

WYMONDHAM

1. Settlement characteristics

The market town of Wymondham is the largest settlement in South Norfolk. It is located approximately nine miles south west of Norwich on the A11 corridor. The town has good road links to the city of Norwich and also has a railway station providing easy direct access to both Norwich and Cambridge.

The origins and importance of Wymondham as a market town are clearly reflected in its layout and fabric. The Market Place is the focal point of roads from all directions and it is one of the highest points in the town centre. The building of the Abbey after the Norman Conquest prevented westward development. From the town centre its towers are glimpsed occasionally, but nowhere does it dominate.

The central area is densely packed with historic buildings. Within the Conservation Area some 203 buildings are listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. The typical image of Wymondham is of the area around the Market Place and Market Cross. To fully appreciate the character of the town it is necessary to look behind the facades, and between and beyond the buildings on the street fronts. Long narrow 'burgage' plots running back from the street still clearly predominate in the central area. This encourages a distinction between 'front of house' and 'back stage'. This distinction extends to the streets themselves: between, on the one hand, 'front' streets such as Market Place, Market Street and Damgate Street, and, on the other hand, 'back' streets such as Chandlers Hill, Brewery Lane and Back Lane. Both types contribute in their own fashion to the attractive character of the town.

The best views of the town are from the north west and south west. From the north west the splendour of the Abbey lying in the river valley can be seen from some considerable distance. From the south west the Abbey is glimpsed through trees and hedges which line the approach roads. From the north, the gently rolling countryside rises up to Tuttle Lane with some notable tree groups around Downham. Views from the northern side of the town looking outwards are extensive, particularly towards the west. Further east, the countryside tends to become flatter and almost bleak in appearance. From the south east and east, the land is more fragmented and this tends to offer enclosed, restrictive views, especially around the Lizard. Land uses here are mixed and comprise disused gravel workings, heathland and wastetips. The nature of the landscape in this area helps to screen these less attractive elements. From Silfield Road and the new A11 bypass there are long distant views to the east and north and from the bypass westwards towards the town.

Policies and proposals (see Inset Maps 62A, 62B and 62C)

2. The Development Limit

The Development Limit for Wymondham has been drawn to encompass both existing development and proposed allocations. The western boundary has been drawn so as to prevent development in the Tiffey Valley, a river valley landscape protected under policy ENV 3. Within the Development Limit, further residential development will be provided for within the context of policy HOU 4. Outside the Development Limit, proposals for any new development will be assessed against policy ENV 8 and other more specific Local Plan policies as appropriate.

Inset Map 62A depicts the proposals for Wymondham as a whole whilst Inset Map 62B shows proposals within the central area. Inset Map 62C contains proposals for the outlying settlement of Spooner Row.

3. Housing

A small site is allocated for housing at Friarscroft Lane. This site may be particularly suited to elderly persons' housing because of its proximity to the town centre. Vehicular access will be required from the former A11 whilst footpath and cycle links will be needed to Friarscroft Lane and Russell Way. The whole site is relatively exposed to the A11 and slopes from Friarscroft Lane towards the River Tiffey in the south-west corner. It is within the Conservation Area and abuts an area at risk from flooding. The interesting roofscape of Chandlers Hill is in the background. Therefore a sympathetic design will be required.

Policy WYM 1: Housing allocation, Friarscroft Lane, Wymondham

An area of 0.82 hectares of land between Friarscroft Lane and the defined river valley is allocated for residential development. The developer of the site will be expected to provide for the following:

Affordable housing

- i) The provision of affordable housing to be phased across the development as a whole, subject to an up-to-date local needs survey.**

Children's playspace

- ii) On-site children's playspace of a minimum size of 400 sq.m.**

Community facilities

- ii) Funding for the extension or alteration of the Ketts Park community centre required to meet additional needs arising from the development.**

(Continued...)

(Policy WYM 1 continued)***Education facilities***

- iv) Financial contributions towards the alterations or extensions necessary to accommodate pupils from the development at the Wymondham High, Robert Kett Junior and Browick Road Infant schools, to be completed within the Plan period.

