

# COUNCIL

To: All members of the Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of South Norfolk Council for the purpose of transacting the business set out in this agenda.

Yours sincerely



**Trevor Holden**  
Managing Director

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Mr G Minshull  
Chairman of the Council

Mrs F Ellis  
Vice-Chairman of the Council

## **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng>

If a member of the public would like to ask a question on an agenda item, please email your request to [democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk), no later than 5.00pm on Thursday 17 September 2020

## **AGENDA**

### **Date**

Monday 21 September 2020

### **Time**

7.00 pm

### **Place**

To be hosted remotely at:  
South Norfolk House  
Cygnet Court  
Long Stratton  
Norwich  
NR15 2XE

### **Contact**

Claire White  
01508 533669  
[democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk)  
[www.south-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk)

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting,  
please let us know in advance

**Large print version can be made available**

## The Council's Prayer

### A G E N D A

**1. Apologies for absence**

**2. Urgent Items;**

**Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as matters of urgency pursuant to Section 100 B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act, 1972;** [Urgent business may only be taken if, "by reason of special circumstances" (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.]

**3. To Receive Declarations of Interest from Members;** (please see guidance – pages 6)

**4. To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 27 July 2020;**  
(attached – page 8)

**5. Chairman's Announcements;** engagements attached – page 16)

**6. To consider any petitions received under Section I of the "Rights of the Public at Meetings"**

**7. Notice of Motions**

**Cllr Chris Brown**

**"This Council notes:**

- **The publication by Government of the White Paper, 'Planning for the Future' on 6 August 2020, which set out proposals on reforms to the planning process for the future.**
- **That the vast majority of planning applications are given the go ahead by local authority planning committees, with permission granted to around 9 out of 10 applications.**
- **That research by the Local Government Association has said that there are existing planning permissions for more than one million homes that have not yet been started.**

**This Council is concerned that the proposals seek to:**

- 1. Reduce or remove the right of residents to object to applications near them.**
- 2. Grant automatic rights for developers to build on land identified as ‘for growth’.**
- 3. Remove section 106 payments for infrastructure and their replacement with a national levy.**
- 4. Reduce the level of affordable housing delivered on many schemes.**

**This Council Further Notes:**

- 1. The Royal Institute for British Architects called the proposals ‘shameful and which will do almost nothing to guarantee delivery of affordable, well-designed and sustainable homes’. RIBA also said that proposals could lead to the next generation of slum housing.**
- 2. Shelter has raised concerns about the delivery of social housing without Section 106 agreements, stating “it makes no sense to remove this route to genuinely affordable homes without a guaranteed alternative.”**
- 3. The reforms are opposed by the all-party Local Government Association, currently led by Conservative Councillors.**

**This Council Believes:**

- 1. That existing planning procedures, as currently administered by our own team in South Norfolk, allow for local democratic control over future development, and give local people a say in planning proposals that affect them.**
- 2. That proposals for automatic rights to build in ‘growth’ areas, and increased permitted development rights, risk unregulated growth and unsustainable communities.**
- 3. That local communities must be in the driving seat on shaping the future of their communities, and local determination of the planning framework and planning applications play an important part in this process.**
- 4. That delivering significant affordable housing is a vital part of ensuring that our planning system meets the needs of local communities.**

**This Council resolves to:**

- 1. Take part in the consultation in the planning proposals, and to make representations against the proposals as outlined in this motion.**
- 2. Write to and lobby our Members of Parliament, urging them to oppose these proposals and to circulate their replies to members.**
- 3. Highlight its concerns over these proposals with Town and Parish Councils and local residents.”**

**8. Recommendations from the Cabinet arising from the meeting held on Monday 24 August 2020;**

- (a) Update to Local Development Scheme;** (page 25 of the Cabinet agenda)

**TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL** approves the proposed amendments to the current, May 2019, Local Development Scheme

- (b) Covid-19 Response – Norfolk-wide Fighting Fund;** (page 44 of the Cabinet agenda)

**TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL** delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to allocate £150,000 to the Norfolk-wide Fighting Fund.

- (c) Risk Management Policy and Strategy;** (page 46 of the Cabinet agenda)

**TO RECOMMEND THAT COUNCIL** approves the Risk Management Policy and Strategy, subject to an amendment at paragraph 14.2, to ensure that Cabinet receives quarterly updates on risks, with a separate review in quarter 1 to examine the previous year's outturn.

**9. Monitoring Officer Report;** (report attached – page 17)

**10. Update to South Norfolk Council's Statement of Community Involvement;**  
(report attached – page 20)

**11. Questions to Chairmen and Portfolio Holders**

**To take questions from Councillors and the Public**

Note: Time allocated to be at the discretion of the Chairman. No notice is required of questions; however, it may be necessary for written answers to be provided where an immediate response cannot be supplied. If members choose to submit questions in writing in advance, they will be circulated before the meeting.

**a. Cabinet**

Please [click here](#) to view the most recent Cabinet minutes available

**Questions to the Leader and other Cabinet members:**

<b>John Fuller</b>	<b>The Leader, External Affairs and Policy</b>
<b>Yvonne Bendle</b>	<b>Better Lives</b>
<b>Alison Thomas</b>	<b>Customer Focus</b>
<b>Michael Edney</b>	<b>Clean and Safe Environment</b>
<b>Josh Worley</b>	<b>Finance and Resources</b>
<b>Kay Mason Billig</b>	<b>Governance and Efficiency</b>
<b>Lisa Neal</b>	<b>Stronger Economy</b>

**b. Scrutiny Committee 2019/20 - Questions to the Chairman**

Please [click here](#) to view the most recent Scrutiny Committee minutes

**c. Licensing Appeals and Complaints Committee / Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee – Questions to the Chairman;**

Please [click here](#) to view the most recent Licensing Committee minutes

**d. Development Management Committee – Questions to the Chairman**

Please [click here](#) to view the most recent Development Management Committee minutes

**e. Electoral Arrangements Review Committee – Questions to the Chairman**

Please [click here](#) to view the most recent Electoral Arrangements Review Committee minutes

**12. Outside Bodies – Feedback from Representatives:**

**13. Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

**14. Broads Authority – Follow up report;** (report attached – page 69)

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION by virtue of Schedule 12A Part 1 of Paragraph 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended))

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS**

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as would a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion, or vote.

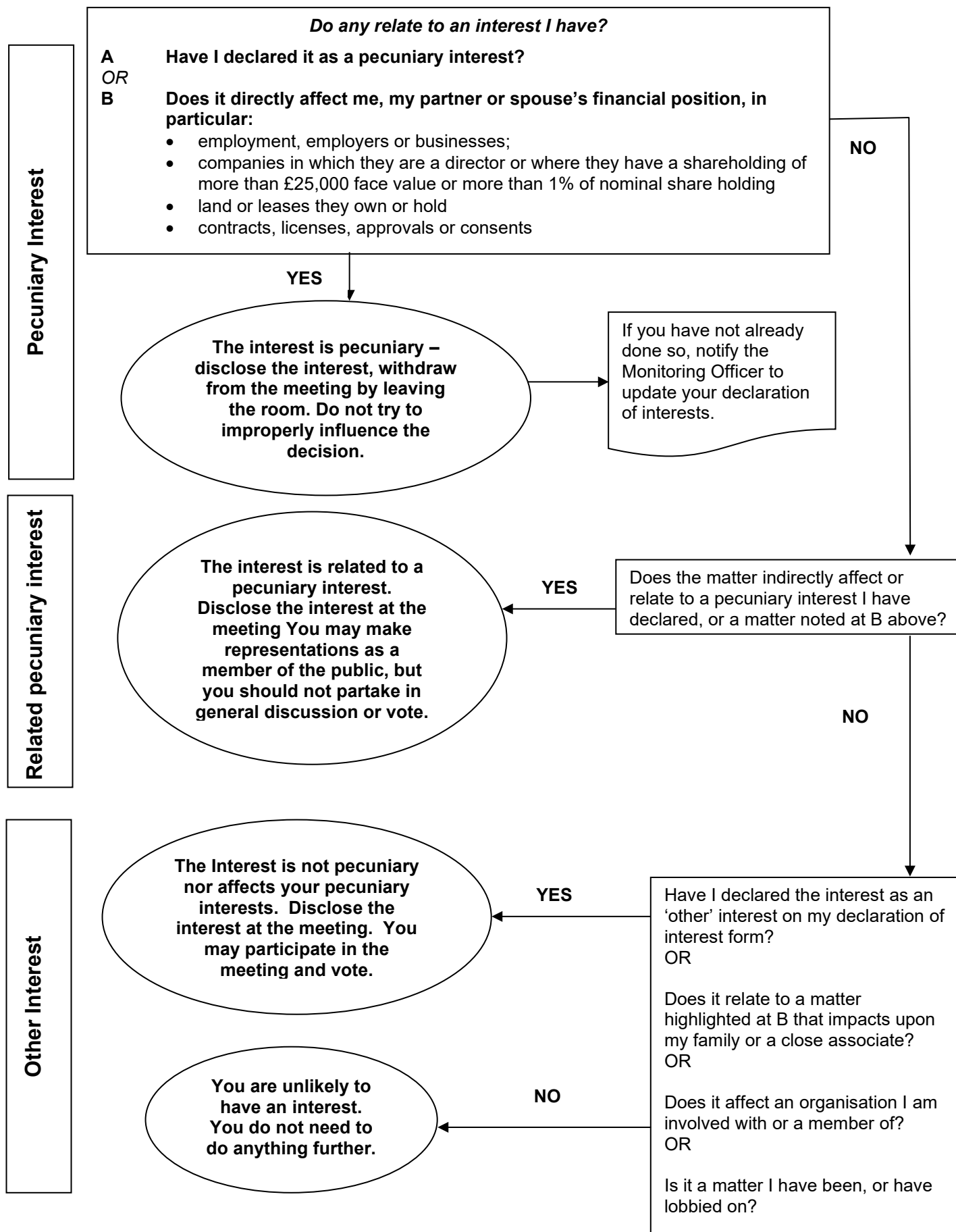
Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an 'other' interest. You will need to declare the interest but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.  
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST  
INSTANCE**

# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

*What matters are being discussed at the meeting?*





## **COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a remote meeting of South Norfolk District Council held on Monday 27 July 2020 at 7.00pm**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors: Minshull (Chairman), Bendle, Bills, Brown, Burrill, Clifford-Jackson, Dearnley, Dewsbury, Duffin, Easter, Edney, Elliott, Ellis, Elmer, Francis, Fuller, Glover, Halls, Hardy, Holden, Hudson, Hurn, Kemp, Kiddie, Knight, Laidlaw, Legg, Mason Billig, Nuri-Nixon, Overton, Ridley, Rowe, J Savage, R Savage, Spruce (for part of the meeting), Thomas, Thomson, J Wilby, M Wilby and Worley.
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillors: Amis, Bernard, Blundell, Curson, Hornby and Neal
<b>Officers in Attendance:</b>	The Managing Director (T Holden), the Director of People and Communities (J Sutterby), the Director of Place (P Courtier), the Director of Resources (D Lorimer) the Assistant Director, Governance and Business Support (E Hodds) and the Assistant Director of Finance (R Fincham)
<b>Also in Attendance:</b>	Mr J Bootman

### **3541 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mr J Bootman put the following question to Council:

**UNESCO has stated:**

**“The appearance of COVID-19 has shown that when we destroy biodiversity, we destroy the system that supports human life. The more biodiverse an ecosystem is, the more difficult it is for a pathogen to spread rapidly or dominate. Loss of biodiversity provides an opportunity for pathogens to pass between animals and people”**

**and:**

**“the COVID 19 virus has lessons that apply to global crises of biodiversity loss. For this reason, our best vaccine for the future is to protect nature and biodiversity”.**

**Will South Norfolk Council now make biodiversity retention and enhancement a prime determinant for all future projects, including maintenance, planning regulation, construction, etc.?**



Cllr Fuller thanked Mr Bootman for his question, which he considered to be timely, not just due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because the Council's new Environmental Strategy, was to be considered by Council later that evening.

Although Cllr Fuller did not necessarily agree with all the points made regarding biodiversity, he explained that the Council's new Environmental Strategy supported biodiversity retention. It detailed what the Council was doing to become greener and how it was assisting others in becoming greener, whilst taking in to account the global and natural environment in which residents lived.

Referring to biodiversity retention in building control, he explained that the Council was currently in the process of devising a new Local Plan, and that this would need to take in to account energy efficiency and net biodiversity gains, currently subject to a consultation through the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

In summary, Cllr Fuller believed that a combination of local and national action would address the issues raised, and he encouraged Mr Bootman to listen to the debate regarding the Council's Environmental Strategy, later in the meeting.

In response, Cllr Bootman advised that the views expressed earlier regarding biodiversity were accepted amongst scientists. He was disappointed that Cllr Fuller had not explicitly committed the Council to making retention and enhancement of the natural world, a prime determinate for future projects. He did agree that there was a wide range of actions that the Council could do to help, for example mowing less in some areas, encouraging tree planting and ensuring new build was in an appropriate place and to a suitable standard. To date, he had been disappointed in the Council's record in protecting the environment.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Bootman for his question and attendance.

### **3542 URGENT ITEMS – TEMPORARY PAVEMENT NOTICES**

Cllr M Edney referred to the urgent report that had been circulated separately to the main agenda, regarding the decision made at Cabinet on 21 July regarding the approval of the delegation of authority to officers and the setting of fees and licence conditions for new temporary pavement licences to local business premises.

Cllr Edney explained that since the Cabinet decision, a late amendment in the Business and Planning Act 2020, had meant that Temporary Pavement Notices were no longer the responsibility of the Council's Executive, as had previously been thought, and therefore a Council decision was now required.

Voting was carried out by way of a roll call and it was unanimously

#### **RESOLVED:**

To agree to:

- a) Set the temporary pavement licensing application fee at £75.

- b) Delegate authority to the following officers for the purposes provided at sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii) below:
- Licensing & Enforcement Officers
  - Senior Environmental Health Officer (Licensing)
  - Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager
  - Assistant Director Regulatory
  - Director for Place
- i) To decide whether to approve, refuse, or revoke pavement licences, also to set their durations.
- ii) To decide which licence conditions are attached to each licence (selecting from local standard conditions as established, and non-standard conditions as appropriate to individual circumstances).
- c) Delegate authority to the following officers, the power to enforce licence conditions and to vary or revoke individual licences:
- Senior Environmental Health Officer (Licensing)
  - Food, Safety and Licensing Team Manager
  - Assistant Director Regulatory
  - Director for Place

#### **3543 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman referred members to the list of civic engagements for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, for the period 17 February to 26 July 2020.

#### **3544 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 February and 15 June 2020 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

#### **3545 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY**

##### **(i) Broadland and South Norfolk – Our Plan for Recovery from the Covid-19 Crisis**

Cllr Fuller introduced the Cabinet recommendations regarding the Council's Plan for Recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. He referred to the Council's existing and future role in driving forward the recovery and the economy, supporting volunteer groups and communities, and looking after the most vulnerable. He stressed the need to ensure that appropriate finances were in place, that any gains were not lost, and that lessons had been learnt. He made reference to the extraordinary efforts from staff across all areas of the Council.

Cllr C Brown welcomed the Plan, and congratulated staff on all their hard work over the last four months.

He referred to the short/medium and long term aims and queried what this meant in terms of timescales. He also questioned how success would be measured and how progress would be monitored against these measures to ensure that the Council delivered against its aspirations.

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson echoed Cllr Brown's comments, referring to the excellent work from staff. She felt the Plan to be an excellent document, and stressed the need to build on the knowledge gained over the previous few months.

Cllr Y Bendle commented on the excellent partnership working, between the Districts, the County Council, and the voluntary sector, and it was hoped that the best practice delivered through this approach would continue. Members acknowledged the huge amount of work carried out by the volunteer sector, and local communities.

Cllr Fuller explained that the pandemic had been a good test of strength for the Council and he had been impressed with how the Council had been able to react immediately with a strong and co-ordinated approach. Now in the recovery stage, the Council needed to prioritise families, jobs and businesses, and focus on growing the economy. He advised that local indicators would be put in place and the Council would be looking to benchmark with other authorities.

It was unanimously:

**RESOLVED:** To:

- a) Endorse the initial Recovery Plan and priorities to support recovery from the Covid-19 crisis in South Norfolk.
- b) Agree the in-year review and update of the 2020/21 Delivery Plan, to be brought back to Cabinets in September 2020 and then onto Councils for agreement.

## **(ii) Environmental Strategy**

Cllr M Edney was pleased to commend the Environmental Strategy to members.

He thanked the Economic and Environment Policy Committee and the relevant officers, for their work on the Strategy. He felt its format to be much more user friendly, and particularly liked the separate action plan, which would be used to monitor progress and ensure that the Council was delivering against its aspirations.

Cllr C Brown welcomed the Strategy, explaining that he had been part of the Policy Committee that had worked on the document with officers, over many months. He felt that there were many good initiatives and actions throughout the Strategy, but

his one concern was that although climate change was most people's greatest environmental concern, it had not been given a high profile throughout the document.

Cllr Nuri-Nixon echoed Cllr Brown's concerns, and she referred to other Councils where a climate change emergency had been declared.

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson queried how flexible the document was and whether new suggestions could be added to the Action Plan later down the line.

Cllr Edney explained that the document had been designed to be flexible. Although it did not mention "Climate Emergency", it was very clear and concise on the relevant actions that would be taken to protect the environment.

Cllr A Dearnley, Chairman of the Economic and Environment Policy Committee, thanked officers and members for their work on the Strategy, and he gave particular reference to the contributions from Cllr Brown. He remained optimistic, that with everyone's involvement, it would really make a difference.

With 33 votes for and 2 abstentions, it was

- RESOLVED:** To approve
- a) The Environmental Strategy.
  - b) The Action Plan.

### **3546 MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

Cllr J Fuller presented the report of the Monitoring Officer, which proposed new and amended Terms of Reference for both the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Policy Committee, and the Community Action Panel, and reported a number of changes to committee membership.

