

# *Delivering a Vision for Prosperity in Sudbury*

# *Background Paper*

*June 2018*



*Delivering a Vision for Prosperity*

## Foreword

Babergh District Council is driving forward prosperity, and as Sudbury is the nucleus of the District, success here is crucial to the prosperity of the district as a whole.

We'd like to thank everyone who took time to express their views at the drop in, online or through their letters. The District Council and its partners have shared this journey and we look to them to help us ensure that the people of Sudbury and the surrounding villages receive the best possible service as we look to the future.

There are many different opinions to consider in mapping out the future of the town and our starting point has been to discuss and understand the views of the local community. *We've listened* and here is the first part of the VfP response – setting the record straight about the “hot topics” that matter most to **YOU**.

We have learned lessons during the *Delivering a Vision for Prosperity* exercise and will keep improving as we look for more ways to engage with residents and businesses across Babergh District.

*“Sudbury can move forward now we have clarity and consensus on the major investment decisions.”*

This Background Paper and the *Action Plan* bring together some of the key areas of work that we will undertake to achieve our goal of a sustainable town that offers a good quality of life to local people.



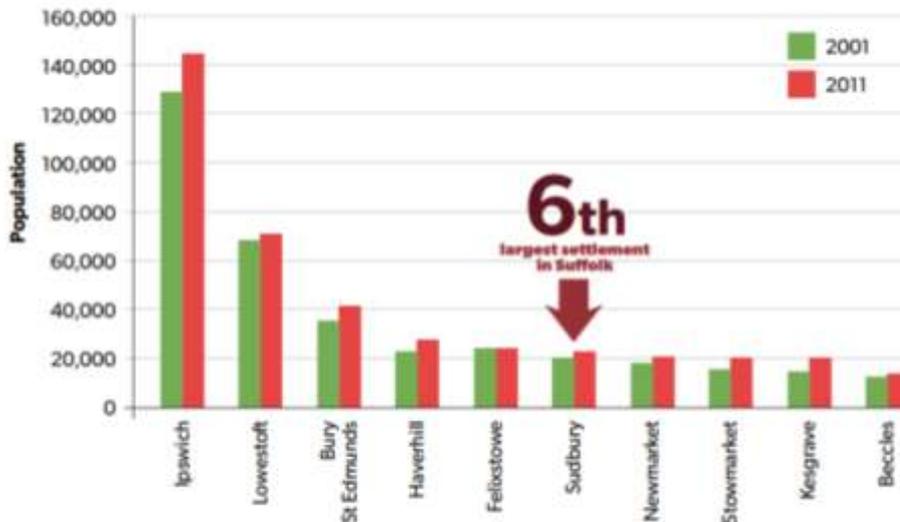
Success will depend upon the combined efforts of a range of partners and stakeholders that have an interest in the town and its surroundings. This will mean measurable targets and accountability for implementation. The public will be kept involved with regular updates and opportunities to help shape the direction we take.

We hope you find this feedback useful and interesting – but please don't think that “*this is it*” – we look forward to keeping *Delivering a Vision for Prosperity* going and evolving as we develop more projects and ideas, and reshape our services to better meet your needs.

## Introduction

### Sudbury today

Sudbury is the main town and key driver of growth and prosperity, with a large sphere of influence as the major social and economic hub for the district.

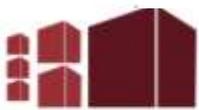


Sudbury is the **472nd** largest settlement in the country

Comparable in size to **Chesham** in Buckinghamshire, **Musselburgh** in East Lothian and **Retford** in Nottinghamshire



Sudbury area amongst **10%** most deprived small neighbourhoods in the country  
Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015



Relatively **small changes** to the town centre over the past few years to unit numbers and use, c260 (Nov 2016)

**50/50**

Roughly a 50/50 split of **independent** and **"High Street retailer brands"**

**42.9%**

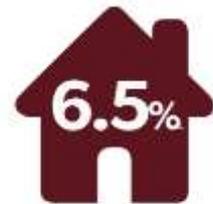
"Comparison" high street retailers on a **par** to **UK average** of 42.9% - the rest are convenience and service units



**Fewer** in convenience, retail and financial services



**Leisure services** below UK average 16.5% compared to 20%



**Average house price** increase of 6.5% since January 2017



**6.15% vacancy rates** (Nov 2016) well below national average of 11.5%

**185m<sup>2</sup> 47,845m<sup>2</sup>**

Average unit size

Sudbury's total **retail and service floorspace** extends to **47,845m<sup>2</sup>** (515,000 sq)



The representation of **charity shops** is higher than the **UK average** (3.9% compared to 2.6% of units)

**Ranked 5th**

for second year running in report listing **Britain's top 10 property hotspots** for rising prices

**#VIP SUDBURY**  
Vision for Prosperity

**Delivering a Vision for Prosperity**

## Growth ambition

Like every town in the country, Sudbury is looking to improve. We can't do it alone, so there must be a framework of organisations, plans and strategies in place to deliver. We are fortunate that the Government, our Regional, County, District and Town leaders are working together to deliver growth and prosperity.

The Government's *Plan for Growth* (2011) was published with the aim of achieving strong, sustainable, and balanced economic growth throughout Britain. Its four ambitions are to:

- Create a more competitive tax system;
- Make the UK one of the best places in Europe to start, finance and grow a business;
- Encourage investment and exports to make a more balanced economy;
- Create a more educated workforce.

The national *Industrial Strategy*<sup>1</sup> (2017) sets out the government's plan to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK. The white paper focuses on the 5 foundations of productivity – ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places – with a clear and complementary vision for each. Each foundation is supported by a range of policies designed to provide businesses with certainty and reassurance that the UK will continue to have a competitive edge.

The New Anglia LEP *Strategic Economic Plan* (NALEP 2017) looks ahead to 2036, but focuses on the actions we need to take over the next four years to help secure long-term success. It is a dynamic and living blueprint to guide the work and investment of many partners.

The *Suffolk Growth Strategy* (Suffolk County Council, 2013) set out the following four aims:

*"First, Suffolk needs a prosperous and vibrant economy which inspires people to succeed. Second, Suffolk needs a high quality, responsive education and training system. Third, Suffolk wants to be an exemplar in tackling climate change. Finally, Suffolk needs all people to be kept safe from harm, to be able to live healthy lifestyles and to be valued."*

The *Suffolk Growth Programme Board* agreed in December 2016 to:

- **lead:** the Suffolk Growth Framework at officer level, and through collaboration across the County ensure GPB outcomes are communicated to all staff and members.
- **deliver:** Suffolk's economic vision and achieve impact through the coordination of programmes and projects directly managed by the GPB and through facilitated work with partners
- **influence** (through engagement): public / private stakeholders, businesses and politicians about the priorities for growth in Suffolk and the opportunities for improving the region's competitive position and prosperity
- **manage risk:** by understanding upcoming risks / unknowns, and responding to these through a flexible & innovative approach to economic growth

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's *Open for Business Strategy* (2018) will serve to support a long-term vision, and actions which deliver economic growth in our Districts, helping secure inward investment and give confidence to businesses operating here.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-the-foundations>



## **Review of the drop-in engagement event**

On 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017, residents, businesses and users of Sudbury and its surrounding catchment villages were invited to attend a drop-in display event at the Town Hall. The drop-in was run alongside the Councils' Joint Local Plan consultation display as a joined-up process.

Publicity for the event was undertaken through

- Press releases, including a front-page headline in the East Anglian Daily Times on Friday 29 September 2017.
- Erecting over 250 posters in prominent positions in Sudbury and in the surrounding villages
- Dedicated web site [www.babergh.gov.uk/vfpsudbury](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/vfpsudbury)
- Text included on the Joint Local Plan publicity material, including on a flyer posted to all residences and businesses in the District
- Social Media using the hashtag #VFPSudbury
- Cross referencing from associated public sector organisations

### **Drop in displays format**

31 display boards were erected around the room (in addition to Joint Local Plan information and other partner organisations' displays) that set out:

- a welcome & introduction to VFP
- a timeline of historic growth and change for Sudbury
- the national/regional perspective demonstrating the growth agenda
- a series of statistics and facts about the area
- a roundup of some young people's views about the area
- a series of questions about the future of Sudbury and the area.

This prompted the use of sticky dots to "vote" on some questions, and some written opinions expressed through the use of post-it notes.

The display used a mix of information including

- infographics (short bite-sized chunks of information presented in a small picture),
- block text,
- charts, maps and diagrams,
- drawings and photographs.

This variety of media meant that there was something for everyone to engage with, but not everyone liked the variety and felt that there was too much to look at.

### **Additional engagement**

Following the drop-in event, hard copies of the material were made available at Sudbury Library, Sudbury Town Hall, Long Melford Library, Glensford Library, and Great Cornard Library. Display material was also available online at [www.babergh.gov.uk/vfpsudbury](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/vfpsudbury). Additional comments on the projects were invited before 5pm on the 10th of November and are taken in to account in this analysis.

### Attendance

Nearly 400 people attended the drop-in event and left hundreds of comments. Of particular value was the ability for people to talk directly with Councillors, Officers and partner organisations to discuss their views openly.

Visitors were mostly from Sudbury and Great Cornard, but there was also a large number from Long Melford, Acton, Waldingfield and Newton. Other settlements were also represented, including people coming from across the county border in Essex.

