Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Examination

Note on proposed modifications to SCLP10.4 Landscape Character

1. This note responds to the Inspector’s comments in relation to modifications put forward to Policy SCLP10.4 Landscape Character. These modifications were agreed through a Statement of Common Ground between East Suffolk Council and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Partnership dated August 2019.

2. Following the comments of the Inspector, the Council acknowledges that the modifications do not fully capture the provisions of paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation to the consideration of proposals that constitute major development in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

3. It is considered however that the modifications agreed previously through the Statement of Common Ground are consistent with the first part of paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that “Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, ...” Ensuring that development will not have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB is considered to consistently apply the national policy of giving great weight to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty within a local plan policy context.

4. Modifications are shown in strikethrough for deleted text and in underline for additional text. The Council will include these revisions in the schedule of modifications that has been collated as part of the Examination. The text shaded in grey is that which is proposed under this note.

Modification to Policy SCLP10.4:

“Development will not be permitted where it would have a significant adverse impact on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, that cannot be adequately mitigated. Development within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or within its setting, will be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment to assess and identify potential impacts and to identify suitable measures to avoid or mitigate these impacts. Planning permission for major development in the AONB will be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, subject to the considerations set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.”

New paragraph after 10.34:
“The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest, and sets out a series of ‘tests’ against which applications for major development would be considered. The NPPF explains that whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.”