

# Initial Consultation Document

## Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document

Consultation Dates: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Monday 7<sup>th</sup>  
November 2022



## What is a Supplementary Planning Document?

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) expand upon policy and provide further detail to support the implementation of policies in Local Plans. Whilst not a part of the development plan, they are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Local Plan policies, which this SPD provides guidance on, can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/localplan).

## The Purpose of the Healthy Environments SPD

The Healthy Environments SPD is intended to provide planning and design guidance for creating built environments and accessible natural infrastructure which help to support our communities' health, weight status, inclusion, social connectivity, wellbeing, and amenity.

The Healthy Environments SPD is also proposed to provide useful tools and guidance (or to sign post to further external guidance) for use during the design and appraisal processes to support the delivery of development proposals with the capacity to improve these key health and wellbeing outcomes, and that reduce potential for health inequalities within new communities.

The need to ensure that built environments are inclusive of all ages and abilities, to promote healthier lifestyles (increasing activity and reducing overweight and obesity), to tackle physical and mental health and life expectancy inequalities within the district, and to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime (including the fear of crime) were identified through the preparation of the East Suffolk Local Plans. Improving the health and wellbeing of those who live and/or work in the district were identified as key strategic priorities for both the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (adopted September 2020) and the Waveney Local Plan (adopted March 2019).

The Healthy Environments SPD is therefore being produced to support interpretation of the policies of the adopted Local Plans that are intended to deliver on the respective Plans' strategic priorities for health and wellbeing. This is through addressing the range of 'wider determinants' of health and wellbeing that arise from how built environments and the accessible natural spaces that support them are planned and designed.

Recent changes in national legislation, policy and guidance, and the greater focus on health inequalities, weight status and social connections following the COVID-19 pandemic have further increased the need for guidance on Local Plan policy interpretation for achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

The SPD will also supersede and update the guidance included in the former Suffolk Coastal district's SPG15 Outdoor Playing Space (2001).

## Background

Health and wellbeing are complex, with a multitude of factors influencing the determination of a person's current state of health. Some determinants are personal, such as genetics, age and gender, or are social (relationships), whilst others may be directly environmental (for example exposure to cold, damp and noise from poor quality housing) or behavioural, which may be influenced by the environment (for example, communities not feeling safe to walk or cycle locally, and therefore not engaging in these health protecting activities).

The form and function of built environments create the physical context in which people that live and work in East Suffolk play out their everyday lives, and as such are highly influential in the overall lifestyles available to them. Key elements of built environments that may influence health, wellbeing and amenity include:

- public and private buildings – their mix of uses (and therefore the activities they facilitate, the access they facilitate to goods and services, impacts of operations on amenity, etc.), accessibility, condition and quality of design;
- accessible natural open spaces (for example, public parks) or more hardscape open spaces (for example, market squares);
- natural infrastructure that is integrated as green/blue 'threads' (for example, tree lined streets, green roofs, front gardens, street planters, rain gardens, etc.), and;
- transport infrastructure.

The quality of the planning and design of these key elements influence communities' opportunities to access mental, physical and social health-creating experiences (for example, time in nature, culture, heritage), behaviours (for example, engaging in exercise and being able to eat healthily), and relationships (time with community, family and friends). Built environments that are well planned and designed may have a positive impact on communities' health and wellbeing by providing access to (but not limited to):

- housing that meets housing needs, creates mixed communities and is tenure blind;
- community, cultural, play, sports and leisure facilities that meet the needs of all ages and abilities;
- inclusive and wildlife-accommodating natural open space;
- private/semi-private external space;
- community growing space;
- active travel infrastructure, and;
- a mix of uses that provide access to high-quality food, goods and services, including services for the treatment of ill-health.

Built environments that are not well planned or designed may have a negative impact on communities' health and wellbeing by causing them to (but not limited to):

- not feel safe to walk or cycle;
- be unable to access healthy food, healthcare, education, employment; and/or personal development opportunities;

- not often/ not positively interact with their neighbours and wider community;
- be encouraged to engage in excessive consumption of alcohol and/or fast food, or other activities harmful to their health and well-being, and/or;
- care less about the quality and maintenance of their environment, due to the way that unattractive, poor design indicates to resident communities that they, their activities, and the places in which they live/work are not valued.

