

**Report to** Sustainable development panel  
03 December 2020  
**Report of** Director of place  
**Subject** Greater Norwich Local Plan update

**Item**

**4**

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### **Purpose**

To provide a verbal update to members on the draft Regulation 19 Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) due to be published for consultation in February 2020.

### **Recommendation**

To comment on the content of the draft Regulation 19 GNLP, to inform discussion at the Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board meeting on 7 December.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priorities: great neighbourhoods, housing and environment; inclusive economy; and people living well.

### **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising directly from this report. The council's contribution towards the cost of producing the plan is expected to be met from existing budgets.

**Ward/s:** All Wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Stonard - Sustainable and inclusive growth

### **Contact officers**

Graham Nelson, Director of place 01603 212530

Judith Davison, Planning policy team leader 01603 212529

### **Background documents**

None

# Report

## Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on reports (not currently in the public domain – see paragraph 9 below) that will be considered at the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) on 7 December in relation to the draft Regulation 19 Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The GNDP is an informal, non-decision making partnership comprising the city, South Norfolk and Broadland councils, the county council and the Broads Authority, and oversees the preparation of the GNLP.

## Background

2. The draft GNLP comprises:
  - (a) a strategy document which contains the planning strategy for growth in Greater Norwich from 2019 to 2036, including thematic policies, and
  - (b) a site allocations document containing sites proposed to be allocated for development to help implement the growth strategy, containing site specific policies for all sites other than the village clusters in South Norfolk. (A separate allocations plan is being developed by South Norfolk council for these village cluster sites, which will come forward in due course.)
3. Once adopted the GNLP will supersede the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, and the site allocations plans for the Norwich and Broadland and part of South Norfolk District.
4. The GNLP has been in preparation since 2016 and has undergone several stages of consultation. A full draft (Regulation 18) plan was discussed at sustainable development panel and subsequently approved for consultation by cabinet, both meetings taking place on 15 January 2020. The cabinet report is available [here](#). Following endorsement by the other two Greater Norwich planning authorities, the plan was published for consultation from 29 January until 16 March 2020. However, in approving the document for consultation Cabinet noted that a number of aspects of the plan should be improved prior to submission of the plan. In summary these aspects were:
  - (a) Inadequate overall scale of growth proposed and overall ambition for growth in the light of the Greater Norwich City Deal;
  - (b) Too great a proportion of development being proposed in village locations which is hard to reconcile with climate change objectives;
  - (c) The rationale for a separate village clusters plan in South Norfolk being weak;
  - (d) Policy for strategic infrastructure considered to be insufficiently ambitious in supporting the transition to a low carbon future by achieving significant modal shift; and

- (e) The lack of ambition on transport issues and the focus on significant development in rural villages is inconsistent with the statements within the plan on addressing climate change.
5. In July 2020 a report to [SD Panel](#) provided feedback on the public consultation in early 2020 and sought agreement to a revised timescale to allow additional time to make updates in relation to large volume of representations, take updated evidence on board, hold an additional, Regulation 18(d) consultation in the autumn, and help address the impacts of COVID19 on plan preparation.
  6. The publication of the Planning White Paper in August 2020 has had serious implications on the timescale for progressing the GNLP. The council's response to the Planning White Paper, and the related technical consultation 'Changes to the Current Planning System', were set out in reports to both [SD Panel](#) and [Cabinet](#) in October.
  7. In summary the proposed changes to the standard method for assessing housing need has significantly increased the housing need for Greater Norwich. The revised methodology, if implemented by Government as proposed, is likely to require the number of new allocations in Greater Norwich to be increased from almost 8,000 to well in excess of 30,000. Following consideration of options by the [GNDP Board](#) on 30 September, the Board took the decision to accelerate plan production making use of the transitional arrangements provided by the government, based on the draft GNLP already consulted upon.
  8. This has resulted in a revised timetable, with consultation on the Regulation 19 plan in Feb-March 2021, submission to the Secretary of State in July 2021 public examination in November-December 2021, and adoption in September 2022. It should be noted that under the Planning White Paper proposals, new plans will be rolled forward every 5 years, so although this GNLP will have an end-date of 2038 it is expected that work will commence soon after adoption on the next iteration of the plan.

## **GNDP papers**

9. The GNDP Board papers for the 7 December meeting are not yet available to be attached to this report. It is anticipated that the papers will be published on 30 November and they will then be circulated to members of the sustainable development panel in advance of the meeting on 3 December. Discussion at the panel meeting will help to inform discussion at the subsequent GNDP Board meeting.

## **Conclusions**

10. A verbal update on the GNDP papers will be provided at the meeting. The GNLP team is working hard to deliver amended plan documentation to the accelerated timescale, in addition to taking account of Covid-19 impacts on the staff resource, and this has had implications on the availability of documentation in time for consideration by officers and members.
11. It should be noted that not all the evidence base will be completed in time for the GNDP December meeting, and it is expected that some evidence updates will have to be reported to cabinet in January alongside the plan, whilst others

will accompany submission of the plan. Although it is acknowledged that it is not ideal that some of the evidence base may not be available in time to fully inform policy, this approach must be balanced against the urgency of progressing under transitional arrangements and the even greater risks of failing to do so. It is important however that when the GNLP is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination that its evidence base is complete at that point.