



SOUTHWOLD AND REYDON SOCIETY
Protecting the character and amenities of Southwold and Reydon

Southwold and Reydon Society Housing Report 2011

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In 2009 the Southwold and Reydon Society developed a Planning Manifesto for Southwold and Reydon, outlining the principles that the Society believes should be applied in local planning developments. Arising from this the Society recognized that it needed to establish some basic facts about housing in the area and this reports seeks to do that. We have drawn on information from the 2001 Census, the 2008-9 voting register, information obtained about categories of council tax payer from Waveney Council under a Freedom of Information request, and the Southwold Town Council's 2006 Housing Needs Survey. We have tried to establish some statistics about the different types of property in Southwold and Reydon and to analyze recent trends. We have also tried to summarize what is available locally in the form of social housing. We emphasize that the picture we derive from the publicly available information is somewhat incomplete.

1. Number of domestic dwellings in Southwold and Reydon

The 2001 National Census (Appendix 1) identified 1284 dwellings in Southwold, of which 790 were permanently occupied. 450 were second homes or holiday homes and 44 were vacant. So the proportion of non-empty dwellings in Southwold in 2001 that were second homes or holiday homes was 36.3%.

Figures supplied by Waveney District Council in July 2010, under a Freedom of Information request (Appendix 2), give 1156 domestic dwellings in Southwold and 1410 in Reydon. Of the Southwold dwellings, 341 paid the full Council Tax, 302 paid the single person rate, 403 paid the second home 90% rate, 65 paid the long term empty dwelling rate and 45 were unoccupied exempt dwellings. So the proportion of second homes in Southwold, excluding empty dwellings was 38.5%. The corresponding figure for Reydon was 11.8%.

If we compare the 643 occupied domestic dwellings paying Council Tax in 2010, with the 790 on the 2001 Census, we see that 147 dwellings that were permanently occupied in 2001 were no longer so in 2010. Some of these may be accounted for by the increase in the number of vacant properties, from 44 to 110. However the total number of dwellings in Southwold classified as domestic by Waveney in 2010 was 1156, compared with 1284 on the 2001 Census. Our assumption is that this reduction of 128 in the number of dwellings classified as domestic by Waveney represents holiday homes paying the business rate, and this brings the number of second homes or holiday homes in Southwold to 531, i.e. 45.2% of non-empty dwellings.

In addition, figures extracted from approved Waveney planning applications show that between 2000 and 2010 inclusive, 83 new dwellings were approved in Southwold. Not all of these may have been completed, and some of the remainder may account for the increase in number of empty dwellings, but at least we can conclude that the number of domestic dwellings is not declining.

Our estimate that 45% of domestic dwellings in Southwold were holiday homes or second homes in 2010, compared with 36% in 2001, represents a worrying trend. It is reasonable to conclude that by 2020 the figure will be over 50%. At this level we may have to start worrying whether services catering for the local population, like shops and the local primary school, will remain viable.



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2. Population of Southwold and Reydon

The 2001 Census gives the populations of Southwold as 1458, with 150 under 18. The population of Reydon was 2367. The 2008-9 Electoral Register shows 1026 in Southwold and 2134 in Reydon. So between 2001 and 2009 the adult population of Southwold dropped by 282, a fall of 21%. This is entirely consistent with the decline in the number of domestic dwellings from 790 to 643, a fall of 18%.

Interpolating between the 2001 Census and the 2009 voting register we estimate the changing permanent resident population, and the number of permanent residences, in Southwold, as follows:

	2001	2006	2009
Resident adult population	1308 ^a	(1122)	1026 ^b
Permanent residences	790 ^a	(698)	643 ^c

a - 2001 Census, b - 2008-9 Voter Register, c - Waveney Council Tax statistics.

3. Profile of Southwold population

In 2006 the Southwold Council carried out a 'Southwold Local Housing Needs Survey' and this allows us to compile a profile of the population of Southwold at that time.

1300 survey forms were sent out and 423 were returned, representing a total of 790 people. 353 forms returned were from permanent resident households, representing a turnout of about 50% (see Appendix 4). The age profile amongst the returns showed that 9% of the population were aged 0-15, 7% were aged 16-24, and 54% were aged 60 or over. 77% of households had lived in Southwold for at least 10 years. 10% of households were in Local Authority or Housing Association properties, and a further 8% were in rented accommodation.

