



**Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk,
NR33 0EQ**

Strategic Planning Committee

Members:

Councillor Paul Ashdown (Chairman)
Councillor Debbie McCallum (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Stuart Bird
Councillor Chris Blundell
Councillor Norman Brooks
Councillor Jenny Ceresa
Councillor Tony Cooper
Councillor Linda Coulam
Councillor Tom Daly
Councillor Mike Deacon
Councillor Andree Gee
Councillor Colin Hedgley
Councillor Mark Newton
Councillor Malcolm Pitchers
Councillor Sarah Plummer
Councillor David Ritchie
Councillor Craig Rivett
Councillor Kay Yule

Members are invited to a **Meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee**
to be held in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft,
on **Monday, 6 March 2023 at 10.30am.**

This meeting will be broadcast to the public via the East Suffolk YouTube
Channel at <https://youtu.be/oaFaXS7y-Wc>.

An Agenda is set out below.

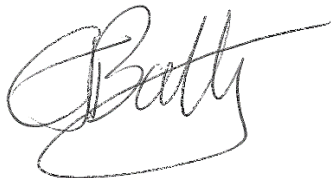
Part One – Open to the Public

Pages

2	Declarations of Interest Members and Officers are invited to make any declarations of interests, and the nature of that interest, that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the Meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.	
3	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2022	1 - 8
4	Energy Projects Update To receive a presentation on Energy Projects within East Suffolk from the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development	
5	Major Sites Update To receive a verbal update from the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management on major development sites in East Suffolk	
6	Planning Performance Report - October to December 2022 ES/1464 Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	9 - 14
7	Enforcement Performance Report - October to December 2022 ES/1465 Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	15 - 19
8	Appeals Performance Report ES/1466 Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	20 - 48
9	Planning Policy and Delivery Update ES/1467 Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	49 - 57
10	Design Skills Audit ES/1473 Report of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management	58 - 81
11	Draft Forward Work Programme for 2023/24 To consider a draft work programme for the Committee in the 2023/24 Municipal Year, subject to it being reviewed following the elections to East Suffolk Council on 4 May 2023.	

There are no Exempt or Confidential items for this Agenda.

Close



Chris Bally, Chief Executive

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Unconfirmed



Minutes of a Meeting of the **Strategic Planning Committee** held in the Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton, on **Monday, 5 December 2022 at 10.30am.**

Members of the Committee present:

Councillor Paul Ashdown, Councillor Stuart Bird, Councillor Chris Blundell, Councillor Jenny Ceresa, Councillor Linda Coulam, Councillor Tom Daly, Councillor Andree Gee, Councillor Colin Hedgley, Councillor Mark Newton, Councillor Malcolm Pitchers, Councillor Sarah Plummer, Councillor David Ritchie, Councillor Craig Rivett, Councillor Kay Yule

Other Members present:

Councillor Peter Byatt

Officers present:

Caroline Clamp (Planning Policy and Delivery Assistant), Chris King (Design Champion & Specialist Services Manager), Matt Makin (Democratic Services Officer (Regulatory)), Andrea McMillan (Planning Manager - Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services), Adam Nicholls (Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery)), Bethany Rance (Planner - Energy Projects), Katherine Scott (Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management)), Alli Stone (Democratic Services Officer (Governance)), Ben Woolnough (Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure))

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Norman Brooks, Tony Cooper, Mike Deacon and Debbie McCallum. Councillor Peter Byatt attended the meeting as Councillor Deacon's substitute.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3 Minutes

On the proposition of Councillor Newton, seconded by Councillor Hedgley it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Energy Projects Update

The Committee received a presentation on energy projects in East Suffolk from Councillor Craig Rivett, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development.

NOTE: Councillor Pitchers arrived during the presentation, at 10.36am.

Councillor Rivett provided an overview of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) taking place in the district, noting two out of district projects that the Council had been consulted on.

The Committee received an update on the Sizewell C project; it was noted that the Secretary of State had approved a Development Consent Order (DCO) for a new nuclear power plant on the site, to be known as Sizewell C. Councillor Rivett stated this did not guarantee that a new nuclear power station would come forward on the site, as final funding was still to be agreed. Councillor Rivett highlighted that EDF Energy, at the Council's request, had established a website to publish when activity was taking place on its land and what each activity was.

The Committee received an update on the planting that had taken place at Pillbox Field, which was required as part of the planning consent to relocate facilities at Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station.

Councillor Rivett outlined the Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) offshore projects, noting the progress of East Anglia One (EA1), East Anglia One North (EA1N), East Anglia Two (EA2), and East Anglia Three (EA3). The Committee was informed that Judicial Review hearings in respect of EA1N and EA2 had been held on 15-16 November 2022, and the decision was pending.

The Committee received information on the Five Estuaries and North Falls offshore wind farm extensions, including details of informal and formal public consultations. It was anticipated that a DCO submission for Five Estuaries would be made in winter 2023 and that a DCO submission for North Falls would be made in summer 2023.

Councillor Rivett provided an update on Sea Link and the Nautilus and Euro Link Interconnectors, including details on consultation dates, the DCO submission process, proposed construction dates, and siting and routing options. Councillor Rivett also elaborated on the two out of district projects that the Council had been consulted on, which related to National Grid Network reinforcements between Bramford and Twinstead, and East Anglia GREEN.

The Chairman invited questions to Councillor Rivett and the officers.

Councillor Rivett confirmed that the Council's Energy Projects team would be able to assist any member of the public with queries about activities taking place on land not related to EDF Energy and the Sizewell C project.

Councillor Rivett and the Head of Planning and Coastal Management confirmed that the Council would be the relevant authority to monitor and enforce the conditions of the DCO and that the Council would be setting up a portal website to collate the myriad of documents relating to the Sizewell C project and allow members of the public to highlight potential planning breaches on the site. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management highlighted the significant workload of officers and encouraged dialogue between the public and landowners where possible.

In response to a series of questions from Councillor Byatt, Councillor Rivett noted that a meeting on Hydrogen East would be taking place in early 2023, highlighting the number of future options for hydrogen production in East Suffolk with Freeport East, Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station and Conrad Energy in Lowestoft. Councillor Rivett said that much consideration had been given to the Sizewell A Nuclear Power Station site but stated the site was still in the process of being commissioned and due to restrictions, there would be limited reuse of the land and it would not be a viable site for an energy projects co-ordination hub. Regarding responses to the National Grid Network informal consultation, this had not been published and more information would be available when the DCO stage was initiated.

Councillor Rivett was not aware of any intention to relocate the proposed sub-station in Friston, noting that this would require an amendment to the SPR offshore DCOs and a new offer from the National Grid for a connection point.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Rivett for his presentation.

5 Authority Monitoring Report 2021/22

The Committee received report ES/1356 of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which sought approval to publish the Council's Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) for the 2021/22 year.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and noted the AMR's importance, outlining its role in judging the implementation and effectiveness of policies contained within the two Local Plans and the numerous Neighbourhood Plans in East Suffolk. Councillor Ritchie considered that the AMR demonstrated significant progress had been made in 2021/22 and described the production of the AMR as one of the most important pieces of work undertaken by the Planning Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services team.

Councillor Ritchie invited the Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery) to address the Committee. The Principal Planner gave a presentation on the AMR which summarised the impacts of COVID-19, the progression of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans, climate change and sustainability, the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier, major infrastructure, health and wellbeing, Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements, neighbourhood plans, employment uses, town centre vacancy rates, housing (statistics, completions, affordable housing completions), housing land supply, planning appeals, site allocations, and the natural and historic environment. The presentation also gave an overview on the next steps for finalising and publishing the 2021/22 AMR and provided a summary of the Council's Open Data Portal.

The presentation highlighted that several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) had been adopted during 2021/22, and that the Cycling and Walking Strategy developed during that period had been adopted by the Cabinet in October 2022. The Principal Planner noted that five neighbourhood plans had been made during 2021/22 in Bredfield, Kesgrave, Reydon, Beccles, and Southwold, and that several other neighbourhood plans were progressing well.

The Committee was advised that the Council had a five-year housing land supply, with the presentation detailing that there was a 6.47-year supply in the former Suffolk Coastal area, a 5.78-year supply in the former Waveney area, and a 6.15-year supply for the East Suffolk area as a whole.

The Chairman invited questions and comments to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

In responses to several questions from Councillor Byatt, the Principal Planner advised that he would be able to provide him with a further breakdown on life expectancy in his Ward and additional information on free Wi-Fi in East Suffolk outside of the meeting. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management responded to Councillor Byatt's question on the proposed Two Villages bypass, explaining that it had been consented as part of the Sizewell C Development Consent Order (DCO) and the programme for delivery, subject to the final investment decision, anticipated the bypass being constructed in the first two years of the project.

Councillor Ritchie, in reply to Councillor Byatt's query regarding the brownfield site at Kirkley Waterfront, noted the history and current work in attempting to develop this site and the significant issues faced, including flooding, contaminated land, multiple land ownerships and viability. Councillor Ritchie considered the delivery of the Lowestoft Tidal Barrier to be pivotal in bringing Kirkley Waterfront forward as viable site for development.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Pitchers, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

1. That the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 be published.
2. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management Service, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, be given delegated authority to make any necessary minor typographical or presentational changes to the document prior to formally publishing it.

6 Planning Policy and Delivery Update

The Committee received report **ES/1357** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided an update on key elements of the current work programme, including the preparation of supplementary planning documents, neighbourhood plans and strategies on specific topics such as cycling and walking, and on housing delivery. The report also provided updates, as appropriate,

for specialist services (Design and Conservation, Arboriculture and Landscape (including Rights of Way) and Ecology) that form part of the Planning Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services team. An update was also provided on the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and highlighted the significant work programme of the Planning Policy and Delivery team, including the Specialist Services team, noting this had been outlined by the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) received by the Committee earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Ritchie highlighted the adoption of the Cycling and Walking Strategy by the Cabinet in October 2022, considering that it put the Council in an advantageous position to receive funding for cycling and walking projects in Suffolk. The Committee was advised that the production of this strategy had been a significant piece of work undertaken by the Council alongside Suffolk County Council and expressed his thanks to all involved in the task.

Councillor Ritchie outlined that work was ongoing to reappraise the Aldeburgh and Saxmundham conservation areas and highlighted that a report would be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on Tuesday 6 December 2022 to seek the addition of five historic parks and gardens to the Council's Local List of Park and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest. Councillor Ritchie noted the neighbourhood plans made, as set out in the AMR earlier in the meeting, highlighting the praise received from examiners on the quality of the plans being produced in the district.

Councillor Ritchie invited the Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specialist Services) to address the Committee. The Committee was informed that the Bungay and Worlingham Neighbourhood Plans had been made by the Full Council at its meeting on 23 November 2022; the Examiner's report for the Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan had been published and concluded that, subject to modifications, the plan could proceed to referendum.

The Planning Manager drew the Committee's attention to paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7 of the report, regarding supplementary planning documents (SPDs). The Committee was informed of the role that SPDs play in the planning system, recognised by legislation and the government to provide detailed advice on policies in adopted local plans. The Planning Manager noted that once adopted, SPDs become material planning considerations and were important in providing clear guidance to support decision making, and it was completely appropriate to provide further guidance in this format.

The Chairman invited questions and comments to Councillor Ritchie and the officers.

NOTE: Councillor Blundell left the meeting room as questioning commenced, at 11.37am.

The Head of Planning and Coastal Management advised the Coastal Partnership East, although working primarily with East Suffolk Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council, was not boundary blind and worked well with West Norfolk District Council and Essex County Council on coastal matters. Councillor Ritchie

concurred that it was important that Coastal Partnership East worked with its neighbours where appropriate.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Yule, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

7 Planning Performance Report - October to Mid-November 2022

The Committee received report **ES/1358** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided an update on the planning performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the timescales for determining planning applications.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report, highlighting the continuing work of the Development Management team to meet both national and local "stretch" targets.

Councillor Ritchie invited the Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure) and the Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management) to address the Committee. The Principal Planner drew the Committee's attention to the figures at paragraph 2.4 of the report, relating to the six-week period of the current quarter.

There were no questions or comments to Councillor Ritchie or the officers, and on the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Ceresa, it was by a majority vote

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

NOTE: Councillor Blundell returned to the meeting room immediately prior to the vote, at 11.42am, and therefore did not vote on the item.

8 Enforcement Performance Report - July to September 2022

The Committee received report **ES/1358** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided information on the performance of the enforcement section of the Development Management Team.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report; the Committee was advised that in the period July to September 2022, more enforcement cases had been closed than opened, particular in the latter part of the monitoring period. Councillor Ritchie added that more cases were now being resolved in shorter time periods and considered this reflected the work being done to improve the enforcement process.

The Chairman invited the Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure) to address the Committee. The Planning Manager updated the Committee that since the last meeting, where an action plan to improve the enforcement section had been agreed, officers had worked with colleagues in ICT and Internal Audit to progress the actions in a timely manner.

The Planning Manager highlighted the enhanced enforcement update report which was now in use for both the Planning Committee North and Planning Committee South and added that the Council would be recruiting to vacant posts in the coming month, including the additional Enforcement Officer post that had been created.

The Chairman invited questions and comments to Councillor Ritchie and the officers. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in response to Councillor Plummer, said it was too early to determine if the recent significant drop in enforcement cases identified a trend, highlighting that there had been a significant increase in reported enforcement breaches during the national lockdowns. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management said this would be kept under review and reported on at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman congratulated officers for their hard work to develop the enhanced enforcement update report being presented to the Planning Committee North and Planning Committee South, considering it much easier to read and understand.

On the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Pitchers, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

9 Appeals Performance Report - 20 September to 11 November 2022

The Committee received report **ES/1360** of the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, which provided an update on the planning performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the quality and quantity of appeal decisions received from the Planning Inspectorate following refusal of planning permission by the Council.

