



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 07 June 2021

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Desi Reed Planning Policy and Delivery Manager Desi.Reed@eastssuffolk.gov.uk 01502 523055

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 preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), strategies on specific topics such as cycling and walking, the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through CIL collection and spend, Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery.

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 Policy and Delivery Team are fully staffed but the work programme is significant and crucial to the delivery of many aspects of the Strategic Plan. There is an acknowledgment that staff capacity, not just in the Planning Service, is on occasions stretched and with the work programme being important to the council discussions are taking place with senior officers and the Cabinet Member to ensure we have a resilient and quality team to deliver on our objectives.

External Consultees:	None
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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 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.

For example, the preparation of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), development briefs, the Historic Environment SPD and Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) SPD all support the Economy theme including the delivery of the right supply of housing (P01) and maximising the

unique selling points of the district (P03). The preparation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, collection and spend of CIL also support the Economy theme, through investment in the district for healthy and sustainable economic growth (P01 and P05).

The support for Neighbourhood Planning, the preparation of the Statement of the Community Involvement, the Affordable Housing SPD and the Cycling and Walking Strategy all support the Enabling Communities theme, including taking positive action on what matters most (P07), community pride through a shared sense of purpose (P09) and maximising health and well-being (P08).

The Sustainable Construction SPD and the Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) SPD will both support the Caring for our Environment theme. The former supports all 4 priorities of leading by example (P20), encouraging the reuse of material (P21), supporting the growth of renewable energy (P22) and protecting, educating and influencing care for our environment (P23) and the RAMS SPD primarily P20 and P23. The Cycling and Walking Strategy also has a key role to play in protecting our natural environment (P23).

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides an update on the current work programme including progress being made on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery. With the adoption of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan in September 2020, providing up to date Local Plan coverage for the whole District, the focus of the work of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team is primarily on the delivery of these plans.
1.2	There are a number of key projects in the current work programme (next 12 to 18 months) that support the delivery of the Local Plans and the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. These focus on providing guidance to support the implementation of planning policies through Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) including development briefs, strategies on specific topics such as cycling and walking, and projects that support the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through CIL collection and spend. The team also support a wide range of external projects plus corporate and regeneration projects across the District that are not reported to this committee. The Major Sites part of the team deal with the largest scale major planning applications for East Suffolk and these will continue to be considered by this committee, as appropriate, on an on-going basis.

2 Current position	
2.1	Since the last report to the Strategic Planning Committee on 8th March 2021 the following key milestones have been met:
2.2	With respect to Neighbourhood Plans : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Kesgrave, Bredfield and Reydon Neighbourhood Plans have been 'made' following their successful referenda 'yes' votes on 6th May 2021. Beccles NP – Examination completed in May. Worlingham NP – Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation (i.e. draft plan consultation led by the NP group) started in April and will conclude in June. Southwold NP – Regulation 16 publicity commenced in May (i.e. consultation led by ESC on the plan submitted to the Council by the NP group).

2.3	The Statement of Community Involvement has been adopted by Cabinet on 6 th April 2021.
2.4	The Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted by Cabinet on 4 th May 2021.
2.5	The Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document is being finalised and at the time of writing this report is scheduled for adoption by Cabinet on 1 st June 2021.
2.6	Initial consultation on the potential content of the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document was completed on 26 th April 2021.
2.7	Consultation on a draft development brief for housing site allocation WLP2.14 Land North of Union Lane, Oulton commenced on Monday 10 th May 2021 for a 6 week period to 21 st June. Discussions with both the parish council and the landowner/developer were undertaken to inform the draft.
2.8	Work has continued in analysing the response to the initial consultation (c. 800 responses) for the Cycling and Walking Strategy and drafting the strategy in preparation for further consultation.
2.9	Initial consultation on the technical viability considerations that inform the preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for East Suffolk, to replace the Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Charging Schedules, was completed on 26 th April 2021. As part of this consultation, specific on-line consultation events were held for developers/agents and parish and town councils. The draft CIL Instalment Policy was also consulted on.
2.10	<p>CIL Collection and Spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year End CIL financial reports indicate that a total of 6,553,773.07 was received in 2020/21. Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) payments for April 2021 were recently made to town and parish councils across East Suffolk. The total amount paid out in NCIL was £531,920.72 with a further £3,671.70 of NCIL being held for areas that are a Parish meeting. The April 2021 NCIL payments relate to the CIL received from development in the parish areas for the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. A full breakdown of the April 2021 Neighbourhood CIL payments, the allocations and all of the adjustments can be seen on the CIL Reporting Webpage. The 2021 Bid Round (April/May) for District CIL spending closed on 31 May 2021. Ongoing discussions with statutory bodies have indicated we may receive funding requests in this year for over £5m funding towards infrastructure that is detailed in the Infrastructure Funding Statement and is planned to support the growth planned for in the Local Plans. Progress has been made on a number of infrastructure projects previously approved for funding from District CIL. Since year end the St Michaels Rooms (now called the Castle Community Rooms, Framlingham) project has commenced and has received the first tranche of District CIL Funding.
2.11	<p>Housing Delivery - The 2019/20 financial year saw the completion of 819 dwellings compared with a combined Local Plan annual anticipated figure of 916 dwellings. Two hundred and twenty-two (222) of the completions were for affordable homes. The March 2021 report to this committee reported that at the end of quarter 3 for the 2020/21 financial year only 421 dwellings had been completed, of which 104 were affordable. Due to Covid-19 it was anticipated that the end of year completion figures would be below target. The end of year latest figures confirms this position, although the drop in overall delivery was smaller than anticipated. A total of 703 dwellings were completed for 2020/21 of which 130 were affordable homes. The picture moving forward continues to be optimistic, given that Local</p>

