

**OFFICERS' REPORTS TO
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY – 24 JULY 2006**

PUBLIC BUSINESS – ITEM FOR DECISION

1. Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England : Panel Report

This report summarises the key recommendation from the Panel Report on the examination in public into the East of England Plan. The Panel supports a housing figure of 8,000 for North Norfolk, and does not promote sub-regions for Norwich and Kings Lynn. A summary of the key recommendations is provided in the report.

1. Introduction

The Report of the Panel following the Examination in Public of the East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England) was published on 22nd June 2006. A summary of the key points was reported verbally at the meeting on 3rd July and this report provides a fuller outline of the key recommendations from the Panel Report as they relate to North Norfolk.

The next stage will be the publication by the Secretary of State of Proposed Changes due in Autumn 2006 which will be subject to further public consultation. These proposed changes will be based on the Panel's recommendations, but may be influenced by more recent information. The Government will then publish its adopted East of England Plan in Spring 2007.

The Panel Report is in two volumes: the main report (some 245 pages) and a set of supporting appendices. Copies of the report are available in the Member's room and at Planning Reception. It is available on line at: www.go-east.gov.uk

2. Overview

The report is structured in the order of the Draft East of England Plan. The Panel notes that in order to address climate change there will need to be a "marked change, indeed reversal, of the habits and attitudes of the region and its people to among other things, water use, energy consumption and waste." The Panel note the particular need to reduce water consumption by 25% of current levels and propose a review of the RSS to ensure that water availability is a key determinant in the location of new development in the longer term.

The Panel recommends an increase in the regional housing number of 27,500 homes to 505,000. This is based on the identified need, particularly in the south of the region. However, the Panel recognises that this level will require an annual rate of around 26,000 homes per annum, a 30% increase on current levels of delivery. They recognise that this number still creates a short fall in terms of need, but that this could be accommodated in the later years of the plan, through the review of the RSS.

The Panel supported the overall spatial strategy outlined in the draft plan, but has recommended a redrafting of the approach in smaller towns and rural areas removing some of the ambiguity in the Draft RSS regarding the role of market towns. The proposed policy covering rural areas is shown below and the development strategy in the North Norfolk LDF preferred options Core strategy is consistent with this approach.

SS4: Development in other towns and rural areas

Development will take place in other towns to the extent identified in local development documents. Such towns will include selected market towns serving rural areas and other towns with the potential to increase their degree of economic and social self-sustainability through measures to:

- *support urban and rural renaissance;*
- *secure appropriate amounts of new housing (including affordable housing), and local employment and other facilities; and*
- *improve the town's accessibility, especially by public transport.*

Local development documents will also consider the potential of other key service centres to accommodate new smaller-scale development which is sympathetic to local character and of an appropriate scale and nature to accommodate local housing and employment needs.

In all other rural settlements and related communities local development documents should seek to assist the continued viability of agriculture and other rural economic activities (such as tourism), the diversification of the rural economy, the provision of housing for local needs, and support for the sustainability of local services.

It should be noted that the approach outlined in these strategic policies in relation to the coast states that Local Development Documents will (among other things):

- *ensure that new development is compatible with shoreline management plans so as to avoid constraining effective future flood management or increasing the need for expensive new sea defences.*

3. Sub-Regions

The Panel recommends a reduction in the number of sub-regions identified in the Plan to only those where a "policy deficit" exists which justifies a separate set of policies for the sub-region. The four remaining are Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway, Cambridge and the London Arc. Consequently the proposed Norwich and King's Lynn sub-regions are now covered in a policy relating to these settlements as key centres. The Norwich Policy Area (an area identified in the adopted Norfolk Structure Plan including the first ring of villages outside the built-up area and including Wymondham and Long Stratton) is proposed as the boundary base for inter-authority working. The policy suggests formal delivery arrangements be adopted to deliver the strategy and identifies the need for a "major shift in emphasis across the NPA toward travel by public transport". In relation to the proposed Northern Distributor Road the panel does not include it as an element of the policy but states that "some form of relief/distributor route to the north of the city is almost certain to form one element among a package of transport measures in a sound core strategy for the NPA."

In relation to the proposed King's Lynn sub-region, the Panel similarly stated that it saw no justification for such an entity and King's Lynn is therefore identified as a key centre. The Panel did, however, increase the housing provision for King's Lynn, by an additional 1,000.

Thus no part of North Norfolk is included in a Norwich or King's Lynn sub-region.