Councillor Ritchie introduced the report and considered that the appeal outcomes received were highly satisfactory. The Committee was advised that there was a significant backlog of appeals to be heard by the Planning Inspectorate.

The Chairman invited the Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure) to update the Committee on an appeal decision received after the production and publication of the report.

The Committee was informed that an appeal decision had been received on 22 November 2022 in respect of a scheme for a care village, including an 80-bed care home, at Land Off Yarmouth Road, Melton, which had been refused planning permission under delegated powers. The Planning Manager advised that the appeal

had been heard in a public inquiry earlier in the year and there had been an eight-month delay in receiving the Inspector's decision.

The Planning Manager was pleased to report that the appeal had been dismissed, considering that the Council had put forward a robust defence of its refusal, which had been heavily disputed by the appellant. The Planning Manager set out the reasons given for the initial refusal of planning permission and noted that positive feedback had been recorded in the Inspector's decision regarding the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan identifying a supply of land for such developments, meaning that development on unsuitable sites such as the one in question can be resisted.

The Committee was informed that the Council had strongly defended the refusal on landscape and character impacts, which had been supported by the Inspector, who had weighed the benefits of the scheme against the potential harm that would be caused and concluded that it was proper to dismiss the appeal. The Planning Manager noted this decision may influence the outcome of another appeal, for a scheme at Norwich Road, Halesworth, which had been heard in a public inquiry during November 2022; the decision of this appeal was expected within the next month.

There were no questions or comments to Councillor Ritchie or the officers, and on the proposition of Councillor Ritchie, seconded by Councillor Ashdown, it was by a unanimous vote

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be noted.

10 Strategic Planning Committee's Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered its Forward Work Programme. No amendments were made to the Work Programme at this time.

The meeting concluded at 11:53am.

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Chairman



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 March 2023

Subject	Planning Performance Report – October to December 2022
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Ben Woolnough Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure) 01394 444681 ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Katherine Scott Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management) 01394 444503 katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

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 the planning performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the timescales for determining planning applications.

Options:

None.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report be noted.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Not applicable.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

Not applicable.

Environmental:

Not applicable.

Equalities and Diversity:

Not applicable.

Financial:

Not applicable.

Human Resources:

Not applicable.

ICT:

Not applicable.

Legal:

Not applicable.

Risk:

Not applicable.

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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected? To provide information on the performance of the enforcement section			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides details on the determination timescales for all planning applications at East Suffolk Council when tested against the government set timescales as well as the East Suffolk Council stretched targets.
1.2	The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are reported on a quarterly basis and included within the East Suffolk Council performance report and tested against the Council's Business Plan.

2 Current position																					
2.1	East Suffolk Council as Local Planning Authority determines applications that seek Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent, Advertisement Consent and Tree Works applications along with associated applications such as those seeking approval of matters reserved by conditions on consents.																				
2.2	This report focuses on the applications for Planning Permission (those seeking Approval of Reserved Matters, Change of Use, Full Planning Permission, Outline Planning Permission, Removal of Condition(s) and Variations of Condition(s)). There are herein referred to as Planning Applications.																				
2.3	<p>The previous Strategic Planning Committee took place on 5 December 2022, after the end of the last quarter and the closure of a two-year monitoring period for quarterly returns to government, and part way through the first quarter of the new/current monitoring period (October – December 2022). It therefore contained partial figures for that quarter. This report provides the full data for that quarter.</p> <table><tr><th></th><th>Quarter (Oct - Dec 2022)</th><th>Percentage</th><th>Targets</th></tr><tr><td>Major Development</td><td>11/12</td><td>91.67%</td><td>60% national 65% stretched</td></tr><tr><td>Minor Development</td><td>98/128</td><td>76.56%</td><td>n/a - national 75% stretched</td></tr><tr><td>Other Development</td><td>275/350</td><td>78.57%</td><td>n/a - national 90% stretched</td></tr><tr><td>Minor and Other Development Combined figures</td><td>373/478</td><td>78.03%</td><td>70% national n/a - stretched</td></tr></table>		Quarter (Oct - Dec 2022)	Percentage	Targets	Major Development	11/12	91.67%	60% national 65% stretched	Minor Development	98/128	76.56%	n/a - national 75% stretched	Other Development	275/350	78.57%	n/a - national 90% stretched	Minor and Other Development Combined figures	373/478	78.03%	70% national n/a - stretched
	Quarter (Oct - Dec 2022)	Percentage	Targets																		
Major Development	11/12	91.67%	60% national 65% stretched																		
Minor Development	98/128	76.56%	n/a - national 75% stretched																		
Other Development	275/350	78.57%	n/a - national 90% stretched																		
Minor and Other Development Combined figures	373/478	78.03%	70% national n/a - stretched																		

2.4	As set out in the table above, during the first six weeks of this quarter the team has determined 91.67% of 'Majors' either within 13 weeks or an agreed extension of time. This is significantly above the national target of 60% and our own stretch target of 65%.
2.5	During this period the team has also met our own stretch target for the determination of 'Minor' Applications, achieving 76.56% determined either within 8 weeks or an agreed extension of time. The stretch target is 75%.
2.6	Unfortunately, the stretch target for the determination of 'other' applications either within 8 weeks or an agreed extension of time has not been met, with the team achieving 78.7% rather than the stretch target of 90%.
2.7	The combined figures for 'Minors' and 'Others' for this period is 78.03% so it meets the government target of 70%. However, it should still be recognised that this figure is unfortunately being reduced by the proportion of 'Others' that are not making the target and therefore this should be recognised as an area for improvement.
2.8	However, it should also be recognised that the team had a significant number of vacant posts during that quarter and those vacancies remain, which likely affects the proportions of applications they are able to determine in time. The team should be commended on all their hard work and efforts to achieve the above figures.
2.9	It should be noted that there are a number of advertisements out seeking to recruit officers to the currently vacant position, and filling those posts should strengthen and improve capacity within the team potentially enabling the above figures relating to quantity to potentially be improved, but also ensure the quality of decisions made is maintained.
2.10	The next Strategic Planning Committee meeting (scheduled for June 2023) will take place once the current quarter has expired (1 January – 31 March 2023)) and therefore the report for that meeting will contain the full figures for the current quarter.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	Quarterly monitoring
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	That the report concerning the performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the speed of determining planning applications is noted.
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Appendices

Appendices:
None.

Background reference papers:
None.



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 March 2023

Subject	Enforcement Performance Report – October to December 2022
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Cate Buck Senior Planning & Enforcement Officer Cate.buck@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01394 444290

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:

To provide information on the performance of the enforcement section of the Development Management Team.

Options:

Not applicable.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report be noted

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Not applicable

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

East Suffolk Council Enforcement Policy

Environmental:

Not applicable

Equalities and Diversity:

Not applicable

Financial:

Not applicable

Human Resources:

Not applicable

ICT:

Not applicable

Legal:

Not applicable

Risk:

Not applicable

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 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 type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected? To provide information on the performance of the enforcement section			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts			
1.1	Following the adoption of the new Local Enforcement Plan in March 2019 and the formation of the new East Suffolk Council section it was decided that a report be presented on a quarterly basis from August 2019.		
1.2	Between October and December, two Enforcement Notices, one Listed Building Enforcement Notice and One High Court Injunction were issued.		

2 Current position				
2.1	<u>Cases Received and Closed Oct to Dec 2022</u>			
	<u>Month</u>	<u>Cases Received</u>	<u>Cases Closed</u>	
	October	45	59	
	November	54	18	
	December	28	58	
	*Please note all new complaints are logged, site visited and then triaged in accord with the appropriate risk assessment.			
2.2	<u>Reasons for Closure</u>			
	<u>Reason</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>
	No Breach	29	5	23
	Compliance/use ceased	8	0	6
	Planning Permission Granted	17	10	14
	Permitted Development	1	1	4
	Other Department	1	0	0
	Withdrawn	0	1	0
	De Minimus	3	0	10
	Duplicate	0	1	1
2.3	<u>Time taken to close cases</u>			
	<u>Time taken to close cases</u>	<u>Cases Closed in October</u>	<u>Cases Closed in November</u>	<u>Cases Closed in December</u>
	<u>1-20 days</u>	3	3	9
	<u>21-40 days</u>	7	0	11
	<u>41-60 days</u>	8	4	3
	<u>61-80 days</u>	6	1	3

	<u>81 - 100 Days</u>	1	3	2
	<u>101 – 120 Day</u>	2	1	2
	<u>121 + Days</u>	32	6	28
	<u>Total</u>	59	18	58
2.4	<u>Enforcement Notices Served Oct to December 2022</u>			
	<u>Type of Notice</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Breach</u>	<u>Compliance period</u>
	Enforcement Notice	The Pastures, The Street, North Cove, Beccles	Change of use	4 months
	Enforcement Notice	39 Foxglove End, Leiston	Erection of a fence	2 months
	Listed Building Enforcement Notice	11 Wharton St, Bungay	Unauthorised works	3 months

3 How to address current situation

3.1 Quarterly monitoring

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1 That the report concerning Enforcement Team statistics be received

Appendices

Appendices:

None.

Background reference papers:

None.



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 05 December 2022

Subject	Appeals Performance Report – 12 November 2022 to 14 February 2023
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Ben Woolnough Planning Manager (Development Management, Major Sites and Infrastructure) 07833 406681 Ben.woolnough@eastsuffolk.gov.uk Katherine Scott Principal Planner (Technical Lead, Development Management) 07867 155568 Katherine.scott@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

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 the planning performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the quality and quantity of appeal decisions received from the Planning Inspectorate following refusal of planning permission by East Suffolk Council.

Options:

None.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report be noted.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Not applicable.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

Not applicable.

Environmental:

Not applicable.

Equalities and Diversity:

Not applicable.

Financial:

Not applicable.

Human Resources:

Not applicable.

ICT:

Not applicable.

Legal:

Not applicable.

Risk:

Not applicable.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 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 type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
XXX	Governance		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected? To provide information on the performance of the enforcement section			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The report is presented to Members as rolling reporting mechanism on how the Council is performing on both the quality and quantity of appeal decisions received from the Planning Inspectorate.
2 Current position	
2.1	A total of 15 planning appeal decisions, one costs decision and one CIL appeal decision has been received from the Planning Inspectorate since the 12 November 2022 following a refusal of planning permission from East Suffolk Council.
2.2	A summary of all the appeal decisions received is appended to this report (Appendix A).
2.3	The Planning Inspectorate monitor appeal success rates at Local Authorities and therefore it is important to ensure that the Council is robust on appeals, rigorously defending reasons for refusal. Appeal decisions also provide a clear benchmark for how policy is to be interpreted and applications considered.
2.4	Very few planning refusals are appealed (approximately 20%) and nationally on average there is a 42% appellant success rate for major applications, 27% success rate for minor applications and 39% success rate for householder applications.
2.5	All of the appeal decisions related to applications which were delegated decisions determined by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management.
2.6	Of the 15 planning appeals, 13 of the decisions were dismissed (86.7 %) and two of the decisions were allowed (13.3%) by the Planning Inspectorate.
2.7	Two of the appeals were for Major Applications, with one allowed and one dismissed.
2.8	Five of the appeals were for minor applications with one allowed (20 %) and four dismissed (80 %).
2.9	Seven of the appeals were for householder applications and they were all dismissed (100%).
2.10	There was also at an appeal against a Prior Approval application. It was dismissed.
2.11	There was also a Costs decision that was dismissed, and an appeal relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which was dismissed, confirming the CIL liability of the scheme.

2.12	<p>In terms of key outcomes of the appeals, these matters are of particulate note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appeal decision relating to Land of Yarmouth Road, Melton (DC/20/1521/FUL) highlights the importance of giving significant weight to development plan policies, and confirms that there is nothing to indicate that the need for an aging population cannot be met through the Local Plan, having regard to the completions and likely pipeline supply. • The appeal decision at Land to the north of School Road, Ringsfield (DC/20/1001/OUT) highlights that an outline application cannot be refused on matters of design quality/impact to character of an area on an allocated site with a prescribed density, as these are matters which would be considered at reserved matters stage. A reduced site area to that allocated is not of concern if the stated density is still achievable. Whether or not an applicant proposes further development to a remaining part of a site in the future is not a consideration which carries any significant weight because any such proposal would need to be considered on its own merits – unless there is substantive evidence to indicate otherwise.
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	Quarterly monitoring
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	That the report concerning the appeals decisions received is noted
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Appendices

Appendices:

Appendix A	Summary of all appeal decisions received
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Background reference papers:

None.

Appendix A

The following appeal decisions have been received. The full reports are available on the Council's website using the unique application reference.

