East Suffolk Design Forum

12th September / East Suffolk House

Welcome

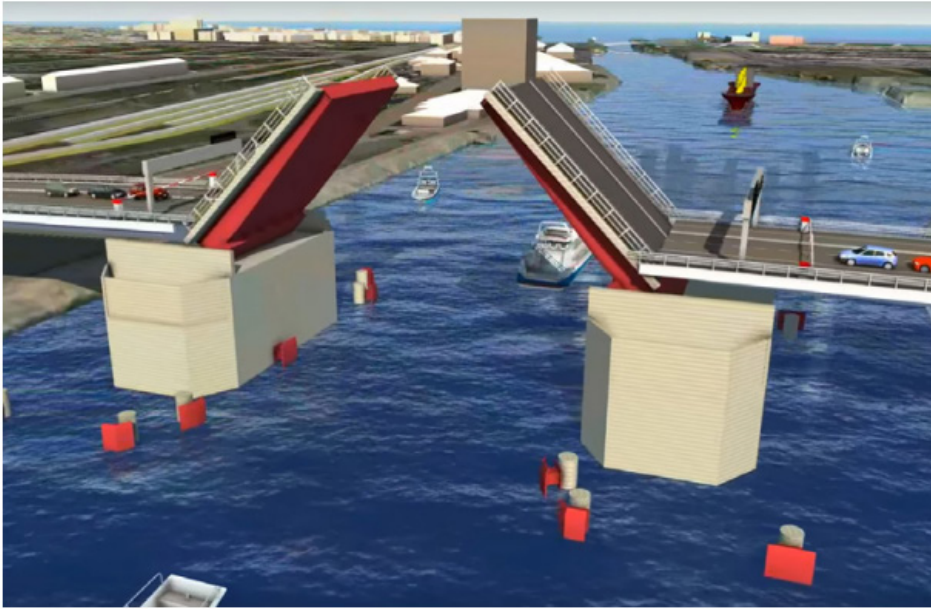**12th September / East Suffolk House**

Ben Woolnough
Head of Planning Building Control and Coastal Management

Jerene Irwin
RIBA East Chair / Director@Chaplin Farrant

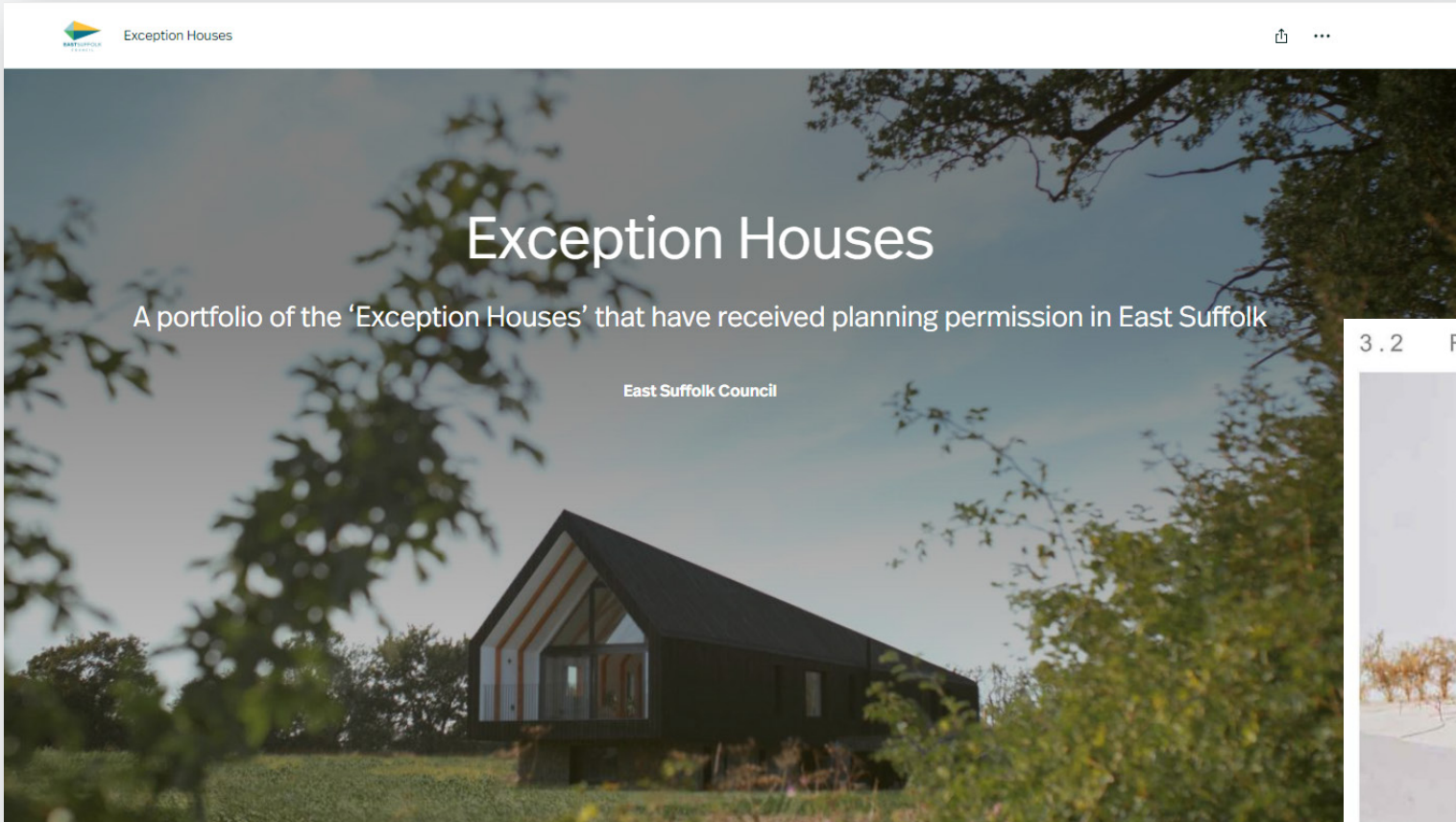# the value of east suffolk design input

Initial design for the crossing

exception houses

sometimes it's good to think outside of the box….

newsletters

Planning, Building Control & Coastal Management Newsletters

An update on the work of the Planning, Building Control and Coastal Management Team at East Suffolk Council.

