



Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 2

## **Workshop 2: Building Blocks**

7th November 2019

## The Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 2

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| <b>Date</b>                | 7th November 2019  |
| <b>Meeting location</b>    | The Edmunds (restaurant training room), West Suffolk College, Risbygate, Bury St Edmunds, Bury Saint Edmunds IP33 3RL  |
| <b>Attendees:</b>          | Rachel Almond, West Suffolk Council<br>Luke Barber, Suffolk County Council<br>Roz Claxton, Ipswich Borough Council<br>David Collinson, West Suffolk Council<br>James Cutting, Suffolk County Council<br>Colin Dunigan, West Suffolk Council<br>Elizabeth Flood, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils<br>Steve Merry, Suffolk County Council<br>Penny Mills, West Suffolk Council<br>Sally Minns, Ipswich Borough Council<br>John Pateman-Gee, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils<br>Anthony Taylor, East Suffolk Council<br>Mike Taylor, Ipswich Borough Council<br>Matt Williams, Suffolk County Council<br>Ben Woolnough, East Suffolk Council |
| <b>DSE Team:</b>           | Garry Hall, Design South East<br>Chris Lamb, Design South East<br>Kieran Toms, Design South East   |
| <b>Outline of the day:</b> | <p>This workshop was the second in a series of four sessions that together will map out how our development management processes can deliver design quality in Suffolk. The aim was to build on the insights from the first workshop and to together begin to develop the content of the ultimate output – the Suffolk Design Management Process (SMDP).</p> <p>There was a focus on behaviour change and using the insights from the first workshop and case studies shared in this workshop, to begin to identify how everyone can deliver quality across Suffolk.</p>   |
| <b>Purpose:</b>            | <p>The specific purposes of the day overall were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of the principles of an ideal approach.</li><li>• Identification of the elements of our current process(es) we should retain or use more.</li><li>• Identification of what the ideal process should look like</li><li>• Understanding of what the Design Charter is, and how this process relates to it.</li></ul>  |

## Introduction:

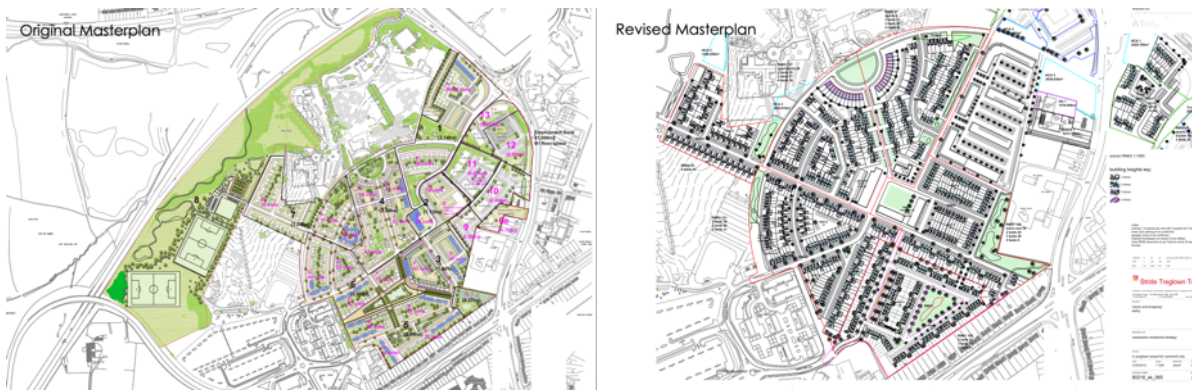
There was an overview of the first session: the commonalities and differences in approach, the things that work well and less well and the issues and solutions discussed. This is outlined in the report from the first workshop and so not repeated here.



## Session 1: Broadening Horizons

After the first workshop, in which we looked at what worked well and less well within Suffolk, this was a learning session in which we looked beyond the boundaries of Suffolk to see how a range of other projects were delivered, with a focus on process.

### Case Study 1: Manor Kingsway, Derby



### Key issues:

- An approved planning permission existing for a master plan on this site, in the suburbs of Derby. The key issues for this site were that it had a confusing layout, did not respond to the local context, and therefore was (and felt) disconnected from the local area
- Block structure was not working and there were issues around parking and rear courts. Overall, there was a lack of character and identity.
- The challenge was how to amend and improve the master plan without requiring new planning application.

