

Report to Sustainable development panel
18 July 2018
Report of Director of regeneration and development
Subject Greater Norwich Local Plan Update

Item

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Purpose

To update members on the progress made on the Greater Norwich Local Plan following the meetings of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) on 19 June and the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) on 25 June.

Recommendation

To note the contents of this report, which will contribute to the production of the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan in due course.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities: a prosperous and vibrant city, a safe, clean and low carbon city, and a healthy city with good services.

Financial implications

None

Ward/s: All Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard - Sustainable and inclusive growth

Contact officers

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. The Regulation 18 consultation on the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) took place in early 2018. Separate reports were taken to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership on 19 June 2018 providing high level feedback on the consultation, and setting out a revised timeline for preparation of the plan.
2. This report summarises both GNDP reports for information. The full text of the reports is available:

<http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/planning/greater-norwich-local-plan/>

High level feedback on the Regulation 18 consultation

3. The consultation took place between January and March 2018 and sought comments on a number of documents, including the Growth Options document, Site Proposals document, Interim Sustainability Appraisal, and the evidence base.
4. Nearly 1,400 people attended 29 roadshow events and over 8,000 representations were submitted, evenly spread between sites and strategy. 180 new sites were submitted and 22 revisions to existing sites were proposed.
5. The key findings arising from the consultation responses were:
 - (a) There was greater support for the concentration of development around Norwich and in transport corridors than there was for more dispersed growth;
 - (b) Mixed views were expressed on the potential for a new settlement;
 - (c) There was more support than opposition to a new Green Belt, with a wedge based approach being favoured. However, a significant minority stated that the 'exceptional circumstances' required by Government for a Green Belt do not exist;
 - (d) Further consideration will need to be given to housing numbers. Contrasting views were expressed that higher numbers are required to meet needs or that the number should be lower as existing allocations should be developed first and any new sites should be held in reserve.
 - (e) Similarly, there were mixed view on jobs growth, with a small majority favouring 'enhanced growth';
 - (f) The approach taken to the settlement hierarchy will also need to be considered further. There was broad support for retaining the current approach to the settlement hierarchy tiers, with the concept of 'Village Groups' having limited support;
 - (g) The vast majority argued that additional infrastructure would be required as a result of growth, with some stating that this was a reason to limit

growth. Many responses focussed on health, transport, schools and water and the need for a comprehensive infrastructure evidence base was identified.

6. The 180 new sites and 22 revised sites will be subject to an initial HELAA assessment to inform a focused public consultation in autumn/ winter 2018. Key points about these sites are:
 - (a) Of the new and revised sites, 70 are in Broadland, 122 in South Norfolk and 10 in Norwich;
 - (b) 65 new sites are under 1 hectare, with 10 sites between 0.4 and 0.5 hectares;
 - (c) 8 new sites are between 10 and 20 hectares. These are in Horsham St Faiths/Newton St Faiths, Bawburgh, Mulbarton, Little Melton, Tivetshall St Mary, Norwich and Rackheath;
 - (d) 18 sites are over 20 hectares. These include a redrawing of the land at Honingham Thorpe, as well as sites at Rackheath, Horsford, Acle, Diss, Costessey and Wymondham. A 50 hectare site east of Harford Tesco has been put forward for employment use;
 - (e) One new settlement site (394 hectares) has been submitted at Silfield and the previous Spooner Row submission has been expanded so that it is effectively a new settlement scale proposal;
 - (f) Of the new sites in Norwich, 3 are significant sites in the city centre: the Archant offices/car park (for mixed use development); Chapelfield (for intensification of current uses) and Riverside (for intensification of uses, including additional housing). While no submission has been made on Carrow Works, the future of this strategic site will need to be considered through the GNLP. Two new sites, south of the Sainsbury Centre and the Congregation Hall, are within the UEA.
7. The new sites submitted will provide more choice for strategy development. In the case of the Norwich urban area, the emergence of new sites will enable more housing growth to be allocated on brownfield land within the existing urban area of Norwich. The key impact on the strategy will be the future of the Carrow Works site.
8. Over the coming months the GNLP team will:
 - (a) Publish full consultation responses for all documents on the website once final checking and formatting has been done;
 - (b) Take new/revised sites through the HELAA process, plus revisit the HELAA assessment for existing sites based on comments received through the consultation;
 - (c) Produce a more detailed Statement of Consultation for publication in September/October 2018, including detailed analysis of responses to the Growth Options document;
 - (d) Hold a focussed consultation on new, revised and small sites in Autumn/Winter 2018.

