

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Recommendations of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
Date of meeting:	16 March 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact Working in partnership across Norfolk helps to discharge the “duty to co-operate”.	

Executive summary

The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (previously entitled the Norfolk Strategic Framework) has been recommended for approval by the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum at their meeting of December 2017. The Framework helps demonstrate that the authorities have discharged the “duty to cooperate”. The consultation draft was considered by ETD Committee in September 2017.

The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework 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. It will be reviewed to keep it up to date and to comply with the requirement to demonstrate that co-operation is ongoing. Any proposed revisions will be reported to Members.

Recommendations:

Members are recommended to:

- **Endorse the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework as part of the ongoing duty to co-operate process**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (previously entitled the Norfolk Strategic Framework) has been recommended for approval by the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum at their meeting of December 2017. The Framework helps demonstrate that the authorities have discharged the “duty to cooperate”. At the time of writing several of the districts have already approved the document.
- 1.2. The Framework was subject to public consultation during August and September 2017. Members will recall that the consultation draft version of the Framework was considered at ETD Committee on 15 September 2017.
- 1.3. The production process is a joint exercise on which consensus must be reached in order for the Framework to be capable of endorsement by a wide range of organisations. In order to demonstrate that co-operation is ongoing, and to keep it up to date with developing Government policy, the Framework will be reviewed over the coming year. This will provide the opportunity to refine and develop the approach. It is intended that the next version will incorporate an agreement on transport. Any proposed revisions will be reported to Members.

2. Evidence

2.1. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework 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. 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 LEP. The document includes 23 separate agreements that 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.

2.2. In summary the agreements are:

Agreements 1-3 –a common Local Plan period to at least 2036 and plans will seek to contribute towards the shared vision and objectives in the Framework.

Agreement 4 - a consistent evidence base in relation to housing needs in identified housing market areas.

Agreements 5, 6 and 7 –planning authorities outside of the Greater Norwich Authorities (Norwich City, South Norfolk, and Broadland) will continue to prepare separate local plans unless evidence suggests joint Plans are justified.

Agreement 8 – the focus for economic investment will be identified ‘Tier One’ Employment sites.

Agreement 9- Local Plans will have regard to various cross boundary infrastructure issues.

Agreements 10-16 – each local plan will aim to address all housing needs (OAN); each authority will quantify and plan for the delivery of specialist accommodation including for gypsies and travellers, and the elderly; measures will be taken to improve delivery rates of new housing development.

Agreements 17-18 – the authorities will seek to pursue high water efficiency standards and liaise closely with the water companies.

Agreement 19 –to help the roll out of 5G telecommunications infrastructure.

Agreement 20 –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 21 –the Authorities will work closely with the County Council to ensure a supply and funding of school places.

Agreement 22 –the planning authorities will work together to produce a County wide Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy.

Agreement 23 –the signatories to the Framework will continue to support and resource joint planning activity.

3. Financial Implications

3.1. There are no financial implications for the County Council. Contributions to the Framework are managed within existing resources.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

4.1. The Framework remains a relatively innovative approach to the duty to cooperate.

5. Background

5.1. In 2015 a formal county wide Strategic Planning Member forum was established with terms of reference to ensure that the duty to co-operate was effectively

discharged. These can be seen at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum>.

- 5.2. All authorities in Norfolk participate in the forum which is supported via an officer team drawn for the councils. Cllr Sands represents the County Council. The forum gained agreement from each of the partner authorities to prepare a framework document in 2015.
- 5.3. The joint member forum considered first drafts of vision and objectives in October 2016 to guide the subsequent drafting of the document. This led to a draft of the Framework being agreed by the forum for consultation in July 2017.
- 5.4. The consultation ran from the 2 August to the 22 September. Just under 100 responses were received with the vast majority being supportive of the idea of producing the Framework and collaborative working between authorities. The responses were from a wide range of interested parties including town/parish councils, residents, community groups, local authorities, public bodies, developers, businesses and agents.
- 5.5. An extensive review of the comments received was undertaken following the close of the consultation. All comments received have been individually reviewed, answered and any changes made to the Framework as a result have been logged. The comments made, responses to them and changes resulting from them are available to inspect on the Forum's website. A range of suggestions were made by the County Council. These have all been considered and are reflected in the final version where appropriate. A suggestion was made at Committee that the reference to the Wensum in the document should be modified to also refer to its tributaries. However, the Wensum is highlighted in the Framework because of the cross boundary implications of its international status as an SAC. As this does not apply to its tributaries they have not been included specifically but are covered in general terms with the expansion of the agreement on green infrastructure to highlight the importance of assets outside of the most important areas and of the ecological connections between habitats.
- 5.6. In addition to changes arising from the consultation response significant changes were made to the emerging Framework as a result of other matters. Most notably in the light of the government consultation 'Planning for the right homes in the right places', the New Anglia LEP Economic Strategy and the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan. The document has been retitled as the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and is described as an emerging Statement of Common Ground to reflect an anticipated government requirement in the forthcoming review of the National Planning Policy Framework
- 5.7. The Member Forum of 14 December 2017 considered the consultation responses and agreed to recommend the amended version of the Framework to constituent councils for endorsement. This version can be seen at <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/norfolk-strategic-framework/results/20171220-norfolk-strategic-framework-final.pdf>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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