



CABINET

Tuesday, 04 October 2022

Subject	East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Anthony Taylor Senior Planner (Policy and Delivery) Anthony.taylor@east Suffolk.gov.uk 07825 693964

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:

The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy (Strategy). The purpose of the Strategy is to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable, and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion, and support economic growth. In order to create these environments, the Strategy identifies cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk including in the Broads Authority Area. These recommendations are supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Framework that aligns with the Infrastructure Delivery Frameworks appended to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and the Waveney Local Plan. The pdf version of the Strategy is appended at Appendices A, B and C of this report, and the interactive version of the Strategy can be viewed here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/4bd40e1d6e6c4637a7fceb840827c843?item=1>.

Options:

Adopt the Strategy. This will mean the Council has an up-to-date Strategy covering the entire East Suffolk area, which will serve as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for East Suffolk.

An alternative option would be to not adopt the Strategy and continue with the adopted Waveney Cycle Strategy (2016) and without a cycling and walking strategy for the former Suffolk Coastal area. However, this would be a missed opportunity to provide up to date cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations for East Suffolk and bring the entire East Suffolk area up to the benchmark of having a plan in place for cycling and walking infrastructure across the district.

Recommendation/s:

1. That the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report, be adopted.
2. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management, be authorised to make any presentational or typographical amendments to the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy prior to it being published.
3. That the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy be presented to Full Council for its information and to ensure Full Council is informed of the Strategy's importance to the district.

Corporate Impact Assessment

Governance:

No impacts.

ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:

The Strategy supports the implementation of site allocations and policies addressing sustainable transport within the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) and Waveney Local Plan (2019).

Environmental:

The Strategy makes cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, in support of development sites allocated in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and the Waveney Local Plan, as well as in support of existing communities. The introduction of cycling and walking infrastructure where it currently does not exist could initially harm the environment through the replacement of for example agricultural land with cycling and walking tracks. However, if the introduction or improvement of cycling and walking infrastructure generates modal shift (the conversion of trips taken by one mode of transport to another, e.g. cycling to local shops rather than driving) then the environmental impact of the cycling and walking infrastructure could be positive. If the Strategy was to be adopted, the detailed design solutions for each recommendation would be considered after adoption and through further community engagement. The exact material treatment and lighting design of each recommendation will have an impact on the environment, but these detailed matters are not set out within the Strategy's recommendations and the impact is therefore not precisely known at this time. A Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion (Appendix E) was undertaken and concluded that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment would not be necessary. A Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement (Appendix F) was also undertaken and concluded that the Strategy will not lead to likely significant effects on protected Habitat sites. If through the implementation of any individual recommendation it is considered that project level Habitats Regulations Assessments or Environmental Impact Assessment are required, then these will be carried out as necessary. Overall, the environmental impact of the Strategy is considered to be positive in facilitating more sustainable lifestyles that do not revolve around the private car.

Equalities and Diversity:

An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Opinion was produced in October 2021 to accompany consultation on the Draft Strategy, and updated after the consultation in September 2022 (Appendix G). The Strategy has also been subject to separate Equality Impact Analysis as part of the production of this report (ref: EQIA445334398) in August 2022. Both assessments concluded no differential negative impacts on those with protected characteristics.

Financial:

The production and adoption of the Strategy is covered by the existing budget of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. The Strategy, in identifying cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF) (Appendix C), the purpose of which is to outline the delivery and funding methods that could be most appropriate for specific recommendations. Funding sources identified in the IDF consist of developer contributions in the form of CIL

and section 106 (which the Council collects from development sites) and funding pots available to be bid into at the national and county level.

In the long term (i.e. beyond the current medium term financial strategy), future revenue budgets for cleansing, grounds maintenance rolling maintenance of our infrastructure will be required.

Human Resources:

No Impacts.

ICT:

No Impacts.

Legal:

The Strategy, if adopted, will serve as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for East Suffolk. There is no legislation governing LCWIPs. The Government's first 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (2017), second 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (2022) and 'Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Technical Guidance for Local Authorities' (2017) provide guidance to help support local authorities in preparing LCWIPs. This Government guidance has been considered alongside a collaborative working relationship with Suffolk County Council throughout the preparation of the Strategy.

The Strategy has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (Appendix E). It has also been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (Appendix F). An Equality Impact Assessment Screening opinion was produced to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Appendix G).

Risk:

There remains a small risk that national priorities shift, thereby reducing funding pots available to deliver the Strategy. This risk is minimal given the overwhelming interest in preserving our environments.

