



Our Strategy for the Future of Southwold

Southwold Town Council

May 2016



INTRODUCTION AND OUR PURPOSE

This strategy describes our plans for Southwold for the remaining duration of this Town Council, a period of three years. We have of course looked further ahead than this in preparing the plan. We have considered the big picture and the external factors that may impact on the town and the people who live here.

The pace of change in our lives, the pressures on Southwold and the changes to regional and Local Government have prompted the Town Council to work together to define its plans for the future of the town. In this climate it is essential that we have a clear view and give a lead about plans for the future of the town.

This strategy has been prepared after a number of structured working meetings of the whole Council in the autumn of 2015 and early 2016, where we worked together on every stage of this plan. It will be available on our website www.southwoldtown.com

Every councillor has had an opportunity to contribute to the plan and make their views clear to their colleagues.

OUR MISSION

As elected councillors our purpose is to provide leadership and direction for the people of Southwold.

We do this with honesty and integrity, without fear or favour to one group or another, whilst recognising our social responsibilities to all in our community.

Our Vision

STC's vision for Southwold is to be *the* successful, vibrant, attractive town on the East Anglian coast, where people want to live, work and visit.

We intend to focus on projects that are truly important and meaningful for the Town and that will help us to achieve our objectives.

We don't settle for anything less than excellence as a Town Council. However, we have the humility to admit when we are wrong and the courage to change.

VISION AND VALUES

Our **vision** is our goal to be worked towards for the period of this plan. We do not guarantee that we will be able to achieve every aspect of our vision, but it is important to us, and for our community, to have a clear vision about where we want to be.

VALUES

Honesty

Integrity

Openness

Respect for others

Service to others

Social responsibility

Teamwork

To inspire – each other and the community

Key PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) points

- Oil/energy crisis
- Climate Change – impact of variable weather, flood surges especially on tourism
- Transport Links
- Devolution/Localism Agenda e.g. closure of public toilets
- Austerity agenda - police, health, social resources more limited
- Imbalanced economy too reliant on tourism
- Tourism vulnerable to fads and fashions
- Accessibility/parking
- Diminishing resident population and age profile
- Competition from towns with similar profile
- Southwold brand
- Development of new business types – new ways of working
- Work with organisations to raise profile and differentiate town

What strategies will we employ?

1. Diversify the local economy by knowledge based businesses
2. Reverse decline in resident population
3. Retaining and enhancing the natural and built environment
4. Protect, maintain and enhance our community assets
5. Promote/maintain the independent character of the High Street
6. Effectively manage and diversify STC income for firm financial base
7. Achieve planned maintenance on our property portfolio
8. Improve access, parking and transport within the town

STRATEGIES THAT WE WILL EMPLOY TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

Our generic strategy is to *focus* on projects that will enable us to deliver our vision, and to select projects and activities that will *differentiate* Southwold from other coastal towns, in East Anglia, and those with a similar profile country wide. Other locations in East Anglia might include Aldeburgh, Burnham Market, Holkham, Wells and Woodbridge. Other locations country wide might include Salcombe, Rock/Padstow, St Mawes, Ilfracombe, Truro, St Ives and Abersoch.

The strategies have been defined to help us play to our *strengths*, enable us, where possible, to address our *weaknesses* and manage *threats*, and to take *opportunities* to support our plan for a vibrant town with a better balanced economy. The actions have also been linked to the key areas of the neighbourhood plan, which will be one of the vehicles for delivery of the overall strategy.

Clearly there are some things over which we have little control, such as Central Government policies, Waveney District Council plans for the whole area and where they choose to allocate resources, and investment in transport. However, there are other projects where we can choose to manage our resources to ensure that we run an effective council.

Diversify the local economy by establishing space for knowledge based businesses



Strategy 1.

Diversify the local economy by establishing space for knowledge based businesses.

Tactics

Within 3 years

Plans in place with funding to remodel Station Road site owned by the Town Council.
Investigate opportunities for potential new sites and use of existing assets.

3 Years plus

Remodel Station Road site into a business hub including small business units and space for artisans.

Reverse decline in resident population/a more balanced age range



*Successfully let for holidays
An ideal holiday home*



Strategy 2.

Reverse decline in resident population, achieving a more balanced age range.

Make the town a more attractive proposition for younger families to live and work.

Tactics

Within 3 years

Promotional programme to attract people to live and work in Southwold (e.g. from other parts of East Anglia, surrounding counties and London).

Check how existing businesses/agents promote the town as a place to live. Seek to influence messaging.

