophy promoted in PPG13 “Transport”, the County Council will seek to reduce demand for the use of private cars and lorries.
- 5.41 In order to increase the likelihood of achieving the outcomes referred to in paragraph 5.40, as well as achieving environmental benefits such as improved air quality, the County Council will pursue an integrated transport strategy. The County Council will seek optimum use of the transport network by managing and maintaining the existing infrastructure and promoting sustainable transport projects. The Council will also promote mixed use developments as a means of reducing the need to travel. Policy CS10 defines the overall approach.
- 5.42 The ports of Felixstowe, Ipswich and Lowestoft serve both national and local markets. They have played a significant part in the development of transport patterns in the county and have influenced the economies of their respective towns and surrounding areas. These roles are likely to continue into the future. The further development of the ports is dealt with in the Transport section of the Plan in policy T15.

CS10 The County Council will pursue an integrated development and transport strategy promoting the most effective use of the transport network through:

- (a) development located and designed so as to minimise the need to travel;**
- (b) transport management and transport investment which help maximise the use of environmentally sustainable and energy efficient modes of travel.**

The County Council will seek to reduce demand for the use of private cars and lorries.

Defence Bases

- 5.43. There are five major military bases in Suffolk. Those at Mildenhall and Lakenheath are currently occupied by the United States Air Force (USAF). Following the Strategic Defence Review, the future of the bases for United Kingdom (UK) forces at Honington, Wattisham and Woodbridge appears to be secure. In the event of a fundamental change such as the complete closure of one or more of the bases, in particular those occupied by the USAF, it is likely that the consequences would need to be addressed through an early and expeditious alteration or review of the Structure Plan.

Defence Base Housing

- 5.44 The housing needs of any of the bases may change over the plan period. Although an element of military needs may be met through existing housing, or implementation of existing local plan provisions or planning permissions, new housing for the military should generally be located as close to the bases as possible. Policy CS11 covers the provision of new housing to meet military needs. To demonstrate the existence of a need for military housing, local planning authorities will require the written confirmation of a given level of need supported by satisfactory evidence to be provided by the appropriate military/Government body. Private speculative housing proposals unsupported by such evidence will not be acceptable.

CS11 New residential development to meet the needs of the military air bases at Honington, Wattisham, Woodbridge, Mildenhall and Lakenheath will, as far as is reasonably practical, be located within the existing air bases, provided there is no material adverse impact on:

- (a) existing communities;
- (b) the environment;
- (c) services;
- (d) best and most versatile agricultural land;
- (e) highways;
- (f) natural and cultural heritage.

Subject to the same provisos, development to meet such needs may be integrated with existing development close to or adjoining the bases; any approval for development permitted in these circumstances will be controlled by legal agreement to restrict occupation of

the dwellings in view of the special planning considerations involved.

Former RAF Bentwaters

- 5.45 Following redundancy of the base in 1993, planning permission has been granted for reuse and redevelopment of the site to create a comprehensive new community. Policy CS12 provides a strategic framework for future development.

CS12 The re-use of appropriate redundant land and buildings at RAF Bentwaters will be supported through the development of a comprehensive community involving integrated proposals for existing housing, administrative and operational buildings, and community facilities. The new community should be approximately 1200 dwellings including new development. The development is to be the subject of a detailed master plan, which will take full account of policies for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the countryside and which will set out:

- (a) the proposed uses;
- (b) the phasing of proposals;
- (c) the intended rationalisation and clearance of existing installations and appropriate restoration of damaged land, particularly within the AONB;
- (d) the intended provision of new or improved infrastructure, education and community facilities;
- (e) access, transport and highway improvements;
- (f) a strategic landscaping scheme.

Proposals for development on hitherto open or undeveloped land will not be acceptable unless essential elements of the new community cannot be achieved within the currently developed area.

The re-use of the base for non-military aviation will not be acceptable.

Woodbridge Base

- 5.46 The USAF left Woodbridge in 1993 and the base has now been transferred to the Army, primarily for use by HQ 24 Airmobile Brigade based at Colchester and Wattisham. The domestic part of

the base is mainly occupied by military personnel but a small number of the houses on the Base are occupied by civilian households. The technical part of the base is used for flying and training purposes involving fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft together with ground support troops. A small number of buildings on the technical base have been let for civilian use. Pending a decision on the permanent use of the base, policy CS13 covers future uses in the event of the site again becoming redundant.

CS13 Re-use of redundant land and buildings at Woodbridge Base, preferably by a single user, will only be acceptable provided:

- (a) proposals conform with policies for housing and employment;**
- (b) proposals do not conflict with environmental policies and in particular those relating to the AONB;**
- (c) the traffic generated does not, when considered together with the implementation of policy CS12, and other committed development, exceed the capacity of the local road network without appropriate improvements to the network;**
- (d) proposals are made for clearance of redundant buildings and facilities and restoration where appropriate.**

The re-use of the base for non-military aviation will not be acceptable.

had indicated its intention to dispose of the Bentwaters base, what is now policy CS12 above was introduced in Structure Plan Alteration 3 as a framework for redevelopment and Suffolk Coastal District Council prepared a draft planning brief for the site. In responding to this brief, the County Council indicated that provision for general aviation could be an appropriate use. This view was supported by the Examination in Public Panel which considered Alteration 3. The final version of the brief acknowledged the acceptability of a general aviation airfield use, envisaged as comprising a runway, taxiways, control tower and reception building, catering primarily for leisure and training, with provision for business flights to serve at least the local area. The brief stated that the scale and nature of any such use would have to be low intensity to respect the location within the AONB, with specific proposals being considered in the light of the factors listed in policy T16.

5.49 The Deposit Draft version of the first Alteration to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan brought forward detailed policies for the redevelopment of Bentwaters consistent with policy CS12. One of these policies supported the re-use of part of the base for civilian aviation subject to appropriate safeguards and was discussed at the Local Plan Inquiry. The Inquiry Inspector reported in July 1999 and concluded that the re-use of Bentwaters for civil aviation was unacceptable. The County Council accepted this conclusion and considers that, in view of the location of Woodbridge Base deeper within the AONB and close to sensitive wildlife habitats, civil aviation would also be unacceptable there.

Aviation use at Bentwaters and Woodbridge

- 5.47 Draft Structure Plan Alteration 2 included a policy proposing the redevelopment of the former Ipswich Airport for other uses, but only after alternative provision for the types of general aviation uses then found there had been made. These included business and training flights, recreational flying and parachuting. The case for such provision was subsequently supported by aviation consultants appointed by the Council and was argued at the Examination in Public (EiP). However the policy caveat was not supported by the EiP Panel and was deleted by the Secretary of State in approving the Plan.
- 5.48 After publication of the draft Plan but before the Examination in Public, the USAF indicated their intention to withdraw from the Bentwaters and Woodbridge bases. Once the Ministry of Defence