




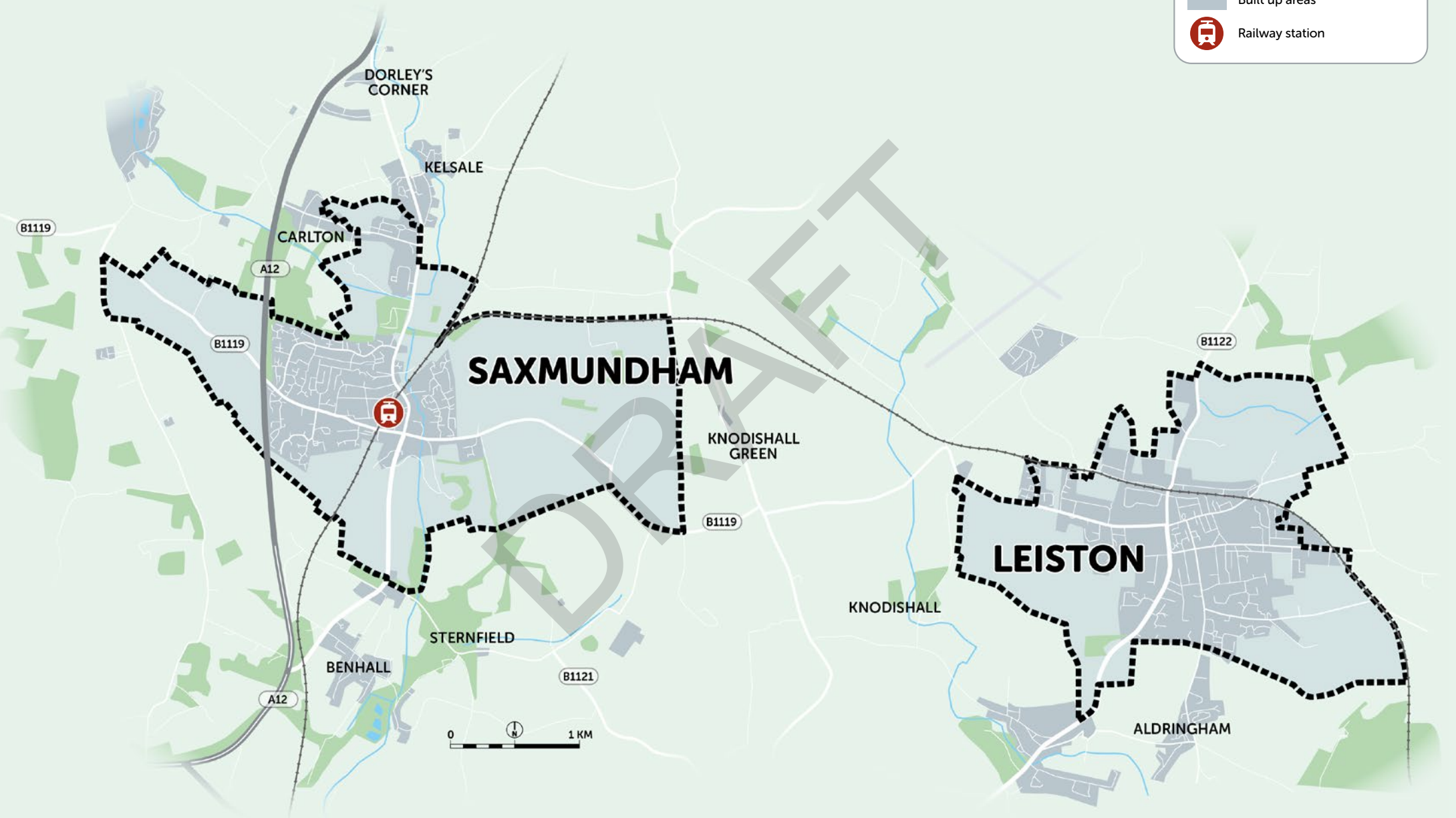
2024

Saxmundham & Leiston Area Transport Plan



KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  Railway station



Introduction

Saxmundham and Leiston are in a strategic location being roughly equidistant from Ipswich and Lowestoft, the two principal economic centres of East Suffolk district. The area is served both by the A12 and the East Suffolk line of Greater Anglia railways. It also acts as a 'gateway' to the Suffolk Heritage Coast, the tourist resorts of Aldeburgh and Thorpeness.

The resident population of the area plan is 10,728¹. This is expected to grow in the coming years with developments planned to the southwest and north of Saxmundham, most notably the South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. There is also the impact to consider of the constructing and delivery of Sizewell C the nuclear power station.