At the time of the VFP display event, the issue of the Bypass was a “hot topic” in the press, as two petitions were being circulated – one for and one against a bypass. A great many attendees to the event assumed that it was all about the bypass and not a more general Visioning event.

### Response analysis

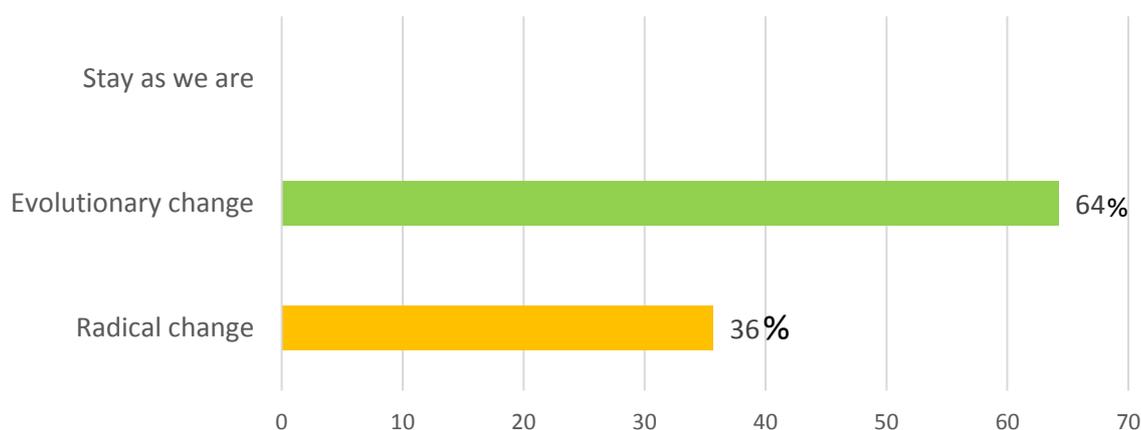
Whilst the boards and questions prompted extensive discussion and commentary, few people responded directly to the questions, instead choosing to make more generalised comments on post-its. Because of this, the analysis does not follow the format used in the displays, and issue are summarised.

Unlike the output from the sister exercise in Stowmarket, the vast majority of interest in Sudbury was in the town’s existing suite of possible development/regeneration projects that have been under consideration for a long time (for example Belle Vue House, Borehamgate, Chilton Woods etc). The overwhelming feeling was that the public wants answers and information regarding these potential major projects, and displayed frustration that projects are considered in isolation rather than in the round. This has steered the format of the prepared response.

### Change in Sudbury

Change is perceived as unpopular and difficult to deliver in Sudbury, however it can be seen from the chart that no-one felt that Sudbury should stay as it is. The majority of responders were in favour of evolutionary change as opposed to Radical change

Town of the Future



**Delivering a Vision for Prosperity**

The commentary left would suggest that the people of Sudbury would welcome new facilities, and would also welcome changes that they perceive as being of benefit to the town and surrounding area. Aside from the bypass (which was topical at the time of the event), no one issue dominates public opinion.

### Places to aspire to

It was envisaged that people would suggest places that they had been and liked that could be used as inspiration for Sudbury to follow, however only Haverhill was suggested as “it has everything it needs”. Instead, most comments were made around Sudbury’s own shortcomings, and responses to these are addressed later in this document.

### Responses to the young people’s views

Although comments were not specifically invited in relation to these boards, there were a number of comments made both in support of and in reaction to, the views expressed. Some opinions were expressed that the views of the young people was not representative of *all* young people, having only been sought from a group of year 8/9 students at Sudbury Ormiston Academy. Others noted that their own experience of working and engaging with other young people corroborates many of the views expressed.

Some of the older generation took exception that young people had been asked their opinion before the older generation, while others understood the need for young people to have a voice as they would not generally attend a drop-in display event.

Below is a roundup of the responses left in relation to the young people’s views

Context (what the young people said)	Attendee’s comment
<p>Strengths. The students comment on some of the best bits of Sudbury, but also observe that Sudbury’s best is not up to the same standard as other places’ best.</p> <p>“Not every town has it so good.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public transport is being reduced</li> <li>• Transport, don’t agree public transport is good.</li> <li>• What public transport? The service to the health centre is shameful!</li> <li>• “Sudbury generally has good public transport links” is this a joke? This exhibition is times to be after the last bus back to my village until Tuesday!</li> <li>• Don’t agree with the comment that Sudbury is always clean and tidy. Level of litter and dirt has increased in the last year</li> <li>• Public transport ids dreadful! Long wait to health centre or taxi! The “old people” are being neglected again</li> </ul>
<p>Sudbury area’s “Weaknesses”: was a constructive and insightful look at where Sudbury is failing – without being overly critical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree with all of this (and I am an old person)</li> <li>• I agree also, Ballingdon Bridge is exceptionally dirty and need maintenance throughout</li> </ul>

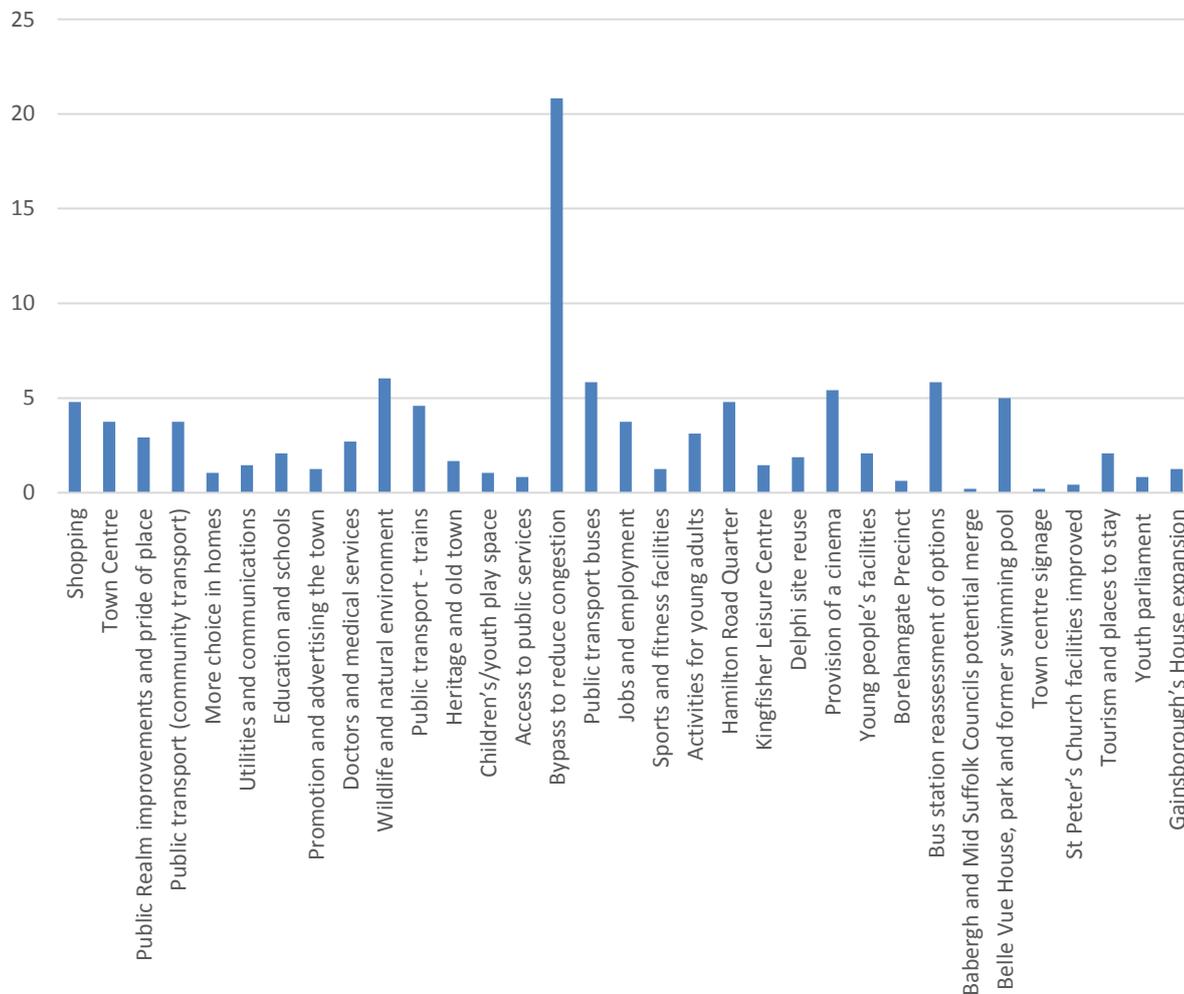
Context (what the young people said)	Attendee's comment
<p>“Negative talk creates a false impression.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to remember, these are the people we will leave Sudbury to!</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities: students identified a number of possible projects that could be undertaken to improve Sudbury.</p> <p>“Positivity about change needed, and everyone to support growth”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree much more balanced view than the “no – Sayers” that get far too much press. We need to look forward not backwards</li> <li>• Agree with everything the kids say</li> <li>• I agree with <u>everything</u> on this board but there is no one in this room under the age of 35!</li> </ul>
<p>THREATS: the students felt that there should be more done to drive change, but in a Sudbury style.</p> <p>“Talking about things but never doing it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Air Force Club (Station Road) – airfields, tourism</li> <li>• Not enough made for tourist. Use of our own assets, Sudbury needs more “Quirk” and a face lift in places. Lavenham has had two centre page spreads on Saturday over the past few months</li> </ul>
<p>Students were invited to liken the town to a famous person in order to express their views about “character” and “image”. They chose David Dickinson, Sharon Osborne, Katie Price, Simon Cowell and Gary Barlow. Overall feedback was that it needs to change to represent someone younger and more well known, such as Mo Farrah or Angelina Jolie.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cheap as chips”</li> <li>• What have these people to do with Sudbury?</li> <li>• There are no deceased people</li> <li>• Well there is a chalk pit?</li> </ul>
<p>Students designed “houses of the future”, and created new “town Plans” for Sudbury of the future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the time this can be delivered year 9 students will have children of their own!!</li> <li>• Young people need the means to get to Sudbury town centre, not just old folk, i.e., they need regular bus services!</li> <li>• Just update everything, bus station, new cinema, more shops, less charity shops, more leisure facilities</li> <li>• Top idea</li> <li>• Go for it!</li> <li>• Essential</li> <li>• Where are young people going I the evenings? You need a cinema now</li> </ul>

The methods used to engage with young people was also commented upon, with equal support and disapproval.

