

COUNCIL

Thursday 24 March 2016

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT (CL06/16)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Proposed Submission Document (Appendix A) has been prepared to provide the site and area specific policies necessary to deliver the Core Strategy targets and objectives within the plan area.
2. The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) has been prepared with input from the Site Allocations Working Group and in response to two rounds of public consultation which have shaped the document accordingly.
3. After consideration of the DPD by Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council, it is recommended that the Proposed Submission document be published for consultation to receive representations relating to soundness in accordance with the Local Plan regulations.
4. Following the consultation period, the DPD will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.
5. Subject to being found “sound” by the Planning Inspectorate, the Council will be asked to consider the Inspector’s report before subsequent adoption and implementation of the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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Wards Affected:	All wards, excluding Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe West, Kirton, and The Trimleys
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Cabinet Member:	Councillor Tony Fryatt Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning
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Supporting Officer:	Hilary Hanslip Principal Planner – Policy and Delivery 01394 444761 hilary.hanslip@eastsuffolk.gov.uk
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2013 identifies the strategic vision, objectives and targets for the development and growth of the district over the period 2010-2027. It provides guidance on the broad scale and distribution of new homes and economic growth, but does not provide site specific details.
- 1.2 The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document (referred to as the Site Allocations DPD) is one of a number of site allocations documents being prepared to enable the Council to identify the site and area specific policies and requirements which will deliver the Core Strategy targets, particularly those relating to housing and employment provision. It also includes area specific policies linked to the district's high quality built, natural and historic environment.
- 1.3 Work on the Site Allocations DPD has been undertaken in parallel with that for the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan.

2 SITE ALLOCATIONS AND AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES DPD

- 2.1 It is the role of the Site Allocations DPD (also the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan and neighbourhood plans) to provide the site and area specific details necessary to implement the Core Strategy, to aid the future growth and delivery in a plan led manner within the plan area, following the principles of sustainable development. Accordingly, development is directed to those settlements identified as major centres through to Local Service Centres in policy SP19 of the Core Strategy (Settlement Hierarchy). In addition, the strategic housing and employment growth area to the south and east of Adastral Park will be provided for by means of a planning application.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy, the Site Allocations DPD and other site allocations documents (Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan and neighbourhood Plans) currently being produced will, together, finally replace a number of the remaining "saved" policies from the 2001 Suffolk Coastal Local Plan and provide for the future development needs of the district to 2027. Importantly, the weight to be given to these emerging policies in decision making on planning applications increases as progress is made towards final adoption.
- 2.3 The policies and proposals in the Site Allocations DPD plan will apply to most of the District, excluding the Felixstowe Peninsula, and those towns and parishes for which a neighbourhood plan is being prepared. The Site Allocations DPD is attached as Appendix A to this report. The plan area is shown on Map 1 on page 6 of Appendix A. Policies are identified by topic area:
 - Housing
 - Economy
 - Retail
 - Tourism
 - Recreation and Green Infrastructure; and
 - Environment.
- 2.4 Importantly, Policy SSP1 - Housing, provides guidance to those Town and Parish Councils' undertaking Neighbourhood Plans as to the minimum housing numbers they will be required to provide to ensure that, across the district, the Council meets the minimum 7,900 dwelling requirement in the Core Strategy. Neighbourhood plans can plan for more but not less than their strategic requirement. Changes to strategic policies such as housing numbers, housing distribution, employment targets or where a particular settlement sits within the Settlement Hierarchy can not be changed by the Site Allocations DPD. Matters such as these would need to be considered as part of a future Local Plan Review, the timetable for which is included in the Council's Local Development Scheme (October 2015).

- 2.5 The Site Allocations DPD has been prepared in a positive manner taking into account a wide range of issues and regulatory procedures such as the tests of soundness, the duty to co-operate and examples of best practice. Consultation and engagement has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (September 2014). The Planning Policy & Delivery Team are confident that the Proposed Submission Site Allocations DPD is fit for purpose and has been prepared in accordance with the Core Strategy and the principles of sustainable development outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2.6 Producing the Site Allocations DPD is an important step in helping to ensure that the Council can demonstrate it has a full, up-to-date set of housing supply policies. Revisions to physical limits boundaries incorporate sites for which there is a planning permission and new site allocations. These policies and amended physical limits boundaries will enable the Council to clearly demonstrate a robust and defensible, rolling, five year housing land supply position as allocated sites come forward over the plan period. The progress of the document through to adoption will enable the Council to take decisions on planning applications within a truly plan led system.

