

## NORTH NORFOLK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**Summary:** The Site Specific Proposals and Re-Use of Rural Buildings as Dwelling Development Plans have been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Independent examination. This report provides an update of the timetable for examination of the Plans, the key issues that the Inspector has identified for Examination, recent Government advice, and the completion of the evidence documents that will support the examination.

**Conclusions:** Notwithstanding the recent announcements made by the coalition government in relation to the probable abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan and the Re-use of Rural Buildings policy provide a 'sound' basis for the management of development in the District over the coming years and the proposed dwelling numbers provide an appropriate, and local derived, basis for helping to address housing needs and meet demand over the plan period (2001-2021).

The publication of updates to the supporting evidence will be helpful to the Independent Examination process by ensuring that discussion draws on the latest available information.

**Recommendations:** This item will be considered by the LDF Working Party on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June. The recommendations of the Working Party will be reported to the meeting. Officer recommendations to the Working Party are as follows:

1. That the content of the Secretary of State's letter of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 be noted and that the Local Development Framework Working Party recommend to Cabinet that in relation to dwelling numbers the Council endorses the proposals within the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan

2. That the Working Party recommends to Cabinet that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Five Year Land Supply Statement, and Housing Trajectory are published

Cabinet member(s):

Ward(s) affected: All

All

Contact Officer, telephone number, and e-mail:

Mark Ashwell, Planning Policy Manager 01263 516325,  
[mark.ashwell@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:mark.ashwell@north-norfolk.gov.uk)

### 1. Background

Both the Site Specific Proposals and the Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Development Plan Documents were submitted for Independent Examination on the 5<sup>th</sup> of

March. A Pre-Hearing Meeting was held by the Inspector on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June at which he identified his 'Matters and Issues' for examination (Appendix B). The Inspector has identified twenty-seven broad questions which will form the basis of the examinations; firstly focusing on general issues and secondly looking at specific sites. One day of the Hearings will be dedicated to the Re-use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Plan. All parties have been asked to prepare written responses to the Inspector's questions by 30<sup>th</sup> June and the Council is expected to prepare papers in relation to all questions. The formal Hearing sessions have been confirmed for the three weeks commencing on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July.

## 2. Central Government Announcements

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles, the new coalition Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, wrote to Chief Planning Officers on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May highlighting the Government's commitment to rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decisions on housing numbers (including Gypsy and Traveller provision) to Local Planning Authorities.

Formal abolition will require Parliamentary approval and until this time the East of England Plan remains an approved part of the statutory Development Plan. However, Mr Pickles finishes his letter by stating that he expects decision makers to take his letter into account 'as a material consideration' in any decisions they are currently taking. It is anticipated that this letter, and the issue of housing numbers generally, will be raised during the Hearings as one of the key 'tests of soundness' is conformity with the Regional Plan, which by the date of the formal hearings may no longer exist. It would therefore be helpful to the Hearings if the Council's position in relation to the East of England Plan, and housing numbers in particular, was clear.

The approved Regional Plan provides the broad strategic context within which other elements of the LDF have been prepared. In relation to dwelling numbers members may recall that early versions of the Regional Plan suggested that North Norfolk accommodate 6,400 dwellings over the twenty year period covered by the Plan and that, at that time, dwelling numbers were being set as *targets* to be delivered. North Norfolk argued for, and were successful in securing, a higher allocations number (8,000 dwellings) based on the evidence of very high levels of housing need within the District. The final version of the Regional Plan expressed the housing numbers as '*minimums to be provided*' rather than an absolute target to be met and it was on this basis that the Core Strategy and subsequently the Site Specific Proposals documents were prepared.

Dwelling numbers in North Norfolk have essentially been derived from local evidence, rather than being imposed by the region, and the Authority is one of only a few with an adopted Core Strategy which will remain as part of the adopted development plan following abolition of the Regional Plan. Both the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Site Specific Proposals Development Plans refer to dwelling numbers in terms of '*at least*' 8,000 dwellings to be provided between 2001 and 2021. Expressing dwelling numbers in this way provides a degree of flexibility in the later years of the period covered by the plan allowing for the 8,000 dwelling number to be exceeded should the circumstances justify it at that time. Officers therefore consider that the submitted Site Specific Proposals document remains "sound" and that the proposed dwelling numbers can be robustly defended in the light of objections made to specific allocations, which may now seek to quote the Secretary of State's letter.

In relation to Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, the Site Specific Proposals Plan made no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller sites and Members may recall that the absence of permanent pitch provision was raised as an issue of soundness in representations on the Draft Plan by both the Regional Assembly and the Government Office. The Council's position (as advised to Cabinet in a report to the meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010) has been that the adopted Core Strategy includes an adopted policy which aims to meet arising need in sustainable locations and consequently, as there was little evidence of any specific need, formal site specific allocations should not be made. This is the basis of the case that will be

outlined at the hearing sessions in the event (now considered unlikely) that this becomes a key issue for examination. Mr Pickles letter is helpful in reinforcing the case that decisions in relation to pitch provision should be made locally and be based on an assessment of local need.

