

Great Yarmouth Borough & Waveney District

Opportunity Sites: Final Report

Volume 4

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1 Introduction

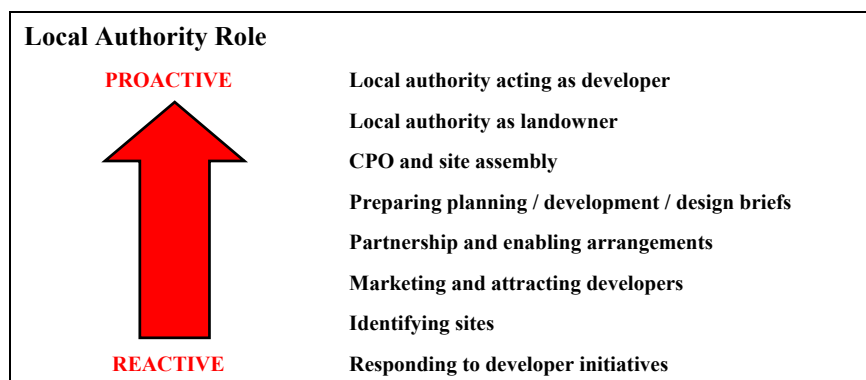
- 1.01 This fourth volume of our retail study provides a high level planning and commercial appraisal of the suitability, viability and availability of these potential opportunity sites, in accordance with the sequential approach. This analysis has been prepared in the context of the capacity and market demand assessments set out in **Volume 1**. It is important to state at the outset that we have not carried out detailed discussions with landowners, nor have we undertaken more detailed assessments, such as financial appraisals, land assembly options and market testing of the potential uses identified.
- 1.02 We therefore strongly advise that the recommendations set out in this volume should be subject to more detailed appraisals to test the options for development on the identified sites (and any other emerging opportunity sites) and provide advice on critical issues, such as delivery, funding and phasing of new development. Thereafter, the Council(s) will need to produce clear and flexible policy guidance on the planning, design and development of the opportunity sites, through tools such as Area Action Plans and/or planning and development briefs.
- 1.03 In consultation with Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney District Councils, we have examined six town centre opportunity sites that could have potential for mixed-use and/or retail-led development. These sites are listed in **Table 1.1**:

Great Yarmouth Borough Council	Waveney District Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Conge, Great Yarmouth• Stonecutters Way/Howard Street South, Great Yarmouth• Laundry Site, Blackwall Reach, Gorleston	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Triangle Market place and land to the north, High Street, Lowestoft• Britten Centre multi-storey car park, Lowestoft• Former Co-Op store, St Mary's Street, Bungay

2 ‘Making Development Happen’ - The Role of Local Authorities

2.01 Before we set out our broad appraisal of the opportunity sites, we believe it is important to highlight the main thrust of the Government’s advice in PPS6 on ‘making development happen’. In particular it sets out the important role that local authorities need to take in the planning and development of their centres, specifically through the sequential approach to site selection and land assembly.

2.02 PPS6 has clearly reinforced the Government’s “town centre first” message. It states that: “...development should be focussed in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them” (para.2.1). Most local authorities have, to varying degrees, adopted a combination of approaches to help attract and deliver new retail-led and mixed-use development in their town centres. As the figure shows, this has ranged from the reactive approach, essentially responding to developer initiatives, through to the more proactive approach of identifying and assembling sites, or even acting as the developer.



Source:BCSC (2004) ‘The Smaller Towns Report’, page 19

2.03 At the heart of the “town centres first” message is the sequential approach. Although this approach to site selection has created significant debate and controversy in retail planning, development and investment circles since it was first introduced into PPG6 (1996 edition), it has had a dramatic impact on the scale and location of new retail developments. It is the fundamental test for identifying opportunity sites for new development and requires that locations in existing centres, followed by edge-of-centre locations, are the first preference for new development, ahead of out-of-centre sites.

2.04 A past criticism of the sequential approach is that it has been largely negative, in that it did little to empower local authorities to assemble sites in town centres or edge-of-centre locations to help deliver new retail and mixed-use developments. The new PPS6 is now clearer in its advice and states that that local authorities should adopt a much more positive and proactive approach to planning for the future of all types of centres within their areas (para.2.15). This involves identifying town centre and edge-of-centre sites for development, and using key tools such as Area Action Plans, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and, where appropriate, preparing town centre strategies to address the key issues associated with the growth and management of centres (such as transport, land assembly and design).

