

## REPORT TO CABINET

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

Date of meeting: 16 March 2021

### NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK UPDATE - 2021

#### **Summary**

This report sets out the key updates to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) document, which when endorsed will be the third edition of the document. The NSPF document is going through a comparable endorsement procedure with all the local planning authorities in Norfolk. The main updates include:

- New updated sections on: Climate Change; Health; Telecoms; & Green Infrastructure;
- A new Agreement to support the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership Covid Economic Recovery Restart Plan;
- New Agreements covering: climate change – agreeing this is a cross-boundary issue; and supporting high speed Broadband provision in emerging local plans; and
- Updates/changes to existing agreements, for example, covering LPAs working towards a Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS).

The NSPF continues to provide an important function in delivering sustainable local plans capable of supporting housing and economic growth together with the necessary enabling infrastructure and service provision. Cross-boundary cooperation is a cornerstone of the Duty to Cooperate and of the NSPF; and is of particular importance in post-Covid recovery.

#### **Recommendation**

To endorse the up-dated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework as part of the Borough Council's ongoing "duty to co-operate".

#### **Reason for Decision**

The NSPF has already been used successfully to support the development of the local plan. It must be kept up to date to continue to fulfil this role.

1.1. The Borough Council has a “duty to co-operate” with other local planning authorities (LPAs) and other bodies on strategic planning matters. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) helps demonstrate that, in the development of local plans, the authorities have discharged the “duty to cooperate”. It also fulfils the role of a “statement of common ground” (SoCG).

1.2. The NSPF is not a policy document and does not include planning policies or proposals, rather it is intended to document areas of agreement between the authorities and other bodies on strategic planning issues. The NSPF was originally endorsed by Cabinet on 13 March 2018 (CAB133); and subsequently updated and endorsed by Cabinet on 24 September 2019 (CAB49). It has now been further reviewed to keep it up to date and to comply with the requirement to demonstrate that co-operation is ongoing.

1.3. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum oversees the production of the NSPF and at their meeting on 25 January 2021 recommended that the authorities endorse the updated version 3.

## **2 Background and Purpose**

2.1. The Localism Act 2011 set out the statutory requirement for a “duty to cooperate” by which authorities are required to cooperate on an ongoing basis with each other, and other bodies, when preparing Local Plans. The NSPF forms a SoCG between all the local authorities; and the NPPF (2019) requires LPAs to maintain, and update on a regular basis one or more SoCGs to support up to date local plans.

2.2. In 2015 a formal county-wide Strategic Planning Member Forum was established to ensure that the duty to co-operate is effectively discharged. The Forum is not a decision-making body and makes recommendations to the constituent authorities.

2.3. All LPAs in Norfolk participate in the Forum which is supported by an officer team drawn from the councils. Cllr Blunt represents the Borough Council on the Forum. In 2017 the partner authorities agreed to prepare a “framework” to include agreements on strategic cross boundary planning matters to help demonstrate compliance with the duty.

2.4. The current version of the NSPF was endorsed by Cabinet on 24 September 2019 (CAB49). To fulfil its roles, it is necessary to keep the NSPF up to date. The Member Forum considered an updated version of the NSPF on 8 December 2020; and on 25 January 2021. The updated version considers the most recent legislation and information/data available; provides updated web-links as appropriate; and has considered Forum Member comments made. Minor updates have subsequently been made by officers to provide further clarity on marine planning and green infrastructure.

2.5. Members will be aware that in the Government’s proposed reforms of the planning system, as set out in the Planning White Paper, there are proposals to abolish the duty to cooperate. The White Paper indicates that further consideration will be given to the way in which strategic cross-boundary

issues can be adequately planned for. As such the continued cooperation between Norfolk's LPAs and the updating of the NSPF is considered vital in order to secure the sustainable delivery of housing and employment growth and its supporting infrastructure.

### 3. Proposals

3.1. A copy of the NSPF, as proposed to be amended, can be found at [Appendix A](#). The most significant changes include:

- The Economic Section (5) has been reorganised following a review earlier in the year; and specific reference is made to the New Anglia LEP Covid 19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan (see below);
- 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 consideration of the residents of the county;
- Changes to the Elderly section (6) following the work of the officer group;
- A new Section (7) on Health – strengthening LPAs' Commitment to planning for a healthier environment;
- A new section on Climate Change (8) – reflecting the importance attached by all Local Authorities to this issue;
- Significant changes to the telecoms section (9) following progress with the 5G rollout; ·
- Changes to the Green Infrastructure section (9) following further work of the officer group; ·
- References made to the Planning White Paper and other proposed changes to the planning system; and
- The conclusion and next steps section has been updated to highlight the commitment from all authorities to continue joint working – at least for the next financial year.

