

East Suffolk Local Development Scheme

Timetable for the preparation of planning policy documents

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Introduction

- 1.1 A Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for the planning documents that the Council will prepare to plan for development in its area.
- 1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme relating to the preparation of development plan documents.
- 1.3 Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out that a Local Development Scheme must specify:
 - the local development documents which are to be development plan documents;
 - the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate;
 - which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities;
 - any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee under section 29;
 - the timetable for the preparation and revision of the development plan documents;
 - such other matters as are prescribed.
- 1.4 The Council's former Local Development Schemes were:
 - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan – Local Development Scheme (October 2015, updated June 2020)
 - Waveney Local Development Scheme (September 2018)
- 1.5 These Local Development Schemes related primarily to the preparation of the Council's now adopted 'development plan documents' which are the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, 2020, and Waveney Local Plan, 2019. There has been no requirement to update these Local Development Schemes since adoption of the Local Plans.
- 1.6 This Local Development Scheme sets out the current position of East Suffolk Council in relation to Local Plan preparation. East Suffolk Council is the local planning authority for East Suffolk, outside of the area covered by the Broads Authority Executive Area, as shown on the map overleaf.
- 1.7 Whilst there is no requirement for the preparation of other planning policy documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans to be covered in the Local Development Scheme, the opportunity has been taken to include information on these, reflecting advice in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance. The focus is on planning policy documents; other important documents produced by the Planning Service such as

Conservation Area Appraisals are not covered, but details are made available on the Council's website¹.

1.8 This Local Development Scheme takes effect from 15th March 2024.

¹ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/

Map of East Suffolk



Development Plan

- 2.1 The East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020) and the East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (March 2019), ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plans and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan prepared by Suffolk County Council form the current ‘development plan’ for East Suffolk. The Broads Authority prepare their own Local Plan and is the planning authority for their area.
- 2.2 The development plan is the starting point for the consideration of planning applications and legislation requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Plans

- 2.3 The Council has two currently adopted Local Plans: the East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (September 2020) and the East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan (March 2019).

East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan

- 2.4 The East Suffolk Council - Suffolk Coastal Local Plan² was adopted on 23rd September 2020. The plan covers the area of the former Suffolk Coastal district. The plan sets out the framework for growth across the former Suffolk Coastal district over the period 2018 – 2036. It comprises a vision and strategic priorities, a strategy for growth including to meet housing and employment needs, strategies for major centres and market towns, site allocations and development management policies on a range of topics. The Local Plan also contains an Infrastructure Delivery Framework and a Monitoring Framework.
- 2.5 The former Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Local Development Scheme (2015, updated 2020) also set out a timetable for the preparation of the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies and the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan development plan documents. These were both adopted in January 2017, but were fully superseded by the adoption of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan in September 2020.
- 2.6 Under the current planning system, the Council would need to review the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan to determine whether it needs to be updated before 23rd September 2025. However it is expected that the new planning system (see below) will be in place in advance of that date.

² 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

East Suffolk Council – Waveney Local Plan

- 2.7 The East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan³ was adopted on 20th March 2019. The plan covers the area of the former Waveney district, outside of the Broads National Park. The plan sets out the framework for growth across the former Waveney district over the period 2014 – 2036. It comprises a vision and strategic priorities, a strategy for growth including to meet housing and employment needs, strategies for Lowestoft and the market towns, site allocations and development management policies on a range of topics. The Local Plan also contains an Infrastructure Delivery Framework and a Monitoring Framework.
- 2.8 Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires the Council to undertake a review to consider whether the plan needs to be updated by the fifth anniversary of its adoption. The Waveney Local Plan review assessment has been undertaken. This review, agreed by Cabinet on 5th March 2024, concluded that the plan remains effective and a review is not necessary at the present time.

