1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the plan

1.1 This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for the town of Beccles for the period 2018 to 2036. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Beccles and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

1.2 The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the town. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the town. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Beccles, its residents, businesses and community groups. It should be noted that planning applications are submitted to and determined by Waveney District Council and the Broads Authority (depending on where they are located). However, the Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and therefore is given equal weight to the relevant Local Plan in the decision-making process.

1.3 Some of the Neighbourhood Plan policies are general and apply throughout the Plan area, whilst others are site or area-specific and apply only to the appropriate areas illustrated on the relevant map. Nevertheless, in considering proposals for development, Waveney District Council or the Broads Authority will apply all relevant policies of the Plan. It is therefore assumed that the Plan will be read as a whole, although some cross-referencing between Plan policies has been provided.

1.4 The process of producing the Neighbourhood Plan has identified a number of actions which have not been included in the policies’ sections. This is because these are not specifically related to land use matters and therefore sit outside the jurisdiction of a Neighbourhood Plan. These actions will be addressed by the Town Council outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Policy context

1.5 The Neighbourhood Plan represents one part of the development plan for the neighbourhood area over the period 2018 to 2036, the other parts being:

- For the parts of the Neighbourhood Area in Waveney district - the Waveney Core Strategy (2009), the Waveney Development Management Policies (2011) and the Waveney Site Allocations document (2011). A review of the Local Plan has reached an advanced stage, with Examination of the Plan that occurred in Autumn 2018 determining that the plan is sound, subject to modifications. Therefore the policies in the emerging Local Plan have also been taken into account in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

- For the parts of the Neighbourhood Area in the Broads Authority area – the Broads Core Strategy (2007), the Broads Site Specific Policies Local Plan (2014), the Broads Development Management Policies (2011) and the saved policies from the Broads Local Plan (1997). A review of the Local Plan has reached an advanced stage, with Examination of the Plan that occurred in Summer 2018 determining that the plan is sound, subject to modifications. Therefore the policies in the emerging Local Plan have also been taken into account in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.
Figure 1.1: Beccles neighbourhood plan area/town boundary
1.6 Waveney District Council and the Broads Authority, as the relevant local planning authorities, designated the Beccles Neighbourhood Area in November 2017 to enable Beccles Town Council to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan has been prepared by the community through the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) Steering Group.

1.7 The BNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (which were amended in 2015). The BNP Steering Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the town and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period.

1.8 The map in Figure 1 below shows the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan area, which is the same as the administrative boundary of Beccles parish.

1.9 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan can only directly address planning applications and matters within the parish of Beccles, it is important that the Plan takes into account issues of relevance in the adjacent parish of Worlingham in particular. The built up area of Worlingham is directly adjacent to that of Beccles and there is a close relationship between the communities and their interaction. Beccles is a market town serving a wider hinterland and it is particularly the residents of Worlingham that rely on many of the services in Beccles. Whilst the process of preparing the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan has engaged with the community of Worlingham and has not sought to distinguish between needs depending on which side of the administrative boundary people live, it is important to be clear that Worlingham as a community, supported by its parish council, will have its own view on things and may choose to address these matters in a different way to this Neighbourhood Plan.

1.10 The Vision in the Emerging Waveney Local Plan, where all growth is located, aligns closely with that of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular it seeks to improve quality of life; have a stronger economy, including more vibrant town centres and a strong tourist offer; housing of the right type to meet needs; increased opportunity for active lifestyles; protection of the Broads and the natural environment; and measures taken to reduce the contribution of the district to climate change.

1.11 The strategy for Beccles and Worlingham is for a total of 1,458 new dwellings over the period 2014 to 2036. In particular, this is to be delivered through the creation of the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood, which will deliver 1,250 dwellings (1,055 dwellings during the plan period) along with a range of facilities, including a care home, employment development, primary school, community hub and country park.

1.12 Along with the Garden Neighbourhood, a further 280 dwellings are allocated on land west of London Road and 13.4 hectares of land for employment uses south of Benacre Road at Ellough Airfield.

1.13 Road access has been improved through the provision of a southern relief road for Beccles which is now complete. The Emerging Local Plan also generally recognises the importance of improving cycling and walking linkages.

1.14 The Emerging Local Plan identifies a number of community infrastructure needs, include library improvements, extension/improvements to Beccles Medical Centre, a new community centre and
various sports and ‘green’ leisure facilities. A number of these are envisaged will be provided as part of the development of the Garden Neighbourhood.

**Developing the Neighbourhood Plan**

1.15 The development of the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan commenced in 2016 and has been characterised by extensive consultation with the community. The Plan has been driven forward by the Operational Group which has endeavoured to ensure that it has engaged across the whole of the community. It has held a variety of meetings, community consultations and evidence gathering events to allow the community and wider stakeholders to express their views.

1.16 The key principle for the Operational Group has always been listen to what people think, rather than driving the conversation. Evidence gathered has informed the development of the Plan so that the content is based on what people living, working and playing in the town think.

1.17 The Operational Group has met with local groups in the town such as the Beccles Business Association (BBA) and the Beccles Branch of the National Women’s Register, as well as holding evidence gathering events at schools, the medical centre, churches, shops and various events.

1.18 The Beccles Neighbourhood Plan website ([www.becclesplan.com](http://www.becclesplan.com)) contains lots of information and the Plan also has a Facebook page. The website has recorded the engagement diary, showing all the events undertaken as well as information relating to the Operational Group’s monthly meetings.

1.19 The Group has endeavoured to ensure people have been informed of dates and times of events by posting posters in the town as well as leafleting households in Beccles and featuring in the local press. It has also written to a wide range of Beccles organisations and groups asking for any comments, concerns and input. In short the Operational Group has tried to ensure that people have had an opportunity to get involved.

1.20 In terms of what people say and think, there is a strong sense from our community that they like living in Beccles and enjoy it just as it is. In other words, its quality as a market town with its own character and charm is important to them. Therefore whilst they would like to see some change and improvement, it should not be at the cost of damage to that special feel that Beccles has. The heritage of Beccles and its town centre are important to residents.

1.21 Concerns about housing growth and development were raised consistently but the Operational Group has attempted to be clear in explaining that the Neighbourhood Plan must focus on shaping the growth that is planned through the Emerging Local Plan and this opportunity is preferable to not having a plan and therefore potentially little influence over how the town grows.

1.22 Well planned and good design and quality building that fits with the town’s character is important. This applies to both residential development and commercial development alike. Whatever is proposed needs to fit in with the environment and not be an eyesore.

1.23 It will however be important that as the town grows there is an opportunity for local people to access affordable housing of a high quality both in the private and rented sectors.

1.24 Beccles has suffered from a loss of people in the mid-range age group over the years and the 2011 Census confirmed this. Whilst reasons for this are complex and varied, one element is the affordability of housing.
1.25 There are a number of messages that consistently came out of consultations:

- Improved facilities for both the young and the older age groups including indoor and outdoor facilities for play, sports and social gathering of varying kinds are needed.

- In terms of sports and leisure, swimming was a priority with requests for an indoor pool being made. Demand is high for the existing swimming facility at Beccles Lido so this may help give an indication of potential year-round demand.

- Concerns were raised about the medical centre and the ability to provide medical facilities to meet the needs of the community. There is a requirement from evidence gathered for a additional medical capacity to serve the town in order to provide more efficient access to treatment. Concerns were also raised about access to GPs, health professionals and even practical factors such as the ability to park at the surgery.

Hidden Needs

1.26 Future changes to the town and environment should always consider factors identified in Beccles by the 2016 Suffolk Hidden Needs report\(^1\). This has informed the Neighbourhood Plan as it is seen as vital that decisions made over the coming years are done so with the question of how this improves Beccles for people with particular needs.

Monitoring the Plan

1.27 Beccles Town Council, as the Neighbourhood Plan authority, will be responsible for maintaining and periodically revisiting the Plan to ensure relevance and to monitor delivery. As the responsible body for preparing a neighbourhood plan covering the parish of Beccles, it will fall to Beccles Town Council to monitor progress against the Neighbourhood Plan’s objectives and to ensure that it remains relevant.

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\(^1\) University of Suffolk (2016) *Hidden Needs in Suffolk*, report to Suffolk Community Foundation
2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Beccles

2.1 Beccles is situated in the Waveney valley, in the county of Suffolk but very close to the Norfolk border. There has been a community here since pre-Saxon times when an arm of the sea extended as far as Beccles, making it a thriving port and a market town. The community prospered by initially relying on the herring industry and the Old Market dates from this era.

2.2 By late Tudor times the tidal estuary had silted up but the town remained a busy port relying on wherry boats to transport local products such as wool to other places. Beccles was granted its charter by Elizabeth I in 1584 and Charter weekend is still celebrated annually each summer. In the late 16th and 17th centuries the town was ravaged by fire resulting in many of the buildings in the town centre being rebuilt in Georgian times. The street plan of earlier years still remains along with the old street names such as Saltgate, Northgate and Ballygate.

