



Executive Summary

Felixstowe Forward was set up in 2015 to develop a collective approach to tackling the town's key challenges and opportunities. The initiative was co-funded by Felixstowe Town Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council (now East Suffolk Council) and Suffolk County Council. Felixstowe Forward consists of a small team which is headed up by the Felixstowe Forward Change Director. The work of the team is guided by the Felixstowe Forward Sponsor Group which consists of local government, business and community representatives

Engagement with a wide range of business and community groups is central to developing a plan of action which will improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Felixstowe.

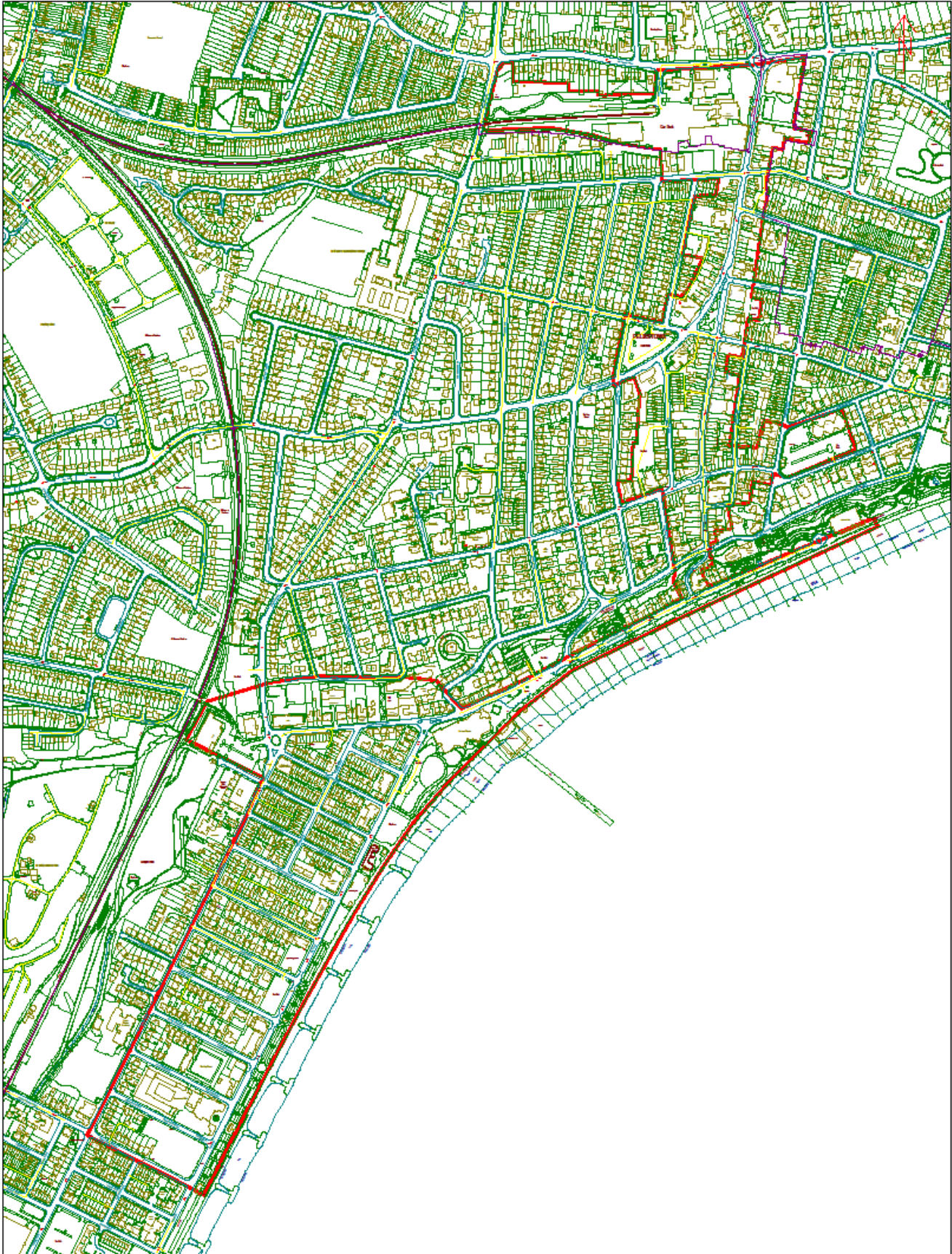
At the inaugural annual engagement event in July 2015 a workshop to explore business priorities identified a need for better town centre representation and an interest in exploring a Business Improvement District (BID) in Felixstowe. At subsequent engagement events in 2017, 2018 and 2019, the subject of a BID and priorities for the Town Centre and Seafont have been explored through presentations and workshop sessions.

