

Planning Committee

05 March 2021

Agenda item number 13

Local Plan for the Broads- review

Report by Planning Policy Officer

Summary

This report introduces the start of review of the Local Plan for the Broads. It sets out the likely steps and talks generally about producing local plans. This report is for information and discussion.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?	2
3.	How do you review a Local Plan? How do you produce a Local Plan?	2
4.	What is the timeline for producing the Local Plan? How long will it be until the Local Plan is submitted?	3
5.	What about the pandemic? What about the changes to the planning system that have been proposed?	3
6.	What kind of evidence will we need to produce? How much will the review cost?	4
7.	Who will produce the Local Plan?	4
8.	How will Members of Navigation Committee, Planning Committee and Broads Authority be involved?	4
9.	But what about the White Paper? What if the planning system changes? Should we wait a while?	5
10.	What role do our District and County Councils have in producing the Local Plan?	5
11.	Next Steps	5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Local Plan for the Broads was adopted in May 2019. This report introduces the review of the adopted Local Plan and answers potential questions that may arise about reviewing it. Any queries, observations or questions from Members are welcomed.

2. Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?

2.1. There are a few reasons why we are starting to review the Local Plan:

- a) We commit, in the current Local Plan, to start to review it around 18 months after adoption. Eighteen months after May 2019 adoption was around November 2020. Background work started internally in November, such as project planning and scoping.
- b) The Local Plan for the Broads 2019 was produced in line with and examined against the 2012 NPPF. At around the time the final draft of the Local Plan was being consulted on/submitted/examined, a new version of the NPPF (2018 and then 2019) was released. This included transition arrangements for advanced Local Plans, such as that for the Broads, which permitted examination against the 'old' 2012 NPPF. It is prudent to now start to review the Local Plan, noting that a new NPPF may well be put in place over the coming years.
- c) Given that the final drafting of the current Local Plan was at the end of 2017 (submitted early 2018, examined from mid-2018 and adopted May 2019), some of the issues that are addressed in the Local Plan, such as climate change, have moved on. Again, it is prudent to start to review the Local Plan to ensure it is as up to date as possible.

3. How do you review a Local Plan? How do you produce a Local Plan?

3.1. To date, we have completed project planning to get an idea of the timeline and steps needed. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the tasks and timeline. An update of the LDS will come to a future Planning Committee for endorsement.

3.2. Generally, however, these are the steps to reviewing/producing a Local Plan.

- Update the Local Development Scheme
- Update the Statement of Community Involvement
- Prepare Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and undertake technical consultation with certain stakeholders
- Review vision, objectives and policies
- Consider issues in the area and identify options to address these. Produce an 'Issues and Options' version of the Local Plan. Consult on this version.
- Undertake call for sites for residential moorings and housing – if required.
- Produce evidence base as required.
- Start to produce policies – this is the 'Preferred Options' version of the Local Plan. Produce Sustainability Appraisal. Produce Habitats Regulation Assessment. Consult on this version.

- Amend and finalise policies – this is the ‘Publication’ version of the Local Plan. Produce Sustainability Appraisal. Produce Habitats Regulation Assessment. Consult on this version.
- If still content with policies after assessing feedback on the Local Plan, submit to Planning Inspector.
- Examination, including consultations as required.
- Adopt and monitor.

4. What is the timeline for producing the Local Plan? How long will it be until the Local Plan is submitted?

- 4.1. The LDS, which sets out the stages and timings for the Local Plan, will come to a future Planning Committee for endorsement. But, generally, it is envisaged that it could take around 4 years to get to a submitted Local Plan.

5. What about the pandemic? What about the changes to the planning system that have been proposed?

- 5.1. In terms of producing the Local Plan, the pandemic does not have a significant impact. We are now well versed at working from home and holding meetings over the internet.
- 5.2. Turning to the consultations, whilst it is regrettable that we are not able to hold public meetings or drop in sessions in person, the Government instruction is clear in that we need to carry on with producing Local Plans. Indeed, since March 2020 the Broads Authority has held consultations and received many responses and much useful feedback despite the lack of face to face meetings. In terms of hard copies of consultation documents, we can print off and post them to those who request them.
- 5.3. The planning system is set to change quite a lot over the coming years. The White Paper (2020) discussed many proposals for Local Plans, some of which are significant, however no further detail has been provided and there is no clear timescale for when these changes might come forward. The Government’s Chief Planner is clear, in the meantime, that work on Local Plans should continue and this has been reiterated by the Minister of State for Housing¹. As and when regulations change regarding Local Plans, we will respond to these to ensure the Local Plan is produced to meet regulations in place at the time. That being said, there will be situations where we can ‘future proof’ the Local Plan and one particular area could be the digitisation of planning and Local Plans. Working with our IT and Communications Teams, we will try to ensure that the new Local Plan and how it is presented take advantage of modern technology.