2.3 A number of important historic and graded buildings can still be seen; the 16th century parish church of St. Michael (with its separate bell tower) which witnessed the marriage of Nelson’s parents, and Leman House, once a local school set up by Sir John Leman in 1631 and now a museum. The octagonal shaped Town Hall was built in 1765 followed twenty years later by the Public Hall, still used for theatre and concerts. The Caxton printing works was set up in 1868 and the town's economies began to rely heavily on this industry; Clowes, as it became known, was possibly the largest book printers in Europe. The works were demolished in 2003, the site now being occupied by Tesco supermarket. The ever popular Lido was built in 1959, replacing a section of the River Waveney that had previously been fenced off for swimming.

2.4 Beccles is set among lovely countryside and is within close proximity to the coast. There are good bus services to Norwich and Lowestoft and rail connections to Ipswich and then on to London Liverpool Street. For some years now Beccles has been known as gateway to the Broads and it is boats that bring many of the tourists to Beccles each year. The town has been twinned with Petit-
Couronne in Normandy which is itself twinned with Ahlem, a suburb of Hanover, and bonds of friendship are encouraged between the three communities.

2.5 Today Beccles is a thriving market town serving a wide area. The town has expanded in recent years and is well liked by both residents and visitors. It is important that, as this expansion continues, Beccles combines the vitality of a 21st century community while preserving its charm and historic heritage which reflects its evolution over time.

Beccles today

2.6 The Suffolk Hidden Needs Report 2016\(^2\) gives a very comprehensive overview which challenges the stereotypical Suffolk as a prosperous rural county. There are a number of areas in Suffolk, including Beccles, which face a significant disadvantage as measured in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)\(^3\), Census and Social Mobility Index. Indeed, Beccles is one of the 20% most deprived neighbourhood areas in the county.

**Figure 2.1: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 in Suffolk: ranking of local concentrations of deprivation in Suffolk relative to England**

2.7 Being in a rural area of England, transport is an essential component of Beccles’s quality of life and the access to opportunities by its residents. Beccles is recognised as having good links to Lowestoft, 

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\(^2\) University of Suffolk (2016) *Hidden Needs in Suffolk*, report to Suffolk Community Foundation

\(^3\) The IMD is a UK government qualitative assessment of deprivation across England. It covers seven aspects of deprivation (income, employment, health and disability, crime, education, housing and living environment.)
Norwich and trains to Ipswich⁴, but in the evening the frequency of service drops substantially. There has been a decline in bus services in the past decade.

2.8 Improvements to public transport, especially through villages and hamlets, would draw more people into the town.

2.9 The southern relief road opened in Autumn 2018 and one of the expected benefits will be to take heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic away from the town centre⁵, through which it has presently had to travel. Traffic within the town centre was an issue raised by the public - people would like to see less traffic in town to cut down on pollution. The community also feels that parking needed to be improved, with its cost cited regularly. Additionally, drivers do not always use designated parking areas, making certain access points problematic for large vehicles, including buses. This, along with the narrow pavements makes areas unsafe for pedestrians, especially for people with pushchairs, mobility scooters and wheelchairs.

2.10 The new southern relief road also provides a cycle path along its length which will ensure bicycle users can travel in safety. Another expected benefit of the road is reduced traffic in the town centre due to reduced levels of through-traffic, which will also increase pedestrian safety. Comments by young people confirm the need for cycle routes to be developed throughout the town and to and from the proposed Garden Neighbourhood, together with secure parking areas for bikes. Improving the opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists will lead to healthy communities, create the potential to enhance our natural environment and ease congestion. By enhancing these aspects, we will be giving people of all ages the opportunity to walk and cycle as a form of recreation as well as being a form of transport.⁶

2.11 Beccles has many social activities and clubs for people of retirement age in the centre of the town. For example, the University of the Third Age (U3A) for retired and semi-retired people in Beccles, is extremely popular and supports over 50 Special Interest Groups⁷, while the Waveney Centre is open Monday to Saturday as a ‘quiet-space’ social hub for people aged over 55.

2.12 Equally, the Neighbourhood Plan engagement has shown that there is a great need for opportunities, activities, and places for youth and the younger ‘pre-retirement’ age groups.

2.13 The Beccles Library has developed as a community hub, holding a range of information about the local area, as well as putting on a range of activities for children aged 0-5 years and providing IT and printing facilities. It provides courses and groups which meet during working hours, a French ‘drop-in’ session some Saturdays, and a monthly reading group held in an evening. Blyburgate Hall provides a space and is used by a number of groups to provide social classes; Beccles Public Hall is a space which can be hired and tends to be used for performances; the Beccles Train Station has recently been refurbished - it now has a popular cafe, toilet, and rooms to hire which presently has regular classes running, for example, yoga and art. The Quaker Hall and rooms also provide a popular venue for use by the community.

⁷ https://u3asites.org.uk/beccles/home
2.14 Beccles has a wide range of shops. Most basic things can be bought within the town, although feedback states there are too many charity shops. Local traders sell their produce at the popular weekly Friday market, for which a part of the town is closed off to cars. It is the ‘older’ generation which the Neighbourhood Plan engagement suggested feel most content with what the town provides regarding retail, whereas data from both primary and secondary schools demonstrates the need for a broader range of shops to serve the needs of younger people. Pedestrianisation of the town centre has also been suggested.

2.15 A common theme across people of all ages is that Beccles would benefit from an improvement to places for recreation and leisure time. The funding to develop the skatepark has now been achieved. The Lido in Beccles is very popular amongst all ages and is open between the end of May and early September - it has excellent disabled access and facilities, as well as a sociable eating area. Popular suggestions are an indoor swimming pool, improvements to the current sports and fitness facilities in the town, a trampoline park, and a cinema.

2.16 Opportunities in Beccles which bring together the local community are always well attended. Examples include the Beccles Carnival, turning on the Christmas lights, the Duck Race, the Cycle Race, Beccles Society of Art annual exhibition, music, food and beer festivals, Beccles Triathlon and the Antiques Market.

2.17 Beccles Quay has the opportunity to be enhanced and improved as a community place. Community engagement showed that people would also like to see an improvement to Beccles Common, turning it into an area with a sense of purpose and place rather than just being a public space. Improvements to the play park, providing a dog-walking ‘zone’, and developing this space to enhance and protect our natural environment has been a popular suggestion. It would be an important factor to make this place accessible to people of all ages and states of mobility. This would provide a green place with a cafe for visitors and residents, as well as being somewhere to enjoy a range of events and entertainment.

The Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood

2.18 The Emerging Local Plan allocates land to the south of the existing built up area of Beccles for development of the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood. The proposed area for the development encompasses parts of Beccles parish and also Worlingham and Weston parishes. This is shown in Figure 2.2.

2.19 This Emerging Local Plan allocates the land for the following:

- Approximately 1,250 dwellings (approximately 50% of this figure is likely to be located in Beccles parish, 40% in Worlingham parish and 10% in Weston parish but the final split but will depend on what is granted planning permission);
- Retirement community comprising a care home/nursing home and extra care and/or sheltered dwellings;
- 2 form entry primary school including a pre-school setting (2 hectares);
- Country park, indoor/outdoor sports facilities, allotments, play areas and public open space (at least 25 hectares);
• Community Hub comprising a convenience store, local shops, community centre and preschool setting.

• Employment development (falling under use classes B1, B2 and B8) (5 hectares).

Figure 2.2: Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood – area by parish

2.20 Whilst this will have a significant impact on the existing community of Beccles, it also represents a major opportunity to address some of the infrastructure needs of the community at present. Access to the Garden Neighbourhood for the existing community will be important, as will managing the impact of the new residents as they seek to move around Beccles. In this regard, the provision of the Beccles Southern Relief Road will help to re-route traffic away from the town centre.

2.21 It will be vital that the new ‘neighbourhood’ is planned to form part of the existing community of Beccles, rather than as a stand-alone settlement. As is shown in Figure 2.2, much of the area of the Garden Neighbourhood is outside the parish boundary of Beccles, therefore the Neighbourhood Plan cannot include policies that directly concern development that is proposed in these areas.

