

IPSWICH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: IP-ONE AREA ACTION PLAN

Analysis of comments received in response to issues and options consultation, June-July 2006.

Overview

Number of comments received on each of the issues.

Issue Number	Issue	No. of comments
1	Objectives	140
2	Areas for tailored policies	74
3	Vision for Ipswich Town Centre	100
4	Central Shopping Area boundary and retail site opportunities	159
5	Relationship between town centre and Waterfront shopping	71
6	Connections within IP-One	99
7	Additional Facilities	125
8	Urban Design	98
9	Office Location Strategy	56
10	Delivery	34
	Other	1
	Total	957

Whilst this paper pulls together, as far as possible, the 957 wide ranging comments made on this topic, please note that the full database of comments is available on the Ipswich Borough Council web site at www.ipswich.gov.uk on the Strategic Planning and Regeneration page.

A detailed analysis of each issue follows.

Issue 1 Objectives

Ten objectives for IP-One were set out for comment:

Objective 1 Integrate new and existing communities

Objective 2 New buildings should meet sustainable construction standards

Objective 3 Areas and facilities should be accessible to all sections of the community

Objective 4 Protect the distinctive character of different neighbourhoods

Objective 5 Promote high quality employment opportunities in accessible locations

Objective 6 Enable convenient pleasant and safe movement by all modes

Objective 7 Provide an attractive, effective, safe and wildlife-friendly public realm and open spaces

Objective 8 Promote sustainable residential communities well served by facilities and services

Objective 9 Protect and enhance the town centre's status as a regional centre

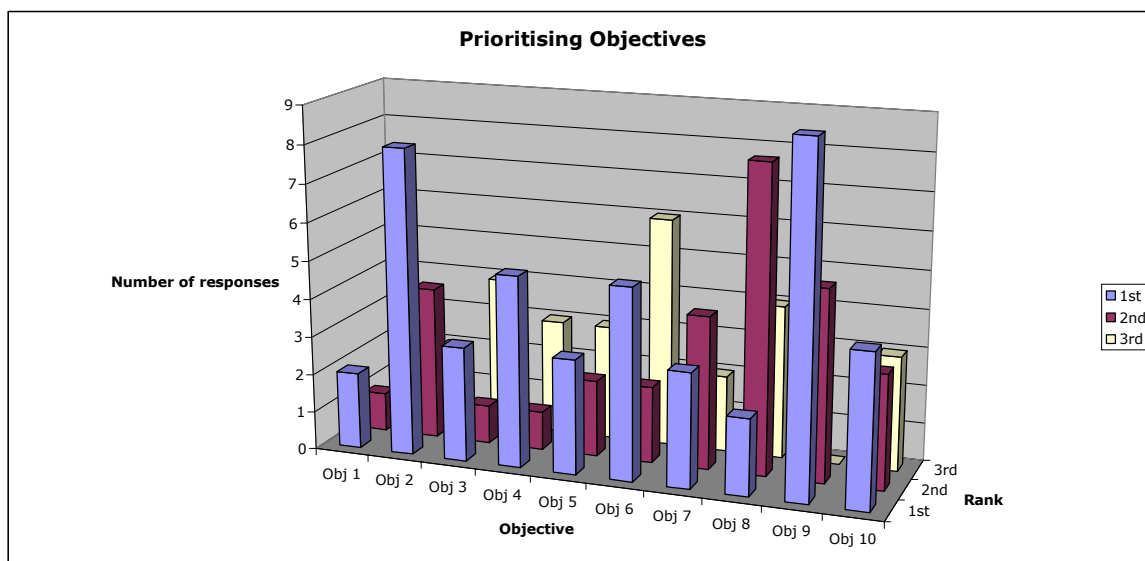
Objective 10 Protect the mixed use nature of the Waterfront.

People were asked to state which of these they agreed or disagreed with, and then to rank the objectives they agreed with in order of preference. They were also invited to suggest different objectives.

A total of 140 separate comments were made on this issue.

The ten objectives suggested received very similar levels of support and consequently there is no great benefit in showing them graphically. The most popular was Objective 7 with 41 respondents selecting it, and the least popular was Objective 6 with 34 respondents selecting it. Objective 6 was also the objective most frequently identified as being disagreed with, followed by Objective 9, but in both cases the number of disagreeing comments was low. Reasons for disagreement, where given, included “Objective 9 is not important”, and “Why does Ipswich have to be an increasingly large regional centre?” At the other end of the spectrum, several respondents asked for the inclusion of the word “promote” in objective 9 so that Ipswich promotes itself as a regional centre. Comments on Objective 6 included “Not all modes of transport may be viable and safe pedestrian movement may clash with cars”, and “Amend Objective 6 to read *green* modes of transport.”

Given the above, the rankings show some surprising results. The chart below indicates the number of respondents who placed in each of the ten objectives in first, second or third place.



You will notice that the number of respondents who commented on priorities was relatively low. Based on first place alone, Objectives 9 and 2 are clear priorities, followed by Objectives 4 and 6. If we combine the scores for first second and third place, Objectives 2, 8 and 9 attracted the highest prioritisation, followed by Objectives 6, and then 4 and 7.

