



Committee	Strategic Planning Committee
Subject	Major Sites and Infrastructure Update
Date	12/01/26
Cabinet Member	Councillor Mark Packard Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Report Author(s)	Kathryn Oelman Major Sites and Infrastructure Manager Kathryn.oelman@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
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Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
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Purpose/Summary

This report provides an update on key elements of the current work programme, including the progress of major allocated sites which are important to the delivery of housing.

An update on the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is also provided.

Recommendation(s)

That Strategic Planning Committee notes the contents of the report.

Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

Environmental Impact	The work programme generally supports a number of aims within the Environmental Impact theme, including the collection of RAMS tariffs, delivering BNG through the planning process, enabling the planting of trees and delivery of the Cycling and Walking Strategy 2025.
Sustainable Housing	The work programme is vital to supporting the delivery of new dwellings in East Suffolk. The delivery of new housing on major sites allocated within the Local Plan is a critical mechanism to achieving the uplift required to meet government targets. The North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood and Kirkley Waterfront sites are investment priorities for the Council, and they are pivotal in promoting wider urban regeneration objectives of these areas.
Tackling Inequalities	A number of the work areas below relate to this theme, in particular the delivery of affordable housing as part of new housing developments.
Thriving Economy	The work programme supports the aim of delivering a thriving economy, for instance, enabling new employment sites to be built, stimulating the local economy through the construction and occupation of new homes, supporting local plan objectives and ensuring planning applications are determined within the required time periods.
Our Foundations / governance of the organisation	Effective engagement and interaction with customers remain integral to delivering the above objectives. The CIL Team remains important to delivering some of the core reporting, budgeting and data-led functions within the Council.

Justification for recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the progress of major sites and on CIL collection and spend.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This report provides an update on key milestones achieved since the Strategic Planning Committee last received an update in July 2025 and, where relevant, targets for the future. The eventual Outline planning applications for the strategic sites below are generally expected to be determined through the Strategic Planning Committee. These updates are therefore provided to aid member understanding of progress and the proposals; members must be mindful that an open mind on these sites must be maintained at this stage in order to avoid any pre-determination in future Planning Committee decisions.

Major Sites Update

North of Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood

- 2.2. This allocation aims to deliver 2,000 homes under a leisure-led approach advocated under policy SCLP12.3 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The allocated site includes land granted consent at appeal in 2017 for 560 dwellings (Land at Candlet Road) with a substantial number of those homes are now being delivered. Development of a collaborative masterplan for the remainder of the allocation is being led by East Suffolk to support their own land interest but also coordinate site delivery in partnership with the two remaining landowners.
- 2.3. Engagement has continued with ESC Regeneration Team and their agents (LDA) who are leading the project from a landowner perspective. A series of workshops have taken place with key stakeholders, and two rounds of written feedback have been provided in relation to the draft Masterplan and associated documents. A number of detailed technical queries remain outstanding.
- 2.4. A draft Design Code with Parameters Plans has been produced which was reviewed by the Design Review Panel on 20th November. Separate technical matters such as section 106 requirements and off-site highways improvements are continuing and will be informed by further work on the Design Code and Parameters Plans.

Brightwell Lakes

- 2.5. Permission was granted in 2018 for development of the land south of Adastral Park to deliver 2000 homes in accordance with Policy SCLP12.19 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. This has since seen the submission of Reserved Matters applications for Phase 1 infrastructure and various residential parcels throughout the site. Two of these parcels are currently under construction and one parcel is occupied.

- 2.6. Most recently, a Reserved Matters application has been submitted for Parcel W4a and pre-application discussions continue in relation to the Reserved Matters for Phase 2 infrastructure. Various applications for conditions discharge and non-material amendments are regularly being processed.
- 2.7. A Variation of Condition application is anticipated to be submitted in early 2026 concerning the education land, whereby the all-through school will become separate primary and secondary schools, allowing the Reserved Matters for the primary school to be advanced independently of the secondary. Such an application may also 'mop-up' necessary changes which are necessary due to the A12 Major Road Network project and/or any potential changes to Affordable Housing tenure distribution.
- 2.8. Officers have existing arrangements for weekly engagement with the developers on top of ad-hoc meetings to progress assessment of detailed proposals. Regular engagement is also occurring with the local community forum.

South Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood

- 2.9. Land lying south of Saxmundham is identified for development under Policy SCLP12.29 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. This includes an employment parcel west of the A12, 800 homes to be delivered between the A12 and the railway line and an open space area east of the railway line.
- 2.10. A programme of six workshops has now concluded with written feedback provided. A further workshop then took place to consider revisions to the Masterplan and elements of the Design Code. It is anticipated that further technical work continues to flesh out the details of public transport provision, northern footpath link through the Cemetery, access details, and layout principles for key areas within the site such as the A12 frontage and local centre. It is believed that the applicant is targeting submission of an application in the first quarter of 2026.

Beccles and Worlingham Garden Neighbourhood

- 2.11. The garden neighbourhood is the subject of Policy WLP3.1 in the Waveney Local Plan with an allocation for 1,250 homes and mixed use development. The site is divided into two parcels by land ownership; east and west, and there has historically been good engagement with the developers to date, who have been working together to produce a joint masterplan.
- 2.12. An Outline application has now been received for the eastern parcel (application reference DC/25/4214/OUT). The application is for the provision of up to 721 dwellings (Use Class C3) including 30% affordable housing and 5% custom build properties, 5 hectares of employment land, land for a primary school, a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), a community hub (incorporating retail floorspace, preschool and sports pavilion), children's play areas, public open space and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG).
- 2.13. The applicants who own the western parcel are currently not ready to submit their application though they have been integral to the masterplan production. Updates from the landowners have been requested.

Kirkley Waterfront Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood

- 2.14. Land south of Lake Lothing is allocated for a mixed-use development under Policy WLP2.4 of the Waveney Local Plan which anticipates the delivery of 1,380 new homes. Due to changing circumstances over the passage of time, a Planning Policy Position Statement was adopted in July 2025 to update the policy framework for this site.
- 2.15. As members will recall, application reference DC/25/2381/OUT for development of the former Jeld Wen site was heard by the Strategic Planning Committee on 31st October 2025 and it was resolved to grant planning permission subject to securing mitigation via Section 106 Agreement. Solicitors have been engaged, and negotiations are progressing to draft the agreement.
- 2.16. In the west, East Suffolk as landowner to the Sanyo and Survitec site has been granted a reprieve in the timetable for preparation of an application for the remediation works and creation of development platform. This will allow further discussion of detailed issues involving consultees. An application is now expected following a report to Cabinet in early 2026 which seeks an extension of time for the funding spend and an application to follow shortly after that.

North Lowestoft Garden Village

- 2.17. The site benefits from an allocation for 1,300 homes under Policy WLP2.13 of the Waveney Local Plan. Recent engagement with Suffolk County Council (SCC) as landowners has focused on the details of a full planning application for Phase 1 with access off Corton Long Lane and master planning the wider allocation, which would be the subject of an Outline application.
- 2.18. A number of meetings have taken place with SCC in an attempt to resolve fundamental urban design considerations. A number of technical areas remain under discussion such as odour and noise considerations. Written advice has been issued in testament of the remaining aspects to which officers request resolution. However, SCC has confirmed that they are moving into 'design fix' and, whilst they may wish to engage further on confined aspects, they are now actively preparing an application to be submitted early in the New Year.

Land South of The Street, Carlton Colville

- 2.19. This site sits south-west of Lowestoft and has been allocated to provide 900 homes under Policy WLP12.16 of the Waveney Local Plan. Recently officers have received an approach from the landowner who is keen to initiate pre-application engagement. In addition, cognisant of the development of the new local plan process, the Head of Planning has requested a meeting to bring together the relevant parties (including owners of other local plan allocations on the southern fringe of Lowestoft) to understand the status of these sites, obtain a general understanding of the issues and inform the call for sites process.

Woods Meadow Lowestoft

- 2.20. Allocated for 800 homes in the 1996 Waveney Local Plan this site had Outline consent granted in 2007. As of March 2024, indications were that 586 homes were complete and 18 under construction. Since then, a Reserved Matters application has been

determined for 190 homes alongside various other applications granted to facilitate amendments to the scheme and discharge of conditions on the consents.

- 2.21. The site remains sensitive for the local community given the previously complex history of land uses, particularly the contaminated land within the site. The site generates regular conditions discharge workload which is currently being dealt with efficiently by a Principal Planner contractor within the development management team.