2.22 The development is expected to take 20 years to be completed. At the current time much of the detail is not fixed. That detail will come with planning applications that are submitted at a later date. The allocation in the Emerging Local Plan and anything shown in accompanying masterplans is seeking to establish certain principles. The role of the Neighbourhood Plan is, through its policies, to better inform those principles and ensure that the detail reflects a development which can provide for the needs not only of the new residents but also the existing community of Beccles.
Beccles Today

**Age Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Beccles</th>
<th>Waveney</th>
<th>Suffolk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85 +</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 84</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 64</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 44</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 17</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - 9</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Housing**

- **Beccles**
  - Detached 28.6%
  - Semi-Detached 30.7%
  - Terraced 29.3%
  - Flat 11.2%
  - Caravan 0.6%
- **Waveney**
  - Detached 31.7%
  - Semi-Detached 37.4%
  - Terraced 21.7%
  - Flat 10.3%
  - Caravan 0.6%
- **Suffolk**
  - Detached 30.6%
  - Semi-Detached 30.4%
  - Terraced 28.4%
  - Flat 11.1%
  - Caravan 0.8%

**Size of Houses**

- **Beccles**
  - 0-1 4%
  - 2 3%
  - 3 9%
  - 4 10%
  - 5 13%
  - 6+ 22%
- **Waveney**
  - 0-1 4%
  - 2 3%
  - 3 9%
  - 4 10%
  - 5 13%
  - 6+ 22%
- **Suffolk**
  - 0-1 4%
  - 2 3%
  - 3 9%
  - 4 10%
  - 5 13%
  - 6+ 22%

**Qualifications**

- **Beccles**
  - 0-1 11%
  - 2 13%
  - 3 12%
  - 4 11%
  - 5 13%
  - 6 13%
  - 7+ 13%
- **Waveney**
  - 0-1 11%
  - 2 13%
  - 3 12%
  - 4 11%
  - 5 13%
  - 6 13%
  - 7+ 13%
- **Suffolk**
  - 0-1 11%
  - 2 13%
  - 3 12%
  - 4 11%
  - 5 13%
  - 6 13%
  - 7+ 13%

**Beccles Neighbourhood Plan**

**Draft 4**

- Large proportion of retirees
- Smaller number of people of working age
- Large proportion of terraced houses but fewer detached houses and flats
- Lots of small, 2-bed houses and fewer larger, family houses
- High number of unqualified residents but a good proportion with high levels of qualification
Beccles Today

### Working Sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Beccles</th>
<th>Waveney</th>
<th>Suffolk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities, energy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<td>Retail &amp; repair</td>
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<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>Transport &amp; storage</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels, restaurants</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT services &amp; communication</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (financial, real estate)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public admin, education, health</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manufacturing is well represented but fewer people work in higher value services, e.g. IT and financial.

### Car Ownership

- **Beccles**: 1.12
- **Waveney**: 1.20
- **Suffolk**: 1.34

Car ownership is below average.

### Travel to Work

35% of people live and work in Beccles (Lowestoft 60%, Halesworth 40%, Bungay 31%)

Most others work in the local towns nearby.

A high proportion of people walk and cycle to work.

Source: 2011 Census
3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Challenges for Beccles

3.1 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges that face the community of Beccles. In summary these challenges are:

Housing and inequality
- A shortage of affordable and rented housing for young people and families, and of sheltered accommodation for the elderly.
- Pockets of severe inequality in Beccles South, identified in the 2016 Hidden Needs Report.

Impact of proposed development south of Beccles
- Potential pressure from the large-scale residential development proposed in the Waveney Local Plan on the environmental, physical and social infrastructure and existing character of the town.

Employment
- Lack of local job opportunities which reflect the full range of technological advances and the green economy.

Infrastructure
- Lack of community facilities, especially for the parents with young children, and teenagers.
- Poorly maintained outdoor play facilities and open spaces, especially at Beccles Quay.
- Pressure on Beccles Medical Centre and lack of facilities for mental health.

Town Centre
- Town centre’s potential as a shopping and social destination in an attractive historical setting constrained by limited space for people to walk and stroll.

Traffic and Movement
- Regular town centre congestion, air pollution and speeding, poor pedestrian safety and lack of provision for technological advances such as electric and driverless cars.
- A need for better management of public car parking particularly to serve the town centre and key tourist destinations.

Environment
- Inconsistently maintained heritage buildings, unsightly brownfield sites and pet fouling.
- Pollution of the River Waveney.
- Flooding.

Tourism
- Lack of visitor accommodation.
- Threats to the character and environment of the town which undermine attractiveness to tourists.
Vision for Beccles

3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Beccles is as follows:

‘By 2036 the Beccles Southern Relief Road will have been long completed. Attractive new housing in the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood and to the west of London Road will provide a range of dwelling sizes and tenure that allows young people to stay and raise families in Beccles, and to provide the elderly with sheltered housing. The new primary school, open space, sports facilities and shops in the Garden Neighbourhood will be easily accessible to the existing town via pedestrian, cycle and bus routes and will be fully integrated into existing infrastructure.

Light industrial units accommodating hi-tech business will have been developed within the Garden Neighbourhood and on brownfield sites. Our schools will have expanded to equip our younger people with the versatile skills required for the future and there will be more links between businesses and the wider community.

Heavy goods vehicles will no longer come into the town centre other than for deliveries, and this together with smart systems to reduce speeding as well as widened pavements will provide more space for pedestrians. This will have improved the environment for shopping and leisure, particularly by improving pedestrian safety and also by reducing air pollution. Electric vehicles will have reduced air pollution and there will be re-charging points in the town, plus better access for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and cyclists. Well-maintained heritage buildings and a well-managed green environment, together with a good range of shops and services will have helped maintain the town’s character. Elsewhere in the town road improvements have eased pressure at critical locations.

Beccles Medical Centre and other health services will have expanded to meet increased demand for both physical and mental care. There will be new and enhanced community spaces for parents, children and teenagers, including a Skate Park and inclusive play areas. The town will have a new leisure centre and/or indoor swimming pool. The environment of the town will encourage active lifestyles for residents and visitors and provide a range of leisure activities to suit all ages.

Open spaces at Waveney Meadow, the Common and especially Beccles Quay will have been much improved to provide an enhanced attraction to residents and visitors. Visitor accommodation will have increased and tourism will be thriving.

The water quality of the River Waveney will have improved and flood risk will have been mitigated.’
Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.3 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

**Housing**
1. To contribute to the Waveney Local Plan housing strategy and provide a range of attractive housing types and tenures to meet all needs.
2. To ensure that the new housing proposed to the south of Beccles is integrated with the existing town.

**Community facilities**
3. To provide new community facilities especially for parents with young children, and teenagers, plus a new leisure centre and/or indoor pool.
4. To enhance existing open spaces, play areas and other facilities including the library and the Waveney Centre.
5. To develop Beccles Quay as an asset for residents and visitors.

**Transport and Movement**
6. To enhance pedestrian safety in order to maximise walking into the town centre and to other key destinations.
7. To support safe cycle routes, maintain and enhance public transport routes and community transport services, wherever possible.
8. To promote junction improvements where there is existing or anticipated pressure from new residential or industrial development.
9. To address potential future shortages of public car parking.

**Environment**
10. To maintain and enhance the character and heritage of our built environment, promote development of brownfield sites and maintain a clean, litter-free and attractive townscape.
11. To encourage the appropriate care and management of our wider green environment.
12. To co-operate with the relevant bodies in improving the water quality of the River Waveney.

**Town Centre**
13. To maintain a thriving town centre and minimise vacancies.
14. Improve the environment of the town centre and explore ways of making more car-free spaces for pedestrians.

**Health**
15. To improve and expand the existing Beccles Medical Centre including car parking so that it fully meets the needs of existing and new residents, and to explore other opportunities for providing medical facilities.
16. To encourage a physically and mentally healthy community.
4 COMMUNITY AND TOURIST INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Community facilities

Community hub

4.1 The Beccles community is diverse, hence the range of demands for indoor activity space are broad. There are community spaces which are already widely used throughout the town, but there is not yet a multi-use, centralised, focal point that offers the broad range of facilities the community needs.

4.2 There are a number of groups and types of activity that would benefit from such provision. This includes users as diverse as sports clubs, theatre companies, musical groups and religious groups. The faith community has specifically stated that such a facility would be an important part of providing multi-faith activities for the new and existing residents.

4.3 A new community facility is being developed in neighbouring Worlingham but this is required to address the needs of Worlingham residents. Beccles needs its own community space. The Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood is expected to deliver a community hub, including a convenience store, local shops, pre-school and a community centre. This is required to be in a ‘central location within the site which has good accessibility from…the existing community of south Beccles…’. Such a facility is likely to be capable of addressing the needs of the existing community of Beccles but must be accessible to them. It is particularly important that accessibility by public walkways, along cyclepaths and by public transport is provided, as well as by car.

4.4 Ultimately a versatile, multi-use space, managed by the local community (through an appropriate vehicle) will not only help to ensure that the community of Beccles can thrive, but that it gives residents a sense of ownership and belonging.

POLICY BECC1: PROVISION OF A COMMUNITY HUB IN THE BECCLES AND WORLINGHAM GARDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD

As required by Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP3.1, the development of the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood is expected to include provision of a community centre. Any such provision is expected to meet the following criteria:

a. The community centre provides a number of spaces of differing sizes which are capable of addressing the identified needs of the community.

b. The developer must demonstrate that they have actively engaged the community on the design of the community centre space and that, as far as possible, the requirements of the community have been met.

c. The community of Beccles, through an appropriate vehicle, is involved in the ongoing management of the community centre.
d. The community centre is easily accessible to the existing community of Beccles, particularly on foot and by bicycle through the provision of a network of high quality public walkways and cyclepaths which link up with existing walking and cycling routes in Beccles town.

