

Seafront and Waterfront

Purpose

To create a 21st century waterfront and seafront, to promote economic development and create more diversity in living accommodation.

Rationale and Evidence

National Policy

Paragraph 13 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) states that 'Neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies. Paragraph 28 states that 'non-strategic policies should be used ... to set out more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development' including consideration of infrastructure, community facilities, design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Paragraph 69 refers to neighbourhood plans allocating small and medium sized sites.

Local Policy

The Waveney Local Plan has allocated the following sites for development (See Plan **):

- WLP2.2 Power Park
- WLP2.3 Peto Square
- WLP2.4 Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (part of allocated site is in Lowestoft)
- WLP2.5 East of England Park (since adoption of the Local Plan this area is now known as Ness Park)
- WLP2.10 Inner Harbour Port Area

The Local Plan Policy WLP2.1 'Central and Coastal Lowestoft Regeneration' seeks to work with numerous agencies including Suffolk County Council, Lowestoft Town Council, Oulton Broad Parish Council, Associated British Ports, Environment Agency, Network Rail, Marine Management Organisation, the Broads Authority, to deliver regeneration projects in central and coastal Lowestoft.

Planning Rationale

The strategic importance of the allocated waterfront site, allocated by the Local Plan, is recognised by the Neighbourhood Plan. The neighbourhood plan seeks to shape development to ensure that it is sustainable, of high quality and appropriate to the waterfront location.

As far as physical growth is concerned, Lowestoft is landlocked. The border to the east is the North Sea. To the west and north any expansion is curtailed by the Norfolk Broads and the Carlton Marshes and the parishes of Oulton Broad and Oulton. The parishes of Carlton Colville and Gisleham border the south and south west. Land directly to the south of the town, between the ward of Pakefield and the parish of Kessingland is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Therefore, the prospects of Lowestoft expanding in physical area to accommodate any expansion in industry and population is limited. So it is important to make more efficient use of land within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The temptation for the strategic housing sites and other key sites may be to adopt a development-at-any-cost approach, including acceptance of poor design. This would be a grave error which, in the longer term, would be likely to lock the area into a cycle of underperformance. So robust application of the later design policies in conjunction with the site-specific design principles is crucial.

In order to tackle challenges of land reclamation, viability and low land value and to make development of the appropriate quality happen, any relaxation of affordable housing requirement for waterfront sites should only be considered where superior environmental performance can be achieved, reducing running costs and addressing climate change. The seafront and Ness Point sites have the potential for transformational development, as a magnet for tourists and visitors. These complement the site allocations made in the Local Plan, but with an emphasis on economic development.

It is clear that both the Local Authority and the local community have an aspiration to create a 21st century waterfront and seafront. The Pavilion is currently being refurbished, but redevelopment is likely in the medium-term. The surrounding Lowestoft Seafront Vision project area provide opportunities, identified by Wayne Hemingway on behalf of the council, to regenerate the south beach and to bring forward opportunities presented by the seafront. Ness Point provides similar opportunities.

SW1: Seafront Pavilion Site

1. The East Point Pavilion site on the south beach seafront is allocated for development to support tourism and the visitor economy. This includes performance, display, exhibition, recreation, and other tourism and visitor-related uses.
2. Development must comply with the following development principles:
 - a) The seafront and surrounding public realm must be overlooked by active frontages, provided through features like glazing and balconies;
 - b) Creative and aspirational architectural and landscape design should be employed to create a distinctive landmark and strong seafront identity;
 - c) The scheme must include a high-quality public realm, taking account of the proximity of the war memorial.
 - d) Higher buildings may be supported where they demonstrate exceptional design quality.



Interpretation and Guidance

This is a key site for a major visitor attraction, to attract visitors, tourists and people from the local and surrounding areas. The site could accommodate an art gallery, arts and innovation centre, events space, performance space, viewing tower and other similar uses.