Looking at those placed in 8th, 9th and 10th position, Objectives 10, 9 and 3 figure most frequently in these lower positions. Objective 9 about Ipswich’s regional centre role is clearly controversial – some respondents prioritise it (notably respondents in the development sector) whilst others are opposed to it and place it at the bottom of the list. Similarly Objective 6 seems to split opinion. It is the most disagreed with objective, and yet those who agreed with it tended to rank it highly.

Many additional objectives were suggested by respondents:

- Suffolk County Council: Ensure that adequate infrastructure comes forward at the same time as development.
- Individuals:
 - Secure high standards of design in individual buildings and in the public realm.
 - Promote a clean and safe environment.
 - Create a vibrant accessible centre for all.
 - Aim for individualistic shops, not clones of other towns.
 - Enhance townscape by subjecting landmark buildings to peer review by a retained architect panel of international repute.
 - Public art should be an identified aim of the plan to enhance the attractiveness of the core of the town.
 - New public spaces should be created wherever possible within developments or development areas.
- Developers:
 - Meet the retail requirements of the borough by supporting the efficient re-use of previously developed land wherever possible to achieve sustainable outcomes.
 - Enhance the retail and leisure offer of the town centre.
 - Meet shopper needs in the central area and provide sustainable shopping opportunities.
 - Optimise the use of central sites and ensure that they contribute to the IP-One vision.
 - Improve links to and accessibility by public transport including rail.
 - Re-integrate the river into the town centre and open up public access.
- Interest Groups:
 - RSPB: Protect and enhance biological diversity for the benefit of wildlife, the environment and humans.
 - Green Living Centre: Enhance the river as per the River Strategy
 - Suffolk Preservation Society: Development should take place in a sustainable way and on sustainable sites.

Finally, comments from key agencies are as follows:

- GO East points out that the objectives are broad and could apply equally to the whole borough, so why not use them for the Core Strategy and develop more detailed and focused objectives for IP-One.
- EERA is satisfied that the objectives are consistent with draft Regional Spatial Strategy.

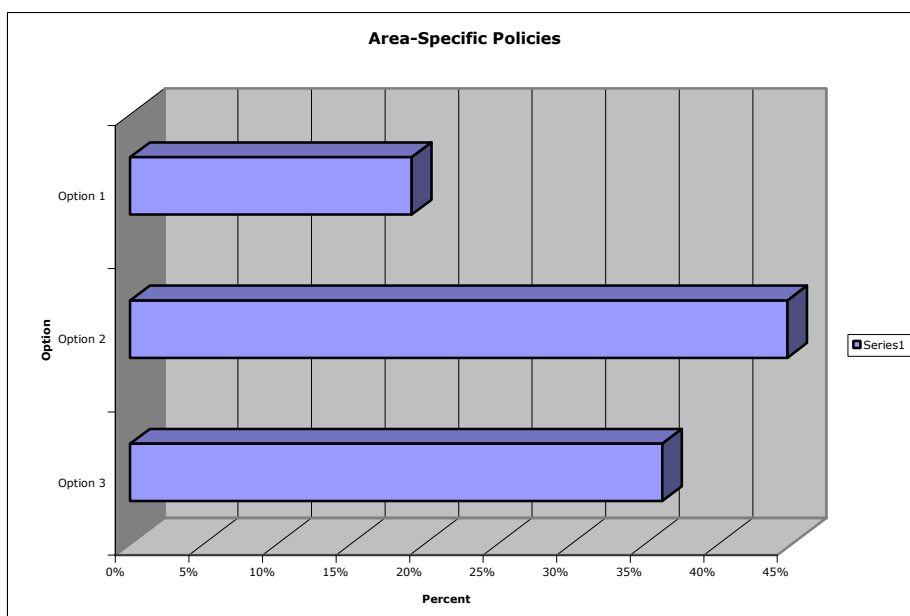
Issue 2 Which parts of IP-One need their own tailored policies?

The options set out were:

Option 1 The Area Action Plan should not focus on any specific geographical areas.

Option 2 The Area Action Plan should set out individual strategies for land uses in Ipswich Town Centre, the Education Quarter the Waterfront and Ipswich Village.

Option 3 The Area Action Plan should identify smaller areas that need a special focus and an individual strategy should be produced for each one.



74 comments were made on this matter of which 48 expressed a preference for one of the options. Option 2 came out as the favourite - that would focus on the town centre, Ipswich Village, Education Quarter and Waterfront. However, there was also a fair body of support for Option 3 which advocated a smaller area focus. Question 6 invited suggestions as to where that focus should be. The answers that came back were:

- All river corridors;
- Develop a low rent area for specialist shops.
- Disused churches and churchyards.
- The Princes Street corridor linking to the station.
- Upper Orwell Street/Bond Street.
- The area behind Woolworth's.
- St Peters/St Nicholas Street
- The river front.
- The area from the town centre to Star Lane.
- Portman Road area.
- The Wet Dock.
- Island Site.
- Riverside between Stoke Bridge and Princes Street Bridge.

Finally respondents were invited to suggest an entirely different approach. Suffolk Constabulary pointed out that they have five policing areas with Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Others consider that a coherent plan for the whole of IP-One is needed, or wish to see Option 1 just with a focus on the town centre and Ipswich Village.

Neither GO East nor EERA commented specifically on this issue.

