



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 06 June 2022

Subject	Planning Policy and Delivery Update
Report of	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer	Desi Reed / Andrea McMillan Planning Manager (Policy, Delivery & Specialist Services) desi.reed@eastsuffolk.gov.uk / andrea.mcmillan@eastsuffolk.gov.uk 01502 523055 / 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 preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), strategies on specific topics such as cycling and walking, the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery. Updates, as appropriate, are also included for the planning service specialist services (Design and Conservation, Arboriculture and Landscape (including Rights of Way) and Ecology) that now form part of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team.

Options:

This report is for information only.

Recommendation/s:

That the content of the report be 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. There has been an acknowledgment that staff capacity,

particularly in the specialist planning services has been stretched. This was cited in previous reports as a risk in relation to delivering on the Strategic Plan and the changing national planning agenda. Recruitment has now taken place, with additional ecology, design and conservation, landscape and arboriculture and rights of way resource now in place to ensure we have a resilient and quality team to deliver on our objectives.

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 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?

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 secondary priorities identified 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.

The adoption of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and preparation of development briefs support the Economy theme, including the delivery of the right supply of housing (P01), and along with the review of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, they also seek to maximise the unique selling points of the district (P03). The preparation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, collection and spend of CIL also support the Economy theme, through investment in the district for healthy and sustainable economic growth (P01 and P05).

The support being provided for Neighbourhood Planning, the Affordable Housing SPD and the Cycling and Walking Strategy all support the Enabling Communities theme, including taking positive action on what matters most (P07), community pride through a shared sense of purpose (P09) and maximising health and well-being (P08). The Healthy Environment SPD will also support the latter priority (P08).

The Sustainable Construction SPD is now supporting the Caring for our Environment theme. It supports all 4 priorities of leading by example (P20), encouraging the reuse of materials (P21), supporting the growth of renewable energy (P22) and protecting, educating and influencing care for our environment (P23). The Cycling and Walking Strategy also has a key role to play in protecting our natural environment (P23).

Background and Justification for Recommendation

1 Background facts	
1.1	This report provides an update on the current work programme including progress being made on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and housing delivery. With full and up to date Local Plan coverage for the whole District, the work of the Planning Policy and Delivery Team continues to focus on the delivery of these plans. In addition, the opportunity is taken to provide relevant updates on the work of the Infrastructure Team relating to the collection and spend of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 monies.
1.2	There are a number of key projects in the current work programme (next 12 months) that support the delivery of the Local Plans and the East Suffolk Strategic Plan. These focus on providing guidance to support the implementation of planning policies through Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) including development briefs, strategies on specific topics such as cycling and walking, and projects that support the delivery of infrastructure to support growth through CIL collection and spend. In addition, the Design and Conservation service has a programme of projects including Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan reviews. The team also support the work of the planning applications and appeals service and a wide range of external projects plus corporate and regeneration projects across the District that are not reported to this committee.

2	Current position
2.1	Since the last report to the Strategic Planning Committee 7 th March 2022 the following key milestones have been met:
2.2	<p>With respect to Neighbourhood Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bungay and Rushmere St Andrew neighbourhood plans - regulation 16 publication commenced on 11 April and concluded on 6 June • Oulton neighbourhood - Regulation 16 publication began on 13 May and will conclude on 24 June. • Halesworth neighbourhood plan - Regulation 16 publication began in May/June (date not confirmed at time of writing) • Carlton Colville neighbourhood plan - Regulation 14 consultation started on 26 March and ended on 21 May. • Lound with Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton neighbourhood plan - Decision Statement issued on 17 March. • Worlingham neighbourhood plan - examination commenced on 17 May.
2.3	The Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by Cabinet on 5 April 2022.
2.4	The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by Cabinet on 3 May 2022.
2.5	Consultation on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy closed on 10 January 2022. There were over 1200 responses, with the majority being made using the interactive map. Most of the responses have now been considered and a final version of the Strategy is being prepared, for adoption in early summer.
2.6	Consultation on the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule for East Suffolk closed on 23 December 2021. Comments received have now been considered and the final revised Charging Schedule and associated documents are being prepared for submission for independent Examination.
2.7	Good progress has been made on preparing the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that will provide additional guidance on the implementation of the Housing in Clusters in the Countryside (SCLP5.4) and Small-Scale Residential Development in the Countryside (WLP8.7) policies of the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Local Plans, respectively. Workshops have been held with Parish and Town Councils, developers and agents and district councillors to discuss issues and ideas around the implementation of the policies and these views are informing the preparation of a draft version of the SPD for wider consultation.
2.8	<p>Design and Conservation:</p> <p>It is important in relation to the protection and enhancement of the historic environment that Conservation Areas and their Appraisals and Management Plans are kept under review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on a review of the Thorpeness Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was completed on 11th March 2022. • Good progress has been made on the preparation of consultation draft review documents for the Southwold and Southwold Harbour and Walberswick Quay, and the Halesworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans. • Good progress has been made on draft appraisals for a proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area. • Consultants have been commissioned to undertake fieldwork in support of a pilot review of the existing Article 4 Directions in place in both Lowestoft Conservation Areas. The existing Directions need to take account of the

