



Agenda Item 4

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 27 November 2018

SUFFOLK COASTAL FINAL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN (SCR 08/18)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan (Appendices A and B) is a comprehensive Local Plan for the District for the period 2018 to 2036. It includes a vision, spatial strategy, district wide policies and area specific strategies including site allocations. On adoption, all the existing Local Plan documents, including the remaining 'saved' policies from the 2001 Local Plan will be superseded.
2. The review of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan has been overseen by the Cabinet appointed Local Plan Working Group, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning. Progress on the Local Plan is broadly in accordance with the Council's timetable published in October 2015. Following two rounds of consultation and engagement the Local Plan has now reached the Final Draft stage.
3. The Constitution requires that the Cabinet Member's 'proposals' are considered by the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet prior to Full Council. The Scrutiny Committee are required to make recommendations to Cabinet and Cabinet to Full Council. The Scrutiny Committee are being asked to consider the preparation process and the consequential Final Draft Local Plan proposals.
4. Subject to the Final Draft Local Plan being agreed at Full Council, for publication to receive representations in relation to soundness and subsequent submission for independent Examination by the Planning Inspectorate, it is anticipated that the Plan will be adopted by the end of 2019.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Tony Fryatt Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning
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Supporting Officers:	<p>Desi Reed Planning Policy and Delivery Manager 01502 523055 Desi.reed@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Edgerley Principal Planner 01394 444558 Mark.edgerley@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</p> <p>Andrea McMillan Principal Planner Andrea.mcmillan@eastsuffolk.gov.uk 01394 444567</p>
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Plan sets out the level of growth which needs to be planned for in Suffolk Coastal and identifies where that growth should be located and how it should be delivered. The Plan sets out the planning policies which the Council will use to determine planning applications in its area.
- 1.2 The Final Draft Local Plan is a comprehensive document which includes a vision, spatial strategy, district wide planning policies and are based strategies including site allocations. It will replace the existing Local Plan for Suffolk Coastal which consists of a number of individual documents that have been prepared and adopted by the Council in recent times. The existing Local Plan is made up of the following documents:
 - Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (adopted July 2013);
 - Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies (adopted January 2017);
 - Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan (adopted January 2017);
 - Saved Policies from the First and Second Alteration Local Plan (adopted 2001 and 2006).
- 1.3 Across the District a number of Neighbourhood Plans have been prepared by the local community. These will not be replaced by the emerging Local Plan but may need to be reviewed to remain in general conformity with it.
- 1.4 The government requires Local Plans to be kept up to date and reviewed regularly. To support the Council in maintaining an up to date Local Plan, the Local Development Scheme, setting out a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan, was agreed by

Cabinet in October 2015. Progress to date on the Local Plan has broadly been in accordance with the timetable and adoption is on schedule for the end of 2019.

- 1.5 The Constitution requires that the Planning Committee are consulted on the Cabinet Members 'proposals'. This was undertaken on the 18 October 2018. It also requires that the Cabinet Member's 'proposals' are considered by the Scrutiny Committee and that it makes recommendations to Cabinet prior to Full Council. In this respect, the Cabinet Member's 'proposals' are the vision, strategy, objectives, policies and site allocations that comprise the main content of the Local Plan. The Scrutiny Committee are being asked to consider the Local Plan preparation process and consequential content of the Final Draft Local Plan. The Final Draft Local Plan will be considered by Cabinet on Wednesday 2 January 2019 and Full Council on Thursday 3 January 2019.

2 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – PREVIOUS STAGES

Issues and Options

- 2.1 At an early stage in the preparation of the Local Plan (autumn 2016) the Council undertook a 'call for sites'. This generated a number of sites and these were published, alongside other known potential sites, as 'potential land for development' in the Issues and Options document. Five workshops were held (May-June 2017) across the District with parish and town councils to discuss the sustainability of communities and how the Local Plan could assist in keeping communities vibrant. These workshops assisted in informing the Issues and Options document. In August 2017 the Council, in conjunction with Ipswich Borough Council, published a Local Plan Issues and Options consultation. This joint approach allowed for cross boundary strategic issues to be considered together. This marked the first stage of consultation on the Local Plan. The consultation covered a 10 week period from 18 August to 30 October 2017. There were 7 drop-in exhibition events across the District and following an invite to all parish and town councils one-to-one sessions were held with 57 parish and town councils during September and October. Over 642 individuals or organisations responded to the consultation, which generated 6,893 comments. Many of these comments related to the questions posed in the Issues and Options, as well as the sites shown as "potential land for development". All responses are available to view via the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review page on the Council's website.