Issue 3 A Vision for Ipswich Town Centre

The options set out were:

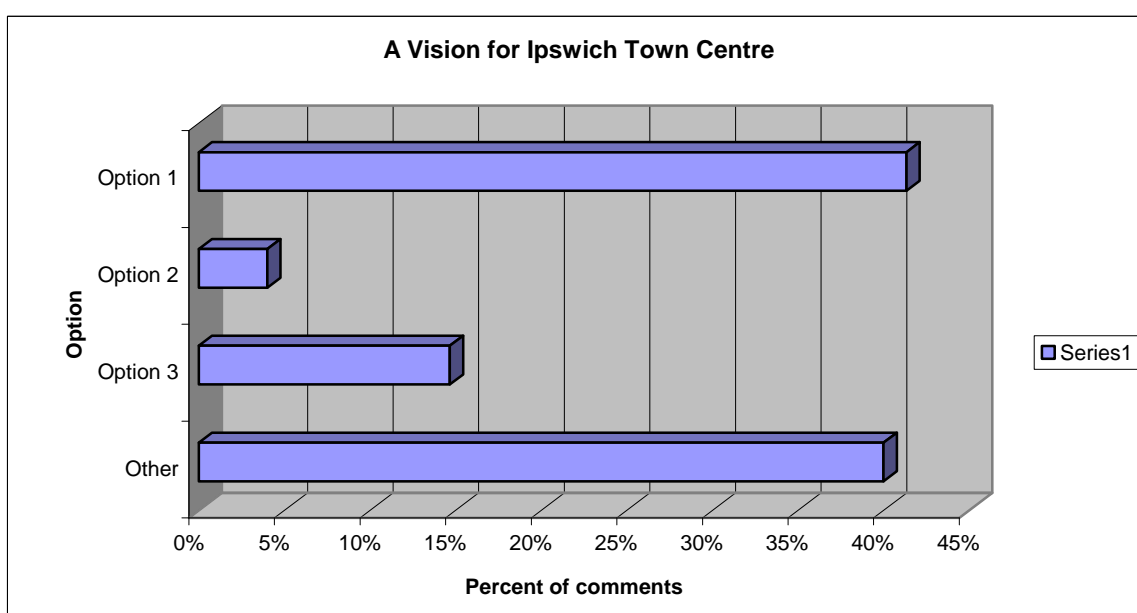
Option 1 A proposed vision for Ipswich town centre could be that in the medium to long term, it should have:

- A more diverse retail offer
- An improved environment
- Excellent connections
- A vibrant culture and street life
- Thriving business, residential and education communities and
- A safe and secure environment.

Option 2 The development of the town centre should be opportunity led and not constrained by a vision.

Option 3 The vision should be more site and street specific.

People were also invited to propose their own vision for Ipswich town centre.



The 74 comments made in relation to options or alternatives under this issue provide clear results. Of the options put forward, Option 1 is the clear favourite. However, marginally more respondents prefer to offer their own vision. There is not room to report them all here but the following gives a flavour of the suggestions:

- Develop the town centre in a way that ensures it can fulfil its role as a regional centre.
- The space allocated to motorists in central Ipswich should be reduced to provide a better environment.
- We need a sustainable vision in which protection and enhancement of biological diversity is integral to social and economic development and contributes fully to the prosperity and well being of inhabitants.
- We need a more diverse market in the town centre e.g. a farmers' market.
- The town centre needs to be made safer.
- More individual shops and cheap or free short-term parking.
- Make all our medieval town centre churches accessible and useful.
- We need independent retail outlets, culture, markets, safe pedestrian areas seating and green spaces - make Ipswich interesting and fun.

In terms of how to achieve the vision for the town centre, suggestions included the Council using its land ownership where possible; working through the Business Improvement District; working through partnership with a development agency; having a robust set of planning initiatives such as area action plans that are designed to facilitate growth; increased police presence; and education as to the benefits of sustainable transport measures to overcome opposition from some motorists and politicians, together with enforcement of sanctions against motorists.

Finally, those who chose option 3 put forward specific areas for change in the town centre and these included: the Mint Quarter, north side of Carr Street, Westgate Quarter, St Matthews St, land south of Grafton way, and Crown Street/Tower Ramparts. One respondent also asked for a detailed delivery plan within that vision.

Neither GO East nor EERA commented on this matter.

Issue 4 Planning for Growth: where to draw the Central Shopping Area boundary and how it relates to site opportunities

The options in this section were split into two groups and will be reported in turn below. The first options set out were about where to draw the Central Shopping Area boundary:

Option 1 Retain the adopted Local Plan Central Shopping Area boundary.

