



Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 1

Workshop 1: Status Quo and Beyond

16th October 2019

The Report of the Suffolk Design Management Process Workshop 1

Date	16th October 2019
Meeting location	Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Melton
Attendees:	Antony Taylor, East Suffolk Council Ben Woolnough, East Suffolk Council David Collinson, West Suffolk Council Elizabeth Flood, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils Eloise Limmer, East Suffolk Council James Cutting, Suffolk County Council John Pateman-Gee, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils Liz Beighton, East Suffolk Council Luke Barber, Suffolk County Council Marie Smith, West Suffolk Council Matt Williams, Suffolk County Council Mike Barnard, Suffolk County Council Natalie Beale, Broads Authority Penny Mills, West Suffolk Council Peter White, West Suffolk Council Rachel Almond, West Suffolk Council Richard Collins, Ipswich Borough Council Roz Claxton, Ipswich Borough Council Sally Minns, Ipswich Borough Council Steve Merry, Suffolk County Council
DSE Team:	Garry Hall, Design South East Kieran Toms, Design South East
Outline of the day:	This workshop was the first in a series of four sessions that are designed to together map out how development management processes can deliver design quality in Suffolk. The ultimate output of this process will be a document entitled the Suffolk Design Management Process (SDMP).
Purpose:	The specific purposes of the day overall were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of current processes for delivering complex projects, including key stages and milestones.• Identification of strengths and weaknesses of current processes.• Identification of areas of current and potential commonalities across the county.• Identification of where districts, county and infrastructure teams do and don't work well with other stakeholders.• Understanding of what the Design Charter is, and how this process relates to it.

Introduction:

Although many of the participants had previously been involved in Suffolk Design and were familiar with the activities to date, the broader context of Suffolk Design was outlined. This helped demonstrate how the current Suffolk Design activities build upon and are a continuation of the previous work, building towards the same ambition of a culture of delivering design quality across Suffolk.

The story so far:

Started in May 2018, Suffolk Design is a project aimed at creating a step-change in the way design is managed across Suffolk. The aim is not just to create a document that people refer to, but to embed a culture of good design across all sectors within Suffolk.

To do this, we have run a series of events and workshops that helped the project team capture the information needed to help shape the way Suffolk Design works. Five training events were put on to help establish a baseline understanding across Suffolk of what accepted design best practice looks like. Roundtable meetings discussing growth, trends and technology allowed us to understand how these issues are being approached in Suffolk.

From there, a series of workshops with different sectors of the design and development process were undertaken. The workshops fed into how Suffolk Design needed to evolve, so that what is produced has the maximum impact on design quality. Research papers were also published looking at how others have approached design quality elsewhere and picking up learning points to help this project. This next phase of the project seeks to bring Suffolk Design into practice.

Morning Session: Examining current delivery process(es):

Firstly, grouped into their respective councils, attendees mapped out how projects of theirs had gone through the planning process:



Secondly, and remaining in groups with their respective council colleagues, attendees answered the following questions about the processes they had mapped out.

1. Which bits work well?
2. Which bits don't work so well?

This information was then fed back to the room:

Suffolk County:

Things that work well	Things that don't work so well
Efficient use of old minerals site	Loss of mixed-use site
Schools planning	Approach to master planning
S106 - Good negotiation process	Political pressure (both ways)
Issues dealt with internally	LLFA not involved early enough
PPA (close working)	Viability at early stage
Committee process – early sight	Changing teams
Better cross working ESC / SCC	Funding infrastructure
	Making effective use of SCC planning Committee

East Suffolk:

Things that work well	Things that don't work so well
Good Architects (local)	Politics
Landowner Engagement Throughout	Managing potential conflicts of interest
SDRP Input	External stakeholders changing views
Architects with proven track record	Public expectation of engagement
Long and detailed pre-app	
Dedicated staff time	

West Suffolk:

Things that work well	Things that don't work so well
Local Plan allocations	Member engagement
Culture: beyond consent	Masterplan: be clearer about purpose?
Design Code: Build on and lock in key aspirations of master plan	Masterplan: can we include more on delivery of infrastructure?
Developer team approach	Future proofing for infrastructure provision

Officer group: as developer comes forward to monitor, review and find solutions	‘People’ don’t understand planning
Development Evaluation Group	Better duty to co-operate
Masterplan: clarity on key issues e.g. SUDS	

Babergh and Mid Suffolk:

Things that work well	Things that don’t work so well
Allocated site in SAAP	No pre-app
Place Shaping group: Operation and membership	Lack of specific detail within policy
Character areas part of development brief	Timing of development brief
Developers open to change	Development brief missed opportunity
Stakeholders were open to change	No clear direction of infrastructure needs
New sport pavilion -> wider use / need	Workload / lack of capacity
Policy compliant affordable housing	
Delivered homes on site and school to be developed	

Ipswich Borough Council:

Things that work well	Things that don’t work so well
Infrastructure Plan and SPD	Land Covenants
Collaborative Working and Continuous Dialogue	Capacity During Peaks
Community Involvement – Community Panel led by Portfolio Holder	PPA should be realistic
SPD Helped – Community Understanding	Co-ordination Capacity Issue
HCA Input – Wider knowledge and capacity	Limitations of Design Panel Approach
PPAs	Programming Inputs into Infrastructure Study. Assuming consultants will manage process
Design and Concept Led approach	
Master planning Highly community led	

Analysis:

The responses can be split into the following groups, outlining where there are recurring issues across the county and where these might be more specific to certain local authorities.

The below guide labels the positives and negatives according to the colours below:

Colour	Authority
	SCC
	ESC
	WSC
	BMS
	IBC

These trends will be discussed further in future workshops and the group will make decisions on where to focus efforts for improvement – and where to ensure existing strengths are retained and enhanced.

Things that work well

Allocation / Policy	Pre-app / PPA	Infrastructure / s106 / CIL etc.	Community Engagement	Councillor involvement	Landowner / Developer / architect Specific	Officer actions / access to resources / technical expertise	Site-specific / outcome-related	County / District / multi-stakeholder collaboration
Local Plan allocations	PPA (close working)	Schools planning	Culture: beyond consent	Committee process – early sight	Good Architects (local)	Issues dealt with internally	Efficient use of old minerals site	Better cross working ESC / SCC
Design Code: Build on and lock in key aspirations of master plan	Long and detailed pre-app	S106 - Good negotiation process	Community Involvement – Community Panel led by Portfolio Holder		Landowner Engagement Throughout	SDRP Input	Policy compliant affordable housing	Place Shaping group: Operation and membership
Allocated site in SAAP	PPAs	Masterplan: clarity on key issues e.g. SUDS	SPD Helped – Community Understanding		Architects with proven track record	Dedicated staff time	Delivered homes on site and school to be developed	Stakeholders were open to change
Character areas part of development brief		New sport pavilion - > wider use / need	Master planning Highly community led		Developer team approach	Officer group: as developer comes forward to monitor, review and find solutions		Collaborative Working and Continuous Dialogue
Infrastructure Plan and SPD					Developers open to change	Development Evaluation Group		
					Design and Concept Led approach	HCA Input – Wider knowledge and capacity		

Things that don't work so well

Allocation / Policy	Pre-app / PPA	Infrastructure / s106 / CIL etc.	Community Engagement	Councillor involvement	Landowner / Developer / architect Specific	Officer actions / access to resources / technical expertise	Site-specific / outcome-related	County / District / multi-stakeholder collaboration
Approach to master planning	No pre-app	Funding infrastructure	Politics	Political pressure (both ways)	Changing teams	Workload / lack of capacity	Loss of mixed-use site	LLFA not involved early enough
Viability at early stage	PPA should be realistic	Masterplan: can we include more on delivery of infrastructure?	Public expectation of engagement	Making effective use of SCC planning Committee	Land Covenants	Capacity During Peaks		External stakeholders changing views
Masterplan: be clearer about purpose?		Future proofing for infrastructure provision	'People' don't understand planning	Managing potential conflicts of interest		Co-ordination Capacity Issue		Better duty to co-operate
Lack of specific detail within policy		No clear direction of infrastructure needs		Member engagement		Limitations of Design Panel Approach		
Timing of development brief		Programming Inputs into Infrastructure Study. Assuming consultants will manage process						
Development brief missed opportunity								

These were grouped into themes, related to the engagement with different stakeholders in the planning process:

- Discussions over each solution took place, to determine how far the proposals were implementable. They were rated with different colours:

- # 1. CAPACITY + RESOURCING.
- OUTSOURCING SPECIALISTS
 - SHARED EXPECTISE / OUTSOURCING OF TECHNICAL BETWEEN COUNCILS E.G. VIABILITY, ENERGY
 - RECRUITMENT - APPRENTICESHIPS, SUCCESSION PLANNING + INTERNS
 - APPROPRIATE SUPPORT STAFF AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH CO-ORDINATING MTGS TO ENGAGE OFFICERS MORE TIME TO FOCUS ON DETAILS
 - Tools + Information Kits
 - ↳ NO SKILL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
 - ↳ LURKING SUPPORT TEAM
- # 2. POLITICS.
- WORK ON MEMBER 'BUY IN', ENABLING MORE MEMBER LEADERSHIP IN PROCESS
 - ADEQUATE / REGULAR MEMBER BRIEFINGS
 - IMPORTANCE OF MEMBER COMMUNICATION
 - ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS
 - ↳ HOW FUNDED → DEVELOPERS
 - MEMBER TRAINING & TO AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.
 - MEMBER ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT PROCESS INCLUDING A REVIEW OF COMPLETED SCHEMES
 - ↳ POSSIBLE FEEDBACK FROM RESIDENTS
- # 3. POLICY - SITE SPECIFIC
- CONSISTENT APPROACH ACROSS SUFFOLK FOR ALLOCATION A, SITES, TIMING OF DEV. BRIEFING SO EXPECTATIONS + PROCESS ARE SAME ACROSS COUNCILS. DEVELOPERS KNOW THE PROCESS.
- # 4. POLICY - CROSS COUNCIL
- HIGH LEVEL AGREEMENT ON CROSS-BOARD ISSUES + SOLUTIONS.
- # 5. NORFOLK SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK OR ISSUE SPECIFIC.

Council Specific issues:

Capacity and Resourcing: Co-ordination Capacity Issue / Capacity During Peaks / Lack of Capacity:

Solution	Colour
Outsourcing Specialisms	Amber
Shared Expertise / Outsourcing of Technical expertise between councils e.g. Viability, Energy	Amber
Recruitment, Succession Planning, Interns	Green
Appropriate Support Staff for co-ordination meetings to enable officers more time to focus on meetings – no silo, development team, upskill support team	Green
Tools and Information Hub	Amber

Politics: Member Engagement / SCC Planning Committee not involved early enough / Managing Conflicts of Interest

Solution	Colour
Work on Member buy-in, Engaging more member leadership in process	Amber
Adequate / regular member briefings	Amber
Importance of member communication	Green
Role of Neighbourhood Plans	Amber
Member training to avoid conflict of interest	Green
Member engagement throughout process including a review of completed schemes including possible feedback from residents	Green

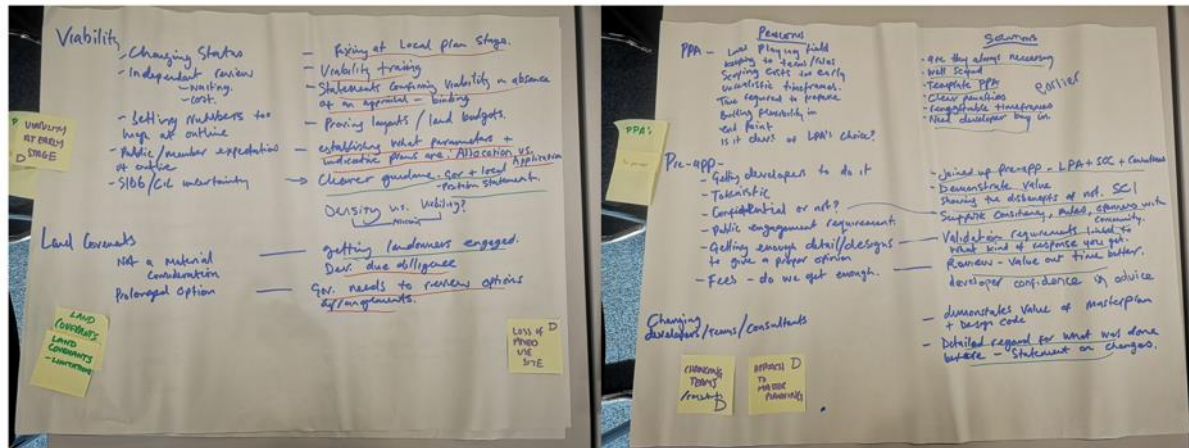
Policy - site specific: Timing of development brief / lack of specific detail within policy / development brief missed opportunity

Solution	Colour
Consistent Approach Across Suffolk for allocation, sites, timing of Developer Briefings, so expectations and process are same	Green

Policy – cross council: Better duty to co-operate / better cross border working

Solution	Colour
High level agreement on cross-border issues and solutions – e.g. Norfolk Strategic Planning	Amber
Coming to issue Specific solutions between councils	Green

Developer-specific issues:



Viability:

Solution	Colour
Fixing at local plan stage	Amber
Viability training	Amber
Statements confirming viability in absence of an appraisal – binding	Amber
Proving layouts / land budgets	Amber
Establishing what parameters + indicative plans are: Allocation vs. application	Amber
Clearer guidance – government + local position statement	Green
Being clearer on density vs viability in Allocations	Amber