Felixstowe Forward undertook a Feasibility Study on behalf of a group of businesses as part of its role to enable the town to find a collective means of responding to the challenges they face in Felixstowe.

The findings from the Feasibility Study conclude that a BID is viable for Felixstowe. In summary the key data is as follows:

- **364 Business Rated Units**
- **£7.4m Total Rateable Value**
- **126 Sectors**

Feasibility Study Levy Area



Market Research and Consultation

A limited market research & consultation exercise is carried out for the Foundation Phase.

It is not the intention of this consultation to ascertain the likelihood of a yes or no vote in terms of support for the BID or what a BID might do, as this is a longer more intensive development and persuasion process. At this stage we seek to establish a general understanding of local business issues and identify the sorts of projects businesses may desire. We can then determine if they can be funded and implemented through a BID proposal e.g. if the demand was for the building of a multi-storey car park then patently a BID is not the right vehicle, whereas marketing can be achieved.

The market research and consultation exercise was essentially carried out as follows:

A desktop review of existing plans and reports. The intention is to draw out from these documents the elements and activities that are relevant to this study.

In particular the work of People and Places has been key to identifying priorities. People and Places were commissioned by East Suffolk Council to undertake a study of East Suffolk Towns to develop a 'Forward Framework' focusing on the 'what' and the 'how' of town centre revitalisation. In Felixstowe 143 (49%) out of 292 Business Confidence Surveys were returned, 81 on street town shopper surveys and 417 shopper surveys were completed online. Outcomes from this work will be shared early in 2020.

Business engagement and consultation exercise to understand the broad priorities for businesses.

The 2018 Felixstowe Forward engagement event 'New Horizons in Felixstowe' was attended by over 140 business representatives and community organisations to find out more about three areas of aspirational development in Felixstowe including a BID. The sessions explored the benefits of a BID to Felixstowe and the concerns and challenges.

The 2019 engagement event attended by over 100 business representatives and community organisations further explored Town Centre issues and priorities.

In March 2018 Drop In Sessions were held to engage with the business community to enable businesses to find out

more about a BID and to help identify priorities.

These were held in March and April 2018 and promoted through the distribution of flyers to town centre businesses. To maximise attendance the drop ins were planned at different times of the day – breakfast, lunch and early

1 to 1 Consultation including an online and paper based survey to understand the broad priorities for businesses and to allow a more detailed understanding of the commitment from key levy paying business stakeholders and groups. A copy of the survey and aggregated responses can be found in the separate Appendix.

Total 1 to 1 meetings held	65
Confirmed Yes	55
Undecided – predicted yes	4
Outstanding (awaiting confirmation)	3
No	3

We engaged with approximately 18% of the organisations in the BID area

Public Agency Meeting

Felixstowe Forward Sponsor group quarterly meetings with representatives from Suffolk County Council, east Suffolk Council, Felixstowe Town Council, Felixstowe Chamber of trade and Commerce, Community Action Suffolk and Port of Felixstowe.

Felixstowe Town Council Meetings attended and reported to.

Project Priorities

This level of investment is recommended to make a demonstrable impact, delivering the business ideas and priorities that have emerged from the consultation process so far. These are:

Local & Visitor Marketing & Promotion

Increasing Footfall, Spend, Dwell

Town Centre/Seafront Links

Pedestrianisation of Hamilton Road

Digital Technology

Business Support

Lobbying & Advocacy

Financial Forecast

It is our opinion based on the consultation and financial analysis that the working assumption at this stage should be a maximum 1.5% Levy which would raise approximately £111,000 pa or £555,000 over 5 years