The plan area includes a variable network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes. National Cycle Route 1 pass by Saxmundham and Leiston. Severance and accessibility issues for active travel connections exist both within Saxmundham town centre and Leiston town centre.

There is a limited bus service for Saxmundham and Leiston connecting surrounding communities and other urban areas, often only hourly / 2 hourly services. Saxmundham has a railway station just off the High Street. It is on the East Suffolk Line with hourly services to Beccles, Wickham Market / Campsea Ash and Ipswich.

The area plan will also give consideration to the development of Sizewell C and the impact it will have on the area's character, infrastructure and natural surroundings.

The geographic area means currently a large proportion of the residents with in both Saxmundham and Leiston can access their local town centre within 10 minutes of average walking speed².



Saxmundham population

10,728

residents

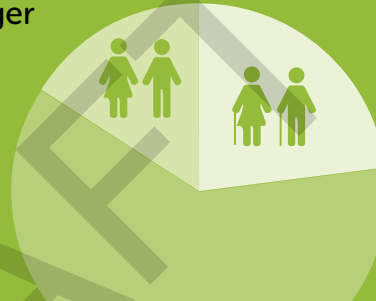


17%

of people are 15 years old or younger

24%

of people are over the age of 65



55%

of households are deprived in one or more dimensions



Travel patterns

18%

of households don't own a vehicle



40%

of people travel less than 5km to work



14%

of people walk, wheel or cycle to work



19%

of people work mainly from home



School travel



Pockets of

3%

of school children cycle to school in the Saxmundham area³

Less than

1%



take the bus

Less than

1%



take the train



60%



drive a car or van to work

Reasons for change



Decarbonisation of Transport

In the Samundham and Lesiton area, 14% of commuters of travel to work by walking, wheeling and cycling or by bus or train. In order to meet Suffolk’s pathway to net zero, the proportion of commuter trips across Suffolk undertaken by these modes should rise to 35%⁴. Furthermore, the government targets half of all journeys undertaken by active travel modes in towns across the country⁵. Existing infrastructure and sustainable transport services restrict people’s sustainable travel options.



Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion

Increasing physical activity is linked to improved mental and physical health outcomes at all stages of life and prevention of chronic and acute health conditions. Increasing physical activity through walking, wheeling and cycling more trips will help to improve the health of the population in the Saxmundham and Leiston area.





A Strong, Sustainable and Fair Economy

Growth in housing and employment has been earmarked through East Suffolk Local Plan for Saxmundham and Leiston in the southwest of Saxmundham. There is also the development of Sizewell C on the outskirts of the plan area. The growth is unlikely to be sustainable unless issues on the transport network can be mitigated. The emphasis will be on a shift to sustainable and high-occupancy modes, though capacity improvements will be acceptable if no alternatives provide sufficient mitigation.



Creating Better Places

There are opportunities to enhance how people interact with the town centres in both Saxmundham and Leiston. Improved provision for walking, wheeling and cycling in the town centres, most notably in the High Street areas and links from the main shopping areas to residential areas and key services and facilities such as the railway station in Saxmundham, will help to create healthier, more attractive and more accessible streets. Both towns existing public rights of way network can help to provide access to green space.



Summary of objectives

The Saxmundham and Leiston Area Transport Plan will support the development of sustainable travel options for the area's residents and visitors, so they become more attractive and realistic choices for everyone.

Enable active travel to be the default choice for shorter trips

Improve bus punctuality and reliability

Improve the integration of modes

Maximise growth opportunities

Support town centre economies



OBJECTIVE

Enable active travel to be the default choice for shorter trips

A network of key walking and cycling routes in Saxmundham and Leiston has already been identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which is closely aligned with the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy.

We will help to prioritise areas so people can have access to safe and welcoming places and direct and attractive routes to key destinations within Saxmundham and Leiston. This will also include leisure routes connecting to Benhall and Kelsale and these routes, where possible, will be traffic free using the Public Rights of Way Network.





The LCWIP will provide alternative travel options for Saxmundham and Leiston's residents and visitors, addressing congestion and helping to improve health and wellbeing by enabling people to get out and about more and be more active in their everyday lives.