External Consultees:

The Strategy has been subject to two rounds of consultation, which returned a significant number of consultation responses, and which have been a valuable source of information. During the formal consultation officers met with various Community Partnerships to discuss the content of the Strategy and receive feedback. Engagement with neighbouring Local Authorities has also been undertaken. The list of respondents, summaries of their comments and how these have been responded to can be found in the Consultation Statement which is appended to this report (Appendix D). An officer steering group comprising East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council officers was established to oversee and help guide the preparation of the Strategy.

Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the Strategic Plan which are supported by this proposal: <i>(Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)</i>		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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T02	Enabling our Communities		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 checked="" 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"/>
How does this proposal support the priorities selected?			
<p>The Strategy supports the delivery of Strategic Plan priority P08 by identifying cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations that can encourage safe cycling and walking and thereby support improvements in mental and physical health and wellbeing, and reduce social isolation and loneliness. The Strategy also supports the delivery of a number of secondary Strategic Plan priorities.</p> <p>The Strategy supports the implementation of Local Plan policies for the delivery of development sites and regeneration opportunities through placed based initiatives enabling plan led growth (P01), and enhances opportunities to secure funding for cycling</p>			

and walking infrastructure projects in East Suffolk (P02). The identification of cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across the district that are supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Framework can inform CIL spend on infrastructure and help to facilitate healthy and sustainable economic growth (P05).

Every Community Partnership has identified priorities that can be supported by the implementation of the Strategy’s recommendations. Such Community Partnership priorities include but are not limited to delivering sustainable and active transport opportunities, enabling physically active and healthy lives, and reducing social isolation and loneliness (P06). Data and community intelligence have been integral to the formulation of the Strategy’s place-based recommendations across rural and urban areas of East Suffolk. The Strategy will also function as an evidence base for community projects, such as neighbourhood plans (P07).

A digital first approach has been taken throughout the preparation of the Strategy in order to present the Strategy in the most effective way possible, including through the use of interactive map based engagement during both the initial and formal consultations. Hard copies of the Strategy documentation have been made available, and thus the digital approach has not undermined or excluded those that prefer to or can only engage with the Strategy via traditional means (P15). The Strategy is supported by a wealth of data, including but not limited to consultation responses, Quiet Lanes, the Public Rights of Way network, existing and planned development, Government supported Propensity to Cycle Tool (web-based tool to estimate cycling potential on any given street), and Strava Metro data (trip data collected from Strava Metro app users) (P17).

Included within the Strategy are recommendations that relate to Local Plan site allocations, including those that are or contain Council assets. These recommendations support the delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure, which would help the Council reach its carbon neutral targets (P20). Cycling and walking infrastructure as identified in the Strategy’s place-based recommendations can, through the conversion of trips to more sustainable transport modes, help create cleaner, quieter, and healthier environments across East Suffolk. The Strategy will also function as an evidence base to support the creation of local policies, for example in the form of local plan and neighbourhood plan policies, that reflect the Council’s environmental concerns and targets. (P23).

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	The Council has two adopted Local Plans: the East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (March 2019) and the East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020). These Local Plans both contain policies relating to sustainable transport, namely policy SCLP7.1 (Sustainable Transport) of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and policy WLP8.21 (Sustainable Transport) of the Waveney Local Plan, as well as a number of site allocation policies for development across East Suffolk.
1.2	The Council has an adopted Waveney Cycle Strategy (July 2016), which makes recommendations for improvements to cycling infrastructure across the former Waveney area. There is currently no adopted cycling and/or walking strategy for the former Suffolk Coastal area.

1.3	<p>Since the adoption of the Waveney Cycle Strategy in July 2016 the Government has published a number of cycling and walking policy and guidance documents, including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first Local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (April 2017) - Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans Technical Guidance for Local Authorities (April 2017) - Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking (July 2020) - Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design (July 2020) - The second Local Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (July 2022) <p>Taken together these Government documents set new targets and standards for cycling and walking infrastructure, which have been considered through the preparation of the Strategy. The Strategy therefore provides up to date cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations based on Government targets and standards.</p>
1.4	<p>The Strategy outlines recommendations across both rural and urban parts of East Suffolk, in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key Corridors – Key routes between, and through, settlements where there are significant opportunities for modal shift from vehicular travel to cycling and walking by improving cycling and walking infrastructure. - Local Plan Site Allocation Recommendations – Recommendations that seek to guide the design and delivery of Local Plan site allocations, covering both on and off-site opportunities. - Leisure Route Recommendations – A number of rural routes have been identified, connecting some of our more rural settlements. The primary function of these routes is to facilitate leisure opportunities but could just as easily function for other purposes. - Community Recommendations – Recommendations submitted to the Council as part of the initial consultation. These have been assessed against the methodology set out under the ‘Community Recommendations’ tab of the digital version of the Strategy and chapter 4 of the pdf version of the Strategy. These have also been useful in identifying opportunities for the above three recommendation types. <p>The Strategy is also supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF), the purpose of which is to outline the delivery and funding methods that could be most appropriate for specific recommendations. The IDF has been prepared to be consistent with the two Infrastructure Delivery Frameworks appended to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and Waveney Local Plan.</p>
1.5	<p>The Strategy does not create new policies but rather seeks to provide infrastructure recommendations that will help with the implementation of relevant policies in the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans.</p>
1.6	<p>The preparation of the Strategy has been undertaken with the support and oversight of an officer steering group, which included officers from both East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council. On occasion, officers from other local authorities attended steering group meetings. For example, officers from the Broads Authority attended steering group meetings where recommendations within the parts of East Suffolk that fall within and are closely related to the Broads were discussed. The preparation of the Strategy has been overseen by the Local Plan Working Group.</p>
1.7	<p>The Strategy was subject to two rounds of consultation during its preparation, the details of which are contained in the Consultation Statement (Appendix D). The</p>