- More consultations in real life (like this one) please. Online is very hard and soulless for most people. Are you listening to us? Prove it please.
- Whoever designed and executed this specific display **DOES NOT USE PUBLIC TRANSPARACY** admit it!
- Meaningful rubbish
- This is about engaging younger people, good piece of work.

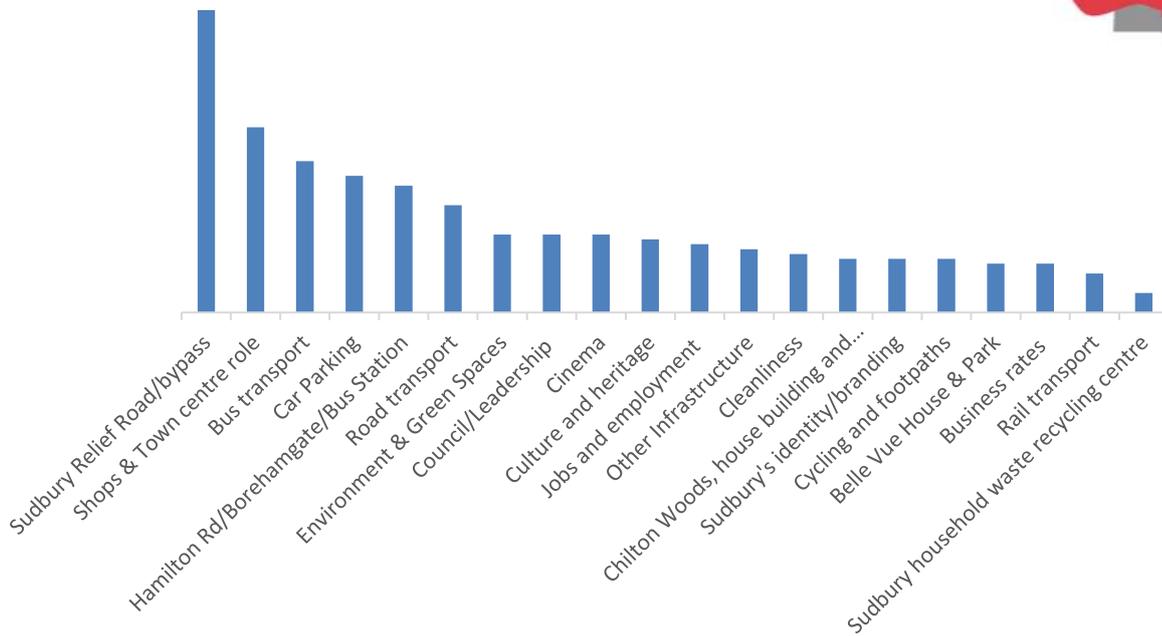
### Top priority Projects

A sticky dot exercise asked people to say which are the most important projects. As can be seen these were in the main, evenly spaced however there are some areas of strong concern. The responses highlighted that there are a lot of areas that need general improvement, intervention or change. It's relevant that the engagement event happened in close proximity to the launch of petitions both for and against the potential bypass, so it was very prominent in peoples' minds.



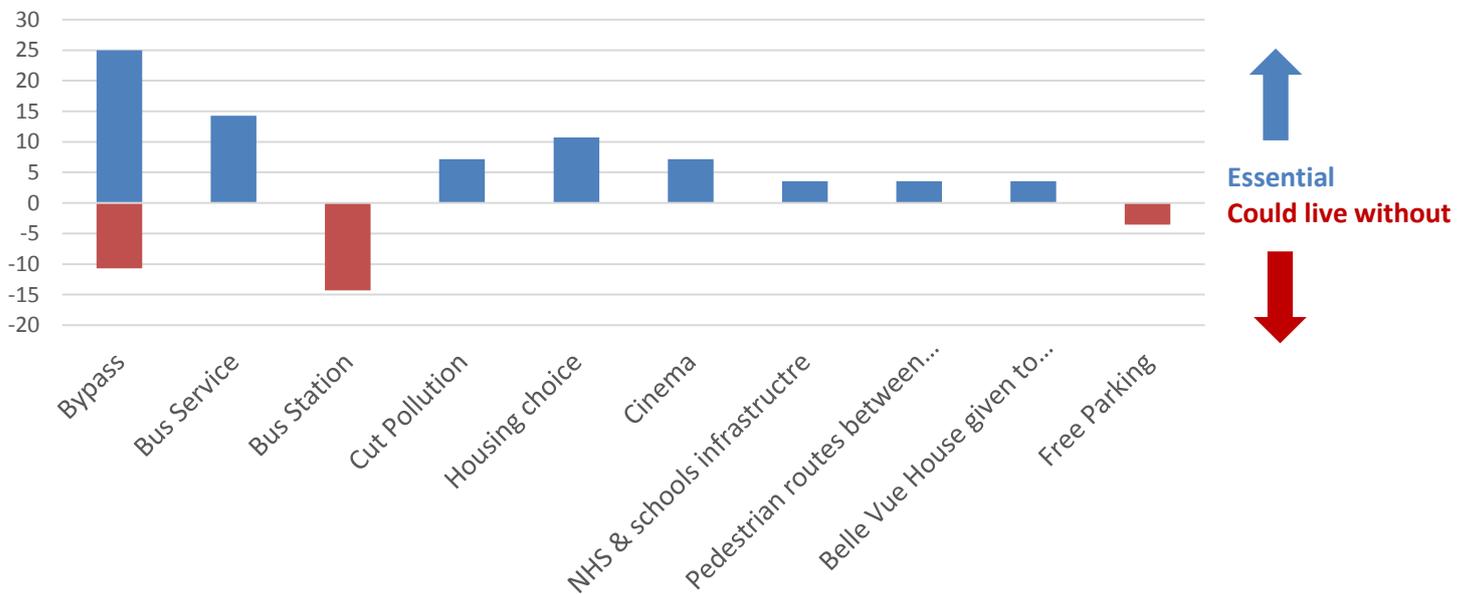
### Top topics by number of comments

Another way of looking at the “top topic” is by the number of comments made about that issue.



### Essential projects, and projects that the town could live without

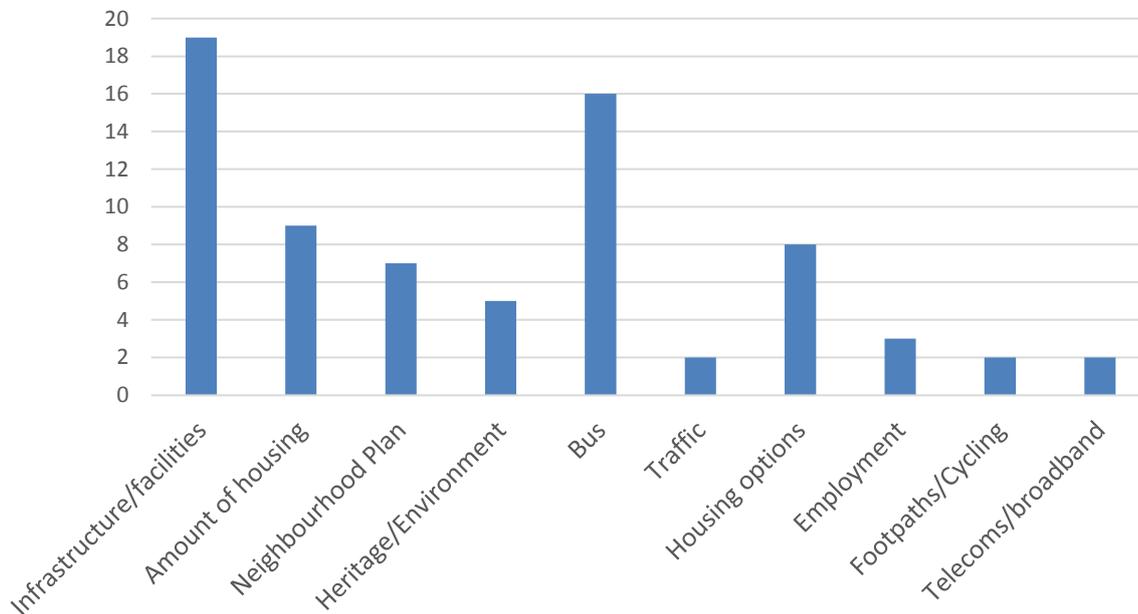
Attendees were also asked which projects were essential and which they could “live without if it means certainty of the priority projects being delivered”.