Members expressed their support for the recommendations, and it was unanimously

- RESOLVED:**
- 1. To note
    - (a) The terms of reference for the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Policy Committee.
    - (b) The membership of the Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Policy Committee; and
    - (c) The subsequent amendments to Committee membership as a result of the changes to Cabinet membership and the new Policy Committee.
  - 2. To approve the changes to the terms of reference for the Community Action Fund Panel.

### **3547 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCE, RESOURCES, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2019/20**

Cllr P Hardy presented the Annual Report of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee, which provided an update on the work of the Committee during 2019.

He referred to the addition of Risk Management to the Committee's Terms of Reference, explaining that the new Risk Management Policy was being devised and would be presented to Council for approval over the next few months.

He thanked Faye Heywood, the Council's Internal Audit Manager, and Emma Hodds, the Assistant Director for Governance and Business Support, and their respective teams, for their invaluable efforts during these testing times.

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson echoed Cllr Hardy's views, suggesting it had been an outstanding effort by all, giving mention to a number of achievements including the the Annual Governance Statement and Internal Audit Plans.

It was unanimously

**RESOLVED:** To approve the Annual Report of the Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee.

### **3548 QUESTIONS TO CHAIRMEN AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

#### **(a) Cabinet**

Cllr K Mason Billig asked Cllr J Fuller, whether he could provide an update for Council on the potential for Local Government Reorganisation.

Cllr Fuller explained that the Government was keen to see more mayoral accountability and that substantial monies for the Prosperity Fund would be distributed to local authorities, via mayors, through the Devolution and Recovery Bill. He understood that current Government thinking with regard to the size of any new combined authority was 3 – 500,000, certainly no larger. In return, such authorities would receive a generous funding package and additional powers in areas such as public health, transport, and infrastructure. He stressed that it was still very early days and that there was still a distinct lack of detail, however, the Council could be asked for a preliminary view as early as September. He explained that he had asked the Managing Director to work with others across Norfolk, to carry out some scenario planning, to consider future options and how the county could benefit from these proposals.

Cllr T Holden asked Cllr J Fuller whether prior to any decision regarding the formation of a Local Government Trading Company with Broadland District Council, any additional steps needed to be taken.

Cllr Fuller stressed that he was extremely proud of the Council's in-house waste collection team which always delivered, whatever the weather. The cross-party working group, chaired by Cllr Dearnley for South Norfolk, had worked with leading

consultants and it was clear that a joint waste company owned by both councils could save each Council up to £500,000 per year. Cllr Fuller had asked the Managing Director to carry out some further work with consultants to ensure that these predictions were based on the latest figures in the market, and that the proposed savings could be realised. He added that with Local Government Reorganisation on the horizon, a long-term private contract might not be a viable option.

Cllr Brown supported this approach, stressing the importance of doing what was best for residents.

Cllr J Knight referred to previous discussions at Council meetings regarding his situation at the Broads Authority, and he asked whether any progress had been made. Cllr Fuller added that this was a matter that had been subject of discussion at a number of meetings, and he reminded members that Council had asked the Managing Director to mediate between the two authorities.

The Managing Director explained that discussions were continuing with the Broads Authority, alongside the Local Government Association's regional peer, Cllr William Nunn. He was pleased to hear that the restrictions imposed by the BA had now been lifted and he advised that he would be providing a detailed report to Council on 21 September. He hoped that the matter could then be brought to a close.

Cllr T Laidlaw referred to Cllr A Thomas' new portfolio of "Customer Focus" and asked what her immediate priorities would be. Cllr Thomas explained that recent focus had been on the Council's Leisure Centres. She would also be working closely with Cllr C Hudson, the Chairman of the new Commercial, Trading and Customer Focus Policy Committee regarding IT, as this was key to so many areas. She added that other areas of focus would include CNC Building Control and Big Sky.

Cllr C Brown asked Cllr Edney what he felt the Council could do to ensure a "green" recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and more generally what the priorities in his portfolio would be going forward.

Cllr Edney referred members to the Environmental Strategy, discussed earlier that evening. He considered all aspects of his portfolio to be important, but felt that waste minimisation to be a particular priority.

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson asked Cllr K Mason Billig what her priorities were going forward, under her new portfolio of Governance and Efficiency.

Cllr Mason Billig explained that her priority over the last couple of years had been the collaboration with Broadland District Council, and that this would continue to be a focus, along with legal services and the potential Local Government Reorganisation.

## **(b) Annual Review of the Scrutiny Committee**

Members considered the Annual Review of the Scrutiny Committee. The Chairman, Cllr G Minshull, thanked the Vice -Chairman, Cllr V Clifford-Jackson for

her contributions over the year. He also thanked Cllr J Worley for his service on the Committee and welcomed Cllr J Hornby as his replacement.

**(c) Licensing Committee**

There were no questions to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

**(d) Development Management Committee**

In response to a query, the Chairman of the Development Management Committee, Cllr V Thomson, advised that the reduced Committee membership of five, would be reviewed in September. He felt that the remote meetings had been working well and was pleased to report that the numbers of public watching on YouTube were high.

(The meeting concluded at 8:36 pm)

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Chairman

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE CHAIRMAN and VICE CHAIRMAN  
FOR THE PERIOD: 27 July – 20 September 2020**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>29 July</b>	<p><b>Interview:</b></p> <p>The Chairman gave an interview for Park Radio to speak about Covid-19 and the impact on the Council.</p>
<b>30 July</b>	<p><b>Presentation:</b></p> <p>The Chairman presented certificates of merit to the Waste Operatives at the Depot for their continued hard work throughout lockdown.</p>
<b>3 September</b>	<p><b>Flag-hoisting ceremony</b></p> <p>The Chairman was joined by members to raise the Red Ensign flag in celebration of Merchant Navy Day.</p>
<b>14 September</b>	<p><b>Community Award Judging</b></p> <p>The Chairman was one of the judges for the South Norfolk Community Awards to choose winners from each of the categories.</p>
<b>14 September</b>	<p><b>Battle of Britain event</b></p> <p>The Chairman observed a Battle of Britain event via a live YouTube stream to witness the Lord Mayor of Norwich lay a commemorative wreath at St Peter Mancroft Church.</p>
<b>15 September</b>	<p><b>Video Message</b></p> <p>The Chairman recorded a message of congratulations for the recipient of a One Award, which was streamed at the Awards on 18 September.</p>



## **MONITORING OFFICER REPORT**

**Report Author(s):** Emma Hodds  
Assistant Director Governance and Business Support  
(Monitoring Officer)  
01508 533791  
ehodds@s-norfolk.gov.uk

**Portfolio:** Leader

**Ward(s) Affected:** All

### **Purpose of the Report:**

This report provides an archive policy for the live streaming of Council meetings, a proposal to change the speaking allocation for District Members at the Development Management Committee and an update on the current arrangements for this Committee.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To approve the archive policy for live streaming of Council meetings.
2. To approve the change to the speaking allocation for District Members at the Development Management Committee.
3. Note the update on the arrangements for Development Management Committee.

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an archive policy for the live streaming of Council meetings, a proposal to change the speaking allocation for District Members at the Development Management Committee and an update on the current arrangements for this Committee.

## **2 ARCHIVE POLICY – LIVE STREAMING**

- 2.1 Since April 2020 the Council has been holding its meetings virtually due to the situation the Country is in with regard to COVID. The success of the meetings has improved considerably overtime, the meetings run well and enable democracy to be much more open and transparent. It has been seen over the months that the views for Council meetings on the You Tube channel have increased, which is a benefit and enables the Council to reach much more of the Community.
- 2.2 It would be sensible to ensure that the videos currently on You Tube are considered as part of the Councils retention policy, and it is therefore proposed that the videos are kept on the You Tube channel for three months, or until the minutes are approved at the next meeting, whichever is sooner.

## **3 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### Proposal to bring District Member speaking time allocation in line with all other public speakers

- 3.1 District Councillors are currently unrestricted on speaking to an application and are not subjected to any follow up questions by the Committee. This is not in line with the arrangements for all other public speakers.
- 3.2 This report therefore proposes that the District Councillor speaking time is aligned with all other public speaking times, it is also proposed that the Committee is able to question the Councillor after the presentation. This approach ensures a fair approach across the board for planning applications.

### Virtual meetings and Membership

- 3.3 Preserving the transparency of all meetings held in public in the virtual environment has been at the centre of the processes put in place over the recent months. The process ensures that all contributions to the meeting, and all decisions made are clear, understandable and transparent.
- 3.4 Virtual meetings are likely to be in place for quite some time, the Development Management Committee has more public participation then the other Committee meetings and it is not possible to predict the level of public interest. Under the current COVID restrictions it would be extremely difficult to hold such a meeting in the traditional sense, i.e. the Council Chamber, as the Council could not restrict the amount of the public who would wish to view a planning application decision.

- 3.5 There are many roll calls required in the Development Management Committee meetings due to the nature of the business, the length of time on each application, and therefore the amount of screen time for Councillors and Officers is impacted on by the membership of the Committee.
- 3.6 The current Membership of five is proposed to be maintained until January, when the Chairman will review this again and, in the meantime, will explore with the Monitoring Officer the possibility of hybrid meetings and how this could work in practice. However, it is recognised that COVID may impact on when this could be achieved.
- 3.7 It is also proposed, that now, and going forward the Committee meetings continue to be broadcast on the Councils You Tube channel.

