





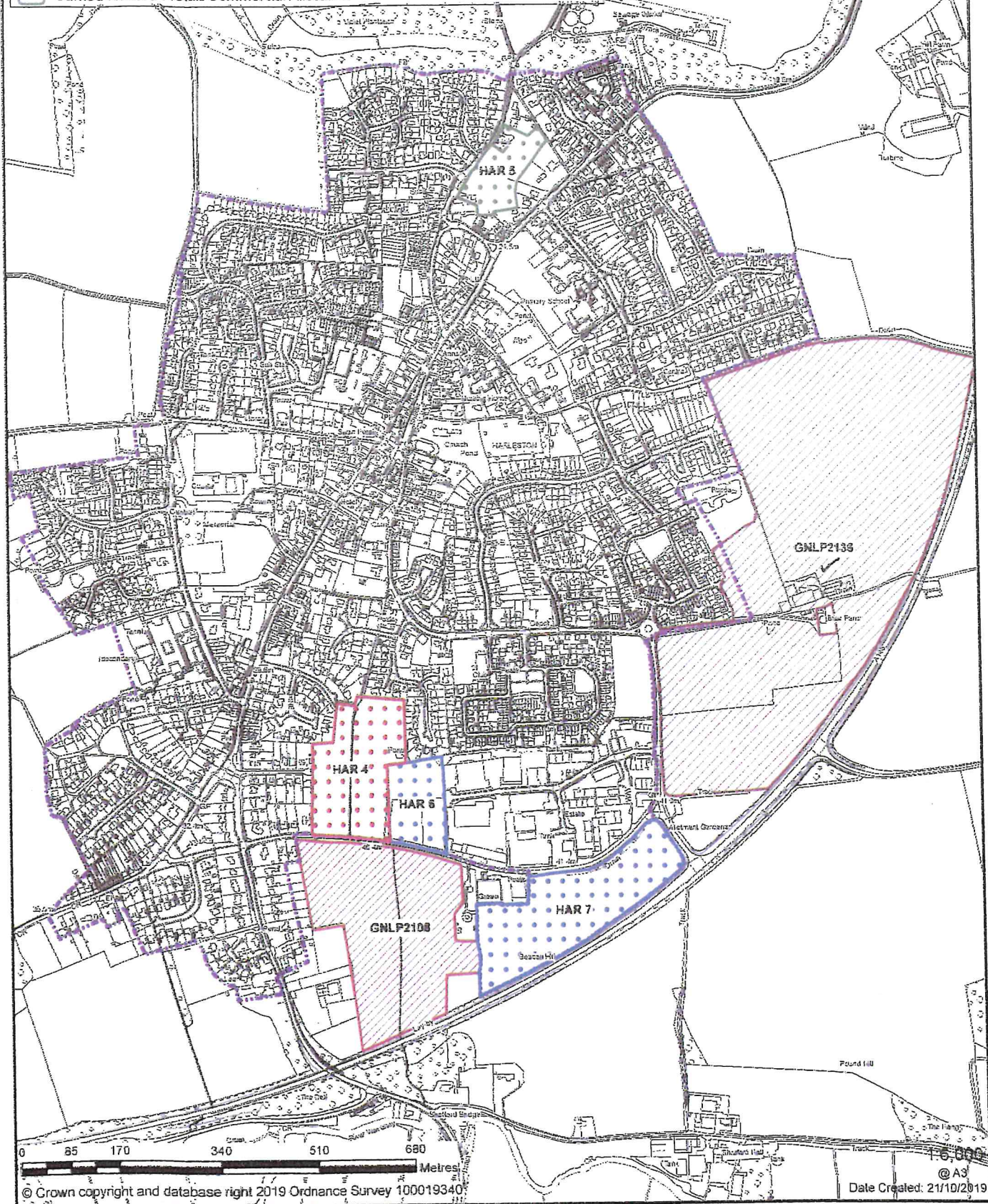


Redenhall with Harleston

Greater Norwich Local Plan
Settlement Map

-  Preferred Mixed Use Allocation
-  Preferred Housing Allocation
-  Carried forward Employment Allocation
-  Carried forward Housing Allocation
-  Carried forward Retail/Commercial Allocation
-  Existing Settlement Boundaries



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Redenhall with Harleston Town Council comments on the GNLP

We welcome the wide-ranging commitments included in the GNLP Policies: to Sustainable Growth, Sustainable Communities, Environmental Protection and Enhancements, Strategic Infrastructure, Homes and The Economy, and we trust that we can rely on these being applied to future housing developments. We would like to highlight some aspects of Harleston which councils and planners need to take into consideration.

