

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. Set out here are the Aldeburgh Society's comments.

### **Policies specifically relating to Aldeburgh's place in the consultation:**

In the plan Aldeburgh is classed a Market Town along with Framlingham, Saxmundham, Woodbridge and Leiston.

It is listed in the retail hierarchy at Retail Level 2, but is completely unlike any of the other Market towns and shares few of their common characteristics.

Aldeburgh has a decimated fishing industry, little or no other industry, existing or proposed and only primary education.

The hinterland it serves is half in the sea and a third over inland water, (the nearest bridge being Snape). Its main economic activity is tourism and tourism related. The shops and businesses cater mainly for the tourist trade, with convenience shops in the minority. The town also serves as an important destination for sailing and golf and a renowned centre for fashion and food.

Cultural activities form a large part of the Town's attraction, and it has a world-wide reputation for music in particular as the original home of the Aldeburgh Festival.

For the aforementioned reasons it is felt that Aldeburgh should have its own classification as a Destination Town.

Aldeburgh is, and will be very much affected by developments happening in the wider area. National infrastructure projects such as Sizewell C, offshore wind farms, onshore transmission and the A12 Energy Gateway will all impinge on Aldeburgh, both directly and indirectly. Their significant and potentially detrimental impact will be felt both in Aldeburgh itself and more widely in the AONB in which it sits.

The Aldeburgh Society is pleased to see that there will be a collaborative partnership approach to these major developments, in respect of protecting the AONB and in relation to housing and the provision of services more generally.

With respect to housing land allocation, the needs of Aldeburgh have been recognised as being met in respect of residential development mainly by infill and brownfield sites, with the exception being the Rose Hill Site (Care Home and 10 houses).

The Society agrees that the main needs in the Town are for affordable housing and housing for an ageing population. Aldeburgh has a high proportion of second homes and the effect of this on housing and services needs to be taken into account. It applauds the priorities given to parking, pedestrian access and safety, and maintaining the attractiveness and viability of the shopping (Central) Area.

### **Specific Policies:**

With three caveats the Society fully supports **SCLP 12.23 Strategy for Aldeburgh** which concentrates on Historic character, Services, Residential Development, (local need, affordable housing and an ageing population), Sensitive surroundings, Tourism, Flood Risk and Pedestrian connectivity .

With respect to the Garret Era Area, it is hoped that the statement will be strengthened to include no

lesser protection than that afforded by the former policy AP125 and that this Area will shortly be designated as a Conservation Area as is currently envisaged.

The Society calls on the Council to introduce an additional policy statement requiring the safeguarding of the public views from the Terrace and the Town Steps. An additional policy setting out future directions for the town's beach would also be welcome.

The proposed development at ROSE HILL is supported with the usual safeguards relating to the AONB and surrounding residential amenities and the conditions in SCLP 12.24 are supported.

The Society is pleased to see definitions and policies in the plan of Infill and garden development, Clusters and Annexes but maintains that a proper definition of affordable housing is long outstanding and that it should include, not only cost information, but characteristics of tenure as well.

Guidance with regard to Non Listed Heritage Assets, SCLP 11.4, is welcome, as is Design Quality, SCLP 11.1 and 2, Conservation Areas SCLP 11.5, the use of Design Panels, the production of a revised, updated Design Guide and the encouragement of the Quality of Place Awards.

The Society trusts that the policies relating to Aldeburgh in the SAASP or policies of equivalent strength will be carried forward in particular policies SSP 2,3,28,31,32, and 41.

It must be added that the existing and proposed Town Centre policy restricting the change of use of premises from shop/offices to residential accommodation, properties which inevitably end up on the holiday home market, should be more strictly adhered to in development management. At least 2 recent examples illuminate this problem.

A further important note is that on the policy map for Aldeburgh, phase 2 of the Brickyard development which appears to now be included within the settlement boundary should exclude the large tract of associated open space to make it quite clear where the actual boundary lies.

The immense amount of work and expertise put into this document is recognised.

The general, District-wide policies are supported with especial mention of Digital Infrastructure, Employment Protection, Coastal Management and Flood Protection, Landscape Quality Protection and Enhancement, Climate Change and related developments, Tourism, encouragement but control, Sustainability, no new allocations for Market Towns, 3.4, and Protection of the Countryside.

Yours faithfully

Peter Hill  
Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee  
The Aldeburgh Society