Planning Appeals relating to 'Majors'

Application number	DC/20/1521/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/21/3280740
Site	Land off Yarmouth Road, Melton
Description of development	Care Village comprising an 80 bedroom care home together with 72 assisted care bungalows, cafe/club house, bowling green, car parking, open space provision with associated infrastructure and access
Committee / delegated	Committee
Appeal decision date	22 November 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	<p>Whether the proposed development would be in a suitable location, having regard to the countryside and access to services and facilities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is the need for specialist accommodation and whether this is adequately addressed by the Local Plan; • the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and • whether the development would provide suitable accommodation, having regard to the affordable housing requirements of Policy SCLP 5.10 and the types and sizes of accommodation proposed.
Summary of decision	<p>Location and connectivity</p> <p>In terms of access to local services and facilities, the proposed development was found to be acceptable as there would be an improved walking route as well as new bus stop. However, as a result of the site's location outside the main settlement, there would be a breach of Policy SCLP3.3 of the Local Plan and Policy MEL1 of the MLP which needs to be given weight in the planning balance. The proposal would however comply with the provisions of Policy SCLP7.1 insofar as it requires development to incorporate measures that will encourage people to travel using non-car modes including considering and taking all available</p>

	<p>opportunities to enable and support travel on foot, cycle and public transport, being located close to and providing safe pedestrian and cycle access and not reducing road safety. The proposal would also comply with paragraphs 110 and 112a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).</p> <p>Specialist accommodation</p> <p>Based on the age of the local plan (adopted in 2020), there is no indication that the need for such housing for an ageing population cannot be met, also having regard to the completions and likely pipeline supply.</p> <p>The provision of this type of accommodation to meet an identified need carries very substantial weight in the planning balance.</p> <p>Character and appearance</p> <p>The proposed development would represent a significant incursion into the countryside, which would result in the collective urbanisation of this part of Yarmouth Road when seen in the context of the existing sporadic development clusters. It would fundamentally alter the character and appearance of the area and would result in the loss of this important area of open, undulating land which itself contributes to the character of the area and keeps this part of the road distinct from the nearby settlements conflicting with Policy SCLP3.3 SCLP10.4. of the Local Plan and MEL1 of the MNP</p> <p>Housing mix</p> <p>A mix of 1-bed and 2-bed properties would be required based on the evidence from the Council. The scheme as it stands would conflict with Policy SCLP5.8 of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The benefits of the proposal would not be sufficient to outweigh the level of harm found in relation to the character and appearance of the area which would be fundamentally altered by the development, and the conflict with the policies and therefore the Development Plan as a whole.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>Significant weight given to development plan policies, particularly as it is relatively recently adopted. Also, significant weight given to landscape character and visual impact on the Countryside.</p> <p>Disappointing conclusion in relation to connectivity to services and facilities in Melton.</p>

Application number	DC/20/1001/OUT
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/21/3281602
Site	Land to the north of School Road, Ringsfield
Description of development	Outline Application (Some Matters Reserved) - Construction of up to 33 dwellings, open space, landscaping, visitor car park and site access from School Road
Committee / delegated	Committee
Appeal decision date	6 December 2022
Appeal decision	Allowed
Main issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the appeal site is capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed and in particular, its resultant effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. • The effect of the proposed development on the integrity of European Sites.
Summary of decision	<p><u>Character and appearance</u></p> <p>“...there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate why the proposed development could not be of a high-quality which is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. This is a matter which would be considered at reserved matters stage upon submission of plans showing detailed design. Nonetheless, the surrounding development in the village is predominantly linear and there is some development in depth to the west of the village. Clearly, the development of the allocated site for 33 dwellings, would result in a residential development of differing character to that which prevails. But this is inevitable, given the allocations location, size and the approximate number of dwellings allocated.” – para 19.</p> <p><u>European sites</u></p> <p>“The s106 Agreement includes provision for this sum to be paid prior to commencement of development. I am satisfied that this obligation will ensure that the proposed development would make the required contribution to the mitigation measures outlined within the RAMS.” – para 30.</p> <p><u>Planning obligations</u></p>

“...the obligations set out within the s106 [RAMS, affordable housing, open space, visitor car park] are all necessary to make the development acceptable, directly related to the development; and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. The planning obligation therefore meets the tests set out under Framework Paragraph 57 and Regulation 122(2) of the CIL Regulations. I have therefore taken it into account in determining this appeal.” – para 38.

Reduced site area

“Whether or not the appellant or another party proposes further development to the north of the site in the future is not a consideration which carries any significant weight. This is because, any such proposal would need to be considered on its own merits and there is no substantive evidence to indicate that this is the appellant’s intention.” – para 41.

Objections to principle of development

“...the principle of a residential development comprising approximately 30 dwellings has already been established on the allocated site. I acknowledged that 33 dwellings are proposed within a reduced site area. However, I have concluded that 33 dwellings fall within the ambit of the term ‘approximately 30 dwellings’. I have also concluded that, despite the reduced site area, the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy WLP 7.14. For these reasons the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.” – para 43.

Heritage impacts

“The Parish Council highlighted that there are Listed buildings within 1km of the appeal site. However, given the significant distance of these buildings⁵ to the appeal site and the intervening urban and natural landscape features, the appeal site is not within (and would not affect) the setting of these listed buildings.” – para 45.

Conditions

Some conditions were amended so that they are enforceable, precise, relevant, necessary and reasonable in all other respects:

- Some of the conditions in the list provided by the Council relate to issues which can be addressed under reserved matters (e.g., matters pertaining to refuse storage and hard/soft landscaping)
- A condition requiring submission of details pertaining to internal access and circulation routes is necessary, as details of

	<p>'access' have only been supplied for the pedestrian and vehicular junctions with School Road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the standard timescale conditions a condition specifying the relevant drawings is imposed, as this provides certainty. • Condition imposed to provide clarity as to the maximum number of dwellings approved. <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>"The proposed development complies with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations raised, of sufficient weight, to warrant a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. As such, the appeal is allowed." – para 61.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>Cannot justify the refusal of an outline application based on design quality/impact to character of an area, especially when it is an allocated site with a prescribed density – this is a matter which would be considered at reserved matters stage.</p> <p>A reduced site area to that allocated is not of concern if the stated density is still achievable. Whether or not an applicant proposes further development to a remaining part of a site in the future is not a consideration which carries any significant weight because any such proposal would need to be considered on its own merits – unless there is substantive evidence to indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Useful input re. strengthening outline conditions, particularly in terms of a separate condition pertaining to internal access and circulation routes as details of 'access' have only been supplied for the site entrance, and a condition to provide clarity as to the maximum number of dwellings approved.</p>

Planning Appeals relating to 'Minors'

Application number	DC/22/0983/OUT
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3300220
Site	4 Nightingale Piece, Orford, IP12 2NP
Description of development	Erection of self-contained, 2-bedroom eco dwelling on side garden
Committee / delegated	Delegated

Appeal decision date	13 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area.
Summary of decision	<p>The proposal would require development to extend close to the side boundary resulting in a loss of the characteristic openness to the side of the dwelling undermining the planned layout of the cul-de-sac which provides an open and spacious character.</p> <p>Due to the proximity of the new dwelling to the boundary, the proposal would appear as a cramped form of overdevelopment compared to the more spacious planned layout. The creation of a short terrace of three dwellings would not respond to the local context and the form of surrounding buildings, where there is a clear pattern of paired semi-detached dwellings and bungalows.</p>
Learning point / actions	Cannot refer to indicative plans for outline applications. Otherwise, the appeal decision was in agreement with the Council's position.

Application number	DC/21/4887/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3292262
Site	Hill House, Mill Lane, Hasketon IP13 6HQ
Description of development	Change of use from domestic garages / workshops to vehicle bodywork workshop / spray shop
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	7 February 2023
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issue is the effect of the proposed vehicle bodywork workshop / spray shop on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers and occupiers of the host property, with particular reference to noise, disturbance and odour.
Summary of decision	In a residential area, there is a reasonable expectation of low levels of background noise when using the garden.

	<p>The Inspector noted that they were unable to use conditions to request acoustic reports and working with closed doors to mitigate noise levels. The outcome of any acoustic assessment is unknown and may have to incorporate as yet unspecified extraction equipment. The extent of any mitigation it may recommend, assuming that mitigation would indeed be possible, is not known. It is not clear that ensuring the workshop doors would be closed would be enforceable. Furthermore, access to the site would be taken from the existing access which serves the host property. This passes in proximity to a number of windows serving the dwelling. While hours of operation could be controlled by condition, it would not be reasonable, in light of the advice and guidance contained within the Framework and the PPG, to control the number of vehicle movements to that identified by the appellant as this could affect the viable operation of the business. It was concluded that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on living conditions of surrounding occupiers and the host property with reference to noise, disturbance and odour. There would be an economic benefit from supporting the continued operation of an existing business in a location that would be convenient for its customers. However, this would not outweigh the harm identified above.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>Decision highlights the importance of ensuring conditions are accurate and enforceable and that they are not used to mitigate against unknown factors or be imposed in a manner which would otherwise restrict viability of a business.</p>

Application number	DC/22/1500/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3306433
Site	5 Buckingham Close, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SX
Description of development	Erection of a detached single storey dwelling
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	6 February 2023
Appeal decision	Dismissed

Main issues	The effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area, and on European Protected Sites
Summary of decision	<p>There is visual separation between the detached dwelling in the Close. The attached dwelling to the site has a large addition extending to the rear and side of the dwelling, and this acts visually to reduce the gap with its other neighbour. The proposed dwelling would reduce the gap between no. 5 and its neighbour however the proposal would not be prominent on the street scene nor would its effect be dissimilar from that created by the large extension built to the rear of its conjoined neighbour.</p> <p>Elsewhere in the wider area there are examples where front gardens have been paved over to allow for parking and manoeuvring. Whilst almost the entirety of the front gardens would be given up for parking, this is not an uncommon feature in the area and would not appear overly dominant in the site's context.</p> <p>Without a RAMS payment, the Inspector was unable to complete the Appropriate Assessment favourably and, as such, concluded that the proposal would cause harm to the Protected Sites contrary to SCLP10.1 and the NPPF.</p>
Learning point / actions	RAMS contribution is essential as mitigation in relation to impact on Protected Sites.

Application number	DC/22/0870/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3299052
Site	Units 1 & 2 plus workshop, Land opposite 1 Loudham Lane, Loudham Lane, Ufford, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6ED
Description of development	Change of existing holiday lets and workshop to a single three-bed holiday accommodation
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	9 February 2023

Appeal decision	Allowed
Main issues	The main issue is whether the condition is necessary and reasonable in the interests of ensuring the property is only occupied as holiday accommodation.
Summary of decision	<p>The site is located in an area of countryside, where for planning purposes, residential development is restricted. The permission on which the condition was proposed to be varied allows for the use of the appeal property to be used as two units of holiday accommodation and for one larger unit of holiday accommodation.</p> <p>The condition which was proposed to be varied sought to ensure that the property is occupied as holiday accommodation only and is comprised of a number of discrete elements. The variation proposed was the removal of a requirement that the holiday accommodation be associated with 1 Loudham Lane.</p> <p>The Inspector concluded that there was no planning reason as to why the restriction/requirement that the holiday units be associated with 1 Loudham Lane is necessary or reasonable to ensure that the premises is occupied as holiday accommodation and no other reason for imposing the condition was included on the decision notice.</p> <p>It was not disputed that the condition as a whole is necessary to restrict the use of the property, limiting the number of days it can be occupied and requiring the owner/operator to keep a register of occupants. The reasons these limitations are imposed is clearly set out in Local Plan Policy SCLP6.5.</p> <p>Therefore, the Inspector varied the wording of the condition to remove the reference tying the holiday accommodation to 1 Loudham Lane, but retaining the restriction on the use of the property, limiting the number of days it can be occupied and requiring the owner/operator to keep a register of occupants.</p> <p>The Inspector also highlights that <i>“A planning condition cannot prevent or restrict the sale or purchase of land in the circumstances of this appeal. Any future changes of use of the property would be assessed on their own merits at the time of any such application. It is not reasonably related to the development proposed to impose conditions to prevent the submission of future planning applications.”</i></p>

Learning point / actions	The reasons for imposing conditions on use to ensure units are used as holiday accommodation should have clear justification within the associated reason set out below the condition. In some cases the reasons may need to be specific to the site and proposals, particularly if that condition seeks to control the use in association with another unit.
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Application number	DC/21/1603/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/21/3282582
Site	1 Burnt House Lane, Kirton IP10 0PZ
Description of development	Erection of one dwelling and garage
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	8 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; 2. The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to outlook, noise and disturbance; and 3. Whether sufficient information is available to assess the impact of the proposed development on trees.
Summary of decision	<p>The scheme would introduce a dwelling which does not reflect the established pattern and grain of development which is of dwellings with long linear gardens set back from the road.</p> <p>As a result of its backland position down a long narrow driveway, the introduction of the dwelling and garage would appear as an incongruous addition within the surrounding area that would be out of keeping with the prevailing spacious low-density character of the area. The proposed development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area.</p> <p>Mature trees and other vegetation located to the front of the appeal site adjacent to Bucklesham Road, including in the gardens of properties at No 1 and No 34, provide amenity value within the streetscene by providing a green break between the built development at the junction.</p>

	<p>The appellant has not provided information upon which an assessment of the effect of the proposal on trees could be reasonably assessed. Without such arboricultural evidence, the Inspector was not confident that development could be carried out in this location without adversely affecting these trees, and there is little to demonstrate that potential harm or unnecessary loss of trees could be effectively mitigated.</p> <p>While the proposed development would be partially visible from the rears of 34 and 36 Bucklesham Road, it would be separated by a sufficient distance to ensure that no existing windows or gardens would be adversely affected through the introduction of a new dwelling in this location whereby any impacts from the proposed house and garage would be minimal.</p> <p>The proposed vehicular access between No 1 Burnt House Lane and No 34 Bucklesham Road would not be typical in design terms of what is evident nearby, with driveways located to the immediate front of nearby dwellings. Nevertheless, a close relationship between vehicle movements in close proximity to houses and gardens would not be particularly unusual for a residential area. It is unlikely that there would be a large number of vehicular movements associated with the single dwelling proposed. Noise and vibration levels likely to emanate from those movements would also be commensurate with what one might expect in a residential area.</p> <p>As such, taking into account the orientation of neighbouring windows and gardens at No 1 Burnt House Lane and No 34 Bucklesham Road, It was not considered that there would be any unacceptable impact on the living conditions of the occupiers of these neighbouring properties through noise or other nuisance.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>Insufficient information provided in relation to impacts on trees justifies refusal reason.</p> <p>The introduction of a new driveway access close to the side elevations of existing dwelling in order to access a back land plot would not be unusual for a residential area.</p>

Planning Appeals relating to 'Others' (including householders and Advertisements)

Application number	DC/22/1385/FUL
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Appeal number	APP/X3540/D/22/3307187
Site	21 Mill View Close, Woodbridge, IP12 4HR
Description of development	Removal of 10ft hedge and erection of 6ft fence to side of property, and Removal of 10ft hedge and erection of 6ft fence on top of retaining garden wall to rear of property.
Committee / delegated	Delegated (After being taken to Referral Panel due to WTC representation of support)
Appeal decision date	12 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issue is the effect of the fences upon the character and appearance of the appeal site and surrounding area.
Summary of decision	<p>The fences had already been erected, so this was a retrospective application and appeal. The fences that have been erected at the appeal property comprise two separate sections to the eastern boundaries, one of which is erected on top of an existing retaining boundary wall, and a shorter section to the north. The property is unusual as it has public highway on three sides.</p> <p>The Inspector concurred with the LPA that Mill View Close has an open and verdant character and appearance with well planted front gardens, semi-mature trees and the general lack of frontage boundary treatments, and that there are no other visible examples of close-boarded fencing within the street.</p> <p>The Inspector concluded that the fences are highly visible from the public realm behind and to the side of No 21, and from the surrounding dwellings. They also state that due to their height, solidity and overall presence the sections of fence are a stark and prominent features in contrast to the characteristic open and more verdant appearance of other properties. It was confirmed that the scheme was contrary to Local Plan Policy SCLP11.1 (visual amenity) and the NPPF, both of which promote good design.</p>
Learning point / actions	This decision confirms the approach and judgement of officers in relation to the installation of close-boarded fencing in such locations.