Harleston

Harleston is identified as a Main Town in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. The town is compact in form and sits on a plateau between Starston Beck to the north and the River Waveney to the south. It is renowned for its strong sense of community and affinity among residents and for its diverse range of independent shops. It is the hub for a large number of surrounding villages, who visit for shopping, healthcare and community activities.

The main street, The Thoroughfare, contains most of the shops and is the area most populated by residents and visitors. The Town Council believe that future housing allocations for Harleston should take account of its individual character, its restricted configuration and the amount of growth which has taken place in recent years.

Housing growth

Harleston has experienced significant growth in the last two decades, from a population of 4,058 (2001 census), to 4,640 (2011 census) to an estimated 5,253 in 2018 (Norfolk Insight) which has already placed a strain on vital infrastructure. Planned allocations for Harleston are 173 houses brought forward plus 450 new homes, 623 in total. With a household size of 2.2 residents (per the census), this is an additional 1,371 residents bringing the total up to 6,624 (plus any increase in the last two years), an increase of 63% on the 2001 population.

The Town Council has discovered that an additional 90 dwellings are being proposed for site GNLP 2136, and there are also expected to be a planning application for 40 homes in Station Hill and 46 homes at Mendham Lane. If successful, these three additional developments would be another 176 houses adding a further 10% growth.

We feel this is too steep a growth rate given that the town already experiences infrastructure constraints. It is notable that the previous Joint Core Strategy envisaged 200—300 new homes in Harleston, described as “moderate”

Infrastructure

We concur with the statement in paragraph 308 that “the towns have a vital part to play in the rural economy” and we welcome the statement that “it is important that they grow at an appropriate scale, having regard to infrastructure “.

Objective 6 in the Joint Core Strategy stated “Wherever new homes or jobs are to be developed, existing supporting services must either be adequate or will be provided at the right stage of a new development”. We propose this objective should be adopted for the new GNLP.

Section 4 of the GNLP states that “Delivery of housing, jobs and infrastructure are interlinked and are mutually supportive”. We agree and feel there should be a review every 5 years to consider whether the quality of the infrastructure has materialised

as originally envisaged, and if not, these shortfalls should be addressed before any further growth is permitted.

Drainage

Existing drainage and sewerage infrastructure and surface water flooding are major problems in Harleston, particularly in the town centre, when heavy downpours produce flooding through The Thoroughfare to the north towards Redenhall Road. (Appendix 1). This is a long-standing issue due to antiquated drainages systems. It has been acknowledged in the past by South Norfolk Council that this is a problem which needed to be addressed, and we request that consideration should be given to identifying the reason for this problem and upgrading systems to solve this issue.

We welcome the commitment in GNLP Policy 2 (point 9) to ensuring development sites are required to minimise flood risk, including “reducing the causes and impacts of flooding, supporting a catchment approach to water management and using sustainable drainage”, and we assume that all allocated sites will need to show there will be no additional surface water run-off and that Sustainable Drainage Systems will be implemented for large developments, to the satisfaction of Anglian Water, the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Environment Agency and Flood management. More emphasis should be placed on the control of stormwater which is becoming an increasing issue with the proposed development of many new sites, especially here in the Waveney Valley.

Employment and Services

The Draft Strategy envisages 623 more homes in Harleston between 2018 and 2038 with 450 homes needing to be found by new allocations. The neighbouring town of Diss, with more than twice the population of Harleston, has been allocated 400 new homes and 743 total allocation. Existing plans would lead to, proportionately, higher growth in Harleston despite less employment and services being available.

Comparing the level of services currently available in Harleston, it is obvious that Diss has a greater range of services to offer e.g. Diss Train Station, three major supermarkets and because of the position of the town to the A140, it forms part of the main commuter corridor to Norwich and Ipswich.

