

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Discretionary	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide	YES	
		Need to be recommendations to Council	NO	
		Is it a Key Decision	NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Richard Blunt E-mail: richard.blunt@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Alan Gomm E-mail: alan.gomm@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:01553 616237		Other Officers consulted:		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications YES	Equal Impact Assessment YES If YES: Pre-screening	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of meeting: 6 September 2017

NORFOLK STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

Summary

The Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) has been published for an 8-week consultation period ending on 22 September 2017. This report recommends the Council's response to it.

Recommendation

Cabinet is recommended to support the Norfolk Strategic Framework.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council discharges its legal duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategically important land use issues which cross administrative boundaries. The result of such co-operation is expected to be better planning outcomes.

Background

1. Introduction

- 1.1 When preparing Local Plans the Authority is subject to a number of legal and regulatory requirements. Amongst these it must discharge a legal duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategically important land use issues which cross administrative boundaries. The result of such co-operation is expected to be better planning outcomes.
- 1.2 The Norfolk Authorities have a strong track record of working together with perhaps the best example being the preparation of a single local plan to cover Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk local planning

authority areas. In 2015 a formal duty to co-operate Members Forum was established with Terms of Reference to ensure that the duty to co-operate was effectively discharged. All authorities in Norfolk including the 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 Framework document.

- 1.3 A first draft of the Framework has now been published for an eight week period of public consultation following which it will be amended and offered to each authority for formal agreement. The consultation document is available here (<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/norfolk-strategic-framework/>).

2. The Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF)

- 2.1 The Norfolk Strategic Framework is not a policy document and if it is approved it will not comprise part of the development plan. As such it does not include planning policies or proposals, rather it is intended to document areas of agreement that the Norfolk local planning authorities have reached and which they will follow when they prepare their individual local plans. It has been prepared by an officer team drawn from all of the Norfolk Authorities supported by others from organisations such as the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the New Anglia LEP (the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership have also endorsed it). The document includes:

- A high level vision for the future development of the County over the next 20-30 years.
- Four topic-based high level objectives covering the economy, housing, the environment, and infrastructure.
- 20 separate draft agreements that each Council is being asked to sign up to.

In addition the document describes the spatial characteristics of the County drawing on a range of previously published, and specifically prepared, evidence.

3. The Agreements.

- 3.1 The document asks that each authority in the County signs up to a number of agreements. These are intended to ensure that the planning authorities work closely together where it is desirable to do so but not to be so prescriptive that they would limit the local production of development plan documents. In summary the agreements are:

Agreements 1 - 3 – That the Norfolk planning authorities will plan to a common plan period extending to at least 2036 and in producing local plans they will seek to contribute towards the shared vision and objectives as outlined in the Framework.

Agreement 4 - That the Norfolk authorities agree to prepare and maintain a consistent evidence base in relation to housing needs in three separate housing market areas. This will include the joint commissioning of Strategic Housing Market Assessments when updates are required.

Agreements 5, 6 and 7 – That outside of the Greater Norwich authorities (Norwich City, South Norfolk, and Broadland) each local planning authority will continue to prepare separate local plans unless the evidence suggests that joint Local Plan production is justified.

Agreement 8 – That the focus for economic investment in the County will be what are called the ‘Tier One’ Employment sites. This includes the Hardwick Extension, the Nar Ouse Business Park and the Downham Market Centre for Advanced Knowledge Engineering (CfAKE) from our area.

Agreement 9 - That local plans will be prepared with regard to cross-boundary economic issues and interventions.

Agreements 10 - 16 – That each local plan will aim to address all housing needs (OAN) plus a buffer of 10%; that housing need in the Broads will be addressed by the adjacent authorities if the Broads Plan does not meet need; that Norwich, South Norfolk and Broadland will address the housing requirement arising from the City Deal within their areas (this results in the setting of higher housing targets, dealt with via a buffer, to ensure that the aspirational jobs growth targets included in the City Deal are matched with sufficient homes to accommodate workers); each authority will quantify and plan for the delivery of specialist types of accommodation for gypsies, travelling showpeople, students and the elderly together with the identified need for affordable homes; that housing capacity will be assessed using a common methodology; and finally further measures will be taken to improve delivery rates of new housing development.

Commentary – the 10% buffer is intended to meet the Government requirement to “boost significantly the supply of housing” and to ensure delivery. The current Local Plan figure from the 2011 Core Strategy included a similar 10% for flexibility and non-completion of commitments, etc. although this became part of the target figure to be provided whereas the NSF Agreement 16 proposes that such buffers are “to be treated as additional supply rather than as part of their housing target”. The Local Plan Task Group have already considered and supported this concept (12 July meeting).

Agreement 17 - That the authorities will work together to develop a combined approach to the roll out of the supporting infrastructure for 5G mobile technology.

Agreement 18 – That the authorities endorse the Planning for Health Protocol which establishes processes for more joined up working between health and planning when preparing plans and determining planning applications.

Agreement 19 – That the local planning authorities will continue to work closely with the County Council and school providers to ensure a sufficient supply of school places and land for school expansion or new schools.

Agreement 20 – That the planning authorities will work together to produce a Countywide Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy.

A full set of the agreements extracted from the NSF is included as Appendix 1 to this report. Agreement 2 sets out the NSF's proposed Spatial Vision while the NSF's proposed shared objectives are listed under Agreement 3.

Options Considered

The Council could choose not to endorse the NSF and its agreements. This would contradict the work that officers and members of this authority have carried out over the last 18 months to establish the NSF. It would also leave the authority struggling to meet its duty to cooperate statutory requirements.

Policy Implications

As stated above the Norfolk Strategic Framework is not a policy document and if it is approved it will not comprise part of the development plan. As such it does not include planning policies or proposals, rather it is intended to document areas of agreement that the Norfolk local planning authorities have reached and which they will follow when they prepare their individual local plans.

Financial Implications

None.

Personnel Implications

None.

Statutory Considerations

As stated above when preparing Local Plans the Authority is subject to a number of legal and regulatory requirements. Amongst these it must discharge a legal duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities in relation to strategically important land use issues which cross administrative boundaries.

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

Risk Management Implications

None.

Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None.

Background Papers

(Definition : Unpublished work relied on to a material extent in preparing the report that disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based. A copy of all background papers must be supplied to Democratic Services with the report for publishing with the agenda)



Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/service/function	Norfolk Strategic Framework Consultation				
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function?	Existing				
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service rigidly constrained by statutory obligations	Agreement between local planning authorities to meet the statutory duty to cooperate requirement.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups according to their different protected characteristic, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			✓	
	Disability			✓	
	Gender			✓	
	Gender Re-assignment			✓	
	Marriage/civil partnership			✓	
	Pregnancy & maternity			✓	
	Race			✓	
	Religion or belief			✓	
	Sexual orientation			✓	
	Other (eg low income)			✓	
Question	Answer	Comments			
2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?	No				
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No				
4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No				
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	Actions:			
		Actions agreed by EWG member:			
Assessment completed by: Name Peter Jermany					
Job title Principal Planner (Policy)	Date 1-8-17				

Please Note: If there are any positive or negative impacts identified in question 1, or there any 'yes' responses to questions 2 – 4 a full impact assessment will be required.