Other community facilities

4.5 Alongside a new community facility, it is important that existing community facilities are improved. There are a range of facilities serving the community that are in need of repair and upgrade in order to meet the needs of the community. These include:

- Play areas
- Skate park
- Sports and community facilities near the Common (serving the needs of the scouts)
- Beccles Library
- Beccles Lido
- Beccles Public Hall

4.6 Many of these facilities are home to services provided for young people and children. Yet there is widespread public consensus that activities and opportunities for young people are currently lacking in the Beccles community. Research to inform the draft Local Plan and on hidden needs supports this. There are spaces and facilities available - mostly for younger children - but these are in a poor state of repair.

4.7 The community of Beccles would like to see a greater range of activities and opportunities for young people and families by:

- Creating a designated ‘Youth Space’ inclusive and accessible to all. This will encompass both indoor and outdoor areas which will be managed in such a way as to give young people a sense of ownership and autonomy.
• Updating existing indoor and outdoor community spaces to provide integrated areas and activities to engage young people and families.

• Providing a designated space for indoor play. There is high demand for an indoor play area for families with younger children. This could be secured either by adapting an existing space or building a new one.

• Ensuring that an adequate range of spaces and facilities are fully accessible and inclusive.

4.8 Two specific needs have also been identified by the community. The first is an expansion of Beccles Library. The 2018 Waveney Infrastructure Study\(^8\) identified a need for a further 108m\(^2\) of floorspace.

4.9 The second is a need for an indoor swimming pool. Whilst this is a long term aspiration – with no suitable site currently identified – the only swimming facility serving the town is the Beccles Lido. This is only open between mid-May and mid-September, during which time demand is very high which often means people are unable to swim. As an illustration, the 2018 season which lasted 15 weeks saw visitors to the pool reached 48,821, which is a record. Typically the Lido has a total of around 40,000 visitors per year\(^9\).

4.10 Since 2010 the Lido has been a community-run organisation and over this time has gone from strength to strength, providing not only a ‘destination’ attraction for tourists but importantly swimming for the public and schools in the area. This is important in an area that has the River Waveney and the Broads on its doorstep; children should able to swim to minimise risks near water.

4.11 There has been strong feedback from residents that an indoor pool providing year-round facilities would be desirable.

4.12 The Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment 2015\(^{10}\) identified that Beccles lacks a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). One is proposed to be provided at the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood, so it will be important that the existing community has good access to that.

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\(^8\) Waveney District Council (2018) *Waveney Infrastructure Study 2018*

\(^9\) Beccles and Bungay Journal, 14th September 2018

\(^{10}\) Waveney District Council (2015) *Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment*
4.13 It will be important that the opportunity is taken, through the provision of the MUGA, to address wider needs. The Waveney Infrastructure Study 2018 identified the need for a small 3G artificial grass pitch in Beccles. This reflects the findings of the Waveney Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Assessment 2014\(^{11}\) that the provision of synthetic turf pitches (for sports such as tennis, hockey and five-a-side football) are below average.

4.14 Beccles is also the Gateway to the Broads, making it a popular tourist town. Visiting tourists reasonably expect the availability of certain public facilities. Existing community members are concerned about the proposed closure and poor state of public toilets in the town centre. This reflects badly on Beccles and gives a poor impression of the town. The need is to provide facilities for tourists and local people alike that encourages people to visit and stay.

**POLICY BECC2: COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

A. As required by Local Plan Policy WLP8.22, proposals for new community services and facilities will be supported if the proposal meets the needs of the local community. In Beccles, the provision of facilities to address the following local needs are strongly encouraged:
   a. A ’Youth Space’ incorporating indoor and outdoor areas.
   b. A Multi-Use Games Area (on the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood) which is capable of being used for a wide range of sports, including five-a-side football, tennis and hockey). This should ideally be complemented by the provision of appropriate changing facilities.
   c. A dedicated indoor play facility.
   d. Expansion of Beccles Library.
   e. An indoor swimming pool.

B. Alongside new provision, proposals to improve the quality of existing indoor community provision are strongly encouraged.

C. Proposals to bring back into use disused facilities which enhance Beccles’s function as a tourist town are strongly encouraged.

**Tourist facilities**

**Beccles Quay and River Waveney**

4.15 As a tourist town, Beccles Quay is an important asset which helps to draw visitors into the town. There is concern within the existing community about its general upkeep of Beccles Quay and

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\(^{11}\) Waveney District Council (2014) *Waveney Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Assessment*
public facilities there. For people who visit by river, this is the main gateway to the town, and the Norfolk Broads.

4.16 Beccles residents say that they could take greater pride in Beccles Quay as asset to the town and use it more themselves if it was better maintained and if there were more up-to-date facilities available. Some areas flood regularly, making access difficult. This is supported by the Waveney Open Space Needs Assessment which recommended that, ‘the overall quality of the site should be improved to reflect the value of the open space to the community and enhance its value as a tourist destination on the River Waveney.’

4.17 It is important that improvements are made which create a more welcoming feel to the Quay for visitors and residents alike. In particular this needs to tackle areas susceptible to flooding. One option favoured by the community is the creation of an attractive park on the northern side of the Quay. The Quay Café has been extended by making use of the old Tourist Information Office and is re-providing tourist information as part of this. This has greatly helped to improve the tourist offer. Alongside this, the existing play area also needs improving to make a more attractive environment and provide a wider offer, for example through the provision of gym equipment.

4.18 The best use of land in and around the Quay will help support tourism and hence local business.

4.19 It should be noted that Beccles Quay is within the Broads Authority area and therefore any proposals must also take account of the policies in its Local Plan.

4.20 The River Waveney is an important hub of the town’s community, leisure and tourist activities. Public access to the river is important and needs to be enhanced (at the Quay as previously identified, and also at Waveney Meadow and The Score). Alongside this, information boards about river ecology, local history and culture are needed at all public access points.

4.21 On the river itself, there needs to be an increase in provision of specified moorings for tour boats and hire boats with the aim of encouraging river-tourism.

Ultimately, the tourist industry of Beccles is largely based around the theme of being ‘the Gateway to the Broads’. Its therefore vital that all efforts are made to be responsible in how sensitive environmental matters such as pollution of the waterways are dealt with.
POLICY BECC3: BECCLES TOURISM

A. Development proposals are expected to protect and enhance the features of Beccles that contribute to the tourism offer of the area. In particular, proposals that will enhance tourism in Beccles and its role as ‘Gateway to the Broads’ are strongly encouraged. Such proposals must recognise and actively demonstrate sensitivity to the natural environment and must not worsen environmental degradation, particularly in respect of the state of water quality of the River Waveney.

Beccles Quay

B. Proposals to improve the environment of Beccles Quay are strongly encouraged, particularly if they address any of the following issues:
   a. reduce the impact of flooding on the Quay;
   b. increase the provision of public green space on the north side;
   c. expand the quantity and quality of food and drink provision;
   d. increase the range of outdoor leisure facilities for all ages.

River moorings

C. Proposals to provide moorings on the River Waveney for tourist boating activities. Such proposals must be coordinated with the Broads Authority.

Overnight accommodation

4.22 Beccles attracts both day visitors and tourists that stay overnight. However, there is a shortage of overnight accommodation in the town. In particular when there are major events, such as at the Ellough Drag race track, this shortage is acute. This has wider impacts, with the retention of tourists locally is important to a wide variety of shop/business owners.

4.23 The Waveney Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016\textsuperscript{12} recommended that:

   “…the development of hotels should be promoted in order to accommodate higher visitor numbers who often are often unable to find rooms within Beccles during peak times. By developing additional overnight accommodation, the centre will be able to increase its visitor capacity with positive benefits for the daytime and evening economy in terms of an increase in year-round footfall and expenditure.

4.24 The draft Local Plan has a policy protecting existing tourist accommodation from changes to alternative uses, its policy support for the provision of new hotels only extends to Corton, Lowestoft, Kessingland and Southwold but not Beccles.

4.25 Any new hotel provision in Beccles must recognise the character of the town and be designed so that it is in keeping.

\textsuperscript{12} Carter Jonas (2016) Waveney Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016, for Waveney District Council
**POLICY BECC4: HOTEL ACCOMMODATION**

The provision of new hotel accommodation in Beccles is encouraged, provided its design reflects the character of the local area.

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**Heritage**

4.26 Beccles is fortunate to have a wealth of heritage features which define the town and give it its unique character. This is one of the reasons why it is popular with tourists and is therefore a vital asset for maintaining the vitality of the town. The richness of this heritage is evidenced by the extent of the Conservation Area and the fact that there are nearly 150 listed buildings, with six of these being Grade I listed. In particular, it is the way that these heritage assets sit within the environment of medieval streets and the market that gives the town a unique sense of pride and community.