3.2. The above changes have led to a number of new agreements being proposed, which include:

- A new agreement (8) in the economic section to say that Local Authorities will work positively to assist the New Anglia Covid 19 Economic Recovery Restart Plan; ·
- A new agreement on climate change (19) highlighting that LPAs in Norfolk agree that climate change is an urgent, strategic cross boundary issue which will be addressed at the heart of local plans. The agreement also states that local authorities will give consideration to the approaches in the Climate Change supporting documentation ([see Appendix B](#)) when the relevant policies are next being reviewed and updated as part of the local plan process; ·
- Related to the climate change agreement above a new agreement (20) is included highlighting that a number of climate change initiatives are best addressed via a Norfolk wide design guide and LPAs will work together to investigate the production of one with climate change best practice guidance included. This work will also help facilitate healthy living initiatives across the county by providing high level principles; ·

- A new agreement (21) has been added to support the ongoing work with Water Resources East; -
- A new agreement (24) has also been included to support the high-speed broadband provision in emerging local plans - Norfolk LPAs will consider the extent to which they could require high-speed broadband to be delivered as part of new developments and promoting Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to smaller sites through the inclusion of a new policy; and -
- A new section and agreement (27) have been added which has allowed the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to become a signatory to the document.

3.3. Finally, changes have also been made to a number of existing agreements, the key changes are:

1. A change to the telecoms agreement (25) highlighting the shared guidance produced with Mobile UK, this highlights that authorities will continue to engage with the telecommunications industry on their 5G rollout plans for Norfolk (see Appendix C).
2. The agreement in the GI section has also been updated to highlight that LPAs will work together to deliver and administer the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (this is in the process of being finalised by the Forum at which point a report will be brought to the Cabinet seeking its approval).

#### **4. Impact of the Proposal**

4.1. The proposal demonstrates our ongoing Member-level commitment to the duty to cooperate, helping to ensure a sound local plan that will deliver housing and employment growth together with supporting infrastructure. Given the economic and social repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a renewed impetus to this work in order to assist with the recovery.

#### **5 Options Considered**

5.1. The Borough Council could withdraw its support for the Framework and come to separate agreements with each adjoining Norfolk planning authority and other body. This would likely be an inefficient process and may undermine the ability to demonstrate the Borough Council's commitment to support the delivery of planned economic and housing growth.

#### **6 Policy Implications**

6.1. The document is a key component of the local plan preparation process.

#### **7 Financial Implications**

7.1. There are no direct financial implications.

#### **8 Personnel Implications**

8.1. None.

## **9 Environmental Considerations**

9.1. The document sets out a number of key agreements relating to environmental matters which will influence the development of appropriate policies in the local plan review.

## **10 Statutory Considerations**

10.1. The Borough Council has a legal duty to co-operate with local plan-making authorities.

## **11 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

(Pre-screening report template attached)

11.1. A detailed equality impact assessment has not been carried out as an EqIA is not required for a Statement of Common Ground. In addition, the local plan produced in accordance with the NSPF will be supported by EqIA. The Council's planning functions are subject to equality impact assessments.

## **12 Risk Management Implications**

12.1. No risk associated with this report other than those implications outlined above.

## **13 Declarations of Interest/Dispensations Granted**

13.1. None.

## **14 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**

Borough Council of  
**King's Lynn & West Norfolk**



Name of policy/service/function	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework Update 2021				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?	Existing (delete as appropriate)				
<p>Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.</p> <p>Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations</p>	<p>The NSPF continues to provide an important function in delivering sustainable local plans capable of supporting housing and economic growth together with the necessary enabling infrastructure and service provision. Cross-boundary cooperation is a cornerstone of the Duty to Cooperate and of the NSPF; and is of particular importance in post-Covid recovery. It is also a statutory obligation.</p>				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<p><b>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 <b>according to their different protected characteristic</b>, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</b></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			x	
	Disability			x	
	Gender			x	
	Gender Re-assignment			x	
	Marriage/civil partnership			x	
	Pregnancy & maternity			x	
	Race			x	
	Religion or belief			x	
	Sexual orientation			x	
	Other (e.g., low income)			x	

Question	Answer	Comments
<p><b>2.</b> 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?</p>	No	<p>Among the shared objectives and agreements set out in the NSPF is a commitment to ensure that new housing allocations will have a positive impact on communities in terms of supporting and enhancing the provision of services; support well-being &amp; health; and support the delivery of infrastructure to keep people safe.</p>
<p><b>3.</b> Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	No	As above.
<p><b>4.</b> Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	No	<p>Although within the limits of legislation and practice certain aspects such as affordable housing are covered. The Norfolk Planning Authorities will quantify the need for, and plan to provide for, the specialist accommodation needs of the elderly, students, gypsy and travelling show people, and those residing in other specialist types of accommodation and working together will ensure that the distribution of provision responds to locally identified needs.</p>
<p><b>5.</b> Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<p><b>Actions:</b> None</p> <hr/> <p><b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> <b>Claire Dorgan</b></p>
<p><b>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</b></p> <p><b>Decision agreed by EWG member:</b> .....</p>		
<p><b>Assessment completed by:</b></p> <p><b>Name</b></p>	<p><b>Peter Jermany</b></p>	
<p><b>Job title</b></p>	<p><b>Principal Planner (Policy)</b></p>	
<p><b>Date</b></p>	<p><b>17/2/2021</b></p>	