2.05 PPS6 sets out guidelines for local authorities relating to the sequential approach to site selection and land assembly. Some of the more relevant advice is highlighted below:

- Local planning authorities should allocate sufficient sites to meet the identified need for at least the first five years from the adoption of their development plan documents, although for large town centre schemes a longer period may be appropriate to allow for site assembly (para.2.52).

- Sites should be capable of accommodating a range of business models (para.2.45). In planning terms the factors to be taken into account are: scale, format, car parking provision and the scope for disaggregation.
- When selecting and considering sites for allocation in the development plan document, local authorities should work closely with key stakeholders (para.2.30).
- In selecting suitable sites for development, the aim should be to locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre, to ensure that it fits into that centre and that it complements its role and function (para.2.41).
- In considering alternative sequential sites with similar locational characteristics, local planning authorities should “...give weight to those locations that best serve the needs of deprived areas” (para.2.44).
- Local authorities should have regard to whether the site is or will be accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport, as well as the impact on car use, traffic and congestion (para.2.49).
- The local planning authority should also take account of the degree to which other considerations, including specific local circumstances, may be material to the choice of appropriate locations for development. This may include physical regeneration, employment, economic growth and social inclusion issues (para.2.51).
- The distance thresholds used in applying the sequential approach and for searching for appropriate sites will differ for different types of development (PPS6: Annex A, Table 2). For example, edge-of-centre retail locations should be well connected to and within easy walking distance (i.e. up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area, taking into account local topography, barriers to movement (e.g. roads) and the attractiveness/safety of the route. All other main town centre uses should be within 300 metres of the town centre boundary, although office developments outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange in the urban area will be classified as edge-of-centre.
- Local planning authorities should consider setting an indicative upper limit for the scale of developments (usually defined in terms of gross floorspace) likely to be permissible in different types of centres (para.3.12). Developments above these limits should be directed to centres higher up the town centre hierarchy (para.2.42).
- Local planning authorities should, where appropriate, include policies and proposals in development plan documents for the phasing and release of development sites over the life of the plan to ensure that those sites in preferred locations within centres are developed ahead of less central locations (para.2.46).
- Where growth cannot be accommodated in identified existing centres, local planning authorities should plan for the extension of the primary shopping area if there is a need for additional retail provision or, where appropriate, plan for the extension of the town centre to accommodate other main town centre uses (para.2.5).
- Where extensions are proposed, these should be carefully integrated with the existing centre both in terms of design and to allow easy access on foot (para.2.6). Where larger developments or larger stores need to be accommodated, “...local planning authorities should seek to identify, designate and assemble larger sites adjoining the primary shopping area” (i.e. in edge of centre locations) (para.2.6).

- PPS6 also makes it clear that developers and operators should be able to demonstrate that they have been flexible about their proposed business models when applying the sequential approach for new planning applications (para.3.15). They are required to demonstrate that they have examined all potential development options to reduce the size of their proposals; tested options for more innovative layouts and store configurations; and looked at reducing/reconfiguring car parking areas. This ‘business model’ approach is intended to explore the potential of “...enabling the development to fit onto more central sites by reducing the footprint of the proposal” (para.3.16).
- 2.06 PPS6 also provides greater clarity with regard to the controversial and much debated issue of “disaggregation”. Although it states that it will “...not be sufficient for an applicant to claim merely the class of goods proposed to be sold cannot be sold from the town centre” (para.3.16), it does accept that local authorities will need to take into account evidence that demonstrates the retailer will end up providing a significantly reduced range of goods if its business model is operated from the sequentially preferable site. PPS6 adds that it is “...not the intention of this policy to seek the arbitrary sub-division of proposals. Rather it is to ensure that consideration is given as to whether there are elements which could reasonably and successfully be located on a separate sequentially preferable site or sites” (para.3.18). For example for retail park, leisure park or shopping centre proposals in edge or out-of-centre locations, the applicants should consider the degree to which the “constituent units within the proposal could be accommodated on more centrally located sites” (para.3.17).
- 2.07 Nevertheless, recent research for the National Retail Planning Forum¹ (NRPF) and our own research for the Department of Trade and Industry’s (Dti) Retail Strategy Group² conclude that site selection, land assembly and the delivery of new town centre development is becoming increasingly complex, expensive and time-consuming. We found, for example, that it takes on average eleven years and often longer to deliver town centre development from inception (site identification) to completion (opening). In turn this means that planning certainty, speed of delivery, managing of the total process and phasing the project to allow the town centre to function at all stages of the development cycle are even more critical to the success of the scheme.
- 2.08 There is also limited research evidence of local authorities assembling and marketing sites for new retail development in, or on the edge of secondary shopping centres and areas. This is not surprising, given the long-term national trend towards the location of new town centre retail development in the largest centres, and the low values in secondary shopping areas. It is also a reflection of the lack of suitable sites for substantial development in, or immediately adjacent to many secondary shopping centres and areas. The NRPF research concluded, for example, that most improvement in secondary shopping centres and areas has tended to be through cumulative small-scale changes over a longer period of time, rather than through large-scale development.
- 2.09 With these caveats in mind, the following sets out our high level planning and market appraisal of the potential for new retail-led and mixed-use development on the identified opportunity sites across Great Yarmouth Borough and Waveney District.

