Local Plan
Covering the former Suffolk Coastal area

Council Response to Matter 1
Procedural/legal requirements

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Duty to Cooperate

Question 1.1

Is there clear evidence that, in the preparation of the Plan, the Council has engaged constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic matters and issues with cross-boundary impacts in accordance with section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, as amended [the 2004 Act]?

1. Yes. The Council is committed to constructive and active engagement with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic matters and cross boundary issues. The Duty to Cooperate Statement (Document A12) sets down in detail how the Council have complied with the Duty. Throughout the plan making process, the Council has been an active participant in a variety of activities relating to strategic matters as outlined in section 33a of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended.

2. The Council has a long, established and successful working relationship with neighbouring authorities and participates across the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area at both officer and member level on a regular and on-going basis. The Ipswich Strategic Planning Area provides opportunity for all local planning authorities (Babergh District, Ipswich Borough, Mid Suffolk District and East Suffolk) and Suffolk County Council to engage on cross boundary strategic matters in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate. Previously the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area was known as the Ipswich Policy Area. The authorities have published a Statement of Common Ground (Document A13) to provide clarity on approach and priorities in relation to cross boundary issues and it sets down a series of outcomes and agreements.

3. Throughout the plan making process, the Council has actively engaged with neighbouring authorities on a variety of evidence base documents. These evidence base documents have been undertaken in accordance with national policy requirements where relevant and examples of best practice on a variety of topics. Sharing an evidence base enables each local authority to have a consistent position and understanding of the issues facing their area, as well as the cross boundary issues which have been identified.

4. The Council shares the following evidence base documents with neighbouring authorities:
   - Document D3 – Ipswich Economic Area Sector Needs Assessment
   - Document D4 – Ipswich & Waveney Economic Areas Employment Land Needs Assessment
   - Documents D6, D7, D8, D9 – Ipswich Borough and Suffolk Coastal District Retail and Commercial Leisure Town Centre Study.
• Documents D14, D15, D16 – Ipswich and Waveney Strategic Housing Market Assessment

• Document D17 – Gypsy, Traveller, Travelling Showpeople and Boat Dwellers Accommodation Needs Assessment.

• Document D21 – Settlement Sensitivity Assessment.

• Document D24 – Suffolk Coastal and Ipswich Borough Council Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study.

• Documents D29, D30, D31, D32 – Transport Modelling for Babergh & Mid Suffolk, Ipswich and Suffolk Coastal.

• Document H19 – Suffolk Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy which has been published since the Council submitted the Final Draft Local Plan for Examination.

5. East Suffolk Council is also involved with Coastal Partnership East which enables a collaborative approach to be undertaken to issues in respect of Coastal Zone management. Coastal Partnership East is a partnership between East Suffolk Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council and North Norfolk District Council and provides opportunity to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis. A Statement of Common Ground (Document A14) has been prepared to address cross boundary issues and strategic matters in respect of Coastal Zone Management between Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk, North Norfolk District Council, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, East Suffolk Council and The Broads Authority. Coastal Partnership East also affords the Council a strong and positive relationship with organisations such as the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation which is beneficial to all parties.

6. In August 2017, the Council published an Issues and Options document for consultation (Document B1). The consultation was run in parallel with Ipswich Borough Council who shared “part 1” of the Issues and Options with the Council. The purpose of a shared part 1 that considered strategic cross boundary issues was to promote a consistent approach to issues and opportunities and enable wider participation. Due to differences in plan making milestones, further phases of consultation and public participation on the Local Plan have not been undertaken in partnership with Ipswich but the Councils continue to work together as detailed in the Statement of Common Ground (Document A13).

7. As outlined above, the Council has prepared various evidence base documents in partnership with neighbouring authorities. The opportunity to undertake a joint consultation alongside Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council was also considered at the early stages of plan making. However, due to differences in timetables at the time and Babergh
and Mid Suffolk Council’s working together in partnership as organisations the Council’s agreed to prepare separate documents for consultation, but using a consistent evidence base.

8. New Anglia is the Local Enterprise Partnership which covers East Suffolk Council and the Local Plan area. East Suffolk Council continues to work in collaboration with the Local Enterprise Partnership and seeks to take on board a number of actions from the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy (Document D5). Economic actions highlighted by New Anglia have been integrated into the East Suffolk Economic Growth Plan (Document G2) which is also reflected in the Final Draft Local Plan (Document A1).

