

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Executive  
28 October 2009  
**Report of** Head of Planning and Regeneration  
**Subject** Site Allocations Development Plan Document

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### Purpose

This report explains the need for a Site Allocations Development Plan Document as part of the local development framework for Norwich. Public consultation is planned on possible development sites for the future and this report describes why sites need to be allocated, and how the ones included at this stage have come forward. The sites are for public comment and there will be further opportunities for the public to be involved as the plan-making process develops. The accompanying sustainability appraisal scoping report is also part of the proposed consultation.

### Recommendation

1. To approve the start of public consultation on the Site Allocations Development Plan Document, and the accompanying sustainability appraisal scoping report.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (Sustainable City Development) to make further minor editing changes to the consultation documents before they are finalised.

### Financial Consequences

The costs involved in this public consultation are planned for in existing budgets.

### Risk Assessment

This is a very early stage of plan preparation for the Site Allocations Development Plan Document. This stage does not commit the council to decisions on possible development sites for the future.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future” and the service plan priority to deliver the Local Development Framework for Norwich.

**Executive Member:** Councillor Morrey - Sustainable City Development

**Ward:** All

### Contact Officers

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**Background documents:**

None.

## **Introduction**

1. In 2004, the government introduced a new system to prepare and deliver planning policy called the local development framework (LDF). It will be a family of policy documents to guide development in the city. Once adopted, the suite of LDF documents will replace the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (adopted 2004). This report is about the next plan the council is preparing as part of the LDF.
2. Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is a core document and will provide the strategy to guide, manage and deliver the growth deemed necessary for the area by central and regional government. For Norwich, it is especially important to help address the significant concentrations of deprivation, develop the economy; ensure new development is more sustainable and provide the strategic policy to support the council's priorities for regeneration. The JCS is currently prepared jointly for the Greater Norwich Area in partnership with Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council and Norfolk County Council.
3. The Site Allocations DPD is part of the LDF and follows the joint core strategy. Unlike the JCS, which is a document prepared jointly for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk districts; the Site Allocations Plan is being prepared individually by each council, in this case for the City of Norwich area alone. The Site Allocations DPD will allocate sites for various land uses, including future housing or employment development. It will also help to deliver the spatial elements of the council's Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **Why do sites need to be allocated?**

4. The council needs to show how it will identify sites, as well as protecting or developing land for jobs to develop the city's role as one of the key regional engines of growth. Sites are allocated for the following reasons:
  - The Local Plan and the development sites it allocates will be superseded by Site Allocations Plan as part of the LDF;
  - The allocations are necessary to ensure a supply of suitable and sustainable sites to provide homes, jobs and community facilities for the future;
  - The Site Allocations plan needs to show how the city can accommodate at least 3,000 more homes by 2026 as required by the government's regional targets and the minimum requirement for Norwich as set out in the Joint Core Strategy.

## **How have sites in been identified at this stage?**

5. Sites have come forward in the following ways:

### **Call for sites**

During February to April 2009 the council invited developers, agents, community groups and the public to suggest sites for possible development or

change. The sites put forward are automatically included in the draft consultation document.

### **Strategic Housing Land Availability Study (SHLAA)**

The SHLAA was completed earlier this year and is part of the LDF evidence base. It reviewed the housing potential of sites across the city, and identified whether they were *suitable* and *developable*. However, the sites included in this study will not automatically become housing development sites – the study was to look at *potential*.

### **Adopted Local Plan**

The Local Plan (2004) allocated sites for a range of future uses. However, not all of them have been developed yet. These will be included in the draft Site Allocations plan and will be subject to consultation on whether they should continue to be allocations for the intended use, or for another use.

### **Evidence studies prepared for the Joint Core Strategy**

- Greater Norwich Employment Sites and Premises study

This study reviewed employment related sites across the city, including those already in the Local Plan. It recommended a list of sites for primary employment use and for general mixed employment use.

- Retail and Town Centres study

This study reviewed and assessed the city centre, district and local centres and recommended potential sites for additional retail use.