Planning reforms and future Local Plan preparation

- 2.9 The Council supports having up to date plans in place, to maintain a plan-led approach to growth and development and to meet its communities' needs.
- 2.10 The Government is currently proposing significant reforms to the plan-making process, as well as to the content of future Local Plans, through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which received Royal Assent in October 2023. These planning reforms are proposed to be implemented in Autumn 2024. These include transitional arrangements under which any local plan being prepared under the current system would need to be submitted for Examination by 30th June 2025 and then adopted by 31st December 2026. Plans not submitted by that date would need to be prepared under the new system.
- 2.11 The Council therefore anticipates that a future Local Plan would be prepared under the new system. Further secondary legislation, policy and guidance is needed before plans can begin to be prepared under the new system. The new system will also include provision for local authorities to prepare Supplementary Plans, which it is proposed would either relate to a small area (e.g. a site) or be a design code. These would form part of the development plan.
- 2.12 The Government is also considering, as outlined in its consultation on 'Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation' (July 2023), allocating local authorities into 'waves' to begin plan-making under the new system. If this proposal is taken forward this is likely to influence when the preparation of a new Local Plan can begin. The Council does not therefore envisage being able to commence the formal stages of plan preparation before 2025. However, early preparations for commencing a review will take place in the short term, beginning in 2024, including consideration of the scope, the likely evidence needed, and resourcing considerations.

³ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Waveney-Local-Plan/Adopted-Waveney-Local-Plan-including-Erratum.pdf

- 2.13 Under the current Duty to Co-operate (to be replaced with a new mechanism under the reformed system) the Council will also continue to actively engage with adjoining authorities and other Duty to Co-operate bodies on strategic cross-boundary matters.
- 2.14 New and updated evidence would be needed to inform a new local plan, and this is anticipated to cover a range of topics such as housing needs including affordable housing, employment needs, retail and town centres, flood risk, coastal change, transport, infrastructure needs, natural environment and landscape, and viability.
- 2.15 The Council will keep under review its position and timetable for plan preparation once further details of the national reforms are available.
- 2.16 In the meantime, indicative information on a future Local Plan review, relating to the matters set out in Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, is set out below, subject to review and further consideration to inform a detailed future timetable. This indicative timetable is based on beginning a Local Plan review in Spring / Summer 2025 (prior to the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan reaching its fifth anniversary from adoption in September 2025) however this timetable could be brought forward if the planning reforms allow.

Document	East Suffolk Local Plan
Subject matter	Comprehensive Local Plan review (dependent on topics to be covered under future National Development Management Policies). The Plan would update and supersede the current Waveney Local Plan and Suffolk Coastal Local Plan. The plan period will cover at least up to 2044, based on planning ahead at least 15 years from adoption.
Geographical area	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads Authority Executive Area)
Indicative timetable	This indicative timetable is based on formal commencement in Spring / Summer 2025 - a detailed timetable will be established at the point at which the Council commences a review. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early consideration of scope and detailed timetable, including through the Council's Local Plan Working Group meetings, and including resourcing considerations (2024/2025) ▪ Initial evidence gathering and early engagement (2025) ▪ Draft the Local Plan, including 2 public consultations (2026 - 2028) ▪ Submit Plan to Secretary of State (2028) ▪ Examination (2028 - 2029) ▪ Adoption (2029)

Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.17 Neighbourhood Plans are produced by communities (Town or Parish Councils, or a Neighbourhood Forum in unparished areas). Once ‘made’, a Neighbourhood Plan forms a part of the development plan, along with the relevant Local Plan for that area. There is no requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to be prepared or reviewed, this is for the Town or Parish Council to decide, along with the range of issues to be covered, in consultation with the local community. A Neighbourhood Plan must however be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the relevant Local Plan.
- 2.18 East Suffolk Council has statutory duties to support the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Information on Neighbourhood Plans in East Suffolk is available on the Council’s Neighbourhood Planning webpages⁴.
- 2.19 There are currently 23 ‘made’ Neighbourhood Plans in East Suffolk:

Beccles (September 2021)	Mutford (December 2019)
Bredfield (May 2021)	Oulton (February 2023)
Bungay (November 2022)	Rendlesham (March 2015)
Framlingham (March 2017)	Reydon (May 2021)
Great Bealings (March 2017)	Rushmere St Andrew (June 2023)
Halesworth (February 2023)	Saxmundham (July 2023)
Kesgrave (May 2021)	Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough (June 2023)
Kessingland (January 2017)	Southwold (February 2022)
Leiston (March 2017)	Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet (July 2018)
Lound, Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton (July 2022)	Wickham Market (November 2023)
Martlesham (July 2018)	Worlingham (November 2022)
Melton (January 2018)	

- 2.20 A further 17 are currently under preparation (having had a Neighbourhood Area designated), and are at differing stages of preparation:

Aldringham cum Thorpe	Lowestoft (Regulation 14 consultation undertaken)
Barnby	Mettingham, Barsham, Shipmeadow, Ringsfield and Weston
Campsea Ashe	Otley
Carlton Colville (Examiner’s report published)	Oulton Broad
Corton	Playford (at Examination)
Earl Soham	Ufford
Easton (at Examination)	Walberswick

⁴ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-plans-in-the-area/

Henstead with Hulver Street	Westerfield (Regulation 14 consultation undertaken)
Little Bealings	

- 2.21 There is no requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to be reviewed, however some Town or Parish Councils are now considering a review of made plans.
- 2.22 The Council prepares guidance documents to support Town and Parish Councils in the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, and will keep these under review and amend as needed, as well as prepare guidance on other topics as appropriate. To date the following have been prepared:
- Neighbourhood Planning – How to go about it (March 2021)
 - Neighbourhood Plans – Indicative Housing Requirements Methodology (July 2021)
 - Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note – Review of Made Neighbourhood Development Plans (January 2022)

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

- 2.23 The Minerals and Waste Local Plan forms part of the development plan and is prepared by Suffolk County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority. Suffolk County Council adopted the Minerals and Waste Local Plan in July 2020.

Design Code

- 2.24 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, under the section ‘Design code for the whole area’, will require a local planning authority to ensure that, for every part of their area, the development plan includes requirements with respect to design that relate to development, or development of a particular description, which the authority consider should be met for planning permission to be granted. Under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act the Council will be required to prepare and maintain a local plan timetable which must include details of how it will prepare a Design Code, and it is anticipated that under the new system Design Codes will either form part of a Local Plan or be prepared as new-style Supplementary Plans. The Council will keep under review any emerging secondary legislation, policy and guidance related to Design Codes, and initially will undertake early scoping work to consider options for an appropriate approach across East Suffolk, including the timetable and the resource required.

Other documents

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.1 Since adoption of the Local Plans, the Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents⁵ to support the implementation of the policies in the Local Plans. Supplementary Planning Documents are material considerations in decision making and are prepared under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The planning reforms propose removing the ability to prepare and adopt Supplementary Planning Documents, anticipated from Autumn 2024 onwards, and consideration would need to be given to the format of future guidance – the Council will monitor the changes as they come forward.
- 3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents adopted (since adoption of the Local Plans):

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Title	Date adopted	Area covered
North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone Design Guide SPD	July 2020	North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone area
Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy SPD	May 2021	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Historic Environment SPD	June 2021	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Residential Development Brief for Land North of Union Lane Oulton SPD	September 2021	Land North of Union Lane Oulton
Sustainable Construction SPD	April 2022	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Affordable Housing SPD	May 2022	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Housing in Clusters and Small Scale Residential Development in the Countryside SPD	November 2022	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Coastal Adaptation SPD	September 2023	East Suffolk (along with the Broads, Great Yarmouth and North Norfolk)

- 3.3 Supplementary Planning Documents currently being prepared:

⁵ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/supplementary-planning-documents/

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Title	Key dates	Adoption	Area covered
Rural Development SPD	Initial consultation 1.2.2023 – 16.3.2023 Draft SPD consultation 15.11.2023 – 10.1.2024	Anticipated April 2024	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Custom and Self Build SPD	Initial consultation 1.2.2023 – 16.3.2023 Draft SPD consultation 6.9.2023 – 18.10.2023	Anticipated May 2024	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)
Healthy Environments SPD	Initial consultation 26.9.2022 – 7.11.2022 Draft SPD consultation 15.11.2023 – 10.1.2024	Anticipated June 2024	East Suffolk (outside of the Broads)

- 3.4 A Review of the 2013 Supplementary Planning Document for the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood recently commenced. The planning reforms propose that authorities will not be able to adopt new SPDs from Autumn 2024 onwards. To provide up to date guidance in a timely manner to support decision making related to the redevelopment of this important strategic site, it is proposed that the update will take the form of a Planning Position Statement. This will be prepared to the following timetable:
- Initial evidence gathering consultation - Spring 2024
 - Consultation on draft Planning Position Statement – Summer 2024
 - Adoption – late Summer / early Autumn 2024.
- 3.5 Further Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance that were adopted prior to the adoption of the current Local Plans, and haven't been superseded by the new documents above, also remain in place.
- 3.6 In addition to the Supplementary Planning Documents listed, strategies and other guidance⁶ have also been prepared, such as the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy, adopted in October 2022.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.7 Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area, to help support the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.
- 3.8 The East Suffolk Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule⁷ was adopted by the Council on 28th June 2023 and came into effect on 1st August 2023. This replaced the former