Fire hydrants

- v) 1 fire hydrant on-site, to be provided during the development of the site.

Footpath and cycle links

- vi) Convenient, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle links within the site and off-site to maximise access to the town centre, public transport and community facilities, via Friarscroft Lane, Russell Way and London Road, access points should not be joined to create a vehicular through route.

Library provision

- vii) Contributions towards the improvement of the local library service.

Other

- viii) Relocation of the existing allotments locally.
ix) A detailed levels survey and ground conditions survey.
x) A detailed tree survey.

The Norwich Area Local Plan allocated 20 hectares of land at Hart's Farm for residential development. The majority of the site is now complete with the remaining part allocated in this Plan. A development brief was adopted for the site in October 1988 and the majority of the developer requirements are contained in a legal agreement between the Council, the original landowners and the developers.

~~Policy WYM 2: Housing allocation, Harts Farm, Wymondham~~

~~An area of 1.73ha of land at Hart's Farm is allocated for residential development, subject to the development not being started before the beginning of 2001. The developer will be expected to provide:~~

~~*Children's playspace*~~

- ~~i) On-site children's play space of a minimum area of 1000 sq. m. plus 17.5 sq.m. for each additional dwelling over 50 with at least two items of play equipment.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy WYM 2 has been discontinued since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process, because the scheme has been completed.

Land adjacent to Preston Avenue is also allocated for residential development. The land is open and flat and capable of being developed at average density. The site is well screened to the western, northern and southern boundaries and any developer would be expected to retain and amplify the existing landscaping. The site contains a Bronze Age burial mound (Norfolk Landscape Archaeology reference 31470) and an archaeological investigation will be required as indicated in policy ENV 9.

~~Policy WYM 3: Housing allocation, London Road, Wymondham~~

~~An area of 2.06 of land at London Road is allocated for residential development, with access from London Road. The developer will be expected to provide for the following:~~

~~Adult / older children's open space~~

- ~~i) Adult / older children open space at a minimum level of 2000 sq. m. plus an extra 42.5 sq. m. for every unit over 50 either on site, or in an agreed location offsite or by way of an agreed equivalent financial contribution.~~**

~~Affordable housing~~

- ~~ii) Affordable housing to be phased across the development as a whole, subject to an up-to-date local needs survey.~~**

~~Bus facilities~~

- ~~iii) Improved waiting facilities (i.e. bus shelters) at nearest stops with good safe walking routes to the stops from the development.~~**

~~Children's playspace~~

- ~~iv) Onsite children's playspace of minimum 1000 sq. m. plus 17.5 sq. m. for each additional dwelling over 50, with at least two items of play equipment.~~**

~~Community facilities~~

- ~~v) Funding for the extension or alteration of the Ketts Park community centre required to meet additional needs arising from the development.~~**

~~Education facilities~~

- ~~iii) Financial contributions towards the alterations or extensions necessary to accommodate pupils from the development at the Wymondham High, Robert Kett Junior and Browick Road Infant schools, to be completed within the Plan period.~~**

(Continued...)

(Policy WYM 3 continued)***Fire hydrants***

- ~~vii) 1 fire hydrant on-site for every 50 dwellings or part thereof to be provided during the development of the site.~~

Library provision

- ~~viii) Contributions towards the improvement of the local library service.~~

Road access

- ~~ix) A new access into the site by means of a roundabout on the B1172 incorporating the Sutton Road junction. Site access to be a type 3 estate road (4.8m + 2x1.5m footways). The retention and widening to 2.5m of the existing public footpath crossing the site which links the mid point of Preston Avenue with London Road, and the provision of a combined footway / cycleway along London Road to Whitehorse Street to gain access to the town centre.~~
- ~~x) On-site road layout designed for 20m.p.h. vehicle speeds.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 3** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process, because the scheme has been completed.

Housing is also proposed on land between Silfield Road and Rightup Lane in the south east sector of the town. This area comprises former gravel workings and is located close to the town's railway station, which provides easy and convenient access to both Norwich and Cambridge.

