Sprowston with Beeston St Andrew

Joint Neighbourhood Plan

Regulation 15 statement

The Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan 2014.

The existing Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan was 'made' (adopted) in May 2014 following an 88% YES vote at a referendum held in March 2014.

The Plan covers the period up to 2026 and therefore is in need of review. Sprowston Town Council instigated a review of the Neighbourhood Plan in Autumn 2024 with a new plan period looking ahead to 2040.

The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) adopted in March 2024, makes two significant housing allocations in the parish of Sprowston. Approximately 1200 homes are identified at White House Farm (phases 2 and 3) and a further 2,000 homes to the northwest of the parish as part of the wider Beeston Park development.

The proposed development known as Beeston Park will extend into the neighbouring parish of Beeston St Andrew and comprises 3,500 new homes in total.

Given the development straddles the parish boundary, Broadland District Council encouraged Sprowston Town Council to work closely with the parish meeting of Beeston St Andrew to produce a Joint Neighbourhood Plan covering both parishes, which could include detailed policy guidance to enable a comprehensive and cohesive development.

The policies within the Sprowston with Beeston St Andrew Joint Neighbourhood Plan includes some updated policies from the existing Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan together with new policies for Sprowston and for Beeston St Andrew.

It is hoped that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan will be in a strong position to influence the future development of both parishes and to ensure that community benefits from new development are realised for both communities.

The process of reviewing or modifying a made Neighbourhood Plan

After five years, Neighbourhood Plans no longer hold the same weight in the determination of applications as they did when first adopted. When Plans reach this position, it is necessary to bring the Plan up-to-date and in line with current national and local planning policies. This is the position for the existing Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan.

Government guidance is clear that Neighbourhood Plans cannot block development, but they can shape it and ensure that proposals that come forward are appropriate for the parish in terms of size, scale and character and that they do not put undue strain on the existing infrastructure of the parish.

Where a Neighbourhood Plan group is proposing to revise their plan, there are different statutory processes, depending on the extent of that revision. The process will be informed by the scope of the review. In the case of a minor update these will need to be agreed with the local planning authority. Where a material modification is involved, an independent Examiner will make the decision over whether a referendum is required. Modifications which do not affect the overall direction and substance of the Plan may require Examination but not referendum.

There are 3 types of modification which can be made to a neighbourhood plan. The process will depend on the degree of change which the modification involves:

- **Minor (non-material) modifications** to a neighbourhood plan or order are those which would not materially affect the policies in the plan or permission granted by the order. These may include correcting errors, such as a reference to a supporting document, and would not require examination or a referendum.
- **Material modifications which do not change the nature of the plan** would require examination but not a referendum. This might, for example, entail the addition of a design code that builds on a pre-existing design policy, or the addition of a site or sites which, subject to the decision of the independent examiner, are not so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the plan.
- **Material modifications which do change the nature of the plan** would require examination and a referendum. This might, for example, involve allocating significant new sites for development.

The Sprowston with Beeston St Andrew Joint Neighbourhood Plan

Whilst Sprowston parish is covered by an existing Neighbourhood Plan, the new Plan is significantly different in that it is a Joint Neighbourhood Plan with Beeston St Andrew ,and the Neighbourhood Area is different as it covers both civil parishes. The Joint Neighbourhood Plan is therefore essentially a new plan for the area although a significant number of the policies covering Sprowston are drawn from the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan. The Joint Neighbourhood Plan does not contain any new site-specific allocations and is supported by separate Data Profiles and Design Codes for each parish. Policies have been informed by the supporting documents together with the results of the two Household Surveys.

In producing this Joint Neighbourhood Plan, Sprowston Town Council and Beeston St Andrew Parish Meetings as Qualifying Bodies under the regulations, are required to make an assessment as to how significant the proposed modifications to the existing Neighbourhood Plan are. Given that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan is not simply a modification of the existing 2014 Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan but covers Beeston St Andrew and has been produced as a Joint Neighbourhood Plan, it is considered that the Joint Neighbourhood Plan is likely to require a Referendum.