- The approach involved agreeing a PPA with developers. The approach was collaborative: Partnership working approach was agreed upon, with bi-weekly design meetings held with key stakeholders.
- Design Review was used at key milestones in order to assess progress and changes. BfL12 was used to shape design discussions. HCA helped fund this approach
- The outcome was a much more connected master plan that provided a real centre and accessible amenities not just for the development itself but also for the surrounding existing neighbourhood.

## Case Study 2: Horsted Park, Kent



- Located in the urban fringe, in an area of relatively low values, the site is next to a scheduled ancient monument and has views to the landscape of the North Downs.
- A planning application had been submitted, but the council thought that application was unsatisfactory on a number of counts – in particular its failure to respond adequately to the context and topography, the views and the openness of the site.
- To help to broker a way forward DSE were asked to review the application. With the support of Design South East, Medway Council defended its decision that the proposed scheme was not the right one for the site and the developer withdrew the application.
- The developer then appointed a new design team, Proctor and Matthews Architects, who proposed an alternative approach that responded to the qualities of the site and context. Both the developer and architects fully engaged with Design South East, and our constructive, collaborative process brokered a better mutual understanding between the developer and the council.
- Following two reviews, DSE were able to fully support the revised scheme, and, with this support, the proposed development received planning consent.
- This is an excellent example of facilitation can improve outcome for all stakeholders; including the community. Horsted Park is one of the most successful housing developments in the South East, it has won numerous awards including a Housing Design Award and a Brick Award and was named Housing Project of the Year by Building Magazine in 2013.



### Case Study 3: Abode, Cambridge



- Whilst some of the context in Cambridge is different to that in Suffolk (for example the land values are much higher in Cambridge, amongst the highest in the country,) there are a number of lessons we can learn from the approach to Abode.
- Cambridge faces similar challenges to many other small cities and towns: a historic core mostly free from new development, with expansion and growth on the edge of the city.
- Abode is part of Great Kneighton on the outskirts of Cambridge. It is a mixed-use development of 2,550 homes developed by Countryside Properties. It is a mixture of terraces of townhouses and apartments, mews homes and individual houses.
- Cambridge has both a 'Cambridge Quality Charter' and a Cambridge Quality Panel. The panel assess development against the 4 C's of the charter: community, connectivity, climate and character.
- It reviewed the development and made several recommendations. The established nature of the Quality Panel and Charter meant that the developer responded positively to the suggestions and the development was improved.

### Session 2: Structure of the SDMP

- We discussed what should be in the structure of the SDMP.
- Participants outlined their 'ideal' process. They were instructed to give titles to the different stages.
- In four mixed groups, participants outlined an "ideal" process for a larger site going through the planning process in Suffolk
- Participants came up with a range of approaches.

### Some key points were:

- "Pre-app" needs to be considered as more of a process than a one-off meeting. Whilst it is not defined as the latter, in reality there is often an expectation from developers that it is brief and cursory. There needs to be a change in approach and mindset towards the former – a pre-application *process*.
- The process is different for different types of developments with different contexts requiring different approaches. Some of the key differences were identified as being:

- Size of development
- Whether or not the site has been allocated
- Whether or not the council supports the principle of development on these sites
- Not every part of the process always proceeds in a linear, stage-by-stage fashion. Some stages may ‘loop around’
- It can be useful to think of the process in terms of the relationship with key actions and goals that need to be undertaken as part of the planning process.
- Local Plan Allocation would fit between stages 2 and 3 but can be considered as a separate process.

From this discussion, participants produced an overarching structure, working as one group and taking into account the previous discussions:

| Stage   | Outputs  |
|---|--|
| 1. Inception  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue opened</li> <li>• Establishing Expectations</li> </ul>   |
| 2. First Formal contact                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Project Teams</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Local Plan Allocation (separate but connected process)</i> |  |
| 3. Pre-App Process  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timetable and project plan</li> <li>• Offer</li> <li>• Risks understood</li> </ul>  |
| 4. Project Plan Agreed  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement from all parties on project plan</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Design Principles  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement from all parties on the principles</li> </ul>   |
| 6. Design Evolution   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Engagement / involvement</li> </ul>   |
| 7. Informal Opinion   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support / not support</li> </ul>  |
| 8. Application Submitted                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment against bespoke pre-app audit doc</li> </ul>   |
| 9. Statutory Process  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking into account any necessary adjustments based on changing externalities e.g. national standards changing</li> </ul> |
| 10. Decision, Conditions and Obligation                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement and time frame (based on previously established)</li> </ul>   |

**Following this, the groups split into three.**

1. One group looked at the actions process associated with larger sites
2. One group looked at the actions associated with smaller sites
3. One group looked at the process around Local Plan allocation.