Policy WYM 4: Housing allocation between Silfield Road and Rightup Lane, Wymondham

An area of 1.8 ha of land between Silfield Road and Rightup Lane is allocated for housing. The developer will be expected to provide for:

Adult/older children's open space

- i) Adult/older children open space at a minimum level of 2000 sq. m. plus an extra 42.5 sq. m. for every unit over 50, either adjacent to the development, as an extension to existing facilities, or by way of an agreed equivalent financial contribution.

Affordable housing

- ii) Affordable housing to be phased across the development as a whole, subject to an up-to-date local needs survey

(Continued...)

(Policy WYM 4 continued)***Children's playspace***

- iii) On-site children's playspace of a minimum size of 1000 sq. m. plus 17.5 sq. m. for each additional dwelling over 50, to include a minimum of three items of play equipment

Community facilities

- iv) Funding for the extension or alteration of the Ketts Park community centre required to meet additional needs arising from the development.

Educational facilities

- v) Financial contributions towards the alterations or extensions necessary to accommodate pupils from the development at the Wymondham High, Robert Kett Junior and Browick Road Infant schools, to be completed within the Plan period.

Fire hydrants

- vi) 1 fire hydrant on-site, to be provided during the development of the site.

Footpath and cycle links

- vii) Convenient, safe and attractive pedestrian and cycle links within the site and off-site to maximise such users' access to the village centre, public transport and community facilities including improved access to the railway station.
- viii) Improved footway provision on the south side of Rightup Lane from the site entrance to Silfield Road junction.
- ix) Footway access from Silfield Road via the existing access onto Silfield Road with improved footway provision on the south side of Silfield Road down to the Rightup Lane junction.

Library provision

- x) Contributions towards the improvement of the local library service.

Road access

- xi) Improvements to Silfield Road/Rightup Lane junction.

4. Employment

Wymondham is identified in policy N.3 of the 1999 Norfolk Structure Plan as a main strategic location for new employment development and the Structure Plan looks to the Local Plan to identify the major sites for this development. The Plan therefore allocates a number of sites for employment, both to help meet the strategic needs of the Norwich Area and to ensure a range of local employment opportunities for

residents of the town. This is important to reduce the need for Wymondham residents to commute to Norwich, and to help to maintain a balance between housing and employment in the town.

Although past take up rates of employment land have been slow it is important to maintain a range of sites of different sizes, in order to be able to attract those developments like the new police authority building at Hart's Farm which required a large single site. It is also important to maintain sites for a range of uses since pressure for development (as indicated by planning applications submitted) is split evenly between manufacturing, storage / warehousing and office uses.

Policy WYM 5 responds to these needs by allocating a number of sites in different parts of the town, varying in size from 0.18 to 18.36 hectares. The Council has a range of positive initiatives as described in its Economic Development Strategy to encourage and assist with the development of these sites, including publishing vacant sites on the sites and premises register (internet and paper copy) and promoting the district to new employers in conjunction with other agencies.

Sites i) and ii) are relatively remote from housing and have good access to the primary route network.

Sites iv) and vi) are limited mainly by their restricted size.

Site v) adjoins the sensitive environment of the Tiffey valley and would be best developed with a mixed use development of housing (max. 50% of site area) and B1 employment uses including offices and small workshops that would reflect the scale of the station buildings and which would complement local tourism and amenity interests. On the Cemetery Lane allocation a 5m wide strip will need to be left between the employment site and the River Tiffey for river maintenance purposes.

Policy WYM 5: Employment allocations in Wymondham

The following areas of land are allocated for employment uses:

- i) To the south-east of the former A11 trunk road adjacent to Ivygreen Villa (3.65 hectares)**
- ii) Adjoining the existing roundabout on the London Road at Harts Farm (18.36 hectares)**
- iii) Land adjoining the southern boundary of the Bridge industrial estate (1.3 hectares)**
- iv) Spur industrial estate (0.18 hectares)**
- v) Cemetery Lane (1.21 hectares)**
- vi) Stanleys Lane (0.7 hectares).**

5. Shopping

Wymondham essentially acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural area. It is a self contained market town, able to offer a range of shops selling both convenience and durable goods, although its proximity to Norwich inevitably means that many shoppers choose to travel there to obtain a wider variety.