Issues and Options

- 2.7 Work on the Site Allocations DPD started in 2014 with early informal engagement with Town and Parish councils to discuss local issues and needs. These one to one discussions with towns and parishes informed the Issues and Options document which was published for consultation in December 2014. The Issues and Options document was subject to public consultation for a period of 11 weeks from 15 December 2014 until 27 February 2015.
- 2.8 The Issues and Options document provided an introduction to the planning issues likely to be covered in the Site Allocations DPD. By its very nature the Issues and Options document raised various topics for consideration, and started the debate around residential sites, employment opportunities, tourism, retail and the environment.
- 2.9 During the 11 week period of public consultation, officers from the Planning Policy & Delivery Team hosted a series of public drop in sessions in various locations across the district. These were attended by approximately 100 people and provided an opportunity for officers to discuss the document and engage face to face with the local community and residents.

Preferred Options

- 2.10 The Issues and Options document generated a lot of interest and resulted in many comments being submitted to the Council (over 800 individual comments) which then helped the Council formulate the Preferred Options document. The Preferred Options document was subject to public consultation for a 6 week period from 19 October until 30 November 2015. Details of the consultation and engagement are set out in Appendix D to this report.
- 2.11 The Preferred Options document, provided a number of site specific policies and allocations which focussed on residential sites, employment sites, town centre uses, tourism uses and the environment (built, historic and natural). The Preferred Options document also proposed amendments to physical limits boundaries and designations across the plan area.
- 2.12 During the Preferred Options document consultation period, officers from the Planning Policy & Delivery Team hosted a further series of public drop in sessions in various locations across the district. Approximately 110 people attended the venues in the plan area and provided an opportunity for officers to discuss the document and engage face to face with the local community and residents. In addition, a drop in session for all members was held in the Council Chamber on 26 October 2015.
- 2.13 As with the first round of public consultation, the Preferred Options document generated a lot of interest and resulted in many comments being submitted to the Council (over 500

individual comments). These comments (Appendix D) have informed the policies and proposals in the Proposed Submission Document.

Working Groups

- 2.14 As well as the formal public consultation periods, the Team has been engaging with Local Plan Working Groups, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Planning. Comprised of district councillors and town/parish councillors or representatives the Working Groups have met on a regular basis throughout the process. One Working Group has dealt with the Felixstowe Peninsula AAP and another, the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies document. The Working Groups are a consultative body, rather than a decision making body and have provided opportunity for officers to discuss and debate topics, ideas and policy requirements with local representatives in an open forum. These discussions have proved extremely beneficial to the preparation of the document, including its presentation.
- 2.15 Feedback from the Working Groups has been positive and provided a real opportunity for local representatives to help shape the emerging documents in a way which has not been available previously. Key points from each Working Group meeting have been published on the Council's website.

Other engagement

- 2.16 Since the publication of the Issues and Options document, officers from the Planning Policy & Delivery Team have been in discussion with key stakeholders such as Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council as well as engaging with infrastructure providers and statutory organisations such as Anglian Water, NHS England, Historic England and Natural England.
- 2.17 Meeting and engaging with a range of stakeholders and interested parties has enabled officers to discuss consultation responses and how they should be responded to in the emerging documents.
- 2.18 An approach to suggested changes and amendments to the Preferred Options documents in response to comments received was also presented to the Planning Committee on 10 and 24 February 2016.
- 2.19 Taking into account the public consultation responses, discussions with key stakeholders, comments from the Planning Committee and significant input from members of the Working Group, the Council has been able to prepare this Proposed Submission document.