1 August 2024
2 March 2024
3 December 2023
4 September 2023
5 June 2023
6 January 2022

East Suffolk Design Forum

12th September / East Suffolk House

jerene Irwin
RIBA East Chair / Director@Chaplin Farrant

East Suffolk Design Forum

12th September / East Suffolk House

Chris King
Design Champion + Specialist Services Manager

East Suffolk Design Forum

12th September / East Suffolk House

09:30 / Arrival

09:45 / Welcome - Ben Woolnough + Jerene Irwin

10:00 / East Suffolk Council

- Overview of LPA's approach to design - Chris King

- Role of the Design Officer - Karolien Yperman

- East Suffolk Place Review - Chris King

- Wider Initiatives - Chris King

11:00/ Workshop

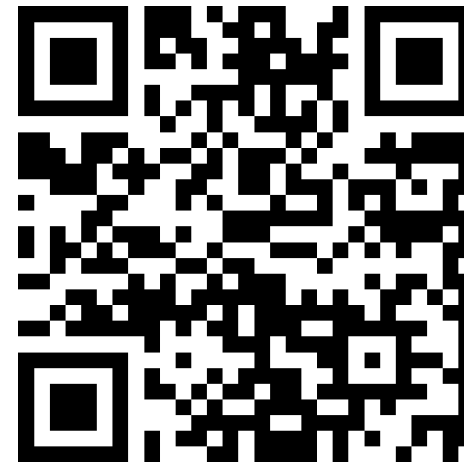What does a Design Code look like for East Suffolk?

11:30 / Break

11:45 / Interactive Panel Discussion
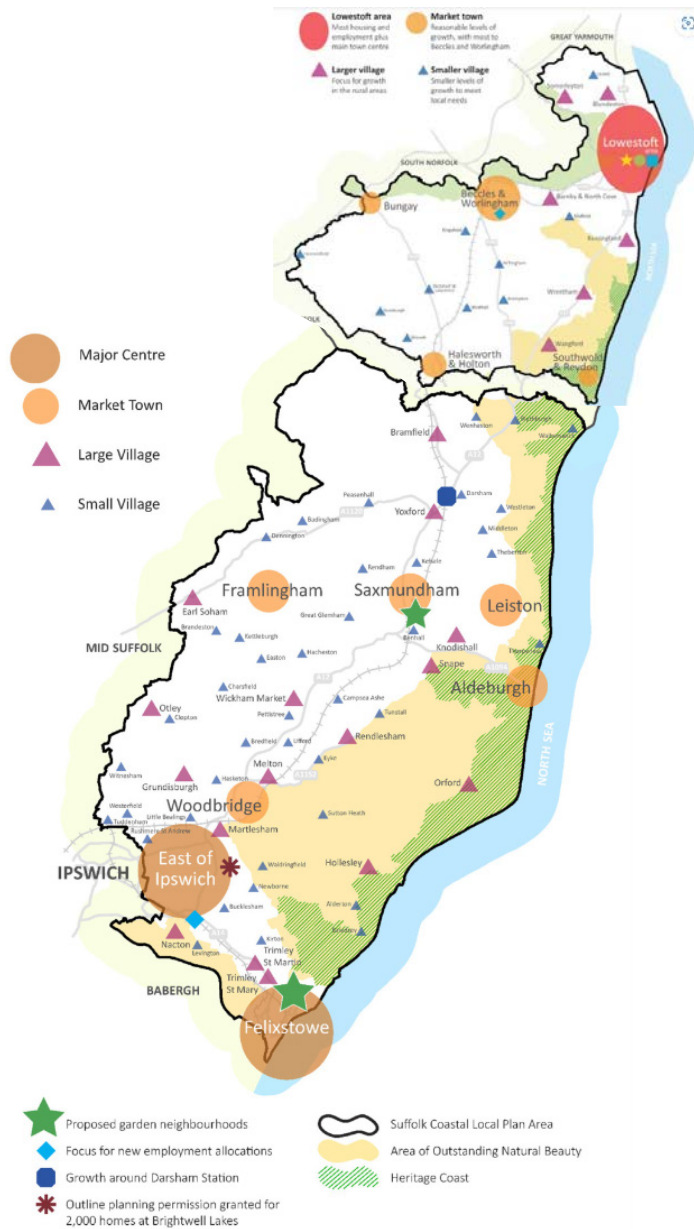
12:15 / Q+A