9. Reports will be taken to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership meeting in September 2018 on (a) more detailed feedback from the Regulation 18 consultation, and (b) the content of the consultation on new / revised sites. It is anticipated that the latter report will be verbally presented at Sustainable Development Panel in September to provide members with information about the proposed sites prior to the start of the consultation in October.

Revised timeline for the preparation of the GNLP

10. The original timeline for preparation of the GNLP was for a single Regulation 18 consultation in 2017 on favoured options and reasonable alternatives for the strategy, topic policies and sites, moving to a Regulation 19 pre-submission publication in summer 2018. This timescale was not achieved and the content changed from the original timetable due to the time taken to build consensus leading to programme planning and resource issues, and changes in Government policy in relation to housing numbers.
11. The changes to the plan's content meant that the recent Regulation 18 was effectively an issues and options consultation and was not a draft plan with preferred options as originally envisaged. The current (unrevised) timeline envisages Regulation 19 pre-submission publication in summer 2019 and adoption by December 2020.
12. The report to the GNLP states that the case for a full second round of Regulation 19 consultation has become compelling for two main reasons: firstly the forthcoming production of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and secondly, how best to minimise the risks of the submitted GNLP being found unsound, its examination being delayed, or it being legally challenged. An extended timetable will allow the implications of the revised NPPF to be fully consulted on and integrated into the local plan. Also, it is now clear that failure to consult on preferred policies and sites at the Regulation 18 stage would entail significant risks and the GNLP could be found unsound or legally challenged.
13. Two options were explored for the revised timeline. Option 1 extends the adoption to September 2021 while option 2 extends it to March 2022. The GNLP at its meeting on 19 June agreed option 1 which is set out below.

Production milestones	
Focussed consultation on newly submitted sites	Oct. – Dec. 2018
Complete and publish draft (Regulation 18) plan for consultation: to include preferred policy options, growth strategy and site allocations	Sep. – Oct. 2019
Complete and publish pre-submission draft (Regulation 19) plan for consultation: to include agreed strategic policies, sites and site-specific proposals	Feb. - March 2020
Formal submission of GNLP to Secretary Of State (Regulation 22)	June 2020
Public Hearings	January 2021

Production milestones	
Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications	March – April 2021
Publication of Inspector's Report	July 2021
Adoption of the Greater Norwich Local Plan	September 2021

14. The detail of the report relating to the revised timeline is available through the link at paragraph 2 above. In conclusion the revised timeline is considered necessary to allow for a full second Regulation 18 consultation on the emerging plan. The decision to agree option 1 (above) will reduce the risk of issues of soundness or procedure being raised through the examination process or legal challenges, whilst minimising the delays to adoption. This is still a very challenging timetable, particularly between the second Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 stages.

15. Changes to the GNLP timetable will also require revisions to the Local Development Schemes for each District. The intention is to prepare a revised LDS for Norwich for discussion at September Sustainable Development Panel.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

16. The GNGB met on 25 June. The papers from this meeting are available on the Greater Norwich Growth Board website:

<http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/growth-board/papers/>

Among other things the meeting considered issues related to the timing of the review of the CIL which was adopted by Norwich City Council in July 2013. The meeting supported undertaking a full review of CIL in parallel with production on the GNLP. This will have implications for the production of the GNLP in terms of resource implications and potentially the nature of policy coverage. This will need to be reflected in the revised Local Development Scheme which will be produced for consideration by sustainable development panel in September and endorsement by cabinet in October.

17. The meeting also agreed to seek legal advice on the potential and process for an interim review of the current operation of CIL once revised CIL Regulations are published (which is expected over the summer).