Unplanned Developer Interest

- 2.22. We are receiving increased indications of developer interest in the large-strategic scale development of sites around the district, some of whom are actively engaging via the pre-application requests. These processes are confidential and therefore officers will only be able to engage in discussions at this committee that are focused on factual queries rather than any debate on the details or merits of specific proposals.
- 2.23. Members may be aware of the recent public engagement exercise being undertaken by Bloor for land on the northern side of Foxhall Road, south of Martlesham Heath. Whilst this site currently does not benefit from endorsement under the local plan and would therefore be contrary to policy, the five-year housing deficit and presumption in favour of development under the NPPF remain influential upon future decision making.
- 2.24. Recognising that the Local Planning Authority cannot control, or prevent, an application being speculatively made for this site, officers remain active in pre-application discussions/meetings where they are seeking to optimise the content of any such application. Efforts are also being made to encourage joined up thinking among landowners in the wider eastern Ipswich area who are expressing interest in submissions under the call for sites process.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) collection and Spending:

- 2.25. This year has been a bumper year for CIL spending with 27 projects with approved CIL funding totalling £8,539,880.39. Some of the smaller Local CIL funded projects that were approved under the delegated powers of the CIL Spending Working Group in June this year have already been delivered. Key bids this year included £4.2 million for the expansion of Beccles Medical Centre in advance of major new housing coming forward. £400,000 for the Benhall to Saxmundham Cycling and Walking project, which has been supported by our Cycling, Walking and Wheeling Working Group. And £272,000 towards the new Henley Gate Primary School, which is within Ipswich Borough but will serve communities and new homes in East Suffolk. Full details of CIL spending can be found in the Report attached as Appendix A.
- 2.26. In October Cabinet resolved to approve the draft Infrastructure Funding Statement 2024-25; the final version is now available on the website: [ESC IFS 2024-25](#). Of particular note is the increased ringfencing of £14.2m District CIL by the CIL Spending Working Group to secure health and education projects proposed to be delivered in the next 5-year period. The ringfencing of District CIL for health and education infrastructure projects ensures that these projects can be delivered in a timely way to support the new housing growth arising across the district.
- 2.27. It is anticipated that CIL spending will continue to remain high for the coming years and that, due to the market downturn, revenues may not necessarily maintain the generous buffer which has previously existed. The CIL Spending Group is therefore conscious of

the need to plan and spend carefully to deliver best value, and to ensure that there remain sufficient monies in the pot to respond to key infrastructure needs such as health and education. The ringfencing process is central to this, as is our close working with stakeholders such as the NHS Integrated Care Boards and relevant parties at Suffolk County Council.

- 2.28. In addition, work continues towards the restructure of the Infrastructure Team to ensure there is adequate qualified and experienced resource to deliver the service. A new team structure has now been approved, and a formal staff consultation exercise commenced 10th December 2025. It is anticipated that following this a recruitment drive can occur in early/mid-January which will, amongst other things, will see a dedicated new role created connected to the delivery of the forthcoming Building Safety Levy.
- 2.29. Meanwhile, the team remains extraordinarily resilient, and their work should be celebrated; East Suffolk Council was identified as one of the top performing councils in England for CIL collection and spending recently. We are also regularly referred to by professional bodies, such as the Planning Advisory Service, as exemplars of good practice.
- 2.30. Ongoing day-to-day functions in this yearly cycle include the work with Ward Councillors and town/parish councils to ensure they are spending their Neighbourhood CIL within five years of receipt and are publishing their reports on expenditure annually by the statutory deadline of 31st December 2025. To date over £8 million of Neighbourhood CIL has been distributed by East Suffolk to our town and parish councils since collection of CIL commenced and this money is achieving some fantastic community facilities and improvements in many areas.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. Areas of work underway are outlined above and it is proposed that Strategic Planning Committee note the contents of the report.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The work of the Team is undertaken within existing budgets, with significant additional income generated from administrative fees for CIL and from pre-application engagement on major sites.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. All work outlined above is undertaken in accordance with relevant legal requirements where they exist. There are no legal impacts arising from this update report.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1. The work programme of the Team is significant and crucial to the delivery of many aspects of the Strategic Plan. Staff capacity is an ongoing risk, particularly in the CIL Team.

7. Options

- 7.1. This report is for information only.

8. Recommendations

8.1. That Strategic Planning Committee notes the contents of the report.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

9.1. This report is for information only.

10. Conclusions/Next Steps

10.1. The areas of work outlined above will take place over the next six months, and a further update will be brought to the next relevant Strategic Planning Committee meeting. These twice-yearly reports will be a regular fixture on the agenda of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Areas of consideration comments

Section 151 Officer comments:

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no additional comments.

Monitoring Officer comments:

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted on this report and has no further comments.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:

The report is for information only.

Safeguarding:

The report is for information only.

Crime and Disorder:

The report is for information only.

Corporate Services implications:

(i.e., Legal, Finance, Procurement, Human Resources, Digital, Customer Services, Asset Management)

The report is for information only.

Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:

The report is for information only.

Appendices:

Appendix A	CIL Spending Report
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