

# Planning and Building Control

Updates during Covid –19



## In this issue:

- Planning Policy and Delivery
- Planning Applications and Support
- Building Control
- Energy Projects



For the latest updates follow us on Twitter

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| East Suffolk Council          | <a href="https://twitter.com/EastSuffolk">https://twitter.com/EastSuffolk</a>         |
| East Suffolk Planning         | <a href="https://twitter.com/eastsuffolkplan">https://twitter.com/eastsuffolkplan</a> |
| East Suffolk Building Control | <a href="https://twitter.com/eastsuffolkbc">https://twitter.com/eastsuffolkbc</a>     |

*“Welcome to the first newsletter produced by the Council’s Planning and Building Control teams to update and advise on the changes and work patterns of the teams during this Covid 19 emergency.”*

*I can assure you all that the teams are working safely but are still committed to delivering the service.*

*I am enormously proud of their efforts and hope you will take a few minutes to read through the information provided and as always if you have any queries or concerns please either contact myself or one of the team who will be pleased to help. Please take care and stay safe.*

*Cllr David Ritchie*

*Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management at East Suffolk Council*

*“As Head of Planning and Coastal Management I echo Cllr Ritchie’s comments and welcome you to this first newsletter. All my teams are working remotely and we have the IT capability to maintain that for all council employees. We have embraced Skype and other ways of communicating and it has been brilliant to see how everyone in my teams has adapted. I also have many volunteers in the teams who have put themselves forward, when needed, to support other parts of the council in managing its role in helping our communities during this crisis.”*

*Through the Council Leader, Steve Gallant, and the Chief Executive, Stephen Baker we are intent on delivering our normal service as best we can and for my teams that is to ensure we can still deliver the Local Plan for the former SCDC area, determining planning applications and building regulation submissions. These are important for the future well being of the district as we enter the recovery stage. I have asked my teams to maintain dialogue with our main agents/developers to discuss current and possible future applications and I too have had some really positive discussions by Skype on a number of potential schemes.*

*I hope you find this newsletter useful and look forward to any comments you may wish to make. If you wish to contact me please e-mail me at [philip.ridley@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:philip.ridley@eastsuffolk.gov.uk). On behalf of all my teams please take care and be safe and look forward to the day when we can enjoy our fantastic and beautiful district .*

Phillip Ridley BSc(Hons) MRTPI

Head of Planning and Coastal Management

# Planning and Building Control

## Updates during Covid –19



### Planning Policy and Delivery Team

#### Update on the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Examination

The Government are encouraging local authorities to continue preparing their Local Plans.

Having now responded to the issues raised in the Planning Inspector's post Examination Hearings letter dated 31 January 2020, the Council will shortly be in a position to announce the timetable and arrangements for the consultation on the Inspector's proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan, taking into account the current Covid 19 restrictions relating to social distancing. The Council's responses to the issues raised in the Inspector's letter will be published, for information, alongside the consultation.

#### Neighbourhood Planning Support

The Planning Policy and Delivery team are available to support you with your neighbourhood plan. Staff can be contacted via email and on the telephone. You can email your normal contacts or use [planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk). Some staff may need to work slightly different hours to normal at times, but if you wish to discuss something we will arrange a mutually convenient time to do so. Please note we will not be scheduling any face-to-face meetings for the time being.

The Government's stay at home advice has implications for the timetabling of forthcoming consultations and neighbourhood plan referendums. Guidance from the Government on this matter can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2# covid-19>.

Frequently asked question responses have been provided by MHCLG here: <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/FAQ-on-Covid-19-Neighbourhood-Planning.pdf>

#### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL is an area of statutory council business which has been affected during this period due to construction sites closing and a halt to property sales. In order to support development commencing again we have considered the CIL implications and considered the steps detailed in the link below.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/developer-contributions/community-infrastructure-levy/coronavirus-actions-for-cil/>

As a result of our Infrastructure Team working remotely, we remain available to support developers, communities and infrastructure providers. If you need to contact us, please leave a voicemail on 01502 523059 or email [CIL@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:CIL@eastsoffolk.gov.uk) (if a new enquiry). Our team can all pick these up, will assign to the relevant officer from there and will call back where required.



# Planning and Building Control

## Updates during Covid –19



### Planning Applications and Support team

We remain open for business and are committed to delivering a high-quality service to all our customers.

### Covid-19 arrangements for planning applications

The link below provides guidance on the emergency measures put in place to deal with certain planning applications during this period. <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/covid-19-arrangements-for-planning-applications/> These emergency procedures delegating all decision making to the Head of Planning and Coastal Management are temporary until such time as the council implements procedures for remote working. The government published the Regulations to enable this to happen last week and there are ongoing discussions as to how they will be implemented at East Suffolk Council including how we will deliver Planning Committee meetings. When the procedures have been established and all the IT necessary to ensure the meetings will work we will inform everyone of how and when they will begin.

### Making a Planning Application

The most efficient way to make your planning application is through the Planning Portal, no delays and easy payment systems are available. The best possible way to keep the paperwork flowing. We still do accept paper copies, but please bear in mind with all officers working remotely, this will delay the receipt and registration of your planning application.