First Draft Local Plan

- 2.2 Following the consideration and analysis of the response to the Issues and Options consultation and a review of existing adopted policies and site allocations by the Local Plan Working Group, the vision, strategy, policies and proposals were drafted for the First Draft Local Plan. This plan set out the Council's preferred approach to planning for future growth. The Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report considered the preferred policies and sites but also set down a number of alternative policy approaches and sites including the reasons for these being discounted. A Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment was carried out in relation to European Sites and identified the policies and proposals that would require a further Appropriate Assessment.
- 2.3 Consultation and engagement took place on this plan for 8 weeks from 20 July to 14 September 2018. To maximise engagement and feedback on the First Draft Local Plan a summary leaflet was published alongside the Local Plan. Social media, such as twitter and facebook were also used to reach a wide ranging audience. Again, drop-in events took

place across the District and one-to-one meetings were held with parish and town councils. There were 1,389 respondents to the consultation, which generated over 3,350 comments. In addition, there were 2 petitions; in relation to the Shottisham site allocation (89 signatures) and proposed allocations in Kirton and Trimley St Martin, including Innocence Farm (972 signatures.) All responses are available to view via the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review page on the Council's website.

- 2.4 The parts of the plan that generated the greatest response in terms of numbers were the Spatial Strategy, Housing and Area Specific Strategies including the site allocations. Site allocations generating the most comments were SCLP12.30 Land at Innocence Farm SCLP12.26 South of Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, SCLP12.3 North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood, SCLP12.61 Land off Howlett Way, Trimley St Martin, SCLP12.62 Land adjacent Reeve Lodge, High Road, Trimley St Martin, SCLP12.65 Land west of the B1125, Westleton and SCLP12.59 Land opposite The Sorrel Horse, Shottisham.
- 2.5 Following consultation and engagement on the First Draft Local Plan, a number of changes have been made to the Plan. In addition to text and policy wording changes, including amendments to allocated sites, the main changes from First to Final Draft Local Plan include the following:

Housing/Mixed Use

- Housing requirement figure for the District increased from an ambitious 545 dwellings per year (for 2016-2036) to an equally ambitious figure of 582 dwellings (for 2018-2036); derived using the Government's new standard methodology for calculating local housing need and using the latest 2016 based household projections published in September 2018 and informed by an uplift based on the ratio of earnings to house prices published in April 2018.
- Brandeston – Housing site allocation SCLP12.40 Land at the Street and Mill Lane (30 dwellings) deleted in response to consultation feedback.
- Felixstowe/Trimley St Mary – SCLP12.3 North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood - requirement for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (in response to Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment) and stronger links with the SCLP12.4 housing allocation to the east required.
- Grundisburgh – Housing site allocation SCLP12.48 Land to the west of Ipswich Road (56 dwellings) deleted and replaced with an alternative site to the east of Chapel Road (70 dwellings) (new policy SCLP12.52) in response to consultation feedback.
- Knodishall – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.56 Land at School Road (16 dwellings).
- Martlesham – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.33 Land at Woodbridge Town Football Club (120 dwellings) to assist in facilitating and subject to, a move to equivalent or better provision of facilities in a location accessible to the local community.
- Martlesham – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.25 Suffolk Police HQ, Portal Avenue (300 dwellings) to plan positively to deliver dwellings and community uses on a brownfield site.
- Otley – Housing site allocations SCLP12.54 Land bounded by Helmingham Road and Ipswich Road (20 dwellings) and SCLP12.55 Land at Chapel Road (35

dwellings) deleted and replaced with a more centrally located site adjacent to Swiss Farm Cottage (60 dwellings) (new policy SCLP12.59) in response to consultation feedback.

- Peasehall – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.60 Land adjacent to Farthings, Sibton Road (14 dwellings)
- Rushmere St Andrew – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.24 Land at Humber Doucy Lane (150 dwellings) post 2031 as part of a masterplanned approach to development with land in Ipswich Borough being included in their emerging Local Plan.
- Saxmundham/Benhall – SCLP12.28 Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood – Boundary of the site clarified, main area for employment moved to the west of the A12, built development focused to the west of the railway line and land required as Suitable Alternative Natural Greenpace (in response to Habitat Regulations Appropriate Assessment).
- Sutton – Housing allocation site SCLP12.60 Land south of Sutton Walks (12 dwellings) deleted in response to consultation feedback.
- Westleton – Additional housing allocation – new policy SCLP12.70 Land at Cherry Lee (15 dwellings), alongside reduction in scale of allocation proposed in First Draft Local Plan (SCLP12.69 Land west of the B1125).
- Woodbridge/Melton – Additional housing/mixed use allocation – new policy SCLP12.32 Former Council Offices, Melton Hill (100 dwellings) to assist in the positive delivery of this brownfield site as there may not be a planning permission in place before submission of the Local Plan.