Application number	DC/21/3493/AND
Appeal number	APP/X3540/Z/21/3284772
Site	169-170 High Street, Lowestoft NR32 1HU
Description of development	'2 fascia signs with name of business so that our customers can find us'.
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	09 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issue is the effect of the advertisement on the amenity of the area and, in particular, whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the North Lowestoft Conservation Area in which the appeal property is located.
Summary of decision	<p>The Inspector concluded that "the advertisement that is in place has an unacceptably harmful effect on amenity and so does not preserve the character and appearance of the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. I have taken into account Policy WLP8.39 of the East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (2019), which concerns the effects of development in conservation areas and which, therefore, is material in this case."</p> <p>Additionally, the Inspector stated that "Given that I have concluded that the proposal would harmfully affect the amenity of the area, including its failure to preserve the conservation area's character and appearance, the proposal is contrary to this policy."</p>
Learning point / actions	This decision confirms the approach and judgement of officers in relation to the effect of the advertisement on the Conservation Area.

Application number	DC/22/1424/ADI
Appeal number	APP/X3540/Z/22/3305524

Site	Advertising Right At Precision Pipework, Horn Hill, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 OPX
Description of development	Illuminated Advertisement Consent - Erection of new freestanding digital poster display
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	8 February 2023
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	Public safety and amenity
Summary of decision	<p>The proposal would introduce a large digital display within very close proximity to an existing large poster advertisement and collectively these would form part of the same vista when travelling along the A12 on approach to Horn Hill or when using the bus stop opposite.</p> <p>The Inspector concluded that the changing of the advertisement on the display every 10 seconds would have a degree of animation that a more traditional poster advertisement would not and it would draw the eye.</p> <p>As a result of its scale, freestanding nature, position next to the roadside and changing display, the appeal proposal when viewed in conjunction with the adjacent existing illuminated poster display would lead to excessive levels of commercial presence and advertisement within the immediate area and would be overly dominant in views, and consequently this would overwhelm the residential components of the areas mixed character and appearance.</p> <p>The Inspector also concluded the appellants stated intention to remove the existing poster display were consent granted for this scheme, would not overcome their concerns.</p> <p>In accordance with the Advertisement Regulations, the Inspector concluded that the advertisement would be harmful to the amenity of the area, and conflict with Policy WLP8.29 of the Waveney Local Plan, and paragraph 136 of the NPPF, which states that the quality and character of places can suffer when are advertisements are poorly sited.</p>

Learning point / actions	This decision confirms the view of officers that the digital poster advertisement would be harmful to the visual amenity of the area.
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Application number	DC/22/2494/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/D/22/3306871
Site	76 Links Avenue, Felixstowe IP11 9HE
Description of development	Two storey and single storey extensions with attached garage
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	12 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.
Summary of decision	<p>The property is a detached two-storey dwelling located at the end of a row of detached dwellings next to a parking area and a small area of public open space.</p> <p>Despite their individual designs, the dwellings in this part of Links Avenue, including the application property, display a good degree of uniformity in terms of built form, layout and external materials, with consistent building lines and frontage widths, and the limited gaps between dwellings.</p> <p>The Inspector agreed with the LPA that the front porch addition would be a proportionate addition to the appeal property subordinate to the original build form, and that the single-storey element to the side and rear, and the single-storey garage would be of typical domestic proportions and appearance, and therefore these changes would not result in harmful changes to the property.</p> <p>The Inspector also shared the view of the LPA that the two-storey element to the side adjacent to No 74, whilst having a lower ridge than the existing dwelling and being of limited width, thereby remaining subordinate, and therefore not result in a harmful terracing effect in streetscene views.</p>

	<p>The Inspector concluded in accordance with the view of the LPA that the in combination effect of the two-storey extension on the side adjacent to No 74 and the two-storey addition to the east of the property would result in a substantively larger dwelling, materially extending the dwellings frontage width, and as a consequence it would appear as a bulky and dominant built form within the streetscene by comparison to the other dwellings.</p> <p>The large upper floor window and Juliette balcony would also pay little regard to the existing fenestration and other new windows. These features together with the vertical timber boarding would result in the extension appearing as a contrived and uncharacteristic addition, which would not integrate visually with the character and appearance of the existing dwelling.</p> <p>The changes would be prominent in the streetscene and appear incongruous and uncharacteristic in appearance. It would therefore have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, contrary to Policy SCLP11.1.</p>
Learning point / actions	This confirms officers views on the unacceptability of the design, form and scale of this proposal.

Application number	DC/22/1780/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/D/22/3303131
Site	3 Gun Hill Cottages, Church Lane, Levington, Suffolk IP10 0LQ
Description of development	Two storey extension to semi detached dwelling.
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	15 November 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issues are the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the host and adjoining property.

Summary of decision	<p>The proposed extensions would alter the appearance of the building, creating a large, bulky development on the rear of the property. It would be at a larger greater height than the existing extensions creating a very large mass of building on the rear of the property. The Inspector has stated that the sheer scale of the development, taking into account the existing extensions would dominate both the host property and the adjoining property at No. 4.</p> <p>The Inspector has concluded that the proposal would not affect the landscape and scenic beauty of the wider AONB. But that the development would be visible from the highway and would be apparent from the rear of the properties and would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.</p> <p>The Inspector concluded that the development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area, the host, and the adjoining property. It would conflict with Policy SCLP11.1 of the East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that developments respond to local context in relation to the overall scale and character of the building and its surroundings.</p> <p>However, the Inspector does not agree that the development would result in overdevelopment of the plot, as adequate amenity area would remain.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>This decision confirms the view of officers that the extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It also confirms the importance of considering the impact of the proposal on adjoining properties.</p> <p>The Inspector disagrees with the view of officers that the extension would result in overdevelopment of the plot. The decision is also useful in highlighting the importance of considering the entirety of the plot and amenity areas, in judgements on whether proposals will result in over-development.</p>

Application number	DC/22/0351/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3297614

Site	128 Carr Avenue, Leiston IP16 4AT
Description of development	<p>"I would like to move the boundary fence to the border of what is on the deeds of the property. The fence is currently running to the rear of the property which is adjacent to private car parking spaces with vehicular access for residents, this will not be moved any closer to the driveway or cause any obstruction to vehicles manoeuvring in or out of spaces. The fence then runs down to the side of the property to where it meets the house, this would be moved out to run along the pathway and extended to the front of the property. The fence will not be moved any closer to the area with vehicular access, only closer to the pathway and then extended to the front of the property. All of this will be done within the boundary deeds as per the HM Land registry document included when buying the house"</p>
Committee / delegated	Appeal against non-determination
Appeal decision date	13 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The effect of the proposed fence upon the character and appearance of the streets scene, including the effect on use of the adjacent footpath.
Summary of decision	<p>The footpath runs between the appeal property and no 126, providing access between the footpath to the front of the properties and a parking area to the rear. There are currently grass strips between the pathway and the garden fences on either side. The proposal would involve the relocation of the fence to enclose the majority of the grass area on 128's side of the pathway, to incorporate it into its rear garden.</p> <p>The grass areas appear to be part of the original planning layout for the estate. As well as providing additional width to the pathway they also soften the effect of the tarmac path, brick elevations and fencing on either side. These green areas make a positive contribution to the character of the street scene and enhance user experience of the pathway.</p> <p>The loss of a large part of the green area next to the appeal property will reduce the softening effect, creating a harder urbanised appearance with a narrower, less expansive path between the properties. This harmful change would be readily</p>

	<p>apparent from the front of the properties and to those using the path.</p> <p>The Inspector concludes that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene and use of the adjacent public footpath. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to Policies SCLP11.1 and SCLP11.2 of the East Suffolk (Suffolk Coastal) Local Plan,</p> <p>The inspector also notes that the appellant has maintained the grass area but confirms they can give that little weight as the application must be determined on its planning merits.</p>
Learning point / actions	This decision confirms the importance of such green areas adjacent to pathways to the character of estates.

Application number	DC/21/4834/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/D/22/3306202
Site	36 Ashburnham Way, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8SJ
Description of development	Front porch extension, two storey side extension, rear extension, materials
Committee / delegated	Committee
Appeal decision date	09 December 2022
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issue is the effect of the extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area, including the effect on the use of the adjacent footpath.
Summary of decision	<p>The Inspector concluded that proposals would have a harmful effect upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and on the surrounding area but would not adversely affect the use of the adjacent footpath due to its short length, with views from one end to the other, so would not be oppressive.</p> <p>The extensions would not result in an uncharacteristic change to the built form; however it was acknowledged that there is a good degree of uniformity across the estate derived from the use of</p>

	<p>brick as the principal external material, which is part of its local distinctiveness.</p> <p>In addition, a particular feature of the estate's character and appearance are the serpentine walls which are prominent in the streetscene and the Inspector recognised that the loss of this feature, replaced by a straight, rendered wall in addition to rendering and cladding the entire dwelling would result in the property being incongruous due to its particularly prominent siting in an open setting facing the main road.</p> <p>Despite the principle of the extensions and improved parking being acceptable, the change in character from the loss of uniformity of materials and design features outweighed the other issues and would harmfully undermine the planned character and appearance of this part of the estate.</p>
Learning point / actions	This is a useful decision for reference as there is great pressure to 'modernise' the exterior of residential properties due to fashion and insulation benefits. The fact that the Inspector afforded so much weight to local distinctiveness is most welcome.

Appeals relating to Part 3 Prior Notifications

Application number	DC/21/4472/PN3
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/22/3295257
Site	'Grimmers', Agricultural Barn south of Beccles Road (B1062), Mettingham, Bungay, Suffolk.
Description of development	The development proposed is the notification for prior approval for conversion of agricultural building to dwellinghouse within Class Q(a) and (b) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (as amended).
Committee / delegated	Delegated
Appeal decision date	06 January 2023
Appeal decision	Dismissed
Main issues	The main issue is whether the proposal would be permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and

	Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the GPDO) due to Part 6 development within the Established Agricultural Unit.
Summary of decision	<p>Mettingham Castle Farm Yard complex has benefitted from two separate agricultural prior approvals under Part 6 within the relevant time period. The nub of this appeal, therefore, is whether the appeal site at 'Grimmers' comprises the same established agricultural unit as Mettingham Castle Farm Yard.</p> <p>The appellant argued that although the three farms (Grimmers, Castle and St Johns) were under the umbrella of Carlton House Farm Partnership, they should be treated as separate farms (agricultural units) supporting different farming operations.</p> <p>The Inspector concluded that there was little evidence to support this view and concluded that the wider 'Castle House Farm' constitutes a single established agricultural unit and as Part 6 development of the construction of agricultural buildings had taken place within that unit the proposal would not constitute permitted development under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the GPDO and the appeal should be dismissed.</p>
Learning point / actions	Important to be aware of the extent of the agricultural unit to be able to check whether any development under Part 6 has been carried out which may affect whether a proposal is permitted development.