### Making your Planning Submission easier

When submitting a planning application, if you are able to include photographs of the site please consider doing so. Our planning officers are not currently making site visits due to strict protocols in place, and we want to offer the same great service. The more assistance you are able to provide our team with to understand your proposals the smoother and quicker it will make the consideration of your application.

### Parish E-consultation

Live from 1 April. If you haven't taken the opportunity to register, please do so now and don't miss out on your electronic documents. If you need assistance please send an email to [planning@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:planning@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) and we will get you started.

EIR search process is electronic as of 1st April 2020. Any Information you cannot find yourself through our site, please submit your personnel search through the EIR/FOI process.

### Using Public Access and the Planning Portal for answers

All staff within the planning applications team are working remotely to adhere to the current protocol for social distancing. We are still operating a Duty Officer service accessible via [dutyplanner@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:dutyplanner@eastsuffolk.gov.uk), but please bear in mind it is likely to take us a bit longer to be able to deal with your query. However, did you know, most of your common questions can be answered by visiting the Planning Portal ([www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk)) or the Council's website ([www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning)). If you have any queries regarding a current planning application please direct those to the case officer as identified on your consultation letter or on the website.

### Planning Support Team

Our Planning Support teams are working hard to process your Planning and Building Control applications, they are not reachable by phone, however, they can be reached via the Planning and Building Control email boxes at [Planning@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Planning@eastsuffolk.gov.uk), [buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:buildingcontrol@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) if your query cannot be answered first visiting the Planning Portal, Public Access or via the Duty Planner we will do our best to assist you

### Making a Payment

Our customer services team would be happy to take your payment for your Planning, Building Control or Land Charge Search requests. Please ensure you have all your details to hand that will allow them to direct your payment to the correct area without delay. E.g. application number, address, name, site address.

### Enforcement

We are continuing to provide an enforcement service, officers are only able to undertake site inspections in emergencies and we will visit sites subject to being confident we can adhere to the government guidance on social distancing to ensure the well being of staff. There may therefore be a delay in resolving the matter or providing clarification to you, but we will still log and progress the matter where possible. If you have any queries please contact [d.c.enforcement@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:d.c.enforcement@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

If you have any specific queries regarding planning applications please contact Liz Beighton, Planning Manager (Development Management) on [liz.beighton@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:liz.beighton@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) who will assist where possible.

# Planning and Building Control

## Updates during Covid –19



### Building Control

#### Site Inspections

During this unprecedented time, the Building Control department alongside neighbouring Authorities have decided to temporarily suspend all inspection duties other than those deemed as emergency site inspections or dangerous structures to avoid unnecessary contact.

Our primary focus is on the wellbeing of staff and the public, as a team we feel we have a responsibility to demonstrate safe practice and reduce encouragement for unnecessary activity or gatherings on active building sites.

To minimise impact for those choosing to continue building works we have offered an inspection service which is case-by-case where we 'may' accept photographic evidence as a physical inspection alternative if we deem it to be of limited risk and appropriate. All surveyors are offering over the phone advice and support, once again demonstrating the business as usual approach.

To promote this we are keeping our Twitter and LinkedIn pages updated with the surveyors area maps which include full contact details of every team member: <https://bit.ly/391CUk0>  
All inspection enquiries/requests will remain directed to the appropriate area surveyor.

All surveyors remain in direct contact with the support team (who have been exceptional!) to facilitate prompt and reliable administrative services.

We have seen several completion certificates requests and general property queries arise as people take stock at home and pull property records together.

#### Dangerous Structure Duties

Safety is our priority and our Dangerous Structures duties will remain in place to protect the public. Health and safety precautions will be considered upon attending any dangerous structure working alongside emergency services. All reports of dangerous structure duties will be dealt with by Mark Harvey, Bob Griffin or Michael Charlton.



# Planning and Building Control

## Updates during Covid –19



### Energy Projects

#### **Sizewell C new nuclear power station:**

The Joint Local Authority Group between East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council, recently sent out a newsletter detailing the current position with regards to the Sizewell C project, (attached/ <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/sizewell-nuclear-power-station/sizewell-c-joint-local-authority-group/sizewell-c-monthly-updates/sizewell-c-monthly-updates-2020/> ). Within the newsletter, reference is made to the joint Leader's statement in relation to the proposed delay in submission by EDF Energy. We continue and welcome discussions with EDF Energy on future timescales for submission of their application for a development consent order.

#### **East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two offshore wind farm proposals:**

Having regard to the current public health situation surrounding Covid-19, the Preliminary Meeting and Hearings scheduled for 24 – 26 March 2020 were postponed by the Planning Inspectorate. There has been no revised timeline published to date and we wait for further announcements from the Planning Inspectorate. In the meantime, officers are continuing to work on our Local Impact Report and responses to initial questions tabled by the Examining Authority (Planning Inspectorate).

#### **Other energy projects in East Suffolk:**

Although we have been engaging in early pre application discussions regarding the international interconnector projects and Galloper extension, these are currently on hold, at the request of the developers, due to the impending examination into the East Anglia One North and East Anglia Two windfarms. We are aware of future projects affecting East Suffolk including the potential for a domestic interconnector, but discussions are not currently active at this time.

Contact the team at: [sizewellc@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:sizewellc@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)



**Newsletter Editor: Lisa Mills**

**Planning Quality Outcomes Officer**

✉ [lisa.mills@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.mills@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)