There are also greater employment opportunities within Diss than in Harleston. Figures produced by Norfolk County Council Norfolk Market Town Centre Report 2019 (see appendix 2) shows a working population of 11,269 in Diss against 4,060 in Harleston, with an influx of people in Diss for employment whereas the figures for Harleston show people leaving the town to work elsewhere.

This underlines the need to create employment within Harleston, in order to avoid new residents travelling elsewhere for work, adding to pollution from cars.

To the south of Harleston is the main employment area which benefits from good access to the A143. Whilst there has been some take up of the existing employment allocations, there remains a need to have land available for employment development to retain the balance of uses within the town (see carried forward allocations HAR6 and HAR7).

Demographic of population and healthcare provision

It has been reported recently that South Norfolk District Council is now reviewing the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and Joint Inclusive Growth Strategy and some interesting facts have emerged.

- Population of Norfolk in 2016 – 891,000 projected to be 985,000 in 2036 – 10% increase
- Population of South Norfolk in 2016 – 133,000 projected to be 156,000 in 2036 – 18% increase
- 88% of the total population growth between 2016 and 2036 is in the over 65's category

The figures above indicate that there will be substantial growth in the over 65's category in South Norfolk and bearing that in mind, the resulting healthcare needs of that demographic need to be addressed as a matter of priority. Harleston has very limited public transport to get to hospitals which are some distance away.

- Ipswich Hospital is 33 miles from Harleston
- James Paget Hospital is 25 miles from Harleston
- Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital is 21 miles from Harleston

Local residents currently experience delays in getting medical tests and appointments through the local Bullock Fair GP surgery.

We welcome the commitment in GNLP Policy 4 that "delivery of new services is a priority for the plan. It provides benefits for new and existing communities and is essential to ensure growth is sustainable".

Unlike most market towns, Harleston does not have a health centre providing community facilities, as an addition to the GP surgery and a way of ameliorating the pressures on GPs. In a survey which proposed that the vacant Paddock Road Surgery building be used as a health hub, the proposal was backed by 99% of respondents. This would allow a more integrated model of care if there was a hub incorporating ancillary health services. The site was a doctor's surgery a number of years ago and has stood empty and unused since its closure. It cannot be used for any purpose other than health care, and its use as a health care hub would ensure residents of Harleston, new and existing, would have access to services locally rather than having to travel elsewhere by car, helping to protect the environment - the building is at a central location and near to the existing free car park.

Schools

The local primary academy caters for children from 3-11 years old, with their own on-site Nursery that offers 26 places in both morning and afternoon sessions. According to the website www.get-information-schoolservice.gov.uk last updated 30/11/2019 it stated that the number of pupils attending was 465 with the school capacity set at 472.

Pupils are admitted from Harleston and the surrounding villages including, Wortwell, Brockdish, Alburgh, Denton, Starston and Needham. Many children travel extensive distances from out of catchment areas in order to attend Harleston Primary.

According to the Harleston Information Plus website, (published date unknown) the Harleston Primary Academy consists of two main buildings, one with 7 classrooms and a hall and the other with 5 classrooms and a hall. There are also 4 mobile classrooms (2 used as year group classrooms, one as Special Needs classroom and one as an ICT Suite) three playgrounds and a large spacious playing field.

However, the academy's current prospectus, accessible via their website states that although there are still two main buildings, one now has 8 classes and a hall, with

the other having 8 classes and a hall. This shows the growth that the academy has already had to deal with before any future developments get the go ahead.

There are 3 year 1 classes according to the academy's prospectus which would indicate that when this group started within the academy, that they were over-subscribed.

The academy is governed by a federated local governing body, shared by Archbishop Sancroft High School (A Church of England Academy) but this is overseen by the St Benets MAT.

Policy 4 Strategic Infrastructure – Education s230 states that 'As a rule, if a new development is likely to generate enough children to fill a new school, Norfolk County Council asks developers for the full cost of building that school. A pro rata contribution of the full cost is requested if numbers of children are calculated to be less than 420, a two-form entry primary school

This Town Council feels that either another school needs to be constructed to accommodate the potential increase in pupils for the future or the current school needs to be extensively extended.

