



## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday 9 December 2019

### AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2018/19

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) is produced annually to provide information on the progress of producing and implementing the Council's Local Plans.
2. The Council monitors planning applications throughout the year to provide a basis on which to judge the implementation and effectiveness of policies contained within Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. Monitoring data collected by the Council is used alongside information collected from other sources such as Suffolk Observatory, Office of National Statistics and Natural England.
3. The 2019 AMR covers the monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
4. Previous AMR's have been produced individually by Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council since 2005, but this is the first report covering the East Suffolk area.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Council produces the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) each year to show progress on producing and implementing the Local Plans. This report covers East Suffolk, but provides specific information on the Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans which cover the former Suffolk Coastal area and the former Waveney area.
- 1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 require key pieces of information to be covered by an Authority Monitoring Report, such as:
  - Progress on the Local Plan against the timetable in the Local Development Scheme,
  - Details of any Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders that have been adopted,
  - Any Community Infrastructure Levy receipts,
  - Any action taken under the duty to cooperate,
  - Details of any policies not being implemented,
  - Net amount of additional affordable housing, and
  - Total housing (and affordable housing) completed against annual requirements.
- 1.3 This AMR covers the monitoring period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and provides monitoring information against indicators in the Local Plans, such as housing completions, town centre uses, tourism applications, environmental designations and the planning applications that the Council received.
- 1.4 The Local Plan covering the former Suffolk Coastal area is currently made up of various documents (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies, Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan). These will be superseded upon adoption of the Final Draft Local Plan (currently subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate). Previous AMR's have recorded information and progress on the implementation of these existing policies which has informed the emerging policies.
- 1.5 The Local Plan covering the former Waveney area was adopted in March 2019. As this is the first monitoring report to be published since adoption the details within it will provide a baseline position from which future monitoring will be judged.
- 1.6 The previous individual local authorities have a long and established history of producing the AMR. Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council both first published their AMR in December 2005 to cover the monitoring period 2004/05.

## **2 AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT FOR EAST SUFFOLK**

- 2.1 In accordance with the regulations and examples of best practice, the Authority Monitoring Report for East Suffolk includes several sections which focus on specific aspects of the Local Plan process.
- 2.2 Chapter 1 introduces the document, with Chapter 2 outlining the content and structure of the report.
- 2.3 Chapter 3 provides information in relation to the progress of the Local Plan documents against the milestones outlined in the Local Development Schemes which guide the production of the Local Plan.

- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan – Local Development Scheme adopted in October 2015 and milestones for the publication of the Final Draft Local Plan and submission of document to the Planning Inspectorate were met within the monitoring period.
- Waveney Local Plan – Local Development Scheme adopted in September 2018 and milestones for the submission of document to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination, examination hearings and adoption of the document were met within the monitoring period.

2.4 Chapter 4 provides details on Neighbourhood Plans which have been progressed by the local community and the Council within the monitoring period.

- Five Neighbourhood Plan areas were designated in the monitoring period at Barnby, Halesworth, Oulton (amendment), Lowestoft and Reydon.
- Two Neighbourhood Plans were “made” in the monitoring period at Martlesham and Wenhasdon with Mells Hamlet.

2.5 Chapter 5 relates to the Community Infrastructure Levy

- In Suffolk Coastal £4,099,539.26 was collected in the monitoring period through the Community Infrastructure Levy. Of which £291,532.17 was passed directly to the relevant Town/Parish Council.
- In Waveney £530,913.48 was collected in the monitoring period through the Community Infrastructure Levy. Of which £118,322.07 was passed directly to the relevant Town/Parish Council.
- East Suffolk Council is undertaking a review of the spend process relating to funds collected through the Community Infrastructure Levy based on the revised regulations published in September 2019. The Council is also undertaking a review of the Charging Schedules operating across the District based on the policies and allocations in the new (and emerging) Local Plans.

2.6 Chapter 6 focuses on the Council’s actions under the Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies as part of the Local Plan process and preparation.

- Under the Localism Act 2011, local planning authorities are required to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going bases in relation to strategic cross-boundary planning matters. East Suffolk Council regularly engages with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies to ensure cooperation on various matters throughout the production and implementation of Local Plan documents.

2.7 Chapter 7 details how the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans have been implemented, performed and delivered over the monitoring period. The chapter is split into sub sections that are outlined below.

- Employment – overall there has been a net gain of employment floorspace across East Suffolk. Within the former Suffolk Coastal area B1 (B1 Business – Offices, research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area) uses account for over a third of uses within existing employment areas. In the former Waveney area, over half of the employment units are occupied by general industrial and storage or distribution uses.
- Retail – the number of vacant units in the town centres has increased, with the largest increases in Bungay, Felixstowe, Lowestoft and Woodbridge. Despite the increase in vacant units the number of A1 shops in town centres increased.