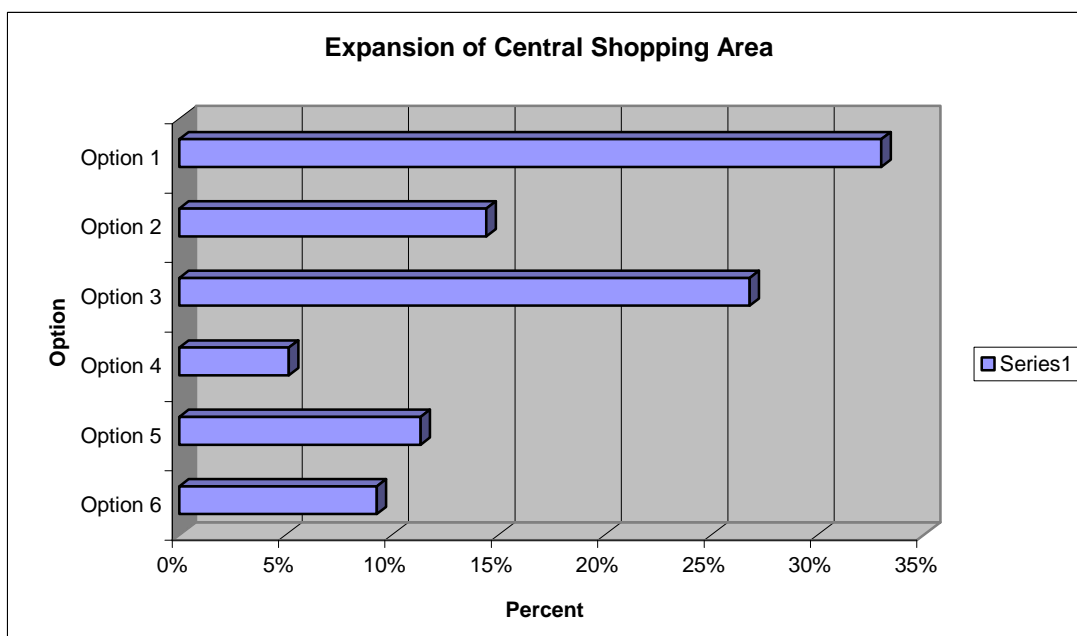
Option 2 Expand the Central Shopping Area primarily westwards to incorporate the Westgate site.

Option 3 Expand the Central Shopping Area primarily southwards to incorporate Turret Lane.

Option 4 Expand the Central Shopping Area primarily northwards to incorporate the Crown Street site.

Option 5 Expand the Central Shopping Area a little in all directions to allow for growth as opportunities arise.

Option 6 Expand the Central Shopping Area significantly to match a more extensive town centre boundary.



The graph provides some clear messages: keep the Central Shopping Area as it is, or if it is extended it should be in a southwards direction to strengthen links to the Waterfront, or westwards to strengthen links to Ipswich Village. Please note that the rows include responses in which respondents opted for a combination of the options. Some respondents did not select an option but made a more general comment:

- Suffolk County Council suggest that the implications for sustainable access to sites should be taken into account in prioritising sites, and that adequate space should be available to meet the growing needs of the town within the centre.
- Individuals comment that it is hard to fill existing shops because of high rates; the town needs to shake off its working class image; and there are plenty of empty shops already.
- Developers comment that the Council should retain flexibility within policies.

The response rate to the next question in the paper (question number 13) asking specifically which option would best improve shopping was low at only 25 responses. Option preferences came out fairly evenly (Options 1, 2 and 6 got four responses each, and Options 3 and 5 got three responses each). Other comments suggest that the

Council should fill vacant shops first and should woo potential traders; the quality and diversity of shopping will increase if it is associated with the Waterfront; and that the Council should look beyond the existing retail core to deliver more town centre convenience (food) retailing.

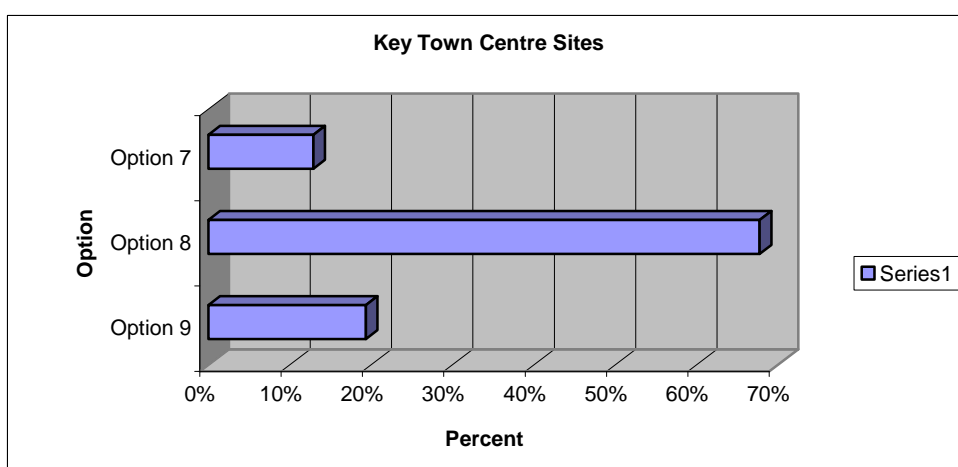
The second part of this issue is about key retail sites and the mix of uses.

The options set out were:

Option 7 If the Central Shopping Area is extended, sites at the Mint Quarter and/or Turret Lane and/or Westgate should be allocated for retail use.

Option 8 If the Central Shopping Area is extended, sites at the Mint Quarter and/or Turret Lane and/or Westgate should be allocated for retail use plus a mix of uses from the range of office, residential or leisure.

Option 9 The plan should not allocate the sites specifically and should let general town centre policies apply to them.



