



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 March 2021

PLANNING POLICY AND DELIVERY UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on key elements of the current work programme, including progress on Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery, for information.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in East Suffolk
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
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Supporting Officer:	Desi Reed Planning Policy and Delivery Manager 01502 523055 desi.reed@east Suffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the 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.

2 KEY PROJECTS

- 2.1 In addition to work on Neighbourhood Plans, 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.
- 2.2 Since the last report to the Strategic Planning Committee in September 2020:

Statement of Community Involvement

- Public consultation on a new Statement of Community Involvement has been completed.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- Public consultation on the Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document has been completed.
- Public consultation on the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document has been completed.
- Initial engagement on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document has taken place.

Initial public consultation on the Development and Coastal Change Supplementary Planning Document (a joint consultation with Great Yarmouth BC, North Norfolk DC and the Broads Authority) has been completed.

Strategies

- Initial digital mapping public consultation on Cycling and Walking Strategy has been completed, with over 800 responses received.
- The Team have been working closely with the Leisure Team in managing the consultants undertaking work to produce a Leisure Strategy for the District. Some of this work will feed into a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District.

Monitoring

- The Annual Authority Monitoring Report for 2019/20 was considered by the Strategic Planning Committee in December and published online, providing information on the progress of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, as well as the performance of specific policies measured against a series of indicators and objectives. The report is the main mechanism for assessing the delivery of the Local Plans and the performance of policies.
- The [Key Statistics](#), a 5-minute read, contains headline statistics from the Authority Monitoring Report focusing on housing, employment and retail topics and provides some additional time-series data. Interactive maps provide information on:
 - the location of new homes
 - progress on delivery of site allocations
 - progress on neighbourhood areas and plans
 - the locations of interest on the self-build and custom housebuilding register
- The [East Suffolk Planning Policy Open Data portal](#) has been updated to include 2019/20 monitoring data and provides downloadable spreadsheets and GIS map files for a range of datasets reported in the Authority Monitoring Report
- The 5 year housing land supply assessment has been completed and published (5.88 years supply for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan area and 6.04 years for the Waveney Local Plan area).

Mapping of Planning Policies

- An interactive online [map of Planning Policies](#) across East Suffolk has been published, including site/area specific policies from the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020), Waveney Local Plan (March 2019) and Made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans. This map is intended to be used as an additional resource and does not replace the definitive [Local Plan policies map](#) and [Neighbourhood Plans](#) policies maps.

Infrastructure Delivery

- At the Cabinet meeting on 1 December 2020 District Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was awarded to a project for the extension of and access improvements to Little St Johns Street GP Surgery in Woodbridge. No further valid CIL Bids were received in the deferred September Bid window (moved from April/May 2020 due to Covid-19).
- The annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) was approved by Cabinet in December and published by 31 December 2020. The IFS includes a list of all the current planned infrastructure that could be delivered to support the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans that are made in East Suffolk; a report on CIL income and expenditure for the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020; a report on s106 income and expenditure for the financial year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- The statutory Neighbourhood CIL payments for the period April 2020 to 30 September 2020 were paid to parish councils in October. The total paid out for this period amounted to £668,925 and a full breakdown of the payments can be found on our CIL reporting webpage: [CIL reporting » East Suffolk Council](#).

2.3 During the next 3/4 months, some of the key project milestones will include:

- Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement.
- Adoption of the Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document.
- Adoption of the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document.
- Initial consultation on the potential content of the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document.
- Consultation on a draft development brief for housing site allocation WLP2.14 Land North of Union Lane, Oulton.
- Consultation on a draft Cycling and Walking Strategy.
- Initial consultation with, developers, landowners, agents and others on technical viability considerations will have been undertaken as part of the CIL Charging Schedule review and consultation on a draft of the new East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule will have commenced.
- The next annual District CIL bid window will open on 1 April 2021 and the focus of District CIL spending will be on 'critical' and 'essential' infrastructure as set out in the Local Plans and in accordance with the updated CIL Spending Strategy approved by Cabinet in December 2020.
- The next statutory Neighbourhood CIL payments for the CIL received in the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021 are due to be made to the relevant parish councils by 28 April 2021. Officers will continue to work closely with a number of Parish and Town Councils to support their effective spending of Neighbourhood CIL on local projects.

3 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS

3.1 A significant number of neighbourhood plans are currently being supported across the District, all at varying stages in the plan preparation process. Nine plans are currently made (adopted) and three more are now close to being made.

3.2 The Neighbourhood Plans for Kesgrave, Reydon and Bealings went through their Examinations successfully during 2020 and the 'Decision Statements' were issued recommending that these plans proceed to a referendum (when referendums are possible). The policies in these plans now attract 'significant weight' in determining planning applications. The referenda for all 3 plans are now scheduled for 6 May 2021. Assuming they secure 'yes' votes they will then be presented to Full Council to be 'made' (adopted). On being 'made' they will form part of the development plan for East Suffolk and will have 'full weight' in decision making.

3.3 Good progress has also been made on other neighbourhood plans. Beccles Town Council submitted their Neighbourhood Plan to East Suffolk Council and the Broads Authority in November 2020 ahead of it being submitted for independent examination. The Plan was published and representations invited for an 8 week period from 14th December to the 8th February 2021. An Examiner has been appointed and all documentation and representations will be forwarded for their consideration. Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton; Southwold; and Wickham Market neighbourhood planning groups have all

run consultations on their draft plans – a vital step in submitting their final draft plan to East Suffolk Council.

- 3.4 During covid-19 restrictions it has been challenging for neighbourhood plan groups to undertake their Regulation 14 draft Plan consultation and engagement. At this stage the whole community need to be able to engage easily and effectively and not achieving this could risk successfully progressing through the later stages of the process, such as the examination and referendum stages. Officer advice has been to delay if possible but where groups have chosen to proceed they have been fully supported in their decision and assisted. Ultimately whether to proceed is a decision for the Neighbourhood Plan group.

4 HOUSING DELIVERY

- 4.1 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. In comparison, at the end of quarter 3 for this financial year only 421 dwellings had been completed, of which 104 were affordable. Usually quarter 4 shows an increase over previous quarters but the figures to date suggest that overall completions will be considerably lower than last year. It is highly likely that this is due to Covid-19, the lockdowns and social distancing restrictions not only impacting housing supply but also demand.
- 4.2 However, looking forward as we come through the pandemic, the picture is looking optimistic for housing delivery. Many of the Local Plan site allocations, including many of the major sites are either under discussion with Planning Officers, undergoing developer/landowner led community consultation, current planning applications or have already been consented.
- 4.3 Strategic housing sites including the garden villages/neighbourhoods and Brightwell Lakes are very important in long term housing and infrastructure delivery. Significant progress has been made on allocated strategic sites in recent months, including initial masterplan consultations and community engagement from the landowner/promoters of North of Lowestoft Garden Village and South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood. Significant progress in the delivery of and commencement of Brightwell Lakes is also expected to be announced in coming weeks. Project plans for strategic sites are currently being developed by the Major Sites team and a summary of this work and progress will be presented at future Strategic Planning Committee and Local Plan Working Group meetings.

5 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 This report is for information only.

RECOMMENDATION

That the content of the report be noted and endorsed.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None