4.27 In addition to the nationally listed heritage assets, a wealth of ‘non-designated heritage assets’ have been identified by The Beccles Society. These are buildings or places which, because of their appearance, design, heritage value, history or local significance, in themselves or in their setting, make a positive contribution to the local character and street scene and the appearance of the area around them. Most of these are shown in Figure 4.2. This will aid any future conservation reviews.

4.28 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan is not adding any further non-designated heritage assets, it will be important to keep this under review.

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**Community actions and schemes for infrastructure funding: heritage**

The 2014 Beccles Conservation Area Appraisal identifies areas that have potential for enhancement. Over the past ten years, the conservation area in the centre of Beccles has seen a lack of maintenance and appropriate management. Visual evidence can be seen in damaged street furniture and inappropriate advertisements. A priority therefore for investment is to address these matters and enhance the quality of the conservation area.
Figure 4.1: Beccles Conservation Area and nationally listed buildings

Source: Beccles Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2014, Waveney District Council
Figure 4.2: Non-designated heritage assets in Central Beccles

Source: Waveney District Council

Community actions and schemes for infrastructure funding: heritage assets
The following are actions and schemes for funding which the local community considers are important for preserving heritage assets in Beccles:

- Explore the potential for ground floor space of the Beccles Tower to be brought back into regular use as an exhibition space, ideally ‘twinned’ with Beccles Museum.
5 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

5.1 As a market town destination, as well as a through route to Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth and Norwich, the historical road network of Beccles has significant challenges with respect to congestion. Partly this is due to the volume of vehicular traffic but also due to the number of heavy goods vehicles which travel right through the town centre. This often causes significant delays and queueing traffic creates problems with air pollution and pedestrian safety, reducing the attractiveness of Beccles town centre. The attractiveness of the town centre is particularly important for Beccles as a tourist destination.

5.2 The growth planned in the Emerging Local Plan – particularly at the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood – is inevitably going to have a detrimental impact on this. Whilst this is recognised in the Emerging Local Plan, with policies seeking to mitigate these problems as far as possible, the Neighbourhood Plan plays an important role in two respects:

i. Addressing more localised junction issues where growth could impact on traffic movements.

ii. Improving the network for walking and cycling, so encouraging people to not travel by car, particularly for short journeys. Access to the range of new community infrastructure proposed at the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood is important in this regard.

Local highway junctions

5.3 The Emerging Local Plan identifies specific transport schemes that are required to support growth. Policy WLP3.1 (Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood) states that ‘Road layout and access should encourage traffic to travel into Beccles westwards along the Southern Relief Road’.

5.4 This is an important principle which is required to ensure that the new traffic created by the Garden Neighbourhood, when making journeys into the town centre, does so by the route most likely to minimise congestion.
5.5 In addition, the Emerging Local Plan identifies the need for access improvements and servicing to the Enterprise Zone at Ellough, a cycle link to the Ellough industrial estates from the Garden Neighbourhood and improvements to cycle network as identified in the Waveney Cycle Strategy.

5.6 Whilst these interventions are supported, no other specific highways improvements are identified. Yet there are a number of road junctions in Beccles that are already congested at peak times to the point that they create problems of safe access for pedestrians and other road users such as cyclists. In a historic market town such as Beccles, one of its notable features is the narrowness of its roadways at certain points, which has fed through to narrow pavements. This is particularly the case along London Road and Blyburgate. Not only does this make it dangerous for pedestrians but, traffic queues caused by congestion increases the levels of air pollution, which creates a direct, increased health risk for pedestrians.

5.7 These local junctions may experience further congestion and safety issues as a result of growth created by the Garden Neighbourhood, by the allocation in the Emerging local Plan of 280 dwellings on land west of London Road or by other developments that come forward over the plan period.

5.8 The following junctions are considered to be at risk of increased traffic levels potentially causing increased risks to pedestrians and cyclists and therefore mitigation may be required:

- Blyburgate/Peddars Lane
- Ashmans Road/Fredericks Road
- Norwich Road/Loddon Road
- Yarmouth Road/George Westwood Way
- Norwich Road/Yarmouth Road
- London Road/St Mary's Road.
- Hungate/Blyburgate/Exchange Square
Figure 5.1: Local pinchpoint junctions

- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Road Junction Pinch Points
- Broads Planning Authority
- Waveney District Planning Authority
  a. Blyburge/Pedders Lane
  b. Ashmans Road/Fredericks Road
  c. Norwich Road/Loddon Road
  d. Yarmouth Road/George Westwood Way
  e. Norwich Road/Yarmouth Road
  f. London Road/St Mary's Road junction
  g. Hungate/Blyburgate/Exchange Square
Figure 5.2: Local pinchpoint junctions – town centre

- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Road Junction Pinch Points
- Broads Planning Authority
- Waveney District Planning Authority
  a. Blyburgate/Pedders Lane
  b. Ashmans Road/Fredericks Road
  d. Yarmouth Road/George Westwood Way
  f. London Road/St Mary’s Road junction
  g. Hungate/Blyburgate/Exchange Square
POLICY BECC5: LOCAL ROAD JUNCTIONS

A. All Transport Assessments (for larger sites) or Transport Statements (for smaller sites) - as required by paragraph 32 of the National Planning Policy Framework - should address to the satisfaction of the highway authority the cumulative transport impact on road junctions, in particular including the following, identified on the Policies Map:

i. Blyburgate/Peddars Lane
ii. Ashmans Road/Fredericks Road
iii. Norwich Road/Loddon Road
iv. Yarmouth Road/George Westwood Way
v. Norwich Road/Yarmouth Road
vi. London Road/St Mary’s Road
vii. Blyburgate/Hungae/Exchange Square

B. In particular, such transport impacts include the impact on the safety of cyclists and pedestrians at the respective local road junction.

Community actions: Vehicular movement and parking

The following are actions which the local community considers are important for improving vehicular transport and parking in and around Beccles:

- Work with Suffolk County Council, as highway authority, on a scheme for restricting HGV’s from travelling through the town centre, unless access is required. This could be in conjunction with the use of physical measures to deter such vehicles from passing through the zone entry points. This would be an area-wide scheme encompassing adjacent villages on the A145 and extending as far as Bungay.

- Work with Suffolk County Council on better signposting to encourage through traffic to use more appropriate routes than through the town centre. In particular:
  - Traffic going north towards Norwich and west towards Diss will need to be signposted to encourage them to use the main road network around the town.
  - Traffic needing to access the town itself should be encouraged to use the most appropriate access point (e.g. for Tesco and the northern part of the town centre this should be around the main road network to the Morrison’s roundabout).

- Measures to reduce speeding will be introduced within the town centre and residential streets to promote quality of life and to enhance the environment of the town. Such schemes should, wherever possible, incorporate physical means to restrict speeds as these have been acknowledged as being more effective at being self-enforcing.

- Exploring the provision of one hour of free parking in public car parks in Beccles town centre.

- Review the management of public car parks in Beccles town centre and how this can be improved.
• Working with local businesses to encourage the use of artificial intelligence for transport and movement, which is expected to develop significantly over the plan period. Retraining affected staff will be an important part of the implementation of any such schemes.

• Regular traffic counts will be undertaken on major routes into and out of Beccles to assess the highway and traffic implications of all new developments as they progress.

Schemes for infrastructure funding: Vehicular movement and parking

The following are specific schemes for which initial funding should be sought and used to explore the feasibility of developing further:

• Any appropriate scheme coming forward to increase the volume and/or quality of car parking serving the town centre. This could include:
  o Improvement of the environmental quality of Hungate car park – resurfacing (including the walkways into New Market), upgrading of the public toilets and provision of soft landscaping.
  o Provision of a park-and-ride facility.

Key Movement Routes

5.9 In terms of trying to positively influence future patterns of movement into and around Beccles, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to focus on making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in order to encourage more walking and cycling from all the residential areas. Linking the new housing sites, as well as the existing parts of the settlements, into the network of walkways and safer cycling routes is vital to encourage more walking and cycling and less use of the car. Such improvements have a range of benefits including:

• Providing genuine alternatives to the private car as a means of accessing the town centre, local schools and other community facilities;

• Provide health benefits through increased walking and cycling;

• Facilitating less congestion at busy times by encouraging children walking to and from school and people walking to the shops rather than ‘jumping in the car’ for a short journey;

• Providing a safer environment for the community of Beccles, including for vulnerable users.