In response to the question 'Is an affordable housing scheme needed?' 83% replied yes. 17.5% of respondents had close family members who have had to move out of the Parish because they were unable to find or buy or rent suitable accommodation. 56 households (16%) said they were in need of alternative accommodation [young people wishing to set up their own home 29; families, young couple, relationship breakup 24; elderly households 20].

Taking into account the 50% turnout of responses, the total need for social housing in Southwold could be as high as 100 units.

4. Social and Affordable housing

The main categories of available social and affordable housing in the area are: Local Authority rental; Housing Association rental and shared ownership; and charitable rental.

There are a total of 124 units in Southwold and 148 units in Reydon, which represent about 10% of the total housing stock in both Southwold and Reydon. These are an important part of the local housing provision.



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5. Overall conclusions

The fraction of domestic residences, which are second/holiday homes in Southwold today, is 45% and in Reydon it is 12%. The trend in Southwold is strongly upward, increasing from 36% in 2001 to 45% today. Between 2001 and 2010 the number of permanently occupied dwellings dropped from 790 to 643, and the resident adult population dropped from 1308 to 1026. The main increase is in business holiday lets rather than in second homes and this is a worrying trend for the life of the town. While second home owners often eventually move to the area permanently, the same is less likely to be true for those using a house as a holiday let business. It's not obvious what the community can do to influence these consequences of the housing market. The pressure on housing in Southwold is a sign of the economic boom the town is enjoying.

The number of social housing dwellings in Southwold and Reydon might be considered reasonable at about 10% of the total housing stock. However, it is important for the continuing viability of the Southwold and Reydon community to preserve this housing and, if possible, increase it since a substantial unmet need was identified by the 2006 Southwold Town Council Housing Needs Survey. The Southwold and Reydon Society should try to give a high profile to the work of local Housing Associations and Housing Charities.



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Appendix 1. Information from 2001 National Census:

Population of Southwold: 1458 in 790 households

Number under 18: 150, so number of adults (electoral roll) would be 1308 in 2001.

Number of dwellings 1284, of which 790 are permanently occupied, 450 second/holiday and 44 vacant.

(Percentage of non-empty dwellings, which were second/holiday homes in 2001, was 36.3%.)

Population of Reydon: 2567

Appendix 2. Information on proportions paying different rates of Council Tax supplied by Waveney DC, July 2010, under Freedom of Information request:

	Southwold	Reydon (Incl. Easton Bavents)
Total number of domestic dwellings:	1156	1410
Unoccupied exempt dwellings	45	41
Long term empty dwellings (paying 100%)	65	29
Total number of occupied dwellings:	1046	1340
Second homes (paying 90% Council Tax and includes furnished holiday homes)	403	158
Percent second homes of total:	34.9%	11.2%
Percent second homes excluding empty:	38.5%	11.8%
Total number of resident dwellings:	643	1182
Percent resident dwellings of total:	55.6%	83.8%
Percent resident dwellings excluding empty:	61.5%	88.2%
Full council tax (more than one person)	341	745
Single person dwellings (paying 75%)	302	437

[Note: short stay accommodation providing for more than six residents, which would include hotels, some bed and breakfast accommodation, and possibly some very large holiday let properties, pay business rate rather than council tax, and are not included in the above table.]

Using information from letting agencies and websites, we have identified 142 holiday lets in Southwold and 39 in Reydon.



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Appendix 3. 2008-9 Electoral Register:

Southwold 1026, Reydon 2134. [Note: these will include a few second home owners.]

If we assume the change from 1308 in Southwold in 2001 to 1026 today reflects conversion of permanent residences to second homes, we arrive at an estimate of the number of permanent residences in Southwold today as ~620, which agrees quite well with the number of residences paying full or single person occupancy council tax, 643. So 147 properties that in 2001 were occupied domestic residences, according to the Census, were no longer so in 2010. Some of this is accounted for by an increase in the number of vacant properties, from 44 to 110. This leaves 81 'lost' domestic residences. However the number of second/holiday homes did not increase from the 2001 census (450) to the Waveney 2010 council tax summary (403). A possible explanation would be conversion of properties to holiday lets paying business rates and this may explain why the number of domestic residences in Southwold given by Waveney in 2010 is 1156, compared with 1284 dwellings given on the 2001 census, i.e. 128 properties seem to be no longer classified as domestic dwellings. We assume these 128 properties are now holiday lets.