There were only 31 responses on the options but Option 8 is the clear preference of respondents – that is for mixed uses on town centre sites. Respondents were asked which sites they would apply the approach to: four said the Mint Quarter, one Turret Lane, one Westgate, five all the sites and two wanted the Crown Street site included.

Others proposed a mixed approach. The two broad positions were put forward:

- for retail at the Mint Quarter and Westgate (possibly with some residential) and office and residential uses at Turret Lane; or
- for retail alone at the Mint Quarter, retail with residential, office or leisure at Westgate, and retail, leisure and residential at Turret Lane.

Other comments made are an objection to any leisure at Westgate because of its proximity to local residents, and an objection to food retailing at Westgate because need has not been proved – it should instead be allocated for comparison retailing.

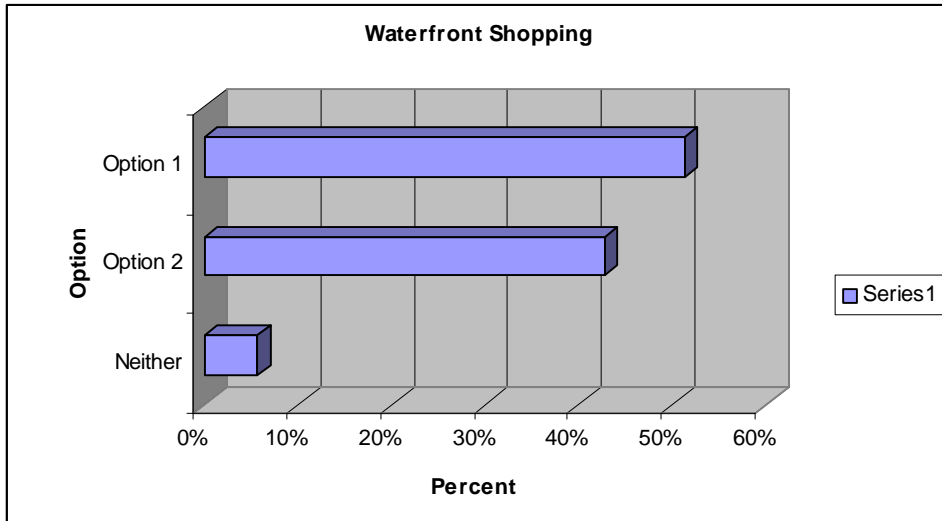
The final question in this section asked for any other site suggestions and just three were made: St Margaret's Street/Soane Triangle, Star lane/Lower Orwell Street, and Crown Street car park.

Issue 5 The relationship between town centre and waterfront shopping.

The options set out were:

Option 1 Shopping at the Waterfront should be limited to specialist shops and shops serving the needs of the resident community, so that it complements the town centre and retains a separate identity (achieved by imposing a maximum floor space).

Option 2 The current approach to shopping provision at the Waterfront should continue with applications considered on their merits against general retail policies.



There are 35 responses represented in the graph, and they show that opinion on this matter is almost equally divided. Of those who chose Option 1, the majority concur with the maximum floor space suggested by the Retail Study. However, a significant minority of developers consider that the ceiling of 200 square metres is too small to accommodate key services such as doctors and dentists. Suffolk County Council point out that whilst ground floor commercial uses at the Waterfront are good for its revitalisation, the town centre remains the most accessible location in the town for shopping. Some consider that the Waterfront could provide more retailing than previously envisaged to complement the town centre, for example, small specialist shops. Another respondent sees the Waterfront as a tourist and residential area rather than a shopping one.

Issue 6 Connections within IP-One: making movement easier.

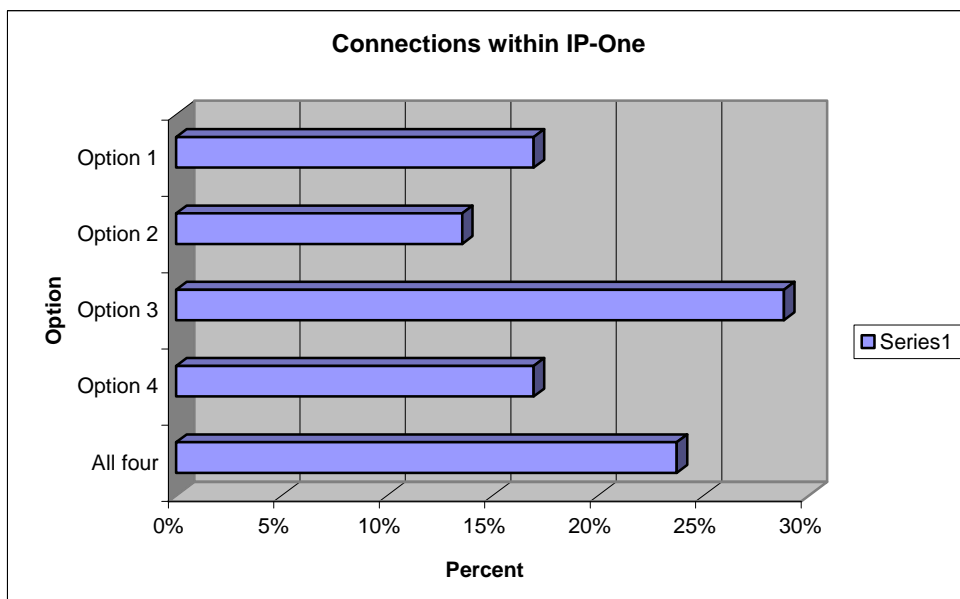
The options set out were:

Option 1 Provide further pedestrian crossing and priority measures on the south-west side of the Town Centre to link to Ipswich Village and the railway station.