5.10 This sits alongside existing policies which seek to assist movement for cars, as appropriate.

5.11 Access on foot into and around Beccles and to key facilities such as the local school and the town centre requires improvement to existing walkways as well as the provision of some new walkways and pedestrian crossing points in order to encourage increases in usage. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the Key Movement Routes that will enable access on foot and by bicycle to these key facilities. These are shown in Figure 5.3. It is vital that these Key Movement Routes are improved and that access to them from the new housing developments can be provided.
Figure 5.3: Key movement routes

1. Elmsdale Road/Ingate between town centre and Elmsdale Industrial Estate with the town centre
2. Lowestoft Road between eastern boundary of the parish and town centre
3. London Road between junction of Blyburgate at northern end and boundary of parish at the southern end
4. George Westwood Way (leading to Gosford Road and Ingate), Station Road, Blyburgate, Paddars Lane, Mirfield, Station Road.
5. Gillingham Dam, Ravensmere, Newgate, Snaigate, and Northgate.
6. Battersea Road/Ballygate/New Market from junction with the Walk in north to junction with South Road in the south.
7. Rye House Lane corridor from proposed Garden Neighbourhood to town centre
5.12 For new development, it will be important that safe footpath and, where possible, cycle access is provided to link in with these movement routes. Without this, new developments will be isolated from the footway and cycle network and will become car-dependent estates.

5.13 One particular area where improved pedestrian access and safety is considered to be important is in the town centre. Some parts of the town centre are pedestrianised but it is considered that increasing and improving this will enhance the vitality of the town centre as a place to visit, shop and enjoy leisure time. This does need to ensure that it enhances the prospects for local businesses, which is often a common concern. Research by Living Streets\(^\text{13}\) has assessed the impact of pedestrianisation schemes and has shown that, if implemented correctly, does have positive benefits on spending and the viability of retailers in particular.

5.14 It is also noted that there are a number of proposed route improvements in the Waveney Cycle Strategy 2016 which will assist in the aim of increasing levels of cycling.

5.15 Where improvements are needed, contributions will be sought through Section 106 agreements or Community Infrastructure Levy and will be used to part-fund these and lever in match funding from other sources.

POLICY BECC6: KEY MOVEMENT ROUTES

A. Development proposals to improve cycling and walking will be supported. In particular, provision of cycle and pedestrian routes that are physically separated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should also ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.

B. To ensure that residents can access public transport facilities, schools, leisure and other important facilities serving Beccles, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian access to link up with existing footways that, in turn, directly serve the Key Movement Routes shown on the Policies Map.

C. Proposals to enhance the identified Key Movement Routes are strongly encouraged.

D. Development will be expected to not have an unacceptable impact on Key Movement Routes and to provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian access.

\(^{13}\) Living Streets (2018) *The Pedestrian Pound: The business case for better streets and places*, [https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/highstreets](https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/highstreets)
**Community actions and schemes for infrastructure funding: non-vehicular movement**

The following actions are considered important for improving non-vehicular movement in and around Beccles:

- Develop a scheme for expanding the pedestrianised area of Beccles Town Centre. Any scheme should be designed to minimise its impact on parking and must retain access for deliveries to town centre businesses.
- Identify footways in Beccles Town Centre that would benefit from widening in order to improve pedestrian safety.
- Safeguarding of existing Rights of Way.

The following are specific schemes for which initial funding should be sought and used to explore the feasibility of developing further:

- A footpath underpass under the A146 adjacent to the Quay car park.
- Any appropriate scheme coming forward to expand the pedestrianised area of the town centre.
- More bicycle parking at the Common.

**Public transport**

5.16 In order to reduce the impacts of congestion on Beccles’s roads, it is important to improve a wide range of alternatives to the car. This not only includes walking and cycling for the shortest trips, but also public transport, i.e. bus services.

5.17 Whilst the existing bus services require improvement in frequency and coverage, Policy WLP3.1 in the Emerging Local Plan in respect of the proposed Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood does not specifically require contributions towards any improvements. It is therefore unlikely that development will provide any significant investment in public transport improvements.

5.18 The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to identify and promote investment in public transport infrastructure and schemes that will improve existing services as far as possible in the most effective way. In particular, connections from the railway station are seen as an important part of increasing bus patronage.
**Community actions and schemes for infrastructure funding: bus provision**

The following are actions and funding priorities which the local community considers are important for improving the quality of bus services in and around Beccles:

- Creation of a community bus service – such services have the flexibility to provide for specific journeys at particular times.
- As identified on the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood Draft Masterplan, the creation of ‘bus gates’ into the development to provide safe and easy bus access into the town centre whilst restricting direct access for other vehicles between the new development and existing areas.
- Identify key locations for bus routes to link up with Beccles railway station and lobby bus providers.

**Electric vehicle infrastructure**

5.19 Whilst it is important to maximise non-car use, there will still be a demand by vehicular use by residents for many journeys. The shift towards electric vehicles over the plan period is expected to be significant, largely due to the Government ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles in the UK in 2040. To encourage take-up of alternatives, and specifically electric vehicles, as early as possible, it will be important that vehicle charging facilities at home are complemented by a network of affordable public charging points.

5.20 Plug-in Suffolk is one example of a pilot scheme to bring together the charging experience of electric vehicle owners under one standard procedure when they are away from home. It is intended to work in support of the rapid charging network that is already being set up to cover main highways but would be a network of slower ‘destination’ chargers placed where people will be parked for hours instead of minutes.

5.21 Such a scheme requires locations where the site owner is willing to have a charging point. Plug-in Suffolk would cover the upfront costs and the site owner would pay a nominal rent per charger per day. When someone uses the charger, some of the money goes to the site holder as a revenue stream.

5.22 With the need for a wide and comprehensive network of public charging points, it is important the such innovative schemes are encouraged.

**Community actions and schemes for electric vehicle infrastructure provision**

Beccles Town Council will work with electric vehicle infrastructure providers and site owners to put in place a comprehensive network of public charging points at key destinations in Beccles:

- Identify locations for the provision of electric vehicle recharging points (ideally fast charging points) in Beccles town centre, e.g. in public car parks and at the Quay.
6   BECCLES TOWN CENTRE

6.1 In 2018, Beccles has an attractive and much-valued town centre, with few shop vacancies. There is a reasonable range of shops, restaurants and service facilities, plus a Friday market.

6.2 The Public Hall and Quaker Hall provide focus of community activity and leisure use within the town centre, complemented by the neighbouring Beccles Library.

6.3 The community of Beccles considers the town centre to generally have a good range of shops and facilities. This was supported by the Waveney Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2016\(^{14}\) which considered the town centre to be healthy in terms of uses and mix. The potential of the town centre to provide a safe and attractive environment for shopping and social activities is restricted by the amount of through traffic and some narrow pavements. The opportunity exists to provide more traffic free areas but the impact on traffic and parking must be carefully considered.

6.4 Nevertheless, it must be recognised that the demand for retail floorspace of many kinds is in decline nationally. In these circumstances, policies that seek to retain retail uses within the primary frontages may have increasingly detrimental impacts over the plan period. A more flexible and proactive approach is required if the town centre is to retain its role as a hub of community activity.

6.5 Whilst traditional retail uses within the town centre and its primary retail frontages will be supported and encouraged, the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide a policy framework for allowing other types of use where vacancies are in evidence and have been so for some time. Policy WLP8.18 of the Emerging Local Plan specifically identifies that town centre uses will be permitted within town centre boundaries. Such uses include all retail and service uses, offices, hotels and leisure uses. However, the Neighbourhood Plan wishes to broaden this to other uses that will maintain footfall in the town centre. Such uses must demonstrate that the unit in question has no demand for other town centre uses.

6.6 In addition, the use of vacant premises on a temporary basis, either for retail or leisure activities, or for community activities more generally, is encouraged.

POLICY BECC7: BECCLES TOWN CENTRE

A. In the Primary Shopping frontage of Beccles Town Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, the change of use of Class A retail and service premises to other uses not identified in Policy WLP8.18 of the Waveney Local Plan will be encouraged, provided it can be demonstrated that:
   - the Class A retail premises question have not been in active use for at least 12 months; and
   - the proposed use will retain and enhance footfall along the frontage; and
   - the proposed use will not create a significant burden on parking in excess of what such a unit would normally expect to create through the operation of a town centre retail business.

B. Equally, the use of Class A premises for temporary uses will be supported along these frontages. Such uses include ‘pop up’ shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events.

C. Such uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution.

D. Such uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires such large amounts of parking in order to function.

Community actions: Beccles Town Centre

The following are actions which the local community considers are important for improving the vibrancy and quality of Beccles Town Centre:

- In consultation with Beccles Business Association, give consideration to establishing a Town Centre Management Team.
- Encourage more street events, including more specialist markets, entertainers and street vendors.
- Explore with stakeholders the potential for further traffic free areas.
- Policing to meet the needs of an expanding community.
7 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Beccles Hospital

7.1 The very first hospital in Beccles was mentioned in 1362 and is believed to have been built some years earlier at the instigation of a man who had been allegedly cured of leprosy. It appears that a hospital of sorts continued in Beccles until the late 17th century after which there seems to have been no medical provision in the town until 1822 when a dispensary, maintained by voluntary subscriptions, was established in Hungate. By 1873 this was no longer large enough to meet the requirements of the town and the building of a hospital started in Fair Close at a cost of £1,500. This was officially opened in June 1874 and patients were admitted from September of the same year.