Transport links. Take opportunities to work with other agencies.

Encourage initiatives for out of peak season events and activities e.g. winter months, Easter.

3 years plus

Approach Suffolk County Council and Sizewell C/Other organisations to create working opportunities (i.e. to sponsor/support/ new business opportunities, develop Station Road site, work with groups e.g. hospital site?)

Working with organisations that promote homeworking, flexible working.

Retaining and enhancing the natural and built environment



Strategy 3.

Retaining and enhancing the natural and built environment.

Tactics

Within 3 years – Built Environment

Neighbourhood plan complete.

Recognising and promoting historic buildings like Town Hall, Market Place, significant terraces etc.

Use of Suffolk design review panel.

Quality and ethos of new build.

Limitations on development - limit over-sized house conversion.

Incorporate our entrance to town design plans in potential developments.

Retaining and enhancing the natural and built environment (cont'd)



Strategy 3 (cont'd)

Retaining and enhancing the natural and built environment.

Tactics

Within 3 years – Natural Environment

Public art works to differentiate town and raise the profile.

Ensure the maintenance of Tibbys Green and other play areas.

Better management of marshes.

3 years plus – Natural Environment

Work with agencies to regrow the denes and ensure better management.

Liaise with WDC re retaining green spaces in town and potential divestment to STC for community use.

Protect, maintain and enhance our community assets



Strategy 4.

Protect, maintain and enhance our community assets.

Tactics

Within 3 Years

Work with relevant groups with the aim of retaining a thriving library and resource centre.
Town Hall refurbishment inside and outside.

Work with WDC and other partners to ensure appropriate business model for lavatories.

Work more closely with organisations to enhance community assets and experiences.

The Harbour to come into local control in the next 3 years.

Liaise with group who might use the hospital site for medical services/care home or library/education hub.

3 Years plus

Museum – work with the museum to assist in developing an education programme, for example link with cellar at town hall, information centre on marshes.

Promote and maintain the independent character of the High Street



Strategy 5.

Promote and maintain the independent character of the High Street

Tactics

Within 3 years

Be ready to develop Town Council owned sites and purchase business investment property for improved investment income.

High Street or similar festival to differentiate Southwold from other towns.

Communicate with national and regional chains to achieve their support for town initiatives.

Effectively manage & diversify STC income streams for a firm financial base



Strategy 6.

Effectively managing and diversifying STC income streams in order to secure a firm financial base.

Tactics

Within 3 years

Consider income from parking to improve accessibility to the town.

Improved income streams from properties.

Business options for Red Cross Hut site.

Ensure we have appropriate tenants and attract high quality business. Be ready to reconsider leases yielding low returns.

Collections at public events to support activities for the community that enhance quality of life and differentiate the town.

3 Years plus

Divestment discussions with WDC.

Encourage individuals to bequeath properties for public use/rental accommodation.

Acquire beach huts for income generation.

Use of Town Hall for weddings/events.

Income from lavatories.

Achieve planned maintenance programme on our existing property portfolio



Strategy 7.

Achieve the planned maintenance programme on our existing property portfolio to ensure fit for purpose and improved income generation.