Our best estimate of the total number of second/holiday homes in Southwold in 2010 is therefore $403+128 = 531$, i.e. 45.2% of the non-empty dwellings.

So between 2001 and 2010 the proportion of Southwold domestic dwellings which are second homes or holiday lets increased from 36% to 45%.



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Appendix 4. Summary of Southwold Local Housing Needs Survey 2006

This survey was commissioned by Southwold Town Council and carried out by Louise Wilby of Suffolk ACRE. 1300 housing needs survey forms were delivered by hand by Southwold TC members. 423 were returned + an additional 14 returned by 2nd home owners and not completed. Of the 423 returns, 70 were from 2nd home owners, so 353 were permanent households.

Size of household	1	2	3	4	5	6+	
	161	181	26	26	11	5	= 790 people

Age range	0-15	16-24	25-44	45-59	60-74	75+	
	70	56	78	160	222	204	= 790

* Approximately 700 adults (18+)

* 428/790 (54%) are 60+

Length of time in Parish	0-1	1-3	3-7	7-10	10-20	20+ yrs	
	6	15	30	31	80	206	

Tenure	self	Housing Assocn	Local Authority	Employer	Private Landlord	
	322	3	36	4	27	
	house or bungalow	365	flat/bedsit	59		

no. of bedrooms	1	2	3	4	5	
	31	130	169	57	32	



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Specific questions in survey:

1. Is affordable housing scheme needed? Yes 342 (83%), No 36, don't know 33
2. Has household had close family members who have had to move out of Parish because unable to find or afford or buy or rent suitable accommodation?
Yes 69 (17.5%)
3. Members of household living with them because unable to find suitable accommodation: 24
4. In need of alternative accommodation: 56 [young people wishing to set up their own home 29; families, young couples, relationship breakup 24; elderly households 20]

Interpolating between the 2001 Census and the 2009 voting register we estimate the changing permanent resident population, and the number of permanent residences, in Southwold, as follows:

	2001	2006	2009
Resident population	1308 ^a	(1122)	1026 ^b
Permanent residences	790 ^a	(698)	643 ^c

a 2001 Census, b 2008-9 Voter Register, c Waveney Council Tax statistics.

We therefore deduce that the 353 permanent residence responses to the 2006 Southwold Town Council Housing needs Survey represent a 51% turnout (the number of adult respondees, 584, represents 52% of the 2006 estimated population).

So the figures in the Survey should be multiplied by ~2 to reflect the turnout of survey, and the total need for social housing is about 100 new units in Southwold.

Appendix 5. Existing Affordable and Social Housing

The main categories of available social and affordable housing in the area are: Local Authority rental; Housing Association rental and shared ownership; Charitable rental.

There are a total of 124 units in Southwold and 148 units in Reydon, which represent as a minimum 10% and 10.5% respectively of the total housing stock.

Local Authority Rental.

Waveney District Council were unable to give precise figures, but have approximately 80 properties in Southwold [Crick Court, North Road, St. Edmunds Road] and 80 in Reydon.

Together with Gt. Yarmouth Waveney operate 'Homeselect', which provides a route for those seeking homes and allocates their housing accordingly. They also allocate clients to the local Housing Associations. [For more details of this scheme see Appendix 6].



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Southwold Town Council has 9 rental properties comprising 6 flats and 3 houses, which when letting they give priority to local people.

Housing Associations.

Flagship Housing Group:

Cover Norfolk and Suffolk providing mainly shared ownership properties, but do have some fully rental properties. Also known as Suffolk Heritage Housing Association.

Shared ownership properties are offered under 'Staircase Agreements', which mean purchasers buy a percentage of the property [usually 50%] and rent the remaining portion and subsequently can increase their purchased percentage. There are two versions of this type of agreement; 'closed' whereby they can never obtain 100% ownership of the property or 'open' where they can if they wish ultimately purchase the full 100%, whereupon the property leaves the affordable housing scheme and becomes private freehold and can be subsequently sold on the open market.

This seems unfair as the properties have to be sold by the original developers to the Housing Association at below market price and it removes such houses from the system. However, new legislation is due to come into force whereby in areas of less than 3,000 population, all shared ownership housing will have to be 'Closed Staircase Agreements', but it will not be retrospective.

