

Wymondham's Future – Strategic Plan

2008 – 2013



WYMONDHAM
COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP
putting wymondham first



1.0 This strategy is presented as a vision to take Wymondham forward over the next five years.

1.1 The document represents the culmination of 18 months work undertaken by Wymondham Town Council, Wymondham Community Partnership, South Norfolk Council, the Business Forum and numerous community organisations. It reflects the priorities of residents and public and private sector organisations.

1.2 The vision and objectives, as set out in Section 5, will be converted into separate actions and projects all designed to shape a town and community facing up to its future expansion whilst protecting its historic and cultural heritage. It is our aim to make Wymondham a place in which we are all proud to live and to be associated with.



2.0 Wymondham is an historic market town situated in the beautiful Tiffey Valley in South Norfolk. It is well placed just 9 miles south west of Norwich and boasts excellent communications by road and rail locally, regionally and to London. Its strategic location on the A11 and its main rail link to London have led to substantial growth over the last 30 years.

2.1 The town has a long, well documented history and contains several notable buildings that make the area an attractive tourist destination. These include the 900 year old Abbey, the distinctive Market Cross and numerous period properties exceeding 300 years of age.

2.2 The civil parish of Wymondham (including the nearby village of Spooner Row) has an area of 44.3 sq km and a growing population already exceeding 14,000. The town, and its surrounding area, is regarded as being a highly desirable location to live: however there are one or two localised areas in need of extra attention

in order to ensure that this quality of life is enjoyed by all residents.

2.3 The town centre boasts a variety of shops and local services such as solicitors, banks and accountants. These include both national chains and local private businesses. On the outskirts, a large supermarket (Waitrose) is sited. One of the principal local employers is the renowned sports car manufacturer Lotus, and the Headquarters of the Norfolk Constabulary is located on the Gateway 11 estate at the east of the town.

2.4 Wymondham acts as a service centre for a much wider rural community

which looks to the town for education, health care, shopping, markets and other services.

2.5 The parish forms part of the local administrative structures of:

- Wymondham Town Council which supports the community in delivering local services such as play areas, cemeteries, allotments, markets, tourist information, etc;
- South Norfolk District Council which is responsible for providing local planning and development control, leisure, housing services, refuse collection, etc;

- Norfolk County Council with a duty to deliver strategic planning, social services, waste disposal, transportation and education;
 - NHS Norfolk which commissions health care for the local population through local hospital services, GP practices, dentistry, etc;
 - Norfolk Constabulary with responsibility for crime detection and prevention.
- 2.6** In addition there are over 150 active groups and societies all seeking ways of improving the town and its services for residents and visitors.



3.0 The Rural White Paper, published in November 2000, described market towns as having a crucial role to play in the future development of the local economy. The White Paper also highlighted the government's commitment to the regeneration of deprived market towns and rural areas through Regional Development Agencies and the Countryside Agency programmes.

3.1 The Market Town Initiative was introduced by the Countryside Agency and developed the Healthcheck process to help structure a review of local services and determine local need and priorities.

3.2 By the late 1990s there was already a need for a fresh impetus in Wymondham to help revitalise the town and address a number of concerns expressed by local residents. The newly established Wymondham Development Partnership had consulted widely and in

2001 produced the town's first action plan.

3.3 The Partnership's second Action Plan published in 2003 set out a number of aims and objectives, all to be delivered through a co-operative approach of key stakeholders working in partnership. By the end of 2006 a number of notable successes had emerged, which included:

- Wymondham Learning Centre
- Farmers market
- Town website
- Wymondham Tourism Forum
- Annual St George celebrations
- Arts Forum and the Tiffey Trails project
- Restoration projects at the cemetery and Tolls Meadow
- Small initiatives/projects, including the provision of grants to local organisations supporting community needs.

3.4 Towards the end of 2006, Wymondham Town Council, in discussion with Wymondham Community Partnership, carried out a review of the Action Plan and determined that the time was right to update the strategic priorities. To achieve this, a small steering group was established with members drawn from the Town Council, Community Partnership and individual community volunteers.

3.5 The first stage of the process was a scoping survey to identify the main areas of local concern. Drawing on a variety of sources, namely the outcome of this survey, the existing strategies of the Town and District Councils and consultation with local groups, a comprehensive survey document was produced covering these areas of concern.



3.6 During the months of July and August 2007, 6200 households received a survey form with the incentive of a prize for completion and return of the questionnaire by September. In addition, the questionnaire was circulated to neighbouring parish councils with an invitation to contribute to the overall exercise. See Appendix 1 and the Wymondham Town Council website for a full description of the methodology and a detailed breakdown of the results.

Who responded to the survey?