9. At each stage of the plan making process, the Council has actively and constructively engaged with the local community. In Spring 2016 (prior to the Issues and Options consultation), the Council engaged with Town and Parish Councils on the topic of sustainable communities and what these look like in Suffolk Coastal. During the consultation periods on the Issues and Options document and the First Draft Local Plan, the Council also invited Town and Parish Councils to 1-2-1 sessions to discuss issues facing their community and how the Local Plan may address these. These sessions were not taken up by all communities but were well received and valued by those who did. The results of the 1-2-1 sessions were seen in responses to the consultations and these have significantly and positively influenced the Final Draft Local Plan (Document A1).

10. Throughout the plan making process, organisations such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England, Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Highways England and Suffolk County Council have been engaged and have informed the content of the Final Draft Local Plan.

11. Full details of how the Council has engaged and consulted with neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies on all issues throughout the plan making process can be seen in the Council’s Consultation Statement (Document A10).

Sustainability Appraisal

Question 1.2

Is the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) adequate?

12. Yes. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (Document A3) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 19 (5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and is therefore considered adequate.

13. Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken on all reasonable policy and site options considered during each stage of the Local Plan preparation and these are detailed in chapter
6 and the appendices of the final SA report (document A3). The process that has been followed is outlined in chapter 1 of the SA Report (Document A3) and involved the following stages and outputs:

a) **Setting the context and establishing the baseline**: Production, consultation and subsequent modification of a Scoping Report (Documents B1 and B7)

b) **Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects**: Production and consultation on Initial Sustainability Appraisal Site Assessments (Document B3) and Interim Sustainability Appraisal (Document B6)

c) **Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report**: Production and consultation on Sustainability Appraisal Report (Document A3)

d) **Consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal Report**:
   i. Consultation on the Scoping Report 18th August-30th October 2017
   ii. Consultation on Initial Sustainability Appraisal Site Assessments 18th August-30th October 2017
   iii. Consultation on Initial Sustainability Appraisal 20th July – 14th September 2018
   iv. Consultation on Sustainability Appraisal Report, Final Draft Plan 14th January – 25th February 2019

**Question 1.3**

**Has the SA been undertaken on the basis of consistent methodology and is the assessment robust?**

14. Yes. The methodology that has been followed is outlined in chapter 1 of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report (Document A3). The approach follows the prescribed requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

15. The Sustainability Appraisal Framework forms the basis of the appraisal process. The framework was initially established through the Scoping Report (Documents B1) and subject to consultation in 2017. The final framework is set out in chapter 5 of the final Sustainability Appraisal Report (Document A3). The framework has been used to assess all reasonable site and policy options during each stage of the Local Plan preparation.

16. The effect of each option has been assessed against each objective of the framework using the decision making criteria as a guide. The outcome of the appraisal is to identify whether the policy will have a positive or negative effect on the objective and whether the effect is significant.
17. The significance of the effect has been determined with regard to the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. In determining the significance of an effect consideration was given to:

   a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;
   b) the cumulative nature of the effects;
   c) the transboundary nature of the effects;
   d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);
   e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
   f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to—
      i. special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;
      ii. exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
      iii. intensive land-use; and
   g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

18. The results of the appraisals were then subject to public consultation alongside the drafts of the Local Plan. Where required, the SA report and the individual appraisals have been amended in response to the comments received as part of the earlier consultations.

19. This robust approach has been consistently followed through all iterations of the SA.

**Question 1.4**

*Has the SA taken into account reasonable alternatives and has sufficient reasoning been given for the rejection of alternatives?*

20. Yes. The Sustainability Appraisal Report (Document A3) has thoroughly considered reasonable alternative options both in terms of alternative policy approaches and alternative site options.

21. Chapter 6 of the SA Report (Document A3) summarises the appraisals of the ‘preferred’ and ‘alternative’ options (reference to ‘preferred option’ in this section of the report refers to the policy as written in the Final Draft Local Plan). These summaries have been drawn from the full appraisals which are included in Appendix C and D of SA Report (Document A3).