## Sudbury and its surrounding villages (Village image)

The identity of villages has an intrinsic value, there were some concerns about the term “Greater Sudbury” as the village identity is perceived as a strength to the area and there is concern that this is maintained.

## Issues in surrounding villages



## Comments about specific villages

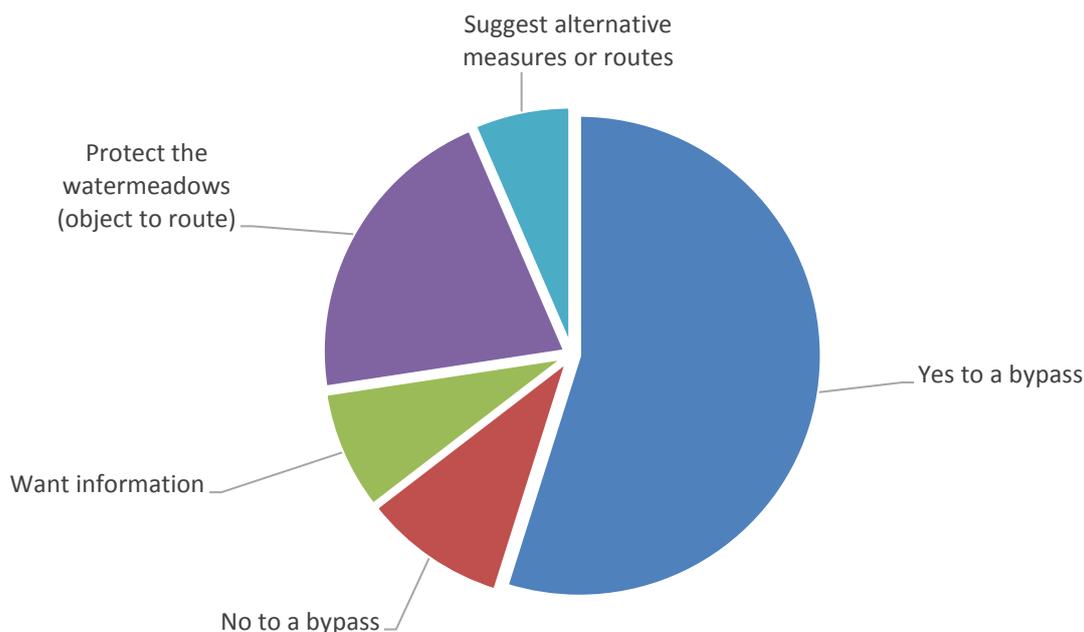
- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Bildeston</b>           | - Concern around the number of homes being built   |
| <b>Lavenham</b>            | - Concern around the number of homes being built, the devaluation of properties, and loss of incomes as a result   |
| <b>Gt Waldingfield</b>     | - Footpath infrastructure needed   |
| <b>Lawshall</b>            | - Support for Neighbourhood Plan<br>- More housing options needed  |
| <b>Little Waldingfield</b> | - Need for infrastructure/facilities<br>- Need for better bus services   |
| <b>Long Melford</b>        | - Concern around the number of homes being built and coalescence with Sudbury<br>- Need for infrastructure/facilities<br>- Impact of development on heritage and environment<br>- Traffic concerns |
| <b>Nayland</b>             | - More employment options needed<br>- More housing options needed<br>- Need for better bus services<br>- Impact of development on heritage and environment   |
| <b>Newton</b>              | - Traffic concerns/bypass request  |

## Detailed response and commentary around the issues raised

### Sudbury Relief Road/bypass

The Bypass is a prominent issue with many comments both for and against it. The main reason for opposition was the threat to the water meadows, which are of significant value to many and seen a real asset to the town itself. There were calls for far more public engagement and information on this topic.

### Breakdown of comments around Sudbury Bypass



Suffolk County Council is the Local Highway Authority, and has stated:

*“A Sudbury western bypass has been identified as a scheme that would provide relief and remove vehicles from the town to reduce congestion and improve air quality. A funding bid for a bypass was rejected by the Government in 2003 on environmental grounds.*

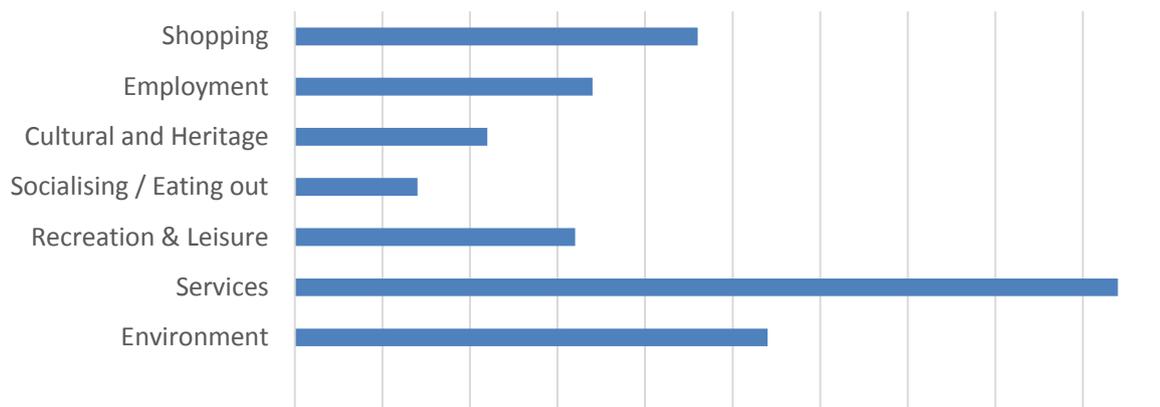
*Further work published by the County Council in 2017 indicated that there was a credible business case to be made for a relief road. The county council has now received funding from partners across Suffolk to carry out more detailed work to develop solutions to the traffic problems around Sudbury. This work will begin with a full assessment of available options, large and small, that might help to address the issues. Should the work conclude (as has been found in the past) that a new road would most effectively resolve Sudbury’s traffic problems, more detailed assessment of a potential scheme would be carried out in order to prepare a bid for funding. This would include consideration of the benefit and dis-benefit to the natural environment outside the town and to the community and the built environment within the town. This work will be completed by spring 2019.”*

### Shops & Town centre role

A perceived lack of variety in the town centre limits its appeal as a retail centre and lack of variety in the evening economy and accessibility in the evening, limits its appeal as a leisure destination. There are many supporting comments for a cinema and calls for better shopping areas within the town.

We asked what the focus of the town centre should (retail, leisure, services, tourism, evening economy etc) be by voting with sticky dots. It is most that people want the town centre to be all things for all people, and not try to focus on a niche area.

### What type of town centre should Sudbury focus on becoming?



### Quarters or Zones

Only a quarter of people that think we should identify "Quarters" or "Zones" and have different roles and/or identity for different parts of the town. The majority however felt that they don't work.

### Should Sudbury have specific "Quarters" or "Zones"?



### Shop vacancy

People stated that vacant shops were a problem, but Sudbury enjoys a low vacancy rate of 6.75% (about half the national average): a very good sign of confidence in Sudbury town centre. There is strong demand from small independent retailers in the town. Vacant units tend to be in places “off circuit” such as the far end of North Street, which means the *centre of town* is strong but that people don’t usually use the *whole town centre* – only the area around the Market Place. More information may be found in the Council’s evidence base (page 35) <http://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Strategic-Planning/Current-Evidence-Base/29-10-15-BaberghMid-Suffolk-TCRSFinal-Report.Final-Version-29.10.15.pdf>.

### “High Street Brand” shops

The selection of shops in Sudbury has been criticised as there are not enough “High Street Brand” shops. Similarly, other people want more independent shops to create a more local-flavour and demonstrate Sudbury’s individuality from other centres. As shown in the VFP display material, Sudbury has few of the “top High Street Brands”. Of those it does have, they tend to be the more discount brands.

There are four main reasons that the “big brands” are not present in Sudbury:

1. Footfall: Sudbury and its catchment simply doesn’t have a big enough population to justify to the big operators opening a store in the town. Those that do live in Greater Sudbury also choose to visit Ipswich, Colchester or Bury St Edmunds over Sudbury. However, through the new Joint Local Plan there will be a significant increase in house building over the coming 25 years which is likely to attract the attention of more big companies.
2. Image – This project has already identified the need for a branding and promotion of Sudbury. This not just advertising to bring people in, but to raise the profile across the board and attract the attention of the big names, investors, and those who can bring in new life and new investment capital to refurbish existing, and develop new, buildings.
3. Unit availability – Most shop units in Sudbury are older stock that are not energy efficient, and lack the servicing arrangements that modern retail needs (such as 24hr rear access for lorries). Furthermore, the average unit size of 185sqm (1,995sqft) is significantly lower than most “high street brand” shops require, and that statistic itself is skewed by the Waitrose unit. Without this, the average unit size is probably under 100sqm (1,076sqft). Lichfields Planning Consultancy noted in a report in 2012<sup>2</sup> “*High street national multiples have increasingly sought larger modern shop units (200 sq. m +) [2,153sqft]*”. In short, Sudbury doesn’t really have the shop units that are of interest to the big high street brands.
4. Lastly, the market conditions for retail are complicated. Globalised retail companies are responding to the changes across the world, not just in one small town, and they are still having to compete with internet shopping. Then, as new trends come and go, this adds yet more complexity to the retail offer in any town – consider the rise and decline of fish pedicure shops, and what will the future hold for the current boom in vaping shops...?

