



Committee	Strategic Planning Committee
Date	12/01/2026
Subject	Authority Monitoring Report 2024-25
Cabinet Member	Councillor Mark Packard Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Report Author(s)	Adam Nicholls Principal Planner (Policy and Delivery) adam.nicholls@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 07781 005429 Caroline Clamp Planning Assistant (Policy and Delivery) caroline.clamp@eastsoffolk.gov.uk 01502 523027
Head of Service	Ben Woolnough Head of Planning and Building Control ben.woolnough@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Director	Nick Khan Strategic Director nick.khan@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

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

This report provides a summary of the 2024/25 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is produced annually to provide information on the progress of producing and implementing the Council's Local Plans.

The Council monitors planning applications throughout the year to provide a basis on which to judge the implementation and effectiveness of policies contained within Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. Monitoring data collected by the Council is used alongside information collected from other sources such as Suffolk Observatory, Office for National Statistics and Natural England.

The 2024/25 AMR covers the monitoring period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Recommendation(s)

That Strategic Planning Committee notes the content of the report.

That the Council publishes the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

That the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, be given delegated authority to make any necessary minor typographical, factual or presentational changes to the documents prior to formally publishing them.

Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

Environmental Impact	Many environmental indicators are reported in the AMR, largely related to monitoring arising through the Sustainability Appraisals which informed the production of the Local Plans.
Sustainable Housing	The AMR reports on the delivery of housing, including affordable housing over the monitoring year. It also provides information on the progress of sites allocated in the Local Plans and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans.
Tackling Inequalities	Some of the information and analysis relates to tackling inequalities such as affordable housing completions and economic indicators.
Thriving Economy	The AMR provides information and analysis on the delivery of employment land and provides information on town centres and employment areas uses and vacancy rates.
Our Foundations / governance of the organisation	'Our Foundations' refers to measuring and reflecting on our performance, and the AMR is a key way in which this is undertaken and reported on. Further, the Planning Delivery Dashboard which sits alongside the AMR represents effective use of digital technology, further reflecting 'Our Foundations'.

Justification for recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1. The Council produces the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) each year to show progress on producing and implementing the Local Plans. This report covers East Suffolk as a whole and provides specific information relating to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, Waveney Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.2. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires key pieces of information to be covered by an Authority Monitoring Report, such as:
 - Progress on the Local Plan against the timetable in the Local Development Scheme;
 - Details of any Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders that have been 'made' (adopted);
 - Any action taken under the Duty to Co-operate;
 - Details of any policies not being implemented;
 - Net amount of additional affordable housing;
 - Any action taken under the Duty to Co-operate; and
 - Total housing and (affordable housing) completed against annual requirements.
- 1.3. The 2024/25 AMR comprises two main elements. Firstly, a concise 'regulatory' report has been produced (see Appendix A), which contains the key information required by the legislation (see paragraph 1.2). Secondly, more detailed analysis of key and supporting information, including some time-series information, has been produced in a 'StoryMap' format, called the [Planning Delivery Dashboard](#). As in previous years, the [Open Data portal](#) is available for people to download information in various different formats (like GIS shapefiles and Excel spreadsheets).
- 1.4. This AMR covers the monitoring period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and provides monitoring information against indicators in the Local Plans, such as housing completions, town centre uses, environmental designations and the planning applications that the Council received.
- 1.5. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan was adopted in September 2020. This is therefore the fourth AMR covering a full year of monitoring information. The Local Plan covering the former Waveney area was adopted in March 2019 and this is the sixth monitoring report covering the Waveney Local Plan.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. In accordance with the Regulations and examples of best practice, the AMR for East Suffolk (see Appendix A) includes sections which focus on specific aspects of the Local Plan preparation and monitoring process.