## **4 ISSUES AND RISKS**

- 4.1 **Resource Implications** – not applicable to this report.
- 4.2 **Legal Implications** – changes to the constitution will be made accordingly to reflect the content of this report.
- 4.3 **Equality Implications** – not applicable to this report.
- 4.4 **Environmental Impact** – not applicable to this report.
- 4.5 **Crime and Disorder** – not applicable to this report.
- 4.6 **Risks** – not applicable to this report.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Full Council are required to review the content of the report and endorse the recommendations therein.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 To approve the archive policy for live streaming of Council meetings.
- 6.2 To approve the change to the speaking allocation for District Members at the Development Management Committee.
- 6.3 Note the update on the arrangements for Development Management Committee.

## **Update to South Norfolk Council's Statement of Community Involvement**

**Report Author(s):** Paul Harris  
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**Portfolio:** External Affairs & Policy; Stronger Economy

**Ward(s) Affected:** All Wards

### **Purpose of the Report:**

Following the issuing of Government guidance on local authority plan-making and related consultations during the Covid-19 pandemic, officers have reviewed the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and consulted on minor amendments relating to the availability of hard copy consultation documents from the Council offices. Following this consultation, it is now proposed that the Council makes the amendments.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To note the responses to the public and stakeholder consultation on the proposed, minor amendment to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To approve the proposed minor amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement, as highlighted in Appendix 2.

## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the issuing of Government guidance on local authority plan-making and related consultations during the Covid-19 pandemic, officers have reviewed the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and are proposing minor amendments (see Appendix 2). This will ensure that the document makes realistic and achievable commitments in terms of how the Council consults the public and stakeholders in future plan making activity.
- 1.2 The amendments will reflect that it will not always be possible to make hard copies of consultation documents available for inspection at the South Norfolk Council offices. At the current time, for example, the Council offices are closed to non-essential visits, due to the pandemic, and there may well be similar occurrences in the future.

## 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 South Norfolk Council adopted its most recent Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in May 2017. It is a legal requirement for local planning authorities to have an adopted SCI which sets out how and when the Council will involve communities and other stakeholders in the development of Local Plan documents. The SCI also sets out the Council's expectation of developers in respect of community engagement at the pre-application stage, and how the Council consults people during the planning application process.
- 2.2 The Government has issued updated planning guidance stating that local planning authorities should make any temporary amendments that are necessary to their SCIs to ensure that there are no conflicts between particular commitments within the document and the Government's current Covid-19 guidance on social distancing.
- 2.3 Officers have produced a [temporary update](#) that sets out which of the various options for community and stakeholder engagement and publicity, discussed within the SCI, will not be possible at the current time. It also sets out temporary alternative measures for consulting, engaging and making documents available to the public. A similar update has been produced in respect of the Broadland District Council SCI.
- 2.4 However, in reviewing the South Norfolk Council SCI, it is apparent that it is necessary to amend one particular commitment set out within the document. Paragraph 60 states, *'We will always publish information on the Council's website and have hard copies available for inspection at the Council's office.'* Given the Council office is currently closed to the public, it is not possible to honour this commitment and (unlike other consultation/publicity methods which are presented as options within the SCI) this is presented as a definite obligation.
- 2.5 Officers sought legal advice on this issue, and the response from NP Law was that an amendment is required here and that the amendment should be subject to

public consultation (the SCI includes a commitment for consultation on any future reviews of the document).

- 2.6 The document was marked up with the necessary, minor amendments (see Appendix 2) and officers consulted on these proposed changes over a six week period, between 27<sup>th</sup> July and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2020.
- 2.7 Notification letters were sent to every parish/town council in South Norfolk, as well as statutory consultees and other appropriate local, regional and national consultation bodies, drawn from the GNLP consultation database.
- 2.8 The proposed, amended document was uploaded to the [SCI webpage](#) on the South Norfolk Council website, along with a consultation response form which respondents were encouraged to complete with their comments.
- 2.9 Parish and town councils were sent a public notice regarding the consultation, and asked to put copies of the notice on local parish noticeboards. In addition, the Communications Team were asked to post social media announcements regarding the consultation throughout the period. Although officers were not able to have the document available to inspect at libraries in the district, the Library Service did include announcements regarding the consultation on each of their local, South Norfolk library Facebook pages.
- 2.10 The temporary update to the SCI was also published on the above webpage but was not subject to the consultation.

### **3 CURRENT POSITION/FINDINGS**

- 3.1 The consultation period ended on 4<sup>th</sup> September and four responses were received. These were from Norfolk County Council, Natural England, Marlingford & Colton Parish Council, and Poringland Parish Council. Two of the responses express support for the changes, one does not express an opinion, and one (whilst not explicitly objecting to the changes) expresses wider concerns. A late response was also received from Woodton Parish Council.
- 3.2 These responses are set out in Appendix 1, along with an officer response in each instance. It is not considered that any further amendments need to be made to the SCI as a result of the consultation responses received.

### **4 PROPOSED ACTION**

- 4.1 Based on the consultation responses received, it is proposed that South Norfolk Council adopts the minor amendments to the SCI, as highlighted in Appendix 2.

## 5 ISSUES AND RISKS

- 5.1 **Resource Implications** – There are no financial or staffing implications as a result of making these minor amendments to the document.
- 5.2 **Legal Implications** – In making these amendments, South Norfolk Council can demonstrate that it has taken account of the Government's changes to Plan-making guidance in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Council can also ensure that it does not contravene its own SCI requirements during future plan-making consultations.
- 5.3 **Equality Implications** – The amendment will potentially impact members of the public in South Norfolk that do not have access to the internet and who wish to take part in any particular plan-making consultations. However, the amendment does not completely remove the measure to make consultation documents available at the Council offices – it simply reflects that it may not always be possible to do so (given that the offices are currently closed). Consultation documents will therefore continue to be made available at the premises unless it is impossible to do so (e.g. because the offices are closed due to the pandemic). In the meantime, other options remain in place, such as making documents available at libraries (again, where they are open).
- 5.4 The SCI temporary update that has been published proposes alternative measures for enabling those without internet access to view copies of consultation documents. It states: *'In circumstances where hard copies are not available from the Council offices and libraries, we will include in our consultation publicity details of how those without internet capability can access hard copies of the consultation documents. The SCI currently includes a range of publicity measures, including non-digital measures such as articles in local media and posters in local notice boards, which will still be considered as options and which can include details of how to get in touch.'*
- 5.5 **Environmental Impact** – There will be no likely environmental impacts as a result of making these minor amendments.
- 5.6 **Crime and Disorder** – There will be no likely impacts on crime and disorder as a result of making these minor amendments
- 5.7 **Risks** – The minor amendment does not remove the measure to make consultation documents available at the Council offices. It brings it in line with the other consultation and publicity measures within the document, which are presented as options. This reduces the risk that the Council is unable to meet its own requirements for consultations relating to the development of local plan documents.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The highlighted, minor amendments to the SCI are required in order that South Norfolk Council is able to continue to conduct plan-making consultations with stakeholders and the public without having to commit in every instance to a measure which may be unachievable due to external pressures. This is in line with guidance set out by the Government within its amended Planning Guidance.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Council to agree to:
- a) note the responses to the public and stakeholder consultation on the proposed, minor amendment to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, as set out in Appendix 1.
  - b) approve the proposed minor amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement, as highlighted in Appendix 2.

**Appendix 1:** Consultation Responses - Statement of Community Involvement – Proposed Amendment July 2020

**Appendix 2:** Statement of Community Involvement (2017) – Proposed Amendment July 2020

### **Background Papers**

None.



## Appendix 1

### South Norfolk Council SCI amendment consultation (summer 2020) - responses

Ref.	Organisation	Comment	Officer response
SCI1	Norfolk County Council	These amendments are consistent with the new regulations/guidance relating to the preparation of Local Plans introduced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in response to the pandemic and as such the County Council supports them.	Support noted.
SCI2	Natural England	<p>We are supportive of the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications.</p> <p>We regret we are unable to comment, in detail, on individual Statements of Community Involvement but information on the planning service we offer, including advice on how to consult us, can be found at: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals">https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals</a>.</p>	Comments noted.
SCI3	Marlingford & Colton Parish Council	<p><b>The following is a summary - please see letter enclosed/on file for complete response.</b></p> <p>The amendments to South Norfolk's SCI may be minor, but the changes to the planning regulations that have necessitated the amendments are anything but minor.</p> <p>With the Govt's Planning White Paper, there is a risk that community voices are further marginalised. The plans include potential zoning systems and for more consultation and planning to take place digitally. Driving activity online can risk excluding a significant number of people and the government seems to have confused the 'digitalisation' of planning with democratic planning and these are, of course, not at all the same. The voices of local people need to be more, not less, included in planning developments.</p> <p>Govt. needs to be much more ambitious wrt. carbon neutral housing. Also great concerns regarding provision of affordable housing and the development of greenfield land. Local councils and planners should not be forced to put developers' profits before public need -both they and central government need to recognise the destructive consequences of their decisions.</p> <p>So these 'minor amendments' in South Norfolk's SCI open something of a Pandora's box and are unlikely to represent either the needs or wishes of the community.</p>	<p>The proposed amendments to the SCI were not influenced by the Government White Paper - the Council proposals were announced before the White Paper was published. The impetus for the amendments was provided by the update to national planning guidance (published in mid-May) which requires local planning authorities to assess their requirements for plan-making consultations against current Government Covid-19 and social distancing legislation.</p> <p>In addition, the amendments do not completely remove the measure to make consultation documents available at the Council offices – they simply reflect that it may not always be possible to do so (given that the offices are currently closed). Consultation documents will therefore continue to be made available at the premises unless it is impossible to do so (e.g. because the offices are closed in the future due to the pandemic). In the meantime, other options remain in place, such as making documents available at libraries (again, where they are open). As the temporary SCI update that has currently been made available states: <i>'In circumstances where hard copies are not available from the Council offices and libraries, we will include in our consultation publicity details of how those without internet capability can access hard copies of the consultation documents. The SCI currently includes a range of publicity measures, including non-digital measures such as articles in local media and posters in local notice boards, which will still be considered as options and which can include details of how to get in touch.'</i></p>
SCI4	Poringland Parish Council	Thank you for consulting Poringland Parish Council on the temporary amendment to the Statement of Community Involvement. Please be advised that the Parish Council supports the temporary changes.	Support noted.