South Norfolk Council will be conducting a separate consultation on development for village clusters which will not be undertaken for some time, certainly the outcome of such a consultation will not be known for perhaps up to two years, so this will potentially have an impact on figures for Harleston schools as it is unknown what the potential number of developments in the surrounding villages will be or the number of extra pupils coming into Harleston from its hinterland, this applies not only to schools, but also impacts on the doctors surgery, dentists, and volume of traffic going through the town.

Transport

With an already greater than average over 65's population within Harleston, transport to access healthcare provision is vitally important. Many elderly residents either are unable to afford to run a vehicle or are incapable of driving which leads to social isolation and a dependency on local public transport or family if they have any locally. Currently there are only five daily bus services (Monday to Friday) from Harleston to Norwich City centre of which a further connecting bus needs to be accessed to reach the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital with a total travel time of around 2 hours. Alternatives to public transport are costly and take the form of Community Cars or taxis and can range from £20 to £85 return from Harleston to the N & N. The Town Council feel that the bus services should be radically improved so important services like clinics and hospitals can be accessed by all, not just the elderly.

GNLP2136 – Briar Farm

Although the Town Council has agreed in principal to this site for development, it disagrees with the HELAA conclusion that this site has access to bus services, the nearest bus stop is in the town centre and would be at least half a mile (805 metres) from this proposed site, unless a new bus route is proposed with a regular service via Mendham Lane (which has its own constraints) or Spirketts Lane.

The Town Council has had the opportunity to discuss with the developer of this proposed site their latest and updated version of their Vision Document. During the discussion, it became apparent that the number of proposed dwellings had changed radically from the number given on the GNLP documentation. It now appears that

potentially there could be 330 dwellings on the main site area with a further 90 care/assisted living dwellings to the south of the site, this brings the figure now to 420 dwellings and not 300 as stated on the GNLP paperwork.

Another change to the proposed site plan is that an additional vehicular access road has been added from Jays Green which again, is not on the original documentation. This needs further serious consideration given the constraints in that area especially where it joins School Lane which is the main pedestrian route to the primary school, with no pedestrian footpath at the top of School Lane. We suggest that the Highways Agency should survey Jay's Green Road and its junction with School Lane, which is a dangerous blind bend, and consider whether the road could be widened near the junction and a pavement constructed, in order to form a safe way for children to walk to school rather than be taken by car, given that there is already congestion at the school approaches.

Notwithstanding the comments above, the Town Council are generally supportive of the developer's vision document and the mix of housing that this will provide.

It has been noted that the developers would allocate some 21 acres, some 35% of the total site area, as Open Space. This could provide community facilities as well as public space for walks. However, planners must be mindful of the visual impact that such a large development would create from the A143 approaches to the town and also in relation to the existing housing adjoining the proposed development.

Developers have confirmed that they will ensure that their Masterplan complies with the SNDC Open Space Supplementary Planning Document, as well as the GNLP

Recommendation –Redenhall with Harleston Town Council support this preferred site for development and believe that the additional 120 housing units negates the requirement for any further development sites

GNLP 2108

The Joint Core Strategy envisaged 200—300 new homes in Harleston, which was described as “moderate”, however the number of dwellings being considered by the developers for the Briar Farm site alone are now around 420 dwellings (of which 300 homes are shown in the GNLP documentation). In the light of this, the Town Council feels that site GNLP2108 South of Spirketts Lane, should not be considered at this time, given all the concerns mentioned above regarding infrastructure constraints and restricted employment opportunities.

Recommendation – Redenhall with Harleston Town Council do not support development of GNLP 2108 until the infrastructure concerns have been fully addressed and employment and commercial opportunities (POLICIES HAR 6 and HAR 7) (Appendix 3 and 4) are realised.

Other sites

The Town Council agrees with the planners that the other sites on the “List of sites to be considered for residential/mixed use allocation” should be categorised as “Not reasonable alternatives”.

SUMMARY

The Town Council supports the preferred option in Policy 1, (Sustainable Growth Strategy). It is imperative that the policy commits the councils, within the GNLP, to review the plan five years after adoption

The Town Council supports the requirements for Developments set out in Policy 2 (Sustainable Communities). We also feel that developments should provide on-site green infrastructure with access to electric car and electric bicycle charging points.

The Town Council supports Policy 3 (Environmental Protection and Enhancement) and the measures detailed to conserve and enhance the natural environment including valued landscapes, biodiversity including priority habitats.