- 2.2. Chapter 1 introduces the document, with Chapter 2 outlining the progress against the Local Development Scheme (Local Plan timetable). As both Local Plans are adopted and no formal Local Plan preparation work took place during 2024/25, there were no milestones for this monitoring period.
- 2.3. The [Written Ministerial Statement of the Secretary of State](#) for Housing and Planning dated 12 December 2024 required all local authorities to provide an updated plan-making timetable within 12 weeks. In response to this request, a new [Local Development Scheme](#) for East Suffolk was prepared and published in March 2025. This document sets out the Council's current position on plan-making, an interim timescale for a future East Suffolk Local Plan and information on the preparation of other planning policy documents. The interim timetable sets out that work will begin on an East Suffolk Local Plan in 2025/26, with the detailed timetable subject to further review once the new plan-making reforms are introduced later in 2025. Some guidance related to these reforms was published in late November 2025 and the new system is now anticipated to come into force in early 2026.
- 2.4. Local Planning Authorities must review their Local Plans before they reach five years old to consider whether they need to be updated. The [Waveney Local Plan Statutory 5 year Review Assessment](#) was agreed by Cabinet on 5 March 2024, and concluded that an update is not required at this time. The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in December 2024 which included a new standard method for calculating housing need, resulting in a significant increase of over 80% to 1,667 homes per year. Because of this change, an [Addendum](#) to the Waveney Local Plan Review Assessment was produced in March 2025, which solely considered the change to housing need and concluded that an update to the Waveney Local Plan would now be required.
- 2.5. The [Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Statutory Review Assessment](#) was agreed by Cabinet on 2 September 2025. The assessment concludes that, principally due to the significant increase in the housing need for East Suffolk, that Local Plan needs to be updated too.
- 2.6. The Council is committed to the preparation of a [new Local Plan for East Suffolk](#).
- 2.7. As set out in Chapter 3, many [Neighbourhood Plans](#) progressed their production during 2024/25, with two 'made' (adopted) – Easton and Playford, both made July 2024. As at 31 March 2025, there are 25 made Neighbourhood Plans in East Suffolk.
- 2.8. Chapter 4 relates to the developer financial contributions, which comprise Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts and S106 legal agreement and RAMS habitat mitigation. The Council is required to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS), which details developer contribution income, allocations and spending as well as the Infrastructure List; the list of projects that developer contributions may fund to support the Local Plans growth. The [2024/25 IFS](#) was published in November 2025 and contains financial reports relating to CIL and Section 106 contributions, which no longer need to be reported in the AMR. However, the headline figures, which are included in the AMR, for 2024/25 are:

- CIL received in the monitoring period was £8.5m (£7.1m in the previous year).
- Total developer contributions (£106 contributions and RAMS habitat mitigation) received by East Suffolk Council (including affordable housing commuted sums) was £1.1m. Other contributions, for highways works or education purposes for example, were made to direct to Suffolk County Council. Any contributions directly received by other bodies are reported in their own Infrastructure Funding Statements.

2.9. Under the Localism Act 2011, Local Planning Authorities are required to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis in relation to strategic cross-boundary planning matters. East Suffolk Council regularly engages with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies to ensure co-operation on various matters throughout the production and implementation of Local Plan documents, such as emerging local plans. This is reported in Chapter 5.

2.10. Chapter 6 details how the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans have been implemented, performed and delivered over the monitoring period:

Planning appeals

2.11. 63 planning appeal decisions were issued during 2024/25 of which 44 were dismissed (70%). This is compared to a total of 61 decisions with a 84% dismissal rate the previous year. The continuing high dismissal rate shows that the Council is overall continuing to make the 'right' decisions when it decides to refuse particular planning applications.

Housing

2.12. 752 new homes were completed during the monitoring period (508 in the Suffolk Coastal area and 244 in Waveney area). This is a reduction compared to 857 completions in the previous year. This figure is below the annual Local Plans requirement of 916 per year.

2.13. Housing completions (including equivalent dwellings arising from new C2 care homes) in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan area are just over the requirement to date: 3,822 completions against 3,794 requirement. In the Waveney Local Plan area, there has been under-delivery across the plan period: 2,764 completions against 4,114 requirement.

2.14. 238 affordable homes were completed (175 in Suffolk Coastal and 63 in Waveney), compared to 275 in 2023/24, and reflecting the overall reduction in the number of new homes completed this year.

2.15. No new care homes have been completed this year, however an extension to an existing care home has provided 5 bed spaces.

2.16. No gypsy and traveller pitches have completed this year, and there are currently no planning permissions for new pitches in East Suffolk.

Employment

2.17. There has been a relatively small net increase in employment floorspace (9,719 sqm) on 1.86 hectares of land. The Local Plans and 'made' Neighbourhood Plans allocate 107 hectares of land for employment development with 6.15 hectares completed.

- 2.18. The [Employment Land Action Plan](#) published December 2025 reviews the delivery of allocated employment sites up to 31 March 2024. The document highlights the issues that are influencing the delivery and identify actions the Council proposes to undertake to encourage delivery of employment development.

Retail

- 2.19. The number of vacant units in the town centres has changed relatively little overall, with some rising slightly, some falling slightly and some unchanged, as is typically seen. Vacancy rates vary from 6% in Aldeburgh (five vacant units) to 23% in Lowestoft (85 vacant units). The most significant change this year is in Bungay, with seven fewer vacant units recording a 14% vacancy rate compared to 20% last year. This is the lowest rate in more than five years and is (at least partly) put down to a local initiative to promote the town centre.

Climate Change

- 2.20. No planning applications have been approved against Environment Agency advice on grounds of flood risk. The Environment Agency initially objected to ten applications during 2024/25. Two applications were withdrawn and three refused wholly or in part due to flood risk. Following further information or amendments to the other proposed schemes, the Agency's objections were withdrawn.
- 2.21. A small number of renewable energy schemes has been permitted this monitoring year, including two solar farms which are expected to generate power equivalent to supply over 10,500 homes per year. Another application extends the operating period for an existing solar farm by a further 15 years to 2054.

