

Planning Committee

08 December 2023

Agenda item number 11

Consultation Responses

Report by Planning Policy Officer

Summary

This report informs the Committee of the officer's proposed response to planning policy consultations received recently, and invites members' comments and guidance.

Recommendation

To note the report and endorse the nature of the proposed response.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Appendix 1 shows selected planning policy consultation documents received by the Authority since the last Planning Committee meeting, together with the officer's proposed response.
- 1.2. The Committee's comments, guidance and endorsement are invited.

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Date of report: 15 November 2023

Appendix 1 – Planning Policy consultations received

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Greater Norwich Partnership

Document: Greater Norwich Local Plan Main Modifications www.gnlp.org.uk

Due date: 06 December 2023

Status: Main Modifications

Proposed level: Planning Committee endorsed

Notes

The Local Plan is still in Examination and the hearings have been held. Following the hearings and answers to the various matters and questions raised by the Inspectors, the proposed modifications to the Local Plan are being consulted on.

Please note that the due date is before December Planning Committee and so a draft response has been sent in and following the December meeting, will be confirmed.

Proposed response

Summary of response

There are some objections proposed in relation to referencing the Broads. Some general comments are also made.

Detailed comments

Objection – MM8

The following text is proposed to be removed from Policy 2 - SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES: ~~5. Respect, protect and enhance local character and aesthetic quality (including landscape, townscape, and the historic environment), taking account of landscape or historic character assessments, design guides and codes, and maintain strategic gaps and landscape settings, including river valleys, undeveloped approaches and the character and setting of the Broads;~~

If this text is removed, there would be no reference to the Broads in this overarching strategic policy. The Broads is a protected landscape. It has a status equivalent to a National Park. Development near or on the edge of the Broads, that is in the GNLP area, has the potential to affect the Broads. This proposed modification is contrary to the NPPF and diminishes how the Greater Norwich Local Plan reflects and protects the Broads and is contrary to NPPF 176. Policy 2 must have reference to the Broads.

It should be noted that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023, amended Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. Section 17A which creates a general duty of public bodies, and this was amended to replace 'shall have regard to' with 'must seek to further' as follows:

- (1) In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority ~~shall have regard to~~ **must seek to further** the purposes of—

- (a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
- (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and] 2
- (c) protecting the interests of navigation.

The changes proposed to Policy 2 do not further the purposes as required under the new Act.

Policy 3 has reference to the Broads, which is supported, but Policy 2 is the overarching main policy and given the importance of the Broads nationally and locally, the Broads needs to be mentioned in Policy 2. Furthermore, the change to Policy 3 that mentions the Broads is only in relation to the built and historic environment. It is not logical to just mention the Broads in relation to built and historic environment. The Broads is also relevant to the natural environment, but the Broads is not mentioned in that section (see next objection).

Therefore, the Broads should be mentioned where it is needed, and this starts at Policy 2. There is no reason given for removing reference to the Broads.

Table 8, row 5 – linked objection

Table 8 lists the key issues addressed by Policy 2. The ‘local character’ row is replaced by ‘design’ wording. The ‘design’ wording is fine, but is different to ‘local character’. ‘Local character’ wording needs to be retained with the design wording being an additional row. Fundamentally, this change and the changes to Policy 2 remove all reference to the Broads, a protected landscape, in the ‘Sustainable Communities’ section. This does not seem to be acceptable.

Objection – MM9

- Policy 3 is about Environmental Protection and Enhancement. Under Natural Environment, it says in the first bullet point ‘such as Landscape Character Assessment’. This needs to say ‘Assessments’ plural like the same text does in bullet one on the Built and Historic Environment. This is because the Broads Authority’s Landscape Character Assessment may also be of relevance.
- Under Natural Environment in Policy 3 - needs to mention the Broads due to the landscape and also the Broads being home to much biodiversity; to just mention the Broads under the Built and Historic Environment (which is welcomed) is insufficient. The great importance for biodiversity is reflected in records for the Broads, which indicate:
 - Around 25% of the Broads designated for its international and nationally conservation status
 - 11,067 species
 - 19% of total protected species in the UK and 26% of the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan species and 17% of all nationally notable or scarce species.
 - 1,519 priority species, including 85% of Red and 94% of Amber designated UK Bird species • Nineteen Global Red Data Book species
 - A wide range within taxonomic groups: e.g. 403 species of beetle, 251 species of fly and 179 species of moth

- 66 Broads Speciality species: 14 species entirely, and 17 largely, restricted to the Broads in the UK, and 35 with its primary stronghold in the area.
- Given that development is proposed near to the Broads, and given the importance of the natural environment of the Broads, Policy 3 needs to not only mention the Broads under the Built and Historic environment, but also under Natural Environment section.

Objection – lack of consistency between policies.

