

Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2025

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Present

Harry Blathwayt – in the Chair (items 1-3), Tony Grayling – in the Chair (item 4 onwards), Stephen Bolt, Andrée Gee, James Harvey, Martyn Hooton, Leslie Mogford, Gurpreet Padda, James Reeder and Vic Thomson

In attendance

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer (item 12), Jason Brewster – Governance Officer, David Carmichael – the Authority’s Assistant Arboricultural Consultant (item 11), Kate Knights– Heritage and Design Manager (item 11) and Ruth Sainsbury – Head of Planning

Members of the public in attendance who spoke

No members of the public in attendance.

1. Apologies and welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Tim Jickells, Matthew Shardlow and Fran Whymark

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The Chair explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy of the recording should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

2. Appointment of Chair

Tim Jickells was proposed by Tony Grayling and seconded by Harry Blathwayt.

There being no other nominations, Tim Jickells was appointed Chair of the Planning Committee for the forthcoming year 2025/26.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Tony Grayling was proposed by Stephen Bolt and seconded by Harry Blathwayt.

There being no other nominations, Tony Grayling was appointed Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee for the forthcoming year 2025/26.

Vic Thomson joined the meeting.

4. Declarations of interest and introductions

Members indicated that they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered.

5. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business

7. Chair's announcements and introduction to public speaking

No members of the public had registered to speak.

8. Requests to defer applications and/or vary agenda order

No requests to defer or vary the order of the agenda had been received.

9. Applications for planning permission

There were no applications for consideration.

10. Enforcement update

Members received an update report from the Head of Planning (HoP) on enforcement matters previously referred to the Committee. Further updates were provided at the meeting for:

Land at the Beauchamp Arms Public House (Unauthorised static caravans)

The HoP confirmed that sentencing, previously scheduled for 25 July 2025, had been cancelled by the Court; sentencing at Norwich Crown Court had been rescheduled for 6 October 2025.

11. BA/2025/0002/TPO 2a The Street, Geldeston

The Heritage and Design Manager (HDM) presented the report recommending confirmation of a provisional Tree Preservation Order (TPO) for an oak tree and sycamore tree located at 2a The Street, Geldeston. The applicant had submitted a notification of proposed works to trees in a Conservation Area (a Section 211 notice) to pollard both the oak and the sycamore to a height of 3-4m. The Authority's Arboricultural Consultant had advised that the proposed pollarding was inappropriate as it would compromise both the visual amenity of the trees and their future health. A provisional TPO had been served and the HDM indicated that this would need to be confirmed by 24 October 2025.

An objection to the provisional TPO had been received stating that:

- The TPO was unnecessary and asking why other trees in the local area did not have TPOs.

- The residents did not have any intention to fell the trees and had always managed the trees to the best of their ability.
- The Authority's budget could be better spent elsewhere.

The objection had been received within the 28-day consultation period and as per the Authority's Scheme of powers delegated to the Chief Executive and other officers, paragraph 50 (ii), this matter would need to be determined by the Planning Committee. Members had agreed at the meeting on 18 July 2025 that, given the nature of the objection, there was no value in undertaking a site visit in this instance.

The HDM presented location maps showing the site within Geldeston on the corner of Station Road and The Street, a site map showing both trees located adjacent to the site's boundary with Station Road, the oak being located in the hedge towards the corner of Station Road and The Street and the sycamore positioned just to the south and set back from the boundary by a couple of metres, and a series of photographs of the subject trees viewed from vantage points on Station Road and The Street.

The HDM noted that the site was located within the Geldeston Conservation Area (CA) and that the location of both trees had been remarked on within the Geldeston CA appraisal for their contribution to the character of the area. Both trees were early mature specimens, considered to be in good condition with a likely retention span of between 40 and 100 years. As demonstrated by the photographs, due to their size and location, both trees were publicly visible and both made positive contributions to the street scene and the wider landscape.