Option 2 Provide further pedestrian crossing and priority measures to the east of the Town Centre to link to the Education Quarter.

Option 3 Provide further pedestrian crossing and priority measures on the south side of the Town Centre to link to the Waterfront.

Option 4 Provide further pedestrian crossing and priority measures to link the railway station through the Waterfront to the Education Quarter.



Once again, amongst the 59 responses represented in the table, there is quite an even spread of opinion as to where we should focus effort on improving provisions for pedestrians. However, Option 3 comes out top, and that is to focus on improving pedestrian connections with the Waterfront. Please note that the rows include responses in which respondents opted for a combination of the options (the combination 2,3,4 was most popular of these).

Respondents were also asked to prioritise the options. Surprisingly, given the results of the earlier question shown in the graph above, Option 1 was most frequently placed as top priority, followed by Option 3. Option 1 was also most frequently placed as bottom priority: clearly links to Ipswich Village and the railway station split opinion about priorities.

Finally, when asked about other short and long term priorities for improving connections, respondents said:

- A wider plan to manage flows around the southern town centre;
- Building the East Bank Link Road would remove HGVs from the one way system;
- Easier and more pleasant access for pedestrians and cyclists in all parts of IP-One.
- Improvements should be across the centre and link to the direction in which the Central Shopping Area expands;
- Princes Street roundabout represents a major barrier;
- Safe access for pedestrians and cyclists and appropriate cycle parking facilities should be incorporated in all new developments;

- Long term links between the town centre, Education Quarter and Waterfront and river corridor too;
- Better placed and timed crossings along Princes Street, and a fully joined up cycle way to the station;
- An integrated rail/bus station for the area instead of the existing fragmented system;
- More pedestrian bridges, brighter underpasses and remove traffic signals;
- Pedestrian only access to the town centre and all parking and buses outside it;
- Rapid transit between the station, town centre, university and waterfront;
- Integrated town centre cycle network;
- Rearrange road access to the Waterfront to make it more accessible from the town centre;
- Straighten Key Street to improve flows; and
- Provide plenty of car parking.

Those with highways responsibilities commented as follows:

- Highways Agency – Generally development should take account of the wider borough and policies should take an integrated approach so that shopping expansion would be matched by adequate sustainable transport measures, and any move to restrict east-west movements by car through the town should avoid putting more local traffic onto the A14.
- Suffolk County Council – the Area Action Plan should include connections (by foot and cycle) with surrounding parks and countryside, so that urban residents can safely access those areas for recreation, and rural dwellers can easily commute by bike into town. Measures should be tied in to a comprehensive transport plan linking the Waterfront to the town centre.

Issue 7 Additional Facilities

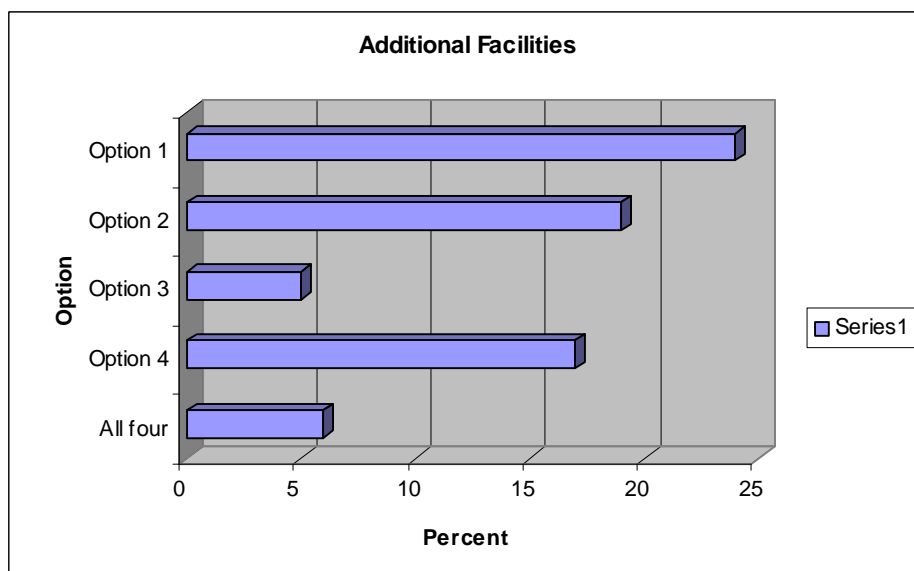
The options set out were:

Option 1 The top priority should be to provide new cultural facilities.

Option 2 The top priority should be to provide new community facilities.

Option 3 The top priority should be to provide new sports facilities.

Option 4 The top priority should be to provide new outdoor spaces such as parks and play areas.



Option 1, cultural facilities, appears to be the most popular choice on this issue, with Options 2 and 4 not far behind. Only Option 3, sports facilities, appears noticeably less popular. More than half of the 71 comments received picked a combination of the options (the most frequently chosen combination was 1 and 2, followed by 1 and 4).

