

NFGN Consultation Public Event - Felixstowe School

November 7, 2024

Q&A Answers

Theme 01 - Why is this project happening? What is the Housing need?

1.1 What is the Local Plan and who wrote it?

- The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) was prepared (up to submission for Examination) by the former Suffolk Coastal District Council, overseen by the Council's Local Plan Working Group.
- The Council's Planning Policy and Delivery team undertook the preparation of the Plan.
- Following Examination, the Plan was adopted in September 2020 by East Suffolk Council.
- It was informed by a detailed evidence base and public consultation, and subject to rigorous Examination undertaken by an independent Planning Inspector.
- Once adopted, it superseded the Suffolk Coastal Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2013) and the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan (2017).
- The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 identifies where growth should be located and how it should be delivered for the former Suffolk Coastal part of East Suffolk.
- East Suffolk Council are trying to ensure that the housing need as defined in the 2020 Local Plan can be met to ensure an adequate supply of housing to the region.
- The Plan sets out the strategic and non-strategic planning policies which the Council will use to determine planning applications across the former Suffolk Coastal area.
- Decisions must be made in line with the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

1.2 How was the Local Plan created?

- The key stages in developing the Local Plan are set out in summary below:
 - **August – October 2017** –Local Plan Issues and Options document was published for public consultation.
 - **July – September 2018** - First Draft Local Plan was published for public consultation, informed by the evidence base.

- **January – February 2019** - the Final Draft Local Plan (which was informed by consultation responses and revised evidence base) was published to invite representations in relation to soundness.
- **March 2019** – the Final Draft Local Plan was submitted for Examination by Suffolk Coastal District Council and the representations received along with the evidence base were considered by the independent Planning Inspector. The Examination, including Hearings and a consultation on Main Modifications, was held over a period of almost 18 months.
- **September 2020** – The Inspector’s report was received, finding the Local Plan ‘sound’ subject to making ‘Main Modifications’
- **September 2020** – The Local Plan was adopted by East Suffolk Council.

1.3 How was the Local Plan consulted on?

- The consultation period referred to in the question was held over ten weeks between May and July 2020 on the proposed ‘Main Modifications’ to the Local Plan, held as part of the Examination which was being conducted by the Planning Inspector.
- Details of the Main Modifications consultation are available on the council website:
<https://eastsoffolk.inconsult.uk/mainmodifications2020/>

The consultation at this stage was only on the proposed modifications, the Inspector was not inviting further comments on the Local Plan as a whole.

- The matters associated with undertaking a consultation during the period of restrictions was carefully considered by both the Inspector and by the Council, and relevant documents associated with this can be viewed on the Examination pages here:
<https://eastsoffolk.inconsult.uk/SuffolkCoastalExamination2019/viewContent?contentid=389011>
(see in particular documents J58 – J61, these are a letter from the Inspector, our response, an Equalities Impact Assessment, and a Temporary Suspension of Statement of Community Involvement). The letter, document J59, sets out the adjustments that were put in place.
- Three previous rounds of consultation on the Local Plan had been held (see below):
 - **August – October 2017** – Local Plan Issues and Options document was published for public consultation.

- **July – September 2018** - First Draft Local Plan was published for public consultation, informed by the evidence base.
 - **January – February 2019** - the Final Draft Local Plan (which was informed by consultation responses and revised evidence base) was published to invite representations in relation to soundness.
- In summary, the types of activity carried out for the consultations above included: posters; public drop ins; social media publicity; direct notifications to those on our mailing list (mailing list includes town and parish councils; consultation bodies; infrastructure providers; and businesses, residents, groups, organisations, landowners, and developers who were on the mailing list).
 - How the consultations were carried out and information on the responses received is set out in the Consultation Statements, available here:
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/adoption-documents-inspectors-reports-and-previous-stages/>
 And here for the Consultation Statement related to the Final Draft Local Plan consultation carried out in Jan-Feb 2019:
<https://eastsuffolk.inconsult.uk/SuffolkCoastalExamination2019/viewContent?contentid=389011>
 - Information related to the Main Modifications consultation, held as part of the Local Plan Examination, is available from the Examination pages here:
<https://eastsuffolk.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/SuffolkCoastalExamination2019/viewContent?contentid=389075> (see Main Modifications and Examination Document Library).
 - Further information on consultation results and the evidence base for the local plan can be found here:
 Evidence base: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/local-plan-evidence-base/>
 Stages of plan preparation (includes Consultation Statements):
<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/adoption-documents-inspectors-reports-and-previous-stages/>
 Examination documents and information (including information related to Main Modifications consultation):
<https://eastsuffolk.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/SuffolkCoastalExamination2019/viewContent?contentid=389075>
 - We would kindly suggest that any further follow up questions on the Local Plan or the process undertaken in its creation are directed directly to the Local Planning Authority.