12:30 / Close

Interactive poll

www.slido.com
2604 579

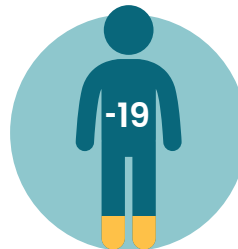please scan

intro

Aldeburgh Beach
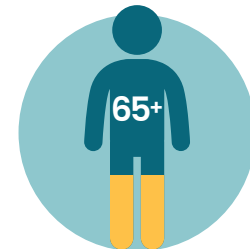
context

49 miles of coast line

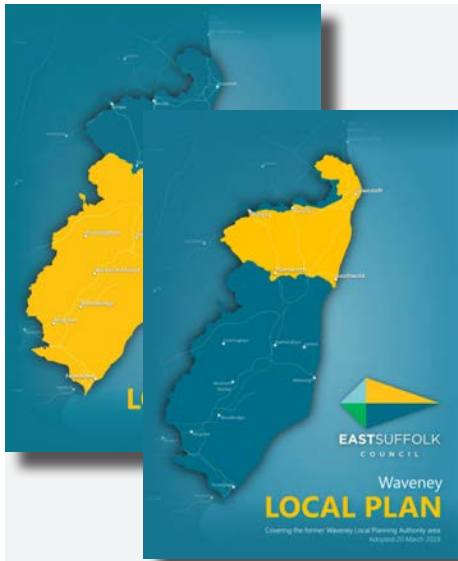Population of around **250373**

Around **487** square miles

15.54% 19 or under

27.71% 65 or over

Approximately **4000** planning applications per year

Map Legend

Lowestoft area — Most housing and employment plus main town centre

Market town — Reasonable levels of growth, with most to Beccles and Worlingham

Larger village — Focus for growth in the rural areas

Smaller village — Smaller levels of growth to meet local needs

● Major Centre
● Market Town
▲ Large Village
▲ Small Village

★ Proposed garden neighbourhoods
◆ Focus for new employment allocations
■ Growth around Darsham Station
✳ Outline planning permission granted for 2,000 homes at Brightwell Lakes

◯ Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Area
◠ Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
▨ Heritage Coast

design context

specialist services

Landscape

Arboriculture

Design

Heritage

Ecology

Public Path Orders

RAMS /Wildlife Wise

Approx. **500** Tree Preservation Orders

50 Conservation Areas (6.67 square miles)

3600 Listed buildings

148 Scheduled monuments

17 Locally listed historic parks and gardens

14 Nationally registered historic parks and gardens

144 Square miles of National Landscapes

47 Square miles of Heritage Coast

design officers

ESC's Design Team includes:

Karolien Yperman
BA(Hons) in Architecture (2015); Postgraduate Certificate in Urban Design (2023)

Eloise Limmer
Postgraduate Certificate in Urban Design (2020)

Robert Scrimgeour
Chartered Architect; Postgraduate Certificate in Urban Design (2007)

design officers

- Bring specialist expertise in the areas of architectural and urban design to the table at pre-application and application stages

- For all scales of design – from single dwellings, to small scale infill to large residential development and including non-residential uses

- Support planning officer colleagues in the development of their design awareness and confidence in decision making

- Articulate and promote the planning authority's expectations of enhanced standards of design across different forums

design officers

Positive outcomes from engagement with the team...

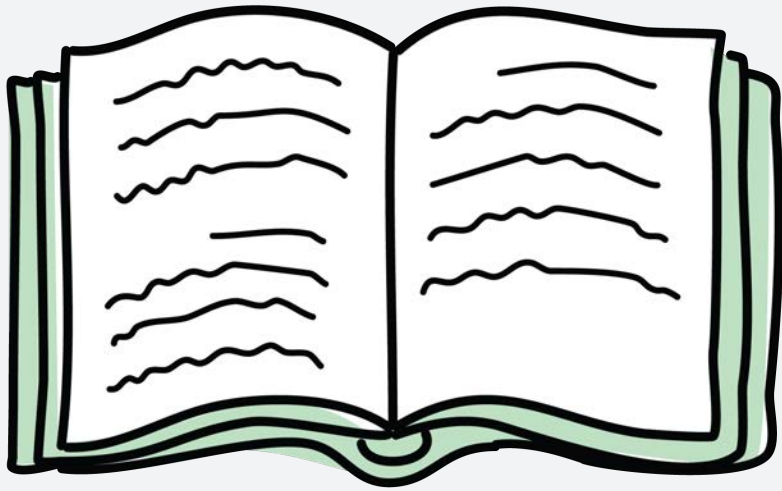# design officers

Positive outcomes from engagement with the team...

what's the goal?

consistency
innovation
quality
speed

code vs guide

how do we get there?

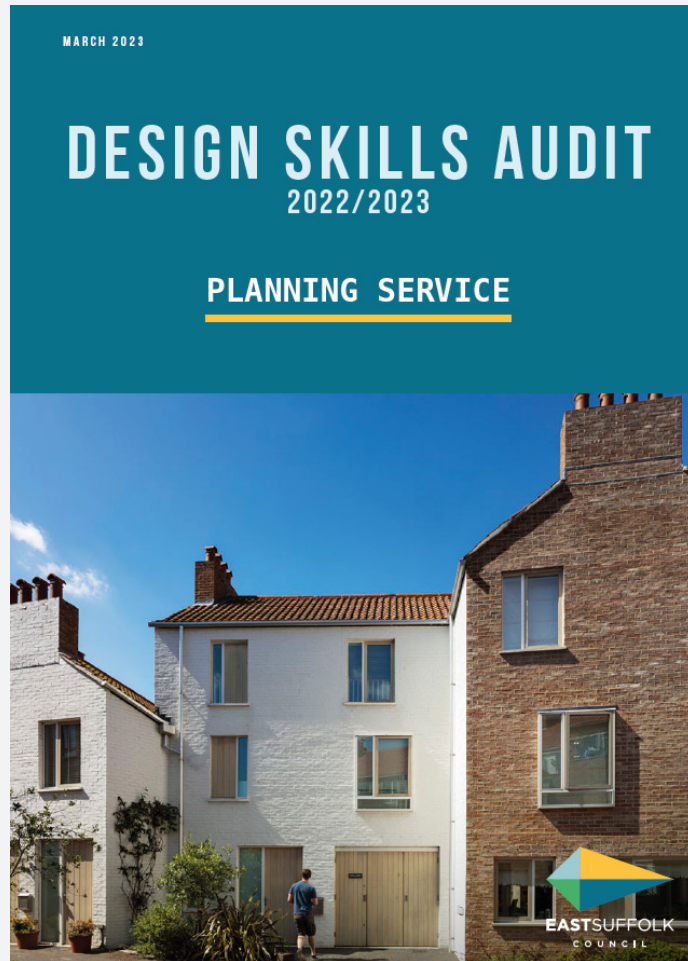## we need to work out...

