

Report to Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
11th October 2018

Report of Norfolk Strategic Planning Group

Subject Proposed work for 2019/20 and Funding Requirements

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed schedule for work to be undertaken in the 2019/2020 financial year for the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum and the funding requirements for this work to be completed. The work will continue to address the government's requirements for local planning authorities (LPAs) to cooperate on cross-boundary issues through their Local Plans and the new requirements introduced by the revised National Planning Policy Framework published on the 24th July 2018.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the forum agrees to:

1. Endorse the principle of continued, formal cooperation through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum supported by a shared administration function to further the joint working in the areas highlight in this report.
2. Recommend each district authority formally agrees to contribute £10,000 for the next financial year (Broads Authority £5,000).

Financial implications

Each district authority formally agrees to participate in the continued formal cooperation and agrees to contribute £10,000 for the next financial year (Broads Authority £5,000).

Contact officers

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Further Information

None.

Report

Background

The Duty to Cooperate is an ongoing requirement and section 3 of revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the requirements for joint working and maintaining effective cooperation.

In the revised NPPF the Duty to Cooperate is strengthened through the introduction of the Statement of Common Ground and new tests of soundness to ensure the Duty to Cooperate is a 'duty to agree' - Strategic policies are informed by agreements with other authorities and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the Statement of Common. It is therefore necessary for Norfolk Planning Authorities to agree a Statement of Common Ground and maintain these on a regular basis.

The NPPF introduced the standard methodology for assessing local housing need which will regularly change when updated household projections and house price to earnings ratios are published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The NSPF will be updated to reflect any changes to these figures.

What strategic plan work is required?

The current review of the NSPF will ensure that the document fulfils the requirements set out in the revised NPPF around Statement of Common Ground; it will also ensure each authority is able to meet its local housing needs and agreements are in place where this is not appropriate or achievable. The review will also ensure that the NSPF remains the most appropriate vehicle to address strategic planning matters for the county and signatories to this document will agree to support the activities of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum and to continue to appropriately resource joint planning activity.

By the end of the financial year the process of updating the NSPF will not be completed. There is also work in the current NSPF which authorities have agreed to complete. In order to complete the review of the NSPF and other work under way the following work will need to be undertaken in the next financial year:

- Update the NSPF in light of comments received from the Public Consultation due to be completed in March 2019
- Ensure the NSPF is ready for endorsement in June 2019 and that the endorsed NSPF is published in the Summer 2019
- Complete a county wide Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Complete the proposals highlighted in the housing section to help promote housing delivery
- Complete an Extra Care Housing Strategy for Norfolk
- The NSPF is updated to ensure all evidence and housing needs calculations are up to date following publications of updated data from the ONS
- The NSPF is aligned to the LEP Economic Strategy and any changes made to this
- The NSPF is aligned to any strategic work of neighbouring authorities

The shared resource will continue to coordinate Joint planning activities by:

- Maintain links to other neighbouring counties and their strategic planning work.
- Maintain links to public bodies and Utilities involved in the prepared of the NSPF
- Support the county in the production of a county wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any potential economic or growth strategies
- Reviewing of Objectively Assessed Need for housing in light of any new government changes to the current methodology or updated data from ONS
- Support of Local Plan Process

Resource Requirements

It is proposed that the work outlined in the report can be completed with the existing project management resource with some planning officer support. Whilst the funding would allow for employment of some administration support, this may not be required. Resource requirements from each authority will continue to be kept to a minimum but it is important that all authorities support the work to ensure they are comfortable with direction it is taking. It is proposed that each Authority contributes £10,000 for the next financial year; this budget will cover the project management, ad hoc administration (which will continue to be hosted at City Hall) and allow £20,000-£30,000 for external work to be commissioned. If additional external work is identified this would need to be funded separately.

How would this be funded?

The existing NSPF funding was provided by the 7 Norfolk district authorities and the Broads authority and it is proposed that this is continued. For the NSPF the Broads contribution was half that of other authorities and it is proposed that their contribution remains the same. Norfolk County Council currently funds the East of England Forecast Model (c£4,000) and will continue to provide officer support for the joint working. It is proposed that further funding may be sort for some of the external work if this is possible.