1.4 How is the housing need calculated in the Local Plan?

- The housing need across the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan area was calculated using the National Planning Policy Framework's standard method. This involved using the published household projections and applying an uplift based upon house prices compared to earnings.
- This calculation determined that 9,756 new dwellings were required across the plan period (2018-2036) based on a housing need of 542 dwellings per year. The Local Plan provides a strategy for meeting its housing need including the proportion of housing expected in its settlements and direct allocations like the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood.

1.5 What does the Local Plan say about Felixstowe and North Felixstowe?

- Felixstowe, given its importance to the UK, its size, services, employment, and tourism make it a major centre (as defined by the local planning authority) and is thus expected to provide a greater proportion of the Local Plan growth than smaller settlements. Felixstowe is the largest town in the Local plan area and has significant opportunities for future economic growth supported by the Port of Felixstowe, associated industries, and tourism. Felixstowe is well served in respect of services and facilities, minimising the need to travel to access employment opportunities and essential services and facilities.
- The policy for the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood states that this new development will be delivered through a masterplan approach brought forward through landowner collaboration and community engagement. It also outlines what should be included in the masterplan.
- The allocation for the North Felixstowe site in the Local Plan is for Up to 1440 dwellings, providing a mix of housing types, sizes, and tenures (local plan allocation of 2000 less 560 already approved within Trelawny Place). This will include housing to meet the specialised housing needs of older, younger, and vulnerable people and self-build plots, and provision of affordable housing.
- The aim is for the masterplan is to comply with current policy and meet the provisions set out in the local plan. If this is achieved approx. 480 affordable homes will come forward as part of the masterplan. The mix of housing required is largely set out within the Local Plan.

- The allocation at North Felixstowe forms part of the planned housing pipeline in the region. We expect the build out of North Felixstowe to be a 10–15-year project.
- Most of the housing sites within the region which are currently being built – such as the Walton North Scheme - or currently in the planning system – such as Land North of Conway Close - are also allocated sites within the current or previous versions of the Local Plan.
- Some sites come forward that were not allocated within the Local Plan - these are known as windfall sites and the Local Plan provides for and anticipates some windfall development coming forward through its criteria-based policies (for example development within the existing built-up area).
- All allocated sites have been counted within the planned housing pipeline for the area covered by the Local Plan. Windfall sites when they are approved are also counted towards the future housing pipeline.

1.6 What would happen if the North Felixstowe site does not come forward?

- By not bringing forward the allocation there would likely be a shortfall in housing delivery in the district and this would encourage developers to put in more speculative applications in less sustainable locations being approved – often on appeal - to ensure housing is being delivered. This would mean more unplanned and uncoordinated development.

1.7 Housing need in Felixstowe:

- We know that as of August 2024 there are over 500 people, within Felixstowe, on bands A-E registered on Gateway to Homechoice (housing register scheme), of which over 200 people are banded A-C, which is considered high priority housing need. Gateway to Homechoice offers a portal for social housing landlords to advertise their vacant/or new built properties through (affordable rents).
- The North Felixstowe Masterplan should meet some of the demand for affordable housing in the area. We are aiming for a policy-compliant scheme which would bring forward 480 affordable homes.
- Through the engagement work we have heard from many people about how young families are struggling to get on the housing ladder as property prices continue to increase in the region. On the opposite end of the spectrum, we also know that people are

struggling to find appropriate housing when they are looking to downsize after their families have grown up and moved out of the family home.

- The North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood has the potential to provide a range of housing types to help many residents both existing and new.
- The exact mix of housing we are proposing in the masterplan follows policies in the local plan which is slightly weighted toward smaller homes for the reasons stated above.