The objections raised were not considered relevant to the confirmation of the TPO and they did not negate the need for the TPO and the preservation of the trees. In response to a question the HDM confirmed the Authority's response set out in the report to the points raised in the objection:

- Given the amenity value of the trees and the inappropriate nature of the proposed trees works the TPO was necessary. There were specific criteria for serving a TPO and it was not expedient to serve TPOs on the other trees suggested.
- The residents may not have any intention of felling the trees however the TPO was served to prevent the proposed tree works that the Authority deemed inappropriate.
- The Authority, as the Local Planning Authority for the Broads, had a statutory responsibility to respond to Section 211 notices and serve TPOs as required.

The HDM concluded the assessment by indicating the recommendation was to confirm the provisional TPO.

In response to questions the HDM confirmed that the subject trees, located within the applicant's property, were owned by the applicant and that the objector was not the applicant.

Members asked what extra protection a TPO would serve within a CA and why a TPO was required. The HDM responded that trees within a CA required people to notify the Local

Planning Authority (LPA), using a Section 211 notice, six weeks before carrying out certain work on the tree. The LPA had to respond within the six weeks to indicate whether the notified works were appropriate or not. If the LPA considered the works were not appropriate and the applicant was not willing to withdraw the Section 211 notice then the only mechanism to prevent the proposed trees works was by serving a TPO. In the context of this TPO, the Authority did not consent to the proposed tree works, the applicant was unwilling to withdraw the Section 211 notice and the Authority served a TPO to prevent this work. The Authority's Assistant Arboricultural Consultant (AAC) added that although a TPO required an applicant to state the reason for any proposed tree works, a Section 211 notice for tree works within a CA did not and therefore we do not know the applicant's reasons for wanting to carry out the works.

In response to a question the AAC clarified that although the proposed works were considered not appropriate the AAC had viewed both trees and identified that the oak tree had some over extended limbs which meant there was quite a lot of tip-end weight. The AAC considered it prudent and good tree management to reduce the tip-end weight of the impacted limbs on the oak tree. This could be agreed with the owner even if the TPO was confirmed. The AAC did not see any benefit to the owner or the community of any intervention regarding the sycamore tree. The AAC confirmed that the oak tree was an English oak of approximately 15 metres in height and the sycamore was approximately 12 metres tall.

A Member asked who was responsible for the cost of the TPO. The HDM responded that there was no charge for submitting a Section 211 notice and that the cost of the tree works remained the responsibility of the owner.

The Member asked whether both trees had to be considered on the same TPO. The HDM confirmed that given their location within the CA and the context of the tree works application it was considered practical to serve a single TPO.

In response to a question the HDM confirmed that no representations had been received from the Highways Authority.

A Member asked whether the applicant had any specialist tree knowledge. The HDM confirmed that we do not know as this was not a consideration of the TPO process.

Members were supportive of protecting the oak tree with no reservations raised. A couple of Members were reluctant to support the preservation of the sycamore with both Members characterising this as a non-native species of tree that was considered a weed by gardeners and one Member believing this species was more prone to disease. Other Members supported the protection of the subject sycamore tree with a Member considering this a fine specimen that deserved protection and another Member highlighting the usefulness of sycamore wood.

Martyn Hooton proposed, seconded by Stephen Bolt

It was resolved 9 votes for and 1 abstention to confirm Tree Preservation Order BA/2025/0002/TPO 2a The Street, Geldeston.

12. Consultation Responses

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report, which documented the draft responses to the following consultations in Appendix 1 of the report:

- Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan Review issued by Broadland District Council (BDC).
- North Norfolk Local Plan Main Modifications consultation produced by North Norfolk District Council (NNDC).

Appendix 2 of the report detailed consultation responses previously submitted for both Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission Supplementary Planning Document issued by South Norfolk Council and on proposed reforms to processes associated with Electricity Network Infrastructure Build and Maintenance issued by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The PPO proposed to discuss each section of the report in turn and welcomed members' feedback on the draft responses.

Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan Review

The Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 version of the plan had been issued for consultation. The PPO indicated that along with comments seeking clarification on a number of points and some suggested improvements she had raised three objections:

- There was an ambiguity/inconsistency in the plan's wording associated with the settlement boundary and a possible revision to the boundary; if the boundary was being revised there was no associated policy to support this amendment.
- The Neighbourhood Plan Group, BDC and the Authority had previously discussed issues raised by a Member of the Broads Authority regarding the Habitats Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment screening. The changes agreed during those discussions had not been applied to the neighbourhood plan.
- The neighbourhood plan's policy regarding community facilities was contrary to the Authority's equivalent policy. The plan's criteria regarding community facilities reflected the wording used in the Local Plan for the Broads submitted for examination in 2018. The Examiner's report had changed these criteria which were subsequently included in the Local Plan for the Broads adopted in May 2019.