¹ National Retail Planning Forum (NRPF, 2004) ‘The Role and Vitality of Secondary Shopping – a New Direction’, London.

² DTZ Pieda Consulting (February 2004) ‘The Retail Development Process and Land Assembly’.

3 Opportunity Sites in Great Yarmouth Borough

3.01 This section sets out our planning and market appraisal of the potential for new retail-led and mixed-use development on the following opportunity sites identified by Great Yarmouth Borough Council:

- The Conge, Great Yarmouth;
- Stonecutters Way/Howard Street South, Great Yarmouth; and
- Laundry Site, Blackwall Reach, Gorleston.

3.02 To set the context of the opportunity sites we first provide a market commentary on Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. This focuses on the residential and commercial profile of the centres.

Market Commentary

3.03 Great Yarmouth has suffered from an unprecedented decline in heavy industry in recent years, which has left a noticeable void in the employment base of the town. Many parts of East Anglia have experienced good levels of economic growth within the last 5 years, but it would appear that Great Yarmouth has lagged behind in terms of competitiveness and variety which is reflected in the average local earnings capacity.

3.04 This has had a knock-on effect within the local housing market. House price growth has now plateaued. Affordability levels are an issue for first-time buyers in the local market. This, in turn, is impacting on the overall liquidity of the housing market in the area. Furthermore, the existing housing stock in Great Yarmouth town centre is below market standard, as a large proportion of the stock comprises converted terraced properties that have not been adequately maintained.

3.05 Great Yarmouth has been identified as a key area to benefit from further regeneration funding in the form of improving new housing provision and economic growth. This is because Great Yarmouth has one of the highest unemployment rates in England, of c.7.6% in the year ending in September 2005, compared to c.4.8% for Great Britain as a whole³. Historically, the housing market in Great Yarmouth has concentrated on providing a steady supply of second-hand stock in the form of terraced houses and converted flats from larger town houses, which are often of poorer quality and therefore not suitable for attracting new occupiers to the area.

3.06 The housing market in Great Yarmouth has been largely focussed on providing homes to meet the local demand for the family and retirement sector of the market. However, as first-time buyers continue to become priced out from other more established markets such as Norwich and its surrounding areas, there is the opportunity shift the demographics in Great Yarmouth.

3.07 The continued growth of this sector of the market will require developers to provide more high-density residential schemes, with supporting commercial uses, that will improve and diversify the local demographic structure of the town and improve its economic vitality in the long-term.