## South Norfolk Statement of Community Involvement

May 2017 (amended ~~June 2019~~ July 2020)



### **Focused SCI Amendment (July 2020)**

South Norfolk Council is making a minor, focused amendment to its Statement of Community Involvement as a result of the Government's guidance on social distancing and public safety, in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The amendment in question refers to the procedure of making consultation and related documents available from the Council offices (paras. 60 and 61 and appendix 3).

South Norfolk Council still intends to comply with the principles of the document but the amendment is necessary in case it is not possible for the public to access the Council Offices due to future lockdown restrictions.

### **Temporary Update – Covid-19 (July 2020)**

Published alongside this SCI is a temporary update explaining which of the various options for stakeholder and community engagement and publicity will not be possible at present due to Government guidance in relation to social distancing and public safety.

The update also sets out temporary, alternative consultation and publicity measures that will be considered as options whilst Government guidelines on social distancing and interaction remain in place. These options will be reviewed as and when the national guidelines change.

The temporary update can be found in the Planning Policy section of the South Norfolk Council website ([www.south-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk)).

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## **1. Introduction**

### **Why we are preparing this Statement of Community Involvement?**

1. South Norfolk Council is always looking for ways for the community to become more engaged in planning matters. We want to encourage more people to be involved and to make that involvement as easy as possible. Local knowledge is important as it helps to ensure that development in South Norfolk maximises benefits for the community whilst protecting the special qualities of the district.
2. This South Norfolk Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a 'code of practice' setting out how the Council will involve people in planning decisions. It identifies how and when participants from local communities and other partner agencies will be involved in the preparation of Local Plan documents. It also sets out the way in which the community can be involved in the determination of planning applications.
3. Once adopted, the Council must comply with the (updated) SCI in preparing any Local Plan document or when determining a planning application.

### **The need for review**

4. The requirement to prepare a SCI is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). South Norfolk Council first published a SCI in 2007 to explain how the Council intended to involve people in the preparation of its planning policy documents and engage them in the processing of planning applications. Since 2007 there have been a number of important changes to national planning policy which will affect how we prepare and consult on plans and proposals and these have led to the need to review the SCI.
5. Under the national planning system the Council has to prepare a Local Plan to guide development and growth in South Norfolk over the next 10-20 years. The Local Plan shows how the Council intends to provide for new housing and employment growth in its area, how much development will be planned for and where it will go. A Local Plan also sets out what will and will not be allowed in certain areas and which areas must be protected from development altogether.
6. The Government has made it clear that it now expects Councils to prepare Local Plans and put them in place as quickly as possible. Recent Government announcements suggest that Councils which do not already have up to date Local Plans will be expected to prepare and adopt them (that is, complete the legal process to bring them into force) by the end of 2017. Councils which fail to produce timely Local Plans may face possible sanctions and financial penalties. Councils that have adopted their plans recently must keep them up to date and review them as soon as practicable.

7. Although the main South Norfolk Local Plan documents were only adopted in October 2015, the overall planning strategy for the Greater Norwich area (the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk) is more than four years old and a new Local Plan now needs to be prepared to manage and shape longer term growth and development to 2036. At the same time there is a need for an overall planning framework to establish future needs and set targets for housing and jobs across the whole of Norfolk and ensure that new local plans for individual districts are consistent with those targets.
8. Accordingly, in partnership with Broadland District Council and Norwich City Council and working with Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council has started work on a new Greater Norwich Local Plan that will set out a development strategy for the wider Norwich area (covering the whole of the three districts) between now and 2036, as well as a broader Norfolk Strategic Framework to set overall planning targets across the county as a whole.
9. The Council will need to strike a careful balance between meeting our obligations to the Government to prepare plans as speedily as possible with making sure that local people have a meaningful opportunity to comment on and influence what goes into those plans through the plan making process. In order to meet Government obligations some of the consultation arrangements for plan-making in the 2007 SCI have had to be reviewed and updated in this document, particularly to streamline certain procedures.
10. In relation to planning applications, the Government has made changes to national planning rules which mean that more kinds of development can now be carried out, and more kinds of premises can change their use, without planning permission – this is called *permitted development*. Also to encourage more housebuilding, the Government have plans to change and simplify the planning process for housing, granting automatic ‘permission in principle’ for new housing on previously developed sites which Councils have listed as suitable. Under new Government plans Local Plans will also have to provide land for low cost starter homes on all suitable housing development sites.
11. Taken together, the changes in the planning system will inevitably affect the way that Local Plans are prepared and how planning applications are made and dealt with. This means that the way we involve local people in the planning process also needs to change. In cases where no planning application is needed (such as permitted development), the Council cannot always let people know about all development which is happening in their area, however applications which need prior approval under permitted development rights are included in the weekly list of planning applications published on the Council’s website. The permitted development rule changes are designed to speed up the planning process, and make smaller scale building projects and minor changes easier. But this will sometimes mean that local people will have less opportunity than before to have their say.

## **South Norfolk Council Vision and Priorities**

12. We are committed to making South Norfolk one of the best places to live and work in the country. Below is our vision for South Norfolk as a place and our ambition for South Norfolk Council as an organisation (taken from the South Norfolk Corporate Plan 2016-2020):



13. We have three corporate priority areas where we focus our resources and efforts. These areas are underpinned by our customer focussed, collaborative and commercial approach to service delivery.





14. In order to achieve the Council's 'Vision' and 'Priorities' through the planning service, it is essential that there is effective public involvement in plan-making and in the determination of planning applications and that clear standards are set for when and how involvement will take place

### **Our aims for community involvement**

15. Our aim is to give communities every opportunity to shape the way planning happens in South Norfolk. To achieve this, the Council has made the following four commitments:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will work with town/parish councils, community groups and other local representatives to help you and your community take a more active role in planning</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will be readily approachable and will work effectively to build open and honest relationships with you</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will help you to understand more about planning and will use plain English in all the plans we prepare</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will take all views into account and (where relevant) feedback information throughout the planning process</li></ul>

16. The Council understands how important it is to involve the community. In this SCI the term 'community' is being used in its widest sense. A community is a group of people and organisations which have a common interest, in this case an interest in the future development of South Norfolk. Overall, greater community involvement in planning will help deliver sustainable development through decisions and outcomes, although clearly there will remain instances where some people will be disappointed by some planning decisions the Council will make – this is, however, unavoidable, as competing interests will sometimes exist which are irreconcilable. More information about sustainable development in the context of planning can be found in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).
17. A number of groups within South Norfolk have been traditionally more difficult to engage with than others. Using the most appropriate techniques and consultation methods the Council will aim to get a response that is representative of the population of the District or of the particular area under consideration. To do this the Council will work with those locally organised groups that can offer improved access to 'hard to reach' groups. These will include:
- Neighbouring authorities and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils;
  - Service and utilities providers;
  - National and local amenity, campaign, interest and support groups (such as groups representing environment/conservation/heritage concerns, access/disability issues, and religious/ethnic/race groups);
  - Young people, including School Councils and South Norfolk Youth Action;
  - South Norfolk Older People's Forum.

## **The Council's commitment to equality**

18. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This Duty requires South Norfolk Council, and other public sector organisations, to have due regard to the need to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
19. This is particularly relevant to planning which has a role to play in promoting equality of opportunity and cohesion by considering the needs of the community. The Council recognises that equality of opportunity in practice includes ensuring that vulnerable or disadvantaged groups have their voices heard and their needs considered. The SCI supports that objective through providing guidance on how to get people involved in planning. Planning activities and decisions will be impact assessed in order to ensure that there are no unintended negative impacts on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. The assessments will focus on the eight protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation but will also consider the wider implications of socio-economic inequalities on community cohesion. This is normally carried out through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which takes place during the Local Plan production process.
20. As part of the community involvement exercises that form the preparation stage of Local Plan documents, the Council will seek to monitor the characteristics of those that take part (typically through the use of a monitoring form attached to consultation response forms or through recording details about those attending consultation events). If it is considered that certain parts of the community who share a protected characteristic, and who may be affected by the subject of the proposed plan are underrepresented then the Council will consider undertaking further involvement exercises, specifically targeted at these groups of people.
21. All printed material will be offered in Braille, large print, audio and translation options on request and the IN TRAN facility will be publicised in all printed material.