4. Housing

North Norfolk's District's housing numbers are considered within the context of the Norwich sub-region. The panel report states:

The District Council seeks an increase in its allocation from 6,400 to at least 8,000 (400pa) which would effectively maintain the rate of provision in the Structure Plan (410pa) and reflect average annual build rates from 1996-2004 (417pa). In its view the North Norfolk market towns are sustainable locations for development and the proposed higher rate of building would help to provide more affordable housing and sustain the local economy. We see no reason not to support this request although it will be necessary through the LDDs to set strong policies to ensure that the growth planned for these relatively remote towns assists in achieving reasonably self-contained and sustainable towns with lively economies and diverse communities.

Thus the Panel supports the housing figure of 8,000 dwellings between 2001-21 as requested by the Council. As Members are aware, the preferred options for the Core Strategy does indeed set strong policies to ensure that development takes place in sustainable locations and should increase the self-containment of these towns.

The Panel's amended housing policy H1 states that provision will be made for the completion of at least 505,500 additional dwellings over the period 20021-2021 and the distribution is identified in 5 year indicative phases, for the purpose of monitoring so that the 8,000 for North Norfolk is:

| Time period | 5 year housing figure | Dwellings per annum |
|--------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2001-06 | 1,850 | 370 |
| 2006-11 | 2,050 | 410 |
| 2011-16 | 2,050 | 410 |
| 2016-21 | 2,050 | 410 |

At a regional level, the policy states that there is a regional expectation that 35% of new housing coming forward as a result of planning permissions granted after the adoption of the RSS should be affordable. The Panel further recommends that the definition of affordable is as set out in the Annex of draft PPS 3 (ie it excludes low-cost market housing.)

The Panel also added a new policy on Gypsies and Travellers which states that:

Local authorities should make provision for sites/pitches to meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers living within or resorting to their area. EERA will work with local authorities and other stakeholders to bring forward an early review to this RSS setting out the strategic framework for such provision, and identifying the requirement in terms of pitch numbers at a district level. Until that review is in place provision in LDDs should be based on the latest available local information on need within the area.

It is understood that this piece of work is programmed to take place during 2007/8 and may be more categorical in terms of the type and number of sites which are required in the district.

5. Affordable Housing

The Panel have proposed significant changes to the policy on affordable housing. The proposed policy states that the Local Development Documents should set appropriate targets for affordable housing taking into account, the objectives of the

RSS, local assessments of affordable housing needs, housing market considerations and the Regional Housing Strategy. It suggests a regional level expectation that “some 35% of new housing coming forward as a result of planning permissions granted *after the adoption of the RSS* should be affordable”. On this basis the LDF should assume that the target of 35% of all provision should “kick-in” only after adoption of the Core Strategy in 2008. The new policy no longer provides a breakdown in terms of being tenure specific, and does not identify a specific requirement for key worker or social housing. It would therefore be for the District, based on information from the Sub-regional Housing Market Assessment due to report in early 2007 to identify more detailed requirements in relation to affordable housing including what the percentage target is appropriate for North Norfolk.

The draft Core Strategy report for Preferred Options consultation proposes that 40% of dwellings on sites over 10 in towns and 50% on sites over 5 in villages should be affordable. The table below shows our actual figures to March 2006 and an estimate of the number of affordable homes which could be delivered through both section 106s and through public funding via exception sites. Clearly, these estimates are optimistic, both in terms of a continuation of public funding and in assuming that the affordable housing policies (of 40% for towns (and Hoveton) on sites over 10, and 50% in villages on sites over 2) can be delivered.

| 5 year time period | Total completions (and RSS requirement) | Affordable housing (section 106) | Affordable housing (exception sites) | % affordable housing |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 2001-2006 | 1,612 (1,850) | 16 | 303 | 20% |
| 2006-2001 | (2,050) | 390 | 320 | 35% |
| 2011-2016 | (2,050) | 390 | 320 | 35% |
| 2016-2021 | (2,050) | 390 | 320 | 35% |
| Total | 8,000 | 1,186 | 1,263 | 30% |

Notes: Total completions based on RSS requirement divided into 5 year time bands. Estimate of section 106 numbers based on achieving full policy requirement on all allocations and on a proportion of windfall sites. Exception sites figures based on projection of current levels of funding. NB units coming forward through exception sites are not included in 8,000 figure.

6. District-wide Jobs Targets

Notwithstanding the comments made by the Panel that there are inevitably major uncertainties regarding the deliverability of any job- growth identified in the Plan, the Panel does support the aspiration to align job and housing numbers. Thus it recommends “indicative targets” for net growth in jobs at district council level. The figure for North Norfolk is 4,000, based on a mid-point from a range of employment projections. The policy also states:

Local development documents will ensure that an adequate range of sites/premises (including dedicated land/sites and sites within mixed-use areas and town/district centres) is identified and then subsequently allocated, safeguarded and/or protected to meet the full range of sectoral requirements needing to be accommodated to meet the job growth targets of Policy E2 and the needs of the local economy as revealed by up-to-date employment land reviews. EERA will take a leading role in coordinating a consistent regional evidence base for, and approach to, future employment land reviews.