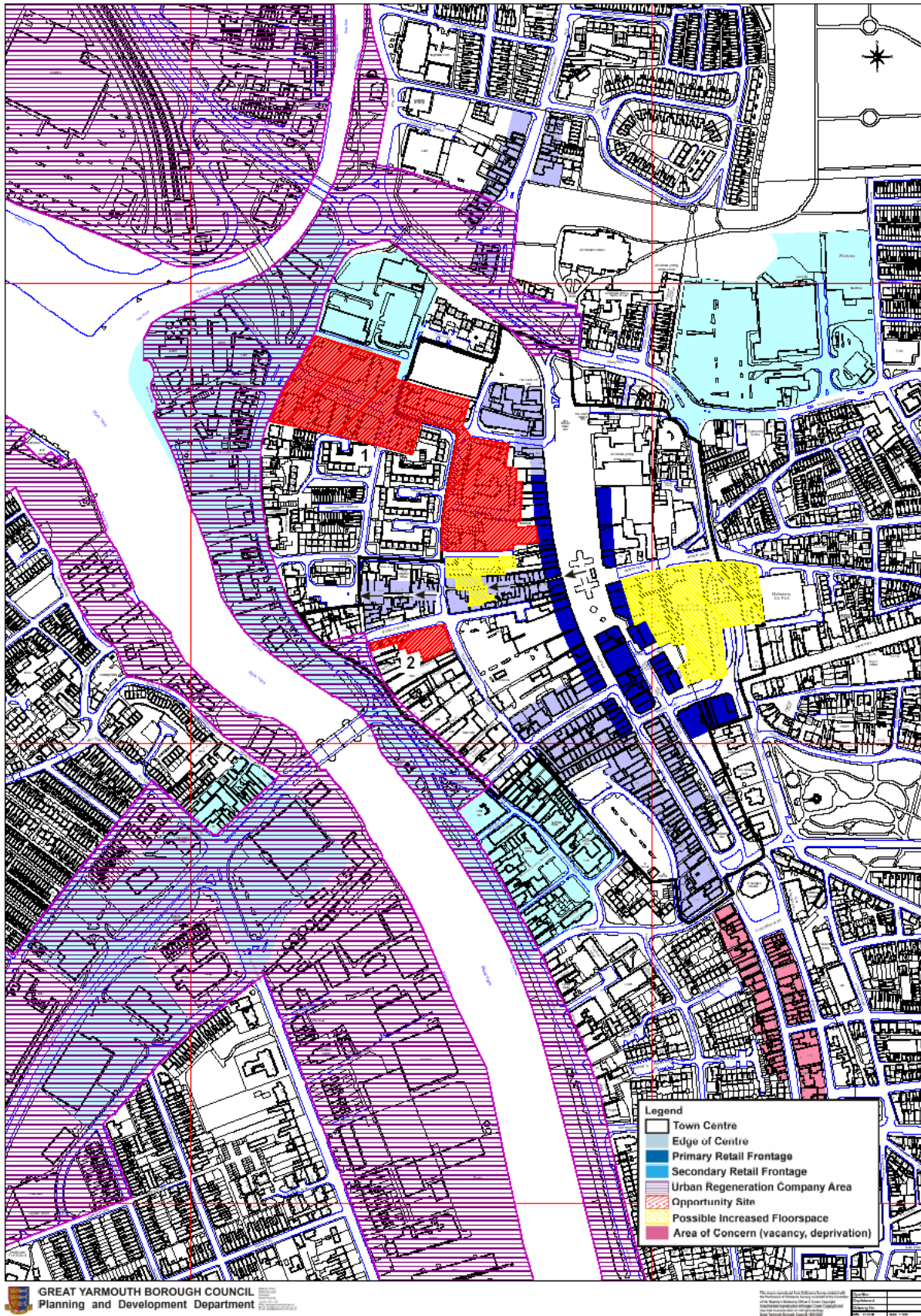
3.08 The Housing Needs Study for Great Yarmouth states, *'A recent survey of local estate agents found only 19% of all buyers were first-time buyers suggesting that with the rise in prices terraced accommodation is now being bought by other sectors of the market. When you combine this demand from other groups with the low incomes and out of area competition*

³ Source: Annual population survey (Oct 2004-Sep 2005), Office of National Statistics

this suggests many first-time buyers may now have to look at purchasing flats in an attempt to get a foot on the property ladder. However, this would be difficult as the Housing Needs Survey 2000 findings are that flats to purchase are in short supply'.