All Flagship's properties in this area are currently 'Open Staircase Agreements' and comprise:

Southwold – 10 at Tibbys Triangle. [there are currently discussions between Flagship and Waveney with the view that Waveney buy 5 out of the scheme and become fully rental]

Reydon – 4 at Hillview Close and 2 at St. George's Square [formerly 3, but one has been bought outright and so is now freehold and outside the scheme].

Orwell Housing Group:

Again covering Norfolk and Suffolk and seem to cater more for the rental and Sheltered Housing sector, but do have some Shared Ownership properties.

Their website lists properties in the Southwold and surrounding areas as: General Needs – 29; Shared Ownership – 7; Very Sheltered 32.

However speaking with them, they do not have any properties in Southwold and in Reydon have:

St. Margarets Court – 24; Pitches View – 32 [sheltered housing]; The Old School [Wangford Road] – 2 rental.

Housing Charities.

The Fox Trust:

Currently own 25 properties in Southwold and as they are registered as 'Almshouses' have specific restrictions placed upon them as to allocation, rents, etc. When the opportunity arises, they do sell the more unsuitable / older [therefore more expensive upkeep] properties and purchase better. They have recently sold a house in Lorne Road and purchased a flat near to the Doctors Surgery.

Andrew Matthews Trust Almshouses:

There are four in Covert Road Reydon.



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Summary on social housing:

The total provision of social housing in Southwold and Reydon is as follows:

	Southwold	Reydon
Local Authority rental	~80	~80
Southwold Town Council	9	-
Housing Associations	10	64
Housing Charities	25	4
Total	124	148

Percentage of social housing compared to 2010 figures [Appendix 2]:

Total domestic dwellings	1156 – 10.7%	1410 – 10.5%
Total occupied domestic dwellings	1046 – 11.9%	1340 – 11%
Total resident domestic dwellings	643 – 19%	1102 – 13.4%

Southwold Town Council's 2006 Housing Survey identified a need for social housing of 56 units, which should perhaps be corrected to ~100 to allow for the ~51% turnout of the Survey.

Appendix 6. Homeselect Scheme, Waveney's Involvement.

(Extract from Homeselect's website)

About The Scheme:

Homeselect is run by Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Waveney District Council in partnership with Broadland, Cotman, Guinness Trust, Orbit, Orwell, Peddars Way, Suffolk Heritage and Wherry Housing Associations. Applicants for housing now need only to join one lettings scheme for council and housing association properties across both areas. Virtually all council and housing association housing is let through the Homeselect scheme. People applying for housing are placed in one of three bands, according to their housing need. The Gold band reflects high housing need, Silver bands reflects medium housing need and bronze reflects you have a low housing need. Homes becoming available are advertised each fortnight in the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Advertisers, on our special property hotline, 01493 846140, and on this website. Each fortnight, registered applicants are able to apply for a maximum of two properties of their choice.

HomeSelect / Choice Based Lettings:

Waveney District Council, in partnership with local Housing Associations and [Great Yarmouth Borough Council](#) (who already run their own very successful scheme, known as Homeselect) is about to launch a scheme that will revolutionise the allocation of Affordable Social Housing to tenants in the district.

All local authorities must have a Choice Based system of allocating housing in operation by 2010. This will enable all applicants to have a choice in where they live, receive an appropriate level of priority and be able to participate in a scheme which is open and readily understood. Choice Based Letting schemes empower people, giving them a greater say over where they live. Instead of points or complex assessments, all applicants are divided into one of three priority bands, based on their needs. Rather than allocating properties from a list, or making nominations to housing



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associations, vacant properties in the scheme are advertised fortnightly in the local press, at local offices and on the website and telephone hotline.

Homeselect went before full Council in September 2007 where it received formal approval. Waveney District Council is concentrating on transferring existing tenants over to the new scheme before it is launched at the beginning of 2008. Cllr. Bruce Provan, Portfolio Holder for Housing said: "This is an exciting new approach to finding a home. Evidence shows that giving people a choice and a stake in where they live will lead to more satisfied tenants. It will make the system easier to understand and will ensure that applicants in most need are given priority."

Further information please visit the HomeSelect website. <https://www.homeselect.org.uk>