People were invited to make specific suggestions of other priorities or of particular facilities needed and some common themes emerge from those comments:

- Several respondents mention the need for a better/permanent market in Ipswich;
- Several respondents want an attraction (some on the Waterfront) and suggestions include a Saxon Ipswich centre, an interactive museum/science park, a visitor centre, maritime museum, or observation tower;
- A landmark community building on the Island site or a community hall in the centre and rooms to book for meetings;
- An Olympic pool including diving boards;
- More recreational land, especially at the Waterfront;
- A sports facility on the edge of town;
- Renovate Broom Hill Baths (these lie outside IP-One);
- An arts/film theatre, perhaps linked to the University (some call for the preservation of Ipswich film theatre) and
- Town centre tea rooms.
- Other individual suggestions include a rowing centre, a green living centre, an ice rink and a cycling venue.

Finally on the matter of funding the delivery of these facilities, a number of suggestions are made: tax payers, the Borough and County Councils, Heritage Lottery Fund, local businesses, higher admission prices, developer contributions and central Government.

Issue 8 Urban Design

The options under this issue were set out in two groups, first exploring the approach to urban design and then attitudes to landmark buildings:

Option 1 The IP-One Area Action Plan should carry forward the urban design principles for Ipswich Waterfront and Ipswich Village set out in the previous IP-One document and the Ipswich Village Urban Design Framework.

Option 2 As Option 1, but with additional urban design frameworks for other areas.

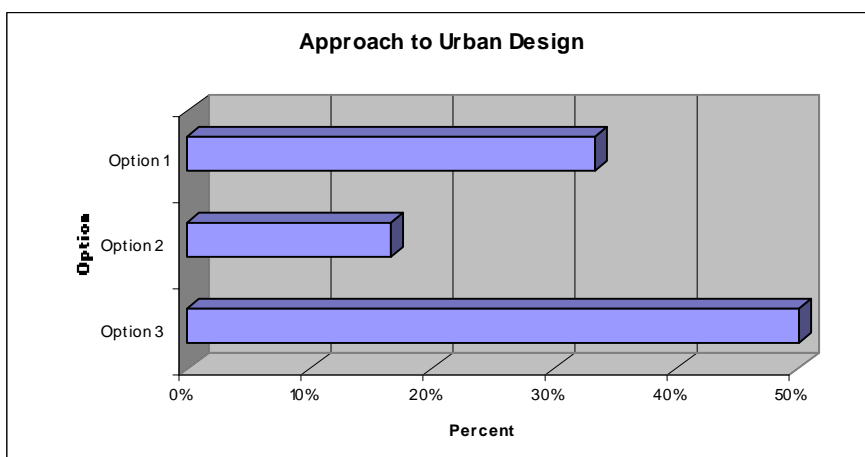
Option 3 The approach to urban design should be criteria based rather than focusing on particular areas.

Option 4 Ipswich does not need a landmark buildings policy.

Option 5 Ipswich needs a landmark buildings policy and it should

- a. identify specific sites where they will be required
- b. identify broad areas such as the Waterfront where they may be acceptable or
- c. permit them anywhere subject to criteria being satisfied.

The graph below focuses on the first three options.



Of 98 comments on this issue in total, only 24 related to Options 1 to 3 in response to question 26 in the issues and options paper. From this small number of comments, it would appear that the criteria based approach to urban design across the whole area is preferred. This certainly seems to be the case within the development sector. The additional areas for urban design frameworks suggested by those who chose option 2 are: Cardinal Park/Greyfriars, the river from Handford Road to Stoke Bridge, and the town centre. In relation to Options 4 and 5, nearly three times more responses (20 to 7) favoured having a landmark buildings policy (Option 5) over not having one (Option 4). Within Option 5 above, the favoured approach was clause a. to identify sites where landmark buildings would be required.

Respondents also made general comments about urban design:

- It is crucial to enforce excellent design once the policies are in place.
- All areas of the town should achieve a quality of design that enhances it.
- Good design should be a high priority.
- Ipswich does not need tall buildings.
- Permit tall buildings if they are of a high architectural standard.
- Encourage new public spaces and irregular rooflines.
- Avoid confrontation between old and new.
- Need better street design with less clutter.
- Areas with important character should be considered carefully.
- Environmental enhancements should be integral with urban design approaches.

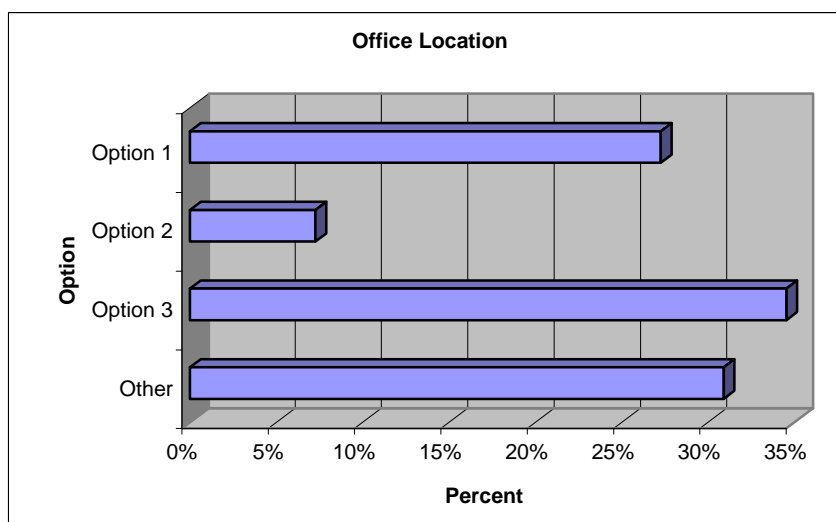
Issue 9 Office Location Strategy

The options set out were:

Option 1 Sites for office development should be clustered in Ipswich Village.