The role of the town centre as a local shopping and service centre is an important aspect of the local economy of Wymondham. If this role is to be maintained, it will be necessary for the town to continue to offer the range of shops and services expected for a local centre and to adapt to meet the changing needs of shoppers and visitors to the town centre, and to meet the needs of future residents of the town.

~~Policy WYM 6: Viability of Wymondham as a shopping service centre~~

~~The District Council will seek to maintain the viability of the town as a shopping service centre, and encourage as wide a range of types of shops in the Central Business Area as possible.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 6** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process. Applicants should now instead refer to Local Plan policy SHO 4 (Town centres).

Recent pressures for development have included those for changes from retailing to non-retailing uses. It is important to define a Primary Shopping Area in the town centre where retail uses will be encouraged (see policies SHO 4 and SHO 5). Elsewhere in the defined Central Business Area, a wide range of retail services are appropriate. This area is defined as the Secondary Shopping Area in accordance with policy SHO 6.

In the case of upper floor premises in the defined Central Business Area the District Council will give favourable consideration to a wider range of retail and commercial uses subject to amenity and access considerations (see policy SHO 7).

6. Non-retail uses in the town centre

Whilst it is accepted that non-retail services play an important role in the functioning of Wymondham as a commercial centre, it is considered that their location in the Primary Shopping Area of the town should be carefully balanced to avoid reducing its attractiveness to shoppers. Outside of this designation each case would be considered on its merits.

~~Policy WYM 7: Non-retail uses in Market Place/Market Street, Wymondham~~

~~There will be a general presumption against proposals for the introduction of non-retail uses into existing ground floor shopping accommodation in the Market place and Market Street, unless special justification can be shown for locating in the position sought. In the event of planning permission being granted for a non-retail use, this will be subject to a condition limiting the occupancy and use of the property to the applicant. Elsewhere in the Central Business Area of the town, new developments, or change of use introducing non-shopping uses, will be considered on their merits.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 7** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process. Applicants should now instead refer to Local Plan policy SHO 5 (Mix of uses within Central Business Areas).

7. Transport and traffic circulation

a) Traffic circulation in the town centre

There are serious problems with traffic flows through the town centre in Wymondham. Market and Middleton Streets are particularly narrow and the need for deliveries to be made to businesses on these streets can cause congestion and highway problems. A number of measures have been undertaken to improve the situation. These include junction improvements to the Cock Street/Pople Street/Town Green junction, the Vicar Street/Town Green and Middleton Street junction and the Fairland Street/Avenue Road junction. These improvements together with traffic calming to Fairland Street, Market Place, Market Street, Town Green, Back Lane, Orchard Way, Middleton Street and Rothbury Road form part of an overall comprehensive traffic management and environmental improvement scheme for Wymondham town centre. The scheme has been implemented in conjunction with Norfolk County Council and has provided an opportunity to improve pedestrian footways in the town centre, and upgrade and enhance the Market Place.

Policy WYM 8: Rear servicing of commercial premises in the central area of Wymondham

The District Council will seek improvement to the rear servicing of commercial premises in the central area provided there is no adverse effect on the townscape and architectural quality of the central area.

b) Traffic circulation outside the town centre

The B1135 is an important cross country route and therefore will carry all classes of traffic including heavy goods vehicles.

The new A11 Bypass should assist in the reduction of heavy good vehicle congestion around Wymondham and improve traffic distribution generally. Existing industrial allocations will have good access to the new A11 bypass.

When considering locations for new residential and industrial development in Wymondham, the existing highway network and proposed improvements to it have been taken into account. The developers of all these sites will be required to meet the costs of all improvements before development commences.

c) Car parking

The Council intends to review the need for and distribution of, further car parking in the town in light of Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 13 "Transport" (March 2001) advice, prevailing economic conditions and local tourism strategy, with a view to incorporating suitable firm proposals in the next review of the Plan.