Costs Decisions

Application number	
Appeal number	APP/X3540/W/21/3284043
Site	16 Lakeside Avenue, Thorpeness, Aldringham Cum Thorpe, Suffolk IP16 4NJ
Description of development	The appeal was against the refusal of planning permission for a development described as 'proposed alterations and extensions'.
Committee / delegated	N/A
Appeal decision date	18 November 2022
Appeal decision	The application for the awards of costs is refused.
Summary of decision	The appellant made a claim for an award of costs, citing multiple grounds. Officers had to spend a considerable amount of time

	<p>responding on these points and demonstrating to the Planning Inspector that the decision to refuse was well-founded, and that the application had been handled properly by the LPA.</p> <p>Part of the appellant's argument was that former Ward Councillors behaved unreasonably and made comments that were libellous and untrue. The Inspector clarified that comments on an application, by a Ward Councillor, did not represent the position of the Council as the Local Planning Authority. This point was dismissed.</p> <p>The appellant cited extensive delays with the determination of the application as an example of unreasonable behaviour. However, the Inspector dismissed this point, noting that they could have appealed against non-determination; however, more importantly, the Inspector noted the efforts of officers to engage with the applicant/appellant, but that an impasse was reached and therefore an appeal was inevitable – and indeed the appeals process exists for those such situations.</p> <p>Amongst other matters, it was important that the Inspector dismissed the appellant's claim that officers were in some way biased, or close-minded when considering the application:</p> <p><i>"13. In this case, the Council specifically set out its concerns in a detailed and neutral way. The judgment it reached was therefore reasoned and grounded in policy. There is nothing of substance before me to suggest Officer approached the matter with a closed mind. The indications are that the Council and appellant simply had a difference of opinions."</i></p>
Learning point / actions	<p>Overall, the decision reflects that, in some instances, the Council as LPA will have to make a decision that an applicant disagrees with, and that the appeals process is sometimes unavoidable.</p> <p>A learning point for officers is to ensure that, when listing consultees within reports, to take extra care to correctly label a consultee as having either a 'statutory' or 'non-statutory' role. A mistake was made in this case and, whilst it had no bearing on the decision, it is important to reflect on that when drafting and checking reports.</p> <p>A noteworthy conclusion from the decision is that the Inspector correctly identified the role of the Planning Referral Panel and found the decision to delegate the application to be well informed:</p>

	<p><i>“12. The Referral Panel is not tasked with considering the merits of the case. Instead, it decides whether a proposal raises matters of significance that warrant the Planning Committee’s assessment. The Referral Panel would have been aware from the Officer’s report as to the weight of objections and the matters in dispute. Thus, they were adequately informed when deciding not to refer the case to the Planning Committee.”</i></p>
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CIL Decisions

Application number	DC/20/3442/FUL
Appeal number	APP/X3540/L/21/3304973
Site	Molen, Bucklesham Road, Foxhall, Suffolk IP10 0AA
Description of development	<p>“Outdoor, detached leisure building to consist of bar area, cinema room, kitchenette and machinery store, with toilet. Demolition and new garage to be constructed in place of existing.”</p>
Committee / delegated	N/a – CIL APPEAL
Appeal decision date	22 December 2022
Appeal decision	The appeal is dismissed, and the surcharges are upheld.
Main issues	<p>The main issue was the ground of appeal, which was that the Charging Authority (ESC) failed to serve a Liability Notice in respect of the developments to which the surcharges relate.</p> <p>Regulation 65(1) states that the Council must issue a Liability Notice as soon as practicable after the day on which planning permission first permits development.</p>
Summary of decision	<p>ESC issued a Liability Notice by post on the applicant on 13 November 2020, and the required CIL forms 2, 8 and 9 were received by ESC as charging authority on 1 December 2020. The applicant also confirmed by email that they agreed the declarations within the exemption forms and the charging authority applied exemptions.</p> <p>A revised Liability Notice was then issued 10 December 2020 to the liable party by email which also included a reminder to submit the CIL Form 6 (Commencement Notice) at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the development.</p> <p>The applicant considered that the Liability Notice should have been served on his agent. However, the applicant clearly</p>

	<p>engaged with the CIL process and was in correspondence with the CIL section at ESC. The applicant had also accepted liability for CIL.</p> <p>The Inspector raised concern regarding the lack of proof of postage for the first liability notice but was satisfied that the second Liability Notice had been served correctly in this case, and there was proof of this taking place as it was sent via email. Therefore, the appeal had to fail.</p> <p>The Inspector dismissed the appeal and the surcharges of £2500 were upheld.</p>
Learning point / actions	<p>The importance of evidencing how CIL Liability Notices are served is key, in order to demonstrate that the correct “service” process has been followed.</p> <p>Where larger sums are required, and where debt recovery actions are reaching latter stages of recovery, CIL Notices are now served through ‘signed for’ postal services in order to demonstrate the “service” of key documents.</p>

**STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE****Monday, 06 March 2023**

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Andrea McMillan Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery & Specialist Services) Andrea.McMillan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01394 444567

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 the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans, and on housing delivery. Updates, as appropriate, are also included for specialist services (Design and Conservation, Arboriculture and Landscape (including Rights of Way) and Ecology) that form part of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. An update is also provided on the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Options:

This report is for information only.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report is 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 East Suffolk Strategic Plan. Staff capacity is an ongoing risk, with additional resource provided in the Specialist Services team during the past year. The majority of posts within the team are currently filled with vacant posts currently being advertised.

External Consultees: None

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? <p>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</p>			

secondary priorities identified above 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.

Recent progress and achievements include consultation on the Draft Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document (P08) and ongoing progress made with the review of the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (P03). The draft East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule is undergoing Examination, supporting the priority of supporting and delivering infrastructure (P05).

The ongoing support being provided for Neighbourhood Planning and the preparation of the Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document provide an important contribution to the Enabling Communities theme, in particular priorities P07, P08 and P09.

The work programme also provides a significant contribution to the Caring for our Environment theme. The work of the Specialist Services team ensures the appropriate protection and enhancement of East Suffolk's important environmental assets (P23).

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides an update on the current Planning Policy and Delivery work programme. The Council's two Local Plans (Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, September 2020 and Waveney Local Plan, March 2019) provide up to date Local Plan coverage for the district, and the work of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team continues to focus on the delivery of these Plans.
1.2	The current Planning Policy and Delivery work programme contains a number of projects to support the delivery of the Local Plans and the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. These include providing guidance to support the implementation of planning policies through the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), the preparation of strategies on specific topics such as the recently adopted Cycling and Walking Strategy and the preparation of the East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. The Design and Conservation service has a programme of projects including Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reviews. The Specialist Services team, which comprises the Design and Conservation, Ecology, and Landscape and Arboriculture (including Public Rights of Way) services, is continuing to provide ongoing expert input across the Planning service including in respect of development management, Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and planning policy, as well as on wider Council projects.
1.3	The updates in this report focus on projects and include the progress being made on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents, Neighbourhood Plans, and the East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule, as well as projects in the Design and Conservation team and in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. An update is also provided on housing delivery. An update on the work of the Infrastructure Team relating to the collection and spend of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies is also provided in this report.

2	Current position
2.1	Key milestones achieved over the past three to four months, since the last report to Strategic Planning Committee on 5th December, are set out below.
2.2	<p><u>Neighbourhood Plans:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bungay Neighbourhood Plan and Worlingham Neighbourhood Plan were ‘made’ on 23rd November 2022. • Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough - Council’s Decision Statement published on 22nd December 2022, referendum to be held on 4th May 2023. • Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan - Council’s Decision Statement published on 11th January 2023, referendum to be held on 4th May 2023. • Oulton Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum held 2nd February 2023, with 85% of votes in favour. The Oulton Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be ‘made’ on 22nd February. • Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum held 2nd February 2023, with 84% of votes in favour. The Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan is being taken to full Council to be ‘made’ on 22nd February. • Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan – Examination currently underway, with a Hearing held on 27th January • Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 publication was held between 9th November and 21st December 2022 and the Examination is now underway. • Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 draft consultation being carried out by the Town Council between 24th January and 7th March 2023 • Easton Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 14 consultation being carried out by the Parish Council between 4th February and 20th March 2023. • Campsea Ashe – Neighbourhood Area approved 26th January 2023.
2.3	<p>The draft <u>East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule</u> is currently undergoing Examination by an independent Examiner following submission in July 2022. A Public Hearing was held on 11th October, and subsequently the Council submitted further information in response to a request by the Examiner. The Examiner consulted on the additional information with interested parties for three weeks, ending on 14th November. On January 6th the Examiner wrote to the Council asking for further work to be undertaken in relation to the Beccles and Worlingham strategic site. The Council submitted further evidence on 3rd February and the Examiner has subsequently asked for some additional follow up information.</p>
2.4	<p>Public consultation on the Draft <u>Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document</u> is underway between 25th January and 8th March 2023. The SPD is being produced in partnership with the Broads Authority, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council.</p>
2.5	<p>Preparation of the Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document continues following the initial consultation which was held for six weeks between 26th September and 7th November 2022, inviting comments on the proposed scope and content of the SPD.</p>
2.6	<p>Initial consultation is being held on the <u>Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document</u> between 1st February and 15th March 2023, inviting comments on the scope and content. The SPD will provide guidance on a range of rural matters such as barn conversions, rural worker dwellings, farm diversification and equestrian developments.</p>

2.7	Initial consultation is being held on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document between 1 st February and 15 th March 2023, inviting comments on the scope and content.
2.8	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <p>Recent progress in relation to the review of Conservation Areas and their Appraisals and Management Plans is set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft appraisals for a proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area have undergone public consultation between 6th January and 17th February 2023. • Public consultation is underway on the draft new Southwold Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The proposed new Conservation Area will form an amalgamation and extension of the existing Southwold Conservation Area and Southwold Harbour and Walberswick Quay Conservation Area. • The review of the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is underway. • Consultants' fieldwork in support of a pilot review of the existing Article 4 Directions in place in both Lowestoft Conservation Areas, taking account of changes in the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on their use, is near completion. Results are to be reviewed by the team when provided shortly. <p>Progress on other Design and Conservation projects includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet approved the inclusion of five new parks and gardens on the Council's Local List of Parks and Gardens of Historic or Landscape Interest at its meeting on 6th December. The five new additions are: Benacre Park; North Cove Hall; Redisham Hall; Sotterley Park; and Worlingham Hall. • Nominations for the 2022 Quality of Place awards closed on Friday 12th August. 18 entries were received. Shortlisting and site visits have taken place and the awards ceremony is to be held in early March.
2.9	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain:</p> <p>The mandatory requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain, as introduced through the 2021 Environment Act, is proposed to come into place in late 2023. In the interim, officers have been working with other Suffolk local planning authorities to prepare interim technical guidance to provide advice on how biodiversity net gain should be demonstrated and considered through planning applications in a consistent manner under current planning policies.</p>
2.10	<p>Housing Delivery:</p> <p>The housing growth planned for in the Local Plans has continued to come forward, with many sites either under construction, consented, subject to planning applications or subject to early discussion with the planning service. The annual housing requirement figure for East Suffolk is 916 dwellings, based on the figures in the two adopted Local Plans for the District. For the year 2021/22, 822 dwellings were delivered, 225 of which were for affordable housing. In the first, second and third quarters of 2022/23 (up to 31st December), 556 dwellings (including specialist dwellings) have been recorded as being completed of which 102 are affordable. A comparison of dwellings under construction shows that as at the end of quarter 3 this year 1,243 dwellings were under construction compared to 1,013 at the same point in the previous year.</p> <p>The Housing Action Plan was reviewed and published in November 2022. As East Suffolk 'passed' the most recent 2021 Housing Delivery Test (results published January 2022), there is no requirement to prepare or update the Housing Action</p>

	Plan however it is considered good practice to review and update the Housing Action Plan annually. The 2022 Housing Delivery Test result is not yet published.
2.11	CIL Collection and Spend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far during the 2022/23 financial year (up to 13th February 2023), £6.3m in CIL has been received. • District CIL funded projects continue to make steady progress, with 2 school extensions projects and the Castle Community Rooms, Framlingham, having been completed and in use. • A Neighbourhood CIL spending and reporting (compliance) review has been underway to ensure that parish councils are spending and reporting on their Neighbourhood CIL funds in accordance with the CIL Regulations. This work informs East Suffolk's duty to clawback funds not spent within 5 years of receipt or not spent in compliance with the CIL Regulations.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	During the next 3 to 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"> • Halesworth and Oulton Neighbourhood Plans are anticipated to be 'made' by Full Council on 22nd February. • Referendums are to be held for Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan and Rushmere St Andrew Neighbourhood Plan on 4th May 2023. • The Examiners' reports into the Saxmundham and Wickham Market Neighbourhood Plans will be received with referendums to subsequently take place. • Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 publication expected to take place. • Regulation 14 draft consultations will have concluded for Easton Neighbourhood Plan and Lowestoft Neighbourhood Plan • Guidance for neighbourhood plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be progressed with stakeholder engagement activities planned for spring 2023.
3.3	The Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule Examination is anticipated to have concluded. Adoption to subsequently take place by Full Council, prior to its subsequent implementation.
3.4	Consultation on the draft Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document will conclude on 8 th March with consultation responses to subsequently be considered by all four authorities and the final SPD prepared ready for adoption.
3.5	The Draft Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared, with public consultation anticipated in Summer 2023.
3.6	Initial consultation on the Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document will have concluded and a draft SPD will be prepared in advance of public consultation which is anticipated to take place in Summer 2023.
3.7	Initial consultation on the Custom and Self Build Supplementary Planning Document will have also concluded with a draft SPD to be prepared in advance of public consultation which is anticipated to take place in Summer 2023.
3.8	Design and Conservation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6 week public consultation on the proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh

	<p>Conservation Area will have concluded, with comments to be considered prior to final proposals being presented to Cabinet for approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 6 week public consultation on the Southwold Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will conclude on 15th March, with comments to be considered prior to final proposals being presented to Cabinet for approval. • Proposed review of the Walberswick Conservation Area to follow on the back of the one for Southwold, to take in the Walberswick Quay Conservation Area and other potential extensions. Informal meeting with the Parish Council and public meeting currently being organised. • Work on the Halesworth Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will continue. • The review of the existing Article 4 Directions in the Lowestoft Conservation Areas will continue with future work involving drafting revised Directions.
3.9	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain:</p> <p>The interim technical guidance approach will be finalised and promoted to help inform Biodiversity Net Gain delivery from new developments ahead of mandatory requirements coming into force.</p>
3.10	<p>Housing Delivery:</p> <p>The outlook for housing delivery overall for the 2022/23 year remains optimistic when comparing completions for the first three quarters (556 dwellings) with the same period for 2021/22 (548). As stated in paragraph 2.12 above, there were 1,243 dwellings under construction at the end of quarter 3 this year (end of December 2022), almost 200 more than at the same time in the previous year although a slight decrease on the number reported as being under construction at the end of September 2022.</p> <p>Over the coming months, the Planning service will continue to support future housing delivery, including through the determination of planning applications and through ongoing support for bringing forward strategic sites such as supporting master-planning. Actions contained in the Housing Action Plan will also continue to be progressed.</p>
3.11	<p>CIL Collection/Spend and Exacom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Exacom data transparency project (relating to the management of CIL, Section 106 and RAMS payments) has continued to make steady progress and reconciliation to financial systems is ongoing as this work progresses. A communications plan is currently being developed to prepare for the launch of the Exacom Public Facing Module (PFM). This is likely to go live in early March 2023, starting with training sessions for the CIL Spend Working Group, Parish Councils and internal teams during March and April and included in the Member training in May and June. • CIL Spending Training sessions for Town and Parish Councils are being planned alongside the Exacom Training events in March. This is following the outcomes from the Neighbourhood CIL compliance review. • Neighbourhood CIL payments to parish councils are estimated to be in the region of £1m for April 2023. • The District CIL bid round will be open for applications on 1st April 2023 until 31st May 2023.