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<sup>2</sup> South Lakeland Retail Study 2012 Para 2.15:

<https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/media/4430/ever04a-sldc-retail-study-2012-combined.pdf>

### Variety of shop type

National planning policy differentiates shop types into “Use Classes”. In the past, planning policy sought to protect and encourage “A1” shop uses: ie those where you can buy objects. Sudbury’s high street reflects this retail-heavy approach. However, the changes in retail trends over the last 30 years (not least internet shopping and out of town developments etc) means that Sudbury is unbalanced as a shopping *experience*.

People now like to visit a place for its ambience, coffee shops, street scene, leisure and entertainment, not just to buy objects. The current dominance of A1 shops means that Sudbury doesn’t offer such an experience. There needs to be more of other types of uses, such as “A3” cafes/restaurants, “D-class uses” such as bingo halls, meeting rooms, entertainment venues, and other services like health centres.

Most “high street brand” companies use computer software to understand the local socio-demographic make-up of the place before they decide whether to invest. Put simply, they will only invest if there is the “right sort of customer”. *IF* there is the right sort of customer, then they will also look at which other companies are already there as they usually only like to be located next to other similar companies. None of them really want to be the first and/or only one to invest, just in case it isn’t successful.

### Quality of shops

Pound shops, discounter brands, the number of funeral directors and estate agents, and proliferation of charity shops are mentioned as being bad for the town. Whilst the town does have a higher than average number of charity shops, they do fill otherwise empty units, adding to the variety of choice. It should also be noted that charity shops also perform a social function. Funeral directors and estate agents are also performing a service, and are good local businesses.

### Town Centre Vision

The District Council’s VfP Action Plan is paving the way for the Town Council to lead a detailed look at the town centre and the options for improving the user experience. The “Town Centre Vision will consider a range of ideas – particularly around road and pavement works to make Sudbury more attractive to shoppers and visitors, with consultation taking place later in 2018.

The District is will work closely with the Town Council and County Council to look primarily at Market Hill and North Street as the main retail core, but will also extend to include Gaol Lane, Friars Street, Station Road, School Street, Gregory Street and all of the other parts that make up the town centre. The Town Centre Vision will look at how the town is used, and where improvements can be made to build a strong daytime and evening economy, making sure people visit more often and stay longer each time. It is a very exciting opportunity to get involved in reshaping our market town into a town fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We’ll meet modern needs, but all wrapped up in our heritage and character that sets us apart from all the other towns.

### Bus transport

A recurring theme is transport connectivity, both public and sustainable, with repeated calls for better bus services, especially evening and weekend services in villages.

Buses form an important part of the transport system, and help to reduce congestion by offering an alternative to the private vehicle. Bus services need to be financially viable, hence routes and times are determined by operators. The majority of bus services in Sudbury are operated on a commercial basis, but the County Council

does provide financial support to some. Sudbury does not have a large enough population to make an internal bus network financially viable. Indeed, in the 2015 survey<sup>3</sup> by the Sudbury Steering group it was found that fewer than 10% of respondents use buses - "Only when no other option is available" or "Never".

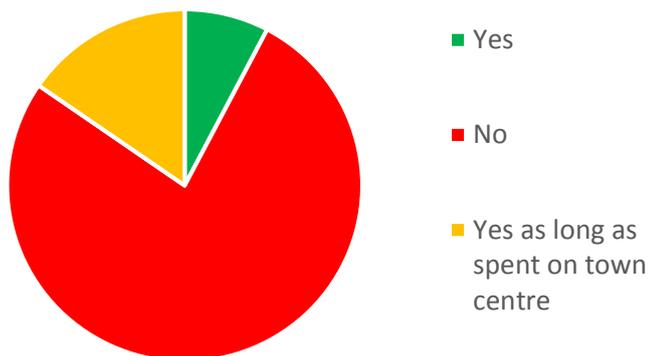
New development is assessed for its relationship with the public transport network and, wherever possible, contributions are sought to improve the network. With more growth across the District the viability of public transport will change, and this could open up more routes and/or allow better timetables to be set. Like all infrastructure investment, there needs to be careful consideration of options to maximise the possibilities.

### Car parking

As with most towns in the country, car parking is an ongoing issue in Sudbury. The key issues appear to be costs, availability of spaces, and inconsiderate parking that causes or worsens congestion. The free parking is seen by many as essential for the town to enable it to compete with larger towns.



**Would you support the introduction of car parking charges to help pay for improved services?**



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/assets/Economic-Development/Sudbury-Steering-Group/4th-Sept-2015-HRQ-Regeneration-Responses-Report.pdf>



In most of Suffolk, on-street parking offences are still criminal offences and dealt with by Suffolk Constabulary. The Constabulary deploys its resources according to threat, harm and risk, so dealing with parking offences is a lower priority and complaints of illegal parking will not automatically result in police attending them. However, officers will attend where there is a clear offence that poses a risk to public safety, and police will consider prosecution where criminal, community engagement or vulnerability issues are identified. Where there is a particular issue with a particular location which is causing community concern, the Safer Neighbourhood Team will deal with it appropriately. Parking offences include:

- parking obstructions (including skips and trailers)
- yellow lines
- loading restrictions
- zig zag lines
- waiting restrictions
- limited parking
- disabled parking
- police no-waiting signs

The District Council is developing a *parking strategy* by Winter 2018 to see if there is a case for charges, how enforcement can be improved, the best design for car parks (for example; Girling Street car park will remain in use for shoppers, and the longer-term ambition is for North Street car park to be multi-storey) and all other aspects of parking in Sudbury. Any decisions about these hot topics can only reasonably be made with up to date evidence and a full understanding of the implications.

### **Hamilton Rd/Borehamgate/Bus Station**

The Borehamgate Centre and Hamilton Road areas are viewed as an opportunity for improvement to the town centre, however their current state is seen by some as damaging the image of the town. This area will be redeveloped with new shops, cafes and homes. The Boreham Gate Centre is to be retained and given a facelift, while buses will now stop on-street instead of at a bus station. The District Council will consider the business case for major regeneration later this Summer, with a view to starting the planning process by the end of the year. Nearby, a £3.4m refurbishment of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Leisure Centre will begin in 2018.

### **Road transport**

There is concern regarding issues with parking and the flow of traffic in the town there are calls for parking/traffic enforcement. Commercial traffic using the town centre is also seen as a problem, in particular the HGV's, the location of the lorry park being on the South side of the town is also seen as detrimental. Some have suggested that better enforcement and organisation of the town centre roads will negate the need for a bypass.

A working group comprising of representatives from the Police, District and Borough Councils and the County Council is in place to progress the transition of on-street parking enforcement in Suffolk from the Police to local authorities. Such a change is known as *Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)*. The aim is to ensure that an effective system is created, allowing all parking enforcement to be fully coordinated across the county.

In early 2017 the District, Borough and County Councils agreed to seek powers to introduce CPE by April 2019. An application for the necessary powers was submitted to the Department for Transport in April 2018 for a start for CPE in April 2019. We are awaiting confirmation from the DfT when CPE can commence. In the meantime, the Police will continue to retain responsibility to deal with illegal parking in Suffolk (except in Ipswich where CPE has successfully operated since 2005).

In respect of route choice and 'rat running', it is difficult to prevent drivers choosing routes that they perceive as being better for them as individuals. Because of the road layout, it is difficult to prevent some through traffic filtering through nearby communities, but the County Council is working with *Highways England* to improve the main roads.

We have a designated lorry route network to keep HGV traffic off smaller routes, and the District Council has committed to reviewing the need for a lorry park. If it is found to be required, a new site will be announced by the end of 2018.

Cross Street is a statutory *Air Quality Management Area* (AQMA) which means that the emissions from vehicles is too high in that concentrated place – principally from (HGV) exhausts due to the stop-start flow of traffic leading to concentrations. The AQMA is monitored on regular basis by Suffolk County Council, and it is of concern to the District Council. The best solution is for the bypass to remove lorries from this route, and the CPE to help remove unnecessary obstructions, leading to freer flowing traffic and help improve air quality.

### **Environment & Green Spaces**

Many comments were made around the importance of the Water Meadows as a wildlife and landscape resource, and of course for the tourism potential of Gainsborough. Comments in this context were entwined with comments around the bypass route.

Sudbury is gifted with an abundance of publicly accessible open green space and surrounded with attractive walks which include the long and delightful Railway Walk. This natural asset is largely due to the limitations of building development to the south and west by the line of the Stour. Part of the marketing and branding will promote these ancient common lands. Sudbury's denser urban areas like Springlands and parts of Great Cornard are within a short walk of other accessible green space such as Cornard Country Park and large pockets of accessible countryside like Waldingfield Airfield.

The Chilton Woods site has been approved with new community woodland which will be an accessible habitat and offer another link in the network of large, quality open spaces for Sudbury's residents and visitors to enjoy. Indeed, 50% of the site is allocated as green space - more useable and integrated with sports pitches and a soft, 'rural edge' to the scheme. Play areas and recreational routes linked to the wider green space network close to homes will also offer circular recreational routes with links to existing green spaces. The details of the scheme are still to be decided as developers come forward, but these fundamental building blocks of green space are central to its identity.



**Delivering a Vision for Prosperity**

## Council/Leadership

At the time of the VfP display, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils were relocating to Endeavour House, and there was uncertainty around the possible merger of the Councils into a single Authority. Some minor comments were made about this and its impacts on “business as usual” within the Council.

