

INTRODUCTION

The Local Development Framework

1. The District Council is preparing a new type of plan that will replace the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (including First and Second Alterations). This will be called a Local Development Framework (LDF). There will be a number of documents forming the Framework. The most significant of these will be this one, the Core Strategy, as this will establish the context for the remainder. It will also contain generic Development Control Policies covering the whole district that will be used in the determination of planning applications.

Purpose and content of this document

2. This Core Strategy document sets out the Council's Vision for the area to 2025. It then establishes the Objectives that a planning strategy must work towards if this Vision is to materialise. In arriving at this Vision and Objectives it summarises the issues that have been identified so far during the preparation process. These include the levels of development identified for Suffolk Coastal in the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) to. The Vision and Objectives take on board comments received through the continuing public consultation process, the last of which was the publication in February 2008 of potential directions for strategic housing growth.
3. Strategic Planning Policies then follow, with an emphasis on the 'spatial' aspect. Whenever choice has been available from a number of options, reasons are given for the preferred strategy. Finally, a suite of Development Control Policies then picks up any detailed aspects.

The Preparation Process

4. The process of preparing this Core Strategy is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended 2008. The Core Strategy will be the subject of public consultation. Following consideration of comments received in response to this document, the Council will draw up and formally submit the final Core Strategy to independent examination. A further opportunity to influence the Plan is provided at this stage when representations on the document are also invited. A Hearing will take place, conducted by the Planning Inspectorate. The representations will be considered either by means of written representations or debate. The Inspector's conclusions will be binding on the Council.
5. The following is how this current document relates to the overall process of preparing the Core Strategy document:

Stage 1 Early document production

Stage 2 Issues & Options consultation and (Regulation 25)

Further Issues & Options consultations (Regulation 25)

Stage 3 Preferred Options consultation (Regulation 25)

Stage 4 Formal Submission consultation (Regulation 27)

Submission (Regulation 30)

Stage 5 Examination in Public/Hearing (Regulation 34)

Stage 6 Formal adoption of Development Plan Document (Regulation 36)

The Role of Sustainability Appraisal

6. The aim of a sustainability appraisal is to promote sustainable development by ensuring that interrelated environmental, social and economic factors are considered throughout the preparation of the Core Strategy. A Sustainability Appraisal of this Core Strategy, including its Development Control Policies and Strategic Housing locations has been carried out as part of its production. This has been an iterative process with working drafts also being appraised.
7. The sustainability appraisal of this Core Strategy is available as a separate document, and this is available on the Council's website: www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Public Consultation

8. The views of the public have been taken into account in the preparation of this document following extensive consultation in the form of:
- (i) The publication of the Issues and Options Report in February 2007;
 - (ii) The publication in February 2008 of a discussion document on potential directions for strategic housing growth. This related to the area east of Ipswich and at Felixstowe/Walton and the Trimley Villages; and
 - (iii) Workshops with town and parish Councils over a period of about three years.

Regional Guidance

9. The Core Strategy must be consistent with the Regional Plan for the East of England – the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The Government, following an examination before an independent inspector, has adopted this Plan in May 2008. It sets out a framework which, amongst other things, sets out the numbers of houses needed in the Suffolk Coastal district until at least 2001.

Sustainable Community Strategy

10. There is a duty on Local Authorities to enable the creation of a Sustainable Community Strategy for their area by a partnership of public, private, community and voluntary groups – the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
11. The Sustainable Community Strategy plays a key role in informing the preparation of the Local Development Framework. In turn, the Framework must assist in delivering the policies in the Sustainable Community Strategy.