## **The role of Elected Councillors**

22. Elected councillors have an important role to play as:

- Community representatives – if you would like to, you can share your views about planning matters directly with your Ward Councillor;
- Information providers – Councillors can act as a link between planning officers and people in their ward and community;
- Decision makers – Elected councillors make decision on certain planning applications and also sign-off Local Plan documents for consultation. In order for a Local Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State or adopted it must be agreed at a Full Council meeting.

23. Members of the public can make their views known to elected councillors in a number of ways; by letter, email, or face-to-face discussion. This is described as 'lobbying' and the councillor will (if your views are communicated in writing) be obliged to pass these on to the Planning Department, where they will be published publicly. It is important that the proper consultation process is used because this is how views are registered in the plan-making or planning application process. This ensures that while councillors hear what you have to say, you will not miss the opportunity to be heard at committees or at any subsequent appeal, inquiry, hearing or examination and that your views are properly publicly recorded and published.

## **RTPI Planning Aid England**

24. People who want to be involved can sometimes be put off by the complexity of the planning system so the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Planning Aid England is there to offer assistance and advice on the planning system to individuals and groups who are unable to pay for independent professional planning advice. Planning Aid encourages people to get involved in the planning system to help shape their own environment. South Norfolk Council endorses Planning Aid England as a service that communities in South Norfolk may wish to use to seek assistance on matters discussed within this SCI.

25. Planning Aid offers five main services and types of support:

- Free planning advice and guidance – website and advice line;
- Bespoke support for eligible individuals and communities;
- Outreach and capacity building;
- Neighbourhood Planning;
- Online resources and guides.

RTPI Planning Aid England can be contacted via the planning aid advice line:

Tel: 0330 123 9244

Email: [advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

Web: [www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid)

## **2. Community Involvement in Plan Making**

### **What kinds of documents are consulted on?**

26. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the community involvement requirements for local authorities to follow in preparing their local planning documents.
27. The local planning documents prepared by the Council are identified in a document called the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS includes a timetable of when we aim to produce the documents and the various stages they must go through to be adopted. The LDS is available on the Council's website at <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/2925.asp> and is reviewed and updated regularly. The main types of documents produced are:

### **Local Plans**

28. Local Plans are the formal policy documents which constitute the statutory development plan for South Norfolk. Once adopted these have full legal weight in decision making. The Council's decisions to approve or refuse any development which needs planning permission must be made in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations are issues that can be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications. These can include (but are not limited to) national planning policies (set out in the National Planning Policy Framework) emerging local planning policy, financial considerations (viability), overlooking/loss of privacy, parking, highway safety and traffic, noise, effect on heritage impacts – listed buildings and conservation areas, layout, density, design, disabled person's access, biodiversity impacts – nature conservation, protected trees, previous planning decisions. The weight attached to material considerations in reaching a decision is a matter of judgement. Issues such as loss of property value, loss of view and an applicant's personal circumstances are non-material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account in the planning process.
29. There are two main stages of consultation on Local Plans, these being:
  - Regulation 18, which specifies that local planning authorities should seek community involvement in the preparation of each Local Plan and that authorities should take into account the comments received in the preparation of the plan. This is often referred to as consultation on the draft Local Plan, and might also be called the Issues and Options stage.
  - Regulation 19, deals with the publication of the Local Plan and occurs before the Council submits the document to the Secretary of State for examination. The Council must publish the document and invite formal representations over a minimum six-week period. This stage is known as the pre-submission publication stage.

30. There are further regulations which set out the requirement for the Council to notify previous consultees of various ensuing stages of the Local Plan, these being:
- Notification of submission of the document to the Secretary of State;
  - Notification of the date, time and place of the public hearing (related to the examination of the document), as well as the name of the Inspector;
  - Notification of the publication of the Inspector's Report; and
  - Notification of the adoption of the Local Plan.

#### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

31. These help to support and explain in more detail how the Council will implement particular policies and proposals in the Local Plan. SPDs are supplementary to the policies in the Local Plan and must be consistent with them. SPD cannot create new policy. SPD can also take the form of masterplans, detailed design briefs or development briefs for sites identified for future development ('allocated') in the plan, as well as for other emerging sites. SPDs can be reviewed frequently and relatively straightforwardly to respond to change, whereas a review of the policies in a Local Plan document is a longer and more complex process.
32. The 2012 Regulations referred to above also specify requirements for community involvement in the production of SPDs, which differ from that for Local Plans.
- Regulation 12, details requirements for local planning authorities to produce a statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised in consultation on production of the SPD in question and how the resulting SPD has addressed those issues.
  - Regulation 13, specifies that the local authority must invite representations on the draft document over a minimum four week period prior to adoption. This is known as the pre-adoption publication stage.
  - Regulation 14, then requires the authority to notify anyone who so requested that the SPD has been adopted.

#### Neighbourhood Plans

33. One of the main recent changes in the planning system encourages people to become more involved in the planning of their local area. They can do this by helping to prepare or by participating in the organised events and consultations of the Neighbourhood Plan process. South Norfolk Council wants to encourage people to become involved in making Neighbourhood Plans. The Planning Policy team is responsible for supporting the work of any Neighbourhood Plan group (this is a legal requirement) but these documents are essentially produced by local groups and are subject to their own consultation arrangements. Further information on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans can be found in the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). The [Locality website](#) gives advice on financial support and grants as well as general information about producing Neighbourhood Plans.

34. The main stages in Neighbourhood Plan production which require South Norfolk Council to undertake consultation or notify communities and other stakeholders of certain developments in the process are summarised below. A list of statutory consultees for Neighbourhood Plans can be found at Appendix 2:
- Publicising and inviting representations over a minimum six week period on applications for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area (the area that the Parish/Town Council would like the Neighbourhood Plan to cover);
  - Publicising and inviting representations over a minimum six week period on a submitted Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents;
  - Publication and notification of the examiner's report, as well as South Norfolk Council's decision in relation to that report;
  - Publication and notification of the referendum information statement and specified documents, giving at least 28 working days notice of the date and procedures relating to a Neighbourhood Plan referendum; and Publication and notification of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
35. Appendix 4 sets out a comprehensive list of the main ways in which South Norfolk Council can support communities in the district that are developing Neighbourhood Plans, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

### **The current Local Plan**

36. The current Local Plan for South Norfolk comprises the following adopted documents:
- Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (the JCS) adopted in March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014;
  - the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations and Policies (adopted October 2015);
  - the South Norfolk Council Development Management Policies Document (adopted October 2015);
  - the Wymondham Area Action Plan (adopted October 2015); and
  - the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (adopted May 2016).
37. In addition, the Council is also working on a Gypsies and Travellers Local Plan document, which when adopted will also form part of the Local Plan.
38. The Council also has adopted Neighbourhood Plans for Cringleford and Mulbarton as well as a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. Neighbourhood Plans are not technically part of the Local Plan but do form part of the wider Development Plan for the district.



## The current South Norfolk Local Plan

### The emerging Local Plan

39. The proposed Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) will be a new statutory Local Plan for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, and will replace the present Joint Core Strategy (JCS). Like the present JCS it will set out strategic planning policies for the whole Greater Norwich area (Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk districts) but unlike the present JCS it will also include policies and proposals for individual sites. As such the GNLP will eventually replace the separate Site Allocation plans for the individual districts. Further information can be found at [www.greaternorwichlocalplan.org.uk](http://www.greaternorwichlocalplan.org.uk), although key information and links are, of course, also on South Norfolk Council's own website.
40. The proposed Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) will be a non-statutory strategic policy statement which will set broad targets and priorities for the next round of statutory local plans for the individual local planning authorities in Norfolk, facilitating joint working across district boundaries and helping to fulfil the statutory Duty to Co-operate (see below).
41. Both of the above documents will cover the period to 2036. The current work programme for the preparation of the both the GNLP and NSF is set out in the latest revision of the South Norfolk LDS which was published in October 2016 <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/2925.asp>. The programme is subject to review and the LDS will be updated to reflect any changes.

## **Procedural requirements**

42. Local Plan documents must be prepared in accordance with a nationally prescribed procedure set out in the Local Planning Regulations for England, which were last updated in 2012. This procedure will be followed in preparing the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan, but a more streamlined and fast-track process will be used for the Norfolk Strategic Framework, since this is not a Local Plan document but an evidence framework to inform the preparation of Local Plans.
43. At key stages of plan-making there are opportunities for the public to comment on emerging planning policies and proposals in the documents being prepared; indeed, this engagement is vital to ensure that the Council fully understands public views (and information) on policies and proposals. At the end of the process Local Plan documents must be submitted to the Secretary of State and be independently examined by a Government appointed inspector to assess their soundness and legal compliance before they can be adopted by the Council and come into force.
44. Certain other documents must be published alongside each Local Plan document, including:
  - The independently prepared Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report of the Local Plan at each stage. (A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is prepared and consulted on at the start of the process to set out what sustainability issues and objectives the SA should cover and what evidence it will use);
  - An update to the Policies map, setting out the Local Plan's policies and proposals on a map base (if relevant);
  - A statement of consultation summarising public representations made to the plan and how they have been addressed (called the 'Regulation 22(c)' statement);
  - Copies of any representations made;
  - Any other supporting documents considered by the Council to be relevant in preparing the plan; and
  - An adoption statement and environmental statement (when the plan is adopted)
45. The Local Plan is supported by a range of research reports, studies and topic papers which make up a detailed evidence base which informs and justifies its policies.