1.8 Housing delivery in Felixstowe:

- We understand that there is concern that a number of homes on recently finished projects have remained unsold. This is a result of a slowdown in the housing market and house builders who are still in construction are adjusting to this by reducing their build out rates. Current forecasts to expect the housing market to pick up in 2025 and into 2026.
- This is not a reason to stop planning for the long-term housing pipeline at North Felixstowe.
- We are aware that there is concern within the local community about the amount of housing that is currently being built and proposed in the Felixstowe Region.
- We have pulled together housing completion data which is recorded by the Local Planning Authority to help explain what is currently happening in the region.
- The table below shows housing completion data since 2001. You will see that 1,694 homes have been built in Felixstowe and the Trimley's since 2001 or approx. 15% of Suffolk Coastal's overall total of 11,205. We have used data up to 2023 as we haven't published the 2024 data yet.
- Delivery in Felixstowe and the Trimley's has been relatively low since the turn of the millennium but has increased over the last few years due to a number of large sites coming forward such as Trelawny Place and North Walton.
- The table shows the completion of all new dwellings (includes new build, conversions, windfalls, and allocated sites etc) in the Parishes' of Felixstowe, Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary for each financial year since 2001/02 as well as providing the Suffolk Coastal total underneath. The data has been taken from here: [Housing Completions by Parish from 2001 | East Suffolk Council 1 \(arcgis.com\)](#)

- The three Parishes shown in the map below have a combined population of approx. 30,000 while the Suffolk Coastal Region has approx. 130,000 people. Therefore, Felixstowe and the Trimley's contain approximately 24% of the local plan areas population. This calculation shows that the number of housing completions over the past two decades is roughly commensurate with the regions proportion of Suffolk Coastal's overall population.



	2001-2006
Felixstowe and Trimley Villages Total	167
Suffolk Coastal Total	3,849
Percentage of Suffolk Coastal Total in Felixstowe and Trimley Villages	4%

	2006-2011
Felixstowe and Trimley Villages Total	171
Suffolk Coastal Total	2,866
Percentage of Suffolk Coastal Total in Felixstowe and Trimley Villages	6%

	2011-2016
Felixstowe and Trimley Villages Total	355
Suffolk Coastal Total	1,800
Percentage of Suffolk Coastal Total in Felixstowe and Trimley Villages	20%

	2016-2021
Felixstowe and Trimley Villages Total	681
Suffolk Coastal Total	2,889
Percentage of Suffolk Coastal Total in Felixstowe and Trimley Villages	24%

	2021-2023
Felixstowe and Trimley Villages Total	320
Suffolk Coastal Total	951
Percentage of Suffolk Coastal Total in Felixstowe and Trimley Villages	34%

1.9 When will the Local Plan be reviewed and how does the process work:

- Local Planning Authorities are required to review the policies in a Local Plan every five years to assess whether they need updating.
- The Local Plan is informed by robust evidence including forecasting. The plan includes a level of flexibility (for example buffers to the housing requirements) to reflect uncertainties that might arise during the plan period.
- Having an up-to-date Local Plan in place provides a level of certainty, and a plan-led approach, to the growth that will come forward. The requirement outlined above to review a Plan to determine whether it needs to be updated every five years, provides a mechanism for considering whether policies remain effective.
- It should also be noted that reviewing Local Plans is a lengthy process which takes several years. While this review process is undertaken the current adopted Local Plan would remain in place.
- The Council monitors the delivery of the Local Plans and reports on this each year through the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report.
- East Suffolk has two Local Plans, the Waveney Local Plan, and the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The Waveney Local Plan was adopted in March 2019, and the review assessment of that Plan was therefore undertaken in early 2024.
- The Council published a new Local Development Scheme in March 2024, and paragraph 2.6 explains that under the current planning system, the Council would need to review the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan to determine whether it needs to be updated before 23rd September 2025.
- The National Planning Practice Guidance on Plan-making sets out a list of factors that can be considered during the review, for example appeal performance of policies. The focus of an assessment is on the effectiveness of the policies, not solely on whether anything has changed.
- The Council has published an indicative timetable for the preparation of an East Suffolk Local Plan, commencing in 2025, as set out in its March 2024 Local Development Scheme. The indicative timetable is subject to review, pending the detail of forthcoming national plan-making reforms.

- A new Local Plan would need to plan for further housing growth, likely planning for around a further decade of growth (the current Local Plan is based on the period up to 2036).

Theme 02 – Strategic Aims and Decision Making

2.1 Strategic aims, decision making and what is being consulted on:

- The central aims of the NFGN project are strategic and have been previously consulted on at different points:
 - East Suffolk Council are trying to ensure that the housing need as defined in the 2020 Local Plan can be met to ensure an adequate supply of housing to the region. This is set out and defined in the Local Plan and was consulted on as part of the process of adoption.
 - East Suffolk Council are also trying to ensure long term sustainability for leisure provision in the region. Allocating a site for a new leisure centre within the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood was a direct response to feasibility and consultation work undertaken in 2017/18 – more in theme five.
- The reason we are consulting and engaging with the local community about this masterplan is because we want to understand how this project should come forward in order to benefit the whole region.
- East Suffolk Council Cabinet will have the final decision on whether the draft masterplan has met their standards and a planning application should be submitted. In order to do this the project team, need to adequately explain how the scheme will meet the requirements of the allocation while also benefiting both the existing and future residents of Felixstowe.
- If the application is submitted to the Local Planning Authority the public will be consulted again and there will be a further chance to input or object in a formal process.

