



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 March 2023

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Andrea McMillan Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery & Specialist Services) Andrea.McMillan@east Suffolk.gov.uk 01394 444567

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Purpose and high-level overview

Purpose of Report:

This report provides an update on key elements of the current work programme, including the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans, and on housing delivery. Updates, as appropriate, are also included for specialist services (Design and Conservation, Arboriculture and Landscape (including Rights of Way) and Ecology) that form part of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. An update is also provided on the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Options:

This report is for information only.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report is noted.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

The Local Plan Working Group oversee the preparation of many of the documents referred to in this report.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

A range of Local Plan policies for East Suffolk.

Environmental:

No impact.

Equalities and Diversity:

This report is for information only, so no equality impact assessment is required. However, undertaking an assessment is an integral element for most of the projects in the work programme.

Financial:

The work of the Team is undertaken within existing budgets, with grant income generated through support provided on Neighbourhood Planning.

Human Resources:

No impact.

ICT:

No impact.

Legal:

No impact.

Risk:

The work programme of the team is significant and crucial to the delivery of many aspects of the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. Staff capacity is an ongoing risk, with additional resource provided in the Specialist Services team during the past year. The majority of posts within the team are currently filled with vacant posts currently being advertised.

External Consultees: None

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
T01	Growing our Economy		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T03	Maintaining Financial Sustainability		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T04	Delivering Digital Transformation		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T05	Caring for our Environment		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
The Planning Policy and Delivery work programme makes a significant contribution to the delivery of the Strategic Plan, cutting across all 5 themes. The primary priority and 11			

secondary priorities identified above reflect the wide range of projects in the work programme.

The primary priority of building the right environment for East Suffolk (P01) is underpinned by having up to date Local Plan coverage for the whole District, with the secondary priorities reflecting the delivery of the Local Plans through the current work programme.

Recent progress and achievements include consultation on the Draft Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document (P08) and ongoing progress made with the review of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (P03). The draft East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule is undergoing Examination, supporting the priority of supporting and delivering infrastructure (P05).

The ongoing support being provided for Neighbourhood Planning and the preparation of the Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document provide an important contribution to the Enabling Communities theme, in particular priorities P07, P08 and P09.

The work programme also provides a significant contribution to the Caring for our Environment theme. The work of the Specialist Services team ensures the appropriate protection and enhancement of East Suffolk's important environmental assets (P23).

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides an update on the current Planning Policy and Delivery work programme. The Council's two Local Plans (Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020 and Waveney Local Plan, March 2019) provide up to date Local Plan coverage for the district, and the work of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team continues to focus on the delivery of these Plans.
1.2	The current Planning Policy and Delivery work programme contains a number of projects to support the delivery of the Local Plans and the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. These include providing guidance to support the implementation of planning policies through the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), the preparation of strategies on specific topics such as the recently adopted Cycling and Walking Strategy and the preparation of the East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The Design and Conservation service has a programme of projects including Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reviews. The Specialist Services team, which comprises the Design and Conservation, Ecology, and Landscape and Arboriculture (including Public Rights of Way) services, is continuing to provide ongoing expert input across the Planning service including in respect of development management, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and planning policy, as well as on wider Council projects.
1.3	The updates in this report focus on projects and include the progress being made on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans, and the East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, as well as projects in the Design and Conservation team and in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. An update is also provided on housing delivery. An update on the work of the Infrastructure Team relating to the collection and spend of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies is also provided in this report.

2 Current position

2.1 **Key milestones achieved over the past three to four months, since the last report to Strategic Planning Committee on 5th December, are set out below.**

2.2 **Neighbourhood Plans:**

- Bungay Neighbourhood Plan and Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan were 'made' on 23rd November 2022.
- Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough - Council's Decision Statement published on 22nd December 2022, referendum to be held on 4th May 2023.
- Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan - Council's Decision Statement published on 11th January 2023, referendum to be held on 4th May 2023.
- Oulton Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum held 2nd February 2023, with 85% of votes in favour. The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be 'made' on 22nd February.
- Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum held 2nd February 2023, with 84% of votes in favour. The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be 'made' on 22nd February.
- Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan – Examination currently underway, with a Hearing held on 27th January
- Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 publication was held between 9th November and 21st December 2022 and the Examination is now underway.
- Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 draft consultation being carried out by the Town Council between 24th January and 7th March 2023
- Easton Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 consultation being carried out by the Parish Council between 4th February and 20th March 2023.
- Campsea Ashe – Neighbourhood Area approved 26th January 2023.