Other elements of the Regional Plan informed the preparation of both the Core Strategy and subsequently the Site Specific Proposals. This includes the spatial distribution of development, proportions of affordable housing, sustainable construction and energy generation, environmental protection and so on. These regional policies are all areas where there is a wide degree of consensus and generally reflect earlier central Government advice as outlined in Planning Policy Statements and/or the requirements of other regulations. Consequently, the possible abolition of the Regional Plan would not appear to precipitate the need for a wholesale review of the Council's planning policies.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June PPS3 – Housing, was republished. The most notable changes relate to the removal of garden land from the definition of Previously Developed Land (brownfield) and, whilst the advice still requires the efficient use of land, the national minimum density target of 30dw/h has been removed. The revised PPS continues to make reference to the need for conformity with Regional Spatial Strategies and maintaining five and fifteen year land supplies and it can therefore be expected that further revisions to the PPS will follow the signalled abolition of the Regional Plan.

### **3. Crime & Disorder**

There are no crime and disorder issues attached to this report.

### **4. Sustainability**

Both Development Plan Documents have been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment throughout their preparation.

### **5. Equality & Diversity**

Both Development Plan Documents have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment. No negative impacts were identified.

### **6. Finance**

There are no financial matters in respect of this report.

### **7. Risk**

There may be a challenge to housing numbers based on recent Government announcements. However, given the Council has an adopted Core Strategy in place minimises these risks.

### **8. Conclusions**

Notwithstanding the recent announcements made by the coalition government in relation to the probable abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan and the Re-use of Rural Buildings policy provide a 'sound' basis for the management of development in the District over the coming years and the proposed dwelling numbers provide an appropriate, and local derived, basis for helping to address housing needs and meet demand over the plan period (2001-2021).

The publication of updates to the supporting evidence will be helpful to the Independent Examination process by ensuring that discussion draws on the latest available information.

# CABINET

**Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 July 2010 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 10.00 am.**

**Members present:**

Mrs P Bevan Jones	Mrs H T Nelson
Ms V R Gay (Chairman)	Mr E Seward
Mr G Jones	Mr C Stockton

**Also attending:**

Mrs L Brettle	Mr P W High
Mr R Combe	Mrs G Lisher
Mrs H Eales	Mr J Lisher
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	Mr W Northam

**Officers in attendance:**

The Chief Executive, The Deputy Chief Executive, the Strategic Director – Community, the Strategic Director – Information, the Head of Coastal Strategy, the Corporate Asset Manager, the Strategic Housing Manager and the Planning Policy Manager.,

**Also attending: Mr C Kutesco, Norfolk County Council**

**27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**28. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**29. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Questions had been received from Mr J Sizer, Property Manager of the National Trust and Miss E Hook of the Norfolk Coast Partnership on agenda item 9 – Morston Quay Public Conveniences.

**30. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There was one item of urgent business concerning 2010/11 Grant Reductions – Implications to NNDC. The reason for this being an item of urgent business was because of recent announcements made on future Government spending from 2011/12 following an emergency budget on 22 June 2010. This would be taken as the next item.

### **31. 2010/11 GRANT REDUCTIONS – IMPLICATIONS TO NNDC**

Copies of this urgent item were distributed.

The Government had published details of the £1.166 billion Local Government contribution to the £6.2 billion savings target for the current financial year 2010/11. The Communities Secretary had confirmed that no Local Authority would face reductions in the revenue grant of more than 2% this year. These revenue grant reductions were to be delivered from cuts to the area based grant for which none was allocated direct to the Council, therefore whilst there would be no direct impact to the Council from the revenue grant cuts, the impact of reductions to other local authorities, for example the County was yet to be quantified. Since then, there had been further announcements on a number of other service grants. Those which would have an impact in the current financial year were the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive (LABGI) and the Free Swimming Initiative Grant.

No LABGI grant had been budgeted for in 2010/11, as the announcement of the £37,748 grant for 2010/11 was not made until March 2010, after the budget had been set. In May 2010, the Cabinet had subsequently approved funding of £30,000 for the Wells Maltings project to be funded from the 2010/11 LABGI allocation. The recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 May 2010 had been: "Cabinet grant authority for financial support of £30,000 to be secured from LABGI that is a relevant fund to support the post through NNDC for the period 2010-12. The fund will act as match funding support for the recruitment of a dedicated Wells Maltings Project and Facilities Manager for the development phase of the capital project that has been proposed via the Wells Maltings Feasibility Study." The announcement had been made on 17 June 2010 that there would be no LABGI grant paid for 2010/11. Unless alternative funding was identified in the current financial year, this would need to be funded from general reserves. This would mean that the level of the general reserve was taken below that of the current recommended level (£950,000) by 31 March 2011 and therefore the financial strategy would have to take account of replacing the £30,000 in the general reserves over the medium term.

