



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 03 July 2023

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Report of	Councillor Kay Yule 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 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, with two vacant Planner posts currently being advertised.

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?			
<p>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.</p>			

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 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 has concluded its Examination and is anticipated to be adopted by full Council on 28th June, 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), including through providing expert input on planning applications, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and planning policy documents in relation to landscape, heritage and ecology; carrying out the Council's 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) 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 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. 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 four to five months, since the last report to Strategic Planning Committee, are set out below.**

2.2 **Neighbourhood Plans:**

- Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan and Oulton Neighbourhood Plan were 'made' on 22nd February 2023.
- Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum held on 4th May 2023, with 88.6% of votes in favour. The Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be 'made' on 28th June.
- Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough -Referendum held on 4th May 2023, with 86.6% of votes in favour. The Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be 'made' on 28th June.
- Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan – Decision Statement published on 17th May 2023, referendum to be held on 29th June.
- Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan – Examination underway, with an additional focussed consultation undertaken between 9th and 30th May 2023 at the request of the Examiner.
- Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan – Submitted to East Suffolk Council (and the Broads Authority), Regulation 16 consultation carried out between 10th May and 21st June 2023.
- Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 draft consultation carried out by the Town Council between 24th January and 7th March 2023.
- Easton Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 consultation carried out by the Parish Council between 4th February and 20th March 2023.
- Playford Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 consultation carried out between 18th March and 5th May 2023.
- Early engagement with Neighbourhood Plan groups has taken place in relation to the preparation of Neighbourhood Planning housing guidance.

2.3 The Examination on the [East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule](#) concluded with receipt of the final Examiner's report on 19th April 2023. The Examiner recommended in his report that the CIL Charging Schedule be approved, subject to three modifications being made: i) to reflect parish boundary changes which came into effect on April 2023; ii) to correct a minor labelling error; and iii) to set the CIL rate for the Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood strategic site to zero (£0). On 6th June, a meeting of the Cabinet considered the final CIL Charging Schedule and agreed that Full Council be recommended to adopt the Charging Schedule (this is to take place at the full Council meeting on 28th June). A revised CIL Instalment Policy and CIL Discretionary Housing Relief Policy were also considered by Cabinet and were also recommended to be approved by Full Council.

2.4 Public consultation on the Draft [Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document](#) concluded on 8th March 2023. The SPD, which is being produced in partnership with the Broads Authority, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council, is now being finalised.

2.5	Preparation of the Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document 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	Initial consultation was held on the Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document 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	Initial consultation was held on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document between 1 st February and 16 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 are being finalised following public consultation that ended on 17th February 2023. Consultants have been re-engaged to prepare some revisions based on consultation feedback. • A six week public consultation concluded on 16th March 2023 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 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 complete. Results are being reviewed by the team. <p>Progress on other Design and Conservation projects includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022 Quality of Place awards ceremony was held on 8th March 2023. Nominations for the 2023 awards have been invited – the nominations period closes on 30th June. 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. In the interim, officers have been working with other Suffolk local planning authorities to prepare an Interim Planning Guidance Note 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 2022/23, 813 dwellings were delivered, 156 of which were for affordable housing (provisional figures). A comparison of dwellings under construction shows that as at 31st March 2023 1,223 dwellings were under construction compared to 1,132 at the same point in</p>

	the previous year, showing that supply is continuing to come forward. Of those under construction 268 are affordable homes.
2.11	<p>CIL Collection and Spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 2022/23 financial year, just short of £6.8m in total CIL had been received. • During the 2022/23 financial year, £1,710,874.89 was allocated to parish councils in Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) payments. Some of this NCIL income relates to NCIL received in 21/22, as per the CIL Regulations. This means that NCIL income received in the last 6 months of a financial year are paid across in the new financial year. • District CIL funded projects continue to make steady progress, with 2 school extensions projects and the Castle Community Rooms, Framlingham, and the Framlingham Walkways project having been completed and in use. • A Neighbourhood CIL spending and reporting (compliance) review was completed in early 2023. This is periodically actioned to ensure that parish councils are spending and reporting on their Neighbourhood CIL funds in accordance with the CIL Regulations. The review 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. Following the review 6 training sessions were offered (and provided in March 2023) to both parish council members and parish clerks/finance staff to encourage compliance and priority spending plans to be developed. • The District CIL fund received £5,390,821.06 and was open to applications between 1st April and 31st May 2023. • Applications to the Local CIL fund also opened on 1st April 2023. This fund remains open to applications until funds have been allocated for the year. It is likely that the fund will be fully subscribed and will close during Summer 2023. • In total 17 Bids were received, although a small portion of these were 'twin-tracked' (some duplicate) bids for both funds, in case the Local fund was oversubscribed. • Data on CIL collection and spend is made publicly available, following a significant period of work over 2 and a half years to create and populate the Exacom Public Facing Module. • Exacom training has been provided to those town and parish councils attending the recent training and there will be further training for East Suffolk Council members planned towards the Autumn. The system is relatively intuitive and allows users to click on values to explore further information.

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"> • Rushmere St Andrew and Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plans are anticipated to be 'made' by Full Council on 28th June. • A referendum is to be held for Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan on 29th June. • The Examiner's report into the Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan will be received with a referendum to subsequently take place.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan - Examination will take place. • Guidance for neighbourhood plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be progressed with consultation expected in the Autumn. • The Neighbourhood Plans for Easton, Lowestoft and Playford are expected to be submitted to East Suffolk Council later this year. • A regulation 14 consultation for the Otley Neighbourhood Plan is expected over the summer.
3.3	The Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule implementation is anticipated to come into effect on 1 st August, subject to approval by Full Council on 28 th June.
3.4	The Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document is anticipated to be adopted in the late Summer/early Autumn.
3.5	The Draft Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared, with public consultation anticipated in the Autumn.
3.6	The Draft Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared, with consultation anticipated to take place in late Summer 2023.
3.7	The Draft Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document will have also been prepared with consultation anticipated to take place in late Summer 2023.
3.8	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The additional work on the proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area will have concluded, with approval anticipated to take place in Autumn. • The Southwold Conservation Area appraisal and boundary review will be complete and is also anticipated to be approved in Autumn. • Consultants' work on the review of the Walberswick Quay Conservation Area with a view to addition to the Walberswick Conservation Area will be complete, with consultation to take place in Summer 2023. • 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, associated consultation and presentation to Members for confirmation. • Following the Article 4 pilots, the review is to be rolled out across other Conservation Areas in the former Waveney area. Consultants are to be 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 30th June for the 2023 Quality of Place Awards, judging and shortlisting will take place. An awards ceremony will subsequently take place later in the year.
3.9	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain:</p> <p>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. Preparation for the mandatory requirements will continue to take place.</p>
3.10	<p>Housing Delivery:</p>

	<p>As stated in paragraph 2.10 above, there were 1,223 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 early 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 be published in the Autumn.</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 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. • District CIL Bid applications will be considered by the CIL Spend Working Group over the next few weeks and subsequently by Cabinet in September. • The 2022/23 Infrastructure Funding Statement, along with a review of the CIL Spending Strategy, will be also considered by Cabinet in September. • It is anticipated, subject to full Council approval on 28th June, new CIL rates for East Suffolk will come into effect on 1st August 2023 (see paragraph 3.3), alongside a new CIL Instalment Policy and Social Housing Relief Policy. Preparation and publicity for the introduction of the new rates will be carried out over the coming weeks.
3.12	<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.</p>

4	Reason/s for recommendation
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4.1	This report is for information only.
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Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None