> what works and what doesnt
> what we want more of and not
> quick wins
> longterm vision

how do we get there?

> data
> evidence collection
> understanding process
> public / private / community

design skills audit

MARCH 2023

DESIGN SKILLS AUDIT
2022/2023

PLANNING SERVICE

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCIL

RESULT SUMMARY
DESIGN CONFIDENCE

Design is considered an important factor when determining applications. This can range from DM Officer input, through to the use of Design Officers within the Specialist Services Team.

66% of officers throughout the planning service are confident in providing design related advice to applicants, where they find the most challenging obstacles are the relationships with applicants and architects, and the confidence in negotiating design changes. 56% of officers generally considered applicant and applicant teams respected design advice from planning officers. However, the results demonstrated that more junior staff (Trainee and Assistant Planners) considered there to be little or no respect around design discussions. Officer level staff were split, where Senior Officers (Senior, Principal and Manager level) considered their

design input was respected and valued. Negotiating design is related to seniority of Officers, opportunities to enhance placemaking can be compromised around preconceptions of Officers experience and background.

Of those confident in supplying advice, topics of which they are confident in discussing mainly focused on the built environment around residential development and architecture. Topics relating to Green Infrastructure and wider contextual influences come lower in the results. With the Policy team the results were in reverse with more strategic topics being high in confidence while elements such as architectural detailing come lower.

83% of DM Planning Officers are confident in refusing applications based on design matters alone. This result is positive where

officers stated the input and expertise of design officers provides the professional and specialist input to refuse on design matters alone. The 17% of officers who are not confident state that there was little confidence in Planning Inspectors to back design refusal, absence of an adopted Design Guide/Code provides little backing, and capacity of Design Officers providing design input.
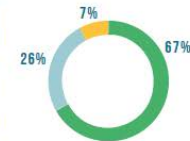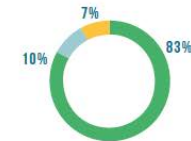
ABOVE: OFFICERS CONFIDENCE IN PROVIDING DESIGN ADVICE TO APPLICANTS.
67% CONFIDENT IN PROVIDING DESIGN ADVICE
26% NOT CONFIDENT
7% NOT APPLICABLE TO ROLE

7%
67%
26%

DESIGN OFFICERS

East Suffolk's Design officers (Design and Conservation, and Landscape Officers) are praised in the Audit where there was a strong engagement in the use of their skills. Over 82% of officers have engaged with Design Officers in the past and recognising their input supplies greater emphasis in planning discussions and decisions. It should be made clear that the 82% does not relate to the quantum of applications but engagement in the past with Design Officers.

How Design Officers are engaged varies throughout the teams where DM have high engagement at pre-app and application stage, but these tended to drop away at Reserved Matters or Discharge of Condition stages.

Understanding how to best use Design Officers' time is important while ensuring there is consistency across advice

being provided. It was clear from the Audit that the most impact Design Officers have on certain scale development was focused toward major development, with Major Residential, Mixed Use and Masterplanning. Uses such as transport infrastructure, commercial and household applications seen as areas where Design may not have the most impact or Officers felt able to determine the application without Design Officer advice.

It is clear from the Audit that the reliance on Design Officers is important in supplying specialist input but also providing the confidence in Officers around resisting poor quality design. They are recognised by officers as being a key specialist in promoting well designed places, but access to their time and resource can be challenging when needed given the size of the team and shared role with Conservation.

ABOVE: ENGAGEMENT WITH COUNCIL DESIGN OFFCIERS
83% ENGAGE WITH DESIGN OFFICERS
10% DO NOT ENGAGE
7% NOT APPLICABLE TO ROLE

7%
83%
10%

development management

design advocates

policy

design officer

panel

planners in the wild

training

validation list

**katherine scott
principal planner**

east suffolk place review

approach

We don't know what our design code will look like...

...we want to do something that addresses the challenges in the district...

...but what are the challenges we face?

approach

Learn from others mistakes...

...we have resource and capacity...

...we want <u>data and evidence</u> to drive this forward!