In respect of the free swimming initiative grant, two year fixed grant funding had been made available by the Government from April 2009. The Council had agreed to participate in the scheme for the over 60s element and had been allocated grant funding of £48,409 per annum to cover the cost (ie lost income) of the initiative. Funding for year two (2010/11) would now cease on 31 July 2010. This equated to a reduction in grant in the current year of £32,273. Due to an underspend of the grant in 2009/10 confirmation was being sought on the use of this and therefore the continuation of the scheme beyond this date within funding constraints was yet to be confirmed.

**RESOLVED that**

delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Leisure and Resources and the Deputy Chief Executive to agree a date that charging for swimming recommences to ensure there is no impact on the 2010/11 budget.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council to**

agree to the release of £30,000 from the general reserve for the Wells Maltings Project.

**32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Member(s)	Minute No.	Item	Interest
Mrs L Brettle	36	Morston Quay Public Conveniences	Personal and non-prejudicial as a Member of the National Trust
Mr R Combe	"		Personal and prejudicial as a member of the Norfolk Coast Partnership and the National Trust
Ms V Gay	"		Personal and non-prejudicial as a Member of the National Trust
Mr G Jones	"		Personal and non-prejudicial as his partner is a Member of the National Trust
Mr P Moore	39	North Norfolk Local Development Framework	Personal and non-prejudicial as a chartered town planner

**33. CAR ALLOWANCES WORKING PARTY**

It was hoped that the proposed travel policy would result in savings of between £200,000 to £300,000.

**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Car Allowances Working Party held on 17 May 2010 be received.

**34. JOINT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The reduction in overall sickness absence and subsequent savings made following the implementation of the Sickness Absence Policy were noted. The Organisational Development Manager and her team were thanked for their work on the Policy.

The Deputy Chief Executive and staff involved in the pay and grading document were thanked.

**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Committee held on 24 May 2010 be received.

**35. MEMBERS' TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT GROUP**

Attention was drawn to the forthcoming prospective candidates' evening and it was hoped that there would be a wide range of candidates for each position. The Council was supporting Norfolk County Council's "Vocal Local" campaign which was starting this month.

**RESOLVED that**

the minutes of the meeting of the Members' Training, Development and Support Group be received.

**36. MORSTON QUAY PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

Public speakers: Mr J Sizer, Property Manager of the National Trust and Miss E Hook of the Norfolk Coast Partnership.

The report concerned a feasibility study for public convenience provision at Morston Quay. The feasibility study considered three options for future provision. A decision as to how the Council supported this provision in conjunction with the National Trust and Morston Parish Council was required.

Members were keen that some kind of public conveniences provision should remain at Morston. It was proposed that in addition to the disposal of the Morston Quay public conveniences to the National Trust on the basis of deed of gift in accordance with the Council's Property Disposals Policy, there should also be a claw-back clause should the site be developed for uses other than public conveniences. This was seconded. It was not considered possible for the Council, in addition, to make a contribution of £25,000 towards the capital replacement project.

Mr R Combe urged Cabinet Members to support Option 3.1.6 – to offer the freehold to the National Trust on the basis of deed of gift in combination with a contribution of £25,000 towards the capital replacement project.

Mrs L Brettle, local Member, informed the meeting that Morston Parish Council were keen to see the issue of the public conveniences resolved as it had been an outstanding issue for some considerable time.

**RESOLVED to**

agree to the disposal of the Morston Quay public conveniences to the National Trust on the basis of deed of gift in accordance with the Council's Property Disposals Policy, but with a claw-back clause in the event of the site being developed for uses other than public conveniences.

**37. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT (CPE) IN NORFOLK**

The report explained the proposal by Norfolk County Council to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in Norfolk. (In Norwich, the City Council already operated CPE on an agency basis). It outlined the proposals for different levels of involvement in the scheme and requested that the Council indicated its support for the submission to the Secretary of State to introduce CPE in Norfolk under the proposed business model.

The Corporate Asset Manager added a further recommendation to the report which was to replace the existing car parking orders in the District to comply with the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Mr C Kutesco of Norfolk County Council was attending the meeting in order to answer questions.

A Member considered that the District Council did not have the resources to provide on-street enforcement, and under Option 3 the County Council would continue to do this either in-house or through an outside contractor. It was explained that the Police would continue to be responsible for moving traffic offences.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council to**

agree the following recommendations:

- a) Support for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in Norfolk as the Police are withdrawing from this activity;
- b) Support for Option 3, whereby the County Council provide on-street enforcement directly, and to work with the County to ensure the most cost effective approach to enforcement integration; and
- c) Replace the existing car parking orders in the District to comply with the Traffic Management Act 2004.