	latest national planning policy framework guidance (NPPF) on their use, hence the need to review.
2.9	Ecology: The Council's Senior Ecologist co-ordinated a response from East Suffolk Council to the Government's (DEFRA) Biodiversity Net Gain consultation (11 th January to 5 th April 2022) on how mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for new developments will be regulated and implemented. Responses to the consultation will be used to help shape the developing legislation, processes, and guidance. It is anticipated that mandatory biodiversity net gain will apply in England by amending the Town & Country Planning Act and it is due to be implemented in late 2023.
2.10	CIL Collection and Spend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the financial year 2021-22 we received just over £6.25m in total CIL. In April we made Neighbourhood CIL payments in relation to income between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022, worth over £590k, to Town and Parish Councils, and retained £4k for Parish Meeting areas. Just under £2.5m was released for District CIL projects during February and March. The 2022 bid round for applications for District CIL funding opened on 1 April and closes 31 May.
2.11	Housing Delivery - The annual anticipated housing delivery figure for East Suffolk is 916 dwellings, based on the figures in the two Local Plans for the District. For the year 2021/22, 812 dwellings have been delivered, up by approximately 100 dwellings on the figures for last year. Of the total, 223 were for affordable housing, nearly twice as many as last year.

3 How to address current situation

3.1	During the next 3/4 months, some of the key project milestones will include:
3.2	With respect to Neighbourhood Plans : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examinations for the Bungay, Oulton, and Rushmere St Andrew plans will take place over the summer Lound with Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton neighbourhood plan - referendum will take place on 23 June. Saxmundham neighbourhood plan – expected to submit their final draft plan to the Council Wickham Market neighbourhood plan - Regulation 14 consultation carried out in Spring 2019, and now working towards Regulation 16 consultation. Guidance for neighbourhood plan groups on delivering new housing through their plans will be published in 2022.
3.3	Following consideration of all the comments on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy , the final version will have been adopted by Cabinet in early summer.
3.4	The final version of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule will have been submitted to an Examiner for independent scrutiny, with a view to Full Council adopting it for implementation at the end of the year.
3.5	Work will have progressed on development briefs for sites allocated for housing in the Local Plans.
3.6	An initial consultation, focusing on the nature of the content for the Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document , will have taken place during June/July.
3.7	Design and Conservation:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having taken account of feedback on the draft consultation, the Thorpeness Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will have been considered by Cabinet for adoption on 7 June 2022. • Southwold and Southwold Harbour/Walberswick Quay Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will have been received and good progress made towards undertaking a draft consultation. • Halesworth Conservation Area draft appraisal and boundary review will have been received and good progress made towards undertaking a draft consultation. • Good progress will have been made in consulting on the draft appraisals for a proposed new Conservation Area at Aldeburgh Park and three proposed extensions to the existing Aldeburgh Conservation Area.
3.8	<p>CIL Collection/Spend and Exacom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the District CIL bid round ending on 31 May, bids will be validated and prioritised, and considered by the CIL Spending Working Group in the summer. <p>The Exacom data transparency project (relating to the management of CIL, Section 106 and RAMS payments) continues to make steady progress with almost all s106 agreements now loaded into the system. Phase 2 project work has started to record S106 financial receipts in the first step towards reconciling the s106 financial position with the Finance System.</p>