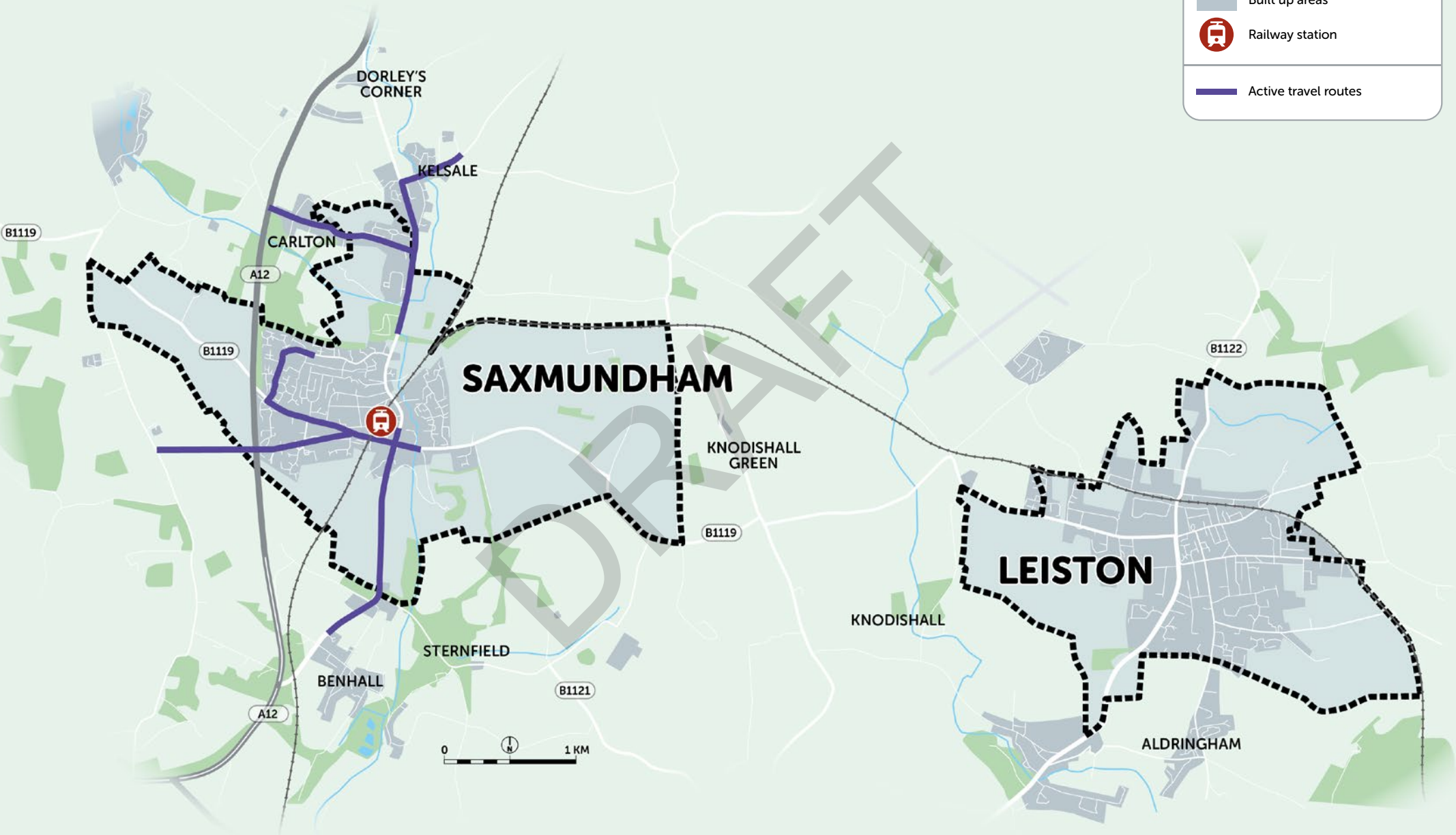
Interventions could include pedestrian zones with places to stop and relax, widening of footways, dedicated cycle lanes, traffic calming measures and new and improved crossed points.

We support Leiston's Cycling and Walking Improvements put forward as part of the Sizewell C development to provide active travel routes to the site for both employees and visitors.