2.3 The draft **East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule** is currently undergoing Examination by an independent Examiner following submission in July 2022. A Public Hearing was held on 11th October, and subsequently the Council submitted further information in response to a request by the Examiner. The Examiner consulted on the additional information with interested parties for three weeks, ending on 14th November. On January 6th the Examiner wrote to the Council asking for further work to be undertaken in relation to the Beccles and Worlingham strategic site. The Council submitted further evidence on 3rd February and the Examiner has subsequently asked for some additional follow up information.

2.4 Public consultation on the Draft **Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document** is underway between 25th January and 8th March 2023. The SPD is being produced in partnership with the Broads Authority, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council.

2.5 Preparation of the **Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document** continues following the initial consultation which was held for six weeks between 26th September and 7th November 2022, inviting comments on the proposed scope and content of the SPD.

2.6 Initial consultation is being held on the **Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document** between 1st February and 15th March 2023, inviting comments on the scope and content. The SPD will provide guidance on a range of rural matters such as barn conversions, rural worker dwellings, farm diversification and equestrian developments.

2.7	Initial consultation is being held on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document between 1 st February and 15 th March 2023, inviting comments on the scope and content.
2.8	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <p>Recent progress in relation to the review of Conservation Areas and their Appraisals and Management Plans is set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft appraisals for a proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area have undergone public consultation between 6th January and 17th February 2023. • Public consultation is underway on the draft new Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The proposed new Conservation Area will form an amalgamation and extension of the existing Southwold Conservation Area and Southwold Harbour and Walberswick Quay Conservation Area. • The review of the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is underway. • Consultants' fieldwork in support of a pilot review of the existing Article 4 Directions in place in both Lowestoft Conservation Areas, taking account of changes in the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on their use, is near completion. Results are to be reviewed by the team when provided shortly. <p>Progress on other Design and Conservation projects includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet approved the inclusion of five new parks and gardens on the Council's Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest at its meeting on 6th December. The five new additions are: Benacre Park; North Cove Hall; Redisham Hall; Sotterley Park; and Worlingham Hall. • Nominations for the 2022 Quality of Place awards closed on Friday 12th August. 18 entries were received. Shortlisting and site visits have taken place and the awards ceremony is to be held in early March.
2.9	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain:</p> <p>The mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain, as introduced through the 2021 Environment Act, is proposed to come into place in late 2023. In the interim, officers have been working with other Suffolk local planning authorities to prepare interim technical guidance to provide advice on how biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated and considered through planning applications in a consistent manner under current planning policies.</p>
2.10	<p>Housing Delivery:</p> <p>The housing growth planned for in the Local Plans has continued to come forward, with many sites either under construction, consented, subject to planning applications or subject to early discussion with the planning service. The annual housing requirement figure for East Suffolk is 916 dwellings, based on the figures in the two adopted Local Plans for the District. For the year 2021/22, 822 dwellings were delivered, 225 of which were for affordable housing. In the first, second and third quarters of 2022/23 (up to 31st December), 556 dwellings (including specialist dwellings) have been recorded as being completed of which 102 are affordable. A comparison of dwellings under construction shows that as at the end of quarter 3 this year 1,243 dwellings were under construction compared to 1,013 at the same point in the previous year.</p> <p>The Housing Action Plan was reviewed and published in November 2022. As East Suffolk 'passed' the most recent 2021 Housing Delivery Test (results published January 2022), there is no requirement to prepare or update the Housing Action</p>