Option 2 Sites for office development should be clustered in Ipswich town centre.

Option 3 Offices should be allowed to locate anywhere within IP-One provided accessibility criteria are met.



This graph again shows quite a spread of opinion about where offices should be located, with the town centre (Option 2) proving the least favoured option. Those who chose Option 2 justified the choice as the best for public transport accessibility and to maintain vitality of the centre. Go East commented that the dispersal options (particularly Option 3) needed to be more explicitly linked to national guidance on town centre planning (PPS6), which favours a town centre location for office uses.

Of the options, Option 3 to disperse office development across IP-One was the most popular choice. Only one respondent gave a reason for this choice, which was that the office market requires some diversity. Almost as popular was the suggestion of alternative approaches to the 3 options. Some of these were:

- Offices should be in the town centre or existing industrial areas;
- Create office areas on the edge of town to reduce the burden on the town centre.
- Concentrating office development into a particular area provides the opportunity to plan the growth so that the office use integrates with associated land uses. It also provides a catalyst for food and drink investment in the area.
- Need to ensure transport between large office developments and the shopping area.
- Suffolk Constabulary prefers office uses mixed in with other uses rather than concentrated together, to help manage opportunist criminal activity in deserted office quarters outside office hours.
- The RSPB thinks that office location should take account of existing infrastructure and facilities and aim to reduce transport congestion and associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- The office market requires a diverse choice of locations.
- Promote mixed uses to reduce the need to travel.
- Locate offices according to sustainability criteria and local need.

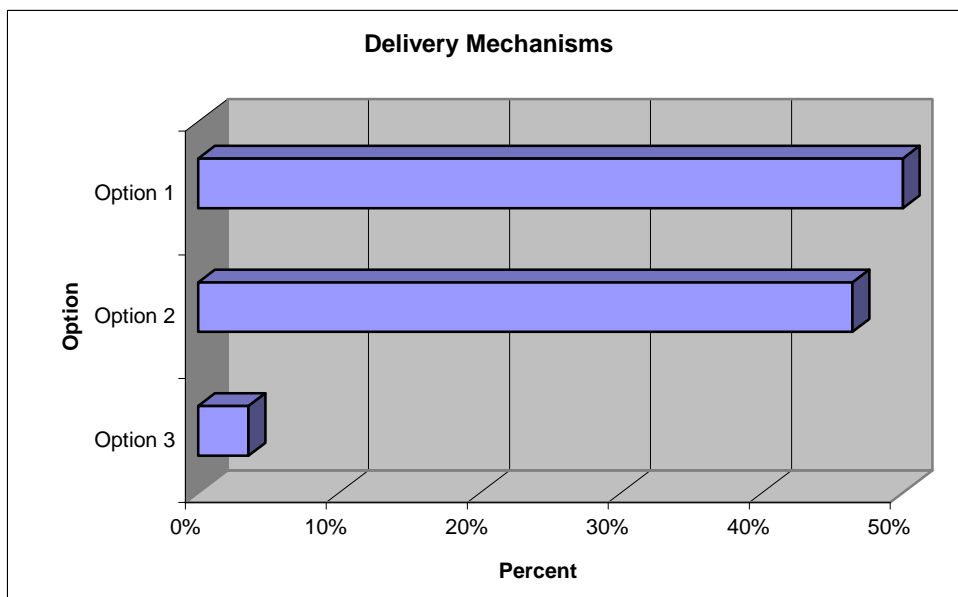
Issue 10 Delivery

The options set out were:

Option 1 A delivery partnership should be established specifically to oversee and drive forward the delivery of schemes within IP-One.

Option 2 Existing partnerships and forums should be used to drive forward the delivery of schemes within IP-One, e.g. Area Forums.

Option 3 A different mechanism is needed to ensure delivery.



The graph shows that opinion is evenly split about whether the best way to deliver development within IP-One is via a new delivery partnership or using existing partnerships and forums.

Comments received in favour of a new delivery partnership include:

- It would be able to gauge the delivery of each scheme and would have the benefit of a coordinated approach. But it would be another tier of bureaucracy.
- We need to ensure delivery and consultation avenues could be maintained through Ipswich Partnership etc.
- Effort could be dissipated if more than one body is involved.
- Option two could create communication problems between partners.

Comments supporting the use of existing partnerships were:

- We already have a raft of partnerships – rather than adding more just establish which work and use them as a blueprint.
- Existing forums represent the various land owners in the area – another partnership could be an impediment to delivery.
- Existing forums, but may need a new partnership for the Mint Quarter.
- Building on existing partnerships would be less costly.

A general comment made about delivery was that, ultimately, those taking decisions should be democratically accountable.

Many thanks to all who commented on IP-One issues and options.