The provision of customer spaces in conjunction with commercial development in the central area is difficult in view of the limited available space and could be detrimental to its townscape quality. The provision of sufficient public car parking spaces adjacent to the main shopping area should meet both these considerations.

~~Policy WYM 9: Customer car parking associated with new commercial development in the Central Business Area of Wymondham~~

~~Customer car parking associated with new commercial development in the Central Business Area will normally be resisted, and in particular the parking of any cars on the forecourt of commercial premises.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 9** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process. Applicants should now instead refer to Local Plan policies IMP 6 (Visual impact of parked cars) and IMP 8 (Safe and free flow of traffic).

Traffic management measures such as waiting restrictions help to create a turnover of parking spaces particularly for shoppers, as well as easing traffic flow. Such measures are only effective if enforced.

d) Lorry parking

The District Council is aware of problems of noise nuisance associated with the existing lorry park at Ayton Road. There is pressure to turn this site over to car parking in association with the existing businesses in Ayton Road.

Policy WYM 10: Car and coach parking, Browick Road Recreation Ground, Wymondham

The District Council will provide an area for car parking and coach parking on the east side of the Browick Road Recreation Ground to serve the industrial estate once the Harts Farm lorry park is in operation.

The Harts Farm employment site is a large allocation in a strategic location. It is proposed to allocate part of the site for a lorry park of not less than 0.5 hectares to cater for the development and for the needs of Wymondham. Detailed requirements are included in the Harts Farm development brief. Early discussions with the Environment Agency about surface water drainage are recommended.

Policy WYM 11: Lorry and coach park on Harts Farm employment land, Wymondham

A site of not less than 0.5 hectares for a lorry park and coach park is allocated on the Harts Farm Employment Land. Developers will be expected to make financial contribution towards that element directly arising from the Harts Farm Employment Land.

The District recognises the strategic importance of Wymondham adjacent to the A11. If demand exists within the Plan period provision will be made at Harts Farm for a lorry park to serve the needs of industrial traffic in Wymondham.

e) Cycling and footpaths

The District Council is aware of the need to provide a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians (see the Movement chapter). Wymondham has been identified as an area of focus for the provisions of cycle routes for both recreation and journey to work trips.

Where new development is proposed it is important that cycleways and footpaths are provided, not just as an alternative means of travel within the new sites but also as a means to link them with existing facilities in the town (see policy TRA 3).

f) Rail services

Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 12 “Development Plans” (December 1999) requests local authorities to consider the potential of disused railway trackbeds for potential future transport schemes and to apply protective policies where justified. The Norfolk Rail Policy Group has examined the potential for such routes to be protected. It has recommended that the Fakenham-Wymondham line including the Kimberley-Wymondham section within the Plan Area, and the Forncett-Wymondham ex-rail route be protected from further development (see policy TRA 6).

8. Built environment

a) The Conservation Area

In a recent review of the boundaries of the Conservation Area around the town centre, two areas have been added. The first is a small site on the west side of Pople Street encompassed by a Victorian building which contributes to the street scene, well preserved Victorian terraces on Norwich Road and Kimberley Street, and the Victorian school buildings on Browick Road which house the First School. Secondly, an area between Friarscroft Lane and the former A11 has been added. This is important since it provides the setting for the properties on Chandlers Hill. This area includes the housing allocation in policy WYM 1.

An additional Conservation Area in the parish is based on The Lizard. This includes an area of artisans' cottages, which still exhibit features which give a clue to the former inhabitants' lifestyle. The surrounding area of The Lizard has retained its original form and character and is also encompassed within the Conservation Area. This site also has important nature conservation value. The Conservation Area Statement will examine the site in detail.

b) New buildings

One of the characteristics of Wymondham is its interesting roof line, punctuated by the Abbey towers. This is further emphasised by the subtle gradients and slopes in the central area, which can make otherwise 'low-key' buildings dominant from particular viewpoints; for example: the Brewery Lane/Chandlers Hill area seen from the former A11. It is necessary to be aware of this in the scale of new development.