2.2 Project Costs

- In September 2022 Full Council approved the decision to carry out whole site masterplanning and enable progression toward securing outline planning consent for the full North Felixstowe site allocation with the cost of this work up to £1,500,000

2.3 Engagement to date

- ESC is keen to ensure the local community are genuinely involved in the masterplanning of the site which is why from the start we have set out an ambitious public engagement strategy that goes above and beyond what your normal developer would undertake:
 - Hosting a project website with extensive Q&As and news feed to keep the community up to date with project progress.
 - Establish a demographically representative Citizens Panel which met five times to discuss topics in detail – many of the recommendations which have come out of that process can be seen on the August display boards.
 - Run workshops with specific community groups to better understand key topics:
 - Green Space Stewardship & Food Resilience
 - Healthy ageing
 - Meanwhile Uses
 - Youth Club collaging workshops – further youth engagement to come
 - Held three public events with the potential for a fourth prior to planning submission.
 - Publishing anonymous public survey data which ran alongside second public event.
 - Held an extraordinary meeting of the Community Partnership to consult with local groups to get a comprehensive understanding of the resources, relationships, and opportunities within the Felixstowe community.
 - Running regular briefings with Local Cllrs and our Stakeholder Forum to provide regular updates and discuss topics in detail.

2.4 What can be influenced:

- It is very difficult to precisely set out what can be affected by the community at this stage as we need to remember that not every decision is within our power to make:
 - We have two landowner partners in this project whom we are collaborating and not every decision is ours to make alone. Each landowner including ESC have their own sets of value and ambitions and there is a particular process of negotiation that we need to go through.

- We must comply with our own Local Plan policies and National Planning Policy.
- There are also a whole range of statutory consultees, such as sports England or Natural England or Anglian Water who will require certain standards and provision is met or else, we will simply not be able to attain permission at the end of this.
- Often certain priorities or provisions will come into conflict with others and it is through a process of iterative design development that enables us to come out at the end of the project with a scheme which as far as practical meets all the aspirations of the local community, landowners, statutory consultees as well as our own local planning authority.
- Within this process it is very difficult to set out a definitive list of precisely what the community can influence. The anonymous survey we ran alongside our event in August set out some topics which we were keen to understand the views of the local community which may be an example of some topics that can be influenced by the local community:
 - The best ways to connect back into the existing town.
 - How do we ensure Gulpher Road maintains it's feeling of being a country road and a designated Quite Lane?
 - The nature of the open space provision within the masterplan
 - How do we deal with Candlet Road – e.g., where do we need new crossings?
 - How the public rights of way, footpaths and cycleways are designed across the site?
 - What sort of community uses are needed in the local centres?
 - What are the most important sustainability issues to local people?

2.5 Community engagement going forward:

- It is important to remember we are not finished yet. What we have shown on the information boards from our August event is a first draft of the masterplan. We are now testing this in more detail with landowners, statutory consultees, and the local planning authority in order to ensure we meet all the strict requirements made of the masterplan.
- We continue to work with a range of community groups and individuals, utilising several different strategies and formats to

identify their priorities for new development in Felixstowe and to weave their recommendations into the draft masterplan.

- We would encourage everyone to please continue to engage with us through these processes to ensure we understand local priorities as there is an opportunity to make sure this project is really successful for the region.
- We are currently reviewing the project programme to include a fourth public event in 2025 to play back to the local community how the draft masterplan has been refined. A key focus at this event will be ensuring the community can clearly see that their key concerns have been understood and addressed in the draft proposal. Where it has not been possible to incorporate recommendations, we will clearly explain why.
- Following this final event, if East Suffolk Cabinet approve the decision to submit an outline planning application there will be a final round of statutory public consultation via the Local Planning Authority. Comments submitted will then be reviewed by the Local Planning Authority and they will be weighed up within the deliberation process.

Theme 03 – Eastward Ho, Public Open Space & the Natural Environment

3.1 What has been done regarding the petition:

- The petition to protect the East Ward Ho Playing Fields was debated by full council on Wed 24th of July – this can be viewed on the East Suffolk Council You Tube channel. The council concluded that as the project is currently actively seeking public opinion and input to inform the masterplan. The detail of the discussion will feed into the process of consideration and the outcome of the wider consultation.