	<p>first was an initial consultation to inform the scope and content of the Strategy. The initial consultation was carried out between 19 October 2020 and 7 December 2020, to which 797 responses were submitted. The responses received to the initial consultation were used to inform the content of the draft Strategy, and are included in the Strategy as ‘community recommendations’. The formal consultation on the draft Strategy was carried out between 1 November 2021 and 10 January 2022, to which 1,193 responses were received. Both consultations were advertised on the Council’s website and social media channels. All those on the planning policy mailing list which includes town and parish councils, individuals and organisations, including those who were previously contacted or responded to the initial consultation were engaged. Both initial and formal consultations were primarily map based and utilised digital mapping technology that provided a user friendly engagement experience. The consultation responses, and how they were addressed in drafting the Strategy, are contained in the Consultation Statement (Appendix D).</p>
1.8	<p>Under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 screening was carried out on the draft Strategy to determine whether a full Strategic Environmental Assessment would be required. The screening concluded that this was not required. The final Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion is appended to this report (Appendix E).</p>
1.9	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment screening was also undertaken which concluded that implementation of the Strategy would not lead to likely significant effects on protected Habitat sites and that it is therefore not considered necessary to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. The final Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement is appended to this report (Appendix F).</p>
1.10	<p>An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Opinion was produced in October 2021 to accompany consultation on the draft Strategy, and updated after the consultation in September 2022 (Appendix G). The Strategy has also been subject to separate Equality Impact Analysis as part of the production of this report (ref: EQIA445334398) in August 2022. Both assessments concluded no differential negative impacts on those with protected characteristics.</p>

2 Current position

2.1	<p>Adopted planning policy on sustainable transport is set out in the Council’s two Local Plans. The two adopted local plans are the East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020) and the East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (March 2019).</p> <p>Guidance is also currently provided in the adopted Waveney Cycle Strategy (July 2016), which covers the former Waveney area. However, the Waveney Cycle Strategy is over six years old and over this period the Government’s cycling and walking targets and standards have been updated. The Waveney Cycle Strategy also refers to planning policies that are no longer in place as it was adopted before the Waveney Local Plan (March 2019). There is no current cycling and walking guidance for the former Suffolk Coastal area.</p>
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3 How to address current situation

3.1	The Strategy contains cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, which will support existing communities and new communities that come together from the implementation of planning policies contained in the adopted Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans. The Strategy will also function as an evidence base in the review of our two Local Plans as well as neighbourhood plans prepared by community groups. The Strategy is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Framework (IDF), the purpose of which is to outline the delivery and funding methods that could be most appropriate for specific recommendations. The Strategy will also enhance opportunities to secure funding for cycling and walking infrastructure projects in East Suffolk.
3.2	On adoption the Strategy will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, replace the Waveney Cycle Strategy, and serve as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for East Suffolk.

4 Reason/s for recommendation

4.1	Adoption of the Strategy will provide up to date cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across the entire East Suffolk area, serving as the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for East Suffolk, and will assist with the implementation of the Council's Local Plan policies which relate to sustainable transport and site allocations.
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Appendices

Appendices:	
Appendix A	East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy
Appendix B	East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy Appendix 1: Community Recommendations
Appendix C	East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy Appendix 2: Infrastructure Delivery Framework
Appendix D	Consultation Statement (October 2022)
Appendix E	Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Opinion (October 2021, updated September 2022) (produced to accompany consultation on Draft SPD, and updated September 2022)
Appendix F	Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement (October 2021, updated September 2022) (produced to accompany consultation on Draft SPD, and updated September 2022)
Appendix G	Equality Impact Assessment Screening Opinion (October 2021, updated September 2022) (produced to accompany consultation on Draft SPD, and updated in September 2022)

Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
March 2019	East Suffolk Council- Waveney Local Plan	https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/
September 2020	East Suffolk Council- Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/local-plans/