Employment

- Land at Innocence Farm SCLP12.35. Built part of the site for employment development has been defined as approximately 67 ha on the western part of the site and land south of the A14, and surrounded by significant green infrastructure to the north and east, for clarity in response to consultation feedback.

Resort/Tourism

- Felixstowe Leisure Centre new policy SCLP12.16 – Additional allocation for resort/tourist development to assist in the positive delivery of this brownfield site tied to the delivery of a new leisure facility as part of the Garden Neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Plans

- Increased Neighbourhood Plan housing figures for Easton (from 10 to 20), Leiston (from 50 to 100) and Framlingham (from 50 to 100) which can be delivered through allocations and windfall development.

3 FINAL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

- 3.1 The Final Draft Local Plan has evolved following the consultation and engagement on the First Draft Local Plan, alongside changes in national policy and the evidence base. The Plan takes an ambitious approach to growth and the early delivery of the necessary

infrastructure to support this growth. The following paragraphs provide an overview of the content.

Introduction

- 3.2 The introduction section outlines the context for the Local Plan and provides details of the issues facing the district at the start of the plan period. It provides information about the role of the Local Plan, evidence base supporting the document and how the local community have influenced the document.

Wider Strategic Planning

- 3.3 The Final Draft Local Plan outlines the strong functional relationship between Suffolk Coastal and the neighbouring authorities of Babergh, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk and Waveney. Suffolk Coastal shares a number of evidence base documents with neighbouring authorities and the Final Draft Plan outlines the growth that collectively will be achieved over the plan period. This section includes policies for the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area relating to strategic infrastructure requirements and to the provision of cross boundary mitigation measures to ensure that new housing development does not result in harm to the integrity of internationally designated areas.

Suffolk Coastal Spatial Strategy

- 3.4 The Final Draft Local Plan builds on the East Suffolk Business Plan and provides a vision for economic growth, infrastructure provision and residential development over the plan period. In order to achieve this vision, a number of Local Plan strategic priorities and objectives specific to Suffolk Coastal have been established.
- 3.5 An ambitious strategy is outlined which will provide employment land to deliver at least 6,500 jobs along with appropriate retail floor space and at least 10,476 new dwellings (582 per year) over the plan period, supported by the delivery of appropriate infrastructure. To achieve this, employment sites and residential sites have been identified in a variety of locations to realise the opportunities that exist across the District.
- 3.6 A revised settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution of housing is provided which targets growth to the parts of the District where there are opportunities for infrastructure improvements alongside development; to take advantage of opportunities provided by road and rail corridors, including a focus on the A12 and A14; and where development opportunities exist. These considerations have been influenced by the consultation responses.
- 3.7 The Final Draft Local Plan seeks to provide new employment land which is targeted around key transport corridors and supports the Business and Professional Services sector as well as the Haulage, Logistics and Port related sector. These sites are identified as site specific allocations with individual policies to guide their future development and delivery.
- 3.8 Amendments to the settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution will bring forward a wider variety of locations for development than in the existing Local Plan. The Final Draft Plan seeks to distribute the residual housing growth (a minimum of 3478 dwellings), having taken into account planning permissions (including those with a resolution to grant subject to a S106), existing allocations reviewed and carried forward and Neighbourhood Plan allocations as of 31 March 2018, as follows:
- Saxmundham: 800 units

- Other A12 communities (Woodbridge northwards): 667 units
- Felixstowe: 1,670 units
- Rural Settlements: 543 units
- Communities neighbouring Ipswich: 490 units
- Framlingham: 100 units
- Leiston: 100 units

- 3.9 The distribution of growth is considered to be an appropriate, sustainable and deliverable approach and based on the robust and credible evidence base that has been prepared. The distribution has been refined based on the First Draft Local Plan consultation responses and seeks to deliver garden neighbourhoods in Felixstowe and Saxmundham whilst spreading growth to the rural areas to help support existing services and facilities and maintain viable communities throughout the District.
- 3.10 The Final Draft Local Plan also includes a policy to consider Major Energy Infrastructure that is expected to come forward over the plan period. The Suffolk coast is at the forefront of electricity energy generation across the country both in respect of onshore and offshore energy and the policy seeks to ensure that any projects which deliver major energy infrastructure also bring positive benefits to the local community and the District.