approach

As Built	Public Sector	Private Sector	Community	Members
Site Audit	Design Skills Audit 2024	Practice Questionnaire	Priority Questionnaire	Priority Questionnaire
Photo Record	Regen and Assets	Developer Interviews	Engagement Event	Engagement Event
Planning Data	ESC Housing			
	Consultee Questionnaire			
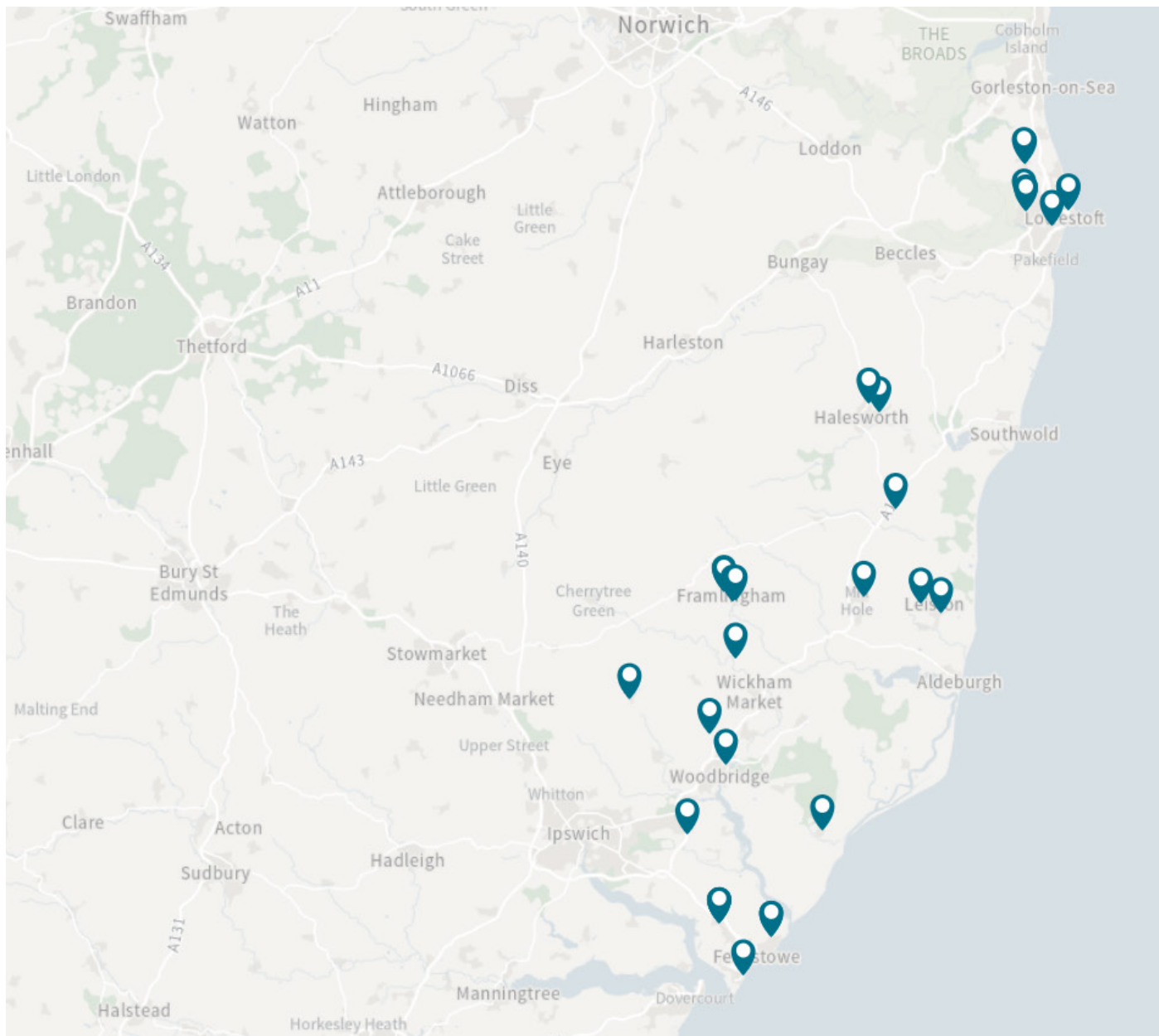
site audits

2010>present (completed)

10>20
21>50
51>100
101>200
200+

5 sites per category
north / central / south

national + regional developers
allocated vs windfall
full>reserved matters

A HOUSING DESIGN AUDIT FOR ENGLAND
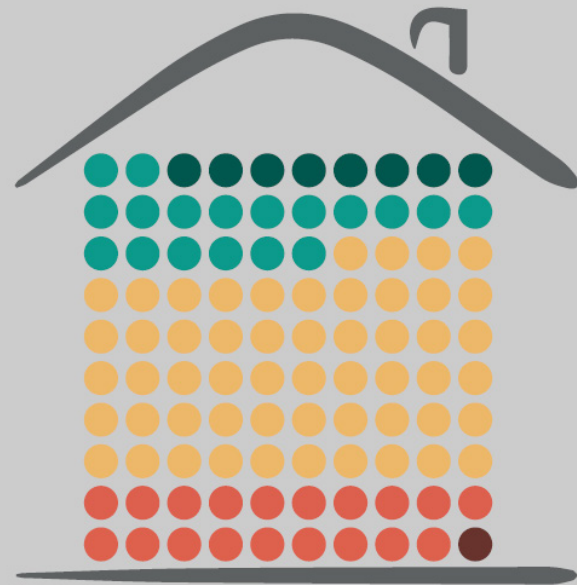
WHAT ARE WE GETTING RIGHT AND WRONG? ✓✗

Designing for safety and security ✓
Of the seventeen design considerations, designing for safety and security faired best, suggesting that the Secured by design parameters of recent decades have been successfully mainstreamed across much of the country.

A variety of housing types ✓
Most of the schemes assessed – even those scoring predominantly in the poor and very poor categories – tended to provide a range of housing types, both physically in their size and design and with a well integrated mix of tenures.

Highways, bins and parking ✗
The least successful design elements nationally relate to overly engineered highways infrastructure and the poor integration of storage, bins and car parking. These problems led to unattractive and unfriendly environments dominated by large areas of hard surfaces (tarmac or brick paviours), parked cars and bins.

Character and sense of place ✗
Low-scoring schemes performed especially poorly in the categories of the architectural response to the context and establishing a positive new character for development. Developments often had little distinguishing personality or 'sense of place', with public, open and play spaces being both poorly designed and located for social interaction. Housing units are frequently of an obviously standard type with little attempt to create something distinctive.

Streets, connections and amenities ✗
Some design considerations were marked by a broad variation in practice nationally. These include how well streets are defined by houses and the designed landscape, and whether streets connect up together and with their surroundings. Also whether developments are pedestrian, cycle and public transport friendly and conveniently served by local facilities and amenities.

Walkability and car-dependence ✗
The combination of the preceding factors influence how 'walkable' or car-dependent developments are likely to be. Many developments are failing in this regard with likely negative health, social and environmental implications.