- 3.09 Average house prices in the Great Yarmouth conurbation are considered to be relatively affordable compared to more active development markets, such as Norwich. However, local income levels in Great Yarmouth are also a reflection of the average house price in the market. Therefore, new residential developments will be required to target and attract a new influx of occupiers from outside the Great Yarmouth area whilst also meeting local housing need.
- 3.10 The average house price in the Great Yarmouth area is estimated to be £127,104, with a range of between £68,861 for an apartment to £175,568 for a detached house. In addition to first-time buyers and owner occupiers seeking suitable properties, there is the opportunity to enhance the investment market, with many investors seeking buy to let opportunities to meet rental demand from potential purchasers outpriced from the market.
- 3.11 Market Place leading into the pedestrianised section of King Street (together with Market Gates shopping centre) is the town centre's prime retailing pitch. This commercial area is anchored by two department stores, Palmers and Co-op (both trading on three retail floors) and two variety store operators, Marks & Spencer (trading on two floors) and Woolworths. Other quality retailers include River Island, Superdrug, WH Smith, Mackays, Holland & Barrett, Clinton Cards, Dixons, JJB Sports, Specsavers, Argos, Burton and Evans. This spacious area also accommodates a large outdoor market.
- 3.12 Miller Developments and Centenary Investments have recently acquired the Market Gates shopping centre from the Halladale Group and its partner Anglo Irish UK Property Fund for £33.31 million. The price reflects a net initial yield of 5.35%. In terms of recent lettings within the scheme, Card Factory has taken 135 sq.m of floorspace on a 10-year lease at £4,000 per annum, F Hinds has taken c.100 sq.m on a 15-year lease at £42,000 per annum and Gamestation has taken c.130 sq.m at £55,000 a year. An application for planning permission has been submitted seeking to extend and reconfigure the shopping centre.
- 3.13 Like Great Yarmouth, Gorleston has also suffered from the decline in heavy industry in recent years. As set out in **Volume 1**, the town centre clearly trades in the shadow of Great Yarmouth and this is likely to be the case for the foreseeable future. There is a real lack of "quality" retailers in the centre and this reflects the fact the centre does not attract a large number of shoppers from a wide catchment. This point is reinforced by the dominance of fashion retailers at the lower end of the market (such as Peacocks and New Look), which occupy units in the primary shopping pitch.
- 3.14 Whilst there is no specific evidence to point to a picture of fragility or decline in Gorleston town centre (i.e. the low level of vacancy), the very limited list of national multiple retailers seeking representation and the centre's decline in the national rankings does not point to a vibrant and robust centre. We believe that Gorleston's future performance and prospects will depend upon its ability to meet local residents and tourists needs effectively. In this way, every opportunity should be taken to sustain or enhance the important food shopping function and to continually seek to improve its existing environment and townscape quality.
- 3.15 In the context of our assessment of the retail and leisure markets, as well as our understanding of the residential sector, the following sets out our broad appraisals of the suitability, viability and availability of the key opportunity sites for new development. **Figure 1.1** below sets out, in strategic terms, the location of the two opportunity sites in Great Yarmouth town centre.

Figure 1.1: Opportunity Sites in Great Yarmouth Town Centre



The Conge Great Yarmouth				
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This redevelopment opportunity comprises a number of ownerships in the area known as The Conge, situated between the western boundary of the main retail pitch and the North Quay business area to the west. The eastern section of the site falls within the town centre, with the western section extending towards the edge of the town centre. The opportunity site also extends to include the existing police station and Job Centre situated in Howards Street South, but excludes the relatively poor standard housing estate directly adjacent to the site. 			
Site Area:	Hectares:	2.48	Acres:	6.123
Proposed Uses:	Mixed-use incorporating bulky goods retailing, residential and community infrastructure.			
Image:				
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The area identified for redevelopment currently accommodates a number of operational commercial premises that provide a wide range of services. These would need to be relocated as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme. This could further provide the opportunity to facilitate a mixed-use scheme by incorporating some of the existing occupiers. The site area forms a strategic opportunity to enhance the retail offer in the town, whilst also providing suitable employment prospects that will form an economic base for further redevelopment in the immediate area. The main constraint in terms of delivering this opportunity is effective land assembly. The multiple ownership of the site would need to be collectively configured to ensure an effective and viable delivery mechanism could be implemented. 			
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This site provides the opportunity to create an important and strategic mixed-use development scheme extending westward from the town centre. The provision of larger retail units in the form of retail warehousing with other uses (possibly positioned above) such as residential and small-scale offices will complement the existing town centre retail provision. Larger retail 'box units' will contribute to a more sustainable form of the mixed-use development that will attract a higher proportion of visitors due to its close proximity to the town centre. Furthermore, the site is easily accessible from the main North Quay arterial route and would limit the relative impact of any increase in traffic. The inclusion of a residential element within any proposed scheme provides for a more sustainable form of development as it creates a greater critical mass within the immediate area. This can also improve the existing residential demographics within the immediate area by introducing a more balanced mix of tenures and occupiers. This, in turn, will aid vitality and viability of the town centre by increasing footfall. As there are a number of operators on the site at present, any proposed redevelopment should require the provision of community services. To a certain extent this could be satisfied with the re-provision of a police station and social services/job centre. Furthermore, the relocation of the existing light industrial tenants to alternative premises will provide the opportunity to ensure that they are more suitably accommodated. 			