3.12	<p>National update:</p> <p>As referenced in previous reports to the Strategic Planning Committee, the Planning White Paper, that set out some potential fundamental changes to the planning system, was published for consultation in August 2020. The Levelling Up White Paper was subsequently published earlier in 2022. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, first published in May 2022, takes forward some of the ambitions from both the Levelling Up White Paper and the Planning White Paper. A summary of the proposed provisions of the Bill, as published in May 2022, can be viewed in the Government's 'Policy paper – Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information'. The paper anticipated that changes will begin to take place from 2024. The Bill is currently progressing through Parliament.</p> <p>A number of future consultations were also proposed as part of the changes such as a review of the National Planning Policy Framework and on proposals such as the Infrastructure Levy and Environmental Outcomes Reports. Consultation on shorter term revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework and on the implementation of some of the proposed reforms is underway between 22nd December and 2nd March. A response is being prepared.</p>
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4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	This report is for information only.
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Appendices

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 March 2023

Subject	Design Skills Audit
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Chris King Design Champion and Specialist Service Manager Chris.King@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01394 444611

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 presents the Design Skills Audit for the East Suffolk Council Planning Service. The purpose of the report is to outline the process associated with undertaking the Audit and to present the outputs and the opportunities identified.

Options:

This report is for information only.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report be noted.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

Not applicable.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The Audit relates closely to Local Plan policies which aim to achieve good design.

Environmental:

No impact.

Equalities and Diversity:

This report is for information only, so no equality impact assessment is required.

Financial:

The Design Skills Audit has been undertaken within existing budgets for the team.

Human Resources:

The Audit report identifies opportunities related to training.

ICT:

No impact.

Legal:

No impact.

Risk:

The Audit proposes to identify and address gaps in design skills, potentially addressing risks in this regard.

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 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 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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"/>
<p>How does this proposal support the priorities selected?</p> <p>The Design Skills Audit analyses the current skills within the Planning service to support the delivery of good design in new development and place-shaping, which is fundamental to building the right environment for East Suffolk (P01) and to maximising and growing the unique selling points of East Suffolk (P03).</p> <p>The Audit has been based upon a survey of staff, supporting the priority of effective use of data (P17).</p>			

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The creation of the Design Champion and Specialist Services Manager role last year has provided an opportunity to strengthen the importance given to high quality design not only in decision making on planning applications but also in creating future planning policies and guidance and in the Council's wider place shaping projects. This is important, given the increased emphasis nationally on achieving well-designed places and also acknowledging the importance locally placed on good design.

2 Current position	
2.1	The Design Champion role has enabled focus to be given to considering the design skills across the Planning service. However, ensuring the delivery of high quality design cannot lie solely within this role and that of other design specialists in the service, but should be embedded across the service.
2.2	It was therefore identified that an Audit, which could identify strengths, gaps and opportunities, should form the starting point and inform the identification of ways in which design skills can be expanded, developed and best applied.

3 How to address current situation	
3.1	The audit was created to gain a clear and measurable understanding of both the perception of design within the Planning service and also to understand the level of knowledge on the topic. The Audit was undertaken in October 2022 and focused on officers in the Planning service. The results are a data driven set of information which provides measurable outcomes allowing this to be re-evaluated and compared in years to come.
3.2	The results of the Design Skills Audit has provided a clear insight into where strengths lie in the teams, including within the existing guidance and policies, as well as areas for improvement and enhancement in knowledge and skills. This has provided the Design Champion role with a clear focus in addressing these specific areas, ensuring resource, training and awareness can be focused.
3.3	The Audit identifies a series of opportunities including the provision of an internal resource hub, a role for 'design advocates', considering opportunities for a dedicated design officer, a design training programme and undertaking a private sector design audit. Opportunities can potentially be delivered Council wide and not just focused to the Planning service. They include some 'quick wins' in delivering changes which will have instant impact, while others will require further review in resourcing and capacity. Following this review, any future opportunities and related implications will be reported separately as appropriate
3.4	This is believed to be the first Design Skills Audit undertaken by a Local Planning Authority in the UK, where this transparency and openness to learn will hopefully be seen as a precedent in driving the agenda of 'well designed places'.
3.5	The Design Skills Audit will be published on the Council's website in order that both the approach and the outcomes can be communicated and promoted.

4	Reason/s for recommendation
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4.1	This report is for information.
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Appendices

Appendices:

Appendix A	East Suffolk Design Skills Audit Report
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Background reference papers:

None

DESIGN SKILLS AUDIT

2022/2023

DRAFT

PLANNING SERVICE



CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

2 APPROACH

3 RESULTS

4 OUTCOMES

APPENDIX A - AUDIT RESULTS

APPENDIX B - TEAM STRUCTURE CHARTS



SNAPE MALTINGS, QUALITY OF
PLACE WINNING PLAQUE, 2010

INTRODUCTION

Embedding quality in place making is at the forefront of both Central Government and East Suffolk Council agendas.

The benefits and impacts well designed places have on communities, environment, and the climate are unparalleled.

East Suffolk is the most easterly district within the UK comprising of a mix of urban and rural environments, a coastal district where the context of East Suffolk's natural, historic, and built environments is varied.

Securing high quality design and place making is fundamental to East Suffolk Council's aspirations and vision. The strong stance towards design in Local Plan policy, Supplementary Planning Documents, county-wide guidance, the annual Quality of Place Awards and the recently created Design Champion role demonstrates the Council's commitment in creating well considered places. This combined with central Government's drive for 'well-designed places' through the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Design Guide expects Local Authorities to go further in driving this agenda. The role of the Design Skills Audit is to understand what the Council offers and how this can be further improved for the Council and the community.

Turning this national agenda into an action has its challenges for Local Authorities. Understanding the current opportunities and challenges will provide East Suffolk Council with direction and knowledge in where value and resources can be focused.

The drive for quality in place making within Local Authorities requires knowledge, voice, and confidence in questioning, refusing, or celebrating design.

Design is a daily consideration in helping to shape, change and create communities and places, and in particular for the following teams and individuals:

- Specialist Services (Design and Conservation, Ecology, Landscape, Arboriculture and Rights of Way)
- Development Management
- Planning Policy
- Enforcement
- Energy Projects
- Council Development Team
- Regeneration
- Assets
- Economic Development
- Coastal Management
- Community Partnership teams
- Councillors
- Housing

Each team provides influence in the quality and outcome of how places look, feel and work. The recent appointment of East Suffolk's Design Champion role emphasises the Council's aspirations in delivering quality in the natural, built, and historic environments. The role brings the ability to connect both internal and external teams to ensure

RIGHT: SUFFOLK BRICK
HOUSE BY NASH BAKER
ARCHITECTS

quality and value are delivered to the highest standards throughout East Suffolk.

To drive forward this vision, it is important to understand the opportunities and challenges which currently face the Council. The ability to assess through an audit approach provides a data driven assessment in understanding design.

The Design Skills Audit 2022 was created by the Design Champion to create a benchmark of the understanding and aspirations within the Council. The approach to 'draw a line in the sand' allows a Council to understand, respond and measure quality, ensuring value and quality in placemaking are being delivered.

The Design Skills Audit was created for teams within East Suffolk's Planning Service (Development Management, Planning Policy, Major Sites, and Energy teams – refer to Appendix B for team structure charts). The decision to provide initial focus towards planning was based on the daily level of influence and interaction on design. The aspirations are to include wider Design Audits around other teams to collate both a team-specific understanding, but also a council-wide insight.

To guarantee place making and design are integral to decision making, it is important to ensure teams are suitably skilled to question and push back on poor quality design. Design Skills across Local Authorities in the UK are both under resourced and poorly utilised. [The Design Deficit Report](#) produced





ABOVE: SPECIALIST SERVICES
SITE VISIT 2022.

The Design Deficit Report Place Alliance 2021

1 – IN-HOUSE CAPACITY HAS STABILISED BUT REMAINS VERY LOW

- Nationally, the numbers of urban designers and architects in local planning authorities has stabilised, although availability of the landscape expertise has declined:
- two fifths of local planning authorities still have no access to urban design advice,
- almost two thirds no landscape advice
- three quarters no architectural advice
- Sharing of posts, use of temporary staff and coverage by non-specialists hides the true extent of the deficit
- There is a significant increase in the use of external consultants and agency staff to try to fill the gaps, with two fifths of local authorities attempting this. The figure rises to 60% in relation to the production of proactive design guidance and frameworks, and 70% for design codes
- Design review is often seen as a means of filling the design skills gaps, rather than a means to challenge and supplement in-house design capacity

2 - FUNDING AND RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES LIMIT AMBITIONS

- There are now, on average, 1.7 design experts per local planning authority across England, an increase from 1.6 in 2017, or some 30 designers across the country
- Over half of that growth has happened in the relatively few authorities that have larger design teams with only 10 local authorities now having design expertise when previously they did not
- Whilst a minority of local authorities have made a strategic investment in a place quality team, many authorities who feel the acute need for design input into their decision-making are unable to secure it because of funding difficulties
- Authorities overwhelmingly describe recruitment of urban design staff as 'challenging', notably regarding their ability to compete with the private sector
- Whilst the employment of temporary staff can help to smooth bumps in workload, on the whole authorities would prefer to build their own capacity, continuity of knowledge and experience in-house

by Place Alliance in 2021 created a detailed picture of design skills and approaches across England's local planning authorities. The report is based on 235 local authorities across England and the research concluded the following results.

As the report clearly states, there is a deficit in design skills across local authorities where the ability to recruit and resource design skills within local authorities is challenging. Given the heightened importance of design from Central Government through the NPPF and National Design Guide, it is expected Local Authorities go further to refuse poor design. With the combined pressures from Central Government and significance for communities within East Suffolk, it is important to ensure officers

within an authority can be skilled in design, ensuring the ongoing conversation around design can be maintained, discussed, and negotiated.

The opportunity to provide officers at East Suffolk Council with the skills and resources to have open discussions around the quality and value of design in development ensures the Council's approach is met, development is scrutinised and the awareness and understanding of design are upheld. The approach is not to replace the role of design officers, but to ensure all development is subject to the appropriate degree of review and scrutiny, either through specialist design input and/or through skilled planning officers where capacity allows. This ensures a consistent

approach and dialogue, clearly promoting the council's aspirations and requirements for well-designed places.

The below approach then focuses on how we as a Council understand the current skill base as well as the engagement from officers on the topic of design. Is design engaging and interesting for officers, how does design fall into their planning discussions and considerations, is design considered important when assessing a planning application, and how do we create a rolling engagement programme for officers?

DESIGN AUDIT APPROACH



The Planning Design Skills Audit was created to understand the following areas:

1. Perceptions of Design and Place Making
2. Design Training
3. Design Quality
4. Design Review Panel

The Audit was written to allow for data driven outcomes allowing results and outputs to be monitored and responded against. This will allow detailed monitoring of the quality, perception, and levels of training across the Council. The Audit also allowed participants to input and provide written feedback to help gauge understanding on why users answered the way they did and provide additional feedback and input.

The overarching aim of the Audit is to gauge a base level of understanding across the Planning service, identify gaps in knowledge, understand current challenges, and to identify and address opportunities in training and upskilling.

A short section on Independent Design Review was included in the Audit. This was included to gain further insight to the value and importance this plays within Suffolk. The opportunity to help shape and drive this service is important and the results of the Audit will input into this. The Audit was created on and issued through Survey Monkey and questions were designed to allow all members of the planning teams to input no matter their experience and understanding of design.

The Design Skills Audit survey was concluded on October 21st 2022 across the Planning Service. This includes the breakdown in responses on page 9.

The following sections provide a summative review of the feedback received, highlighting positive results, areas requiring further review, and constructive feedback. The data and a copy of the full set of questions are presented in Appendix A for further reference.

Please note all data has been processed to ensure results are presented anonymously.



BELOW: TIBBYS TRIANGLE, SOUTHWOLD. IMAGE
BY ASH SAKULA ARCHITECTS.

Survey Respondents

- Development Management – 25 Officers
- Planning Policy – 17 Officers

This included:

- Technician – 2
- Trainee Officer – 4
- Assistant Officer – 7
- Planning Officer – 11
- Senior Officer – 6
- Principal Officer – 10
- Manager – 2



LEFT: CRAG PATH, ALDEBURGH

RESULT SUMMARY DESIGN CONFIDENCE

Design is considered an important factor when determining applications. This can range from DM Officer input, through to the use of Design Officers within the Specialist Services Team.

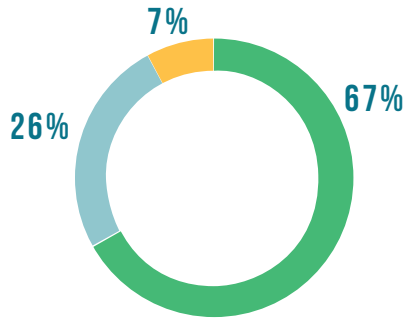
66% of officers throughout the planning service are confident in providing design related advice to applicants, where they find the most challenging obstacles are the relationships with applicants and architects, and the confidence in negotiating design changes. 56% of officers generally considered applicant and applicant teams respected design advice from planning officers. However, the results demonstrated that more junior staff (Trainee and Assistant Planners) considered there to be little or no respect around design discussions. Officer level staff were split, where Senior Officers (Senior, Principal and Manager level) considered their

design input was respected and valued. Negotiating design is related to seniority of Officers, opportunities to enhance placemaking can be compromised around preconceptions of Officers experience and background.

Of those confident in supplying advice, topics of which they are confident in discussing mainly focused on the built environment around residential development and architecture. Topics relating to Green Infrastructure and wider contextual influences come lower in the results. With the Policy team the results were in reverse with more strategic topics being high in confidence while elements such as architectural detailing come lower.

