



COUNCIL

Wednesday, 25 November 2020

ENDORSEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDANCE NOTE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Environmental Guidance Note is a project which began in 2019 with the aim of providing simple, concise information on a range of key environmental topics for developers. The information includes guidance on best practices, suggested aims for developments and key sources of further information.
2. The Environmental Guidance Note is not a Supplementary Planning Document and does not contain policy, but it offers guidance to those undertaking new development and the renovation of existing buildings on how construction can mitigate the impact of climate change. As a guidance note use of the document is voluntary.
3. The Environmental Guidance Note was developed by Planning Policy Team in consultation with Building Control, Development Management, Design and Conservation, Environmental Protection, Ecology, Housing, Asset Management and Building Maintenance.
4. The recommendation is that the Council endorse the Environmental Guidance Note.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All Wards in the District
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Mallinder Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
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Supporting Officer:

Ruth Bishop

Senior Planner

01502 523028

ruth.bishop@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Environmental Guidance Note was commissioned by the Environmental Task Group and has been produced in response to the climate emergency that was declared by the Council in July 2019. The Guidance Note supports the vision of the Council and the existing measures already put in place by the Council, including the commitment by the Council to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 1.2 The Environmental Guidance Note is a clear, concise document that provides a snapshot of key environmental issues relating to the building industry. The guidance will assist those seeking to mitigate the impact of construction on climate change by offering support and advice on implementing the best practice principles and providing sources for further information. The guidance can be used by anyone looking to undertake new development or renovate existing buildings at any scale.
- 1.3 The Environmental Guidance Note is not a statutory document, and as such carries little planning “weight” in the determination of planning applications. However, the document can be used to assist with the production of information submitted to support planning applications and inform comments made on planning applications, in particular in relation to Waveney Local Plan Policy WLP8.28 (Sustainable Construction) and Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Policy 9.2 (Sustainable Construction) and the supporting text of the policies.

2. PRODUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDANCE NOTE

- 2.1 The Planning Policy and Delivery Team developed the guidance note in consultation with Building Control, Development Management, Design and Conservation, Environmental Protection, Ecology, Housing, Asset Management and Building Maintenance. The Cabinet Member for the Environment was consulted and provided input at various key stages in the development of the guidance note. An initial draft Environmental Guidance Note was presented to the Local Plan Working Group in March 2020 and the Environmental Task Group in April 2020.

3. CONTENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDANCE NOTE

- 3.1 The Environmental Guidance Note addresses key environmental issues to assist in bringing forward development that mitigates the impact of climate change. The introduction explains how the interactive document can be used and includes a brief list of the actions taken by the Government to address climate change and the actions taken by the East Suffolk Council to address climate change. The topics addressed in the Guidance Note are:
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Renewable Energy
 - Nature and Wildlife
 - Siting and Orientation
 - Sustainable Travel
 - Surface water run-off
 - Water Conservation
 - Materials and Waste
- 3.2 Each of the key environmental topics includes a summary of the issues, what East Suffolk Council is doing in relation to the issue, what to aim for in new development, and key sources

for further information. All Planning Policies, Building Regulations and websites listed under sources for further information are interactive hyperlinks to assist the document user.

- 3.3 The Environmental Guidance Note includes case studies, details of the Green Print Forum (a voluntary network facilitated by the Council to aid the delivery of the East Suffolk Business Plan) and relevant Council contact details for further information. The case studies show work carried out to improve the thermal efficiency of existing buildings and generate renewable energy.
- 3.4 The Environmental Guidance Note does not set building standards. The energy efficiency of all new and renovated buildings for residential and non-residential use is covered by Building Regulations. All developers must build and renovate to Building Regulation standards. The setting of Building Regulations is not within the control of the Council. Local Planning Authorities can, through planning policy in Local Plans, set energy performance standards for new housing that are higher than building regulations, but only up to the equivalent of Level 4 of the, now withdrawn, Code for Sustainable Homes (this is approximately 20% above current Building Regulations). Local requirements must also be based on robust evidence and consider the impact on the viability of development. The Government's Future Homes Standard plans to require new homes to have low carbon heating and increased energy efficiency. These proposed changes could impact Building regulations, Planning Policy and guidance.
- 3.5 The information in the Environmental Guidance Note supports the planning policies in the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted September 2020) and the Waveney Local Plan (adopted March 2019) that seek to mitigate the impact of development on climate change. The Local Plans both contain planning policies that address sustainable transport, renewable energy, sustainable construction, flood risk, coastal erosion, and water management. The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan includes Policy SCLP9.2 on Sustainable Construction ([see page 150](#)) that requires all new developments of more than 10 dwellings to achieve a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions below Building Regulation requirements and for new non-residential development to meet the British Research Establishment Environment Assessment Method 'Very Good' standard. The Waveney Local Plan includes Policy WLP8.28 on Sustainable Construction ([see page 252](#)) that requires residential developments of 10 or more houses to submit a sustainability statement that demonstrates, where practical, they have incorporated a range of environmental measures. Both Local Plans contain sections on sustainable transport with policies that support the increased use of low-emission vehicles and their infrastructure, such as electric charging points.

4. HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?

- 4.1 The endorsement of the Environmental Guidance Note supports the achievement of the following Strategic Plan theme – Growing our Economy ('Build the right environment for East Suffolk') and Caring for our Environment ('Lead by example,' 'minimise waste, reuse material, increase recycling' and 'renewable energy').

5. FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The production and endorsement of the Environmental Guidance Note is covered by the existing budgets of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team.

The Environmental Guidance Note is not a statutory planning document and has not been subject to public consultation. The guidance note provides advice, support and encouragement to those undertaking new development and renovation of existing buildings. As a guidance note use of the document by developers is voluntary.

The Environmental Guidance note will be made available on the Council's website and circulated to Town and Parish Councils and Ward members. The document will be

publicised through a press release, announced on the Council’s social media, and featured in the Planning and Building Control Newsletter.

The Environmental Guidance Note will be reviewed and updated as appropriate to ensure advice is up-to-date with the latest government legislation, advancement in technology, and best practice principles to mitigate the impact of development on climate change.

6. OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Screening Assessment was undertaken on the Environmental Guidance Note. The Screening Assessment concluded that no negative impact upon any group with protected characteristics was identified and therefore a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 An alternative option would be to not endorse the Environmental Guidance Note. However, this would represent a missed opportunity to fully support the implementation of environmentally responsible measures that would reduce the impact of the building industry on climate change and to support the Council’s Strategic Plan priority to ‘Build the right environment for East Suffolk’.

8. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 The Environmental Guidance Note supports the strategic aims of the Council to ‘Build the right environment for East Suffolk’ and for ‘Caring for our Environment’, by providing advice that will assist in bringing forward new development that mitigates the impact of climate change. It provides an important instrument to show Council leadership and guidance, and it illustrates how individuals and corporations can come together and join East Suffolk’s environmental vision and aspirations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council note and endorse the content of the Environmental Guidance Note.
2. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Environment, is authorised to make any factual or typographical amendments to the Environmental Guidance Note.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Environmental Guidance Note
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please note that copies of background papers have not been published on the Council’s website www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk but copies of the background papers listed below are available for public inspection free of charge by contacting the relevant Council Department.

Date	Type	Available From
2019	Waveney Local Plan	https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/waveney-local-plan/ .
2020	Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/Adopted-Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan/East-Suffolk-Council-Suffolk-Coastal-Local-Plan.pdf