



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 02 October 2023

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Cabinet Member	Councillor Kay Yule Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Report Author(s)	Andrea McMillan Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery & Specialist Services) Andrea.McMillan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01394 444567
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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 be 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 although the majority of posts within the Team are currently filled.

External Consultees: None

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		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, supporting a plan-led approach, with the secondary priorities reflecting the delivery of the Local Plans through the current work programme.

Recent progress and achievements include adoption of the Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document (P08), public consultation underway on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document (P01) and ongoing progress made with the review of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (P03). The East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was adopted by full Council on 28th June 2023 and came into effect on 1st August 2023, 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 centres on the appropriate protection and enhancement of East Suffolk's important environmental assets (P23), through a wide range of responsibilities including providing expert input on planning applications, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and planning policy documents in relation to landscape and trees, design, heritage and ecology; carrying out duties relating to trees and hedgerows; and reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.

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 Design and Conservation service has a programme of projects including Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reviews and the review of Article 4 Directions in Conservation Areas. 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 and Neighbourhood

	Plans and an update on 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 towards meeting the requirements set out in the adopted Local Plans.
1.4	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, are set out below.
2.2	<p><u>Neighbourhood Plans:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan was ‘made’ by full Council on 28th June 2023. • Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough was also ‘made’ by full Council on 28th June 2023. • Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum held on 29th June 2023, with 86.9% of votes in favour. The Plan was ‘made’ on 26th July 2023. • Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan – Decision Statement published on 2nd August 2023, referendum to be held on 12th October 2023. • Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 consultation carried out between 10th May and 21st June 2023, examination now underway. • Little Bealings Neighbourhood Area designated on 9th August 2023. • Preparation of Neighbourhood Planning housing guidance is underway.
2.3	The <u>Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document</u> was adopted by Cabinet on 5 th September 2023. The SPD was prepared in partnership with the Broads Authority, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council, with adoption to take place in the respective authorities over September and October 2023.
2.4	Public consultation on the Draft <u>Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document</u> is underway between Wednesday 6 th September and Wednesday 18 th October 2023.
2.5	Preparation of the <u>Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document</u> has continued following the initial consultation which was held for six weeks between 26 th September and 7 th November 2022, which invited comments on the proposed scope and content of the SPD.
2.6	Preparation of the <u>Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document</u> has also continued following initial consultation which was carried out between 1 st February and 16 th 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	Early work has begun on a review of the Supplementary Planning Document for the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood which was adopted in 2013. The review will update the SPD in relation to policies contained in the 2019 Waveney Local Plan.
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 appraisals for a proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation

	<p>Area have been finalised, and will be presented to Strategic Planning Committee on 2nd October 2023 for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A six week public consultation concluded on 16th March 2023 on the proposal to amalgamate and extend the existing Southwold Conservation Area and Southwold Harbour Conservation Area and the draft new Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Consultation responses are currently being considered. • Consultants’ work on the review of the Walberswick Quay Conservation Area is complete and proposals to incorporate this as an extension to the Walberswick Conservation Area will be publicly consulted on from early October to mid November 2023 alongside a draft Supplement to append to the existing Walberswick Conservation Area Appraisal. • The review of the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is underway. <p>Progress on other Design and Conservation projects includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 complete, with consultation expected to take place in due course. • The nominations period for the 2023 Quality of Place Awards closed on 21st July 2023. Judging of the entries is now underway. The four categories are design, building conservation, nature and landscape, and community.
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 November 2023. An Interim Planning Guidance Note was prepared by Suffolk Local Planning Authorities in May 2023 to provide advice on how biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated and considered through planning applications in a consistent manner under current planning policies. Preparations for the introduction of the mandatory requirement are underway, including through the creation of a new ecologist post which is currently being recruited to.</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 2022/23, 812 dwellings were delivered, 155 of which were for affordable housing (provisional figures). During the first quarter of 2023/24 (April to June) 157 net additional dwellings were reported as completed (of which 34 were affordable) (provisional figures), compared to 210 completed in the same quarter in the previous year. A comparison of dwellings under construction shows that as at 30th June 2023 1,369 dwellings were under construction compared to 1,192 at the same point in the previous year, showing that supply is continuing to come forward. Of those under construction 320 are affordable homes.</p>
2.11	<p>CIL Collection and Spend:</p> <p><i>Income received:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIL income received over the last quarter has slowed down a little, but this is not a concern as income is based on commencing developments and the timing of both existing instalments and new instalments since we adopted the new instalment policy - this went live on 1st August 2023. • To date, this financial year, we have collected £2.4m in total CIL.

- We are already charging newly approved developments the CIL Rates from the new East Suffolk CIL Charging Schedule (also since 1 August 2023) and these permissions will slowly reach a stage where the developments commence (and hence begin to pay the CIL).
- Data on CIL collection and spend is publicly available (in real time) via the Exacom PFM system which the public see as our Developer Contribution Dashboard. Training is planned for Councillors on how to use/navigate the Dashboard.