Environmental impacts ✗
Whilst the majority of schemes are achieving the basic minimum energy efficiency requirements set out in legislation[2], significant numbers are still falling below. This, combined with the known and persistent performance gap between 'designed' and 'as built' energy performance in new homes and the failure to deliver a green and bio-diverse landscape in many projects, amounts to a sub-standard response to the environmental challenges we face.

2 Recognised as too low by Government in their proposals for a far more ambitious Future Homes Standard to cut carbon emissions.

B1 B2 B3 B4 B5

4.3.2 Existing and New Landscape
Does the scheme exploit existing landscape or topography and create a new bio-diverse landscape?

• *The development takes advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including watercourses), wildlife habitats, site orientation and microclimates*
• *SUDs are fully integrated within the development and the scheme is / will be ecologically rich*
• *Street trees are provided throughout the development*

The green landscape is often viewed as the forgotten dimension of urban design, applied after-the-fact in an attempt to obscure ugly architecture and parking or alternatively removed from masterplans prior to their development in an attempt to save on maintenance costs. Green infrastructure (the network of green spaces and other environmental features), both as a context into which development should fit, and as designed in new developments, is fundamental to creating a pleasant and healthy external environment in which residents will wish to spend time. It can play a vital role in encouraging bio-diversity and compensating for any habitat loss, as envisaged in the NPPF (2012 and 2019). Auditors considered the total landscape from the integration of existing landscape features to the planting of street trees and the creation of SUDs.

Whilst some regions exhibited some excellent practice, the headline is that too often green landscape and bio-diversity was sacrificed for a hard over-engineered environment. This was reflected in an average score of just over the 300 (100% mediocre) mark. Again, in this area, there was considerable variation across the regions with the North East (227) where there was no 'good' or 'very good' scores for landscape bringing up the rear, whilst the South East (351) was out in front. The key difference was between schemes that exploited the existing landscape as a bio-diverse resource – retaining existing mature trees, water features, hedgerows, and so forth – and those which did not, and which instead delivered seemingly leftover bits of green with no obvious function, either social or environmental.

EXISTING AND NEW LANDSCAPE (ALL ENGLAND)

Very Poor	Poor	Mediocre	Good	Very Good
5%	34%	30%	22%	10%
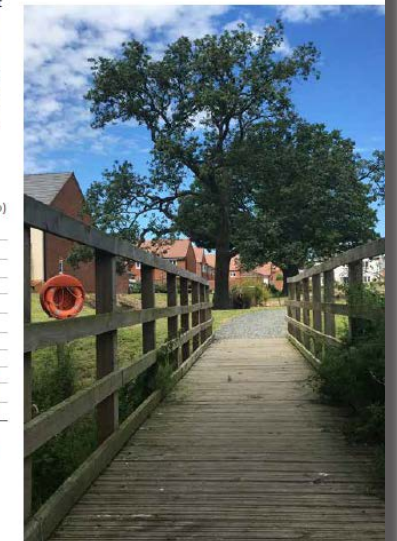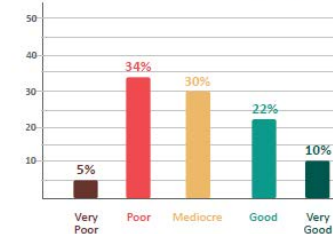
Building for a Healthy Life

A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces

Integrated Neighbourhoods	National Planning Policy Framework	National Design Guide
Natural connections	91a; 102c and e; 104d; 127b; 127f	B3; M1; M2; N1; R3
Walking, cycling and public transport	20c; 91a; 91c; 127e	B1; B3; M1; R3
Facilities and services	102; 103	B1; B3; N1; P3; U1; U3
Homes for everyone	60-62	B1; B2; U2; U3
Distinctive Places		
Making the most of what's there	122d; 127c; 127d; 153b; 184	C1; C2; I1; B2; R3
A memorable character	122d; 127c; 127d	C2; I1; I2; I3; B3
Well defined streets and spaces	91a	B2; M2; N2; N3; P1; P2; H2; L3
Easy to find your way around	91b; 127b	I1; M1; M2; U1
Streets for All		
Healthy streets	91b; 102c and e; 110a-d	M1; M2; N3; P1; P2; P3; H1; H2
Cycle and car parking	101e; 127f; 105d	B2; M1; M3
Green and blue infrastructure	20d; 91b; 91c; 127f; 155; 170d; 174	C1; B3; M1; N1; N2; N3; P1; P3; H1; R3; L1
Back of pavement, front of home	127a-b; d; f	M3; H3; L3
Generally	7; 8; 124; 125; 126; 127; 130	15; 16; 17; 20-29; 31-32
Using the tool as a discussion tool	39; 40-42; 125; 128; 129	

The relationship between Building for a Healthy Life, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.

What 'red' looks like

❌ Using a predetermined sequence of house types to dictate a layout.

❌ Attempting to create character through poor replication of architectural features or details.

❌ Arranging buildings next to each other in a way that does not create a cohesive street scene.

❌ Referencing generic or forgettable development nearby to justify more of the same.

red = stop & rethink

criteria

1. Natural connections

2. Facilities and services

3. Homes for everyone

4. Making the most of what's there

5. Memorable character

6. Well defined streets and spaces

7. Easy to find your way around

8. Healthy streets

9. Cycle and car parking

10. Green and blue infrastructure

11. Back or pavement, front of home

12. Design quality

site visits

site visits

headlines site scores

	East Suffolk	East of England	England
Very Good	9%	0%	7%
Good	40%	6%	19%
Mediocre	23%	83%	54%
Poor	14%	11%	19%
Very Poor	14%	0%	1%