### **The consultation process**

6. The consultation document forms part of this Executive report as appendix A. It is available electronically on the council's website at:  
[http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/meeting\\_minutes/Meetings.asp?meeting=specific&mid=2051&id=](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/meeting_minutes/Meetings.asp?meeting=specific&mid=2051&id=) (committee meetings – Executive 28 October 2009). This is first consultation under Regulation 25 of the plan-making regulations. At this stage, Norwich City Council is not committed to allocate any of the sites in this document. The inclusion of a site in this document does not represent any decision by the Council (unless a planning permission has already been granted).
7. The potential sites are proposed for specific uses that are set out in the consultation document. There are about 170 sites for the following types of development:
  - housing;
  - employment;
  - retail;

- mixed use;
  - other sites from Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment;
  - other sites (protection for environmental or conservation purposes)
8. At this early stage in the plan-making process, there will not be detailed proposal for all the sites. However, it is likely that enough land to provide for at least 3,000 homes will exist among the sites put forward.

### **Other appraisals and assessments**

9. It is a requirement of the plan-making process that a sustainability appraisal is undertaken in parallel with the development of a plan such as this one. A sustainability appraisal is a systematic and iterative process to ensure sustainability considerations are integrated into plan-making and to ensure that environmental, economic and social impacts are taken into account. At this stage, a scoping report has been prepared which sets out a proposed sustainability framework against which proposed sites and alternatives will be judged. The public are also invited to comment on the proposed sustainability framework. The scoping report is available electronically on the Council's website at:  
[http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/meeting\\_minutes/Meetings.asp?meeting=specific&mid=2051&id=](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/meeting_minutes/Meetings.asp?meeting=specific&mid=2051&id=) (committee meetings – Executive 28 October 2009).
10. A habitats directive assessment is mandatory for all development plan documents, like this one.
11. A diversity impact assessment will be undertaken to meet the council's obligations to evaluate the effects of the plan on the equalities strands and consider the implications of the policies.

### **Consultation and public engagement**

12. A comprehensive programme of events is planned as part of the consultation process. The council's efforts will be focussed to make best use of time and resources whilst also seeking a breadth and depth of public response to help make the process effective. There will be a combined planning consultation for the Site Allocations Plan together with the Statement of Community Involvement from the end of November 2009 to early February 2010.
13. In summary, the consultation process will involve a city-wide event, four neighbourhood-based focus groups, and exhibitions (including City Hall). Officers will also aim to attend other organisations' meetings to give briefings and answer questions about the process and the sites. The consultation will be publicised through the media, the council's website, cascaded through local organisations of community groups and other targeted publicity.

### **Relationship with other related LDF documents**

#### Development Control DPD

14. The City-wide Development Control Policies DPD will provide more detailed, generic policies to complement the Site Allocations DPD. These policies will be

used to determine planning applications and set out spatial planning requirements to protect the natural and built environments for example. Work on the development control policies document will start in 2010.

### Northern City Centre Area Action Plan

15. There are a number of sites allocated separately in the Northern City Centre Area Action Plan. The Area Action Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State and the public examination will be held in the first week of November 2009. Once adopted, it will form part of the council's Local Development Framework. The sites allocated in the Area Action Plan, however, are not included in this consultation document because the Council has already reached a decision on them, but they will form part of the overall list of proposed allocations.

### **Members' briefings**

16. Early drafts of the consultation documents and proposals to involve the public were considered by the local development framework working party on 14 September 2009 and at a briefing for all councillors on 13 October 2009. Comments raised by members were concerned with clarification on some of the descriptions about individual sites. Following members' suggestions, information will be prepared to help ward councillors explain the purpose of the consultation and the status of sites, and how to encourage their constituents to take part.

### **Evaluating sites after consultation**

17. Following the consultation, there will be an assessment of the sites looking at their suitability, availability, public comments and local issues before proposing favoured sites based on their deliverability. If additional sites are suggested during this process the council will consider how and when to consult the public on them.

### **Next steps**

18. The next planned stages in the work programme are:

- First public consultation (Regulation 25) – December 2009
- Second public consultation (Regulation 25) – August 2010
- Public representations on soundness (publication version) – February 2011
- Submission to the Secretary of State – October 2011
- Adoption – December 2012

## **References**

City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan, 2004

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, 2009

Joint Core Strategy, publication version, 2009

'Call for sites', individual representations, February – April 2009

Town & Country (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended

Planning Policy Statement 12: local spatial planning