This approach is consistent with the approach taken in the preferred options report.

7. Transport

The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) has been the subject of significant debate through the Examination, but much of this relates to large scale infrastructure schemes outside of Norfolk. The Northern Distributor Route is the only regional scheme which is of significance to North Norfolk and the Panel has excluded this from the list of schemes detailed in the Plan. The panel notes the projected increase of 47% in traffic levels during the plan period, of which only 2% is accounted for by the new developments, as most of the growth in traffic is people travelling more by car and further. The panel stresses the major change in travel behaviour required to address the challenge of climate change. As a result they have strengthened the policy on managing traffic demand by stating that “road user charging, in the form of urban congestion charging, selective or area-wide charging on the strategic network will be considered as part of an integrated approach in support of the objectives of this RTS.”

The Panel also propose a policy on walking and cycling and one on transport in rural areas which states

In the rural areas priority will be given to providing sustainable access from villages and other rural settlements to market towns and key service centres (see Policy SS4). Measures will include:

- *support for public transport where viable to meet and, where possible, exceed the minimum accessibility levels set out in Policy T13 and Table 8.1;*
- *innovative approaches to local transport provision including community based transport initiatives, travelling service delivery to remote areas and measures to assist people without the use of a vehicle; and*
- *support for increasing the availability and use of communications technology to reduce dependency on travel in remote areas.*

This approach is in line with the policies set out in the Core Strategy preferred options.

8. Environment

The Panel report recommends a range of changes to the policies on the Environment. There is additional emphasis on protecting woodlands, and generally giving more strength to the protection of “green infrastructure”. The policy lists assets of particular regional significance including the Broads and the North Norfolk AONB.

In relation to renewable energy the Panel concluded that sub-regional targets for renewable energy are not appropriate, but instead has a region-wide target of 1192 megawatts of installed capacity for renewable energy by 2012 and 4250 by 2020. This is equivalent to 14% (including off-shore) by 2012 and 44% by 2020.

The policy on renewable energy is somewhat disappointing as it suggests that energy efficiency is best delivered through the building regulations rather than through planning policies. However, the Panel does recognise that there should be opportunities for going beyond the minimum standards and create more sustainable development and they suggest this is best done through master planning and other measures on larger sites, particular in the major growth locations. This approach therefore removes the concept of targets for a percentage of energy on larger developments to be from renewable sources, as outlined in our preferred options

policy approach (EN10). It is suggested that our approach should be retained to signal the Council's intention to demand high quality sustainable construction and this approach to be tested through the preferred options consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

(Source: Jill Fisher, Ext. 6304)

PUBLIC BUSINESS – ITEM FOR DECISION

2. NORTH NORFOLK CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD): PREPARATION OF THE PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT

This report deals with the preparation of the Core Strategy DPD *Preferred Options document*. Specifically, it asks the LDF Working Party to consider outstanding items following its consideration of the proposed final draft content of the document at its meeting on 3 July.

1. Introduction

Following its consideration of the draft contents of the **Core Strategy Preferred Options document** at its meeting on 3 July, there remain a few outstanding items that require the endorsement of the LDF Working Party prior to the document's approval by Full Council on 26 July for the purposes of statutory public participation later this year. These matters relate to car and cycle parking standards, implementation and monitoring and sustainability appraisal.

2. Car and Cycle Parking Standards

At its meeting on 3 July, Members agreed a number of principles that should be used to inform the preparation of a proposed new set of car and cycle parking standards that will be required in association with new developments. Accordingly, the standards have been formulated on the following basis:

- the standards make **no** distinction based on location (e.g.; as made in the car parking standards contained in the current Local Plan), except in relation to the point below, on the basis that, in a rural district, town centre developments also require car parking needs to be met;
- in respect of proposals relating to sites situated in designated Town Centres, as identified on the Proposals Map, a **commuted sum** in lieu of meeting the Minimum car parking provision required of a given proposal may be offered by the applicant to the District Council for helping to fund public car parking and/or transport-related schemes proposed by the District or County Councils;
- based on the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended, individual classes or individual components of classes have been given:
 - a **Maximum** car parking standard, as previously calculated by the County Council, which will form the basis for assessing a limit on parking provision for a given proposal; and

- a **Minimum** car parking standard, as calculated by North Norfolk District Council, which will form the basis for assessing the minimum level of parking provision that is required of a given proposal;
- for the sake of clarity, in the case of each class or component of a class, a Minimum standard can equal but not exceed a Maximum standard; and
- a **Minimum** cycle parking standard, as previously calculated by the County Council, has been assigned to each of the previously-identified classes and components of a class.

