

Report to Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
12th October 2017

Report of Norfolk Strategic Planning Group

Subject Next Steps after the Norfolk Strategic Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to set out an approach to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum on how to continue to address the government's requirements for local planning authorities (LPAs) to cooperate on cross-boundary issues through their Local Plans after the Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) has been completed. It presents suggested workstreams and recommendations on how formal cooperation can be continued.

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 highlighted in this report.
2. Recommend that each constituent authority agrees formally to take forward the proposed plan of joint work subject to later agreement of:
 - A) Revised terms of reference for the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum in light of the new work and completion of the NSF;
 - B) Detailed proposals on the 3 workstreams identified for consideration at the Spring 2018 Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
 - C) Full timetable and budget implications for the proposed work
3. Recommend each district authority formally agrees to contribute up to a maximum of £10,000 per year; Broads Authority to contribute up to a maximum of £5000 per year; Norfolk County Council to continue to contribute to the East of England Forecasting Model and provide support in kind.
4. Recommend that Norwich City Council remain the employing and hosting authority for the employee and provide administration resource as required.

Financial implications

Each authority formally agrees to participate in the continued formal cooperation and agrees to contribute up to a maximum of £10,000 per year.

Contact officers

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Further Information

None.

Report

Background

The Duty to Cooperate is an ongoing requirement and as part of the conclusions section of the NSF (section 8) officers have been looking at how to take forward strategic planning once the NSF has been completed.

A number of options were presented at the Norfolk CEO meeting in June 2017 and the views expressed highlighted the need to continue joint working between authorities and a desire to maintain some form of jointly funded resource to continue the Norfolk strategic planning work.

Furthermore the government is proposing a number of significant updates to the NPPF which are scheduled to be published in Spring 2018 and further joint work will be required to update the NSF and other publications off the back of these changes.

What strategic plan work is required?

Reviewing and updating the NSF:

- Update the NSF in light of the publication of the new NPPF scheduled for Spring 2018
- Enhancing areas of the NSF where time and resource has limited progress and where highlighted through the public consultation - such as follow up work on delivery issues, enhancing the economic chapter and further work around how elderly housing could be delivered.
- Once all Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments are complete work with authorities, where required, where not all housing needs can be met
- Ensure NSF aligns to LEP Economic Strategy
- Monitoring NSF and maintain links to other authorities

Coordinate Joint planning activities:

- Build on the NSF and support the county in the production of a county wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any potential economic or growth strategies
- Production of statements of co-operation to inform Local Plan examinations;
- Production of statement of common ground
- Reviewing of Objectively Assessed Need for housing in light of new government methodology
- Support of Local Plan Process
- Jointly commission evidence for local plans to create savings over commissioning evidence separately.
- Coordinate responses to consultations etc.
- Look to complete and maintain some policy work across the county eg OAN methodology, Brownfield register, production of common policies, Strategic Green Infrastructure

Work streams

It is suggested that the Strategic Planning work highlighted in the previously section should be organised into 3 Workstreams:

- 1) Support updates required as a result of the new NPPF due for publication in Spring 2018, this will include:
 - a. Working with officers to progress the production of Statements of Common Ground in line with the proposed government timetables of Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019
 - b. Work with officers to update the NSF in light of the new government Methodology for calculating Housing Objectively Assessed Need.
 - c. Work with officers to agree areas for enhancing the NSF following the analysis of the NSF Public consultation and in light of the updated NPPF.

- 2) Work with authorities to identify areas for cost savings through joint working including analysis of the following areas where authorities have previously expressed an interest in joint working:
 - a. Joint Strategic Needs assessment for older people
 - b. Water Cycle Study
 - c. Renewable Energy Assessment
 - d. Further visitor Pressure Study
 - e. Ecological Networks Assessment
 - f. Strategic Infrastructure Study
 - g. Retail and Commercial Leisure Study
 - h. Business Growth and Investment opportunity Study
 - i. Brown field and Self-Build Registers
 - j. Reviewing of OAN in light new government methodology

- 3) On-going communication and support for Strategic Planning including the following:
 - a. Support the yearly East of England Forecast Model run
 - b. Support for the NSPG and Member Forum
 - c. Maintain links to third parties eg Anglian Water, NALEP and EA
 - d. Monitoring NSF for accuracy and updated where required
 - e. Maintaining links to neighbouring authorities (Suffolk and Cambridgeshire) and their strategic planning work
 - f. Maintaining links to other authorities completing non statutory frameworks to understand best practice and build links to DCLG

Resource Requirements

It is proposed that the work outlined in the report can be completed with the existing project management resource, ad hoc administration resource and some planning officer resource. Whilst the funding would allow for employment of a new administration employee, it is unlikely that there would be enough work to fulfil this role. Resource requirements from each authority will be significantly less than what was required for the NSF 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 per year which will be reviewed regularly; this budget will cover the project management and administration resource 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 NSF funding was provided by the 7 Norfolk district authorities and the Broads Authority and it is proposed that this is continued. For the NSF the Broads contribution was half that of other authorities and it is proposed that their contribution remains the same. Norfolk County Council's Mineral and Waste Local Plan is not reliant on the NSF in the same way as the other partners. Norfolk County Council currently fund 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 will be sought from other organisations although no additional funds are required to support the proposed workstreams.

Suffolk authorities have expressed an interest in working jointing for some studies in the future and further cost savings could be explored in the this area through the strategic planning function.