Policy WYM 12: Impact of new buildings on vistas and views of Wymondham Abbey Towers

All new buildings will be required to take account of their impact on the skyline, existing vistas and views of the Abbey Towers and their relationship with adjoining buildings and the street scene.

Policy WYM 13: Protecting the setting of Wymondham Abbey

All new development in the following areas will need to ensure that the setting of the abbey is protected:

- i) River Tiffey Valley
- ii) Abbey Fields
- iii) Damgate
- iv) Church Street
- v) Becketswell.

Development which is detrimental to the setting of the Abbey will be refused.

9. Recreation**a) Public open space**

The Norwich Area Local Plan identified a need for some 10 to 15 hectares of open space, approximately 5 to 8 hectares of which would be required for playing fields. This was required to compensate for an existing shortfall of public open space, and to cater for anticipated population growth in the town. A number of sites were identified and these are re-allocated in this Plan.

The reduction in the allocation at The Lizard to 1 hectare recognises the importance of the area in conservation and wildlife terms. Although it represents a slight reduction in the formal public open space allocations it does not affect the availability of The Lizard as a whole as an area for informal recreation.

Policy WYM 14: Public open space allocations in Wymondham

The following sites are allocated for use as public open space:

- i) Harts Farm (15 hectares)
- ii) East of Silfield Road (2.4 hectares)
- iii) North east of Tuttle Lane adjacent to Rugby Club (5 hectares)
- iv) The Lizard (1 hectare).

b) Allotment provision

The site allocated for housing off Friarscroft Lane will displace the existing allotments (see policies WYM 1 and WYM 15). Provision should be made for an alternative area for allotments to be acquired if considered necessary by the Town Council.

Policy WYM 15: Provision of replacement allotments in Wymondham
The provision of replacement allotments will be supported if the Town Council consider that replacement is necessary.

c) Informal countryside recreation

An opportunity exists to define the Wymondham - Dereham rail line as a long distance footpath. The Mid-Norfolk Railway currently operate the line as a tourist attraction.

Policy WYM 16: Footpath route alongside disused Dereham to Wymondham rail line
A new footpath route will be identified and provided alongside the disused Dereham to Wymondham rail line.

d) Indoor recreation

Existing purpose built indoor facilities include the Dell Bowls Club, and various other halls that can be used for general leisure, recreation or social uses. The lack of major indoor recreational facilities has in part been remedied by initiatives such as the new purpose-built sports hall and swimming pool. The District Council will consider proposals for such facilities favourably subject to normal planning requirements. Grant aid may be available for such schemes.

10. Community facilities

a) Schools

The District Council is keen to see a new primary school at Harts Farm. This will avoid long journeys to school for the children who will live there. A site has been reserved for a school on the site and the developer will be expected to liaise in consultation with education providers to either provide a school at Harts Farm or to ensure capacity at existing schools if the need for a wholly new school cannot be justified.

~~Policy WYM 17: School provision at Harts Farm, Wymondham~~

~~The District Council will require the developer of the residential development at Harts Farm to make suitable school provision for the children generated by that development, in consultation with education providers.~~

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 17** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process, because the scheme has been completed.

b) Community halls

The provision of a community centre to serve the Harts Farm housing development was a requirement of the original development brief. At the time of writing the Ketts Park community centre has now been built on land adjacent to the development, (but for technical reasons the following policy must remain in the Plan).

~~Policy WYM 18: Community centre provision at Harts Farm, Wymondham~~

~~Provision will be made for a community centre to be built in connection with the new housing development proposed at Harts Farm.~~

(NB: This site has since been completed)

Attention: Please note that Local Plan policy **WYM 18** has been **discontinued** since 28th September 2007 as part of the 'saved policy' process, because the scheme has been completed.

11. Tourism

Wymondham has the potential to attract more visitors. The District Council considers that the attractions of Wymondham should be more widely publicised and facilities expanded to cater for visitors. The traffic management and environmental improvements carried out in the town should assist this aim. The Council has also grant aided the Mid-Norfolk Railway which serves the town