## **The Duty to Co-operate**

46. For many years South Norfolk Council has worked in close co-operation with its neighbouring councils in Broadland and Norwich to plan for and deliver major growth envisaged for the Greater Norwich area. This work was undertaken as part of a formal Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP). The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk was produced by the GNDP, which includes Norfolk County Council working in partnership with the three districts and this arrangement will continue for the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan.
47. The need for Councils and other agencies (see Appendix 1) to work together in developing effective planning strategies for their areas is now a legal duty. Councils must show that they have met this statutory Duty to Co-operate in order for Local Plans to be accepted (found 'sound' and 'legally compliant') when those plans are independently examined by a Government-appointed inspector. Work on preparing the overall Norfolk Strategic Framework – although it will not be a formal local plan – will involve South Norfolk Council in joint working with all the local planning authorities in Norfolk, plus other agencies, across Norfolk, and also into Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.
48. The Local Plan documents which have been and will be prepared jointly by the Greater Norwich area authorities are set out in the respective LDS's for each Council. Public involvement in their preparation is guided by the standards set out in this SCI, which is very similar in the 2016 Broadland and Norwich SCIs.

## **Who will we consult with?**

49. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out statutory requirements for the Council to follow in producing its Local Plan documents. The regulations define two specific groups of consultation bodies for the purpose of plan making. These are 'specific consultation bodies' and 'general consultation bodies'.
50. Specific consultation bodies are listed within the regulations and criteria are also suggested for determining general consultation bodies. Appendix 2 sets out South Norfolk Council's interpretation of 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies for the purposes of involvement in plan making.
51. The Regulations require that for each Local Plan document being produced the Council must involve any of the specific and general consultation bodies that it feels may have an interest in the subject of the proposed document. This means that the Council will not necessarily consult the same consultation bodies on each Local Plan document it produces.
52. The regulations also require the Council to involve such residents or businesses in the area that it considers appropriate.

53. Comments submitted on consultation documents will be publicly available on the Council's website and cannot be made confidentially.

### **The basic content of each Local Plan consultation document**

54. Because the Local Plan is made up of a number of documents (including Supplementary Planning Documents) the Council will make clear the stage of the document which is the subject of each consultation. The Council will ensure that the language used is straightforward, minimising jargon and clearly explaining any technical terms.
55. Each consultation will make clear:
- The document being prepared;
  - The stage in the process that the document has reached (e.g. Issues and Options or Pre-submission);
  - The scope and purpose of each consultation;
  - The issues/questions on which the Council wants to receive views or representations;
  - What people are being invited to do; (e.g. answer a questionnaire, attend a meeting etc.);
  - The date and time that responses need to be received by the Council;
  - How the responses received will be used;
  - What the public responses can or cannot influence in the consultation documents;
  - How and when results of the consultation will be made available;
  - How decisions will be made using the results of the consultation and
  - What are the future stages in the process.
56. It will also be made clear that
- i. Any personal details and information supplied will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which control how personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.

- ii. There may be a number of elements which consultation responses will not be able to change (such as the status of nationally designated wildlife sites and national planning policies) and therefore it will be made clear on which matters consultation responses are sought.

### **Consultation methods**

57. The Council has a well-established procedure for involving people in plan making and we will continue to refine our understanding of different consultation techniques. A variety of methods have and will be used during consultations, taking into consideration the issues being consulted on, the stage of consultation and the needs of the audience. These include, for example, the use of appropriate locations and/or the use of particular presentation media for presentation to blind people, people with impaired hearing and people with mental health issues or learning difficulties.
58. The Council will use a range of methods of consultation appropriate to the needs of the exercise and the stage of the consultation reached. The Council will consider carefully:
  - The ways in which we publicise documents and events - letters, advertising etc;
  - The ways in which we consult - questionnaire, exhibition etc.;
  - Methods for feeding back the results - direct to participant, published on the website etc.
59. Consultation is carried out increasingly by electronic means but this is still rapidly evolving in the digital age. Whilst almost all documents are made available electronically, the challenge remains as to how information can be disseminated effectively to attract the widest audience. The Council is steadily expanding the use of digital technology to enable direct access to its services across a range of devices and allow local people to make payments, submit comments and report issues and problems electronically. We will endeavour in future planning consultations to integrate these mechanisms where possible and extend the use of social media to help access 'hard to reach' groups, especially younger people. However, we will also continue to use more traditional methods of consultation to include those without access to the internet or social media. The Council encourages comments to be submitted electronically via the website or email where possible (which is much cheaper and easier to process) but will also continue to accept paper representations. Comments received will be published on our website and recorded with the name under which the comments were made.
60. We will use a range of consultation approaches. We will **always** publish information on the Council's website and, where possible, we will have hard copies available for inspection at the Council's office. Other consultation/engagement methods will also be used, but these will depend on the document being consulted on, the stage of consultation reached and the appropriateness of different techniques. Some of these potential methods are

described below, but this is not necessarily an exhaustive list (more detail about individual consultation methods is given in Appendix 3):

61. We will:

- Make consultation information and documents available on the Council's website
- Make consultation information and documents available and in our Council Office receptions (where possible)
- Send out letters/emails to statutory/general consultees (as appropriate)
- Involve Local Councillors and Town/Parish Councils (as appropriate)
- Lodge copies of consultation material at libraries in the district in paper and/or electronic form (as appropriate)
- Engage local print and broadcast media (as appropriate)
- Publish articles in the Council's Link magazine/ Parish Magazines (as appropriate)
- Produce posters/notices for Town/Parish Council noticeboards and other methods of advertising (as appropriate)
- Hold exhibitions/meetings (as appropriate)
- Facilitate focus groups/workshops (as appropriate)
- Consult with Neighbourhood Planning bodies and take account of Parish Plans (as appropriate)
- Make use of social media (as appropriate)

62. We acknowledge that it is important to make public consultation arrangements as extensive as possible to make sure the public can get their voice heard. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to undertake consultations using all the methods listed above at every stage of the plan making process. We will make sure that consultations are tailored appropriately to the nature of the plan, policy or proposal being consulted on and the stages it has reached. At any consultation stage the Council will comply with the minimum legal requirements for consultation.

63. The Council will aim to hold all public consultation events at venues that have good access for everybody. Venues should be ideally be within easy distance of local communities for walking and cycling and on a public transport route, as well as having enough car parking. The Council will also choose locations that reflect the geographic spread of the population. Given the rural nature of large parts of South Norfolk, it may not always be possible to use venues which allow easy access for all; where this is the case clear information about other methods of participation will be available. Events will be timed to allow as many people as possible in the target audience to attend, taking into account working hours, school/public holidays, other known events etc. When targeting specific groups venues will be chosen accordingly e.g. using colleges or student unions to target the 18-35 age group.

## How long will consultations last?

64. The following timescales will be adhered to for documents consulted on:

Document type	Normal period for consultation	Circumstances in which the consultation period will be extended
Local Plan documents and accompanying sustainability appraisal reports	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) on Local Plan documents	We will extend consultation periods to allow for extra days where a bank holiday falls within a consultation period (on a day-for-day basis).
Neighbourhood plans (See pages 25-26 for the stages of the process which require the Council to undertake consultation)	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) when proposals for neighbourhood plans prepared by designated neighbourhood planning bodies are published (Regulation 16 publication stage).	Where a normal period of consultation would take in all or part of the Christmas/New Year holiday, the Easter holiday or the July/August summer holiday period in addition to bank holidays, extra days will be added to allow for this, up to a maximum of 14 calendar days over and above the statutory minimum.
Supplementary planning documents (SPD) including planning briefs.	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>four weeks</b> (28 calendar days) on SPD and on planning briefs which have the status of SPD.	At its discretion, and only in the early, informal stages of Local Plan/SPD production, the Council may allow additional time for representations to be made in circumstances where there is a justifiable reason for not responding within the deadline.
Non-statutory planning documents and informal guidance.	We will consult for a period appropriate to the coverage and content of the document concerned.	
Future reviews of this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	We will consult for at least six weeks (42 calendar days) on any future reviews of this SCI	In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, we will not normally run consultations on planning documents in the six week period immediately before local council elections. ("purdah").