National Scoring

7% Very Good
19% Good
54% Mediocre
19% Poor
1% Very Poor

East Suffolk Scoring

9% Very Good
40% Good
23% Mediocre
14% Poor
14% Very Poor

East Suffolk %   East of England %   England %
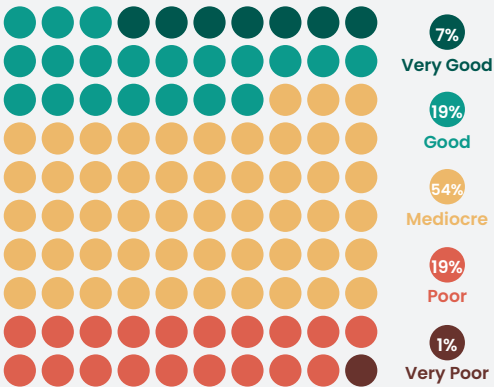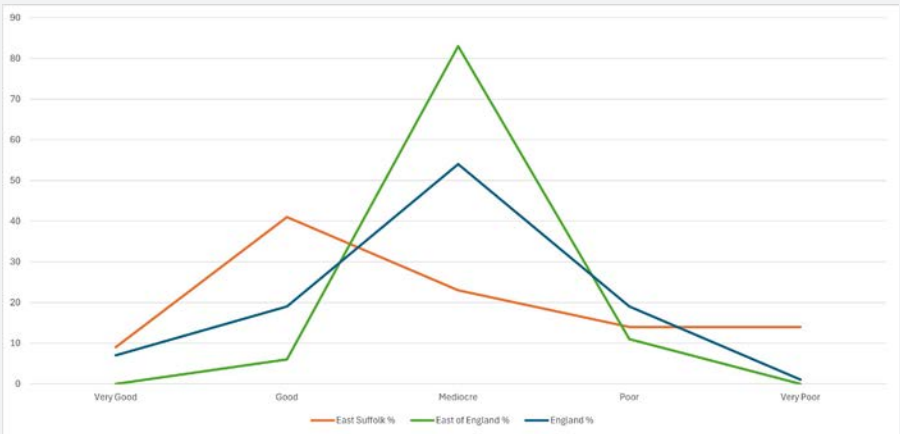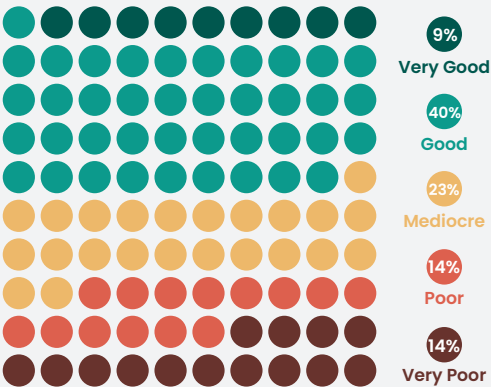
headlines themes

1	Homes for everyone
2	Facilities and services
3	Well defined streets and spaces
4	Easy to find your way around
5	Back or pavement, front of home
6	Design quality
7	Healthy streets
8	Cycle and car parking
9	Memorable character
10	Making the most of what's there
11	Natural connections
12	Green and blue infrastructure

Often Successful
Varied
Problematic

headlines

Key takeaways...

Little difference between >

National and regional developers
Full and Reserved Matters
Allocated and Windfall
Local Plan areas

headlines

Key takeaways...

Difference we DID notice ›

Variation between <u>North and South</u>

Sites that did and didnt delivery <u>affordable housing</u>

Under 50 homes - Varied
50-100 homes - Often Successful
100+ homes - Varied or problematic

headlines

Key takeaways…

Difference we DID notice ›

Top 3 scoring sites were by <u>two</u> national housing developers

The 3 **lowest** scoring sites were by <u>one</u> national housing developer

headlines

Key takeaways...

Onsite observations›

›**Death by timber knee rail!!!**

›**Material selection to defines places.**

›**Landscape maintenance matters.**

›**Materials do matter.**

›**Pedestrians are royalty.**

›**Young people are not catered for.**

›**Parking courts can be designed well.**

›**Highways design isn't consistent.**

east suffolk land budget

approach

What proportion of land is being used for what?

How do these vary and why?