Stonecutters Way/Howard Street South, Great Yarmouth			
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is situated to the west of the main retail pitch within Great Yarmouth town centre, at the corner of Stonecutter's Way and Howard Street South. The site occupies a prominent position and can be easily accessed from the north and east. Stonecutter's Way provides direct access onto North Quay (A12) to the west, which in turn forms part of the main ring road route within the town centre. The area immediately surrounding the site is a mixture of tertiary retail accommodation, mostly situated along the adjacent 'Rows'. There are a number of existing residential dwellings at first floor level, and above, within the adjoining and nearby buildings. Some comprise vacant and redundant retail accommodation. There is also an existing car park directly opposite the site. 		
Site Area:	Hectares:	0.16	Acres:
Proposed Uses:	Retail, residential		
Image:			
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site currently accommodates an operational NCP car park, which has been fenced for security reasons and also provides five advertising hoardings. Along Stonecutter's Way towards the western boundary of the site there are a number of small storage properties dating from the Victorian era that are in a relatively poor state of repair. The site provides a developable area of approximately 0.402 acres and is a relatively regular shape for redevelopment. 		
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the existing stock surrounding the property, we believe the opportunity exists to redevelop the property as a residential-led scheme that could accommodate ground floor commercial uses. The residential aspect of the scheme should include a mixture of predominately 1.5 and two bedroom apartments, to maintain a good level of affordability and attract the appropriate occupier profile. The target market should be either first-time buyers, who would provide vitality and activity to support and enhance the immediate area, or towards the retirees, who could benefit from the convenient location to local amenities, public transport, and possibly supporting services within the ground floor of the proposed development. A good degree of flexibility should be maintained in terms of the proposed uses for the ground floor commercial areas, to ensure that a sustainable and viable scheme is proposed. Suitable uses would include A1, A2 and A3 retail spaces and perhaps live/work (studio/workshop) accommodation if there is evidence of appropriate demand. 		

Laundry Site, Blackwall Reach, Gorleston			
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorleston is located to the south of Great Yarmouth and historically it has provided docking facilities for the distribution of sea-borne cargo to the area. • Gorleston town centre has a number of retail operators along the main High Street, with a mixture of national multiples at the lower end of the market, independent traders and professional service providers. It is an edge-of-centre site located towards the waterfront area. • It is situated adjacent to an existing Somerfield supermarket and adjoining car park, with residential units to the rear along Blackwall Reach. 		
Site Area:	Hectares:	0.29	Acres:
Proposed Uses:	Retail, residential		
Image:			
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site comprises of warehouses and associated parking, and a disused laundry. It forms a regular shape, and benefits from a good level of passing trade due to its prominent position adjacent to the Somerfield supermarket. • The site is level and can be easily accessed from both Baker Street and Blackwall Reach, with the opportunity to extend the existing residential frontage along Blackwall Reach. 		
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe that the site would be most suitable for a mixed-use development, with ground floor retail units and residential uses above. • Retail accommodation at the ground floor levels would benefit from passing trade to the neighbouring Somerfield supermarket, and would also contribute to improving the linkages with the main retail pitch within the town centre. • There is a risk of potential contamination at the site due to the processes and works undertaken in the past. • A good degree of flexibility should be maintained in terms of the proposed uses for the ground floor commercial areas, to ensure that a sustainable and viable scheme is proposed. Suitable uses would include A1, A2 and A3 retail uses and perhaps live/work (studio/workshop) accommodation if there is evidence of appropriate demand at the time of procurement. • The site falls under a small number of potential ownerships. This will assist in an easier land assembly procurement process and thereby facilitate a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. 		

4 Opportunity Sites in Waveney District

4.01 This section sets out our planning and market appraisal of the potential for new retail-led and mixed-use development on the following opportunity sites identified by Waveney District Council:

- Triangle Market place and Land to the north, High Street, Lowestoft;
- Britten Centre Multi-Storey Car Park, Lowestoft;
- Former Co-Op Store, St Mary's Street, Bungay.

4.02 To set the context of the opportunity sites, we first provide a market commentary on Lowestoft. This focuses on the residential and commercial profile of the centre.

Market Commentary

4.03 Lowestoft has experienced a similar economic decline over the last decade to that of Great Yarmouth, with many of the town's key industries being scaled back or ceasing operation. This has had a detrimental impact on the town's economic base, which in turn has limited overall growth prospects in comparison to other centres in the Eastern region. Various regeneration strategies seek to address this decline and establish a more robust and flexible employment market, that will form the grounding for expansion within the property and retail markets in the town.