- Tourism – 27 applications permitting new tourist accommodation and 4 applications permitted for loss. Total visitor spend in excess of £500m in East Suffolk.
- Housing – 885 new homes completed during the monitoring period (588 in Suffolk Coastal and 297 in Waveney). Of which 220 were affordable homes (131 in Suffolk Coastal and 89 in Waveney). The Council has a housing land supply of 7.03 years in Suffolk Coastal and 6.58 years in Waveney. The Housing Delivery Test showed 128% delivery in Suffolk Coastal and 72% delivery in Waveney, against housing requirements/need over past three years. A Housing Action Plan was published in August 2019.
- Transport – applications received generally in conformity with the Suffolk County Council guidance on parking standards. Local Plan policies seek to further increase use of sustainable modes of transport.
- Community Facilities and Assets – 12 assets have been identified under the Community Right to Bid. Planning permissions will create or enhance community facilities in Benhall, Corton, Kesgrave, Leiston, Martlesham, Reydon, Trimley St Mary and Woodbridge. Some permissions result in the loss of community facilities to residential uses in Felixstowe, Framlingham and Leiston.
- Climate Change – 9 renewable energy schemes have been permitted (8 in Suffolk Coastal and 1 in Waveney). No planning applications have been approved in the monitoring period against Environment Agency advice on flood risk.
- Design – 166 applications refused (in part) on design grounds (140 in Suffolk Coastal and 26 in Waveney).
- Natural Environment – introduction of charges relating to the Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.
- Historic Environment – New Conservation Area for Kelsale designated in November 2018. A programme for the regeneration of the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone began in May 2018.
- Health – communities in the former Suffolk Coastal area generally have better health and life expectancy than communities in the former Waveney area. However, the health of residents in East Suffolk does not perform as well when compared to the national averages.
- Site Allocations – this section provides a summary of site allocations with planning permission as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. It also includes the site allocations identified in Neighbourhood Plans covering Framlingham, Kessingland, Leiston and Melton.

2.8 Chapter 8 relates to the Sustainability Appraisals that support the Local Plan documents. Tables provide a summary of potential significant effects (positive and negative) identified in the Council's Sustainability Appraisals. Monitoring of these enables the potential significant effects to be assessed and any remedial action to be taken if required.

2.9 The document also includes four appendices to provide further detail, justification and information in respect of the details included in the AMR.

- 2.10 The AMR for the monitoring period 2018/19 shows that the policies in the Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans across the district are generally performing as expected. The policies are all evidenced based, in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance and examples of best practice. They provide consistency of decision making for those wishing to bring forward applications and certainty for the local communities in respect of the future development and infrastructure requirements across the District.

### **3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN?**

- 3.1 The AMR is a key document to report on the progress of the Local Plan. The Local Plans across the district are central to the East Suffolk Business Plan as they provide policies that enable communities to fulfil their potential, whilst promoting economic growth and maintain a special quality of life. Central to the Local Plans for the district is significantly improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.
- 3.2 The East Suffolk Business Plan has a strategy which focuses on Enabling Communities, Economic Growth and Financial Self-Sufficiency. The AMR provides monitoring information of policies and actions that collectively contribute to this strategy, through the implementation of the Local Plans.
- 3.3 The AMR provides monitoring information in respect of the health and wellbeing of communities across East Suffolk. Fundamental to the Local Plans in East Suffolk is the delivery of healthy and thriving communities which provide significant benefits in respect of access to the countryside, areas of recreation, community facilities and employment opportunities.

### **4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The AMR has been prepared by the Planning Policy and Delivery Team who continually monitor the progress of the Local Plan policies and planning applications that are received and determined by the Council. The financial costs of this are already accounted for within existing staff budgets for the Planning and Coastal Management Service Area.
- 4.2 The AMR has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will be published on the Council's website.

### **5 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Analysis. No specific issues have been identified through the Equality Impact Analysis.

### **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The preparation of the AMR does not require any formal period of public consultation before it is published on the Council's website.

- 6.2 The AMR has been prepared by officers in the Planning Policy and Delivery Team as they have responsibility for the monitoring of Local Plan policies and indicators. Other teams across the Council, such as Private Sector Housing, Economic Development and Infrastructure have also been involved with the preparation and collation of information included in the AMR.
- 6.3 A draft of the AMR was presented to the Local Plan Working Group on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Comments made by members of the working group have been actioned and incorporated where relevant.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The Council is also required to publish its AMR in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 7.2 The Council could choose to not monitor and publish the AMR, but this would be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Not undertaking the AMR would result in the Local Plan policies not being subject to monitoring and therefore the Council not being able to judge the usefulness of them.

## **8 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 In order to publish the AMR for the monitoring period 2018/19, the constitution outlines that Strategic Planning Committee is required to review and monitor the operational impact of the Council's planning policies and development control activities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 be published.
2. That the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management in conjunction with the Head of Planning and Coastal Management Service be given delegated authority to make minor typographical or presentational changes to the document following Strategic Planning Committee.

### **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report 2019
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### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Available From</b>
November 2019	Equality Impact Analysis	Planning Policy and Delivery Team