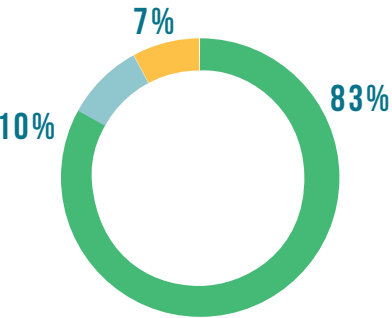
83% of DM Planning Officers are confident in refusing applications based on design matters alone. This result is positive where

officers stated the input and expertise of design officers provides the professional and specialist input to refuse on design matters alone. The 17% of officers who are not confident state that there was little confidence in Planning Inspectors to back design refusal, absence of an adopted Design Guide/Code provides little backing, and capacity of Design Officers providing design input.



ABOVE: OFFICERS CONFIDENCE IN PROVIDING DESIGN ADVICE TO APPLICANTS.
 67% CONFIDENT IN PROVIDING DESIGN ADVICE
 26% NOT CONFIDENT
 7% NOT APPLICABLE TO ROLE

DESIGN OFFICERS



ABOVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL DESIGN OFFICERS
 83% ENGAGE WITH DESIGN OFFICERS
 10% DO NOT ENGAGE
 7% NOT APPLICABLE TO ROLE

East Suffolk's Design officers (Design and Conservation, and Landscape Officers) are praised in the Audit where there was a strong engagement in the use of their skills. Over 82% of officers have engaged with Design Officers in the past and recognising their input supplies greater emphasis in planning discussions and decisions. It should be made clear that the 82% does not relate to the quantum of applications but engagement in the past with Design Officers.

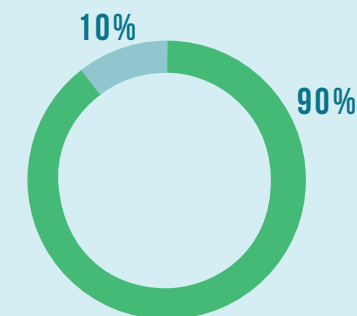
How Design Officers are engaged varies throughout the teams where DM have high engagement at pre-app and application stage, but these tended to drop away at Reserved Matters or Discharge of Condition stages.

Understanding how to best use Design Officers' time is important while ensuring there is consistency across advice

being provided. It was clear from the Audit that the most impact Design Officers have on certain scale development was focused toward major development, with Major Residential, Mixed Use and Masterplanning. Uses such as transport infrastructure, commercial and household applications seen as areas where Design may not have the most impact or Officers felt able to determine the application without Design Officer advice.

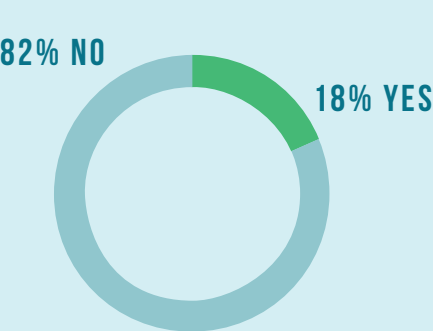
It is clear from the Audit that the reliance on Design Officers is important in supplying specialist input but also providing the confidence in Officers around resisting poor quality design. They are recognised by officers as being a key specialist in promoting well designed places, but access to their time and resource can be challenging when needed given the size of the team and shared role with Conservation.

DESIGN TRAINING



ABOVE: INTEREST IN ATTENDING DESIGN TRAINING
90% BE INTERESTED IN TRAINING
10% WOULD NOT BE INTERESTED

DESIGN CODES



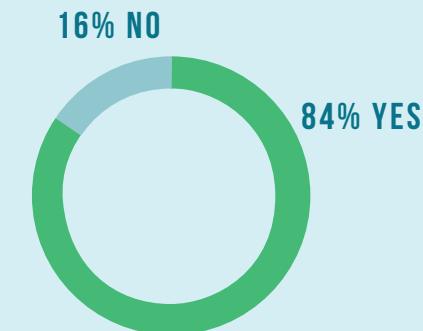
ABOVE: HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED WITH REVIEWING A DESIGN CODE?

Design training engagement across DM and Policy is around 65% across the past 12 months, while those interested in attending future training was a 90% response. This could show that opportunities in training may not have been transparent or available across all teams.

Those who had attended design related training included Lunch and Learns within the Council, Urban Design Learning courses and RTPI events. 80% of the training was externally provided. This highlights reliance on external opportunities being presented to the Council.

Topics highlighted as areas Officers would like to receive training on corresponded with the data received around confidence on certain topics. Most of the topics identified

Design Codes were a reoccurring theme through the responses on the Design Skills Audit. A high number of officers (82%) have not been involved with either the review or creation of a Design Code.



ABOVE: DO YOU CONSIDER DESIGN CODES PROVIDE FURTHER QUALITY TO A DEVELOPMENT?

were focused on green infrastructure (stewardship, flooding, open space provision) and sustainability (zero carbon design, solar gain). Other areas included more large scale Masterplanning, highways and historic environment (Conservation Areas and historic buildings).

It is clear there is a drive from DM and Policy to engage further with design to help promote well designed places in East Suffolk. The high response on the willingness to attend future training opportunities and strong feedback on those who attended the Urban Design Learning courses recognises this as a key resource to offer to the planning teams. Officers stated a preference in online training, but a high proportion of officers saw the benefit of in person and on-site training as well.

Design Codes have been recognised through the Audit as an area of uncertainty through knowledge or lack of confidence in providing advice. Despite this lack of knowledge or experience, 85% of officers believe Design Codes provide further quality to development.

Given the high number of officers with limited knowledge or exposure to Codes, this has been raised around opportunities for future training or guidance on. Given the Central Government steer on the importance of Design Codes it is an important theme to embed within the planning service and wider Council.

DESIGN TOOLS + RESOURCES

The spread of resources used by officers across DM and Policy were relatively high. 100% of officers who responded stated they use local policies and local guidance (Supplementary Planning Documents) to assess what is 'well designed', with 76% considering the Local Plan provides suitable weighting towards design. Design Officers are also a well-used specialist with 73% accessing this resource. National Guidance was not engaged with as much as more 'local resources' with 60% of officers using this tool.

Officers said that opinions of other planning officers were a big contributor to assessing what is 'well designed' in line with the NPPF, whether this was through informal discussions or design related surgeries.

Half of the planning service had engaged with an independent design review panel in the past, whether this was in Suffolk or in earlier roles.

Overall, 80% of those who had engaged with the Suffolk Design Review Panel agreed the process was beneficial and they recognised enhancements in the proposals following engagement.

From the comments received it was clear the panel had only

been engaged around small standalone proposals or NPPF Paragraph 80 schemes. It was found that there were future opportunities to present major/ large scale development to the panel. Additionally, it was felt more representation from wider disciplines should be present on the panel and not just architects, as well as diversity in backgrounds. Comments also highlighted challenges around turnaround of panel reports which have wider implications on programmes and determination.

However, 73% of Officers considered the Council needs further guidance on design aspirations in East Suffolk. Suggestions included further guidance on 'minimum standards' (garden sizes, back-to-back distances etc.), further training opportunities, Design codes or guides, promotion of design consistency through guidance, a Council wide design manifesto and wider coordination between stakeholders and services (Highways, secured by design for example).

It is clear officers use the resources they have on offer but clearly there are aspirations for this resource to go further in helping promote design in East Suffolk.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

BELOW: NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



DESIGN BARRIERS

The Design Skills Audit was aimed at highlighting areas of strength and identifying areas for development and resolution. The following areas were consistent in feedback and addressed directly in written responses to the Audit. This includes the following:

Applicant Team and Case Officer relationship

As found above, it was clear from the feedback received that Planning officer's design feedback was often met with little response or respect from Architects and Design Teams depending on the Officers seniority. The ability to receive constructive feedback around design from a planning professional was highlighted as an ongoing challenge when negotiating design. This breakdown in discussions or respect can have large impacts in ensuring constructive dialogue is kept between a Local Authority and applicant.

BELOW: EAST POINT PAVILION,
LOWESTOFT



Time and Resource

Feedback highlighted a clear drive to engage with design and place making, but time restraints in the planning process and caseloads are highlighted as reasons training or further engagement are not pursued by some officers. Additionally, it has been highlighted that there can be a lack of consistency in which applications are reviewed and which are not, as accessing resource in the form of Design Officers, given the limited number, can be an issue due to capacity.

Cost and Viability

These topics were highlighted as the main push back on engaging with design discussions in the planning process. The standard response from applicants was around good design being expensive and this was the main push back on uplifting quality or engaging in conversation.

Consistency

Inconsistency in district/countywide Design Guidance, along with inconsistency in the submission of applications was raised. Lack of Design Guidance in Suffolk is thought to provide varying levels of quality and approaches to development. Additionally, the varying levels of quality and documentation submitted as part of an application was recognised as being a challenge when assessing an application. Throughout the Audit the subject of having consistency in advice has been raised, whether this is around garden sizes or back-to-back distances for example. Without the guidance, feedback can vary between officers and in turn create varying approaches to similar development.

DESIGN AUDIT OUTCOMES



ABOVE: RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT, EAST
SUFFOLK, GOOGLE EARTH.

The Design Skills Audit has demonstrated a clear positive approach to addressing design within planning in East Suffolk. The willingness to engage and learn are clearly shown within the results received.

With the positive enthusiasm we must create an approach which will provide officers an opportunity to develop and learn around well-designed places. The following projects and approaches have been provided as an indication of what can be achieved, although will need further consideration prior to taking any actions forward. It will be important that any outcomes can be rolled out to the wider Council and not just focused on officers in the planning service. This wider approach will enforce a collective network ensuring delivery of high-quality places is embedded system wide. The following opportunities have not been listed in order of priority and provide indications of possible approaches.

1.

DESIGN RESOURCE HUB

The results from the Audit clearly outline that current training is sporadic, with limited service-wide approaches. Those invested in training will seek personal development through training events (normally online events) while others will engage with what is offered. Those who seek training do so by chance through engagement on social platforms such as LinkedIn or word of mouth.

Additionally, the sheer amount of design tools on offer to Officers can appear dispersed, overlapping, and confusing, whether this is in assessing development or self-learning.

The opportunity to create a central online hub, accessible Council wide will provide a 'one stop shop' for all design and place making opportunities and resources. This could be known as a Design Resource Hub.

The Design Resource Hub would hold opportunities for the following:

- Training events – forum of upcoming events (internal and external events) allowing

users to register and attend. These can range from face-to-face events to online sessions. The event forum will be managed/monitored by the Design Champion role and shared across the Council.

- Resources/Tools – Central collection of all place making tools, guides, case studies, studies, and images. This can range from national level guidance through to local and community level. Examples could include, National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life, Suffolk Design Streets Guide, NPPF summaries (design focused) to Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan design policies. Managed and monitored by the Design Champion.

The opportunity to ensure the Design Resource Hub is accessible will be important. Restricting access or locating the resource out of sight will go against the aims of the hub in creating accessible and transparent information across a council wide approach. Options in hosting could include SharePoint. This provides an internal Council page for access to all council employees.

The resource will be monitored and managed by the Design Champion. Available training events will be updated and monitored frequently, while guidance and tool updated when required.

Timescale - two month turnaround to implement

BELOW: STUDY VISIT TO RIVER ALDE, SUFFOLK 2022



2.

DESIGN ADVOCATES

"Its about engaging with people with influence and enthisiām. You dont need letters after your name to champion great design."

A clear outcome from the Design Skills Audit was the interest and enthusiasm to learn, engage and promote design across East Suffolk Council. This combined with the individual interests of varying Officers who have either had past careers or studied design as part of the qualification, presented many opportunities to use this engagement and interest.

As highlighted in the report, the Design Skills Audit was designed to create an understanding of design aspirations and look to focus training and upskilling across the Council.

The approach to training programmes on offer to Council staff, combined with the Design Resource Hub will provide a good basis for Officers to engage when availability and interest allows. The approach to offer these opportunities provides a central resource but this provides no certainty in engagement.

The role of the Design Champion has created many opportunities across multiple teams to collaborate and to better use resources and knowledge within the Council. This is a single role whose remit spreads widely across all Council services and teams. The ability to embed design considerations further could open opportunities for individuals in the Council and begin to create a

collective approach and discussion on important design related topics.

The opportunity to appoint officers as volunteer Design Advocates across the Council will allow the importance of good design to be embedded within teams across East Suffolk. This opportunity allows individuals to represent, promote and drive the agenda of high-quality place making across East Suffolk. The approach will inspire specific individuals to act as the internal contact and promoter of design within their teams. The opportunity will allow the Council to be more proactive in creating internal networks and communications, while allowing the Design Advocates the opportunity to develop and receive specific training and opportunities.

Expectations of Design Advocates could include:

- Represent - First point of call within their service/team – with the enhanced training opportunities the Design Advocates will be the first point of contact for wider team members to discuss and question design related topics.
- Promote – ensuring design is part of the discussion and being vocal around enhancing and promoting well designed places. The Design Advocate role will be to promote design and not fulfil to role of a Design Officer.



- Share and learn – be part of a collective group to share and learn from each other's experiences and projects across a Council.
- Coordination – creation of a collective group to ensure design vision is shared amongst those who may not otherwise have contact with each other.
- Grow – the ability to input and develop tools, guides, training, and other initiatives to help embed good design within the Council.
- Timely – it is expected that time will be made available for volunteers to undertake this role within their day-to-day work. Volunteers would be expected to manage time around attending training and network meetings much like they would through wider training opportunities. The more the advocates put in, the more they will gain.