3.2 Responding to key elements of the petition:

We do not feel that the council has ignored the residents the concerns captured in the petition. If we break down what the petition is asking for:

- The Grove Woodland – the key area of biodiversity on the site - has never been under threat of development. There is a legal covenant protecting the woodland and it would never be deemed acceptable to develop them. We are also working as far as practical to include all existing hedgerows and other habitats within the draft masterplan.

- The Playing Fields - from the start reducing development as much as practical on the existing playing fields has always been our priority and we continue to try and implement this aim. We are also committed to improving the changing facilities associated with the playing fields and relaying the grass pitches to improve drainage and usability.
- The other areas within the masterplan are principally agricultural land and while we understand that many will feel it is not appropriate to develop these areas due to food security this was a strategic decision made and consulted on by the local plan. It is worth noting that agricultural land generally has a very low ecological value due to the monocultures it creates and potentially the methods used to manage them.

3.3 Risks in stopping this project – i.e., aim of petition:

- By not bringing forward the allocation there would likely be a shortfall in housing delivery in the district and this would encourage developers to put in applications on unallocated sites which would mean more unplanned and uncoordinated development.
- We believe this would result in worse outcomes for Felixstowe in the long term.
- What we have put forward currently is a draft and will be refined as we work through the details with all statutory consultees, the LPA, and our landowner partners to ensure that what comes forward retains required space for recreation, leisure, sports, and wellbeing for the current community and ensuring we allow for future population growth.

3.4 Responding to the Local Plan policies:

- We have no intention to contravene any policies within the Local Plan or National Planning Policy.
- There is still a lot of detail to work through on almost all topics to ensure that we address all concerns in the final masterplan. It may appear in the current draft that certain elements have not been well designed or contravene policy. This is because there is still a long way to go on the detailed design work which will refine the masterplan and evidence compliance with policy.
- We have already had numerous meetings with the Local Planning Authority and others to ensure that - although there is more detail to work through - we are confident that we are responding in a compliant way.

- We are working with all statutory consultees to ensure that when we release our final draft masterplan for submission there will be no objections.

3.5 The Climate Crisis, Biodiversity, and the Natural Landscape

- We appreciate that many will state that building anything new is counterintuitive when we have declared a climate crisis. However, we are also in the middle of an acute housing crisis and these critical issues need to be balanced. We believe it is possible to design a new neighbourhood in a responsible way that does not damage the environment.
- Policy requires that we improve overall biodiversity on the site by 10% above the current baseline. We believe this is achievable and we are committed to improving on this where possible.
- We are aware that there is concern locally regarding existing natural assets on the site, principally the Grove Woodland and the project team are committed to protecting what is there.
- We are working hard to ensure all hedgerows and historic field boundaries are incorporated into the project to reduce the impact on the existing habitats.
- We cannot promise that there will be no impact on existing habitats, but we have appointed a range of consultants from ecology to hydrology to ensure that where impacts are unavoidable, we are mitigating these appropriately in other areas by providing additional habitats and space for the ecology to flourish.
- All factors need to be considered as part of the wider masterplan and future space for wildlife and recreation may look different, but the ambition is to improve the provision and access. The masterplanning process is a balancing act. The team are attempting to find the appropriate place in the scheme for the development itself while respecting the heritage and landscape on the site, to ensure it works with the natural goods and services.
- If the planning application is submitted for planning all the evidence that we have prepared regarding the natural landscapes and ecology will be publicly available. This will include the Environmental Impact Assessment.

3.6 Brownfield Sites and Developing on Farmland

- The decision to develop agricultural land goes back to the 2020 Local Plan allocation decision. There are always trade-offs in these types of decision, and we appreciate that not everyone will agree, but it is not a decision that we as a project team are directly responsible for.

- Prioritising brownfield sites first has been part of government policy for a number of years. During the creation of a local plan there is a period whereby landowners, developers, industry players such as planning consultants, and members of the public are invited to submit sites they believe are suitable for new housing projects. During this process the Local Planning Authority assess and shortlist sites for allocation. This is a rigorous process that involves a range of consultation with statutory consultees and others to assess both the suitability and viability of bringing forward a site.
- The Local Planning Authority needs to balance the available sites and their suitability against the housing need to ensure that there is an adequate pipeline of housing in the region. As there are not a great deal of brown field sites in Felixstowe of the scale or suitability required the Local Planning Authority has had to weigh up the decision to release agricultural land for development.
- A Sustainability Appraisal is undertaken as part of the Local Plan process. This reviewed all policies in the proposed plan and appraised them against an agreed set of 19 sustainability objectives, with Objective 8 referring to: To conserve and enhance soil and mineral resources. The appraisal did identify an impact on agricultural land, but this was considered in a wider balance of impacts.