District Wide Planning Policies

- 3.11 The Final Draft Plan includes a number of more generic, district wide planning policies which will be used to determine planning applications for new development. These policies are intended to replace the existing planning policies and will also help to inform the content of Neighbourhood Plans that come forward over the plan period. The policies cover the following topics:
- Economy,
 - Housing,
 - Tourism,
 - Transport,
 - Community Facilities and Assets,
 - Climate Change,
 - Natural Environment,
 - Built and Historic Environment,

Location specific strategies

- 3.12 The Final Draft Local Plan includes commentary on Neighbourhood Plans across the District, including those that have been “made” to date. Included within this section is a policy that outlines the indicative housing requirement for each Neighbourhood Plan area. Setting the indicative housing requirement for each Neighbourhood Plan is a key role of a Local Plan.
- 3.13 Strategies for areas at the top of the settlement hierarchy are provided, along with specific site allocations and area specific policies as appropriate. Strategies for Felixstowe, Communities neighbouring Ipswich, Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Leiston,

Saxmundham and Woodbridge and the Rural Areas detail how these areas are anticipated to evolve over the plan period.

- 3.14 The strategy for each area has been informed by public consultation responses, engagement with the local community and builds on the vision outlined for these areas in the Core Strategy. Policies in this section provide an area specific focus which combines the over arching vision, employment, residential and other area specific policies all in one chapter to aid understanding for the reader.
- 3.15 Within the strategy for each area, a number of policies have been carried forward from the existing Local Plan documents. There are also new policies that have emerged through public consultation and engagement with the Local Plan Working Group, such as:
- Policies for Garden Neighbourhoods in Felixstowe and Saxmundham.
 - Policies for the reuse of brownfield sites such as Brackenbury Sports Centre and the Leisure Centre sites in Felixstowe; the Police Headquarters at Martlesham; and Former Council Offices, Melton Hill.
 - A policy for residential development at Humber Doucy Lane, Rushmere St Andrew as part of a master-planned approach to development with land in Ipswich Borough post 2031.
 - A policy for the residential development of land at the Woodbridge Town Football Club to assist in facilitating and subject to, a move to equivalent or better provision of facilities in a location accessible to the local community.
 - A policy for the delivery of Brightwell Lakes, to support the outline application approved by the Council in April 2018.
 - Policies for employment development on land at Felixstowe Road (parishes of Levington and Nacton) for a high quality business park targeted at the Business and Professional Services Sectors and land at Innocence Farm, Trimley St Martin/Kirton for port related development.
 - A policy for residential development and a new primary school to support existing and proposed development in the area, to the south of High Road, Trimley St Martin.
 - New residential/mixed use site allocations are proposed across the rural areas at the following settlements (those in *italics* include existing allocations, reviewed and carried forward):

<i>Aldringham</i>	<i>Kelsale-cum-Carlton</i>	<i>Rendlesham</i>
Benhall	Kettleburgh	<i>Shottisham</i>
Bucklesham	Kirton	<i>Trimley St Martin</i>
Campsea Ashe	Knodishall	Tuddenham
Charsfield	Levington	<i>Westerfield</i>
Darsham	<i>Orford</i>	Westleton
<i>Dennington</i>	Otley	<i>Witnesham</i>
Eyke	Peasenhall	
Grundisburgh	Pettistree (Wickham Market)	

Appendices

- 3.16 A series of appendices are not included in this agenda item but will be included to support the Local Plan and provide further detail where required, similar to those in the First Draft Local Plan. The appendices will include a list of the existing Local Plan policies which will be superseded following the adoption of this Local Plan.
- 3.17 A Monitoring and Delivery Framework, updated from the First Draft Local Plan will be included, which details how the Council will monitor the policies and ensure the delivery of the plan during the implementation stages. Delivery is dependent on landowners, service providers and other third party organisations and the frameworks provide information on these aspects.
- 3.18 An Infrastructure Delivery Framework will also outline the variety of infrastructure that is required over the plan period to achieve the objectives of the Local Plan. The infrastructure is associated with the site allocations and policies contained within the plan to enable the creation of healthy and vibrant communities across the District.

Policies Maps

- 3.19 The Final Draft Local Plan is also supported by Inset Maps which provide a geographical representation of the Local Plan policies (Appendix B). These Inset Maps form part of the district Policies Map which will be updated following the adoption of the Local Plan.

