



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 07 March 2022

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 Manager (Policy, Delivery & Specialist Services) Desi.Reed@east Suffolk.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 the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery.

Since the last report in December, the planning specialist services of Design and Conservation, Landscape and Arboriculture (including Rights of Way) and Ecology have moved from being managed as part of the Development Management structure to become part of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. Therefore, this report also provides updates on key aspects of the work of the specialist services. Major Sites and Infrastructure are now part of Development Management but it is anticipated that this report will continue to highlight progress on CIL spend and the Exacom data transparency project which includes improved customer access to CIL and Section 106 information.

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 Strategic Plan. There is an acknowledgment that staff capacity, particularly in the specialist planning services has been stretched and with the growing work programme to address the changing national planning agenda recruitment is currently taking place 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: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		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.

The preparation of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and development briefs support the Economy theme, including the delivery of the right supply of housing (P01), and along with the review of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management they also seek to maximise 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 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 Healthy Environment SPD will also support the latter priority (P08).

The Sustainable Construction SPD will support the Caring for our Environment theme. It supports all 4 priorities of leading by example (P20), encouraging the reuse of materials (P21), supporting the growth of renewable energy (P22) and protecting, educating and influencing care for our environment (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 full and up to date Local Plan coverage for the whole District, the work of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team continues to focus on the delivery of these plans.
1.2	There are a number of key projects in the current work programme (next 12 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. In addition, the Design and Conservation service has a programme of projects including Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reviews. 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 Current position

2.1	Since the last report to the Strategic Planning Committee 13th December 2021 the following key milestones have been met:
2.2	<p>With respect to Neighbourhood Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lound with Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton Neighbourhood Plan – The Independent Examiner issued his report on the 1st February. • Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation will conclude on 11th March 2022. • Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation began on 1st November and concluded on 22nd December. • Southwold NP – The plan successfully passed the referendum on 3rd February and was formally made by East Suffolk Council on 23rd February 2022. • Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 publication of the final draft of the plan concluded on 21st February 2022. • Guidance on reviewing ‘made’ neighbourhood plans has been published on the Council’s website.
2.3	Consultation on the draft Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document closed on 13 December 2021. All responses to the consultation are being considered and a final version is being prepared, prior to being presented to Cabinet for adoption in April 2022.
2.4	Consultation on the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document closed 13 December 2021. All responses to the consultation are being considered and a final version is being prepared, prior to being presented to Cabinet for adoption in May 2022.
2.5	Consultation on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy closed on 10 January 2022. There were over 1200 responses, with the majority being made using the interactive map. These are now being considered and a final version of the Strategy is being prepared, for adoption in early summer.
2.6	Consultation on the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule for East Suffolk closed on 23 December 2021. Comments received are being considered prior to submission of the Charging Schedule for independent Examination.
2.7	Work has commenced on preparing a Supplementary Planning Document to provide additional guidance on the implementation of the Housing in Clusters in the Countryside (SCLP5.4) and Small-Scale Residential Development in the Countryside (WLP8.7) policies of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans, respectively.
2.8	Following consideration of the annual Authority Monitoring Report 2020/21 , by this committee in December, the AMR was published on the Council website, including an interactive summary in January 2022. Information was also published on the Open Data Portal .
2.9	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <p>It is important in relation to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment that Conservation Areas and their Appraisals and Management Plans are kept under review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new Bungay Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted by Cabinet on 4th January 2022. • A new South Lowestoft / Kirkley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was also adopted by Cabinet on 4th January 2022. This work was initiated through the Heritage Action Zone work and taken forward in collaboration with the Design and Conservation Officers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on a draft Local List of Historic Parks and Gardens covering 5 proposed sites in the north of East Suffolk, to add to the current Local List for the district, thereby giving them greater protection in the planning system, as non-designated heritage assets, closed on 17 December 2021. The 5 sites are Benacre Park, North Cove Hall, Redisham Hall, Sotterley Park and Worlingham Hall. • Consultation on a review of the Thorpeness Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan commenced on 31st January and will close on 11th March 2022. • Reviews of the Southwold and Southwold Harbour and Walberswick Quay, and the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans are also underway.
2.10	<p>CIL Collection and Spend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the financial year 2021-22 to date we have received just over £5.25m in total CIL. The volume of CIL chargeable development has continued to increase over the last 12 months. • The Latest Infrastructure Funding Statement (2020-21), showing Developer Contribution Reports and the latest Infrastructure List was published before 31 December 2021. Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) » East Suffolk Council
2.11	<p>Housing Delivery - The annual anticipated housing delivery figure for East Suffolk is 916 dwellings. For the first 9 months of this financial year (April to Dec) 493 dwellings were delivered (c40 dwellings up on the figures for this time last year), of which 150 were affordable (already exceeding the total for the whole of 2020/21). At the end of December there were 977 dwellings under-construction so delivery is anticipated to pick up before the end of March this year. Although intelligence indicates that there are still some material supply and cost issues for developers to contend with.</p>