Results of a public consultation exercise run by the two districts earlier this year were published in March showing that a majority of those consulted were in favour of a merger. It would be good for our residents, would save tax payers money, and protect the services that residents value most. However, one of the alternative options that we also favour is the creation of a Unitary Council which has been considered across Suffolk as a whole. Given that any new district council could not be created before May 2020, the Councils believe that it would be illogical to submit a business case for detailed consideration by or hold a referendum in Babergh at this stage. Babergh and Mid Suffolk will continue to work to further expand the ‘Working Together’ partnership between the Councils.

## Cinema

There is still strong demand for a cinema as a major socio-economic boost to the town. A cinema will be the anchor use in the Hamilton Road Quarter development.

## Culture and Heritage

Sudbury has a fantastic offer with the Quay Theatre, Gainsborough’s House and St Peters centre providing the principal attractions.

St Peter’s Church<sup>4</sup> is no longer a place of worship; on the 29th of May 1976 the building was vested to the Churches Conservation Trust. In the same year the Friends of St Peter’s, Sudbury was formed with the aim of keeping the building open, in good order and enabling its use for the benefit of the community.

The Friends believe that St Peter’s is starting to look a little tired and have embarked on an ambitious programme to ensure that it remains in use at the heart of our town. This will involve many repairs to the fabric of the building, including major work on the roof and clerestory; but it will also affect some changes within the building with plans that include the installation of a mezzanine gallery and toilets, among other things. These exciting plans are at an early stage at present and Babergh District Council will wholeheartedly support them with the Churches Conservation Trust regeneration team to breathe new life into St Peter’s.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.stpetersudbury.co.uk](http://www.stpetersudbury.co.uk)

***'Reviving an Artist's Birthplace: A National Centre for Gainsborough'*** A new £9m National Centre for Gainsborough will be a hub for the visual arts in Suffolk and a vibrant centre for learning and training to raise the profile of Gainsborough and to encourage more exhibitions of Gainsborough's art. *'Reviving an Artist's Birthplace: A National Centre for Gainsborough'* is an ambitious project that responds to these needs and aims to fascinate and inspire audiences to enjoy the art, life and passions of Gainsborough in the special setting of his childhood home. The project will open in 2021 with refurbished historic buildings and create a 525sq m gallery extension for exhibitions that aim to put Gainsborough's House on the 'International art museum map'.



This cross-section removes the new building's Weavers Lane façade, and looks inside the building, facing west.



**ZMMA**

With audiences at the heart of the project, the museum will show more of Gainsborough's art, displaying more works from the collection, national museum stores and private ownership, and tell the story of his life, his family and his interests, while illuminating the culture and social history of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This project will tell the little-known story of Sudbury as a national centre of silk weaving, linking Gainsborough's weaving family history and maximise opportunities for artists working in the print studio.

The project will be complemented by a new orangery style café that overlooks the garden, a refurbished print studio, and a new glass wall that will offer visitors views of artists at work and enhance the workspace for the thriving artistic community.

By doubling the size of the museum, this project will transform the museum's future with additional visitor capacity to raise more admissions income and enable audiences to access art in new ways. The expanded museum will spearhead much-needed economic revival in Sudbury with increased footfall of day trippers and overnight visitors, generating up to an estimated £3,025,640 annually in visitor spend.

### **Jobs and employment**

The (then) recent announcement of the closure of Delphi in Sudbury prompted enquiries around the future use of the site. Many felt that a residential development was imminent, but would prefer new economic uses.



**Delivering a Vision for Prosperity**



It is too early to say what the site will be used for as Delphi is still operating (albeit winding down until 2020). A taskforce has been set up with members from the New Anglia LEP, Babergh District Council and Sudbury Town Council, James Cartlidge MP, Delphi and Unite. The Taskforce will commission a new 'Options Appraisal' report into future use of the site. The report would consider credible future uses of the site, looking at all possible configurations to understand what could practically be achieved at the site. There is unanimity among all stakeholders that the site should be taken on for continued industrial use with the greatest possible retention of existing staff. Agreement was reached that the least desirable option would be to allow the site to fall into a derelict state and a blot on the surrounding area.

Aside from Delphi, the District Council is shortly to adopt new housing, economic and infrastructure strategies. These together with the annual publication of the Councils' priorities will demonstrate a coordinated and focused direction so that any reuse or redevelopment of the site is the most appropriate for the town. The strategies will ensure people understand how their Council is delivering growth District-wide. The "Open for Business Strategy" in particular is a renewed commitment to helping local businesses prosper, setting out actions and interventions that will create a stable economic basis for new and existing businesses to prosper.

### Other Infrastructure

"Infrastructure" normally refers to the provision of public services and utilities, including:

- Education – early years and childcare, primary and secondary, and further and higher education
- Healthcare – means the physical infrastructure of surgeries, dental practices, preventative care clinics and hospitals, not the doctors themselves
- Transport – highways, cycle and pedestrian facilities, rail, bus, travel management and car parking
- Water and drainage – water supply, waste water, flood risk management and resilience, and water quality
- Energy – electricity, gas, and renewable energy
- Communications – telephone, mobile and broadband coverage
- Leisure and Green infrastructure – sport, open space, and community facilities

Infrastructure is important because the delivery of new homes and employment needs to be supported by necessary infrastructure to make it work. Without improvements in infrastructure existing services are strained and there can be problems such as congestion on our roads, slow download speeds in broadband, long waiting times at doctor's surgeries, "brownouts" in electricity supply, flooding and other problems. The Councils are prioritising investment into strategic services and infrastructure in order both alleviate existing issues as well as to enable new growth.

Addressing Infrastructure needs is undertaken both at the Local Plan preparation stage, and on a site-by-site basis.

- For the Local Plan, the Council liaises with infrastructure providers and bodies and then considers where development needs can be met by existing infrastructure networks. Where existing capacity does not exist, then an assessment is made to establish what needs to be done, or sometimes that the scale/cost of accommodating additional development is too much so development cannot be permitted. The Local Plan is accompanied by an *Infrastructure Delivery Plan* which contains all the information about *strategic* infrastructure necessary to deliver the Local Plan aims and objectives.

- Individual planning applications are also scrutinised by infrastructure providers as part of the normal consultation process. This may occur up-front in a “pre-application discussion”, but is always considered in any formal planning application. Infrastructure is always planned as part of a development proposal and if the infrastructure meets the three tests in the CIL Regulations<sup>5</sup> then it should be an important part of the Councils considerations before weighing up all the issues and then recommending whether to grant planning permission or not. Not having the required infrastructure can mean that the resultant development is unsustainable so cannot be granted permission.

The funding of infrastructure varies depending on which service is being improved. Some items are paid for from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – a mandatory charge placed on the building of most new homes that is put in a “general strategic pot” to address schools places, leisure centre and library, waste handling etc. Where there are site-specific needs, infrastructure is paid for through a Section 106 agreement on top of the CIL. However, some other infrastructure is paid for through normal taxation and budgets. This is because the Government cannot give money to improve networks “just in case development takes place” – it will have to be bid for retrospectively.

However, where growth is known about – such as through land allocation in Local Plans and assessments in Infrastructure Delivery Plans – budgets can be fixed up-front. This is why it is so important to have a good Local Plan and not have to rely on occasional “windfall” planning applications. Large developments will have their own infrastructure plan which sets out the milestones and quantities of houses built before payments for infrastructure must be made.

In the summer of 2018, the Council will develop and adopt the “*Community Infrastructure Levy spending schedule*” has been adopted and we’re inviting bids to invest hundreds of thousands of pounds in infrastructure and community improvements across the District.

### Doctors

There were particular concerns regarding access to GP infrastructure - particularly around the new facility in Churchfield Road being over-subscribed and too remote. There is a perception that you can’t get an appointment to see a doctor in Sudbury, but that isn’t correct – it’s just that sometimes they are busier than other times. Note that there is also a wealth of information and assistance available to you online. GP Practices also offer online appointment bookings or repeat prescription ordering: you can log on to online services directly from NHS Choices: each available service is listed under "Online facilities" on the "Overview" page of the GP profile.

GPs deal with a whole range of health problems. They also provide health education, offer advice on smoking and diet, run clinics, give vaccinations and carry out simple surgical operations. GPs usually work in practices as part of a team that includes nurses, healthcare assistants, practice managers, receptionists and other staff. Practices also work closely with other healthcare professionals, such as

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<sup>5</sup> *In accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2010, the obligations recommended to be secured by way of a planning obligation deed must be (a) necessary to make the Development acceptable in planning terms (b) directly related to the Development and (c) fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the Development.*

health visitors, midwives, mental health services and social care services. If your GP cannot deal with a problem, then you'll usually be referred to a hospital for tests, treatment, or to see a consultant with specialist knowledge.

Like dental practices, GPs in England are independent contractors (working as either individuals, companies, partnerships and non-profit organisations) that provide NHS services via a contract with NHS England. GP Practices are available at

- Meadow Lane Surgery, Meadow Lane, Sudbury
- Hardwicke House Group Practice, Stour Street, Sudbury
- Great Cornard Surgery, Pot Kiln Road, Gt Cornard
- Siam Surgery, Sudbury Community Health Centre, Sudbury
- The Long Melford Practice, Cordell Road, Long Melford
- Church Square, Bures
- The Mill Surgery, Church Street, Boxford
- Glemsford Surgery, Lion Road, Glemsford
- The Long Melford Practice, Church Street, Lavenham

All the above GP Practices are currently (as at April 2018) accepting new patient registrations.