4.04 The existing housing stock in Lowestoft town centre has suffered from being below market standard. A large proportion of the stock comprises of converted terraced properties that have not been adequately maintained.

4.05 Average house prices in the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft areas are considered to be relatively affordable when compared to other more active development markets such as Norwich. However, local income levels in Lowestoft are also a reflection of the average house price in the market. Therefore, new residential developments will potentially attract new occupiers from outside the Lowestoft area.

4.06 The average house price in the Lowestoft area is estimated to be £135,074, which has demonstrated in annual increase of 1% from 2005 and 109% from 2001. This levelling off of house prices within Lowestoft is not only a reflection of a general stabilisation within the housing market in the Eastern region of the UK, but is also as a result of the relative levels of affordability of housing in the area when directly related to average incomes. Therefore, in order to stimulate the housing market on a local basis and to attract further investment from residential and mixed-use developers, the level of average earnings needs to be lifted through attracting new employers to the area and creating a more sustainable and broader economic base.

4.07 Lowestoft town centre has two department stores namely Co-op Westgate and Chadds, together with the full complement of variety stores (Marks and Spencer, Woolworths and Bhs). In Great Yarmouth, there is a requirement by Debenhams department stores for Lowestoft seeking between 12,000 – 20,000 sq.m of retail floorspace. However, in our view it is very unlikely that Debenhams would trade from two town centres within close proximity and therefore once their requirement has been satisfied in the study area they will not pursue additional representation.

Triangle Market Place and Land to North, High Street, Lowestoft			
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is located outside the Lowestoft Central Area, on the northern section of the main shopping street. The area is regarded as being the 'older' area of the town centre, as historically this part of the High Street was the prime retail pitch within Lowestoft. This prime pitch then shifted to the south of the centre, which provides an opportunity to develop a bespoke retail and leisure based scheme that will complement the main retail area to the south. 		
Site Area:	Hectares:	0.27	Acres:
Proposed Uses:	Retail, leisure and residential		
Image:			
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site identified for redevelopment currently comprises an open-air market, former furniture store and a paved area of public open space (currently used for stand alone market stalls). The surroundings accommodate a number of uses, mainly comprising retail and leisure units on the ground floor with office or residential uses on the upper floors. 		
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land assembly required for this opportunity site should be relatively straight forward because the Council currently own the main areas for redevelopment. There is the opportunity to create a more welcoming and identifiable environment, such as a range of cafes and public houses with outdoor seating areas. Furthermore, this could be amalgamated with specialist shops and market stalls. This would complement the mainstream shopping in the south of the town centre and shopping experience. The creation of café culture and open air shopping experience that is well-designed and enhanced with the right mix of occupiers, with supporting uses such as residential and small studios, should create a type of environment that Lowestoft currently lacks. This form of development could also take advantage of the historical nature of this part of the town centre. The inclusion of residential accommodation will help to enhance the occupier profile in this part of the town centre, which currently only provides a limited supply of good quality accommodation. A proposed scheme that would comprehensively include a mix of uses and design could have a positive effect on property values in nearby locations. This could provide a catalyst for further market driven renewal on a sustainable basis. 		

Britten Centre Multi-Storey Car Park, Lowestoft			
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site falls within the town centre to the western boundary of the main high street, adjoining the existing Britten Shopping Centre and covered market place. The property is directly accessed from Clapham Road South and benefits from having a prominent position and a convenient location. 		
Site Area:	Hectares:	0.28	Acres:
Proposed Uses:	Retail and residential		
Image:			
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site currently comprises a purpose-built multi-storey car park that links directly to the adjoining Britten Shopping Centre and provides a total of circa 200 car spaces for town centre shoppers/and visitors. The property was constructed in the late 1980's and extends over three storeys. 		
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of redevelopment, any proposals would have to involve the demolition of the existing structure to accommodate the required floor plates for a new development. The site is ideally located to provide a mixed-use residential and retail-led scheme that would benefit from the high degree of passing trade and the existing retail provision within the Britten Centre itself. The loss of any parking facilities could be mitigated against by the provision of a similar multi-storey car park facility on the Clapham Road South surface car park, which is directly opposite the site, and more easily accessed from Katwijk Way. As part of a comprehensive mixed-use scheme, there is the opportunity to provide better configured retail units to complement the existing retail provision within both the town centre and the Britten Centre. The provision of residential accommodation as part of a proposed scheme will seek to provide a more sustainable and viable form of development that will contribute to the local housing need, whilst also creating an improved sense of community and a more dispersed range of activities and uses. The regular shape of the site will also provide the opportunity to design a mixed-use scheme that does not create conflicts between the different uses on site. Ideally, this would be through maximising servicing and access solutions that meet new occupiers requirements. 		