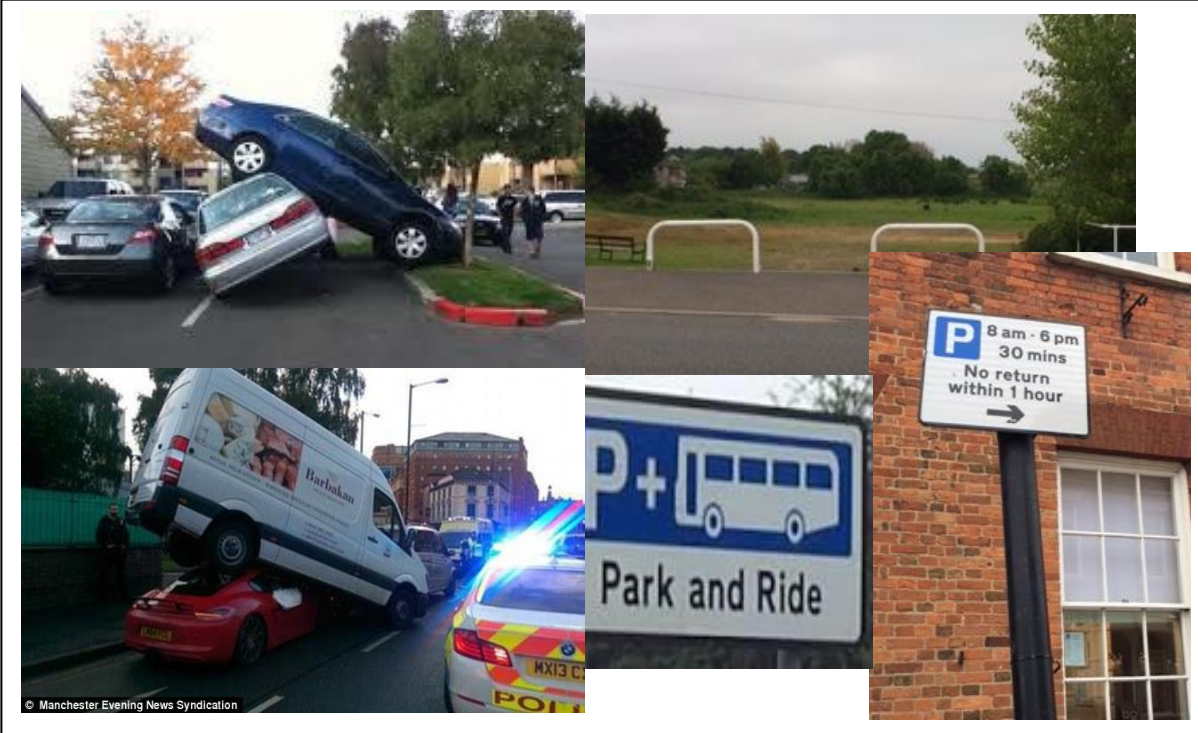
Tactics

Within 3 years

Maintenance programme for properties.

Advice to deliver our objectives in Strategy 6 and 7.

Improve access, parking and transport within the town



Strategy 8.

Improve access, parking and transport within the town.

Tactics

Within 3 years

Parking review – complete and implement phase 1

Work with third parties on the potential for parking in light of parking review.

Liaise with partners regarding the feasibility and establishment of a park and ride.

Re-examine timed delivery of larger vehicles plus enforcement.

Contact Police & Crime Commissioner re changes to parking enforcement regulations and ascertain whether STC could become a model council on deregulated parking enforcement.

Keep High Street alive and ensure time limited parking is enforced.

Communicate clearly with police regarding STC's objectives for match funded PCSO scheme.

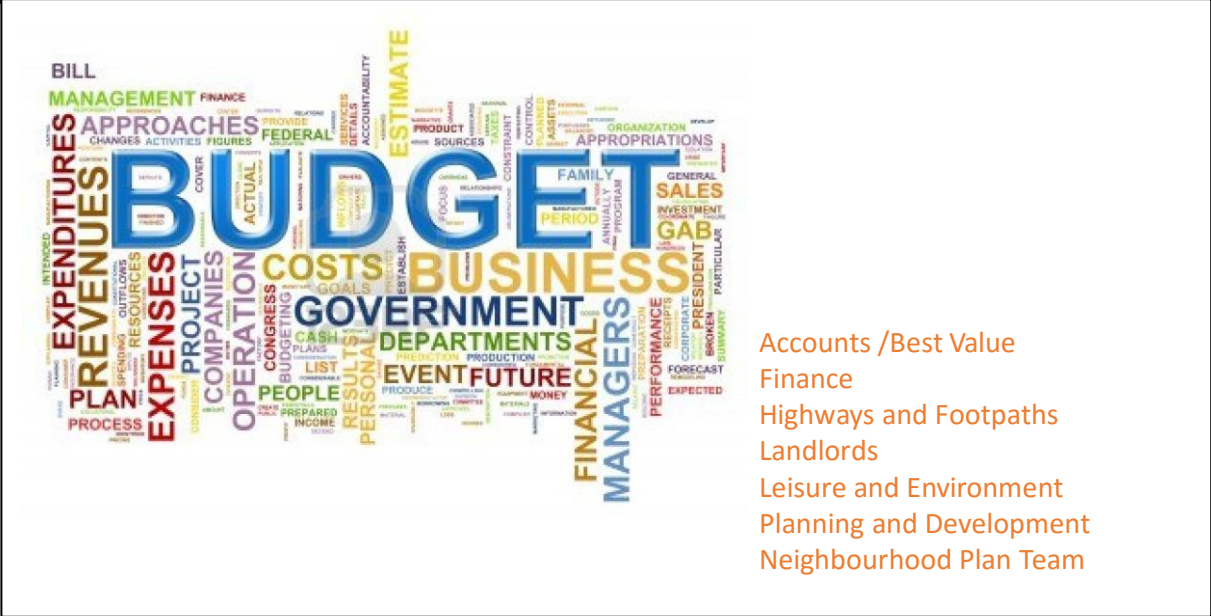
Creation of any new car parks.