3.7 Distribution of Public Open Space with the Draft Masterplan

- A number of people have concerns about the distribution of public open space within the masterplan, in particular the decision to omit a green buffer adjacent to existing properties along Links Avenue and Upperfield Drive – this was also a recommendation which came out of our Citizens Panel.
- The reason that this recommendation has not been endorsed so far is a decision which had to consider a several separate topics which we can try and explain.
- Having public open space directly on to frontages that do not provide passive surveillance i.e., rear fences is not deemed best practice for security reasons.
- The new access road onto the site from the Grove Road has to be financed through development, if there is no development either side it will become an issue for the viability of the scheme.
- The design team have thought carefully about how the entrance sequence onto the site would look and feel and it was felt that in order to create a convivial entrance sequence there needs to be some frontages onto the new access road.

- The proposal looks to develop a back-to-back typology with the rear gardens of Links Avenue backing on to rear gardens of new proposed properties. This is a common typology which can be seen throughout Felixstowe.
- The draft scheme is already over providing on open space. Given the community's very clear direction that Eastward Ho Playing Fields should be protected, a decision was taken on balance of all the above not to provide additional green buffer space to the rear of Links Avenue and Upperfield Drive.

Theme 04 – Infrastructure

4.1 What is in the allocation:

- The allocation for the North Felixstowe site in the Local Plan includes a Community Hub, which could comprise a range of potential uses such as a convenience store, shops, meeting places, education facilities, care facilities and medical facilities to be created in accessible locations.
- The aim is for the masterplan to meet the provisions set out in the local plan and work with and for the existing Felixstowe community.

4.2 How does infrastructure provision work:

- Some onsite and offsite infrastructure can be funded via Section 106 agreement or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- Certain services - such as health care and education - are planned by separate organisations such as the local Integrated Care Board or Suffolk County Council.
- The project team and the Local Planning Authority are working closely with these organisations to ensure they understand the expected growth in local population and are coordinating closely to ensure that they can make appropriate plans for their own services.
- Neither the project team nor the Local Planning Authority can compel these organisations to act in a certain way rather both parties liaise closely with them through infrastructure meetings and community infrastructure levy bids to ensure appropriate plans are made for the expected growth in local population.
- In some circumstances - such as the proposed primary school - new buildings will form part of their forward plans, in others offsite

upgrades – such as an extension to a GP practice - may be deemed more suitable for the increase in population.

- It is worth noting that these organisations have been consulted at every stage of the project from allocation in the local plan to today.

4.3 What is Section 106 and CIL and how will funding be spent?

- S106 agreements are legal agreement between a local planning authority and a developer or landowner. S106 agreements are part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. They are also known as planning obligations or developer contributions. They can be used for a range of purposes and these agreements are decided upon through a process of negotiation. These could include:
 - Providing affordable housing
 - Improving public open spaces
 - Improving play areas
 - Improving sports facilities and playing pitches
 - Improving offsite highways
 - Flood mitigation
- Section 106 monies are usually paid in instalments at key stages during the construction and/or occupation of a development.
- Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. It is set by the Local Planning Authority and the rate can vary between areas and sites. The reason for this is due to viability and the levels of infrastructure delivery required.
- The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website.
- The levy is collected by the 'collecting authority'. In the case of North Felixstowe this is East Suffolk Council.
- The list of projects that the council intends to fund through developer contributions will change and be updated as statutory infrastructure providers, such as Education, Health, Waste and Highways, prioritise delivery of infrastructure projects, particularly for areas that are experiencing new housing developments starting to be built. For more details, please visit the Council's website - [CIL spending » East Suffolk Council](#)

4.4 Education:

- Suffolk County Council Education Department are in charge of education provision within the region, and they have their own strategies for provision and make their own plans for how best to meet future growth in population.
- They review forecasts and monitor capacity annually, considering actual build out rates (for example the developer may have slowed to 30 houses a year) and birth rates (for example currently there is a dip in birth rates). The forecast data is then used to amend the plans to ensure that places are being delivered when needed.
- When considering programme, they try to ensure we time new school places so that there isn't a surplus that could compromise an existing school or a deficit meaning pupils don't have a school place.
- The primary school that is proposed within the draft masterplan will be required to serve the 1440 homes that we are being planned within the masterplan.
- How quickly it will be required depends on how quickly the homes are phased and built out and the above considerations.
- Although there are a number of primary schools located quite close to the masterplan area – SCC have not advised that there is the possibility to extend any of these.
- The reason new secondary school provision has not been proposed in the masterplan is because when the allocation was written there was believed to be enough capacity within the existing Felixstowe Secondary School.
- If this were to change at any point SCC would need to propose an appropriate strategy to ensure there is adequate provision forecasting future housing growth.