KEY

-  Area boundary
-  Built up areas
-  Railway station
-  Active travel routes



OBJECTIVE

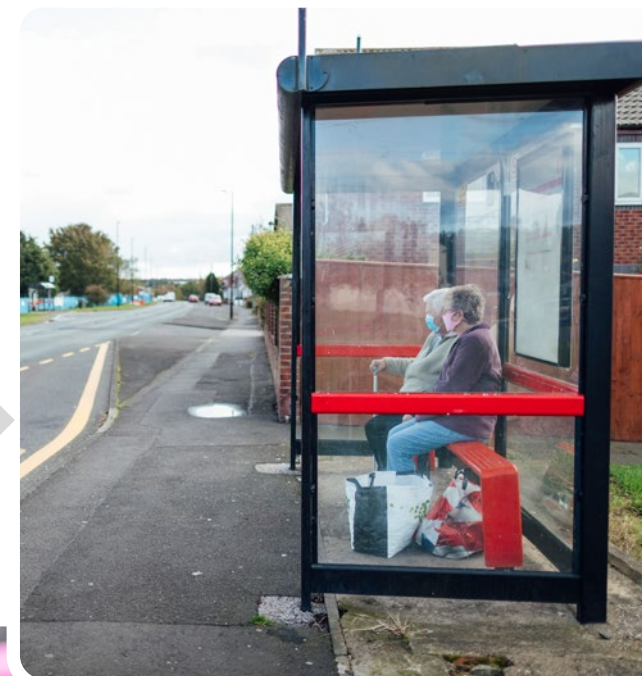
Improve bus punctuality and reliability

A range of bus services operate in Saxmundham and Leiston which include connections to Halesworth, Aldeburgh, Thorpness and Beccles. On-demand community transport service connects communities in surrounding villages to the towns which are not served by regular bus services.

We will support opportunities to:

- Enhance service provision where long-term viability can be identified
- New services to new locations
- More flexible bus services that better meet local community demands

We will continue to promote bus travel as a more sustainable way of connecting in Saxmundham and Leiston as we transition away from diesel buses to our Zero Emissions Bus Plan. This move will help alleviate local air quality issues, particularly around schools at drop off and pick up times.



OBJECTIVE

Improve the integration of modes

The main transport hub is the rail station just off the High Street in Saxmundham. Both Saxmundham and Leiston do not have bus stations.

We support measures to improve the rail station in Saxmundham to make it into a multi-mode transport hub with improvements to cycle facilities and information on bus services.

We will look at improvements to key bus stops in Saxmundham and Leiston. Facilities must include adequate waiting facilities inclusive of shelters, passenger information (preferably real-time) and sufficient high-quality cycle parking.

An area wide wayfinding signage strategy will be considered to help those navigate key services and facilities as well as transport links to key bus stops and the rail station in Saxmundham.

We will continue to support East Suffolk Council with the installation of electric vehicle charging points and support residents to travel sustainably with the delivery of electric vehicle car clubs.

We will also collaborate with partners to rationalise and consolidate car parking provision in Saxmundham and Leiston, so it is managed appropriately with consideration to highway efficiency and all its users including those walking, wheeling, cycling, and traveling by public transport.



OBJECTIVE

Maximise growth opportunities

South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood is a new development approved in East Suffolk Council's Local Plan. It comprises of 800 dwellings and is located to the south of Saxmundham.

The impact on Saxmundham and Leiston as a result of the neighbouring construction and delivery of Sizwell C will be closely monitored to ensure the project meets its commitments to support local communities, mitigates its impact on them which includes sustainable travel options for workers and visitors, and any ongoing concerns and issues from residents and businesses are listened to.



OBJECTIVE

Support town centre economies

We will support improvements to Saxmundham and Leiston by enhancing the attractiveness of streets and spaces within the town centres to draw shoppers and visitors in.

This will include giving greater priority to pedestrians in the town centres by reducing/ removing traffic and improving crossing points. In particular along the High Streets in both Saxmundham and Leiston, which are the main shopping areas.

We will help to remove barriers to access different areas of the town centres, especially linkages from the train station in Saxmundham by creating a clear, safe and direct pedestrian and cycling routes.

