

Sustainability Appraisal of Suffolk Coastal District Council's Reviewed Core Strategy and Development management policies Development Plan Document November 2010

Suffolk County Council Research and Intelligence group prepared a sustainability appraisal of the draft version of the Suffolk Coastal's Core Strategy and Development management policies in June 2010 as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Following a change in government a reviewed Core Strategy was prepared reflecting various policy changes, in particular the intended revocation of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy.

In general, changes have been made to:-

- delete references to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
- confirm the revised housing numbers using a new base date of 1st April 2010;
- pick up where possible changes proposed by national government e.g. Community Right to Build; marine plan and marine management organisation
- update factual information e.g. proposed hourly train service Ipswich to Saxmundham due to start December 2010; latest position re Sizewell etc
- other minor amendments/clarification
- specific reference included to evidence based documents where appropriate
- areas to be covered by Area Action Plans included after Key Diagram

Appendix 1 attached summarises the changes made and our conclusions about the significance of the changes to the previous sustainability appraisal. The only items arising are:

SP1 Sustainable Development: (i) with the addition of the words “ best of the areas” to “conserve and enhance the best of the areas natural and built environment” has limited the potential scope of conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, landscape and historic environment. “Best” is used in an undefined way and could be interpreted as meaning areas with special designations (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc) when the plan is implemented, thereby belittle site specific consideration. This change weakens the scores for SA objectives 17, 18 and 19 concerned with protection and enhancement of biodiversity, historic and archaeological importance, landscape and townscape but does not change them.

Housing – Housing numbers have been updated taking into account changes in government policy. For the period 2010 to 2027 the proposed number of houses has dropped by 70 compared to what was in the previous draft for 2009 to 2026. Such a small change over this time period will not have a significant implication for the sustainability appraisal. Changes to the distribution of housing across the District are also proposed. The slight increase in Felixstowe and the Trimleys is proportional to the size of the existing development. The proposed government policy of Community Right to Build is mentioned several times in the plan and it is suggested that this could result in additional housing in small villages. This potential policy sits outside the LDF system and is determined by a 75% majority agreement of the community. It is not appropriate to sustainability appraise it because the plan policies are not key determinants.

SP15 Landscape and Townscape: Addition of words concerning coalescence further strengthen the assessment of positive impact already given to SA objective seeking to protect landscape and townscape.

SP19 Settlement Policy: The change from 0% to 8% of new housing being in Other villages and countryside is understood to be windfall that is actually spread throughout the District and is hence not a major change to previous proposals.

SP20 Eastern Ipswich Plan Area: The addition of mention of the restoration of the Foxhall tip to a country park could help relieve the potential recreational pressure of development at Adastral Park on the Deben estuary. However this is not direct or significant enough to change the original assessment of the potential impact of development in this area.

All changes are deemed to be insignificant, having no impact on the original sustainability appraisal given the strategic nature of the assessment.

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Appendix 1: Schedule of changes

The following schedule sets out the main changes between the draft Reviewed and the Interim Core Strategies.

Page No	Section of Plan	Type of Change	Change to SA?
2	Foreword	New	No
3	Stop Press	New	No
4	Policy Context	New	No
8	Preface	Updated	No
11	How to use this document and what is its status	Updated and clarified	No
21-33	Chapter 2 - Portrait of Suffolk Coastal.	Updated to reflect local and national situation	No. Inclusion of mention to archaeological legacy responds to comment in previous SA.
34 - 75	Chapter 3		
	SP1	No overall change but (a) – (l) re-ordered. (l) added word “sustainable”	No. Addition of “best of the areas” in (i) weakens score for SA objectives 17,18 and 19 but does not change them.
38 - 44	Housing	This section re-written. New housing numbers and background. Tables 3.1 – 3.4 updated.	No. Reduction by 70 houses in the plan period is insignificant in terms of this strategic appraisal. Community Right to Build is outside the LDF so is irrelevant to this SA.
44	Brownfield target	Reduced – gardens now categorised as greenfield	No. Definition of Greenfield changed.
47	Gypsies and Travellers	Updated to reflect lack of RSS and latest government approach	No
56 - 61	Transport	Updated to reflect introduction of hourly train service; potential upgrade of A12 linked to Sizewell.	No
62-63	Renewable energy – nuclear power	Minor updates	No
69	SP15	Reference added in respect of coalescence	No. Reinforces further the strong score for protection of landscape.
72-73	Green space	Reference included to updated HAGGIS study	No

75	SP18	Note added at end of policy to New Homes Bonus scheme	No
76 - 108	Chapter 4		
77	Para. 4.05	Clarified. New reference to small scale locally supported schemes	No
78	Para 4.06	Additional references included to Community Right to Build	No
79	SP19	Note added to end of policy re Community Right to Build	No. Change from 0% to 8% of new housing being in Other villages and countryside understood to be windfall that is actually spread throughout the District.
81	Table 4.2	Was previously Table 4.6 – brought forward in document for ease of reference. Note new references to small scale developments under Key Service Centres; Local Service Centres and Other Villages	No
84-89	Eastern Ipswich Plan Area	Section re-drafted. Amended, strengthened and clarified.	No. Addition of mention of Country Park helps mitigate concerns about Adastral Park development but not remove completely.
90-94	Felixstowe	Some updating. Additional references to retail provision. Resort section expanded to include recreation – para 4.44	No. The level of growth proposed is proportional to the size of the settlement.
95	Table 4.4	Updated	No
97	Framlingham	Minor wording changes	No
98-99	Leiston	Minor updates. New cross ref to SP13 included in SP24	No
99-100	Saxmundham	Minor updates	No
100-101	Woodbridge	Minor updates	No
102-103	Key and local service centres	Updates to include ref to Community Right to Build; small scale local schemes. Table 4.5 updated.	No

		SP28 (d) added	
106-108	Coastal Zone	Minor updates	No
110 - 139	Chapter 5		
110 - 113	Affordable housing	Some more substantial re-wording.	No
115	Houses in multiple occupation	Updated to reflect latest changes to regulations including definition	No
118	DM9	Amended to reflect latest government guidance	No
130 - 131 *	Sustainable construction	Updated and re-written to more closely reflect recommendations in evidence base study. NB Additional page added as addendum as final part of policy omitted in error.	No
	DM24		
139	Allotments	Reference included under para 5.91 to consideration of provision through the Area Action Plans	No
140 - 160	Implementation and Monitoring	References to RSS deleted and position clarified where possible.	No
179 - end	Appendices D and E	New. Help set policy and political context	No