



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 9 September 2019

PLANNING POLICY AND DELIVERY UPDATE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides updates on the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, the East Suffolk Housing Action Plan, the Housing Land Supply position and Community Infrastructure Levy spend process review, for information.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The last meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee received an update on Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan progress and the forward work programme. This report provides a brief update on the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, the Housing Action Plan and the 5 year housing land supply position for both Local Plan areas.

2 LOCAL PLAN FOR THE FORMER SUFFOLK COASTAL AREA

- 2.1 As Councillors will be aware from the last meeting of this Committee, the Local Plan for the former Suffolk Coastal area is well progressed and was submitted to the Secretary of State, for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate, on 29th March 2019. Inspector Philip Lewis BA (Hons) MA MRTPI was appointed to conduct the Examination to determine whether the Local Plan is sound.
- 2.2 The public Hearing stage of the Examination commenced on Tuesday 20th August. Nine hearing days are scheduled over a 5 week period, closing on Friday 20th September. At the time of preparing this report 3 days of hearings have taken place in the first week, including matters relating to legal compliance, housing strategy, employment strategy and infrastructure, including major energy infrastructure. Latest news and updates including the hearing programme can be accessed via the following link.
<https://suffolkcoastallocalplan.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/SuffolkCoastalExamination2019/viewContent?contentid=389043>
- 2.3 As is usual practice, it is anticipated that the Inspector will require modifications to be made to the Local Plan. These will need to be published for at least 6 weeks consultation. The Inspector will then consider the feedback, any changes and whether the hearing needs to be re-opened. Assuming all goes well, the Inspector will write his report and the Local Plan will be presented to Full Council for consideration for adoption. Based on current timings it is anticipated this will be early next year.
- 2.4 On adoption, this plan will supersede the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2013, Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies 2017, Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan 2017 and the remaining 'saved' policies from 2001 Local Plan, (pre the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act).

3 EAST SUFFOLK HOUSING ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 All Councillors were emailed a briefing note for the East Suffolk Housing Action Plan on 20th August 2019 along the lines of the text below. Due to timescales set by Government it wasn't possible for the Housing Action Plan to be considered by this Committee prior to it being signed off by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management. In future the Housing Action Plan will be reported to this Committee prior to it being finalised.
- 3.2 The Housing Delivery Test was introduced by the Government in 2018 and assesses how successful each Local Authority has been in delivering the required number of houses in the previous three financial years. In Local Planning Authority areas where less than 95% of the required housing has been delivered over the past three years, authorities must produce a Housing Action Plan. In those areas where less than 85% of the requirement was delivered there is an additional requirement to apply a 20% buffer to their 5-year land supply, and where less than 75% is delivered the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' would also apply in decision making. The Government intends to publish the results of the Housing Delivery Test in November each year (for the previous three full financial years) and transitional arrangements mean that the requirements outlined above are being phased in over the period up to November 2020. The purpose of a Housing Action Plan is to identify the

reasons for under delivery and to set out measures to reduce future risk. The Government requires that a Housing Action Plan, where necessary, should be published within 6 months of the publication of the Housing Delivery Test results.

- 3.3 The first set of Housing Delivery Test results, covering the period 2015/16-2017/18, were published in February 2019 and relate to the areas covered by the Local Plans: the result for the former Suffolk Coastal area is 128% and the result for the former Waveney area is 72%.
- 3.4 Whilst further action is not required for the former Suffolk Coastal area, a Housing Action Plan and applying a 20% buffer to the 5-year land supply is required for the former Waveney area. Under the transitional arrangements the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', triggered at less than 75% delivery of the housing requirement, will not apply until the November 2020 results. As both areas are now within East Suffolk, and in view of the corporate objectives surrounding housing delivery and the desire to ensure strong delivery is maintained across East Suffolk, the Housing Action Plan covers the whole of East Suffolk local planning authority area (excluding the Broads Authority area).
- 3.5 As required by the Government, the Housing Action Plan was published on 19th August 2019. <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Housing-Action-Plan/Housing-Action-Plan-2019.pdf> The Council is in a positive position in terms of setting out its planned approach to housing delivery, with the Local Plan for the former Suffolk Coastal area at an advanced stage and the Local Plan for the former Waveney area having been recently adopted. The two new Local Plans set ambitious targets for housing delivery, along with site allocations and policies to bring development forward. In the former Waveney area the Local Plan has sought to address previous reasons for under delivery in the Local Plan through a range of site allocations.
- 3.6 There are a number of initiatives related to housing delivery which have already been put in place prior to the drafting of the Housing Action Plan, and the Plan acknowledges that the Council is already taking positive steps to boost and maintain delivery. The actions identified are focused on delivering the new Local Plans and the Housing Action Plan sets out specific actions around ongoing and further improvements to processes and procedures in the Planning Service, the development of further policy tools to support delivery, and the work of the new Major Sites and Infrastructure Team.
- 3.7 Whilst some sites in the new Local Plans are expected to come forward in the short term, others will take longer to deliver, and the Housing Action Plan will not have an immediate influence on the Housing Delivery Test results. The expectation is that the 2019 Housing Delivery Test will result in over 100% for the former Suffolk Coastal area and approximately 85% for the former Waveney area. As set down in National Planning Practice Guidance for new Councils, the 2020 Housing Delivery Test is anticipated to relate to the full East Suffolk local planning authority area and it is possible that the results will be close to 100% for East Suffolk under which no action will be required. However, regardless of future results, it is intended to produce an annual Housing Action Plan as a tool to 'check' the progress and success of actions to secure housing delivery and enable the Council to take early steps to minimise any future risk of under delivery.

4 HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

- 4.1 The Statement of Housing Land Supply as at 31 March 2019 was published on 6th August 2019.

- 4.2 The purpose of the 5 year housing land supply is to provide an indication of whether there are sufficient sites available to meet the housing requirement for the next 5 years. Where strategic policies are up to date, which is the case for the former Waveney area, the housing requirement is the adopted figure (374 dwellings per annum). Where strategic policies are more than 5 years old, as is the case for the former Suffolk Coastal area, local housing need calculated using the standard method should be used in place of the housing requirement (542 dwellings per annum).
- 4.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in February 2019 is more challenging for local planning authorities than previously, in terms of demonstrating that sites are 'deliverable' i.e. can be delivered with the next 5 years. This has required greater engagement and additional information from developers to produce a robust 5 year land supply. The 5 years covered in this statement are 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2024.
- 4.4 The Statement confirms that the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan area for East Suffolk has a housing land supply of 7.03 years (including the standard 5% buffer) and for the Waveney Local Plan area 6.58 years including a 20% buffer in accordance with the Housing Delivery Test requirement. <http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/suffolk-coastal-local-plan/monitoring-information/housing-land-supply-assessment/>

5 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SPEND REVIEW

- 5.1 As Councillors will be aware, CIL is the main way in which the Council collects contributions from developers for infrastructure provision to support development planned in the Council's Local Plans. The former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils had similar annual approaches to the spending of CIL. As one Council, the approach needs to be reviewed.
- 5.2 At present the annual CIL spend process has been placed on hold pending the commencement of the new Infrastructure Delivery Manager in September and the establishment of a new structure for the East Suffolk CIL spend process, utilising the combined CIL collection funds from both the former Waveney and Suffolk Coastal Districts.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 This report is for information only.

RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of the report, updating the Strategic Planning Committee on the emerging Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, the East Suffolk Housing Action Plan, the Housing Land Supply position and Community Infrastructure Levy spend process review, be noted and endorsed.

APPENDICES – None

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None