22. Included against each of the options in the tables in chapter 6 are the reasons why each alternative option has been discounted.
23. In some cases the reason for discounting a site is not exclusively based on the conclusions of the sustainability appraisal and/or there not being much difference in the predicted effects between the preferred option and the alternative option. In these cases the choice of preferred option came down to professional planning judgement taking into account other evidence. This reasoning is outlined in the summaries in chapter 6. This does not undermine the overall robustness of the Sustainability Appraisal.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Question 1.5

Has the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) been undertaken in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017?

24. Yes, the Habitats Regulation Assessment (Document A4) has been carried out in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. Paragraphs 1.8-1.14 and Appendix 1 of the Habitats Regulation Assessment (Document A4) summarise the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and outline the process that has been undertaken. Paragraphs 2.1-2.3 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan- Supplementary note (Document H27) expands on this and confirms compliance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

25. Representations received from Natural England (comment ID 1) confirm that they agree with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulation Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local plan at the Final Draft Plan Stage (Document A4).

Question 1.6

Has the HRA screened all the proposed allocations and considered potential in-combination effects? If so, where are the results of this set out?

26. The Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan has assessed all policies to identify whether these would be likely to have significant effects on European protected sites, as documented in the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (Document A4).

27. The Habitats Regulations Assessment has assessed all site allocations included in the Final Draft Local Plan, including those which are existing allocations in the adopted Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies DPD (Document F2) and the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan DPD (Document F3) and which have been reviewed and carried forward into the new Local Plan.
28. Screening of site allocations was initially undertaken in relation to the First Draft Local Plan, as set out in Habitats Regulations Assessment (Screening for Likely Significant Effects) of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at First Draft Plan Stage (Document B8). All allocations were then re-screened at the Final Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) stage and the results of this are set out in table 3 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (page 27-46, Document A4).

29. The approach to the assessment of site allocations is explained in the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan at Final Draft Plan Stage (December 2018) (Document A4, Chapter 2). Map 4 on page 22 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment shows the geographical locations of the site allocations which have been assessed alongside the locations of the European protected sites.

30. Table 3, (Document A4, pages 27-46), sets out the screening conclusions in relation to each policy. For site allocations, these are considered in terms of their distance from European Protected sites. Any sites which are over 1km but within 13km from a European site are ‘grouped’ for the purposes of this analysis in the table (see page 27). For clarity, Footprint Ecology have produced a supplementary note (Document H27) which identifies specifically which ‘group’ each allocation falls into, see appendix 1 on page 9.

31. As confirmed in paragraphs 3.6-3.7 of the supplementary note (Document H27) in-combination effects have been considered as part of the HRA process. Potential in-combination effects were identified in relation to recreation pressure, water resources and treatment and air quality and were considered further through appropriate assessment (see chapters 5, 7 and 8 of Document A4 and para 3.6 to 3.7 of Document H27).

32. Impacts on European protected sites from recreation were identified through the Habitats Regulations Assessment carried out during the production of the Core Strategy and Development Policies (Document F1), and mitigation is being taken forward through the implementation of a Recreation Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) (Document H19) which is explained in paragraphs 1.28 and 1.29 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document A4). Paragraph 5.4 of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document A4) explains that there is flexibility in the RAMS and that there are measures that could be expanded to accommodate additional growth. The approach is carried forward through paragraph 10.16 and Policy SCLP10.1 of the Final Draft Local Plan.

33. The appropriate assessment section of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document A4) (paragraphs 7.19-7.22) recommended continued engagement with utilities companies, the Environment Agency, and Natural England to ensure that water related matters and infrastructure upgrades are continually reviewed and resolved. A commitment to this work is included within the Monitoring Framework of the Final Draft Local Plan at page 481. The appropriate assessment also recommended specific reference to the timely delivery of
infrastructure and treatment capabilities, reference to this was included the Infrastructure Delivery Framework (page 442, Document A1).

34. The appropriate assessment section of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document A4) concluded (paragraph 8.11) that air quality did not warrant any additional measure at this stage, but that additional evidence gathering is required in co-ordination with neighbouring authorities. This work will then inform the next plan review. This approach was agreed in discussion with Natural England. A commitment to this work is included within the Monitoring Framework of the Final Draft Local Plan at page 481.

Local Development Scheme

Question 1.7

Is the Plan compliant with the Council’s Local Development Scheme in terms of its form, scope and timing?