**38. NORTH NORFOLK SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Work to develop the second generation of the North Norfolk Shoreline Management Plan had been completed. This had followed a three month period of public consultation and then finalisation of the Plan. The Plan had been overseen by steering groups of Officers and Members from all the partner organisations. North Norfolk District Council had been actively represented throughout the process. The resulting Plan was both thorough and sound and may be considered for adoption by the Council.

The Head of Coastal Strategy thanked Mrs L Brettle and Mrs J Trett for their input into the development of the Plan.

Appendix A to the report showed changes between the current and the proposed Plan. The Head of Coastal Strategy asked Members to note that many of the policies put forward were conditional. The process had been both robust and thorough.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council that**

the North Norfolk (Hunstanton to Kelling) Shoreline Management Plan is adopted as policy by North Norfolk District Council subject to Secretary of State approval to matters in relation to the Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest.

**39. NORTH NORFOLK LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

The Site Specific Proposals and Re-Use of Rural Buildings as Dwellings Development Plans had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Independent examination. The report provided an update of the timetable for examination of the Plans, the key issues that the Inspector had identified for Examination, recent Government advice and the completion of the evidence documents that would support the examination.

The Council had been only the second in the county to adopt a core strategy.

The Local Development Framework Working Party had, at its meeting held on 28 June 2010, recommended that the Council continue as it had been doing.

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett said she and Mr N Dixon were uncomfortable with this process continuing unchecked and felt that it should be given further consideration. She hoped that the public consultation would be listened to. In response, it was pointed out that the Council's last public consultations had been good examples of democracy. There would be opportunities for the public and organisations to make their views known and to make recommendations as to the soundness of the plan.

Mr E Seward welcomed the localism in respect of the travellers sites. In respect of affordable housing, there was a high level need in the District, especially as the cost of buying an average house far outstripped basic incomes. It was important to keep flexibility within the plan for this, whilst being mindful of development policies.

Mr C Stockton reiterated that the Council was on the point of putting the plan forward for public examination, and the inspector would decide whether it was sound. The Local Development Framework itself gave the opportunity to be reviewed on a regular basis.

**RESOLVED that**

- a) the content of the Secretary of State's letter of 27 May 2010 be noted and that in relation to dwelling numbers the Council endorses the proposals within the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan.
- b) the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, Five Year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory are published.

Mr P Moore abstained from voting on this item.

**40. PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT FOR THE FUTURE DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S WOODLAND SERVICE**

The report outlined a proposed partnership arrangement with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in the future management of the Council's woodland assets.

Mr P High, a local Member for Holt, supported the proposal.

**RESOLVED to**

approve the proposed partnership arrangement with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in respect of the management of the Council's woodland assets for a period of three years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 – the details of the partnership arrangements being on the terms detailed within the report.

**41. NORTH NORFOLK YOUR CHOICE YOUR HOME CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME – UPDATE ON SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION, PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS OF THE SCHEME AND A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE NORTH NORFOLK HOUSING REGISTER POLICY**

A review of the Your Choice Your Home Choice Based Lettings Scheme had been undertaken by partners and a number of minor changes were being proposed to enhance the Scheme. It was proposed that these changes be implemented to coincide with the first anniversary of the Scheme once all of the necessary system changes had been made.

The Strategic Housing Manager informed the meeting that there had been positive feedback from Members, stakeholders and customers on the Scheme. There was an opportunity to make a number of changes to the Scheme which would not require a change to policy. These were to make three bedroom houses available, thereby freeing up smaller properties for smaller families and couples; and also moving to a two-weekly viewing cycle. A consultation exercise would be undertaken in October.

Members were pleased with the progress of the Scheme and thanked Officers involved with it.

**RESOLVED to**

note the successful implementation of the Your Choice Your Home Choice Based Lettings Scheme and endorse the enhancements to the scheme which are now being proposed by partners following a review of the first eight months operation of the Scheme.

**42. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED that**

under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.

**Definition of paragraphs:**

**Paragraph 1:** Information relating to any individual

**Paragraph 3:** Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**Paragraph 4:** Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

**43. NORFOLK LEGAL PARTNERSHIP**

The report identified the opportunity for North Norfolk District Council to consider joining the Norfolk Legal Partnership as a stakeholder authority.

**RESOLVED**

- a) to authorise the Strategic Director – Information, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio holder, to enter into discussions and negotiations in relation to the prospect of joining the Norfolk Legal Partnership as a stakeholder.
- b) that a further report is brought before Cabinet after that process is complete in order to decide whether the Council should commit to joining the Norfolk Legal Partnership.

The meeting closed at 11.22am.

.....  
Chairman, 6 September 2010