

Ward Member's Report for September

This has been the time of reduced activity over the holiday spell. We all had long holidays!

Draft Local Plan Consultation

The main activity over the period has been the consultation on the Draft Local Plan. There has been considerable interest in the Plan and many public meetings and one-to-ones were held. The closing date was 14th September. Work is now in progress to analyse these results.

The next steps in the process prior to submission to the Inspector:

Review by Scrutiny Committee	Tues 27 Nov
Agreement of Cabinet	Wed 2 Jan
Agreement by Full Council	Thurs 3 Jan

Organisation of the Planning Committee

Discussions have been taking place to decide how the Planning Committee structure might be adjusted when the two districts combine to form East Suffolk.

No firm decisions have been made but the proposal is for:

- Two Planning Committees –North and South, (Lowestoft and Melton)
- The boundaries between each Committee to be arranged to provide equal workload (where possible)
- Nine members on each committee,
- The Chair and Vice Chair of each meeting to attend all committee meetings to ensure consistency of approach,

Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Following on from the Government White Paper on Planning, the paper “Building the Right Homes in the Right Places” and a comprehensive consultation, the revised NPPF has now been published. It sets the underlying principles for all our planning policies and we must ensure consistency between this and our upcoming Local Plan. There is a strong emphasis that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led;

As you would expect, the emphasis is on facilitating the construction of new homes. Some of the key points are:-

Five Year Building Land Supply

The 5year building land requirement is still included but the NPPF now includes the new standard methodology for calculating housing need. This is something we have

been advocating since the original NPPF was introduced. It should eliminate the vagaries and challenges we currently experience with the calculation of our housing needs. We are expecting new household projections to be published by the Office for National Statistics during September;

Housing Delivery Test

Alongside the retention of the requirement to identify and update annually the five year housing land supply, it introduces the Housing Delivery Test as a mechanism for assessing recent housing delivery across a local planning authority's area. The details have not been published but it will mean that we will be assessed on the number of houses actually delivered each year. Failure to meet the targets will incur special measures. This could need some significant changes in the planning function to force completion of developments once consent has been granted.

Viability

Given the increase in viability challenges from developers that have taken place over recent years, there is guidance as to how these should be handled. In future all viability assessments will be made public documents. Very often these viability challenges relate to the need to provide affordable housing but it can arise from a Section 106 charge.

Efficient use of land

The Framework stresses the need for efficient use of land and the need to maximise the number of houses that should be considered for a site.

Building on Small Plots

The original draft proposed that 20% of houses should be built on small plots (half hectare or less). This has now been reduced to 10%.

Importance of Neighbourhood Plans

Emphasis is given on the importance of Neighbourhood Plans. The expectation is that the NPs will play a vital role in the definition of the special qualities of an area. It also introduces the requirement for the LPA to quantify the number of houses expected in a Neighbourhood Plan area.

Garden Waste Scheme Goes Hi Tech

Suffolk Coastal's successful Garden Waste Scheme will shortly go hi tech. Special ID tags will be embedded in the new, bigger green bins, before they are delivered to scheme members that have opted in for the upgrade.

The hi tech tags - radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, to give them their official name - work in a similar way to barcodes and smart labels. A unique identifier is

encoded in each tag which can be “read” by a special device that the bin lorry crews will have. We will record which bin has been delivered to which property using the unique identifier.

Staff will also be going round to fit the ID tags to the smaller brown bins where people have not opted for the upgrade and want to stick with their existing bin.

The first paid-for collections of garden waste began in May, after Suffolk Coastal District Council introduced a £43 a year charge for collecting garden waste.

One of the benefits of joining the Suffolk Coastal Garden Waste Scheme is that subscribers can get a free upgrade - receiving a larger (240 litre) green bin for their garden waste (240 litres is the most common wheeled bin size, but the current brown organic waste bins in Suffolk Coastal are 140 litres).

About 32,600 households (or about 56% of homes) have now signed up for the Garden Waste Scheme. Of these, 80% have opted to get the new, larger green bins.

The main delivery of the new larger green bins will start in October and will be carried out area by area, to households that have subscribed to the garden waste scheme and opted for the upgrade. These bins will already have had the tags fitted and an address/bar code sticker fixed to them.

We will also be carrying out a phased ‘retro-fit’ of the tags to the brown bins, where people have joined the garden waste scheme but have not opted to have one of the new larger green bins.

Detailed roll-out plans for the delivery of the new bins and retro-fitting of ID tags to brown bins will be publicised in September. So people do not have to do anything at this time.....we will publicise the plans on our website once they have been finalised.

Tony Fryatt

24/09/2018