35. Yes. The Final Draft Local Plan (Document A1) has been prepared in accordance with the Council’s Local Development Scheme (Document E1).

36. Page 16 of the Council’s Local Development Scheme (Document E1) outlines the scope of the Local Plan review for the former Suffolk Coastal geographic area. At the time of publication (October 2015), the Council and neighbouring authorities across the Ipswich Housing Market Area and Functional Economic Area envisaged an “aligned” or “joint” Local Plan. However as plan preparation has taken place the alignment of timings have become out of step, although still share common baselines and evidence base documents (in part) in accordance with the Duty to Co-operate.

37. The Council has progressed the preparation of the Local Plan (covering the former Suffolk Coastal District), broadly in accordance with the timetable outlined on page 16 of the Local Development Scheme (Document E1). There has been some slippage in timescales for specific stages during the preparation of the Local Plan but this has not significantly affected the overall timetable in respect of key milestones on submission to the Planning Inspectorate (1 month slippage) and the Examination hearings. Throughout, the Council has kept timescales up to date on the Council’s website to provide certainty to interested parties and those wishing to participate in the preparation of the Local Plan.

38. Each stage of the timetable has been followed and these actions are detailed in the Consultation Statement (Document A10). The Council does not have any intention to update the Local Development Scheme (Document E1) as part of the Examination. An updated Local Development Scheme will be prepared by East Suffolk Council for future rounds of plan making.
Community Involvement

Question 1.8

Has the Council complied with the requirements of section 19(3) of the 2004 Act with regard to conducting consultation in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement?

39. Yes. The Council’s Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (Document A11) was adopted in September 2014. The document sets out how the Council will engage on the preparation of the Local Plan and other documents which meets the requirements of section 19(3) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

40. Pages 7, 8 and 9 of the SCI detail who and how the Council involve individuals, groups and stakeholders in the preparation of planning policy documents. The Council’s Consultation Statement (Document A10) pages 3 – 15 provides specific information on who was consulted and the methods used to promote the consultation and encourage participation and engagement in the Local Plan.

41. Page 10 of the SCI (Document A11) sets out the period of time that a document will be consulted upon and the instances where the minimum period, required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended), may be extended. All periods of consultation under Regulation 18 (Issues and Options and First Draft Local Plan) were consulted on for longer than the 6 week minimum period due to them overlapping with the summer holiday period.

Climate Change

Question 1.9

Are the policies of the Plan designed to secure that the development and use of land contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change in accordance with Section 19(1A) of the Act?

42. Yes. The Council has prepared the policies in the Final Draft Local Plan (Document A1) within the context of climate change as required by Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

43. Throughout the Final Draft Local Plan, the Council recognises climate change as an issue and ensures that, where appropriate, policies seek to reduce the impact of development on climate change. The table of Key Issues on page 7 and 8 of the Final Draft Local Plan.
highlights the importance of climate change to the Local Plan and this is reiterated in other sections of the document.

44. The Vision which is central to the Final Draft Local Plan (pages 23 and 24) outlines that climate change is a key factor for the district and that the Local Plan addressed “issues relating to flood risk, coastal erosion and wider coastal management and adaptation, as well as ensuring the human impact is reduced and mitigated accordingly.”

45. Table 3.1 (pages 24-28) also outlines that climate change is a Strategic Priority for the district and this will be mitigated through reducing human impact on the environment and conserving the natural resources within the District. Table 3.1 (page 27) also outlines the specific policies which will deliver this strategic objective, which amongst others also includes chapter 9 that is dedicated to climate change.

46. As part of the plan making process, the Council has undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal to inform the policies within the Final Draft Local Plan. Fundamental to the Sustainability Appraisal process is the consideration of objectives which relate to climate change, the mitigation of this or the introduction of techniques to ensure adaptation can be achieved. Details of the Sustainability Appraisal process can be found in Documents A3, B2, B3, B6 and B7.

47. Evidence base documents have also been prepared whilst taking into account the effects of climate change and what mitigation or adaptation measures may be needed over the plan period. For example the Cross Boundary Water Cycle Study (Document D24), the AONB Management Plan (Document D25) and the Deben Estuary Plan (Document D26) all take into account the effects of climate change.

48. The Council is satisfied that the policies within the Final Draft Local Plan have been designed to secure that developments that come forward over the plan period contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change in accordance with Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.