(Limitations of) Land Covenants:

Solution	Colour
Getting landowners engaged	Green
Developer due diligence	Amber
Government needs to review options arrangements	Red

PPAs:

Solution	Colour
Using consistently – when necessary	Green
Ensuring these are Well-scoped	Green
Having a template PPA	Green
Renegotiable timeframes	Green
Need developer buy-in	Green

Pre-app –no pre-app:

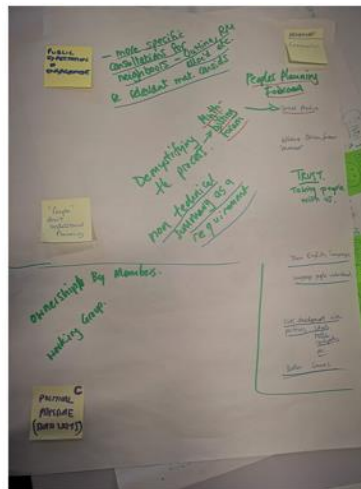
Solution	Colour
Joined up pre-app: LPA + SCC + Consultees	Green
Demonstrate Value: showing the disbenefits of not engaging	Green
Suffolk Consistency, Rules, openness with community	Green
Validation requirements linked to what kind of response you get	Green
Review – value our time better	Green

Developer confidence in advice	Green
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Changing Developers / teams / consultants

Solution	Colour
Demonstrating value of master plan and design codes	Green
Detailed regard for what was done before – statement on changes	Green

Community-specific issues:



Public Expectation of engagement:

Solution	Colour
More specific consultations for neighbours – explaining meaning of outline, allocated, relevant material considerations etc.	Green

'People' don't understand planning:

Solution	Colour
Demystifying the process: Myth busting 'People's Planning Forum' / social media presence	Amber
Non technical summary as a requirement	Green
Using 'Plain English'	Green
Link development with positives: e.g. show 'this park has been paid for by this development'	Green

Political Pressure (both ways):

Solution	Colour
Ownership by members – working group	Green

Analysis:

The below analysis can form the basis of the key principles that underpin the SDMP

Key take-outs:

In one word: Consistency!

The overall approach we are looking for is one that is consistent across Suffolk. Additionally, discussions demonstrated that all stakeholders are looking for consistency: whether it's developers, officers, councillors, or members of the community. This helps set expectations, allocate resources efficiently, and gain an understanding of what needs to be done by who at what stage. Ultimately it helps deliver quality effectively and on an ongoing basis.

Throughout the workshop a range of projects were presented, at different scales and with different levels of input. This in itself makes a useful point: the Suffolk Design Management Process needs to be flexible enough to cope and deal with a range of projects.

Differences / inconsistencies

- Ways of engaging with / involving the community
- Different approaches for different types of ownership
- Different routes for allocated / non-allocated sites
- Different types of community engagement / involvement

Key common themes that could lead to behaviour change towards a consistent approach:

Timeframes / expectations / communication:

- Regular meetings between departments, and between councils and developers/other stakeholders.
- Specific timeframes with specific milestones for all – and incentives for meeting these (for both sides) and disincentives for not doing so.
- Structured approach to each stage of the SDMP.
- Specific considerations for different types of project: e.g. sites that have been allocated vs. not

Specific content / parameters:

- Setting certain approaches for certain agreements such as PPAs or Pre-app fees
- Clarity on issues such as viability – what should it take into account and when?
- Providing consistency and clarity for developers
- Make it simpler if developers comply with parameters, and harder/longer/slower if developers do not.

Training / Knowledge sharing

- Ensuring officers understand the processes and expectations
- Ensuring members understand the processes and expectations

- Shared understand of good and bad practice and why they work / don't work
- Consistent, easy-to-access, county-wide information for all stakeholders
- Providing consistency and clarity for residents (could more be said re: involvement in the planning process itself?)

Resources (staff /expertise):

- Assessment of technical expertise and coverage: stronger / weaker areas
- Sharing technical expertise across county and even beyond county where possible
- Planning ahead as much as possible to manage staff time



Next Steps:

Workshop 2:

The next workshop will build on the insights from the first workshop and in it we will together begin to develop the content of the ultimate output – the Suffolk Design Management Process.

Purpose of the workshop:

- What are the principles of an ideal approach?
- What elements of our current process(es) should we retain?
- What would the ideal process look like?
- Understanding of what the Design Charter is, and how this process relates to it.



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