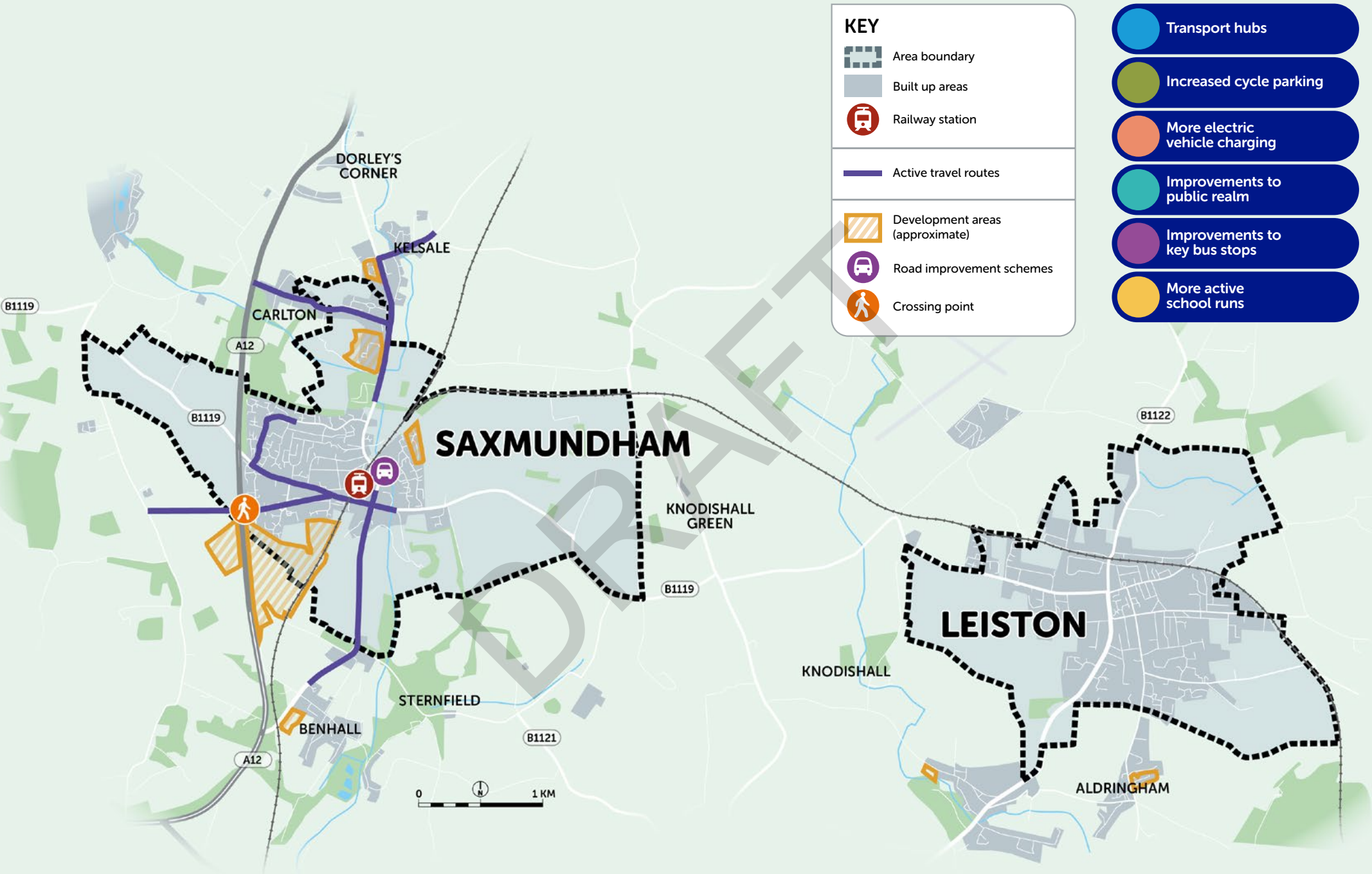
We will also support the use of increased seating and social spaces, more trees and planting and co-ordinated and accessible signage and lighting.



Our plans for Saxmundham and Leiston

The development of the Area Transport Plan has identified a number of areas to improve sustainable travel movements. These areas, together with improvements to the wider public realm, offer the opportunity for Saxmundham and Leiston to meet the ongoing and future needs of the population, and those who visit and work in the towns.





KEY

- Area boundary
- Built up areas
- Railway station
- Active travel routes
- Development areas (approximate)
- Road improvement schemes
- Crossing point

- Transport hubs
- Increased cycle parking
- More electric vehicle charging
- Improvements to public realm
- Improvements to key bus stops
- More active school runs

Implementation plan

The table below indicates the county council's priorities for investment over the next five years including schemes funded through the county council's budgets, government funding and developer funding. The table does not include schemes delivered by 3rd parties.

Location	Description	Indicative Capital Investment
Saxmundham	Leiston town centre walking and cycling improvements	£500,000
Saxmundham	Benhall to Saxmundham cycle route improvements	£200,000

References

1. Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2021) www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/
2. [TravelTime | Unlimited Travel Time Calculations](#)
3. Office for National Statistics, Census Data (2011) [Propensity to Cycle Tool - Suffolk \(pct.bike\)](#)
4. Suffolk Climate Emergency [Suffolk-Climate-Emergency-Plan-Summer-23.pdf \(greensuffolk.org\)](#)
5. Gear Change. A bold vision for cycling and walking <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>