**Larger developments:**

Key points:

- There was focus on the ‘Pre-app process’ as that’s where there’s a bigger difference between smaller and larger developments.

- For the purpose of this the group made the following assumptions:
  - the hypothetical site had already been allocated for 2,500 homes, through a detailed Local Plan process
  - The site had just one landowner (if it were to have multiple owners then an important part of the Inception stage would be to draw together landowners, and to work out if ultimately there will be multiple planning applications or just one.
- That the process was proceeding in a relatively linear, direct fashion. (In reality it is likely that site of such a large scale might have had a period of silence/no activity, and therefore some elements of the process may have been undertaken beforehand and might need to be repeated or amended.)

| Stage                   | Outputs   | Actions   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Inception            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue opened</li> <li>• Establishing Expectations</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First acknowledgement of bringing site forward</li> <li>• Making sure borough has evidence base – this can be embedded in local plan docs and allocation docs</li> <li>• Making sure website and info is up to date</li> <li>• High level briefing: significant site will go straight to head of planning</li> <li>• Dedicated planning officer will be sought – either an internal, new hire, or consultant</li> <li>• Other partners should be made aware that this larger scheme will require investment of time from consultees</li> </ul> |
| 2. First Formal contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Project Teams</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Content of PPA established</li> <li>• Timeframe established</li> <li>• Resourcing of everyone – both applicant and LPA side</li> <li>• Good opportunity to share history of site with applicant – reflect on previous failures etc.</li> <li>• Risk Register – collective SWOT analysis to jointly understand threats and risks particularly in relation to land supply</li> <li>• Council will want to brief portfolio holder</li> </ul>  |
| 3. Pre-App Process      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timetable and project plan</li> <li>• Offer</li> <li>• Risks understood</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPA milestones decided</li> <li>• Joining up council comms team with developers' comms team</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Project Plan Agreed  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement from all parties on project plan</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early focused session: different from smaller sites: EIA screening and scoping.</li> <li>• Starting to put in public domain.</li> <li>• Engagement is tricky if scoping – because community treat it as planning application – but it is actually a long way off.</li> <li>• Needs to be shared knowledge of constraints and opportunities- includes needs, types of housing etc.</li> <li>• Confirm validation requirements: review and agree</li> </ul>  |
| 5. Design Principles    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement from all parties on the principles</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be underpinned by previous master plan</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolving process of test and review – focused workshops on specific things such as heritage, highways and drainage etc.</li> <li>Establishing parameters and level of detail expected in planning application</li> </ul> |
| 6. Design Evolution                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Engagement / involvement</li> </ul>   |   |
| 7. Informal Opinion                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support / not support</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council should hold briefing with parish.</li> <li>Cllrs ward Cllrs and members to understand what everyone expects</li> </ul>   |
| 8. Application Submitted                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment against bespoke pre-app audit doc</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Similar to small site process</li> </ul>   |
| 9. Statutory Process                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account any necessary adjustments based on changing externalities e.g. national standards changing</li> </ul> |   |
| 10. Decision, Conditions and Obligation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement and time frame (based on previously established</li> </ul>  |   |

### Smaller Developments

- The Design checklist as outlined can evolve over time if needed to – unlike policy
- South Gloucestershire Design Checklist was cited as a precedent here.