	Plan site allocations, including many of the major sites, are either under discussion with Planning Officers, undergoing developer/landowner led community consultation, are current planning applications or have already been consented.
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	During the next 3/4 months, some of the key project milestones will include:
3.2	<p>With respect to Neighbourhood Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beccles NP – Referendum will take place over the summer. • Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton NP - Regulation 16 publicity will take place early summer 2021. • Southwold NP – Examination is due to commence in the summer. • Wickham Market - Regulation 14 consultation carried out in Spring 2019, and now working towards Submission of the Final Draft to the Council. • Shadingfield, Willingham, Ellough and Sotterley: Habitat Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment screening currently being undertaken by the Council to support the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft plan anticipated summer 2021.
3.3	Consultation on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy will have commenced.
3.4	Consultation on the draft Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document will have commenced.
3.5	Consultation on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document will have commenced.
3.6	Adoption of the development brief for housing site allocation WLP2.14 Land North of Union Lane, Oulton . In addition, further development briefs will be worked on and progressed towards draft consultation stage.
3.7	Consultation on the draft CIL Charging Schedule will have commenced.
3.8	Work will shortly commence on the preparation of the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2020-21 , once CIL, Section 106 and RAMS financial reports have all been verified within the Finance Service.
3.9	The Exacom data transparency project (relating to the management of CIL, Section 106 and RAMS payments) is making good progress and the back-office system has now been in operation for 12 months. All CIL back data has been added and 70% of the RAMS (habitats mitigation sums) data has been added. The project is on target to go live with the public facing module in late Spring 2022.
3.10	Housing Delivery -The East Suffolk Housing Action Plan will be published in the summer and will report on issues facing the development sector, including due to covid-19, and progress in implementing actions to support the delivery of housing. The Major Sites team continue to support and steer master-planning work on key sites across the District, including North of Lowestoft, Beccles/Worlingham, South Saxmundham and North Felixstowe; with master-planning being a key policy driver to provide certainty and a coordinated approach to delivery.
3.11	Planning White Paper update – Members will be aware of the Government consultation proposals published in August last year to radically reform the planning system, including the plan making system. Some of the proposals, such as changes to permitted development rights, are already being implemented. The Government’s formal response to the consultation feedback and the way forward are still awaited. However, the Queens Speech on the 11 th May highlighted that the Government will be introducing ‘Laws to modernise the planning system, so that more homes can be built’.

The Government's briefing paper to support the speech cites the main elements of the forthcoming Planning Bill as:

- Changing local plans so that they provide more certainty over the type, scale and design of development permitted on different categories of land.
- Significantly decrease the time it takes for developments to go through the planning system.
- Replacing the existing systems for funding affordable housing and infrastructure from development with a new more predictable and more transparent levy.
- Using post-Brexit freedoms to simplify and enhance the framework for environmental assessments for developments.
- Reforming the framework for locally led development corporations to ensure local areas have access to appropriate delivery vehicles to support growth and regeneration.

This suggests that the Government are likely to be pursuing at least some of the main elements of the White Paper but with the detail still to be determined.

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1 This report is for information only.

Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None