	Plan however it is considered good practice to review and update the Housing Action Plan annually. The 2022 Housing Delivery Test result is not yet published.
2.11	<p>CIL Collection and Spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far during the 2022/23 financial year (up to 13th February 2023), £6.3m in CIL has been received. • District CIL funded projects continue to make steady progress, with 2 school extensions projects and the Castle Community Rooms, Framlingham, having been completed and in use. • A Neighbourhood CIL spending and reporting (compliance) review has been underway to ensure that parish councils are spending and reporting on their Neighbourhood CIL funds in accordance with the CIL Regulations. This work informs East Suffolk's duty to clawback funds not spent within 5 years of receipt or not spent in compliance with the CIL Regulations.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	During the next 3 to 4 months, some of the key project milestones will include:
3.2	<p>With respect to Neighbourhood Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans are anticipated to be 'made' by Full Council on 22nd February. • Referendums are to be held for Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan and Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan on 4th May 2023. • The Examiners' reports into the Saxmundham and Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plans will be received with referendums to subsequently take place. • Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 publication expected to take place. • Regulation 14 draft consultations will have concluded for Easton Neighbourhood Plan and Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan • Guidance for neighbourhood plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be progressed with stakeholder engagement activities planned for spring 2023.
3.3	The Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule Examination is anticipated to have concluded. Adoption to subsequently take place by Full Council, prior to its subsequent implementation.
3.4	Consultation on the draft Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document will conclude on 8 th March with consultation responses to subsequently be considered by all four authorities and the final SPD prepared ready for adoption.
3.5	The Draft Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared, with public consultation anticipated in Summer 2023.
3.6	Initial consultation on the Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document will have concluded and a draft SPD will be prepared in advance of public consultation which is anticipated to take place in Summer 2023.
3.7	Initial consultation on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document will have also concluded with a draft SPD to be prepared in advance of public consultation which is anticipated to take place in Summer 2023.
3.8	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6 week public consultation on the proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh

	<p>Conservation Area will have concluded, with comments to be considered prior to final proposals being presented to Cabinet for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6 week public consultation on the Southwold Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will conclude on 15th March, with comments to be considered prior to final proposals being presented to Cabinet for approval. • Proposed review of the Walberswick Conservation Area to follow on the back of the one for Southwold, to take in the Walberswick Quay Conservation Area and other potential extensions. Informal meeting with the Parish Council and public meeting currently being organised. • Work on the Halesworth Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will continue. • The review of the existing Article 4 Directions in the Lowestoft Conservation Areas will continue with future work involving drafting revised Directions.
3.9	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain: The interim technical guidance approach will be finalised and promoted to help inform Biodiversity Net Gain delivery from new developments ahead of mandatory requirements coming into force.</p>
3.10	<p>Housing Delivery: The outlook for housing delivery overall for the 2022/23 year remains optimistic when comparing completions for the first three quarters (556 dwellings) with the same period for 2021/22 (548). As stated in paragraph 2.12 above, there were 1,243 dwellings under construction at the end of quarter 3 this year (end of December 2022), almost 200 more than at the same time in the previous year although a slight decrease on the number reported as being under construction at the end of September 2022.</p> <p>Over the coming months, the Planning service will continue to support future housing delivery, including through the determination of planning applications and through ongoing support for bringing forward strategic sites such as supporting master-planning. Actions contained in the Housing Action Plan will also continue to be progressed.</p>
3.11	<p>CIL Collection/Spend and Exacom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exacom data transparency project (relating to the management of CIL, Section 106 and RAMS payments) has continued to make steady progress and reconciliation to financial systems is ongoing as this work progresses. A communications plan is currently being developed to prepare for the launch of the Exacom Public Facing Module (PFM). This is likely to go live in early March 2023, starting with training sessions for the CIL Spend Working Group, Parish Councils and internal teams during March and April and included in the Member training in May and June. • CIL Spending Training sessions for Town and Parish Councils are being planned alongside the Exacom Training events in March. This is following the outcomes from the Neighbourhood CIL compliance review. • Neighbourhood CIL payments to parish councils are estimated to be in the region of £1m for April 2023. • The District CIL bid round will be open for applications on 1st April 2023 until 31st May 2023.

3.12	<p>National update:</p> <p>As referenced in previous reports to the Strategic Planning Committee, the Planning White Paper, that set out some potential fundamental changes to the planning system, was published for consultation in August 2020. The Levelling Up White Paper was subsequently published earlier in 2022. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, first published in May 2022, takes forward some of the ambitions from both the Levelling Up White Paper and the Planning White Paper. A summary of the proposed provisions of the Bill, as published in May 2022, can be viewed in the Government’s ‘Policy paper – Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information’. The paper anticipated that changes will begin to take place from 2024. The Bill is currently progressing through Parliament.</p> <p>A number of future consultations were also proposed as part of the changes such as a review of the National Planning Policy Framework and on proposals such as the Infrastructure Levy and Environmental Outcomes Reports. Consultation on shorter term revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework and on the implementation of some of the proposed reforms is underway between 22nd December and 2nd March. A response is being prepared.</p>
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	This report is for information only.
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Appendices

Appendices:
None

Background reference papers:
None