3 PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT (APPENDIX A TO THIS REPORT)

- 3.1 The Proposed Submission document is intended to be the Council's final plan and the document which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate following another period of public consultation. The next round of public consultation is to seek comments in relation to the "soundness" of the document as required by the regulations governing Local Plans.
- 3.2 The document details the site specific policies and requirements to deliver sustainable communities across the plan area up to 2027. The policies in the Site Allocations DPD are in accordance with the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework and have also been subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). These assessments have ensured that the preparation of the Proposed Submission document has been robust and sound. Where issues or constraints have been identified the policies provide mitigation measures to overcome these. The SA and HRA reports are available electronically as Appendices B and C to this report.
- 3.3 The Site Allocations DPD Proposed Submission document, along with the Felixstowe Peninsula AAP, allocates land for housing in accordance with the Core Strategy housing distribution strategy for the District. Sufficient deliverable housing sites have been

allocated or otherwise identified, to meet the Core Strategy housing requirement of at least 7,900 dwellings for the period 2010 to 2027. Together the documents positively seek to boost the supply of housing with a carefully planned over provision of approximately 1000 dwellings included as a contingency, to ensure that a five year land supply is maintained and to provide a range and choice of sites and locations. Sites have also been allocated to provide employment opportunities, retail policies seek to protect the vitality and viability of town, district and local centres and other policies are designed to protect the district's high quality built, natural and historic environment and assist in promoting the tourism industry. Policies are also included in relation to coastal change management areas and flood risk.

- 3.4 In accordance with the constitution, the Site Allocations DPD Proposed Submission document needs to be subject to consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Full Council, before it can be published for consultation.
- 3.5 The Site Allocations Proposed Submission Document was considered by Scrutiny Committee on 10th March 2016 and, subject to one or two minor amendments was endorsed and recommended to Cabinet that it progressed to Council for approval. Given the reporting deadlines, the suggested amendments were provided by means of a verbal update to Cabinet. An addendum sheet with the suggested revisions was circulated at that meeting. A verbal update on matters raised by Cabinet will be provided to Council together with an addendum to be circulated at the meeting.
- 3.6 Subject to the successful recommendation it is anticipated that the Proposed Submission Document will be published for a 6 week period to receive representations relating to soundness starting on Monday 18 April 2016. The tests of soundness are as follows:
- **Positively Planned** – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development.
 - **Justified** – The most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives and based on proportionate evidence.
 - **Effective** – deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.
 - **In accordance with national policy.**
- 3.7 Once the Site Allocations has been agreed by Full Council, it will carry some weight in the decision making process in relation to decisions on planning applications, whether by the Council or at Appeal.
- 3.8 Following the closure of the 6 week period to receive representations relating to soundness, the Council will look to submit the Site Allocations DPD along with all supporting evidence and a summary of the consultation responses to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in June 2016. The examination commences on submission of the documentation. This is a one month slippage on the timetable set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (adopted October 2015).
- 3.9 The timing of any public hearing during the examination period will be dependent on the Planning Inspectorate. The Council's Local Development Scheme anticipates a July 2016 date, but given the lead in time this is more likely to take place in August/September. It is still possible that the Inspector's Report could be received in October 2016 and subsequent adoption by the Council in November 2016.
- 3.10 Upon adoption by the Council the Site Allocations DPD will become part of the Suffolk Coastal Development Plan.
- 3.11 The adopted Site Allocations DPD (alongside the Felixstowe Peninsula AAP) will replace a number of policies "saved" from the 2001 Local Plan. A list detailing which policies are to be replaced or deleted is provided in Appendix 1 of the Proposed Submission Document.

- 3.12 Although the Site Allocations DPD will replace or delete most of the “saved” policies from the 2001 Local Plan, there will still be a few which will remain part of the Development Plan for Suffolk Coastal. These are being retained because they apply to areas across the District where Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared. As Neighbourhood Plans progress they will be required to replace or delete the remaining “saved” policies which still apply to their area. A list of the remaining ‘saved’ policies will be published on the Council’s website at the appropriate time. The list of 28 policies, to remain ‘saved’ from the 2001 Local Plan is set out below:

Saved Policy Number	Saved Policy Title
General Policies	
AP28	Areas to be Protected from Development
AP51	General Employment Areas
AP56	Town Centre
AP59	District Centres
Area Specific Policies	
AP122	Sizewell Gap
AP137	Framlingham: General Employment Areas
AP138	Framlingham: Land between Station Road and Fairfield Road
AP139	Framlingham: Car Parking
AP142	Leiston: Eastlands Industrial Estate
AP145	Leiston: Abbey Road
AP146	Leiston: Town Centre Car Parks
AP147	Leiston: Town Centre Environmental Improvements
AP212	Ipswich Fringe: Open character of land between Settlements
AP213	Sandy Lane, Martlesham
AP214	Ipswich Fringe: Ipswich Road/Sandy Lane, Martlesham
AP216	Ipswich Fringe: Martlesham Heath Industrial Estate
AP236	Woodbridge/Melton: Restraint
AP237	Melton: Protection of Trees and Character
AP242	Melton: Wilford Bridge Employment Area
AP243	Melton: Employment Area off Melton Road
AP249	Woodbridge & Melton: Retention of Riverside Qualities
AP250	Woodbridge: Riverside recreational area
AP252	Woodbridge: New Yacht Harbours and Marinas
AP257	Woodbridge Town Centre: Prime Shopping Area
AP258	Woodbridge Town Centre: Church Street and Market Hill
AP259	Woodbridge Town Centre: Loss of Residential Accommodation
AP262	Woodbridge Town Centre: Potential Service Areas
AP263	Woodbridge Town Centre: Traffic Management

- 3.13 The Council is required by legislation to keep plans and policies up to date and subject to continual review. As members will be aware, the Council made a commitment in the adopted Core Strategy to an early review, recognising that the housing provision was lower than the full objectively assessed housing need figure at the time. Details of the future review are provided within the Council’s Local Development Scheme (October 2015).
- 3.14 The Local Development Scheme anticipates that a full Local Plan Review will be aligned or undertaken jointly with neighbouring authorities to quantify the housing and employment growth needed and identify broad locations for the growth, the infrastructure needed and any mitigation measures required through a Habitat Regulations Assessment. At this stage the precise geography and scope of the Local Plan are to be determined, but in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate the local authorities are committed to reviewing all Local Plan documents together.

- 3.15 An aligned or joint Local Plan Review provides the Council with the opportunity to reconsider housing targets which take into account the most up to date Census figures, population and demographic projections, travel to work data, constraints and mitigation measures to promote sustainable development across the wider area.
- 3.16 Work on the evidence base to support an aligned or joint Local Plan Review is well underway through the Ipswich Policy Area Board and work on Issues and Options is expected to start in October 2016. Consultation periods, submission to the Planning Inspectorate and Examination are anticipated to take place during 2017 – 2019, with adoption of the plan by the Council in November/December 2019.

4 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN

- 4.1 The Site Allocations DPD supports the vision of the East Suffolk Business Plan by providing a range of housing and employment sites alongside protection of the environment and access to key services and facilities for local communities. The Site Allocations DPD has been produced following the principles of sustainable development and will improve the quality of life. The three prongs of the East Suffolk Business Plan are considered in turn below.
- 4.2 Enabling Communities - The Site Allocations DPD enables communities to live and work in areas they are proud of. Throughout the production of the Site Allocations DPD, the Council has engaged with partners in the health, education, community and business sectors to help provide and deliver appropriate services and facilities alongside future growth.
- 4.3 Economic Growth – The Site Allocations DPD promotes economic growth and building communities which enjoy more stable, high quality and high value jobs by making the most of opportunities that exist across the district. The Site Allocations DPD will strengthen economic opportunities and ensure that employment, housing and infrastructure requirements are provided in a timely manner.
- 4.4 Financial Self Sufficiency – The Site Allocations DPD will guide future development across the district. Encouraging development in a plan led manner is expected to increase the delivery of housing and lead to increased receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy and New Homes Bonus which will enable the Council to become more business-like and entrepreneurial in approach.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The preparation of the Site Allocations DPD is budgeted for within the overall budget for the Planning Policy & Delivery Team.
- 5.2 The public consultation periods do have a cost in respect of printing and distribution of consultation documents and information as well as the cost of hiring venues to hold public drop in sessions. However these costs are necessary to ensure that Local Plan documents are published as widely as possible and that everybody is given the opportunity to engage and comment on the document.
- 5.3 Significant costs are also associated with the independent examination into any Local Plan document, but these are covered within existing budgets.
- 5.4 Once the Site Allocations DPD has been adopted it will become a fundamental part of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, alongside the Core Strategy and be used to consider individual planning applications and development proposals across the district.
- 5.5 The Site Allocations DPD will enable the Council to be more efficient when considering planning applications which will result in more residential consents. The increase in consents will mean larger Community Infrastructure Levy receipts and New Homes Bonus across the district. Revised employment and tourism policies will also have a positive

impact across the district which will help to deliver wider Council objectives as set out in the Business Plan.

