

**Norfolk Strategic Framework – next steps**

Report by Planning Policy Officer

**Summary:** This report updates the Committee on progress on the Norfolk Strategic Framework to date and discusses the next steps.

**Recommendation:**

Members are requested to note the contents of the report and support the proposals for future strategic planning at a Norfolk level. It is recommended that Planning Committee 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.
- (2) 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 work streams identified for consideration at the Spring 2018 Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum;
  - c) Full timetable and budget implications for the proposed work;
  - d) Support to Norwich City Council to remain the employing and hosting authority for the employee and provide administration resource as required.
- (3) Recommend to the Broads Authority to increase the Planning Policy Team budget by £5,000 per year to contribute towards the joint working, initially for 2018/19.

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to members on the progress of the Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) which is being overseen by the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum. It also discusses the next steps to strategic planning across Norfolk as and when this version of the NSF is agreed.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) is to provide a non-statutory framework for the planning authorities across Norfolk covering joint working to continue to ensure that the Duty to Cooperate is discharged and there is beneficial co-operation on strategic planning issues across a wide area. The NSF will draw on the existing information the authorities have on housing, economic growth and infrastructure and look to fill any areas where this information is deficient. The NSF will consult with other key public bodies

including the Environment Agency and Homes and Communities Agency, and private sector infrastructure providers, particularly utility companies. It will ensure the conclusions of any reports are deliverable by consulting key business representatives.

## **2 NSF Progress to date**

- 2.1 Consultation on the draft Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) ran from 2nd August until the 22nd September 2017. There were around 100 responses received, from Town/Parish Councils, residents, community groups, Local Authorities, Public Bodies, developers, businesses and agents. Officers continue to analyse these responses and update the NSF from the comments received.
- 2.2 The Economic, Housing and Infrastructure groups met during October to review the comments received from the consultation. Officer comments and suggested changes to the NSF will be prepared for each comment received and the suggested changes will then be taken forward by the steering group in November and presented to the Member Forum for review and feedback in mid-December.

## **3 NSF next steps**

- 3.1 Regarding the NSF itself, on completion of the amendments to the document following consultation, a proposed final version of the NSF will go before the Member Forum in December. It is anticipated that the Member Forum will recommend to the Local Planning Authorities that the NSF be formally agreed. It is the intention to bring the final NSF with any recommendation from the Member Forum to Planning Committee on 5 January 2018.
- 3.2 Turning to what is next in relation to future iterations of the NSF and cooperating strategically with other Norfolk Local Planning Authorities; Members are advised that a report was considered by the Member Forum in October 2017 and at this meeting it was recommended that Member Authorities agree the recommendations in the report (summarised below) and commit funding to the NSF for the next two years initially. It was also highlighted that the NSF to date is effectively best practice, but also that it aligns neatly with what the Government are likely to introduce to show how Authorities have cooperated – the Statement of Common Ground. As such, it was felt that the Member Group's role may change to reflect changes to the Government's policy relating to planning and these could be reflected in new Terms of Reference early in 2018.

## **4 Summary and recommendation**

- 4.1 On completion of the amendment to the NSF, a proposed draft final version will be presented to the taken to the Member Forum in December 2017. It is anticipated that they will recommend to each Local Planning Authority that the NSF is agreed.

- 4.2 Looking further ahead, the Authority is requested to contribute £5,000 (initially for 2018/19) to fund future joint evidence studies as well as the continued post of the NSF Project Manager to coordinated strategic planning around Norfolk.
- 4.3 Members are requested to note the contents of the report and support the proposals for future strategic planning at a Norfolk level. It is recommended that Planning Committee agrees to the recommendation set out above:

## **5 Financial implications**

- 5.1 £5,000 contribution to continued strategic planning on a Norfolk basis. This initially covers 2018/19 but could be required for subsequent financial years (to be confirmed in 2018). This funding will be budgeted for accordingly.

Background papers: None

Author: Natalie Beal  
Date of report: 20 October 2017

Appendices: None