Does density and parking ratios impact open space?
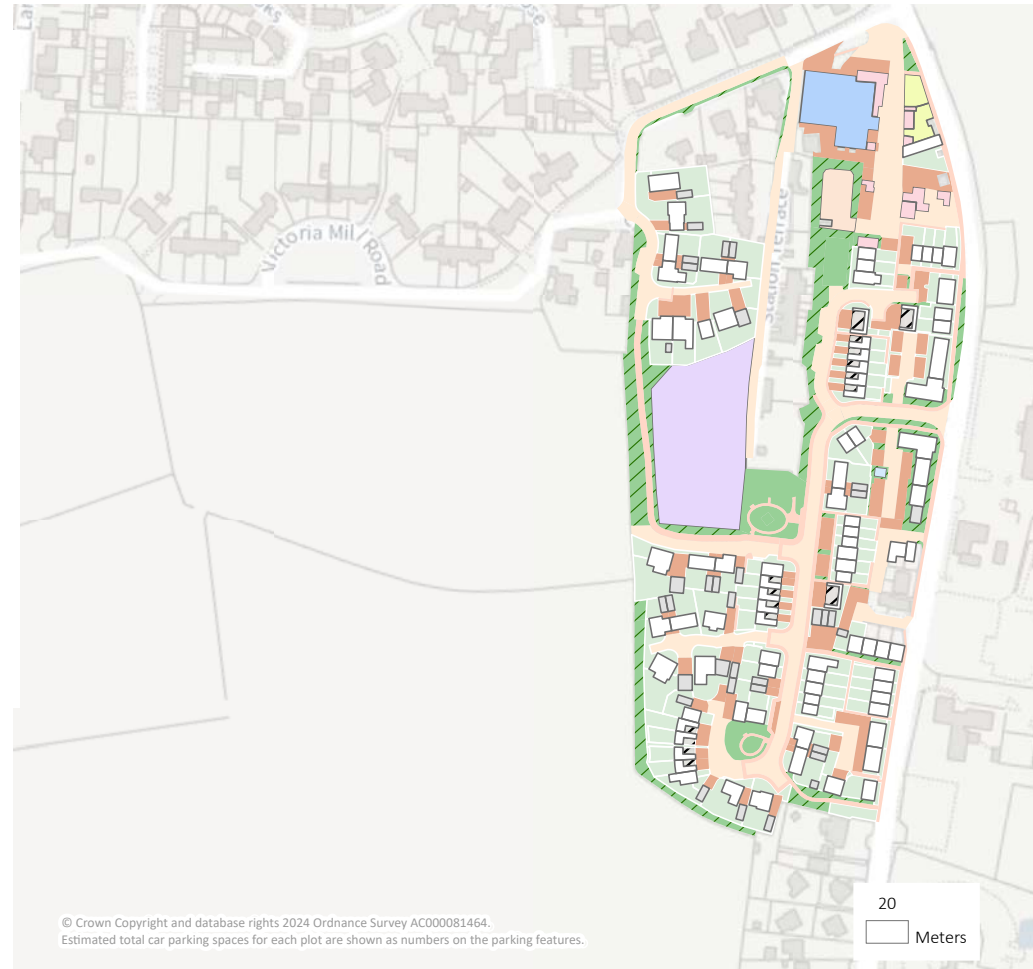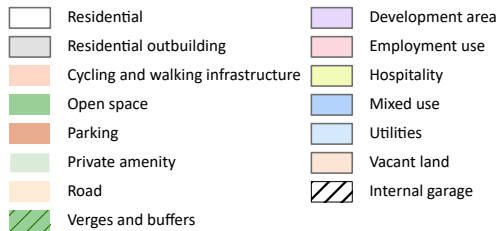
Can land budgeting help influence coding and policy?

approach

- Buildings
- Roads
- Parking
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Private amenity
- Open space
- Verges and buffers
- Wild area
- SuDS

example 1

Site area **3.08 hectares**
Number of homes **99**
Density **32 dwellings per hectare**

Parking ratio **2 spaces per dwelling (215 total)**

Pie chart:
- 31% Buildings
- 19% Private amenity
- 12% Parking
- 15% Road
- 6% Cycling and walking infrastructure
- 5% Open space
- 12% Verges and buffers
- 0% SUDs Feature

Legend:
- Residential
- Residential outbuilding
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Open space
- Parking
- Private amenity
- Road
- Verges and buffers
- Development area
- Employment use
- Hospitality
- Mixed use
- Utilities
- Vacant land
- Internal garage

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Estimated total car parking spaces for each plot are shown as numbers on the parking features.

20 Meters

example 2

Site area **3.1 hectares**
Number of homes **107**
Density **35 dwellings per hectare**

Parking ratio **2 spaces per dwelling (215 total)**

Pie chart segments:
- 13% Private amenity
- 5% Parking
- 8% Road
- 9% Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Open space 19%
- Verges and buffers 29%
- SUDs Feature 4%
- 13% Buildings

Legend:
- Residential
- Residential outbuilding
- Cycling and walking infrastructure
- Open space
- Parking
- Private amenity
- Road
- Verges and buffers
- Bus stop
- Utilities
- SUDs Feature

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Estimated total car parking spaces for each plot are shown as numbers on the parking features.

41.6m
37.3m

Maryland
Kenilwe
High Vie
El Sub Sta
Track

20 Meters

example

example 1

Site area **3.08 hectares**
Number of homes **99**
Density **32 dwellings per hectare**

Parking ratio **2 spaces per dwelling (215 total)**

Wild area
0%

SUDs
Feature
0%

Verges and buffers
12%

Open space
5%

6%
Cycling and walking
infrastructure

15%
Road

12%
Parking

19%
Private amenity

31%
Buildings

example 2

Site area **3.1 hectares**
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13%
Private amenity

SUDs Feature
4%

Wild area
0%

Verges and buffers
29%

Open space
19%

9%
Cycling and walking
infrastructure

8%
Road

5%
Parking

13%
Buildings

workshop

What does a Design Code look like for East Suffolk?

20min to work as a table to discuss
Wish list of ideas and suggestions
10min discussion

What does a Design Code look like for East Suffolk?

What type of development should a code focus on?

Should East Suffolk try to code the whole district?

What should a code focus on?

What shouldnt a code include?

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09:30 / Arrival

09:45 / Welcome - Ben Woolnough + Jerene Irwin

10:00 / East Suffolk Council

    - Overview of LPA's approach to design - Chris King

    - Role of the Design Officer - Karolien Yperman

    - East Suffolk Place Review - Chris King

    - Wider Initiatives - Chris King

11:00/ Workshop

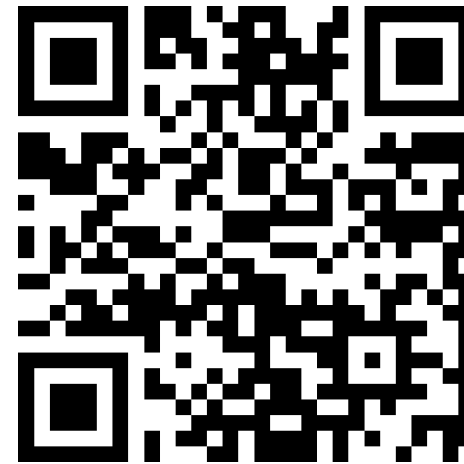   What does a Design Code look like for East Suffolk?

11:30 / Break

11:45 / Interactive Panel Discussion

12:15 / Q+A

12:30 / Close

Interactive poll

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please scan

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