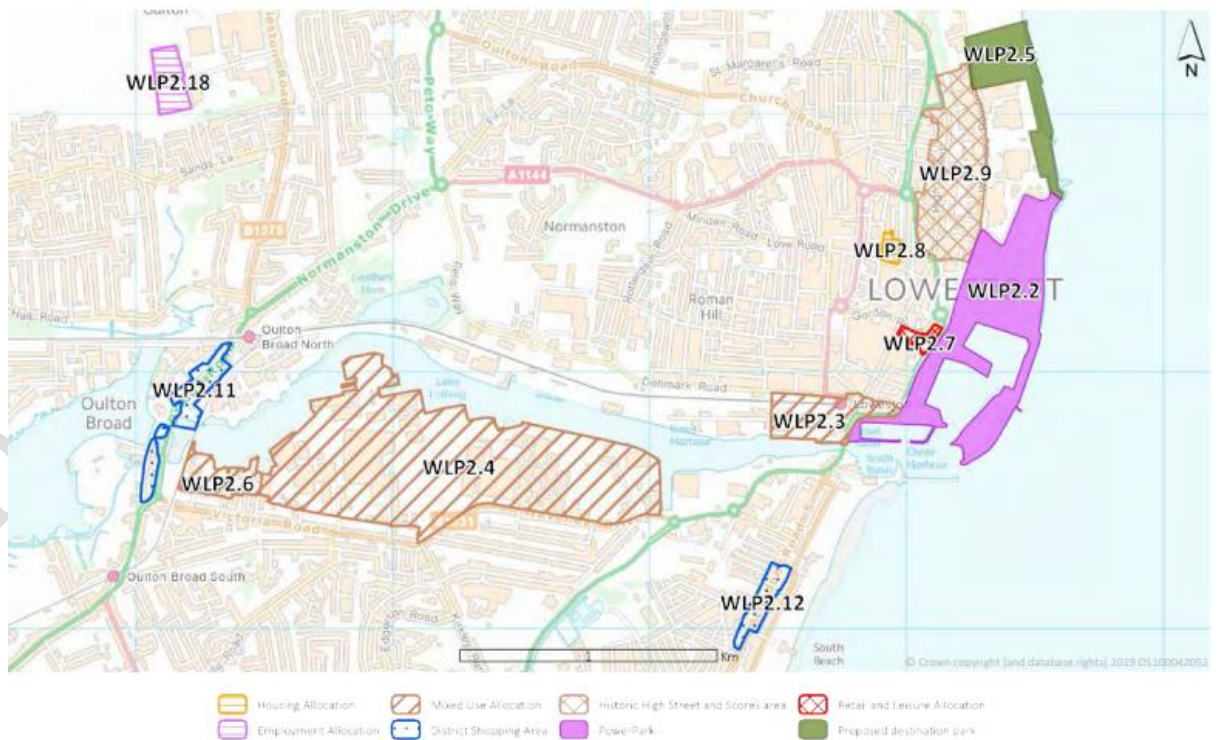
Independent design review is encouraged, in line with NPPF advice. Alternatively, the site would be an ideal subject for an architectural competition. The aim of the policy is to achieve exemplar design, to create a positive symbol of an area transforming.

Whereas the later Policy EP1 seeks to ensure that the scale of development complements surrounding townscape, this policy modifies that requirement, recognising the opportunity that this site presents in terms of landmark development. The scheme should provide a strong identity from all viewing angles, including the seafront and from the surrounding spaces.

Achievement of a suitable scheme may involve remodelling of the wider public realm and parking areas.

SW2: Seafront Ness Point

1. Development of a visitor centre will be supported within Ness Park (as identified below and in Waveney Local Plan WLP2.5).
2. Development must comply with the following development principles:
 - a) The seafront and surrounding public realm must be overlooked by active frontages, provided through features like glazing and balconies;
 - b) Creative and aspirational architectural and landscape design should be employed to create a distinctive landmark and strong seafront identity.
 - c) The scheme must include a high-quality public realm, taking account of the proximity of the Ness point.



