

ORDINARY COUNCIL 6 NOVEMBER 2024 – APPENDIX A

Felixstowe Town Council's Draft Position Statement / Masterplan consultation response following a briefing meeting held on 8th October, attended by representatives from East Suffolk Council and members of the Town Council.

While we recognise the importance of this development for the future of Felixstowe, we wish to highlight several key areas that require further exploration and emphasis to ensure the success of the project and its alignment with the needs of our community.

1. Leisure Facilities

We welcome the opportunity for Felixstowe to host a state-of-the-art leisure centre. A single, multi-purpose facility is favoured, providing modern, inclusive amenities that promote physical activity and wellbeing. This development should focus not only on traditional sports but also on informal and natural leisure opportunities, such as the peaceful enjoyment of the Grove woodland and Eastward Ho, which must be preserved and enhanced.

The Council stresses the importance of connectivity to ensure that all residents, including those using the current seafront leisure centre and Brackenbury Sports Centre, can easily access the new facilities.

We encourage East Suffolk Council to explore the feasibility of an Olympic-size swimming pool as part of the new leisure centre. Furthermore, any redevelopment of the existing leisure centre site on the seafront should accord with SCLP 12.1, focusing on imaginative tourist facilities. We expect comprehensive consultation to take place ahead of any closure of existing leisure sites.

2. Housing

The Council acknowledges the importance of meeting housing targets, including a 30% affordable housing provision, which is anticipated to deliver approximately 500 affordable homes, of which 250 are expected for social housing. While we understand that 25% of the housing stock will be apartments and the density will vary between 30–50 dwellings per hectare, we believe there is potential to provide additional green space by allowing higher-density housing in appropriate areas.

We strongly advocate for a housing mix that supports downsizing (e.g., bungalows) and first-time buyers. We also encourage East Suffolk Council to retain ownership of as much of the social housing as possible, ensuring long-term affordability.

Community-led housing and self-build opportunities should be fully explored to diversify the housing options within the development. The Council also emphasises the need to consult closely with disability groups to ensure adaptable housing is included, and that accessibility across the site is maximised, exceeding national policy requirements.

Given that East Suffolk Council is a major landowner in this project, we expect the housing quality to be exemplary, exceeding current building standards to ensure longevity (well beyond 30-50 years) and achieving net-zero carbon standards. We support the use of renewable energy solutions, such as on-site solar energy generation and also suggest regular reviews to incorporate future innovations during the development's long timespan.

3. Green Spaces

The Town Council is keen to ensure that publicly accessible green space is maintained and expanded where possible. We support upgrading playing pitches at Eastward Ho and advocate for the creation of a Country Park to serve the community and promote outdoor leisure.

We also expect existing natural assets, such as the Grove woodland, to be protected, and any development should provide opportunities for the enhancement of these spaces for the peaceful enjoyment of all residents.

4. Allotments

The Town Council would like East Suffolk Council to consider the provision of additional allotment land within the development, which the Town Council would be willing to manage. We also support other community-growing initiatives to encourage local food production and engagement with green spaces.

5. Infrastructure

Connectivity is crucial to the success of the NFGN development, both internally and across Felixstowe. We advocate for the inclusion of dedicated cycleways and footpaths, with consideration given to a footbridge to improve accessibility and integration with existing communities. While vehicle access through the site is constrained, improvements to the current road network and public transport links, including bus routes and well-maintained shelters, will be vital in minimising reliance on private car use.

The Council also stresses the importance of enhancing existing medical services to support the growing population. This includes improved facilities at Felixstowe Community Hospital, increased dental care capacity, and an upgrade to the town's library services.

Retail development near the leisure centre should be focused on meeting the needs of the local community, rather than detracting from Felixstowe's town centre offer.

6. Education

Education provision is a significant concern, and while Suffolk County Council is responsible for ensuring adequate school places, the Town Council would like to play an active role in this process. Investment in both primary and secondary school capacity is essential, with a particular focus on post-16 educational opportunities, to support the aspirations of young people in Felixstowe.

The Town Council looks forward to continuing to work closely with East Suffolk Council as the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood masterplan progresses. We hope that our feedback is taken into account as the project develops, and we remain open to further dialogue to ensure the best possible outcome for the residents of Felixstowe.