The opportunities for Design Advocates could include:

- Specific design training offered to Design Advocates – this allows specific training to be directed to advocates within teams as opposed to the traditional 'blanket approach.' More in depth and specific training would be offered. There are opportunities for Advocates to receive recognised accreditation, for example a Foundation Certificate in Urban Design.
- Design Advocate Working Group – ability to meet, discuss and learn as part of a group. Opportunity to meet quarterly. The opportunity to bring together varying teams around a common theme will coordinate a Council-wide approach.
- Opportunities for site visits and tours – specific opportunities offered to Design Advocates.

- Role would be a volunteer position where the opportunity to receive further training and knowledge will be offered.
- Design Advocates would be encouraged to promote their roles to ensure visibility and design focus across the Council.

Expected services and teams to engage:

- Development Management
- Planning Policy
- Energy Projects
- Regeneration
- Assets
- Coastal Management
- Council Development
- Housing

The remit of a Design Advocate will not be limited to the visual appearance of a building, but it would be focused on place making and the elements which draw this together. This could include, but not limited to:

- Architecture
- Urban Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Sustainability
- Conservation
- Biodiversity
- Community
- Health and Wellbeing

Timescale - four month turnaround to implement subject to approval as appropriate across the Council

3. DESIGN OFFICERS

The Audit was clear around the value of Design Officers' input into planning applications. The access to specialist input was well regarded and was highlighted as a critical resource in enhancing design and quality in the planning process, however the number of applications reviewed by Design Officers has remained low due to the size and shared role of Design Officers.

The current structure of the Design and Conservation team provides much greater weighting towards Conservation given both planning and project demands. Specific design input is resourced where capacity allows, and this is managed by the team.

With regards to the Place Alliance Design Deficit Report referenced at the beginning of Audit document, the reliance of in-house design expertise provides value and quality to a Council and its community.

It is considered there may be benefits in providing further dedicated Design Officer resource to support the planning service, as well as reflecting the increasing prominence of design in national policy where increasing duties are being placed on authorities. The role would be to provide dedicated support to Development Management and Planning Policy, as well as providing input across the Council. The dedicated role would ensure consistency in design across the council and ensure all projects of a certain scale would be subject to design input allowing a consistent expectation of quality in place making across East Suffolk.

Timescale - 6 month review subject to approval as appropriate across the Council

LEFT: TIBBYS TRIANGLE, SOUTHWOLD. IMAGE BY ASH SAKULA ARCHITECTS.

4.

DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMME

Training opportunities were a key point raised within the Audit. There was a low response for officers engaging with design training, but a high response (91%) willing and interested to attend and engage with future design related training.

Some of the reasoning provided around challenges with design training included, ad hoc opportunities, often offered at short notice and centred around repetitive topic areas. Capacity was an area referenced, where Officers felt they had little capacity to attend events due to high volumes of work. The recent Urban Design Learning programme provided some officers with a series of training over a set period providing the ability to plan and accommodate.

The opportunity to produce a Design Training Programme for East Suffolk Council will create a set structure covering an array of topics and interest areas. The Audit provides key indicators in areas officers wish to engage with and where there is limited knowledge on certain subjects.

The Training Programme has opportunities to provide a mix of learning sessions from face

to face, on-site visits, and virtual seminars. The approach will be to focus training to Suffolk requirements as opposed to feeding into more national training programmes. It would utilise in-house expertise, local and national professionals, as well as potential opportunities with the University of Suffolk.

Furthermore training can be provided wider across the Council with opportunities in incorporating Town and Parish Councils.

The Programme will also focus on specific training for Council Members ensure design knowledge and understanding is embedded at all decision-making stages. Member training will be explored further post elections.

Training has opportunities to be rolled out across Local Planning Authorities in Suffolk, building on the joint working established through Suffolk Design, to ensure value can be provided through shared budgets, development, and venues.

Timescale - potential for September 2023 roll out to deliver 6-month program for 2023/2024.

5.

APPLICANT DESIGN AUDIT

The Design Skills Audit raised a series of key challenges Officers face when discussing and negotiating design as a Planning Officer. One area which was clearly represented was the relationship between Planning Officers and Applicant consultants. Depending on seniority of Officers, it was considered respect and willingness to engage around design related topics was low and in-turn restricts open discussion.

The Design Skills Audit is purely focused on East Suffolk Council officers across DM and Policy. To both gauge a better understanding and to understand the approach from the applicant perspective it is proposed to undertake a private sector Design Audit to consider and coordinate challenges from both sides.

The Audit will be focused on

understanding the challenges and positive experiences they have when discussing and negotiating design with East Suffolk Council. To ensure design is well considered and championed, it must be understood from an applicant perspective.

Further review and timings around engagement will need to be considered. It is considered engagement through Suffolk's professional branches (RTPI, RICS, RIBA, LI) and re-engagement of the East Suffolk Developer Forum will be key to gaining contact to key applicants and consultants in the private sector. Additionally, the approach and ability to listen and understand can create more positive discussions and outcomes when considering design and place making.

Timescale - four month turnaround to implement

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

DESIGN AUDIT RESULTS

1.

Generally, how important is design quality when determining an application?	Response
The most important priority	19
A priority, but not the most important	22
Not important at all	0
	41

2.

On average, how often do you consider design when determining a planning application?	Response
1 - Never	2
2	0
3 - Occasionally	5
4	12
5 - Always	21
This is not applicable to my role	1
	41

3.

Are you comfortable in providing design related advice to an applicant and their team to help uplift and promote quality in placemaking?	Response
Yes	26
No	10
This is not applicable to my role	3
	39

4.

What do you find most challenging about communicating your design thoughts with agents, architects and applicants?	Response
Confidence	13
Terminology	7
Being able to negotiate design changes	14
Agents, Architects and Applicants not respecting a planners views on Design matters	20
This is not applicable to my role	3
Other	11
	68

5.

Generally do you consider Design professionals (Architects etc) acting for applicants respect your opinion on design?	Response
Yes	23
No	16
This is not applicable to my role	2
	41

6.

Do you engage with the ‘Councils Design Officers’ on Design related matters?	Response
Yes	34
No	4
This is not applicable to my role	3
	41

7.

Are you confident interpreting and communicating a ‘Design Officers’ response to applicants?	Response
Yes I understand the responses provided and happy to engage with applicant on matters raised.	31
Yes I understand the responses provided and happy to engage with applicant on matters raised.	6
No I don’t normally understand comments provided. I trust the Officer and support their input	1
No, I don’t have time to engage with design related comments.	0
This is not applicable to my role	3
	41

8.

When do you engage with the 'Councils Design Officer' on Design matters? (Multiple Selection)	Response
Pre-application	22
Application Stage	24
Reserved Matters / Conditions	18
Monitoring and Enforcement	9
No Engagement	1
Supplementary Planning Documents	11
Local Plan Review	9
Allocation of sites	3
Development Briefs	7
Neighbourhood Plans	10
This is not applicable to my role	3
Other	5
	122

9.

Why do you engage with a ‘Council Design Officer’?(Multiple Selection)	Response
Requires specialist input.	36
I do not feel confident engaging with Design.	9
Provides greater emphasis or weighting in planning discussions/decisions.	27
I have been instructed to.	8
I consult all Specialist Services consultees when considering an application.	8
I do not engage with a design officer as I can lead design discussions myself.	0
I do not see the need for design input.	0
This is not applicable to my role	3
	91

10.

What scale of developments would you consider a 'Council's Design Officer' to have the most impact on?(Multiple Selection)	Response
Householder Application	10
Major residentials-led mixed use	19
Major Residential (10+ dwellings)	20
Minor Residential (fewer than 10 dwellings)	12
Energy / Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects	11
Commercial (e.g. office, retail)	10
Public Buildings (e.g. education, health, sport)	14
Other Mixed Use	6
Public Realm	16
Transport Infrastructure	3
Masterplans and Place Strategies	17
Design Codes	14
Other	5
	157

11.

Please select which topics you would be confident in providing Design advice on:(Multiple Selection)	Response
None of the above	5
Masterplanning	11
Site Appraisal (Opportunities and constraints)	16
Design and Access Statements	11
Design Codes	4
Layout design	16
Architecture (Housing)	13
Residential extensions	22
Materials	18
Elevations	20
Fenestration	18
Character Areas	9
Open Space (Including play provision)	6
Density	15
Height	21
Streetscape	17

12.

Are there any reoccurring topics relating to design which come up repetitively in applications? E.g. connectivity, materials, architectural details etc - free text
Materials
Design
Parking
Scale
Housing
Connetivity
Neighbourhood Planning
Context
Open Space
Design Quality
Lighting
SuDS
Trees

13.

Would you be confident in refusing an application based on Design matters alone?	Response
Yes	20
No	4
This is not applicable to my role	17
	41

Please select which topics you would be confident in providing Design advice on:(Multiple Selection)	Response
Massing	20
Context appraisal	12
Connectivity/Movement	16
Sustainability/Renewable Energy	6
Parking	18
Privacy	19
Sustainable neighbourhoods (e.g. walkable neighbourhoods, densities etc)	11
Green Infrastructure	10
Garden Community Principles	9
Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)	1
Secured by Design	6
Maintenance and Management (Stewardship)	5
National Policy	9
Local Plan Policy	10
	374

14.

What tools help you to assess what is 'well-designed' in line with National Planning Policy?(Multiple Selection)	Response
National Guidance (National Design Guide, Building for a Healthy Life)	26
Local Guidance (SPD's and Local Plan Policy)	41
Opinion as a Planning Officer	29
Design Officer	30
Design Review Panel	10
Other	3
This is not applicable to my role	3
	142

15.

Do you hold a qualification in a Design? (e.g. Urban Design, Architecture, Landscape Architecture)	Response
Yes	5
No	36
	41

16.

Have you received design training in the past 12 months?	Response
Yes	14
No	27
	41

17.

Was the training in-house or externally provided?(Multiple Selection)	Response
Not Applicable	25
In-House	3
External	8
Both	5
	41

18.

Are there any specific areas of design you would like to receive training on?	Response
Yes	26
No	15
	41

Open Space / Stewardship / Materials / Landscape Details / Sustainable Construction / Flooding / Solar Gain / Medium to large Layout Design / Masterplanning / Listed Buildings / Design Refresh / Modern Additions to Historic Buildings / Highways / Planting Design / Design Codes / Design negotiation / Parking Design / Zero Cardon Design / Green Infrastructure / Negotiations

19.

Did you attended the recent Urban Design Learning courses (April - June 2022) offered to the team (focused on the subject of Design Codes)	Response
Yes	14
No	27
	41

20.

If yes, did you consider them to useful?	Response
Yes	37
No	4
	41

22.

What is your preference to training events?(Multiple Selection)	Response
Online (Teams, Zoom etc)	34
In-person (on-site)	27
In-person (venue based)	24
Self Taught (book reference, video training etc)	10
Other	4
	99

23.

Have you engaged with a Design Review Panel in the past?	Response
No	20
Yes	19
Not come across a Design Review Panel before	22
	41

24.

If you do have experience of a Panel, which Panel were you involved with? (e.g. Suffolk Design Review Panel, Design Council Review Panel, Design South East)	Response
Suffolk Design Review Panel	All

25.

Subject to being involved in a Panel, do you consider the process to have enhanced the proposals presented?	Response
Yes	10
No	2
N/A	12
This is not applicable to my role	17
	41

26.

Again, if involved, how many applications have you recommend to an independent panel?	Response
N/A	12
1-5	8
6-10	2
11-20	0
21-50	0
51-99	0
100+	0
This is not applicable to my role	17
	39

27.

Any comments on the Suffolk Design Panel or Review Panels in general?
Council and Panel use only.

28.

Do you consider Local Plan Policy provides suitable weighting to promote high quality place making and design aspirations?	Response
Yes	29
No	8
N/A	1
	38

29.

Do you consider Members recognise and support good design?	Response
Yes	26
No	11
N/A	1
	38

30.

Do you consider the Council requires further guidance on design aspirations and place making?	Response
Yes	28
No	9
N/A	1
	38

31.

Generally, how do you rate the quality of new residential development across East Suffolk (within the past 15 years)	Response
Poor	0
Average	28
Good	10
Excellent	0
	38

32.

Which developments do you consider to be of exemplar design within East Suffolk?

Council use only.

33.

Which developments do you consider to be of poor design quality within East Suffolk?

Council use only

34.

Are there any developments which you consider to be of exemplar design from around the UK? If so please state

Council use only

35.

Have you been involved with reviewing a Design Code?	Response
Yes	7
No	31
	38

36.

To your knowledge, do you consider Design Codes provide further quality to a development?	Response
Yes	32
No	6
	38

APPENDIX B

TEAM STRUCTURE CHARTS

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Team structure during Audit period.



32

Planning Manager (Development Management,
Major Sites and Infrastructure)

- Principal Planner x 3
- Principal Planner (Major Sites) x 2
- Senior Planner x 7
- Planner x 6
- Assistant Planner x 5
- Trainee Planner x 2

PLANNING POLICY & DELIVERY

Team structure during Audit period.



33

Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery
and Specilaist Services)

79

- Principal Planner (Policy and
Delivery) x 4
- Senior Planner (Policy and
Delivery) x 2

Planner (Policy and Delivery) x 5

- Trainee Planner (Policy and Delivery)
- Assistant Planner (Policy and Delivery)

Policy and Delivery Assistant x 2

Planning Technician x 3

SPECIALIST SERVICES

Team structure during Audit period.



34

	Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery and Specilaist Services)		
	Design Champion & Specialist Services Manager		
	Design and Conservation	Landscape and Arboriculture	Ecology
	Principal Design and Conservation Officer	Principal Design and Conservation Officer	
	Senior Design and Conservation Officer	Strategic Landscape Advisor	Senior Ecology Officer
	Design and Conservation Officer x2	Arboricultural and Landscape Officer x2	Ecology Officer
		Rights of Way Officer	

Note: Specialist Services were not part of the Audit

ENERGY PROJECTS

Team structure during Audit period.



35

	Energy Projects Manager	80
	Energy Projects Transport Lead	
	Senior Energy Projects Officer	
	Planner - Energy Projects	