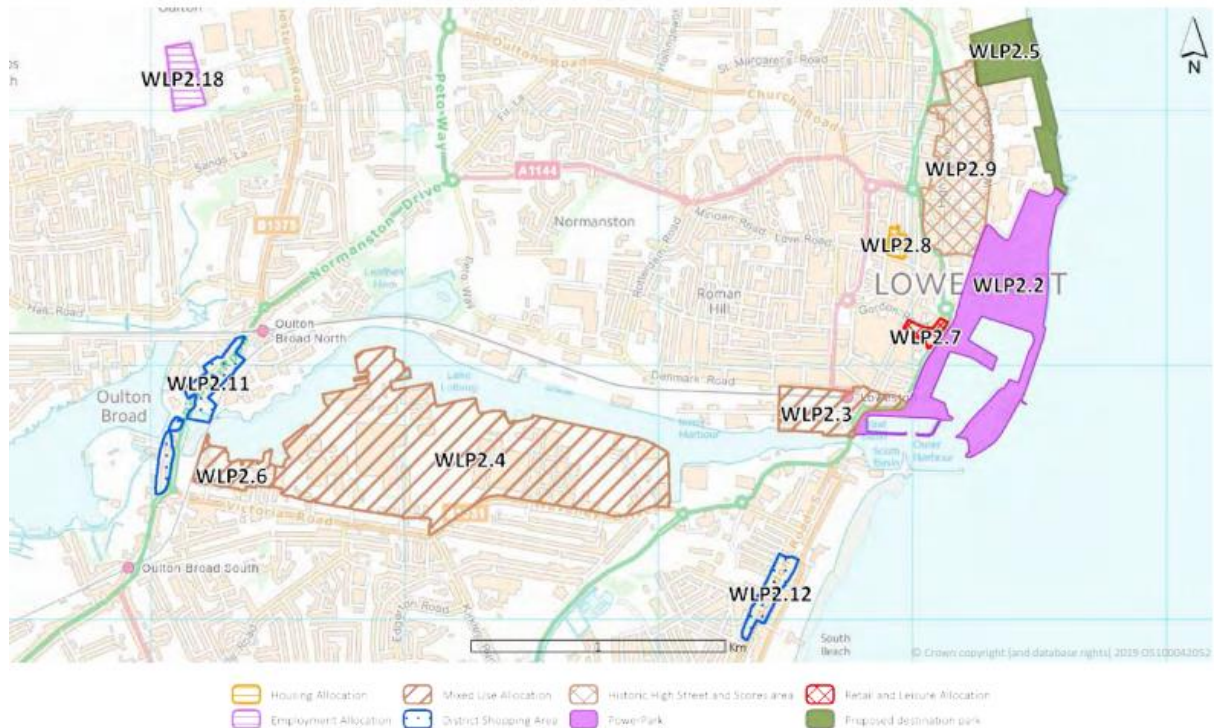
Interpretation and Guidance

The policy allows a visitor centre associated with Ness Point. This could include exhibition space, interpretation, café, shop and related facilities.

Independent design review is encouraged, in line with NPPF advice. The aim of the policy is to achieve exemplar design and regeneration.

SW3: Kirkley Waterfront Sites

- 1. Development of waterfront sites (Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP2.4 as above) must result in the creation of a high-quality urban waterfront, including residential and employment uses,**
- 2. Development must comply with the following development principles:**
 - a) There must be public access to the waterfront edge, provided through a combination of walkways, cycle ways, public spaces and high-quality landscape design;**
 - b) Spaces must be designed to encourage public and visitor use the of waterfront;**
 - c) The layout must prioritise pedestrian access to the waterfront edge and include clear sight-lines through the development;**
 - d) The waterfront must be overlooked by active frontages (windows, doors and balconies);**
 - e) Higher buildings may be supported on the waterfront, where they demonstrate exceptional design quality and superior environmental performance;**
 - f) For sites adjacent to and/or facing the waterfront, residential accommodation may be provided at upper levels, but not at ground floor level. Suitable uses at ground floor level would include a mix of employment and commercial uses, food and drink and/or community uses.**
 - g) Creative architectural design should be employed to create a strong waterfront identity.**
- 3. Affordable housing provision should take account of Policy LH2.**



Interpretation and Guidance

The policy sets a high level of expectation for development in general and in particular the waterfront edge, in recognition of the strategic importance of the sites.

Independent design review is encouraged, in line with NPPF advice. As with the seafront policy, the aim of this policy is to achieve exemplar design, to create a positive symbol of an area transforming. The layout and design of development should also meet the requirements of Policy ETC1.

The key to compliance with the policy is to create a new neighbourhood with an accessible and vibrant waterfront.