Evidence Base and Outstanding Matters

- 3.20 A wide ranging evidence base has been prepared, and commissioned as necessary, to support the content of the Final Draft Local Plan. Evidence bases includes those relating to housing and economic needs, transport modelling, viability, Heritage Impact Assessments, Landscape Character, infrastructure, Sustainability Appraisal, Habitat Regulations and Equality Impacts, all of which have informed the content of the Final Draft Local Plan. The complete evidence base will be published alongside the Final Draft Local Plan.
- 3.21 All the evidence bases have been sufficiently progressed to inform the content of the Final Draft Local Plan on this agenda. The one exception is the further evidence commissioned in relation to the mix of housing, in terms of size and tenure, in the light of the new district wide housing need figure derived through the Government's new methodology. It is unlikely that the overall mix will change significantly. However, so that this issue is given further consideration prior to the Local Plan being finalised for Cabinet and Full Council, this issue will be considered at a further meeting of the Local Plan Working Group. This will also provide the opportunity for the Working Group to consider any issues arising from the Scrutiny Committee and any other necessary changes resulting from consideration of the final evidence bases, including the Appropriate Assessment, and for clarity and consistency.

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?

- 4.1 Having an up to date Local Plan for the District is fundamental to the delivery of the East Suffolk Business Plan and will significantly improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area through inclusive growth.
- 4.2 The Final Draft Local Plan has been prepared by taking into account the East Suffolk Business Plan and the vision contained within it. The Local Plan has a key role to play in

the three pronged strategy for delivering the Business Plan and will be significant in delivering a number of the Critical Success Factors identified in the Business Plan.

- 4.3 **Enabling Communities:** The Local Plan will enable communities to feel included and proud of where they live, as well as ensuring the delivery of healthy and vibrant communities over the plan period. The Final Draft Plan has been informed by considerable public consultation and engagement which provided the opportunity for residents, visitors and businesses to shape the emerging policies. Policies within the Local Plan will be used by communities who undertake Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.4 **Economic Growth:** The Local Plan places the economy at the centre of the plan's vision and seeks to provide a plan based on ambitious economic growth. Suffolk Coastal is well placed to take advantage of economic opportunities associated with key economic drivers and a wide variety of small and medium enterprises operating throughout the country. The Final Draft Plan includes policies to support economic growth as well as identifying sites to meet the needs of specific sectors.
- 4.5 **Financial Self Sufficiency:** An ambitious Local Plan which focuses on economic growth, supported by an increase in residential development across the District, will increase the financial income to the Council and the local communities. Increased receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy, business rate retention and new homes bonus will ensure steps are taken towards financial self sufficiency.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of preparing the Local Plan and undertaking consultation and engagement is covered within the agreed budget for the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. Where appropriate, consultants have been appointed to undertake specialist evidence bases to inform the Local Plan policies, such as viability and habitat regulations assessments and value for money is sought for all contracts.
- 5.2 The Local Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Local Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended). Progress has been overseen by the Cabinet appointed Local Plan Working Group of cross party District Councillors, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning. The Working Group have met throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, on 27 occasions since January 2017, and have actively informed and developed the vision, strategy, policies and proposals, from the initial definition of Issues and Options, through to the First Draft Local and now this Final Draft Local Plan. Throughout the process, careful consideration has been given to feedback from consultation and engagement.
- 5.3 Considerable partnership working has taken place with Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. These Council's, along with Suffolk Coastal, constitute the appropriate geography across which to plan based on the evidence base, the strength of housing and economic interrelationships and the associated strategic cross boundary issues. The joint working has been governed by the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) Board represented by the Cabinet Members with responsibility for planning, including Suffolk County Council.
- 5.4 The Board have been working collaboratively on a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), based on the approach set down in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018. The SoCG sets down the outcomes and agreements from discussion on a range of cross boundary issues including housing and economic needs, strategic infrastructure, environmental protection and gypsies and travellers. It is not envisaged that Suffolk Coastal will need to address any unmet housing need from other local authorities. A draft

was published alongside the First Draft Local Plan and for continued transparency and clarity a further version will be published alongside the Final Draft.