The planning and design of built environments also influences residential amenity. This is through the effectiveness of its approach to management of exposure to environmental stressors (noise, poor air quality, odour, natural light, artificial light exposure, reduced privacy, etc.) on communities arising from nearby land uses and activities that are incompatible or are incompatible without appropriate design measures to reduce impacts.

The quality and functionality of built environments may also have positive or negative overall wellbeing impacts on communities' feelings of place attachment, identity, civic pride, sense of meeting their potential, belonging to a community, and overall assessment of their quality of life. Built environments that do not support communities' health and wellbeing may not only cause harm, but may encourage people to move away, undermining community cohesion. Designing developments for healthy social interaction is therefore key to the success of sustainable mixed communities and to ensuring the wellbeing of all residents.

## Main objectives

The main objectives of the SPD are to:

- Provide guidance on the policies within the Local Plans, structured by topic (for example, open space, town centre environments, dementia friendly design, 20 minute neighbourhoods, etc.) and scale (neighbourhood>> plot> dwelling);
- provide good practice case study examples of planning and design initiatives;
- 'sign-post' to useful design guidance to support successful implementation of East Suffolk Council strategies, Suffolk County Council guidance, and national-level guidance;
- provide guidance/suggestions for neighbourhood plans on policy options for supporting health;
- provide a 'master checklist' to help guide the design process of new development, and;
- produce an East Suffolk Health Impact Assessment (HIA) template(s) for assessing the impacts of development proposals and provide guidance on the expected content of HIAs.

## About this consultation

This is the first stage of consultation and will inform the preparation of the Healthy Environments SPD. The aim of this consultation is to gather feedback on what you think the SPD should include and address. The proposed content of the SPD and a series of consultation questions are set out further below. Please respond to this consultation by 5pm **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**, via one of the following means:

- Complete the online questionnaire;
- Email your response to [planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk); or
- Post your response to Planning Policy & Delivery Team, Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 0EQ

Please note that by responding to this consultation you are accepting that your name and response will be available for public inspection and published online in accordance with the Town and County Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012). View the [data protection statement](#).

## Next Steps

The scope and content of the SPD will be informed by responses to this consultation, after which a full draft of the SPD will be prepared. The draft SPD will be supported by Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment screening opinions and where necessary full assessments. Public consultation will be undertaken on the full draft of the SPD.

## Proposed content of the SPD

The SPD is proposed to cover the following key topic areas:

**Healthy homes and workplaces to protect health and amenity:** provide guidance on the planning, design and construction of sustainable homes and places of work, leisure, and education that protect health, productivity, creativity, wellbeing and amenity. This is through meeting needs for (but not limited to):

- adequate internal space and storage space;
- design that facilitates flexible use and adaptation of the building;
- appropriate kitchen spaces/facilities to support healthy eating;
- glazing schemes that provide multiple aspects (where possible) and natural light for natural surveillance and maintaining a healthy 'body clock'

- adequate sound proofing;
- measures for climate resilience through high levels of water and energy efficiency, and optimising orientation, plantings and elevation design for balancing solar gain and solar shade (as to warm the home in cooler weather but avoid overheating in warmer weather, reducing heating and cooling costs and risk of cold/heat-related ill-health), and;
- ventilation (for good internal air quality and avoidance of damp and mould).

The SPD is proposed to encourage developers of town centre use buildings to consider options for designing in flexibility and adaptability to their units in order to best facilitate any likely possible changes of use and associated alterations/extensions over the lifetime of the building. This is to support the resilience of town, district and local centres so they may continue to thrive as demands for how these places and spaces should be used/activities undertaken evolve over time. Guidance on managing the impacts of new uses, or intensification of existing uses, that may have impacts on amenity (for example, hot food takeaway) will also be included.