At Hardwicke House Surgery, an alternative site is being sought and will be announced by the end of 2018.

### **Chilton Woods**

The urban extension at Chilton Woods on the north of Sudbury was raised, both for its scale/impact on the town, but also due to the delay in bringing it forward. Outline planning permission was granted in 2017 for 1,150 homes, space for 1,900 new jobs to be created, and new primary school. Suffolk County Council (as owner of the site) is promoting the site and actively looking for a developer to start the 10-year construction.

### **General housing type, size and tenure issues**

The comments from residents reflect some of the social issues identified in our area causing issues for the local housing market, and they reflect central Government's thinking that the 'housing market is broken'.

We know that it is much more difficult across the Eastern region, where Babergh is located, for people to afford to buy or rent a home compared to other regions such as the Northwest or Central England. Twenty years ago, the cost of a home here was about 3X a local wage, but now this ratio is more usually about 10X a local wage – putting home ownership out of reach for many, especially single person or single waged households and first-time buyers. This lack of housing to buy at the right price forces many households to rent in the private sector, and as this demand for private rent homes increases so often, do the rents.

Some of the underlying causes and the inevitable effects on the housing market are:

- a growing population as people are living longer. This means a higher number of additional new homes are required because right now demand for homes is far outstripping new supply
- by 2036 it is anticipated 1 in 3 people will be aged 65+ means we need to provide both more, and a wider range of, suitable housing options for 65+ year olds
- fewer younger people in the area as birth rate decreases proportionately to average age, means their housing needs (for example starter homes, more affordable homes as 1<sup>st</sup>-time households generally earn less) may get less priority

- house prices locally are on average around 10 times the average earnings of residents and even more so in some of the more desirable areas. This means buying a home is not an option for many households, especially single people and/or those on limited incomes – these people will look to renting a home, or may choose to opt for discount market home sales under the ‘Help to Buy’ scheme.
- the global economic downturn of 2008 left many individual households in severe financial difficulty, so new financial regulation means households can mainly only borrow 3 times earnings, in permanent employment. This could mean that there will be an increase in homelessness affecting single people and families, as well as preventing older children ‘flying the nest’ to set up their own home – many still live with parents in their 30s and 40s.

The Council is aware of these factors and is intervening where it can, but the Council does not CONTROL the delivery of housing – it is predominantly market-led. However, we can influence and seek to steer housing delivery through evidence-based policies. Some of our actions include:

- undertaking a study called the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to fully understand the local housing market needs<sup>6</sup>.
- developing the *Joint Housing Strategy 2050* – the strategy and the action plan show how we will address the difficulties many households face because of their housing situation. This will include
  - making sure new homes are of the ‘right type, right tenure and in the right places’;
  - re-generating tired housing estates fit for 21<sup>st</sup> century living;
  - making sure resources are available for housing adaptations ensuring residents can stay in their own homes for longer;
  - creating a new generation of fully accessible homes for people who need them;
  - ensuring Babergh has only the highest quality private rented homes
- the creation of a new Joint Local Plan 2036 that will guide the development of new homes to 2036 through planning policies that steer developers as to where and what to build to best deliver the strategy.

The SHMA establishes a *starting point number of how many homes* should be built each year across the whole of the district: at present it is around 450 in Babergh. It also gives us a steer to understand what *types of homes* by number of bedrooms may be ‘missing’ from the housing stock. Finally - and perhaps most importantly for many financially stretched households - *what sort of tenures*. By tenure we mean if the property could be owned outright (open market homes), rented through the private sector by private landlords or, rented/part owned–part rented through the social sector via the Councils or another registered social housing provider operating in our districts.

However, our duties as the Local Housing Authority don’t simply stop at delivering new homes. There are already about 40,000 homes in each district, so whilst new homes delivery is very important, we must focus too on making the most of all the homes already here. Our housing duties require us to demonstrate responsibility for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness; we must regulate and enforce standards in the private rented sector; commission housing stock surveys; getting empty homes back in to use; administer grants for home adaptations and, administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. BMSDC also have many very technical duties as a responsible social housing landlord for about 7,000 households across the two districts.

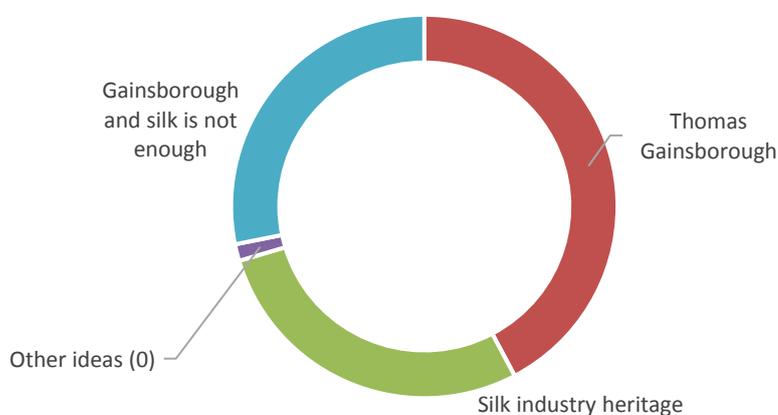
<sup>6</sup> Ipswich and Waveney area Strategic Housing Market Assessment <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/evidence-base/current-evidence/>

### Sudbury's identity/branding

Sudbury is seen as having a strong cultural heritage, coupled with an attractive appeal. The water meadows and surrounding countryside are a strong attraction for people both living in and visiting the town. Many people recognised the need for a “USP” / brand image for the Sudbury area, and some support for the suggested Thomas Gainsborough and silk industry theme was expressed. Conversely, some people expressed the view that Gainsborough and Silk is not a strong enough draw – particularly with the young – but no alternative suggestions were put forward for a brand image.

Therefore, in 2018 the “Wool towns”, Gainsborough, St Peters Cultural Centre, and our Silk heritage are the main elements to be explored as part of new marketing strategy to promote tourism and investment. We do not wish to reinvent the town, but can build upon and combine those existing themes with a new twist to ensure Sudbury is recognised for all of its assets.

### Sudbury area image and branding



### Cycling and footpaths

There is universal consensus that transport links – cycling/walking routes in particular - all need improvements to enable people to get to and from Sudbury and between the sporadic village services. Recognition of the narrow, winding roads without footpaths and the resulting safety issues, together with “rat running”, speeding and other anti-social car use mean that villagers are forced to use cars by more than simply the distance.

Greater use of walking and cycling for short trips and of buses for longer trips would remove some traffic from the road and hence reduce congestion. It would also lead to better health outcomes for people. The County Council seeks to enhance existing cycle routes and to promote new facilities including safe routes and cycle parking.

## Belle Vue House & Park

The Belle Vue and Hamilton Road areas are viewed as an opportunity for improvement to the town centre, however their current state is seen by some as damaging the image of the town. The uncertainty around the possible disposal of the house and garden by the Council has caused a lot of local concern while negotiations are taking place.

The former swimming pool and a small part of the park will be developed into an hotel – the District Council will consider the details in a business case later in the summer. Belle Vue House will be sold separately for sympathetic residential conversion. This will retain the architecture and character, but give the building a new lease of life.

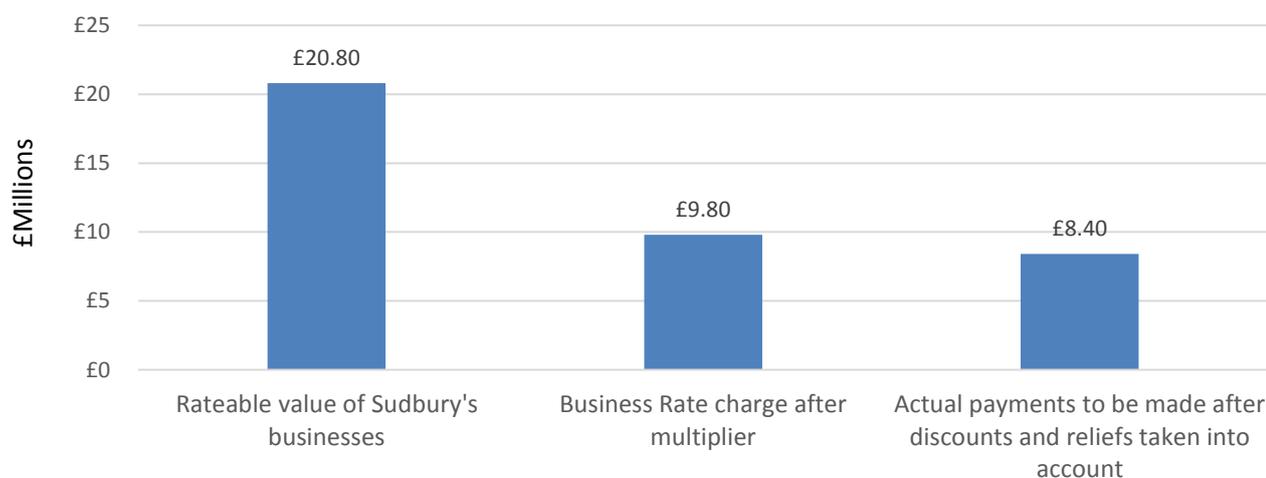
## Business rent and rates

Shop rent and rates costs have been criticised as the reason there are not so many “big name High Street shops” present, and as the reason the high street is failing.

