

Report to Sustainable development panel
18 March 2021
Report of Director of place
Subject Revised Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework

Item

5

Purpose

To consider the revised Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) and whether to recommend to cabinet to endorse it.

Recommendation

To recommend that cabinet endorses the revised Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities a healthy organisation, great neighbourhoods, housing and environment, people living well and an inclusive economy

Financial implications

The city council's share of costs undertaking the preparation and review of the NSPF is met from existing budgets.

Ward/s: All Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Stonard - Sustainable and inclusive growth

Contact officers

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Background documents

[Climate Change and the Planning System](#)

[Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework – Shared Objectives for extending 4G coverage and the rollout of 5G infrastructure in the County of Norfolk](#)

Report

Introduction

1. In preparing Local Plans, local authorities are subject to a number of legal and regulatory requirements. Councils must discharge a legal duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategically important and cross-boundary issues. The aim of the duty to co-operate is to achieve better planning outcomes.
2. The Norfolk local authorities have a strong record of working together. Previously Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk councils prepared a joint local plan (the Joint Core Strategy) covering all three authority areas, and are currently collaborating to produce the Greater Norwich Local Plan.
3. In 2015, a formal county wide Strategic Planning Member Forum was established to ensure that the duty to co-operate was effectively discharged. All authorities in Norfolk, including Norfolk County Council, participate in the forum which is supported via an officer team drawn from the councils. The forum sought and gained agreement from each of the partner authorities to prepare a joint planning framework document. The city council's cabinet resolved to agree to co-operate on strategic planning matters through the preparation of a shared non-statutory strategic framework, the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) in March 2015 (the Statement of Common Ground).
4. The original version of the NSPF was agreed to and endorsed by cabinet in February 2018. The framework was subsequently revised and cabinet agreed to the [updated version of the NSPF¹](#) in September 2019.
5. The NSPF has been revised further to ensure that it is kept up to date and to ensure that the duty to co-operate continues to be discharged. The revised version was presented to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum in December 2020 and again in January 2021. The revision takes into account comments made at the Member Forum meetings, with the inclusion of subsequent officer amendments to provide additional clarity around the role of the Marine Management Organisation and further information on Green Infrastructure. The proposed revised version of the NSPF is attached at Appendix A.
6. As part of the government's proposed reforms set out in the Planning White Paper, there are proposals to abolish the Duty to Co-operate but there is no clear indication of the future approach to strategic planning beyond a proposal that local authorities can participate in joint planning arrangements "to agree an alternative distribution of their [housing] requirement". In its response to the consultation on the White Paper, which was reported to [SD Panel in October 2020](#), (Sustainable development panel, 1 October 2020). Norwich City Council raised concerns that without a strategic planning framework it is difficult see how strategic cross boundary issues are going to be effectively addressed and

¹ <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/strategic-member-forum/latest-endorsed-version-of-the-norfolk-strategic-planning-framework.pdf>

how sustainable patterns of development will be achieved. As such, the continued cooperation between the Norfolk authorities in updating the NSPF is considered central to securing better planning outcomes.

7. It was not considered appropriate to undertake public consultation on the revision of the NSPF owing to the technical nature of the changes and the level of stakeholder engagement. In addition, there is no requirement to hold a public consultation for a Statement of Common Ground such as the NSPF. Furthermore it was important that the revised version of the NSPF be endorsed in good time in order to support Local Plan preparations being expedited due to proposed planning reforms.

Revisions to the Framework

8. The main changes proposed to the NSPF include:
 - a) Changes have been made to the vision and objectives to highlight the importance of the New Anglia Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart plan and the wider health considerations of the county's residents.
 - b) Section 5 (The Economy) has been re-organised and specific reference is made to the New Anglia LEP Local Industrial Strategy and Covid-19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan.
 - c) Reference has also been added to section 5 (The Economy) highlighting the opportunity a clean/green economic recovery presents for the county, as well as the opportunities for life sciences and bio-tech, IT and digital creative services, the visitor economy, and construction and manufacturing sectors.
 - d) Within section 6 (Housing) information on elderly people's accommodation has been updated to incorporate findings from the Norfolk Older Persons Accommodation Study. The study contains information on the range of housing types required to meet the needs of older people ranging from conventional housing to higher support housing (such as nursing homes). Section 6 has also been updated with information on how student accommodation contributions to housing delivery are calculated.
 - e) New information has been added to section 7 (Health) strengthening the local authorities' commitments to planning for a healthier environment.
 - f) A new section on Climate Change (section 8) has been inserted incorporating work undertaken by an officer's sub-group. This work focuses on what local plans and the wider planning system can do to help address climate change.
 - g) Section 9 (Infrastructure and the Environment) has been updated to include reference to work being undertaken in collaboration with Water Resources East (WRE) to help safeguard a sustainable supply of water for the region that is resilient to future challenges. Information has also been inserted into section 9 covering coastal and marine planning.
 - h) Significant changes have also been made the telecoms subsection (Section 9) following progress with 5G rollout

- i) The Flood Management and Green Infrastructure section (Section 9.9) has been amended to incorporate work and outcomes of the officer sub group and the Green Infrastructure Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Study (GI RAMS)
9. The above changes have led to a number new agreements or amendments to existing agreements:
- a) New Agreement 8 has been added asking authorities to work positively to assist the New Anglia Covid-10 Economic Recovery Restart Plan
 - b) A new agreement on climate change (Agreement 19) that the authorities agree that climate change is an urgent, strategic cross boundary issues which will be addressed at the heart of Local Plans has been included. The agreement also states that the authorities will give consideration to the approaches in the Climate Change supporting documentation when the relevant policies are next being reviewed and updated
 - c) New Agreement 20 has been included to highlight that a number of climate change initiatives may be best addressed via a Norfolk-wide Design Guide. The Norfolk authorities agree to work together to investigate the production of such a guide with climate change best practice guidance included. This work will also support healthy living initiatives. The aim of the guide would be to provide high level principles rather than details on local vernacular etc.
 - d) Agreement 21 has been added to support the ongoing work with WRE.
 - e) Agreement 24 has been added to support the high speed broadband provision in emerging local plans. The Norfolk authorities will consider the extent to which they could require high speed broadband to be delivered as part of new development and promoting Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to smaller sites
 - f) Agreement 25 has been amended to highlight the shared guidance produced with Mobile UK outlining that the Norfolk authorities will continue to engage with the telecoms industry on their 5G rollout plans
 - g) Agreement 27 has been added which has allowed the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to be a signatory to the document and to support ongoing collaboration between the MMO and the Norfolk authorities
 - h) Agreement 28 has been updated outlining that the Norfolk authorities will work together to deliver and administer The Norfolk Green Infrastructure Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.
10. The revised NSPF also outlines some amended next steps:
- a) Investigation of the production of a Norfolk Design Guide/Charter
 - b) Developing an implementation programme for the GI RAMS tariff
 - c) Review of the Norfolk HELAA methodology
 - d) Review of the Health Protocol

- e) Review of evidence to support future production of Local Plans
- f) Possible future revision of the NSPF dependent on the outcomes of the Government's proposed planning reforms.

Conclusion

11. The NSPF has been revised and updated to take account of changing circumstances and updated evidence. Continued work on the NSPF demonstrates the Norfolk authorities' commitment to continue to work collaboratively and strategically in discharging the Duty to Co-operate.