The Town Council supports Policy 4 (Strategic Infrastructure), especially the emphasis on “timely delivery”

The Town Council supports Policy 5 (Homes) and the stated requirements with regard to affordable homes, space standards and accessible housing

The Town Council supports Policy 6 (The Economy) and commends the intention to ensure sufficient employment land is allocated in accessible locations to meet identified need and provide for choice.

Regarding Policy 7 .2 (The Main Towns), our detailed comments as to new developments were made above. The Town Council feel that drainage, school capacity, healthcare provision and public transport should all be improved to an acceptable level before further development takes place.

Signed (Chairman of Redenhall with Harleston TC)

Date

Floods in The Thoroughfare, Harleston
Appendix 1





Norfolk County Council

Norfolk

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Market Town

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Centre Report

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4.8 Harleston



Harleston is a small market town, in South Norfolk, connected to surrounding towns and villages by the A143.

There is an assortment of independent shops and services which are used and supported by residents and visitors to the town.

Harleston is a popular destination for ramblers and cyclists, who want to explore the Waveney valley walks, cycle paths and the Angles Way a 93-mile path. The weekly market is also an attraction.

Key Figures

Parish Population (2016) - **4,206***

Estimated number of jobs (2011) - **1,718**

Parish work day population (2011) - **4,060**

Number of town centre business premises (2019) - **97**

Town centre business premise vacancy rate (2019) - **7.2% (7 units)**

The Waveney Valley Local Tourism Action Group is currently running a project to help promote businesses within the area.

Harleston has a variety of walking and cycling routes, including the National Cycle Network Route 30 and the Angles Way walk from Thetford to Great Yarmouth.

Harleston benefits from the [Harleston and District Business Forum](#) which supports businesses in Harleston and surrounding areas.

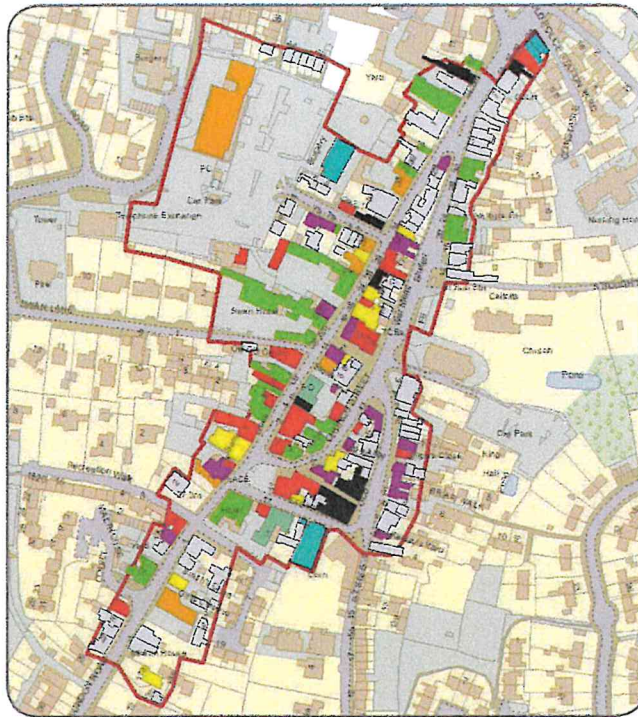


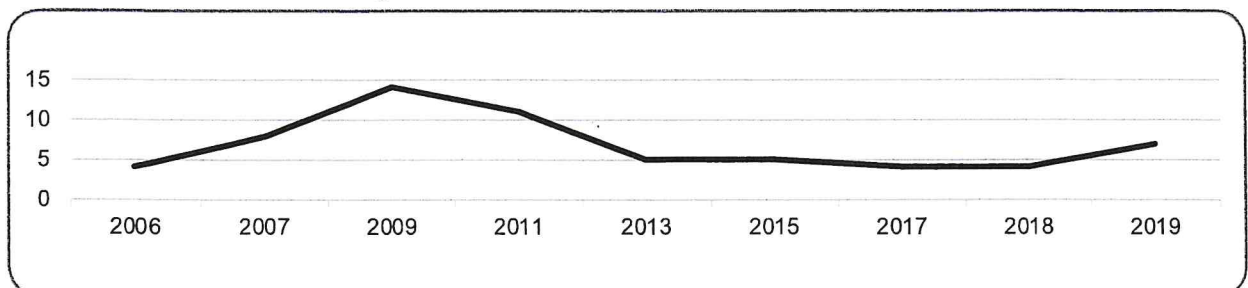
Fig.16 Unit Distribution in Harleston

- Convenience Retailer ■ Comparison Retailer ■ Leisure Service ■ Retail Service
- Financial and Business ■ Public Service ■ Mixed Use ■ Vacant