There is a lack of consistency between some policies. I have used a table to illustrate this. You will see that all sites are located next to the River in Norwich but some mention the Broads in the supporting text or in the policy and others don't. Indeed, some modifications are proposed to refer to the Broads (which are welcomed), but the reference to the Broads is not consistent between these policies and needs to be. It is not clear why some modifications have been made to some policies and not to others given that the context of all the sites in relation to the Broads is exactly the same. I have added colour coding where green is that no change is needed, orange is that the Broads is mentioned, but not correctly or consistently with other policies so needs changing and red where text is missing and needs adding in order to be consistent. Considering all the sites have exactly the same context, changes are required to make them all consistent and so 'green' across the board, like Policy CC4B.

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
0068	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	No mention	Yes at 2,29.	Yes, but strangely at 2.30, only regarding flood risk and water disposal which is not our role and this needs changing as it is misleading and factually incorrect.	As per 0401 and CC4b, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of its riverside context and prominent location within the City Centre Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	Add this wording: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers engage in early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority.</u> This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.
0401	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	Yes	Yes at 2.50	No	None	Add this wording: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers engage in early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Broads</u>

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
						<u>Authority</u> . This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.
CC4B	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	Yes	Yes at 2.121	Yes at 2.121 which is a proposed change	None	None – changed to refer to the Broads which is supported.
CC16	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	No	Yes at 2.193	Yes at 2.203 which is a proposed change	As per 0401 and CC4b and CC8, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of its riverside context and prominent location within the City Centre</u>	None – changed to refer to the Broads which is supported.

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
					<u>Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	
0409AR	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	No	Yes at 2.58	No	As per 0401 and CC4b and CC8, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of its riverside context and prominent location within the City Centre Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	Add this wording: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers engage in early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority.</u> This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.
0409BR	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore	No	Yes at 2.58	No	As per 0401 and CC4b and CC8, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of</u>	Add this wording: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers</u>

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
	immediately adjacent to the Broads.				<u>its riverside context and prominent location within the City Centre Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	<u>engage in early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority.</u> This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.
CC7	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	No	Yes at 2.135	Yes at 2.134	As per 0401 and CC4b and CC8, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of its riverside context and prominent location within the City Centre Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	None – already ok.

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
CC8	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	Yes	Yes at 2.145	No	None	Add this wording: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers engage in early discussions with the Environment Agency and the Broads Authority.</u> This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.
GNLP0360/3053/R10	Immediately adjacent to the river which is therefore immediately adjacent to the Broads.	Only reference to the part of the Utilities Site in the Broads, nothing in relation to being next to the river/Broads.	Only reference to the part of the Utilities Site in the Broads, nothing in relation to being next to the river/Broads.	Only reference to the part of the Utilities Site in the Broads, nothing in relation to being next to the river/Broads.	For all of the three sites, as per 0401 and CC4b and CC8, needs to say something like: <u>takes advantage of its riverside context and prominent</u>	For all of the three sites say: <u>As the site lies adjacent to the River Wensum, it is recommended that developers engage in early discussions with the Environment</u>

Site policy number	Location of site	Reference to the Broads in policy	Reference to the Broads in supporting text		Change needed to policy	Change needed to supporting text
			Consider the Broads	Early engage with the Broads Authority		
					<u>location within the City Centre Conservation Area and immediately adjacent to the Broads</u>	<u>Agency and the Broads Authority.</u> This would make the policy consistent with what is already in CC4b and CC16 and CC7.

Comments

- **MM11:** This Modification proposes this change to Policy 5: ~~have safe and sustainable access to schools and facilities;~~ **Is within reasonable travelling distance of schools, services and shops, preferably by foot, cycle or public transport.** Being within walking distance or cycling distance is one thing, but what about the route? There needs to be footways for people to use to get to these facilities and the amendment does not say that. The original text referred to 'safe' which is useful and needs to be reintroduced.
- Map page 16 of the Sites document needs to show the part of the Utilities Site that is in the Broads. This does not affect the soundness of the Local Plan especially given the stance in the Plan that the sites in East Norwich are seen as one, including the part in the Broads.
- Para 205 of the Strategy - goes on to state that development should avoid intruding into important views of historic assets. Historic England guidance on the Setting of Historic assets ([The Setting of Heritage Assets \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://www.historicengland.org.uk)) and numerous appeal decisions make clear that the setting of a heritage asset is much greater than views and it is the setting of heritage assets that need to be considered not specific views.
- GNLP0378R/GNLP2139R, GNLP0312, GNLP1001 and para 5.42 – please also mention dark skies of the Broads. The Broads has intrinsically dark skies. You mention the setting of the Broads, which is welcomed, but please add reference to protecting the dark skies of the Broads.
- Broadland villages: Cantley map, page 15 – show the Broads for consistency and to show the context.
- Broadland villages: Horstead and Coltishall map, page 25 – show the Broads for consistency and to show the context.
- Broadland villages: Salhouse – again should the Conservation Area (CA) be mentioned – potential for limited impact on the wider setting of the CA at the site allocated in Salhouse.