Natural Environment

- 2.22. Air quality in East Suffolk is generally good. Following an eighth year of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations below the Air Quality Objective, a Revocation Assessment Report was produced and the remaining Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) located in Stratford St Andrew was revoked on 18 December 2024. There are currently no AQMAs in East Suffolk.
- 2.23. The coast, heaths and estuaries of Suffolk are internationally recognised wildlife assets and many are enjoyed by residents and visitors. However, disturbance and damage from recreational activity – including walking, dog walking, cycling and water sports – can negatively impact on wildlife and habitats. The Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) was developed by East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council to ensure the mitigation of the impact of new residential development on protected habitats. Implementation of the project is being delivered through the '[Wildlife Wise](#)' brand launched in July 2024 and which focuses on public education, engagement and behavioural changes, as well as installing physical measures such as fencing and signage. Wildlife Wise has four members of staff, one manager and three rangers.

Historic Environment

- 2.24. There are 31 designated heritage assets on the 2025 Heritage at Risk Register. Assets include North Lowestoft Conservation Area, 18 listed buildings/structures, 11 scheduled

monuments and one historic park or garden. There is one new addition (Minster Church of St Benets, Beccles) and one removal for positive reasons (The Long Shop, Leiston).

2.25. Easton and Playford Neighbourhood Plans, which were 'made' during 2024/25 identify a total of 37 non-designated heritage assets.

2.26. A review of Article 4 directions, which provide increased planning control by restricting national permitted development rights in defined areas, is in progress. This year, three new directions and three amended directions came into effect.

Local Plan policies not being implemented

2.27. The 2012 Regulations require that any non-implemented Local Plan policies are identified, with the reasons why and any appropriate steps being taken to rectify this. Only one policy is now not being implemented – part of Suffolk Coastal Local Plan policy SCLP9.2 Sustainable Construction. This is because Part L of the Building Regulations now requires a 30% reduction in CO₂ emissions, higher than the 20% set out in policy SCLP9.2. The policy requirement is therefore no longer monitored, as essentially all new dwellings will need to achieve this standard, and it will be secured through the Building Control inspection regime.

2.28. Four policies - SCLP5.17 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, WLP8.5 Gypsy and Traveller Sites, SCLP8.3 Allotments and SCLP5.15 Residential Moorings, Jetties and Slipways - have not been used in decision-making so far. As with various site allocations policies where the sites have not yet come forward, this is consistent with the lack of relevant applications requiring assessment against these policies.

2.29. Chapter 7 relates to the Sustainability Appraisals that support the Local Plan documents. Tables provide a summary of potential significant effects (positive and negative) identified in the Council's Sustainability Appraisals. Monitoring of these enables the potential significant effects to be assessed and any remedial action to be taken if required.

2.30. The AMR for the monitoring period 2024/25 shows that the policies in the Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans across East Suffolk are generally performing as expected. The policies are all evidence-based and examples of best practice. They provide consistency of decision making for those wishing to bring forward applications and certainty for the local communities in respect of the future development and infrastructure requirements across East Suffolk.

3. Proposal

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

3.2. That the Council publishes the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The AMR has been prepared by the Planning Policy and Delivery Team, who continually monitor the progress of the Local Plan policies and planning applications that are received and determined by the Council. The financial costs of this are already accounted for within existing staff budgets for Planning and Coastal Management.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. The AMR has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and will be published on the Council's website.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1. None directly, but the AMR highlights where there are potential environmental, social and/or economic risks which may need mitigating/addressing.

7. Options

- 7.1. The Council is required to prepare and publish its AMR in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), so there are no other credible options.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That Strategic Planning Committee notes the content of the report.
- 8.2. That the Council publishes the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 8.3. That the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, be given delegated authority to make any necessary minor typographical, factual or presentational changes to the documents prior to formally publishing them.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

- 9.1. The Council is required to prepare and publish its AMR in accordance with Regulation 34 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

10. Conclusions/Next Steps

- 10.1. That the Council publishes the East Suffolk Authority Monitoring Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Areas of consideration comments

Section 151 Officer:

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

Monitoring Officer:

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:

Not directly relevant to this report, although the AMR reports on affordable housing permissions and completions (amongst other areas).

Safeguarding:

N/A

Crime and Disorder:

N/A

Corporate Services implications:

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

The AMR is published commensurate to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:

No prior consultation, as the AMR is published for information. However, the data will be available for all residents and businesses etc to view/download on the website.

Appendices:

A	East Suffolk 'Regulatory' Authority Monitoring Report 2024/25
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Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
December 2025	Statement of Housing Land Supply as at 31 March 2025, and appendices	Housing Land Supply » East Suffolk Council
Various	Housing Action Plans	Housing Action Plan » East Suffolk Council