The SPD is also proposed to encourage and support the provision of a variety of housing models for meeting housing needs not met by general housing, including sheltered accommodation, independent living accommodation, community-led housing and self-build plots (as appropriate) through guidance on how the design of these models may be optimised for positive health and wellbeing outcomes. The key policies for this topic area are listed in the table below:

Key Local Plan policies	
East Suffolk – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	East Suffolk – Waveney Local Plan
SCLP4.2: New Employment Development and SCLP4.3: Expansion and Intensification of Employment Sites (Amenity)	WLP8.13 - New Employment Development and WLP8.12 - Existing Employment Areas (Amenity)
SCLP4.8: New Retail and Commercial Leisure Development (Amenity)	WLP8.18 - New Town Centre Use Development and WLP8.20 - Local Shopping Centres (Amenity)
SCLP9.2 - Sustainable Construction (Resource efficiency/optional technical standards)	WLP8.28 - Sustainable Construction (Resource efficiency/optional technical standards for water and carbon emissions)
SCLP5.8: Housing Mix (Housing mix and optional technical standards for	WLP8.1 – Housing Mix and WLP8.31 - Lifetime Design (Housing mix; optional technical

<p>accessible and adaptable dwellings; meeting the needs of older people; alternative housing models to general housing)</p> <p>SCLP11.1: Design Quality (and Building for a Healthy Life) (design for functionality, safety, amenity, inclusivity, health and wellbeing; dementia-friendly design)</p> <p>SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity</p> <p>SCLP5.7: Infill and Garden Development (Amenity)</p>	<p>standards for accessible and adaptable dwellings; meeting the needs of older people and dementia-friendly design)</p> <p>WLP8.4 - Conversion of Properties to Flats (Amenity)</p> <p>WLP8.29 – Design (and Building for a Healthy Life) (design for functionality, safety, amenity, inclusivity, health and wellbeing)</p> <p>WLP8.33 - Residential Gardens and Urban Infilling (Amenity)</p>
<b>Key Council strategies/guidance documents</b>	
<p>Air Quality Strategy (updated annually)</p> <p>East Suffolk Sustainable Construction SPD (see Chapter 11 Healthy Buildings and Places)</p>	

**Social, accessible, inclusive and attractive design of the public realm:** provide guidance on creating a more sociable public realm that helps to create mixed communities by promoting:

- community interaction through well designed layouts;
- shared open space and recreational facilities with equal access;
- tenure blind housing design; and
- the fair distribution of affordable tenure homes (in mixed-tenure housing-led schemes).

The SPD is also proposed to provide design guidance on creating public realm environments that are disability, neurodiversity, and dementia friendly in their design. The SPD is also proposed to provide guidance on creating attractive, legible, functional, safe, and convenient to use public realm environments that incorporate heritage assets, culture, and natural infrastructure to support health and wellbeing. The key policies for this topic area are listed in the table below:

Key Local Plan policies	
East Suffolk – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	East Suffolk – Waveney Local Plan
SCLP4.10: Town Centre Environments (Social spaces; inclusive design; protecting historic environments)	WLP8.1 – Housing Mix and WLP8.31 - Lifetime Design (meeting housing need; meeting the needs of older people; accessible and adaptable dwellings)
SCLP5.8: Housing Mix (meeting housing need; meeting the needs of older people; accessible and adaptable dwellings)	WLP8.2 – Affordable Housing (mixed communities; tenure blind design)
SCLP5.10: Affordable Housing on Residential Developments (mixed communities)	WLP8.29 – Design (and Building for a Healthy Life) (attractive and functional design; inclusive design; tenure blind design)
SCLP 11.1: Design Quality (and Building for a Healthy Life) (attractive and functional design; inclusive design; tenure blind design)	WLP8.21 - Sustainable Transport (functional design; inclusive design; reducing travel costs/barriers)
SCLP11.2: Residential Amenity (protecting community relationships)	Policy WLP8.32 – Housing Density and Design (urban morphology)
SCLP7.1 - Sustainable Transport (functional design; inclusive design; reducing travel costs/barriers)	WLP8.30 - Design of Open Spaces (integration for placemaking)
SCLP9.6 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (nature-based schemes)	
SCLP8.2: Open Space (integration for placemaking)	
Key Council strategies/guidance and national guidance documents	
Building for a Healthy Life Affordable Housing SPD (see Chapter 7 Design) East Suffolk Leisure Strategy Green Infrastructure Strategy (former Waveney area)	