6 OTHER KEY ISSUES

- 6.1 This report has been prepared having taken into account the results of an Equality Impact Assessment and a Partnership Impact Assessment. No issues have been raised by these assessments.
- 6.2 Sustainability Appraisal is an integral part of the plan making process and this has been prepared alongside the Site Allocations DPD. To inform and support the Proposed Submission document, a Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared (Appendix B) to demonstrate how sustainability appraisal, including the consideration of alternative site and policy options, has informed the document and the policies within it.
- 6.3 The Site Allocations DPD has been prepared within the context of the previously agreed Habitats Regulation Assessment undertaken for the Core Strategy. To ensure that proposals do not have an adverse impact on the integrity of European Sites across the district, the Council commissioned a Habitat Regulation Report to be produced by the Landscape Partnership.
- 6.4 The Landscape Partnership have undertaken the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and confirmed that no significant adverse effects are likely as a result of the policies within the Site Allocations DPD. The Council have worked alongside the Landscape Partnership and Natural England during the production of the Site Allocations DPD to ensure that the legal requirements have been satisfied. The HRA Report (Appendix C) forms part of the evidence base supporting the Site Allocations DPD.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Site Allocations DPD Proposed Submission document has been prepared to provide the site and area specific details which will allow the Council to meet the Core Strategy targets and objectives within the plan area.
- 7.2 The Site Allocations DPD has been continually informed by the Local Plan Working Groups set up to provide a consultative body of District Councillors alongside Town and Parish Representatives. These Working Groups have met regularly throughout the process and provided a sounding board which has shaped the document significantly.
- 7.3 As well as input from the Working Groups, the Site Allocations DPD has been subject to two rounds of public consultation (Issues and Options and Preferred Options) over the past 14 months. The public consultation periods have provided opportunity for the wider community, members of the public and key stakeholders to get involved in the preparation of the Site Allocations DPD. The Proposed Submission document has been shaped by these periods of public consultation.
- 7.4 Engagement with key stakeholders and service providers such as Suffolk County Council, Anglian Water, Historic England and Natural England throughout the plan making process has been continual and also helped shape the Site Allocations DPD. The continued involvement of these key stakeholders and service providers ensures that the appropriate level of services and facilities are provided alongside the level of growth anticipated.

8. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 No other options were considered as production of the Site Allocations Document is a requirement of the Council's Local Development Scheme adopted October 2015.

9 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 To ensure that the Council is able to progress the Site Allocations DPD to the next formal stage of public engagement in the plan making process with a view to submission for Examination in June 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That, subject to any amendments recommended by Cabinet, Council approves the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD Proposed Submission document as the final version of the Plan for publication to receive representations in relation to soundness.
2. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning be given delegated authority to make the changes agreed under recommendation 1 together with any other typographical or presentational / format changes necessary linked to the publication for consultation of the Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD Proposed Submission document.
3. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management in consultation with Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning be given delegated authority following the 6 week period to receive representations relating to soundness to agree any minor modifications suggested by representations and submit the Site Allocations DPD for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
4. That the Head of Planning and Coastal Management in consultation with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning be given delegated authority during the Examination into the Site Allocations DPD to address minor modifications that may arise as part of the Examination.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD – Proposed Submission Document
Appendix B	Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD – Sustainability Appraisal Report (electronic only – see website)
Appendix C	Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD – Habitats Regulation Assessment (electronic only – see website)
Appendix D	Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD – Analysis of Response to the Preferred Options (electronic only – see website)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Date	Type	Available From
February 2016	Site Allocations DPD Equality Impact Assessment	Planning Policy & Delivery Team
February 2016	Site Allocations DPD Partnership Impact Assessment	Planning Policy & Delivery Team
October 2015	SCDC Local Development Scheme	SCDC Website
September 2014	Statement of Community Involvement	SCDC website