7.2 After the end of World War I, it was agreed that the town’s war memorial should be in the form of a well-equipped up to date hospital with 24 beds and an x-ray department which continued to be used till the mid-seventies. The site of this, along with the war memorial cross, was to be on land bordering St Mary’s Road and Priory Road. The 24-bed hospital, costing £12,000 that was raised by public and private subscriptions, was opened in February 1924 and included two beds allocated for maternity services. The latter were mainly used for caesarean births and were in use until 1960 when maternity services for the mums of Beccles were carried out in Yarmouth and Norwich.

7.3 In 1948 the hospital came under the umbrella of the newly formed NHS and has continued to be an important asset to the town ever since. Today the 20-bed community hospital is an intermediate care unit with in-patient facilities for those needing care or therapy but not to the degree of that provided by a general hospital. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy are also available. Currently the hospital is operated by East Coast Community Health Care but sadly the minor injuries clinic closed in February 2017. Patients consistently bring good reports of the hospital. One patient said, “Every member of staff was pleasant and caring. If I could award stars I would give 5 to the Beccles hospital” while another said, “Every member of staff went beyond the call of duty.”

7.4 In these days of cut backs and pressure on the NHS, everything must be done to ensure that Beccles hospital continues the good work that has been going on there for many years.

7.5 A significant concern to the community are the levels of deprivation and inequality in Beccles.

7.6 As shown in Section 2, the Suffolk Hidden Needs Report 2016 identified Beccles as having some particularly significant types and pockets of deprivation.

7.7 Building a strong sense of community wellbeing and good mental and physical health, through ensuring the best possible community facilities are made available and accessible, can help change this. Various matters relating to community facilities are addressed in the section on ‘Community and Tourist Infrastructure and Facilities’. However, matters relating to health and social wellbeing – in terms of more direct provision – are not.

7.8 There is a need within the scope of existing initiatives to ensure that when planning and future development in Beccles that policies that are put in place address the work already undertaken by
The Hidden Need Report shows that South Beccles is an area of particular concern. Providing facilities such as retirement community comprising a care home/nursing home and extra care and/or sheltered dwellings, along with a community centre, can address isolation and loneliness to the ageing population. The Garden Neighbourhood provides an opportunity to achieve this.

There was significant feedback through the Neighbourhood Plan of concerns about provision of both mental and physical health facilities in Beccles. In particular, people are concerned about medical provision being mostly centred at the Beccles Hospital site. However, there was a particularly strong feeling that more comprehensive provision could be delivered through a new, modern medical facility at an alternative location (which would possibly complement the provision at Beccles Hospital). Whilst the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood proposals do not include such provision, it is expected that contributions will be made towards expansion of the existing Beccles Medical Centre. Such expansion could be delivered through a new facility on an alternative site. Whilst no sites have been identified, the Neighbourhood Plan supports any ongoing work to address this situation.

### POLICY BECC8: MEDICAL PROVISION IN BECCLES

Proposals to expand and improve medical provision in Beccles will be encouraged. In particular, provision of a new medical centre which can provide a wider range of medical and social care services to better meet the needs of the community of Beccles will be strongly encouraged.

### Community actions: Health and wellbeing

The following are actions which the local community considers are important for improving health and wellbeing in Beccles:

- Beccles Town Council will work with all relevant stakeholders (including developers, the County Council and social care providers) to better engage with the NHS regarding the provision of a comprehensive care setting to address the needs of the community of Beccles.
- Beccles Town Council will work with East Coast Community Health Care and other health partners to ensure all efforts are made to retain an operational hospital facility in Beccles.
- Beccles Town Council will continue its programme of engaging residents in community gardening and will take forward proposals to develop a community orchard along Goose Green West.
- Beccles Town Council will seek to build on its current group of community volunteers and seek to allocate specified public spaces for further community gardening projects.

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**Dog waste**

7.11 Residents of Beccles have long complained about dog waste in the town.

7.12 Dog waste contains faecal coliform bacteria which is known to cause cramps, diarrhoea, intestinal illness and kidney disorders. It can also cause Ocular Toxocariasis. This is rare but can affect young children who encounter it and will impact on eye health. Whilst we feel that most owners are responsible as evidenced by full dog poo bins it only takes a few who are maybe less willing or able to clean up to cause issue.

7.13 An audit undertaken in January 2019 gives a view on areas, but it is considered likely that most people know additional locations. Whilst this is not a land use issue, it is considered important to take a sensible stance and include relevant actions in the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Community actions: Dog waste**

The following are actions which the local community considers are important for improving health and wellbeing in Beccles in respect of dog waste:

- The Town Council should make every effort to ensure that waste bins are available in areas where they currently do not exist and where residents flag an issue with dog waste.
- Clear notice should be displayed of penalties / fines that can be levied should someone not collect and either take away or bin their dog’s waste.
- Flag dangers to health that are presented by dog waste.
- Promote good community behaviours in schools and organisations and Pride in Beccles.

**Age-friendly housing**

7.14 The population of Beccles is growing progressively older: the proportion of younger people is declining and the proportion of pensioners increasing. This is supported by the Hidden Needs Report which identifies isolation and loneliness and growing problems, particularly among older people. Creating age-friendly communities - including the mix of homes and the design of the built environment more generally - would have a significant positive effect on older people's health and wellbeing, increasing human contact and provision of emotional support. This should be an important principle in designing new development.

7.15 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages provision of a built environment that supports and enhances ageing and aligns health, housing and care systems around a shared objective of helping people to live independently in a home that is suited to their needs as they age. This would potentially reduce the pressure on the Beccles Medical Centre.

Policy WLP8.1 of the Emerging Local Plan requires a mix of housing which is based on evidence of local needs including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. New residential developments are expected to provide at least 35% of properties as 1- and 2-bed properties. This will address the generic need for smaller properties. It is supported by Policy 8.31, which requires developments to be ‘lifetime design’, with 40% of all dwellings on sites of 10 dwellings or more to meet required standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings. This is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan.


8 **HOUSING, DESIGN AND REGENERATION**

**Health and wellbeing in design**

8.1 As recognised in the Hidden Needs Report, people still live in housing estates that are badly designed, built and poorly managed, resulting in social inequality and poor health outcomes that affect quality of life and local prosperity. A wide range of research provides evidence and demonstrates that health and wellbeing can be improved through design and regeneration.

8.2 Areas of South Beccles would benefit from improved access to community facilities for people of all ages including health and wellbeing, and youth and community services; employment and skills opportunities; an improved quality of place; and better outcomes for residents and communities. Existing streets can be retrofitted to varying extents. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to encourage well-thought out design which deliberately and demonstrably provides health and wellbeing benefits for residents and users. This should be both for estate regeneration and new development.

8.3 The type of features that will assist in achieving this are relatively simple and inexpensive. The principle should be that public places should be designed so that they are places where people want to spend time because it provides an enjoyable and pleasant environment. They should also be well lit to ensure users feel safe after dark, which is an issue of particular importance to young people wishing to use youth facilities. Equally, people should be able to move around easily on foot and by bicycle without feeling threatened by the presence of vehicular traffic.

8.4 Ultimately, estate regeneration can address Hidden Needs in Beccles and play a key role in thinking differently about how we meet not only the health and social care needs of people, but also how it can transform economic outcomes by attracting investment and providing space for new or resurgent skills and employment needs.

**POLICY BECC9: HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN DESIGN**

New development or major regeneration of existing residential estates is expected to demonstrate, through its design and layout, how it will enhance the health and wellbeing of residents or users. In particular, it should seek to incorporate the following into its design:

- **a.** Street infrastructure which allows residents and users to enjoy their surroundings whatever the season, such as provision of sensitively designed shade and shelter features, benches, tree planting and practical landscaping features such as planters. This should be supported by sensitively located, low energy lighting.
- **b.** Along main ‘desire lines’ ensure that pavements are wide enough to allow multiple users
- **c.** Where possible, install dedicated cycle lanes to support active transport.
- **d.** Provision of an adequate number of safe highway crossing points which prioritise pedestrians and cyclists.
Effective Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and biodiversity

8.5 The issue of flooding has been raised during the engagement phase for the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular there are concerns about the impact that new development will have, particularly if further greenfield land is to be built on.

8.6 Whilst flooding issues are generally dealt with at the strategic level, the Neighbourhood Plan presents an opportunity to encourage effective urban drainage solutions that can add additional capacity and flexibility to water drainage systems in cost effective ways. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are a common tool for mitigating the impact of water created by a development but commonly these solutions fail to take the opportunity to maximise the wider benefit of SuDS and to properly integrate it into development. When determining the appropriate SuDS method, developers need to give consideration to amenity value and green infrastructure as well as the basic function of moving water away from the built form. This is particularly important, given that well-designed SuDS can not only improve the environment and provide biodiversity benefits, but can also provide a place for residents and others to enjoy and be closer to nature.