The proposed standards are set out in **Appendix 1**.

3. Implementation and Monitoring

The monitoring and review of the effectiveness of local development documents (LDDs) are key aspects of the new planning system, and should be undertaken on a continuous basis. They will be crucial to the successful delivery of the spatial vision and aims of the North Norfolk Core Strategy. By identifying appropriate indicators and targets, the effectiveness of policies and implementation measures can be monitored. The results of such monitoring will then identify which policies and implementation measures are succeeding, and which need revising or replacing because they are not achieving the intended effect.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004 require the Council to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) containing an assessment of LDD preparation against the milestones set out in the LDS, and the extent to which policies in the Core Strategy and other LDDs are being achieved and targets (including national and regional as well as local) are being met. If, as a result of monitoring, it is considered that policies in the Core Strategy or other LDD are not working as intended, a review of the document may be required.

The Regulations specifically require LDDs to include information on housing policy and performance, particularly in terms of net additional dwellings, and it is intended that the North Norfolk AMR will feature a 'housing trajectory' to demonstrate past and likely future performance in housing provision.

The proposed framework of indicators, targets and implementation measures that will form the basis for monitoring the success of the Core Strategy are set out in **Appendix 2**.

The indicators have been formulated with a view to providing a consistent basis for monitoring the performance of the Core Strategy preferred options against the spatial aims. They have been chosen in order to provide a brief guide to overall progress and to focus on the key development provisions relating to housing.

4. Sustainability appraisal

All development plan documents must contribute to sustainable development – the concept that development should meet the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability appraisal is a process carried out during the preparation of a document to assess to what extent the emerging proposals will contribute to environmental, social and economic objectives.

A draft Sustainability Appraisal report has been prepared which provides background information on how the appraisal was undertaken, the main impacts of each preferred option and any alternative options, and recommendations on mitigation

measures. This report has been placed in the Members Room for information and comment.

Members will recall that a Sustainability Appraisal Task Group was established to assist in carrying out the appraisal. This group provided valuable input at the outset when appraising the Core Strategy portrait, vision, aims and the preferred approaches to Sustainable Development and the Development Strategy. The draft Sustainability Appraisal report will be sent to the Task Group for comment prior to publication. A summary of the Sustainability Appraisal results are found in **Appendix 3**.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members

- 1. endorse, subject to any amendments that they wish to make, the contents of Appendices 1 and 2, dealing with Car and Cycle Parking Standards and an Implementation and Monitoring Framework respectively, for inclusion in the North Norfolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document: *Preferred Options document*; and**
- 2. endorse the draft Sustainability Appraisal report on the North Norfolk Core Strategy Development Plan Document: *Preferred Options document*; (Appendix 3) for the purposes of informing the Council's public participation on the document.**

(Source: Gary Alexander; Ext. 6133)

PUBLIC BUSINESS – ITEM FOR DECISION

3. SITE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS DOCUMENT: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

| |
|--|
| <p>Legislation requires a Sustainability Appraisal to inform the decision making process and the development of preferred options. Local Authorities must undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the Preferred Options and publish the report alongside the Preferred Options document. Members have previously agreed the Sustainability appraisal methodology and considered the appraisal of individual sites in reaching decisions on the selection of preferred options sites. This report draws Members' attention to the emerging Sustainability Appraisal Report.</p> |
|--|

Sustainability appraisal

The social, environmental and economic effects of the emerging Site Specific Proposals document have been appraised following a systematic and iterative process that was initially reported to Members on 21st November 2005. An appraisal of potential allocation sites in each of the towns and villages selected for future development in the forthcoming Core Strategy was undertaken and reported to members alongside the preferred options. As well as this individual site appraisal exercise the cumulative effects of the site specific proposals have been appraised against the objectives contained in the SA Scoping Report, published 16th November 2005.

A draft Sustainability Appraisal report has been prepared which provides background information on how the appraisal was undertaken, presents the results of the site appraisal process and details the cumulative effects of the preferred options and the alternatives considered. This full draft report has been placed in the Members Room. **Appendix 4** provides a summary table of the assessment of the overall impact of the Site Specific Proposals. The detailed assessment of sites is included in the full report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.

(Source: Rob Young, Ext. 6162)