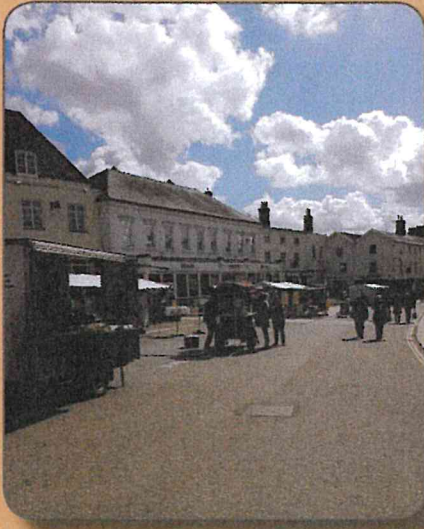
Key Findings from the 2019 Survey

- The largest proportion of units in Harleston are comparison retailers at 27%, see figure 16.
- There is also a concentration of leisure units at 22%, these units are pepper potted along the High Street.
- There is a large convenience retail unit to the north-west of High Street, see figure 16.
- The biggest increase since 2018 was found to be the increase in vacant units.
- Vacant units have increased by 3 units since 2018, the first increase since 2017.

Fig.17 Historical Number of Vacant Units



4.5 Diss



Diss is located in the Waveney Valley on the Norfolk/Suffolk border in South Norfolk. The town is connected by the A140, A1066 and regular rail services on the Norwich to London railway line.

Diss has a wide selection of shops ranging from small local businesses to large superstores, meaning it not only serves its residents but serves the surrounding rural catchment.

The town centre has a mixture of attractions including Georgian and Edwardian buildings, a public park, the Mere, auction rooms, the Diss Corn Hall Theatre, and a marketplace with a regular Friday market.

Key Figures

Parish Population (2016) - **8,279**

Estimated number of jobs (2011) - **3,617**

Parish work day population (2011) - **11,269**

Number of town centre business premises (2019) - **160**

Town centre business premise vacancy rate (2019) - **2.5% (4 units)**

The [Heritage Triangle Project](#) has been completed, the project has regenerated the Corn Hall and created a boardwalk link through the Mere.

Diss and District have commenced the [neighbourhood plan](#) process, the area includes: Diss, Roydon and Burston & Shrimpling in Norfolk; and Scole and Palgrave, Stuston and Brome & Oakley in Suffolk.

Diss is included in the first tranche of Norfolk County Council Market Town Network Improvement Strategies. Traffic surveys were carried out during summer 2018, the report is being drafted.