3.9	<p>Housing Delivery - The picture moving forward continues to remain optimistic, given that Local Plan site allocations, including many of the major sites, are either under discussion with Planning Officers, undergoing developer/landowner led community consultation, are current planning applications or have already been consented. As of 31 March 2022, there were 1110 dwellings under construction (of which 213 are affordable units), nearly 200 more than at a similar time last year. This bodes well for continued good delivery throughout 2022/23. The Major Sites team continue to support and steer master-planning work on key sites across the District, including North of Lowestoft, Beccles/Worlingham, South Saxmundham and North Felixstowe; with master-planning being a key policy driver to provide certainty and a coordinated approach to delivery.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Planning White Paper</u> update – Members will recall that the Planning White Paper, that posed some fundamental changes to the planning system, was published for consultation in August 2020. The Government received a huge response to the consultation, including a response from this Council. The last Strategic Planning Committee Report (March 7 2022) noted the publication of the <u>Levelling Up White Paper</u>, the important role that planning has to play and that a further update on the Government’s approach to changes in the planning system would be provided in the Spring.</p> <p>On 10th May, on the opening of parliament, the Queen’s speech referred to the forthcoming Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which was subsequently published on the 11th May and received its first reading in parliament. As well as delivering against some of the ambitions set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, it also incorporates some of the proposals for planning reform outlined in the Planning for the Future White Paper where they support the levelling up approach.</p> <p>A ‘<u>Policy paper – Levelling Up and Regeneration: further information</u>’ has been published on the Governments website and provides an overview of the proposals in the <u>Bill</u> and some forthcoming consultations. The Bill contains considerable content relating to planning and this will require further consideration by officers before appraising members of the content and the potential implications for East</p>

Suffolk. Pending detailed consideration, some key points, largely related to planning policy, include:

- Greater digitisation of the whole planning system
- Increased weight for Local Plans
- National Development Management Policies
- Duty to provide a design code for the whole district
- Power to prepare Supplementary Plans (replacing SPDs), with the full weight of a Local Plan e.g. such as design codes
- Streamlining plan making with 30 months to prepare (Planning for the Future White Paper proposals for all land to be placed in prescribed categories and linked to automatic 'in principle' permission for development in areas identified for development are not being taken forward.)
- Local Plans still to be considered for their 'soundness' at examination but the current tests are to be reviewed
- Local Development Scheme to be replaced by a Local Plan timetable
- Infrastructure providers have a duty to engage in plan making
- Removal of the need to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply where the adopted Local Plan is less than 5 years old
- 'Duty to Cooperate' for plan making to be repealed and replaced with a policy test of alignment with neighbouring authorities
- Groups of local authorities can voluntarily prepare a spatial development strategy
- Neighbourhood Plans will be given greater weight in planning decisions
- Ability for parish councils and neighbourhood forums to produce a simpler 'neighbourhood priorities statement' which the local authority must take into account when preparing its Local Plan
- Also included are 'street vote' powers, allowing residents on a street to bring forward proposals to extend or redevelop their properties in line with their design preferences
- Introduction of a simple, mandatory and locally determined Infrastructure Levy, linked to the value of the property when sold and based on gross development value rather than floorspace. This will replace the existing system of developer contributions under CIL and S106
- Duty to prepare an Infrastructure Delivery Strategy
- An Environment Outcomes Report to replace Environment Impact Assessment Reports (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment Reports (SEA)
- A streamlined Compulsory Purchase Order procedure to be consulted on with powers to use for regeneration purposes
- Duty to maintain Historic Records

A review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also proposed, as well as the publication of transitional arrangements around the implementation of the proposals in the Bill. There will also be several other consultations forthcoming over the next year or so related to the proposals (such as the Infrastructure Levy and the Environment Outcomes Report).

The overview policy paper also suggests that 'in broad terms changes to planning procedures will begin to take place from 2024, once the Bill has Royal Assent and associated regulations and changes to national policy are in place'.

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

Appendices:

None

Background reference papers:

None