| Stage                   | Outputs   | Actions   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Inception            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue opened</li> <li>Establishing Expectations</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signposting to publicly available info: not overly engaged beyond that</li> </ul>  |
| 2. First Formal contact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify Project Teams</li> </ul>  |   |
| 3. Pre-App Process      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timetable and project plan</li> <li>Offer</li> <li>Risks understood</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be the PPA; PPA can be part of that stage:</li> <li>Understanding of timetable can be flexible – to delivery or beyond depending on promoter – you agree depending on size of development, you agree level of engagement depending on size, but also other context e.g. controversy</li> </ul> |
| 4. Project Plan Agreed  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement from all parties on project plan</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>  |
| 5. Design Principles    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement from all parties on the principles</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are they?</li> <li>Opportunities and constraints –</li> <li><b>Accessibility and drainage are early stage issues to be addressed</b></li> </ul>   |
| 6. Design Evolution     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Engagement / involvement</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evolve into one of a number of indicative plans – master plan type thing</li> <li>Design Concept Here</li> </ul>   |



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   |  |   |
| 7. Informal Opinion                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support / not support</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design checklist helps you press home need for certain design criteria –</li> <li>Informal opinion: may be informed by design review</li> <li>Set out site-specific requirements</li> <li>May be discussion/decision on principle of development if for example there are more proposed</li> </ul> |
| 8. Application Submitted                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment against bespoke pre-app audit doc</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design checklist helps you press home need for certain design criteria –</li> </ul>  |
| 9. Statutory Process                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking into account any necessary adjustments based on changing externalities e.g. national standards changing</li> </ul> |   |
| 10. Decision, Conditions and Obligation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreement and time frame (based on previously established)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreements based on Suffolk-wide standard conditions and standard s106</li> </ul>  |

### Local Plan Allocation:

- There would be a different process if the site was more speculative. The challenge is making the ‘Suffolk Design’ process both faster and cheaper.

| Stage                                     | Actions / process  |
|---|--|
| Consideration of Strategic factors        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of Local Plan as spatial delivery of Corporate Strategic Policy</li> </ul>  |
| Agreement on draft appraisal methodology  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of ‘checklist’ of criteria sites should fulfil</li> </ul>   |
| Call for sites                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early discussions with landowner(s)</li> </ul>  |
| Baseline Assessment                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment against strategic factors. Includes assessment of deliverability</li> </ul>  |
| Detailed site assessment                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Including assessment of deliverability (Although increased clarity will lead to increased understanding of this.)</li> <li>Assessment of resource requirements</li> </ul> |
| Evolution of Design and Development brief | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be put together by:</li> <li>LPA – easier if larger</li> <li>The applicant – easy if there are multiple allocated sites and resources do not permit LPA</li> </ul>    |
| Development brief                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains Parameters:</li> <li>Things you must do</li> <li>Things that there is more flexibility on</li> </ul>   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Agreement on allocation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once agreed – allocation included in Local Plan</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------|---|

## New things to be introduced / discussed moving forward:

### Standardisation:

There was agreement that the following issues should be standardised across the county. There was however an acknowledgement that this may be a complex process. However, achieving it would help deliver the consistency of quality across the county that Suffolk Design exists to achieve.

- S106 agreements
- Conditions
- PPA document
- Design 'checklist' (so a standardised list of design elements. A DAS, or specifically dedicated document, would have to explain how it has achieved them.)

These documents would have standardised components but could be flexible depending on the type and size of development.

### Key things to be further decided / discussed:

- **Engagement:** it was generally agreed that engagement should run through the whole process, from an early stage. More discussion is needed to get more specific on what engagement should take place and when.
- **Post decision stages and actions:** Most of the discussion focused on the process and actions up until the decision process. More discussion is needed to ensure quality, once given permission, is actually delivered. This includes any stages post construction.
- **Multi-landowner approach:** The approach to a site with multiple landowners may be different. More discussion might lead to a more specific approach for such sites.

## Next Steps:

### Workshop 3:

The next workshop will build on the outputs developed in workshop 2 and the insight into current issues and potential solutions developed in workshop 1. The idea is to build on the principles and work to date and to begin to 'fill in the gaps' regarding key actions at certain milestones. There will also be discussion about organisational change that needs to take place to implement the SDMP effectively.

### Purpose of the workshop:

- To get to a more fleshed-out (but not finalised) step by step pre-draft Suffolk Design approach.
- The identification of key areas of organisational development that need to take place.
- Resolution of key details and unresolved details.
- Reflection on Workshop 2 outputs.



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