⁶ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/supplementary-planning-documents/#other

⁷ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/developer-contributions/community-infrastructure-levy/cil-rates/approved-cil-rates-for-the-east-suffolk-area/

Suffolk Coastal CIL Charging Schedule (2015) and former Waveney CIL Charging Schedule (2013).

Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.9 Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare and maintain a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), setting out when and how the Council will involve the community in the preparation of planning policy documents and in the consideration of planning applications. The East Suffolk Statement of Community Involvement⁸ was adopted on 6th April 2021. Under Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) the Council is required to review the Statement of Community Involvement to consider whether it needs to be updated before the fifth anniversary of its adoption (i.e. before 6th April 2026). The planning reforms propose to remove the requirement to prepare an SCI, and to replace this with a Project Initiation Document for plan-making which would set out how consultation and engagement would take place. The Council will therefore consider whether, when and how to review the SCI in due course, with reference to the plan-making reforms.

Authority Monitoring Report

- 3.10 The Council publishes an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) each year to provide an assessment of the progress of the Local Plans and monitor the effectiveness of policies including the delivery of site specific allocations.
- 3.11 The AMR is published on the Council's planning policy monitoring⁹ webpages, along with the Planning Delivery Dashboard which presents the detailed information and data on a range of topics including housing, employment, retail and town centres, climate change, design, and the natural and historic environments and provides an assessment on how the local plan policies are performing.
- 3.12 In addition to the Authority Monitoring Report the Council also monitors housing land supply, through annual updates to the Housing Land Supply Statement, and the delivery of housing through its Housing Action Plan.

⁸ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Planning-Policy-and-Local-Plans/Statement-of-Community-Involvement/Statement-of-Community-Involvement.pdf

⁹ www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy-and-local-plans/open-data/

Risk Assessment

- 4.1 The work areas set out in this document are led by the Planning Policy and Delivery Team. Potential risks to the future work programme are set out below. A detailed risk assessment will be drawn up as part of preparing a detailed future local plan timetable and work programme.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Uncertainty over future planning reforms (nature and timing)	High	Major	Changes to the timing of the introduction of planning reforms, and the introduction of details such as secondary legislation, policy and guidance – officers continually monitor progress and consultations on proposals are responded to. The Local Plan timetable above is indicative and will be reviewed following introduction of the planning reforms. The reforms are also likely to affect the ability to adopt SPDs after Autumn 2024, however a planning position statement is being prepared for the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood.
Lack of staff capacity to deliver the work programme	Significant	Major	Most positions in the Planning Policy and Delivery Team are currently filled (including in the Specialist Services team who input into planning policy documents), however if any staff were to leave this would impact on the current work programme, and future work programme if recruitment was difficult. Recruitment has been difficult, in particular for more senior roles. Staff are supported to undertake training and to follow areas of work of interest to them, within the work programme.
Neighbourhood Plans	Low	Major	Whilst it supports Neighbourhood Plan preparation, the Council does not have any control over how many Neighbourhood Plans might come forward and when. If the number being prepared increased

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
			significantly, this would require much more staff time from the team, and impact on other areas of work. Regular contact is made with Neighbourhood Plan groups who are preparing plans, and engagement with other Town and Parish Councils takes place for example through the Town and Parish forums to maintain an understanding of the level of interest.

Review

- 5.1 This Local Development Scheme will be kept under review and updated as necessary (or replaced with alternative timetable documents as required under the reformed planning system) in relation to future Local Plan preparation.

Write to us



East Suffolk Council
Planning Policy and
Delivery Team
Riverside, 4 Canning Road,
Lowestoft,
NR33 0EQ

Call us



Planning Policy and Delivery Team (Local Plans)

01394 444557

Development Management (Planning Applications)

01394 444832

Email us



Planning Policy and Delivery Team (Local Plans)

planningpolicy@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Development Management (Planning Applications)

planning@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

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