



East Suffolk Council Residential Development Briefs

Introduction

East Suffolk Council aims to achieve high quality outcomes and developments from all future growth in the East Suffolk area. The adopted East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan (adopted March 2019) and the emerging East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (currently under examination) both include numerous sites for development up to 2036.

This is an informal consultation to gather respondents' views on the scope, aims and design of a template for residential development briefs which will be created for some sites in the Local Plans. At this early and informal consultation stage we would particularly like to hear the views of developers, agents, landowners and specific consultees. This consultation does not replace the formal consultation that will take place for the individual briefs for sites once these have been drafted. A number of questions have been listed below which should be used to guide responses.

The Purpose of this Consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to gain views on the scope and aims of the residential development briefs and the process that will be followed to create them (as outlined later in this document). The following questions have been created to guide comments on the draft residential development brief template, however views are welcomed on any elements of the draft template or the residential development brief drafting process.

- 1) Do you think residential development briefs will help facilitate high quality design?
 - a. If yes, why do you think this?
 - b. If no, why do you think this and what other design governance tool/s do you think would be more useful?
- 2) Do you think the draft residential development brief template provides the scope and detail needed to guide Pre-Application discussions and planning applications on allocated sites?
- 3) Are there any additional considerations that the draft residential development brief template could include?

- 4) Do you think the draft residential development brief template is easy to use and understand?
- 5) Do you think the balance between written and visual information is appropriate?
- 6) How do you think the document presentation could be improved?
- 7) Do you have views on when and how landowners and agents should be involved in the drafting process?

The Process for Creating the Residential Development Briefs

Once the template has been finalised, the Council will begin the process of drafting development briefs for the relevant sites. The general process for this is outlined below.

- 1) Desk-based analysis of the site to determine constraints and opportunities for the site to achieve the highest quality development for all involved.
- 2) Site visit to determine any other considerations that would need to be included in the residential development brief.
- 3) Draft the residential development brief in consultation with teams across the East Suffolk planning service as well as with the landowners/agents of the site. Engaging with landowners and agents will be important to ensure the appropriate consideration is given to the residential development briefs from the outset.
- 4) Public Consultation on the draft residential development brief. All comments received will be considered and the briefs amended accordingly.
- 5) Adoption of the residential development brief as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Background

A Housing Design Audit for England released in January 2020 concluded that up to 75% of new housing developments suffered from either 'mediocre' or 'poor' design. Areas where new housing developments performed particularly poorly were in terms of responding to local character and sense of place.

The report outlines a number of recommendations, such as needing to outline clear ambitions for sites from an early stage. It recommends that sites be considered in parts as well as a whole. Most importantly, the report finds that "the most effective design governance tools are design codes and design reviews but they are used far less than other generic approaches" (p9).

The Development Briefs

The ambition of East Suffolk Council is to be at the forefront of ensuring high quality, inclusive and sustainable development that meets the needs and aspirations of everyone

involved. It is the Council's view that residential development briefs are a key tool to ensure that this ambition is achieved.

Once drafted, the residential development briefs will take the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and will therefore be considerations when a planning application is submitted for a site. The residential development briefs are intended to be concise and easily accessible, with the focus being on mapping and photographs. Each residential development brief will highlight the considerations that any development on the site will need to respond to and will outline the Council's aims for each site without being prescriptive and allowing for innovative design. Thus, planning applications will be expected to demonstrate how the principles outlined in the relevant residential development brief have been considered.

The residential development briefs are not intended to replace or negate the need for pre-application discussions with the Council. Paragraphs 39-42 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and Planning Practice Guidance state that pre-application discussions and consultation have significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system. The residential development briefs are intended to form a starting point for these discussions to take place.

A draft residential development brief template has been created based on these aims. This will be used as the starting point for each residential development brief. However, the template is designed to be flexible in order to respond to the complexity of each separate site. There may be some instances where, for example, more detail or multiple maps may need to be used due to the factors relating to a specific site. The text highlighted in red on the draft template is to be used by East Suffolk planners as the starting points for highlighting the various considerations of each site. The text in black is standard text that will be used for every site.