3.7 At the end of the survey period, 722 completed household questionnaires from 1224 people had been received at the Council Offices. This amounts to a 12% return. An analysis of the survey showed that:

- a high level of support came from people over 18 years of age
 - men accounted for 44% of the returns and 56% were from women;
 - the responses from ethnic minorities in Wymondham were a close representation of the ethnic mix in South Norfolk;
 - 10% of households who returned the questionnaire indicated that there was a disabled or seriously ill person resident at home;
 - there was a good spread of residents who had lived in Wymondham for most of their lives as well as those who had only moved comparatively recently into the town.
- 3.8** The steering group, however, was very disappointed with the response to the survey from neighbouring parishes.

4.0 Four strategic themes emerged from the survey and a number of priorities were identified.

The Community

4.1 Key findings from the survey:

- a strong community spirit was important, especially for the elderly;
- despite low crime levels in the town, vandalism and antisocial behaviour was a concern;
- the fear of crime and intimidation of the elderly was highlighted;
- more out-of-school activities were needed;

- there was a need for vibrant community facilities for both the young and the elderly;
- information about the town's activities was deemed adequate, but more could be achieved through the town's website;
- more adult education opportunities were requested.

Development

4.2 Key findings from the survey:

- the protection of the town's historic heritage was a priority;



- local shops were supported, but additional and more varied shopping was needed, including an additional major supermarket;
- access to housing was a priority, especially for the young, and suitable homes should be available for the elderly / the disabled;
- adequate services and infrastructure should be provided ahead of further expansion;
- small scale development to support employment opportunities was to be encouraged;
- the loss of the local job centre was viewed as a barrier to employment;
- there was a demand for out-of-hours medical services.



Silfield Nature Reserve

The Environment

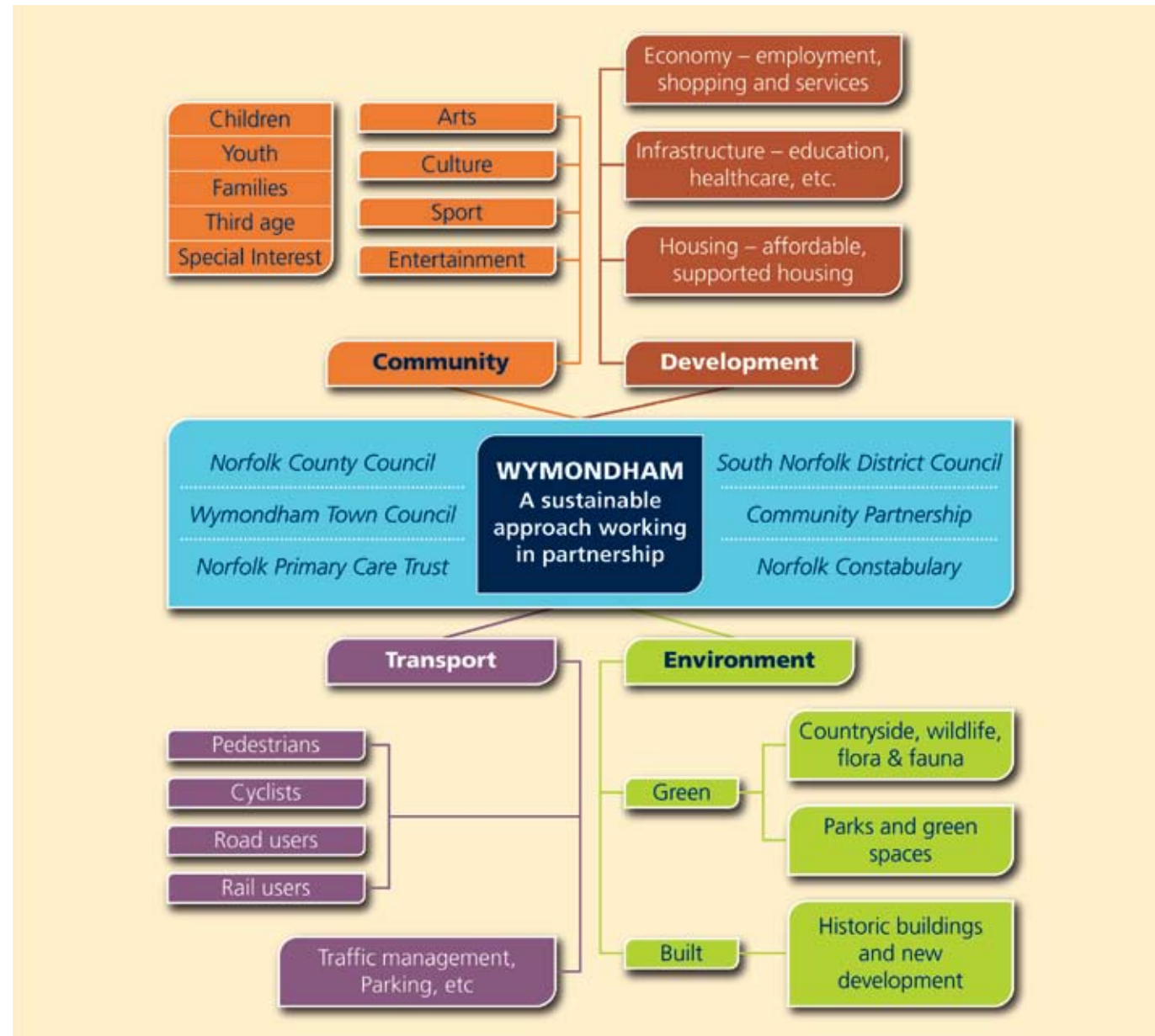
4.3 Key findings from the survey:

- it was important to maintain Wymondham as a market town;
- protection of the river valley and surrounding countryside was a high priority;
- the natural environment, including wildlife, birds and flora/fauna should be protected;
- greater access was needed to the countryside through additional paths and signage;
- there was a desire for additional parks and sitting areas;
- more recycling was needed;
- street lighting should be energy efficient;
- there should be better maintenance of public areas to include the removal of dog mess and litter.

Transport

4.4 Key findings from the survey:

- better public transport was needed, especially linking residential and employment areas;
- many expressed concern over illegal and thoughtless parking in Market Street and around schools;
- more dedicated parking areas were needed, which should include additional spaces for disabled drivers;
- improved access and facilities were needed for disabled people in general;
- better information was required about public transport services, timetables and routes;
- through traffic in the town centre and obstruction from unloading lorries was a concern.



5.0 Wymondham has an exciting and prosperous future especially if all key organisations share the following common vision:

“Wymondham – a forward looking market town recognising the need for sustainable growth whilst retaining a strong sense of its own history.”

5.1 Objective – Community

Support a vibrant local community where all age groups can develop and enjoy the quality of life Wymondham can offer.

Programmes and actions to achieve this objective could include:

- support for the local police and community police officers in order to reduce vandalism and antisocial behaviour;
- additional neighbourhood watch schemes and/or extend the town centre CCTV system;
- a review of local community facilities (centres) and the seeking of new funding

to widen provision for all community groups;

- liaison with local schools and youth services to investigate the future provision of facilities for young people;
- additional learning opportunities reflecting the needs of various age groups;
- expansion of the Wymondham website in order to inform local residents of leisure, culture and services provided in the town;
- an approach to the Norfolk Primary Care Trust for additional medical services for the growing population, including out-of-hours access;
- a half yearly litter pick and campaign through local

schools to reduce litter and eradicate vandalism / graffiti;

- town centre notice board(s) to circulate information;
- improved town centre facilities including a venue to display local artwork.

5.2 Objective – Development

Protect Wymondham’s cultural and historic heritage and ensure that the town’s growth and economy progresses in a controlled manner.

Programmes and actions to achieve this objective could include:

- a campaign to encourage more diverse shopping in the town centre;
- support for the provision of more housing in small scale developments with increased affordable and special needs homes as a priority;
- adequate services and infrastructures in place ahead of large scale

- developments;
- a project to expand tourism through a dedicated website, tourist literature and promotions at leisure fairs, etc;
- a town trail linking heritage sites;
- a wider range of educational and recreational courses at the learning centre.

5.3 Objective – Environment

Improve access to the surrounding countryside and protect the town’s open spaces.

Programmes and actions to achieve this objective could include:



- measures to protect the entire Tiffey Valley and Bays River valley as a designated nature reserve;
- protection for the banks of the rivers with a 20 m green strip on each side;
- additional signage to local tourist attractions and sites with access to local wildlife, flora and fauna;
- the provision of a recycling centre close to the town and additional facilities at suitable sites;
- a more diverse and supported role for volunteer environmental wardens;
- an approach to SNDC to replace all street lighting with energy efficient bulbs over a period of 5 years.

5.4 Objective – Transport

Seek ways of improving public transport services and traffic management

Programmes and actions to achieve this objective could include:

- additional street wardens to enforce traffic management and reduce illegal parking;
- research to identify new land for additional off-street parking;
- the lobbying of Norfolk County Council and local bus companies for the introduction of integrated bus services linking the town centre with residential estates, places of work and the railway station;
- the displaying of bus and rail timetables at appropriate sites and their regular inclusion in the town website/parish magazine;
- efforts to identify new footpaths and cycle ways to the surrounding countryside and improved access for disabled people;
- the repair of dropped kerbs to assist disabled people.

6.0 The strategic objectives set out above will be converted into a series of projects and actions as part of a 5-year programme. In order to achieve the desired outcomes the community will:

- seek the support of local business, trades and voluntary organisations;
- ensure all projects meet set criteria for sustainability and value for money;
- investigate and pursue sources of additional funding to help deliver the key objectives;
- appoint a dedicated worker to co-ordinate activity and develop/manage projects;
- post regular progress reports on the website and circulate information to local residents through the Town Council newsletter and local media;
- review and update the strategy annually.

Produced in partnership with

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