

Green field development would be inevitable and the District would become populated more densely.

4 - Environment led vision

The rural character of our District means that any additional major development will increase our dependency on cars (already above average) and exceed the capacity of our own sustainable water resources. Such development would probably require green field sites as there is insufficient brown field land in the District to meet national and regional development targets.

This vision constrains the scale, type and location of developments (particularly housing) in order to preserve our natural and built environment. This vision is the closest to maintaining the existing character of the District, its landscape, towns, neighbourhoods and villages.

Development would be restricted to appropriate sites within the three main towns in accordance with the Regional Plan. The character of towns, neighbourhoods and buildings would be preserved wherever possible. Housing growth would be capped to the requirements of the existing Suffolk Structure Plan (5200 new dwellings by 2021, equivalent to 260 per annum). This is 1200 less than the total required by the Regional Plan but is still more than the actual building rate in the District since 2001.

Levels of new housing provision below the targets set in the Regional Plan will require substantial justification. It may also lead to the construction of fewer affordable homes.

5 - Leisure led vision

The Regional Plan facilitates the development of leisure facilities of a regional standard.

This vision seeks to facilitate a regional centre for sports and leisure activity within the District.

'Watermark' is a mix-use proposal to integrate a collection of sports and leisure facilities with a new settlement between Red Lodge and Kentford. The 215 ha green field site would be developed over several years and would include a rowing/water sports lake, a multi-purpose arena, tennis & golf facilities, employment (office) development, retail and community facilities funded by 4 - 5000 new dwellings.

The proposed sport and leisure facilities would attract around 1.2M visitors per year, with 90% arriving by car. It is estimated that 75% of trips would be via a new junction off the A14 and 25% from the A11 through Red Lodge.

This proposal would limit additional development elsewhere in the District if housing growth was not to exceed the target of 6400 set in the Regional Plan. It is also in conflict with the requirements in the Regional Plan to restrict housing growth to existing settlements. Its impact on the economy, character and infrastructure of the District would be significant.