¹ [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

5.4. To summarise, in terms of the pandemic and the changes to the planning system, the message is to keep on going.

6. What kind of evidence will we need to produce? How much will the review cost?

6.1. Some evidence will be able to be completed in house; other evidence will probably need be provided by external contractors. Examples of evidence and studies that we will need are as follows. This list is not exhaustive. It may be that we jointly commission the work with other teams in the Authority or other Local Planning Authorities.

- Habitats Regulation Assessment
- Housing Need
- Gypsy and Traveller, Travelling Show People Need
- Residential Moorings Need
- Viability Assessment
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

6.2. The cost of producing the Local Plan is mostly officers' time. The examination of the Local Plan could be in the region of £50,000 to £70,000.

7. Who will produce the Local Plan?

7.1. The Local Plan will be produced by the Planning Policy Officer. The Head of Planning and Director of Strategic Services will be heavily involved in its production as well. Development Management Officers will have a key role to play, as it is those officers that will implement and deliver the Local Plan policies when it is adopted. Our in-house topic experts will also help with policies that are relevant to their topic area such as ecology, access and navigation. We will also use consultants as needed, for example, to help calculate our housing need and to assess the viability of the Local Plan.

8. How will Members of Navigation Committee, Planning Committee and Broads Authority be involved?

8.1. Member involvement and engagement is key.

8.2. Any part of the Local Plan that is relevant to navigation will be presented to Navigation Committee for discussion and comment. Comments will be fed back to Planning Committee.

8.3. For the current Local Plan, bite size pieces of the emerging Local Plan were brought to Planning Committee for discussion. This approach worked well and was welcomed by the Members at the time. This same approach is proposed for the new Local Plan. We will try to ensure a constant flow of items, in manageable bite size pieces. Then, when

consultation needs to be approved, the entire document will be presented to Planning Committee for discussion, comment and approval. Comments received as part of these consultation stages will then be reported back to Planning Committee.

- 8.4. There may be occasions where it is recommended that endorsement of certain stages of the Local Plan are delegated to an officer, such as the Director of Strategic Services, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee and the Chair of Broads Authority, in the interest of expediency.
- 8.5. When a consultation needs to be approved, following the Planning Committee's endorsement, the document will be presented to Broads Authority for final endorsement for consultation. At the end of the process, the Local Plan would be adopted by resolution of Broads Authority.

9. But what about the White Paper? What if the planning system changes? Should we wait a while?

- 9.1. The planning system will probably change over the next few years, given the messages coming from Government. There is no set timetable for the changes taking place, so how long should we wait? And what changes are we waiting for? Not all of the White Paper changes may come to fruition. Also, as set out above, time moves on and policies can get out of date or not be based on the most up to date evidence. Importantly, the message from Government is to keep going. We are therefore expected to, and it is prudent to, keep going with producing the Local Plan.

10. What role do our District and County Councils have in producing the Local Plan?

- 10.1. We need to work with our six District and two County Councils. Not only because the Duty to Cooperate requires us to, but because they undertake services for our residents (for example minerals and waste planning, housing services) and also because it is good planning. One particular topic area that we will need to work with the districts on, is housing, including housing numbers and affordable housing. So, we will work closely with colleagues from the eight councils to ensure the Local Plan is as good as it can be. There are already fora in place that enable this working (for example, both Norfolk and Suffolk LPAs meet regularly and there is a regular meeting of Great Yarmouth Borough Council, East Suffolk Council and the Broads Authority).

11. Next Steps

- 11.1. The next three stages of producing the Local Plan are producing and then consulting on a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, updating the Local Development Scheme and also checking and updating the Statement of Community Involvement as required.

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