- 5.5 The SoCG includes outcomes and agreements in relation to the Ipswich Northern Routes. These clarify that further evidence gathering for the next set of local plans will examine route options in more detail, including the extent to which the options might support potential future housing and employment growth beyond what is being planned for in the current local plan reviews.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 The Final Draft Local Plan has been prepared based on a robust and credible evidence base which has been commissioned since 2016.
- 6.2 The First Draft Local Plan was supported by an Interim Sustainability Appraisal Report as required by the Town and Country Planning Regulations and best practice. Further Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken in preparing the Final Draft Local Plan and will be published alongside the Local Plan in January 2019.
- 6.3 An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared to inform and support the preparation of the First Draft Local Plan. This is being updated to respond to and inform changes included in the Final Draft.
- 6.4 The First Draft Local Plan was subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening. The screening exercise assisted in evolving the First Draft Plan and identified those policies and site allocations that required Appropriate Assessment to avoid harm to the integrity of European Sites. Footprint Ecology was appointed to undertake the Habitats Regulations Assessment and this has informed the policies and site allocations in the Final Draft Local Plan. Pending the completion of the Appropriate Assessment report, an interim Position Statement is provided in Appendix C. It concludes that the report will not raise any insurmountable concerns and further changes to the text and policies are only likely to be minor and for clarity.
- 6.5 Subject to Full Council approval, the Final Draft Local Plan will be published for 6 weeks, from Monday 14 January to Monday 25 February 2019, to receive representations relating to legal and procedural requirements and soundness. The legal and procedural tests include passing the 'duty to cooperate' test in relation to addressing cross boundary strategic issues, consultation, sustainability appraisal, habitat regulations assessment and compliance with the 2012 Local Planning Regulations. The tests of soundness, set down in the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, are as follows:
- a) Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - b) Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - d) Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

- 6.6 A thorough approach to the preparation of the Local Plan has been undertaken and it is considered that all the necessary legal and procedural tests and the tests of soundness have been fulfilled.
- 6.7 Once the Final Draft Local Plan has been agreed by Full Council it will carry some weight in the planning application and appeal decision making processes. Some policies may also gain further weight at the end of the period for the receipt of representations, depending on whether representations have been received.
- 6.8 At the end of the 6 week period for the receipt of representations, the Council will look to submit the Final Draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate at the end of March 2019, with all the representations received, including a statement of the main issues raised and all the supporting evidence. The Examination commences on submission of the documentation. At this point the timetable is in the hands of the Planning Inspector, but usually within approximately 3 months a public hearing would be held. The Local Development Scheme anticipates the Inspectors Report in October 2019 and adoption at the end of 2019.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 All consultation and engagement on the preparation of the Local Plan, as referred to in Section 2 of this report, has been undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (September 2014). Over and above the commitments in the SCI, officers have also offered one-to-one meetings with parish and town councils at the Issues and Options and First Draft Local Plan stages to explain the process and discuss local issues. There was good take up and taking into account feedback, the meetings were considered productive and mutually beneficial.
- 7.2 In addition, the Local Plan Working Group held a joint meeting with a wider group of District Councillors and also with Town Councils on town centre issues. Briefings took place for all District Councillors prior to consultation at each stage and a briefing for all parish and town councils was held prior to consultation on the publication of the First Draft Local Plan. Consultation with the Planning Committee, at their meeting on 18 October 2018, took place in accordance with the Constitution.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Not progressing the Final Draft Local Plan to Cabinet and Council, and subsequent publication is an option; however this would delay the preparation and production of the Local Plan, including providing certainty around housing numbers and mean that the timescales agreed in the Local Development Scheme would not be met.
- 8.2 The Government requires local authorities to produce a Local Plan, prepare it in a timely manner and keep it up to date. The National Planning Policy Framework promotes the plan led system as the way to deliver sustainable development across the country. Without an up to date Local Plan, the Government may place sanctions on local authorities to produce a plan.
- 8.3 Failure to produce a Local Plan in a timely manner would increase the risk of speculative developments coming forward which are not in accordance with the existing Local Plan and potentially do not meet the objectives of the Council as local planning authority.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 To ensure that the Council is able to progress the Final Draft Local Plan to the next formal stage of the plan making process with a view to submission for Examination in March 2019. The timely production of the Local Plan will ensure future growth is delivered in a sustainable and planned manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Scrutiny Committee notes and endorses the preparation process and consequential Final Draft Local Plan proposals.
2. That the Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Final Draft Local Plan proposals progress to Full Council for approval for publication to receive representations in relation to soundness and subsequent submission for independent Examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan
Appendix B	Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan – Policy Maps
Appendix C	Habitat Regulations Position Statement

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council's website but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
September 2014	Statement of Community Involvement	East Suffolk website
October 2015	Local Development Scheme	East Suffolk website