4.5 Traffic:

- Suffolk County Council Highways are the statutory body with responsibility for overseeing maintenance and future planning of the road network in Suffolk.
- They will ultimately decide if the increase in traffic is deemed acceptable and we continue to liaise closely with them.
- The project team is exploring different ways in which to manage the traffic to and from the development, to promote other ways of getting around, such as buses, walking and cycling. The ambition is to provide all residents with a range of mobility options to enable

them to make their own choice on how they would like to get around.

- With such a big site as the NFGN there are ways traffic can be gradually monitored throughout its construction that different ways to manage the traffic onto the local highway network can be managed.
- Within our current transport policies that govern how we develop out sites, sustainable transport must always be considered first, and if we can use money that would be spend on building new roads or creating new road space on a new bus service, then that is our priority. We will do everything we can to support, right from the beginning, new bus services for the town which connects the NFGN site to the town and vice versa.
- Discussions with Suffolk Highways will continue throughout the planning application process to determine the best course of action to manage the highway network appropriately.
- SCC have clear guidance on parking requirements for residential developments. Where possible we are looking to interrogate these to ensure that the draft masterplan includes suitable parking for all residents and visitors while at the same time providing equal opportunities for other transport modes.
- Gulpher Road is a designated SCC Quiet Lane which means it is a route where visitors and locals can enjoy the natural surroundings and use them for activities such as cycling, horse-riding, jogging and walking. However, the idea is not to restrict motor vehicles on these rural routes, but to encourage considerate use of the road, so they can be shared and enjoyed by all. We are working to ensure the character of Gulpher Road is retained and there will be no access onto the masterplan site from this route.
- We have discussed looking at different traffic calming measures on Gulpher Road as a number of residents have described an increase in traffic since adjacent developments have been built.
- Candlet Road is a key barrier to integrating the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood with the rest of Felixstowe and the Trimleys. We are looking carefully at how we address this. We need to ensure crossings are in the right location, particularly where key routes are identified to and from schools and other public facilities.
- We have looked at creating a new bridge, however due to the land required to make such a crossing possible there is not an obvious location. There is already an underpass where Gulpher Road crossed Candlet Road and this will be a key active travel route onto the site.

- The project team are also looking at extending the new separate walking and cycle route which currently runs along the north side of the road to the new entrance at Trelawny Place all the way to the new leisure centre site.

4.6 Healthcare:

- Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board work in close partnership with local government, healthcare, community and voluntary organisations and residents to plan and buy healthcare services in the region.
- The project team and the Local Planning Authority are working closely with the ICB to ensure they understand the expected growth in local population and are coordinating closely to ensure that they can make appropriate plans for their own services.
- A recent example of this at work is the announcement that:
 - Felixstowe's Haven Health Surgery is to receive more than £600,000 in funding towards investment in its facilities to help meet new demand in the town to include an additional five clinical rooms and help futureproof future service delivery.
 - Another £61,641.68 will fund the conversion of four rooms at the Grove Medical Centre into clinical accommodation, with a large upstairs office also divided to include a clinical room and telephone consultation area.
 - They are two of three surgeries in the district to benefit after East Suffolk Council allocated £1.5million to ensure that residents can access improved health facilities in areas of housing growth.
 - The allocations were included in a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spending Report, approved by Cabinet on September 3, and presented to Full Council on September 25, detailing how funding levied against new housing development is used to help deliver essential infrastructure.
 - The project, supported by Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB), will help offer up to 60 additional appointments per 1,000 patients per week and deliver more services in community settings.

4.7 Drainage:

- SCC Flood and Water Management (Lead Local Flood Authority) are the statutory body with responsibility to manage local flood risks

(i.e., risks of flooding from surface water, ground water and ordinary (smaller) watercourses).

- They will ultimately decide if the changes to drainage on the site are deemed acceptable and the project team have been consulting in detail on our strategies for surface water drainage on the site.

4.8 Utilities:

- The project team have been liaising with all utility's companies to ensure that the draft masterplan is in their forward plans for the region.
- This includes Anglian Water and UK Power Network. Currently we expect some upgrades to be required however nothing that would be described as abnormal.