8.7 Recent developments in Beccles have often failed to take full advantage of the benefits of well-designed SuDS schemes. Whilst SuDS have been provided, they are not often made attractive and accessible to people, nor have they been designed to enhance biodiversity, as now required by the NPPF. In particular, they have not recognised the opportunities to mitigate the growing threat of water stress through effective water capture and management. For example, when rainwater or greywater is captured, it can be used to keep greenery adequately watered and to generally cool the ambient temperate of built development.

SuDS in Portland, Oregon, USA  Rills in a development in Stroud
(Source: Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust)

8.8 There are many examples of creative use of space within developments where a ‘multi-value’ approach to SuDS provision has been adopted. The common theme is that a wide range of techniques and approaches have been used to maximise the potential for SuDS to mitigate climate change. These approaches start from the point that SuDS is about more than just flood mitigation and that, importantly, good design means SuDS can be provided even where there is very little available space.
POLICY BECC10: MULTI-VALUE SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

A. Development that is required to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is expected to be provided on site, unless there are clear reasons why this is not possible. Such development is encouraged to demonstrate the use of a wide range of creative SuDS solutions, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens. Only where it is demonstrably unviable will an absence of any on-site SuDS provision be permissible in such developments.

B. SuDS provision must demonstrate how its design will enhance wildlife and biodiversity as well as minimise the impacts of flooding.

Maximising energy efficiency through design

8.9 The need to improve the energy efficiency of the stock of residential properties is a nationwide issue as well as one in Beccles. Building Regulations established minimum standards for the energy efficiency of properties yet, if the UK is to reduce the significant amount of energy used in construction and operation of its stock of buildings, more energy efficient buildings are required. Development to Passivhaus or equivalent standards will also serve to reduce (or even eliminate) energy bills for occupiers. This would represent a significant social benefit, particularly for those on low incomes, many of whom are living in households with hidden needs in Beccles.

8.10 Emerging Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.28 requires major development (defined as 10 residential properties or more or at least 1,000m² of commercial floorspace) to submit a sustainability statement to demonstrate that development has maximised energy efficiency, used locally sourced materials, incorporates sustainable water management measures and minimises construction waste. However, a significant number of new properties in Beccles will be on sites of less than 10 dwellings. In addition, many properties will be renovated, either to upgrade poor quality stock or to provide enlarged properties. Whilst development must remain deliverable, such smaller developments should also seek to put in place measures which demonstrably maximise the efficiency of the built form.

POLICY BECC11: LOW ENERGY HOUSING DESIGN

New residential properties on sites of less than 10 dwellings, as well as renovation of existing properties (where a planning application is required) are expected to demonstrate that they have incorporated measures which actively maximise the energy efficiency of the buildings. This relates to the heating, cooling, lighting and waste management of the buildings as well as the opportunity for renewable energy generation on the property.
**Development sites within the Beccles settlement boundary**

8.11 Within the settlement boundary there are a number of sites which are considered likely to come forward for development during the plan period. Whilst these sites are not necessarily all available for development at the time of preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan – and are therefore not allocated – it is considered important to recognise their potential to provide a range of facilities that will benefit the community as part of mixed use development.

**Community actions: Health and wellbeing**

Beccles Town Council will actively work with owners of sites within the settlement boundary of Beccles to identify opportunities for community uses that could be incorporated as part of a mixed use development.
9 POLICIES MAP

- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Settlement Boundary
- Town Centre
- Beccles Quay (BECC3)
- Local Road Junctions (BECC5):
  a. Blyburgate/Piddens Lane
  b. Ashmans Road/Fredericks Road
  c. Norwich Road/Loddon Road
  d. Yarmouth Road/George Westwood Way
  e. Norwich Road/Yarmouth Road
  f. London Road/St Mary’s Road Junction
  g. Hungate/Blyburgate/Exchange Square

- Key Movement Routes (BECC5)
- Primary Shopping Frontages (BECC7)
- Broads Planning Authority
- Waveney District Planning Authority
- Conservation Area
- Listed Buildings
10 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ACTIONS AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

10.1 Table 11.1 provides a summary of the community actions identified in the Neighbourhood Plan.

10.2 Below is a summary of the particular priorities for investment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and funding from other sources:

Transport and movement

i. Any appropriate scheme coming forward to increase the volume and/or quality of car parking serving the town centre. This could include:

ii. Improvement of the environmental quality of Hungate car park - resurfacing (including the walkways into New Market), upgrading of the public toilets and provision of soft landscaping.


iv. A footpath underpass under the A146 adjacent to the Quay car park.

v. Any appropriate scheme coming forward to expand the pedestrianised area of the town centre.

vi. Creation of a community bus service.

vii. The creation of ‘bus gates’ into the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood.

Community facilities

i. A ‘Youth Space’ incorporating indoor and outdoor areas (as identified in policy BECC2)

ii. A dedicated indoor play facility (as identified in policy BECC2)

iii. A Multi-Use Games Area (as identified in policy BECC2)

iv. Provision of a green gym

v. Expansion of Beccles Library to provide greater opportunities for a range of community activities (as identified in policy BECC2)

vi. Tourism and leisure improvements at Beccles Quay.

vii. Well-lit footpaths.
Table 11.1: Priority actions to support the Beccles Neighbourhood Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Movement</td>
<td>Work with Suffolk County Council, as highway authority, on a scheme for restricting HGV’s from travelling through the town centre, unless access is required. This could be in conjunction with the use of physical measures to deter such vehicles from passing through the zone entry points. This would be an area-wide scheme encompassing adjacent villages on the A145 and extending as far as Bungay.</td>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>HGV movements</td>
<td>Work with Suffolk County Council on better signposting to encourage through traffic to use more appropriate routes than through the town centre. In particular:</td>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Traffic going north towards Norwich and west towards Diss will need to be signposted to encourage them to use the main road network around the town.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Traffic needing to access the town itself should be encouraged to use the most appropriate access point (e.g. for Tesco and the northern part of the town centre this should be around the main road network to the Morrison’s roundabout).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Signposting</td>
<td>Measures to reduce speeding will be introduced within the town centre and residential streets to promote quality of life and to enhance the environment of the town. Such schemes should, wherever possible, incorporate physical means to restrict speeds as these have been acknowledged as being more effective at being self-enforcing.</td>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speeding</td>
<td>Exploring the provision of one hour of free parking in public car parks in Beccles town centre.</td>
<td>Waveney District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public car parking</td>
<td>Review the management of public car parks in Beccles town centre and how this can be improved.</td>
<td>Waveney District Council</td>
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<td>Electric vehicles</td>
<td>Identify locations for the provision of electric vehicle recharging points (ideally fast charging points) in Beccles town centre, e.g. in public car parks and at the Quay.</td>
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<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technological improvements</td>
<td>Working with local businesses to encourage the use of artificial intelligence for transport and movement, which is expected to develop significantly over the plan period. Retraining affected staff will be an important part of the implementation of any such schemes.</td>
<td>Beccles Business Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traffic impact</td>
<td>Regular traffic counts will be undertaken on major routes into and out of Beccles to assess the highway and traffic implications of all new developments as they progress.</td>
<td>Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle idling</td>
<td>Develop a campaign to reduce vehicle idling</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedestrian movement in town centre</td>
<td>Develop a scheme for expanding the pedestrianised area of Beccles Town Centre. In particular, identify footways in Beccles Town Centre that would benefit from widening in order to improve pedestrian safety.</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Heritage</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation Area</td>
<td>Maintenance and appropriate management of the conservation area in the centre of Beccles in order to enhance its quality.</td>
<td>Waveney District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beccles Tower</td>
<td>Explore the potential for ground floor space of the Beccles Tower to be brought back into regular use as an exhibition space, ideally ‘twinned’ with Beccles Museum. Repair the stonework of Beccles Tower to restore it to its original condition. Following restoration, provide attractive landscaping around the Tower.</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Beccles Town Centre</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Town centre management</td>
<td>Assess the value of establishing a Town Centre Management Team.</td>
<td>Beccles Business Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street events</td>
<td>Encourage more street events, including more specialist markets, entertainers and street vendors.</td>
<td>Beccles Business Association</td>
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## Health and wellbeing

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Partners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive care</td>
<td>Work with all relevant stakeholders to better engage with the NHS regarding the provision of a comprehensive care setting to address the needs of the community.</td>
<td>Developers Suffolc County Council Social care providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community gardening</td>
<td>Continue programme of engaging residents in community gardening. Take forward proposals to develop a community orchard along Goose Green West. Identify and allocate specified public spaces for further community gardening projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lighting of recreational</td>
<td>Undertake assessment of recreational spaces and pathways that are appropriate locations for sensitive lighting to allow use after dark. Consult on any proposed spaces and determine which are appropriate to fund and deliver.</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council Suffolk Police</td>
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<td>spaces and pathways</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seating on the Common</td>
<td>Undertake assessment of appropriate locations for new seating on the Common. Then fund and deliver this.</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public waste bins</td>
<td>Undertake community survey to identify hotspots for waste bin provision.</td>
<td>Beccles Town Council</td>
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BECCLES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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