

Report to Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
17th July 2017

Report of Norfolk Strategic Framework Project Manager

Subject Norfolk Strategic Framework

Purpose

To update members on progress of the Norfolk Strategic Framework and seek endorsement to the publication of the attached draft version of the Framework for consultation. Report includes brief progress update on the evidence gathering, timescales and any likely future budgetary implications and a summary of progress made on the drafting of the framework.

Recommendation

To:

- a) Note the contents of this report, progress on the Framework project and timetable for completion;
- b) Comment on the emerging draft version of the Framework attached as Appendix 1 prior to consultation
- c) Authorise Officers (via the Norfolk Strategic Planning Officer's Group) to make minor changes to the document and to respond to any comments made at this meeting prior to publication for consultation.

Financial implications

No financial implications and no additional budget required.

Contact officers

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Further Information

None.

Report

Purpose

The purpose of the Norfolk Strategic Framework Project is to produce a non-statutory framework to:

- Agree shared objectives and strategic priorities to improve outcomes for Norfolk and inform the preparation of future local plans;
- Demonstrate compliance with the duty to co-operate;
- Find efficiencies in the planning system through working towards the establishment of a shared evidence base;
- Influence subsequent high level plans (such as the Strategic Economic Plan); and
- Maximise the opportunities to secure external funding to delivery against agreed objectives.

Summary

1. The Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) project has continued to progress well, the main evidence gathering tasks are complete and the draft document has been written. The Economic, Housing and Infrastructure groups have now completed their tasks. The delivery group has some work to complete once their external study is finished and this should take the group until the end of July. There is also an ongoing Green Infrastructure study which will not be complete until the end of the year.
2. A draft version of the NSF is attached to this report as Appendix 1. It should be noted this is still a work in progress and some comments on the draft are still outstanding. Should these comments require further changes to the document then members will be updated verbally at the meeting and appropriate updates tabled.
3. All authorities are looking to complete Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments based on the Methodology agreed in mid-2016. This process has taken longer than expected although most are now either complete or nearing completion.

Timetable

4. Due to issues arising from the timing of the general election, the date of the Strategic Planning Member Forum meeting had to be rescheduled. As a result of this delay the previously agreed timetable for preparation for the NSF has come under pressure. With the joint member meeting not taking place until mid-July it is no longer possible to formally report the draft NSF to each individual authority prior to its publication for consultation. A revised timetable has been prepared and is set out in the report in consultation. This proposes that, assuming agreement of members to both the timetable and the emerging draft framework, consultation commences as soon as practicable following the member forum and consultation will last for 8 weeks. This will keep the project moving forward and also allow all authorities to report the consultation through appropriate meetings. An initial report on the response to the consultation will then be considered by the Strategic Planning Member Forum in October 2017 before considering a revised draft final version later in the year.

Public Consultation

5. A Public Consultation Sub group have been set up to manage the planned NSF consultation. The group has written a separate report for members with a recommend approach to the NSF public consultation.

Housing

6. No further work is being conducted by the housing group however all authorities are looking to complete Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments based on the Methodology agreed in mid-2016. This process has taken longer than expected although most are now either complete or nearing completion.
7. An update to the central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment has recently been made and this has been incorporated into the NSF.

Infrastructure

8. All the required evidence has now been collected for the Infrastructure task and finish group, however the Green Infrastructure sub group with continue until this work is completed at the end of 2017.
9. The separate Green Infrastructure (GI) group was set up to identify and map GI on a county-wide basis - to identify deficiencies in GI Provision, and identify opportunities for enhancements. The work of this group is progressing to timetable, initial drafts of the GI corridors and current GI assets have been completed. Further updates are now being made to these maps along with Ecological Network maps produced so far. The group is aiming to be able to provide updated versions of the maps before the NSF is published for public consultation.

Economic

10. The Economic group has already completed it's assign tasks but the group recently met to review the evidence and the progress by the LEP with their Economic Strategy.

Delivery

11. The delivery group have commissioned an external study using consultants at WSP to complete interviews and analysis (ie a deep dive) of larger development sites across Norfolk looking for positives and negatives in their progression. An initial report has been discussed with officers and the final report is expected at the end of July. The delivery group are looking to complete their report once the external study is completed however all other evidence gathering has been completed.

Budget

12. The project only commissioned two external studies for Green infrastructure and a deep dive into larger development sites in Norfolk (both approx. £20k each). Project staff have been retained for longer than originally intended because of the delay in the completion of the NSF document but this additional cost has been met within the existing budget. There is likely to be very little additional cost around the consultation

of the final document and the website costs. The project is likely to be completed with a project surplus of around £20-30k, unless further work is needed to be commissioned in response to the issues raised in the consultation.