

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership Position Statement (November 2018)

Planning consultations in the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Additional Project Area

Introduction

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated by the Government for ensuring that the natural beauty of the finest landscapes in England and Wales are conserved and enhanced.

Purpose

The purpose of this Position Statement, which has been endorsed by the Joint Advisory Committee (JAC), is to provide clarity for local planning authorities, landowners and other interested parties about the planning documents /applications that the AONB team would like to be consulted on.

The AONB team would like to be formally consulted on the following Planning Policy Documents covering the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB & Additional Project Area:

- A) Emerging Local Plans
- B) Supplementary Planning Documents
- C) Area Actions Plans
- D) Emerging Waste and Mineral Plans
- E) Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

We would also like to be formally consulted on the planning applications within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB & Additional Project Area listed below.

The criteria below indicate the planning applications that should automatically be referred to the AONB team for comments on landscape grounds. We would ask our Local Planning Authority partners to screen applications and only consult us on proposals where the following impacts are thought likely:

- all Nationally Significant Infrastructure schemes
- applications with the potential to result in a significant negative impact to the natural beauty and environmental quality of the designated landscape.
- applications of a sufficient scale or set within a sensitive landscape setting with the potential to detract from the protected landscape qualities of the area (e.g. footprint, scale, mass, height and location). These might include agricultural buildings, industrial sites, offices, care homes, housing developments, including proposals for large isolated dwellings and renewable energy facilities.

- those that could significantly reduce the tranquillity of the area through increased levels of light and noise. These might include sports facilities, road proposals and mineral and extraction sites.
- applications with the potential to result in a notable increase in disturbance from increased numbers of visitors or recreational pressures. These might include increases associated with nearby housing developments and new visitor attractions.
- applications with the potential to change the landscape character of the area (e.g. land use changes that are subject to planning permissions). These might include the use of poly-tunnels and pony paddocks, as part of horse livery.
- Applications/proposals that relate to changes to Rights of Way, particularly promoted routes in the AONB, such as the Stour and Orwell Walk and the Suffolk Coast Path/England Coast Path.
- Applications that establish precedents and that may reduce the need for further liaison where there is a recurrence of similar planning applications. Particularly in cases that require a departure from Local Plan policy and for exception sites.

We wish to be notified about planning consultations both within the AONB and within a 5km buffer zone around the AONB. By setting the buffer zone to 5km, this should not preclude any consultations more distant from the AONB if it is thought they too could have a significant negative impact upon its setting.

National & Local Policy Context

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a statutory duty on all relevant authorities requiring them to have regard to the statutory purpose of AONBs when coming to decisions or carrying out their activities relating to or affecting land within these areas.

Paragraphs 170 – 173 of the revised 2018 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the planning approach within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In policy terms AONBs have the same planning status as National Parks.

[National Policy Statements for energy](#) set out the planning considerations that have to be balanced when delivering large scale energy projects within AONB.

Sections 3.2.2 – 3.2.7 Development & Infrastructure in the [Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Management Plan 2013-2018](#) identifies the issues and high level planning approach within the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and Additional Project Area.

For further information contact the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and Stour Valley Project on 01394 445225 or via dedhamvalestourvalley.org