East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy (nearing adoption)  
 (Suffolk County Council) Suffolk Design: Streets Guide  
 (Department for Transport) Cycle Infrastructure Design – LTN 1/20

**Active travel infrastructure:** the SPD is proposed to include guidance on supporting the delivery of high quality active travel infrastructure for all active travel purposes. High quality active travel infrastructure encourages people away from using private vehicles which provides a range of significant benefits including air quality, quality of place, and physical and mental health. The key policies for this topic area are listed in the table below:

Key Local Plan policies	
East Suffolk – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	East Suffolk – Waveney Local Plan
SCLP4.10: Town Centre Environments (access improvements)	WLP8.18 – New Town Centre Use Development
SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport (active travel infrastructure)	WLP8.21 – Sustainable Transport (active travel infrastructure)
SCLP8.2: Open Space (active travel infrastructure integration into open space)	WLP8.30 – Design of Open Spaces (active travel infrastructure integration into open space)
Key policy/guidance and national guidance documents	
East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy (nearing adoption) (Suffolk County Council) Suffolk Design: Streets Guide (Department for Transport) Cycle Infrastructure Design – LTN 1/20	

**Protecting health and wellbeing with 20-minute neighbourhoods:** on creating more sustainably located, connected, compact and complete settlements, centres and developments. The ‘20 minute neighbourhood’ concept is centred around making it easy, convenient and sustainable to access the goods, services and spaces that meet the needs of everyday life via walking, cycling or public transport (with ‘20 minutes’ referring to a radius of time spent walking). This is achieved through optimising the mix of uses, services, amenities and facilities, and their proximity and relationships with each other. The ‘20

minute neighbourhoods' concept is best applied in more dense urban areas, and therefore the concept may need to be adapted to provide guidance on achieving connected, compact and complete developments at different scales and in more rural locations within the district.

Similarly, the SPD is also proposed to provide guidance to support emerging, related combination concepts such as 'Wellness Hubs', where the co-location of health infrastructure (for example, sports and leisure facilities, creches), natural infrastructure (for example, planters, community gardens and natural children's play areas), healthcare infrastructure (for example, GP practices, chemists, etc.), wellbeing services (for example, salons), and relevant experience (for example, health-focused restaurants and cafes) and retail uses together creates connected, compact and complete health and leisure places that support community wellness. The key policies for this topic area are listed in the table below:

Key Local Plan policies	
East Suffolk – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan	East Suffolk – Waveney Local Plan
SCLP4.8: New Retail and Commercial Leisure Development (Protecting compact and connected centres)	WLP8.19 – Vitality and Viability of Town Centres, WLP8.20 – Local Shopping Centres, WLP8.30 – Design of Open Spaces and WLP8.29 – Design (and Building for a Healthy Life) (Protecting compact centres; supporting healthy lifestyles; integration of open space for placemaking centres)
SCLP4.9: Development in Town Centres, SCLP4.10: Town Centre Environments, SCLP4.12: District and Local Centres and Local Shops, SCLP8.2: Open Space and SCLP11.1: Design Quality (and Building for a Healthy Life) (Protecting retail hierarchy for connectedness, compactness, and completeness; supporting healthy lifestyles; integration of open space for placemaking centres)	Policy WLP8.22 – Built Community Services and Facilities (for complete centres)
SCLP8.1: Community Facilities and Assets (for complete centres)	WLP8.21 – Sustainable Transport (active travel infrastructure for connectedness)

SCLP7.1: Sustainable Transport (active travel infrastructure for connectedness)