3 years plus

Parking Review phase 2 implemented.

Park and ride.

Budgets and delivery of our plans



- Accounts /Best Value
- Finance
- Highways and Footpaths
- Landlords
- Leisure and Environment
- Planning and Development
- Neighbourhood Plan Team

BUDGETS AND DELIVERY OF OUR PLANS

The Town Council has prepared a three-year financial plan to support these activities and a detailed budget for the first year.

The action will be delivered by the working groups and committees of the Town Council:

Accounts /Best Value

Finance

Highways and Footpaths (including Parking Review Sub Group)

Landlords

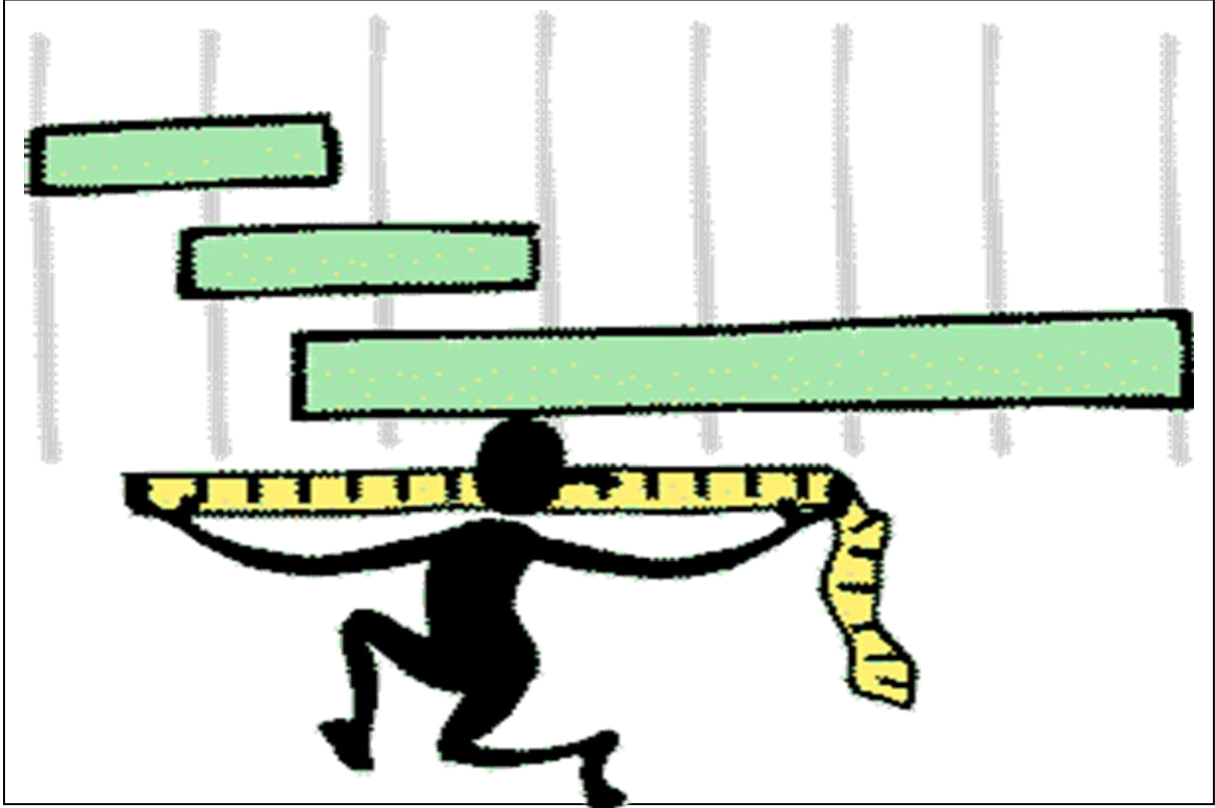
Leisure and Environment

Neighbourhood Plan Team

Planning and Development

Where necessary other working groups may be established to deliver our plans.

Monitoring Progress



HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE OUR PLANS AND MONITOR PROGRESS?

The strategy will be communicated to individuals, groups and businesses in the town and to relevant organisations outside, such as WDC, SCC, the media.

The Finance working group will monitor all financial aspects on a regular basis.

The Town Council will review progress of the strategy and tactics on a six monthly basis.

The Town Council will publish progress reports on its website.

Contacts

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