North Norfolk Local Plan Main Modifications

The North Norfolk Local Plan had been examined and the Planning Inspector had recommended, in conjunction with NNDC, a number of modifications which had been issued for consultation. The PPO, in addition to highlighting the omission of references to the Broads, had requested an update to reflect a change introduced by the new government to remove the requirement for local plans to identify suitable areas for onshore wind power (the Planning Committee endorsed the equivalent change to the Local Plan for the Broads on the 13 September 2024).

Since the report was issued, a Member of the Planning Committee had suggested some additional responses that the PPO supported. The first response related to an improvement to

section 6.1.1 of the Local Plan to better reflect the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 amendment to Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. Section 17A created a general duty of public bodies, and this was amended to replace 'shall have regard to' with 'must seek to further' in the context of the Authority's statutory purpose and this updated wording was expected to be incorporated in the Local Plan. The other additional response related to the Planning Inspector's modification to extend references to native trees to include "or appropriate trees". The Member had requested a clarification regarding what constituted appropriate trees and questioned the need to tone down the importance of native trees. A Member asked whether a further clarification regarding the definition of native trees could be included in the response to which the PPO agreed.

Andrée Gee proposed, seconded by Gurpreet Padda

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the nature of the proposed responses to the Regulation 16 version of the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan and, subject to the agreed Member amendments, the North Norfolk Local Plan main modifications.

Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission Supplementary Planning Document

The PPO confirmed that the consultation response to South Norfolk Council's Landscape Susceptibility in relation to Energy Generation, Storage and Transmission Supplementary Planning Document had been shared with Members via email prior to submission. The response included corrections to ensure adequate referencing to the Broads and, at the behest of South Norfolk Council, a new section relating to the impact of schemes on the Broads.

Electricity Network Infrastructure: Consents, Land Access and Rights

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero was consulting on changes to land access, rights and consents processes for electricity network infrastructure to support the transition to Net Zero and secure Clean Power by 2030. The PPO received notification of this consultation a matter of days before the submission deadline. The proposed changes referred to National Parks and National Landscapes however they had omitted to reference the Broads or the Broads Authority and the response sought to correct these omissions.

There was a discussion regarding the government's ongoing planning reforms and their expected impacts on the Authority. The PPO indicated that the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, once enacted, would deliver a range of changes to the development process and included changes to environmental regulation and possible mitigation of environmental impacts. It was unclear when these changes would be implemented and whether there would be a need for secondary legislation or statutory instruments to fully enact the scope of this new legislation. The PPO explained that changes to the local plan system associated with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 were ongoing and a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework was expected, both of which would be consulted on later in the year.

13. Circular 28/83 Publication by Local Authorities of information about the handling of planning applications – Q2 (1 April to 30 June) 2025

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report, which provided the development management statistics for the quarter ending 30 June 2025. The HoP highlighted that all minor and other applications had been determined within statutory timescales or within an agreed extension of time as shown in table 2 (of the report) and exceeded the national performance indicators as shown in table 3 (of the report). Members noted this as excellent performance and thanked the Planning Team.

14. Appeals to the Secretary of State

The Committee received a schedule of appeals to the Secretary of State since the last meeting. The Head of Planning highlighted the recent appeal decision relating to an open structure pavilion/boathouse over a mooring at Little Quay, Potter Heigham. The Planning Inspector's assessment supported the Authority's decision and Local Plan Policies DM21 (amenity) and DM43 (design) on which that decision was based.

15. Decisions made by officers under delegated powers

The Committee received a schedule of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from 4 July 2025 to 29 August 2025 and any Tree Preservation Orders confirmed within this period.

16. Other items of business

There were no other items of business.

17. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be on Friday 10 October 2025 at 10:00am at The King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich.

The meeting ended at 11:04am.

Signed by

Chair