Theme 05 – Leisure

5.1 Why is ESC proposing a new Leisure Centre:

- In 2015/16 ESC took the decision to continue to provide leisure services within the district. This is important because it is not a statutory service that the Council are required to provide, and many local authorities have taken a different approach.
- ESC believe it is important for the local community that good quality and affordable leisure facilities are available to everyone.
- In order to continue to provide these facilities it is fundamental that they are financially sustainable. This key aim has underpinned the Leisure Strategy over the last decade which has seen almost every leisure centre in the district refurbished and upgraded. Turning an overall annual deficit to at minimum a break-even position by increasing membership and appealing to a wider range of the community.
- In Felixstowe feasibility studies showed that even if the two centres were refurbished there are some fundamental issues with the current centres:
 - Firstly, it does not make sense to have two separate centres. It is inefficient and doubles up on management costs and the two Felixstowe facilities run at a significant deficit.
 - Secondly in order to make the provision sustainable the centres need to attract more members, and both current

centres are located on “inner town” locations which make them more difficult to reach from those traveling from further afield.

5.2 Have you investigated refurbishing the existing centres:

- Yes, refurbishment has been explored. Both existing buildings are coming to the end of their lifespan and while refurbishment could be undertaken to extend this, it wouldn't change the fundamental issues highlighted in the question above:
 - Neither current sites are not large enough to accommodate all the facilities required.
 - The issue with their “inner town” location would remain.
- In addition to this, if the current facilities were completely refurbished or demolished and rebuilt on the same site it would result in closures of a minimum of two years closure and, hence, no wet and dry leisure facility in the town for that period.

5.3 Why does the new leisure centre have to be located within North Felixstowe?

- The current site of Felixstowe Leisure Centre is very limited as, given its location, half of its catchment is the sea. It is also difficult to access for those coming from other areas to the north and west of the town as users have to cross the town centre to reach it.
- A new type of facility which would combine provision from both current centres and provide future proofing for population growth requires a large site – approx. 4 Ha with external pitches and parking. These sites are not often available.
- The new proposed location within the North Felixstowe masterplan should almost double the catchment area in terms of population which will drive increased membership numbers.
- The ten-to-twenty-minute drive time will open up memberships from Martlesham, East Ipswich and other places to help ensure that the new leisure centre is financially sustainable.
- The estimated membership numbers in the business plan for the new centre has been informed by a Latent Demand Report from The Leisure Database Company.

5.4 How will people get to the new Leisure Centre:

- We understand that some existing members/customers who can currently walk to use the Felixstowe Leisure Centre may not be able to walk to the proposed site, however others in the town will.
- The new location will allow many more users from other areas of Felixstowe and surrounding areas and with free car parking it will keep the cost of memberships and using the facilities down (at the existing centre in Felixstowe, visitors have to use the public pay and display car park).
- We are exploring several ways in how to connect the proposed leisure centre to the existing residential areas of Felixstowe. The project team is committed to adhering to national guidance in seeking active travel connections to and from the site and we are currently undertaking options to enhance/implement cycling and walking infrastructure to and from the LC from the town centre and along adjacent Roads.
- We are also exploring a bus service which would be for the town only moving people from area to area within the town and would seek to promote walking/cycling and a new bus service over building any more roads or hard infrastructure.
- With cycling and walking, our approach would be to re-purpose road space for cyclists and pedestrians without compromising the highway network for other road users. As we stated previously, we are still working through these options and aim to provide enhancements that cater for all road users.

5.5 How much will the new Leisure Centre Cost:

- The Council have an approved budget of £35m to build the proposed new leisure centre. Costs have increased significantly since the pandemic and the council is reviewing the plans and costs to ensure that the leisure centre is value for money and affordable.

5.6 What will happen to the existing leisure centre sites when the new leisure centre opens?

- Both leisure centre sites are allocated in the 2020 local plan for future redevelopment. These sites will only come forward once the new leisure centre has opened and until that point the existing centres will be maintained as per normal to ensure no drop in provision:
 - The Brackenbury Leisure Centre site as per policy SCLP12.5 has been allocated for a “residential development of approximately 80 dwellings”.

- The Felixstowe Leisure Centre on the seafront as per policy SCLP12.16 has been allocated for “a mix of uses which promote unique, modern and imaginative tourist, resort and visitor opportunities.”

5.7 When will the new Leisure Centre open?

- It is very difficult to give a clear estimate of when the new leisure centre might open at this point. There are still a number of agreements to get in place and decisions to be made before we can give an estimate with any certainty. However, current estimates are that it will be a four-year process from the point of submitting the outline planning application.