**Key policy/guidance and national guidance documents**

East Suffolk Leisure Strategy  
 East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy (nearing adoption)  
 Green Infrastructure Strategy (former Waveney area)  
 (Suffolk County Council) Suffolk Design for Streets Guide  
 (Department for Transport) Cycle Infrastructure Design – LTN 1/20

**Providing high-quality outdoor spaces:** guidance that encourages development proposals to include the provision of adequate quantity, quality and variety of open spaces, providing communities with:

- a connection to plants, wildlife, climate and seasonality;
- opportunities for producing food at a domestic and community level through the provision of external private, semi-private and community food growing spaces;
- equipped and/or natural areas for play, exercise and social development, and;
- integrated nature-based solutions to sustainable drainage systems, providing amenity and biodiversity co-benefits.

The key policies for this topic area are listed in the table below:

<b>Key Local Plan policies</b>	
<b>East Suffolk – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan</b>	<b>East Suffolk – Waveney Local Plan</b>
SCLP4.10: Town Centre Environments (open space to support opportunities for social interaction)	WLP8.23 - Protection of Open Space
SCLP8.2: Open Space	WLP8.29 – Design (and Building for a Healthy Life)
SCLP8.3: Allotments	WLP8.30 - Design of Open Spaces
SCLP9.6 - Sustainable Drainage Systems (nature-based, multi-functional schemes)	

<p>SCLP10.4: Landscape Character (enhancing and protecting landscape character for health and wellbeing)</p> <p>SCLP11.1 Design Quality (and Building for a Healthy Life)</p>	
<p><b>Key Council/County Council strategies and guidance</b></p>	
<p>East Suffolk Leisure Strategy  Green Infrastructure Strategy (former Waveney area) (Suffolk County Council) Suffolk  Design: Streets guide  East Suffolk SPG 15 – Outdoor playing space (2001) (SPD will supersede)</p>	

As covered above in the Main objectives, the SPD is also intended to include an East Suffolk Health Impact Assessment (HIA) template(s) and a 'Healthy Environments Master Checklist'.

## Initial Consultation Questions

1. Do you consider the proposed scope (range of Local Plan policies and topic areas that have been included or excluded) of the SPD to be appropriate? Yes/No

If 'No', please suggest how you think the scope should be amended.

2. Do you consider the proposed content (the intended approach of the guidance to be included under each topic area) of the SPD to be appropriate? Yes/No

If 'No', please suggest how you think the content should be amended.

3. How valuable do you think an East Suffolk Health Impact Assessment template (or series of templates for different types of development proposals) to assess development proposals would be?

4. How valuable do you think a Healthy Environments Master Checklist of design considerations for use as a tool during the design process of a development proposal would be?

5. Are there any elements of national policy or guidance related to the creation of healthy environments that you consider would benefit from additional guidance in the SPD? Yes/No

If 'Yes', please explain what guidance is required.

6. Are there any developments or places that you think are good practice examples of overall health-supporting environments, or that have excelled in a particular aspect of creating health-supporting environments (for example, healthy homes and workplaces, inclusive design, active travel, natural infrastructure, encouraging community cohesion, etc.) that you would like to suggest for use as case studies in the SPD?

If so please list them below, and if possible please provide hyperlinks to more information.

7. Are there any examples of good practice guidance (for example, included in other SPDs or guidance documents) you think would be helpful to consider in the preparation of the SPD?

If so please list them below, and if possible please provide hyperlinks to more information.

8. Do you have any other comments or information that you would like us to consider in drafting the Healthy Environments SPD?

**Write to us**



East Suffolk Council  
Planning Policy and Delivery Team  
Riverside, 4 Canning Road,  
Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ

**Call us**



**Planning Policy and Delivery Team (Local Plans)**  
01502 523029 / 01394 444557

**Development Management (Planning Applications)**  
01502 523100

**Email us**



**Planning Policy and Delivery Team (Local Plans)**  
planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

**Development Management (Planning Applications)**  
planning@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

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