

Report to Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum
8th October 2019

Report of Norfolk Strategic Planning Group

Subject Proposed work for 2020/21 and Funding Requirements

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to set out a proposed schedule of work to be undertaken in the 2020/2021 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.

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 Ground. 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 planning work is required?

The NSPF was reviewed in early 2019 and endorsed by all authorities (except Breckland) in August/September 2019. This updated was relatively minor in nature but ensured that the document fulfilled the requirements set out in the revised NPPF around Statement of Common Ground; it also ensured that each authority housing need was assessed against the new standard methodology and the impact this had on the local housing need. The review also ensured that all other information within the document was up to date.

It was agreed at the member forum in October 2018 that a more thorough review of the NSPF would then be carried out this included:

- Completion of a county wide Green Infrastructure and Recreational impact avoidance and mitigation Strategy
- Complete an Older Persons housing and support needs Study 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 Local Industrial Strategy which is the next stage in the evolution and implementation of the Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy
- The NSPF is aligned to the Water Resource Management Plan being prepared and the work of Water Resources East
- The NSPF is aligned to any strategic work of neighbouring authorities
- Shared objectives for extending 4G coverage and the roll out of 5G and Guidance to Broadband

This work is well underway but as part of the endorsement process for the current version of the NSPF it was agreed that additional work would be undertaken to update and enhance the Climate Change information in the document and propose agreements to support this. As part of this work it is also suggested that a full review of the Vision and Objectives is carried out and a thorough update of the document is

completed. The government have also indicated that they will be introducing a new version of the Standard Methodology for local housing need and it would seem sensible to publish the next version of the NSPF after this has been implemented.

The shared resource is currently managing the following workstreams and associated steering groups:

- Green Infrastructure and Recreational impact avoidance and mitigation Strategy
- Older Persons housing and support needs Study
- Shared objectives for extending 4G coverage and the roll out of 5G and Guidance to Broadband
- Climate Change group which will provide technical evidence and make recommendations in relation to Climate Change insofar as this raises cross boundary issues which should be considered at a strategic level.

The shared resource will also continue to coordinate other joint planning activities to:

- Maintain links to other neighbouring counties and their strategic planning work.
- Maintain links to public bodies and Utilities involved in the preparation of the NSPF
- Support the county in the production of a county wide Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any potential economic or growth strategies
- Support of Local Plan Processes across the county
- Maintain links to NHS estates and the CCGs with regular meetings to share updates on key developments and progress of Local Plans

Resource Requirements

To complete the work highlighted in the previous sections it is proposed that we maintain the existing programme resource with some planning officer support. 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 continues to contribute £10,000 for the next financial year; this budget will cover the programme 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. The budget for external work is provisionally set aside for the climate change workstream. If this budget is not required for this work it can either be carried forward for additional work or returned to authorities. 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.

Norfolk Strategic Planning Work Programme 2019-21