Former Co-Op Store, St Mary's Street, Bungay			
Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bungay is an old market town, rich in history. It was primarily built around the ruins of an ancient Norman castle and partially surrounded by the River Waveney. • The town centre comprises a long linear main street based on a traditional retailing background (north/south axis). • It constitutes St Mary's Street, which 'dog-legs' into Market Place and Earsham Street. The latter has a rich diversity of specialist shops and commercial premises. Black Dog Antique Centre, opposite the post office, is the largest of a number of antique shops in this area. 		
Site Area:	Hectares:	0.16	Acres:
Proposed Uses:	Retail, residential		
Image:			
Description:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site occupies a corner position towards the southern boundary of the main retail pitch within the town centre. • The property benefits from passing trade along St Mary's Street and currently accommodates a small car park to the rear accessed via Priory Lane. • The property itself dates from the late 1970's and generally is not in keeping with the historical frontages within the town. 		
Redevelopment Potential:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe that this site offers the opportunity to provide a small mixed-use scheme. This would comprise a retail unit fronting St Mary's Street with residential accommodation to the upper floor and to the rear of the existing car park. • Maintaining a commercial use to the main frontage of the site will ensure that there remains an element of consistency with surrounding uses, whilst also maximising development potential. • The area to the side and rear of the property fronting Priory Lane would not lend itself to a retail use due to accessibility and visibility constraints, and therefore would be more suited for residential accommodation in the form of terraced/townhouses. There could be the opportunity to accommodate smaller residential units above the proposed retail space. • Parking for both the residential and commercial uses would have to be considered in view of the loss of parking on the site. This could be addressed within the existing car parking facility situated directly opposite and also on Priory Lane. Servicing requirements for the retail element would also have to be carefully considered when preparing a new scheme. 		

5 Summary

5.01 In summary, PPS6 requires local planning authorities to allocate sufficient sites to meet the identified need for new retail and town centre uses for least the first five years from the adoption of development plan documents. Although it is recognised that for large town centre schemes a longer time period may be appropriate to allow for more complex site assembly. PPS6 also advises that:

“An apparent lack of sites of the right size and in the right location should not be construed as an obstacle to site allocation and development to meet this need” (para.2.52).

5.02 Local planning authorities are therefore encouraged to consider the need for effective site assembly using their CPO powers, to ensure that suitable sites within, or on the edge of, centres are brought forward for development. This includes sites that are under-utilised, such as car parks and single-storey buildings, “...which could be redeveloped for multi-storey, mixed- use development” (para.2.52).

5.03 Our high level planning and market appraisal of the sites identified has indicated that a number of the sites are complex and their viability is obviously dependent on more detailed market, transport, urban design, land ownership, land assembly and financial appraisals.

5.04 Each of the sites have their unique attributes and we advise each Council that they may need to consider using CPO powers to effectively assemble the opportunity sites. However, we are also aware that the skills to implement long-term development schemes, incorporating CPO, is often absent at the local authority level, added to which there has been a general reluctance to use the instrument. The decision-making at local authority level involving elected members for a term of four years can also, in some circumstances, breed a short-term mentality and a lack of commitment to long-term land assembly, especially where compulsory purchase is a realistic option.

5.05 Due to the limited resources available, local authorities should therefore focus on their key statutory function as planning authority. The new planning system provides new opportunities for local authorities to enhance skills in plan-making and produce a clearer vision and set of policy objectives for individual sites through the new system of local development frameworks. The added-value that local authorities can bring to the development process in the form of more detailed investigations of sites and release of information would help to kick-start retail and mixed-use development and provide greater clarity and certainty to developers.

5.06 Therefore, we strongly recommend that the Council(s) carry out more detailed analysis and testing of the development potential of all the identified opportunity sites (and other emerging sites). Where appropriate, the Council(s) should aim to produce planning and development briefs for the key sites to provide a flexible, robust and co-ordinated strategy for planning and development over the next five to ten years.