

# Planning Committee

10 January 2020

Agenda item number 12

## Suffolk Design – briefing

Report by Planning Policy Officer

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### Summary

Suffolk Local Planning Authorities have been working together to address good functional design of developments in Suffolk. This report outlines progress to date.

### Recommendation

To note the work going on in Suffolk in relation to design.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Suffolk Local Planning Authorities have been working together to address good functional design of developments in Suffolk. This report details work to date.
- 1.2. A small part of the Broads Authority's area falls in the former Waveney area of East Suffolk. Officers have therefore taken part in Suffolk Design meetings and workshops.

## 2. Suffolk Design

- 2.1. Suffolk Design is a long-term approach to embedding quality design into future developments. It is about shaping Suffolk. The consultants are keen to emphasise that it is about the function of a place or development.
- 2.2. The project was launched in July 2018. Since then events, workshops and research have been undertaken with the aid of design consultants. A website has also been set up and more can be seen at [www.suffolkdesign.uk](http://www.suffolkdesign.uk).
- 2.3. The aim is to deliver a Suffolk Design Charter as well as an effective and consistent design management process. There will be an online resource managed on a Suffolk-wide basis, and further detailed design guidance.
- 2.4. Suffolk Design fits well with the national design guidance, especially the reference in the national design guidance to the need for local design guides<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.5. The intention is that the Suffolk Design Charter is agreed as a corporate commitment in the short term. Similarly, the Design Management Process will be considered by each

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<sup>1</sup> National Design Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

Suffolk Local Planning Authority, and as work progresses discussion will be had on whether it moves towards a Supplementary Planning Document.

- 2.6. It will be up to the Broads Authority to determine whether it wishes to agree the Charter and the Design Management Process.
- 2.7. Across the Suffolk Local Planning Authorities there is a commitment to improve the approach to design, and to use design criteria to improve the way future developments work. It is important to consider how this will translate on the ground through the planning process and delivery of Suffolk's wider growth agenda.

### **3. Financial implications**

- 3.1. The Authority has not contributed financially to this work. Officers have attended meetings and workshops, and will continue to do so in the first half of 2020.
- 3.2. Another issue to consider is any increase in cost of schemes in Suffolk so they are designed in a way that meets the objectives and criteria of the design work. The emerging Suffolk Design work discusses principles rather than specific requirements. Such principles can be designed in from the start and it is not considered that there will be significant impacts on scheme costs and therefore viability.

### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1. The Charter and Development Management processes are being produced, together with the more detailed design guidance. This project is being driven by Chief Executives of Suffolk Local Planning Authorities as well as Heads of Planning, and it is anticipated that the documents will be circulated to officers in the next few months.
- 4.2. Once we see the documents, we will have to take a view on how they are to be applied in the Broads, a nationally protected landscape where design is already an important factor in determining planning applications.

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