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/developer-contributions/

CIL Spending:

- Its been a very busy few months with CIL spending
- The District CIL fund received £5,390,821.06 and was open to applications between 1st April and 31st May 2023. There were 12 bids received, and 1 was refused as invalid by the CIL Spending Working Group (CSWG).
- At Cabinet on 5th September 2023 recommendations made by the CSWG were considered and supported, with 6 successful bids being awarded and 2 refused as invalid and/or premature. **A total of £3,604,203.00 was awarded to the successful projects, subject to conditions.**
- Cabinet also approved the 2022-23 Infrastructure Funding Statement and the revised (updated) CIL Spending Strategy.
- The new Local Projects CIL Fund was also open to applications from 1st April 2023 and received 5 bids. This fund was £161,724.63 and is determined as 3% of the previous financial year District CIL allocation.
- Of the 5 bids received, 4 were successful and have been awarded CIL by CSWG – The projects are: Beccles Waveney Meadow Project, Rendlesham Skate Park and Nature Walk, Southwold Klondyke Skate Park and Blundeston Play Park Refurbishment and Improvements.
- The 5th bid was withdrawn from the Local Projects bid route and proved successful as a larger District CIL bid for funding toward Barnards Soccer Centre improvements in Lowestoft.
- **A total of £147,000 Local CIL Fund was awarded to Local Projects.**
- District CIL funded projects continue to make steady progress, with Little Oaks Play School Dennington opening to families and the local project of play park refurbishment and improvement in Blundeston being delivered and opened. Delivery of Worlingham Community Facility has also commenced.

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 With respect to **Neighbourhood Plans:**

- The Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan referendum will take place on 12th October 2023. Subject to a positive referendum outcome, the Neighbourhood Plan will be brought forward to full Council to be ‘made’.
- Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan - Examination will be completed.
- The Neighbourhood Plans for Easton and Playford are expected to be submitted to East Suffolk Council during the Autumn.
- A regulation 14 consultation for the Otley Neighbourhood Plan is expected over the Autumn.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance for Neighbourhood Plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be progressed with consultation anticipated later in the Autumn.
3.3	The consultation on the Draft Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document will have been completed. Comments will be considered in finalising the SPD which is anticipated to be adopted in early 2024.
3.4	The Draft Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document will be finalised, with public consultation anticipated to take place in the Autumn.
3.5	The Draft Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document will be finalised, with consultation anticipated to take place in the Autumn.
3.6	Progress will be made with the review of the Supplementary Planning Document for the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood .
3.7	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to approval by Strategic Planning Committee the proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area will come into effect from Friday 6th October 2023. The Southwold Conservation Area appraisal and boundary review are anticipated to be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee for approval in January 2024. Public consultation on the review of the Walberswick Quay Conservation Area will be complete, with approval anticipated to take place in January 2024. Work on the Halesworth Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will continue. Following the Article 4 pilots, the review is to be rolled out across other Conservation Areas in the former Waveney area. Consultants have now been appointed to initiate a 3-year phased project to undertake a review of the remaining Article 4 directions in Conservation Areas in the Waveney area and to consider pilots in the Suffolk Coastal area. Following the nominations deadline of 21st July 2023 for the 2023 Quality of Place Awards, judging and shortlisting will be completed. An awards ceremony will take place in late November this year.
3.8	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain:</p> <p>Preparation for the mandatory requirements will continue to take place. The Interim Planning Guidance Note approach will be promoted to help inform Biodiversity Net Gain delivery from new developments ahead of mandatory requirements coming into force.</p>
3.9	<p>Housing Delivery:</p> <p>As stated in paragraph 2.10 above, there were 1,369 dwellings under construction at the end of March 2023, up slightly on the same time the previous year providing a positive outlook for delivery, including affordable housing. Over the coming months, the Planning Service will continue to support the delivery of housing set out in the Local Plans, including through the determination of planning applications and through ongoing support for bringing forward strategic sites such as supporting master-planning.</p> <p>Work on the Housing Land Supply Statement will be completed and this will be published in the Autumn.</p>

	<p>Whilst the Council is not currently required to prepare a Housing Action Plan due to having ‘passed’ the most recent Housing Delivery Test, the Housing Action Plan is reviewed annually and the 2023 Housing Action Plan will also be published in the Autumn.</p>
3.10	<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 contributions and RAMS payments) has continued to make steady progress and reconciliation to financial systems is ongoing as this work progresses to finalise s106 data. • 30 years’ worth of historic s106 data has been input to the system and is currently being progressed to a point where this module of the system will be made “live” to view. • The Sizewell C Legal Agreement is also in the process of being recorded on the system and we are working with the Software Suppliers to enable a separate “tab” for this data to be reviewed on its own “page” of the system. • The DCIL funded project for improvements to Foxhall Household Waste and Recycling Centre is on track for completion in October 2023. • Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) allocations will be calculated following the first full half of the 23/24 financial year (i.e. after 30th September 2023). The NCIL payments will then be processed and made to all relevant Town and Parish Councils by the 28th October 2023. • CIL training is being arranged and provided for all members in October 2023. • Additional training is also planned for the Town and Parish Councils during the next quarter.
3.11	<p>National update:</p> <p>The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, first published in May 2022, takes forward some of the ambitions from both the 2022 Levelling Up White Paper and the 2020 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 took place between 22nd December 2022 and 2nd March 2023. The Government has also recently undertaken consultation on its proposals for Environmental Outcomes Reports and the Infrastructure Levy, and responses were submitted to each of the consultations. A consultation is currently underway in relation to plan-making reforms, and a response is being prepared.</p>

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	This report is for information only.
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Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None