

Report to Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
12th Oct 2017

Progress Report of Norfolk Strategic Framework Project Manager

Subject Norfolk Strategic Framework

Purpose

To update members on progress of the Norfolk Strategic Framework and the recently completed Public Consultation.

Recommendation

To note the contents of this report, progress on the Framework project and timetable for completion

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) consultation ran from 2nd August until the 22nd September. There was limited publicity of the consultation in local press and radio. Almost 2000 emails were also sent to various consultees highlight the consultation and requesting a response. There were just under 100 responses to the consultation from Town/Parish Councils, Residents, Community Groups, Local Authorities, Public Bodies, Developers Businesses and Agents. The Work continues to analyse these responses and to update the NSF from the comments received.
2. The Economic, Housing and Infrastructure groups are all meeting during October to review the comments received from the consultation. Officer comments and suggested changes to the NSF will then be pulled together for each comment received. The suggested changes will then be taken forward by the steering group in November and presented to members for review and feedback in mid-December.
3. The delivery group still has some work to complete once their external study is finished which should be completed in October. There is also an ongoing Green Infrastructure study which will not be complete until the end of the year.

Timetable

4. It is proposed that the review of the consultation responses and updated NSF document will be ready to present to members by mid-December and an additional meeting will be scheduled for this date. This will allow the final version of the NSF to be available for all authorities to endorse before the end of the year.

Budget

5. The NSF 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. The project is likely to be completed by the end of the year with a project surplus of around £22k.

NSF Consultation Summary

Introduction

The Norfolk Strategic Framework consultation ran from the 2nd August to the 22nd September. Just under 100 responses have been received to the consultation with the vast majority being supportive of the idea of the NSF and collaborative work 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, the table below sets out who the response were from.

Responses by Type

Town/Parish Council	Resident	Other	Community Group	Local Authority	Public Body	Developer	Business	Agent
19	19	14	12	9	7	7	6	5

More than two thirds of all responses included comments about the infrastructure section where as housing and economic sections were mentioned just under half of responses. The table below sets out the number of responses for each section.

Responses by Section

Vision and Objectives	Understanding the county	Projections of Growth	The Economy	Housing	Infrastructure	Conclusions	Other Comments
41	25	23	42	41	67	25	44

Key themes for each section

Vision and Objectives

There was good support for the vision and objectives, a small number supported them as they were and a small number said that they were unrealistic. There was an array of amendments suggested but key themes included greater references to dealing with infrastructure issues, greater emphasis on environment aspects of the county and greater emphasis on the importance of tourism to the county.

Understanding the county

There was support for the approach taken to understanding the county but a small number of responses highlighted issues with snapping housing market areas (HMA) and travel to work areas to district boundaries. There was again support for districts working closer together where they share HMAs. A small number highlighted the lack of reference to the impact of Cambridge on the west of the county.

Projections for Growth

The vast majority of comments about this section are around the lack of consideration for the aging population, the NSF currently says that this is not considered further other than around the housing section and there may be benefits of further work in this area.

The Economy

There was some support for the economic section particular for the emphasis on supporting high quality tech jobs growth but there were a number of key issues raised including:

- Conservation/Environmental impacts of increased employment growth
- More to encourage employment variety and focus on rural areas
- Need for adequate infrastructure and housing provision around the tier 1 sites
- More emphasis on the importance of tourism to the county
- Importance of the Cambridge economy to West Norfolk
- The lack of digital connectivity in the county

Housing

There was good support for the housing section but there was a range of views around the proposed 10% buffer with an even mix suggesting it is right/too high/too low. There a number of mentions around the issues of affordable housing and second home ownership in some parts of the county and more could be included in the NSF to address these issues. There were also comments on addressing the needs for certain groups within the population including the elderly, students and the armed forces. Finally the environmental issues of housing development were raised in a number of responses.

Infrastructure

There were a large number of comments received on the infrastructure section with many themes being raised. As you would expect there were wide ranging views on the many aspects of the infrastructure section with rail, roads, environmental, broadband, health and water all getting significant numbers of comments. There were also a number of comments highlighting the lack of mention for cycling and agriculture.

Conclusions

There was strong support for continued joint working between authorities and 6 groups requested to be involved in further joint working. It was suggested that this forum could be used to work more closely with local people through 'roadshows' and with parish and neighbourhood teams.

Proposed responses and updates to NSF

The NSF task and finish groups will be meeting during October to review all responses received in depth. Officer comments and suggested changes to the NSF will then pulled together for each comment received. The suggested changes will then be taken forward by the steering group in November and presented to members for review and feedback at an additional Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum in mid-December.