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"> • Bungay neighbourhood plan – Regulation 16 publication of the final draft of the plan will take place in spring 2022. • Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation is expected to take place in the spring. • Great Bealings are commencing a review of their ‘made’ neighbourhood plan. • Halesworth neighbourhood plan - submission to the Council and Regulation 16 publication on the final draft of the plan will take place in spring 2022. • Lound with Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton NP – The Decision Statement will be issued in spring and a referendum is expected in early summer of 2022. • Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 publication of the final draft of the plan is expected to take place in spring 2022. • Wickham Market - Regulation 14 consultation carried out in Spring 2019, and now working towards Submission of the Final Draft to the Council. • Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan – Examination will take place in spring 2022, with a referendum later in the year. • Guidance for neighbourhood plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be published in 2022.

3.3	Adoption of the Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document in April 2022.
3.4	Adoption of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document in May 2022.
3.5	There is still considerable work to do given the scale of the consultation response to the draft Strategy but it is anticipated that good progress will have been made on producing a final version of the Cycling and Walking Strategy , with a view to it being presented to Cabinet for adoption in early summer.
3.6	Following consideration of all the consultation responses to the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule the Charging Schedule will have been submitted to an Examiner for independent scrutiny, with a view to Full Council adopting a final version for implementation later in the year.
3.7	Work will have progressed on development briefs for sites allocated for housing in the Local Plans.
3.8	An initial consultation, focusing on the nature of the content for the Healthy Environment Supplementary Planning Document , will have been completed.
3.9	Early initial consultation/engagement will have been completed for the Housing in Clusters in the Countryside (SCLP5.4) and Small-Scale Residential Development in the Countryside (WLP8.7) policies Supplementary Planning Document which is being prepared to support the implementation of these policies and good progress will have been made on preparing the draft SPD.
3.10	Design and Conservation: The additions to the Local List of Historic Parks and Gardens will have been presented to Cabinet in May 2022 for adoption. In addition, work currently underway on the Thorpeness, Southwold/Southwold Harbour/Walberswick Quay, and Halesworth Conservation Areas Appraisals and Management Plan reviews will have made good progress.
3.11	Ecology: The Council's Senior Ecologist is co-ordinating a response from East Suffolk Council to the Government's (DEFRA) Biodiversity Net Gain consultation on how mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments will be regulated and implemented. The consultation sets out the Government's proposals for this and asks questions about how biodiversity net gain will be applied to Town and Country Planning Act development, and, at a higher level, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. Responses to the consultation will be used to help shape the developing legislation, processes and guidance. The consultation runs from 11th January to 5th April 2022 and it is anticipated that the mandatory biodiversity net gain will apply in England by amending the Town & Country Planning Act and is due to be implemented in 2023.
3.12	CIL Collection/Spend and Exacom: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) payments are due to be made to Parishes by 28 April 2021. These will be for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. • The Exacom data transparency project (relating to the management of CIL, Section 106 and RAMS payments) continues to make steady progress with 86% of s106 agreements loaded into the system. Once all s106 agreements have been loaded, all the financial data relating to any s106 contributions received, allocated or spent will be updated and the financial position reconciled to the Finance System. The Exacom system has recently undergone a major technical update for all areas which will also go towards improving the way the data will be presented in the future once the project is completed and able to switch to live mode via the Council's Developer Contributions webpages.

3.13	<p>Housing Delivery - The picture moving forward continues to remain optimistic, given that Local 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. As of 31 March 2021, the latest figures available, there were 7767 consented dwellings either under construction (979) or not started (6788). 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.</p>
3.14	<p>Planning White Paper update – Members will recall that the Planning White Paper, that posed some fundamental changes to the planning system, was published for consultation in August 2020. The analysis of the consultation response was expected last autumn, to be shortly followed by a new Planning Bill. This is still awaited. However, the latest (Feb 2022) Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) ‘Planning Newsletter’ highlights the recent publication (2 Feb 2022) of the Levelling Up White Paper and the important role that planning has to play, with the key planning changes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The simplification of local plans ensuring they are transparent and easier to engage with. • The consideration of new models for a new infrastructure levy. • A number of policies and powers to enable planning to better support town centre regeneration. • Improving democracy and engagement in planning decisions. • Supporting environmental protection through planning. <p>The Newsletter goes on to state that, ‘We will be providing a further update on our approach to changes in the planning system in the Spring. This will provide further detail on how we will take forward measures to create a modernised and effective planning system that empowers communities to support, and local authorities to deliver, the beautiful, environmentally-friendly development this country needs.’</p>

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1 This report is for information only.

Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None