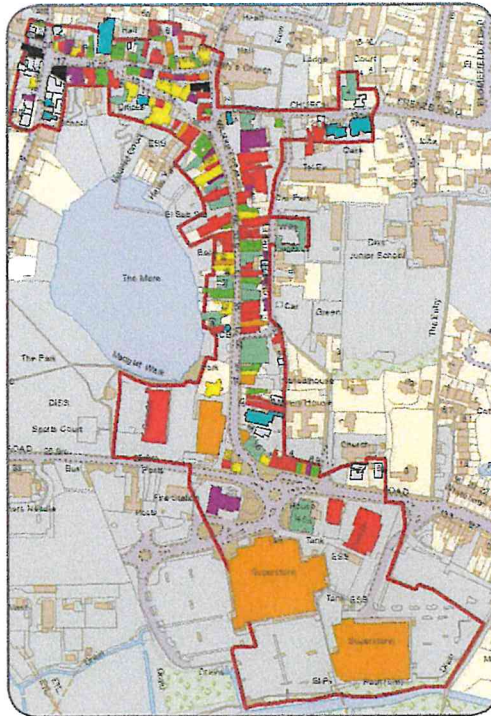


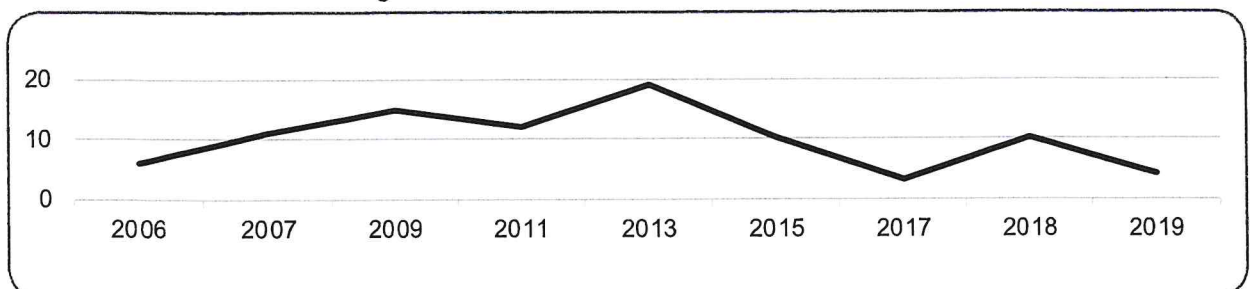
Fig.10 Unit Distribution in Diss

- Convenience Retailer ■ Comparison Retailer ■ Leisure Service ■ Retail Service
- Financial and Business ■ Public Service ■ Mixed Use ■ Vacant

Key Findings from the 2019 Survey

- The largest proportion of units are comparison retailers at 34%.
- There are 2 large convenience units are located to the south of the High Street.
- Leisure units are largely located north of the High Street, see figure 10.
- There is a concentration of vacant units to the north of the market town centre.
- The most considerable change in units in the town in 2018 was the decrease in vacant units.
- Vacant units reduced by 7 units since 2018.

Fig.11 Historical Number of Vacant Units



POLICY HAR 6 Land north of Spirketts Lane, Harleston (approx. 1.6 ha) is allocated for employment uses in Class B1/B2.

The development will be expected to address the following specific matters:

- Restrict employment uses to ensure that amenity impacts on adjacent housing are not unacceptable;
- Deliver pedestrian and cycleway links to Spirketts Lane and existing and proposed adjacent housing areas to the west;
- Provide enhanced landscape screening on western and northern boundaries of the site;
- Contribute towards green infrastructure protection or enhancement along the Waveney valley corridor;
- Deliver a suitable drainage strategy (SuDS where practicable);
- Wastewater infrastructure capacity must be confirmed prior to development taking place.

Notes

HAR 6: The site was allocated in 2015 as part of the current local plan but has not yet been developed. The principle of development is already accepted and it is expected that development will take place within the new local plan time-period. The site is re-allocated for employment/commercial development.

POLICY HAR 7 Land south of Spirketts Lane, Harleston (approx. 4 ha) is allocated for employment uses in class B1, B2 and B8.

The development will be expected to address the following specific matters:

- Provide road access from Spirketts Lane (rather than directly off the A143);
- Provide footway/cycleway links for the length of the Spirketts Lane site frontage to join to new footway/cycleway links from allocated housing site HAR 4;
- Provide enhanced planting along all site boundaries;
- Protect the mature tree belt along the Spirkett's Lane frontage;
- Contribute towards green infrastructure protection or enhancement along the Waveney valley corridor;
- Deliver a suitable drainage strategy (SuDS where practicable);
- Wastewater infrastructure capacity must be confirmed prior to development taking place;
- Historic Environment Service to be consulted to determine any need for archaeological surveys prior to development.

Notes

HAR 7: The site was allocated in 2015 as part of the current local plan but has not yet been developed. The principle of development is already accepted and it is expected that development will take place within the new local plan time-period. The site is re-allocated for employment/commercial development. The site is a key gateway location into to the town but is remote from residential dwellings and is therefore considered more appropriate for B2 and B8 development. A high quality B1 business park could also work well in this location. Due to its gateway location by the A143 junction this site will need to be designed carefully to provide an appropriate and attractive entrance to Harleston. It will be important to encourage sustainable travel modes to and from the site.