### Business Rates in Sudbury for 2017/18

For 2017, the total *rateable value* for Sudbury is £20,787,995, with a gross charge of around £9.8m. After various reliefs and discounts are taken into account the net rates actually collected is around £8.4m.

### Business Rates in Sudbury in £Millions



There are 870 companies with rateable values which if they were split evenly, the mean average bill is £11,264. However, not everyone pays the same as the rateable value depends on many factors, not least the size of premises. In fact, just 20 very large companies pay 53% of Sudbury's overall charge. This reduces the mean average for the rest (which are usually small local companies) to £5,419.

### Retail rates

In terms of retailing in the High Street, 251 shops are registered (37% of companies liable for business rates) with a total rateable value of £7,724,950. After discounts, shops pay about £3.6million, which is 37% of the total rateable value for Sudbury. Shops have always paid more than industrial premises.

In the 2017 review, the percentage change in total rateable values from 2010 to 2017 is shown below for the East of England and England as a whole.

Area	% change in rateable value by Sector				
	Retail	Industry	Office	Other	All
East	-4.0%	2.3%	2.4%	13.2%	3.9%
England	4.7%	4.0%	11.3%	15.5%	9.1%

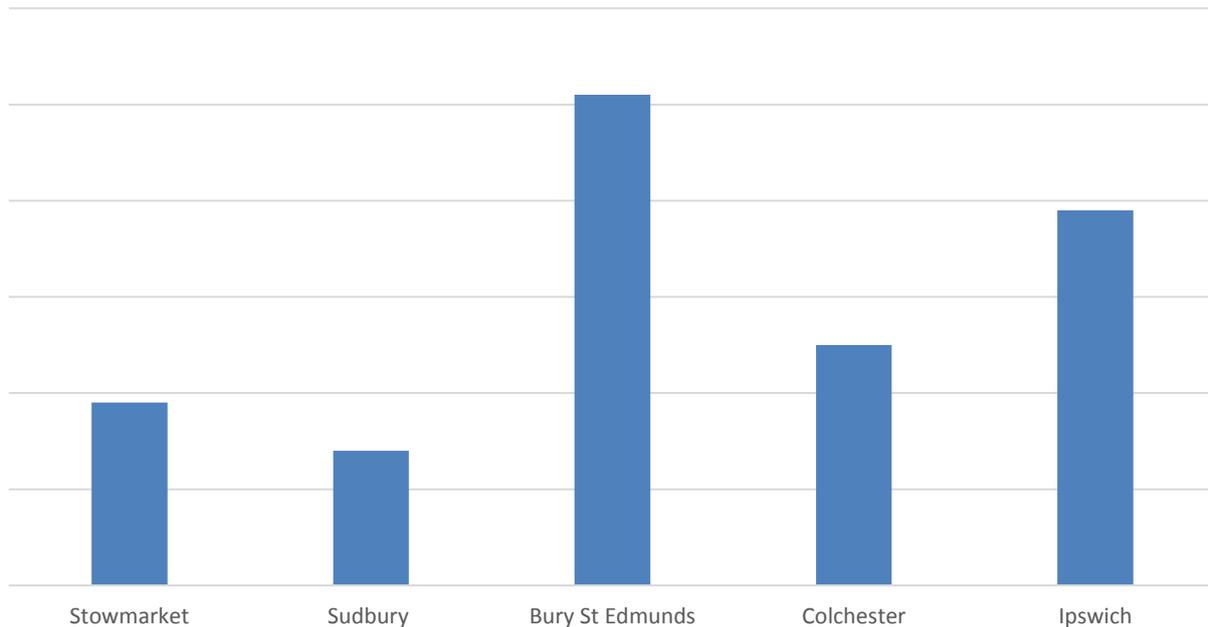
Source Valuation Office Agency data as at 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016

It is clear that overall in the eastern region the rateable value for retail premises reduced unlike all other sectors that increased. This means that overall, Business Rates are less of a burden on operators in retail in this region from 2017 onward.

### Rates comparison

Although there is a view that small, local, independent shops are not opening due to Business Rates, the reality is that these operating costs are relative. **It is not really possible to directly compare rent or rates between towns** because there are so many factors, not least operator preference, footfall (how busy a street is), size of premises, location in the town, proximity of other similar shops and competition, quality and layout of premises, upper floors or just ground floor use etc. However, the few **examples** below show that Sudbury's combination of rent and rates is lower than some neighbouring towns. This means that rent and rates are not necessarily putting retailers off, as although their potential profits are lower, their actual costs are too.

### INDICATIVE: relative cost of £rent + £rates in town centres



As at December 2017/January 2018 examples of shops to let in the following places:

1. Sudbury – North Street (former North Street Studios)
  - Floorspace: 1,659sqft (155sqm)
  - Rent: £21,500 (payable to the landlord)
  - Rates: rateable value is £21,500  
multiplier 46.6p  
actual business rates payable (£21,500 x £0.46.6) = £10,575
  - Total rent+rates: £22,075
  - £/sqft p/a: about £14/sqft (£142/sqm)
  
2. Stowmarket – “Millpets” Ipswich Street
  - Floorspace: 1600sqft (158sqm) (plus upper floors)
  - Rent: £22,500 (payable to the landlord)
  - Rates: rateable value is £16,500,  
multiplier 46.6p  
actual business rates payable (£16,500 x £0.46.6) = £7,689
  - Total rent+rates: £30,189
  - £/sqft p/a: about £19/sqft (£196/sqm)
  
3. Bury St Edmunds – 3 Cornhill (former “Betfred” unit)
  - Floorspace: 1732sqft (161sqm)
  - Rent: £65,000 (payable to the landlord)
  - Rates: rateable value is £49,250,  
multiplier 46.6p (estimate)  
actual business rates payable (£49,250 x £0.46.6) = £22,950
  - Total rent+rates: £87,950
  - £/sqft p/a: about £51/sqft (£546/sqm)
  
4. Colchester – 26 Priory Walk
  - Floorspace: 2874sqft (267sqm) (+ upper floor)
  - Rent: £47,500 (payable to the landlord)
  - Rates: rateable value is £47,750,  
multiplier 46.6p (estimate)  
actual business rates payable (£47,750 x £0.46.6) = £ 22,251
  - Total rent+rates: £70,001
  - £/sqft p/a: about £25/sqft (£262/sqm)
  
5. Ipswich – Carr Street (part of the former Co-Op)
  - Floorspace: 841sqft (73sqm) (plus upper floors)
  - Rent: £25,000 (payable to the landlord)
  - Rates: rateable value is £16,750,  
multiplier 46.6p  
actual business rates payable (£16,750 x £0.46.6) = £7,805
  - Total rent+rates: £32,805
  - £/sqft p/a: about £39/sqft (£449/sqm)

### Rate relief and help for small businesses

Notwithstanding the generally lower rent and rates in Sudbury, the Council operates a *small business rate relief* scheme (not just for shops but for all types of small businesses). Under this scheme, if the rateable value is under £12,000 and it is the ratepayers only property (ie an independent not a chain store) then they do not pay any rates. For properties with a value that does not exceed £15,000, the ratepayer will receive a percentage reduction in their bill of up to a maximum of 100%.

In fact, over 300 (around a third of all businesses) pay no rates or only a proportion of the bill due to *small business rate relief*. In addition to the reliefs, additional help is offered for those businesses that have a significant increase in rates following the 2017 review. The Councils automatically apply the “supporting small business relief” which caps the annual increase to spread the cost.

### Pub Relief

The Government has also introduced a new relief scheme for pubs that have a 2017 rateable value of below £100,000. Under the scheme, eligible pubs will receive a £1,000 discount on their bill for 2017/18 and 2018/19. This relief is automatically awarded by the Council.

### Overall business rates

Overall, the Council is required by the Government to collect Business Rates, but it does what it can to support smaller independent businesses through local reliefs. Therefore, Sudbury’s weaker retail experience is not considered to be solely due to Business Rates alone.

### Rail transport

A direct link to London (no change at Marks Tey) is a common request, both for its commuter benefits but also so that more may be made of promotion and day trips from London – this can be part of the branding and promotion project. Implementing the link itself is much more complicated and there has been no commitment from Network Rail or the train operator to do so. The Councils will continue to support the idea, but at this point in time we can’t announce that it will happen.

### Sudbury household waste recycling centre (HWRC)

Suffolk County Council continually reviews the pressures on its HWRC service across the county and the suitability of all sites to deliver these needs both now and in the future. It is recognised that the current site in Sandy Lane is restricted in terms of space and traffic management and that development in the town and nearby villages will continue to increase this pressure. The County Council would like to identify possible alternatives but potential sites which meet the essential criteria for an HWRC are difficult to find. A new facility is proposed as part of the Chilton Woods development which will be done once the employment land part of Chilton Woods is released later in the development phasing.

The **Vision for Prosperity 5-Year Action Plan** is available alongside this response in a stand-alone document. The Action Plan considers all of the points raised and set out some immediate actions to address them. The Action Plan is not about talk – it is about doing things. Some are small, some are setting the groundwork for longer-term projects, but all of them are going to happen and make Sudbury a better place.

After that, we'll look to do more Action Plans and keep the momentum of positive change going.

*Let's get started!*

Visit us at  
[www.vfpsudbury.com](http://www.vfpsudbury.com)

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**Delivering a Vision for Prosperity**