### **How will we consult people at different stages in the plan making process?**

65. Different types of policy documents need different levels of involvement, depending on factors such as how many people would be affected by the proposed policy and the type of impact it would have. Detailed guidance on who we will involve, how and what level at the various stages of the plan making process is given on the following pages:

## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of Local Plan production

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Pre-production/ evidence gathering	The information needed for the plan is prepared and potential issues identified. This stage may encompass a series of discrete exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish/Town Council workshops</li> <li>• Stakeholder focus groups</li> <li>• Stakeholder meetings</li> <li>• Resident/stakeholder workshops</li> <li>• Survey documents (hard copy and online)</li> <li>• Write to statutory environment bodies to initiate Sustainability Appraisal screening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to stakeholders and database contacts</li> <li>• Information on the Council's website</li> <li>• Information via SNC social media</li> <li>• Information in libraries and at Council offices</li> <li>• Article in The Link Magazine (if publication timings allow)</li> <li>• Article in the local press</li> <li>• Letter/email to Town/Parish Councils and elected Members</li> <li>• Posters on Parish Notice boards/libraries</li> <li>• Article in Parish magazines</li> </ul>
Consultation on draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)	<p>The information gathered at the first stage is taken into account in the drafting of detailed policies and allocations.</p> <p>The Council presents a draft of the Local Plan setting out detailed policies which meet the aims of the Plan and address identified issues.</p> <p>Depending on the level of complexity, the draft Local</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (principally online)</li> <li>• Public exhibitions</li> <li>• Stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to 'specific consultation bodies'</li> <li>• Letter/email to 'general consultation bodies', other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database</li> <li>• Publish consultation documents on the Council's website</li> <li>• Make copies of the consultation document available for inspection at the Council offices and libraries</li> <li>• Issue press release to local newspapers</li> <li>• Publicise consultation via SNC</li> </ul>

	<p>Plan stage may involve more than one period of consultation.</p> <p>Draft Local Plan documents will be published for consultation for a minimum of six weeks.</p>		<p>social media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange public meeting, exhibitions, focus groups as appropriate</li> <li>• Article in The Link Magazine (if publication timings allow)</li> <li>• Articles in Parish Magazines/posters on Parish Notice boards (if relevant/appropriate)</li> </ul>
Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19)	<p>The Local Plan is finalised and published for a representations period before being submitted to the Secretary of State. Representations at this stage can only be made on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan</p> <p>The Pre-Submission publication version of the Local Plan will be published for consultation for a minimum of six weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish a statement of the representation procedure</li> <li>• Publish Sustainability Appraisal Report for consultation</li> <li>• Publish consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments have been considered and taken into account</li> <li>• Publish relevant supporting documents</li> <li>• Send letters/emails to specific consultation bodies</li> <li>• Send letters/emails to relevant general consultation bodies, other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database</li> <li>• Publish electronic copies of all the documents on the Council's website</li> <li>• Make hard copies available for inspection at the Council's offices</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and libraries</li> <li>• Issue public notice/press release in local newspapers</li> <li>• Publicise consultation via SNC social media</li> <li>• Article in The Link magazine (if publication timings allow)</li> </ul>
Submission	The draft Local Plan and all supporting documents and representations received are submitted to the Secretary of State, who appoints an independent planning inspector to examine the Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to 'pre-submission publication' respondents who requested to be notified of submission</li> <li>• Information on Council's website</li> <li>• Information via SNC social media</li> <li>• Information available at Council offices and libraries</li> </ul>
Public examination	The Local Plan and comments received are examined by the appointed planning inspector, including the public Hearing stage. If there are any proposed main modifications, they will be consulted on for at least six weeks. On receipt of the Inspector's report, it will be published on the Council's website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to 'those who made Pre-Submission representations about the date of the Hearing session(s), publication of Proposed Main Modifications and receipt of Inspector's report (as relevant)</li> <li>• Information on Council's website</li> <li>• Information via SNC social media</li> <li>• Information available at Council offices and libraries</li> </ul>
Adoption	The Local Plan is adopted following the consideration of the recommendations in the Inspector's report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the Inspector's report available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's offices</li> <li>• Letter/email to 'pre submission publication' respondents who</li> </ul>

			<p>requested to be notified</p> <p>Following adoption:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the Local Plan and make available on Council's website and at Council offices/libraries</li> <li>• Publish adoption statement in Local newspapers</li> <li>• Send adoption statement to specific and general consultees and those who made representations at previous stages or those who have asked to be notified of the adoption</li> <li>• Make the Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents available for inspection for six weeks after adoption</li> <li>• Add adoption information on SNC social media</li> </ul>
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## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)/Planning Brief production

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Pre-production/ evidence gathering	<p>Information is gathered on the topic and potential issues are identified and explored. This stage may encompass a series of discreet exercises</p> <p>Preliminary consultation may be carried out prior to publication of draft SPD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder focus groups</li> <li>Stakeholder meetings</li> <li>Preliminary survey/consultation documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter/email to stakeholders</li> <li>Notification of relevant database contacts</li> <li>Survey/consultation documents available on Council's website, in libraries and at Council offices</li> <li>Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link magazine/parish magazines as appropriate</li> </ul>
Draft SPD/Planning Brief	<p>A draft SPD/planning brief is prepared following the initial evidence gathering stage.</p> <p>Consultation at this stage will involve publishing a draft of the SPD/planning brief for comment for a minimum of four weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> <li>Public exhibitions</li> <li>Stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make electronic copies of the SPD/planning brief and supporting documents available on the Council's website, in libraries and at Council offices</li> <li>Send letters/emails to relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database who may have an interest in the issues</li> <li>Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link magazine/parish magazines as appropriate</li> <li>Arrange exhibition or presentation to interest groups if appropriate</li> </ul>

Adoption	The Council will consider the representation received through the consultations and make any amendments necessary before adopting the SPD/planning brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the SPD/planning brief and make available on the Council's website and at libraries and Council offices</li> <li>Publish a consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments were considered and taken into account</li> <li>Send an adoption statement to those who have made representations during the previous consultations and those who have asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD/planning brief</li> <li>Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link Magazine/ Parish magazines as appropriate</li> </ul>
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## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Neighbourhood Plan Area application	Parish/Town Council applies to South Norfolk Council to designate the Neighbourhood Area. South Norfolk publicises the application and invites representations over a minimum six week period if the Plan area differs from the Parish boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to key stakeholders</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Consultation document Council offices</li> </ul>
Submission of Neighbourhood Plan	Parish/Town Council submits the Neighbourhood Plan to South Norfolk Council. South Norfolk invites representations on the submitted plan over a minimum six week period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to stakeholders and residents identified in Neighbourhood Plan SCI</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Consultation document at Council offices</li> </ul>
Publication of Examiner's report	South Norfolk Council publishes the report of the examination into the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and the decision of the Council as to whether or not it accepts the Examiner's recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and decision statement at Council offices</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> </ul>
Referendum Information Statement	South Norfolk Council publishes the Referendum Information Statement and specified documents, setting out the date and procedure for the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. A minimum of 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter to all residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (wider if Examiner wishes a wider area to be covered by the referendum)</li> <li>• Information on the Council website</li> <li>• Information at Council offices</li> </ul>

	working days notice will be given		
Adoption of Neighbourhood Plan	South Norfolk Council adopts the Neighbourhood Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to those consultees who requested to be informed about the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Information at Council offices</li> <li>• Information via SNC social media</li> </ul>

## **Feedback**

66. It is important to feed back the results of consultation regularly. It allows people to see how their contributions have been taken into account and helps to maintain their confidence in the process. Feedback needs to be relevant, concise, and easily understood and we need to explain clearly why certain decisions have been made.
67. Opportunities for feedback include press releases, The Link, publications produced by other parties (e.g. parish council newsletters), the website (which includes a 'have your say/results of previous surveys' page), and direct letters/e-mails. These will explain how the results will be used in the decision making process

### **3. Community Involvement in Planning Proposals and Applications**

#### **Introduction**

68. As well as setting out how communities and stakeholders can have their say in the production of Local Plan documents, this SCI also details how individuals and organisations can take part in the consideration of planning applications through the development management process. It is important that the views of the general public and interested parties are taken into account to inform decision making on planning applications.
69. This section details South Norfolk Council's arrangements (and, where appropriate the Council's expectation of developers) in terms of community and stakeholder involvement during the following stages of the development management process:
- **The pre-application stage**  
when proposals are being formulated and before any planning application is submitted to the Council
  - **The planning application stage**  
once an application is lodged with the Council
  - **The post-application stage**  
the notification and (if followed) appeal process following a decision on a planning application
70. This section also contains information on the Council's Planning Enforcement process.

#### **The pre-application stage**

71. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is clear that early engagement is important and can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties, improving the outcomes for the community.
72. The Council has a key role to play in encouraging developers to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. There are two main aspects of pre-application. The first is encouraging applicants to engage directly with the local community before submitting their applications to the Council so that local people can have their say about the proposed development before a planning application is submitted and the second is encouraging developers to take up the confidential chargeable pre-application service offered by the Council with the aim of improving the quality of planning applications being prepared for submission. Details of this service and the fees involved can be found at <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/278.asp>. Pre-application advice for relevant proposals may also be sought from, amongst other bodies, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency – see their websites for details.



## **The planning application stage**

73. It is important that the community has suitable opportunities to be involved in commenting on planning applications and that those comments are taken into account during the decision-making process. The Council has a well-established process of consultation on planning applications, although this varies depending on the type of application. All comments received are published on our website and are attributable to their author. No anonymous comments can be considered. Guidance on how to keep your details safe online can be found on the South Norfolk Council website at <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/finding-and-commenting-planning-application>.
74. Once an application is registered as valid, it may be publicised in a variety of ways:
- All applications are posted on the South Norfolk Council website <https://info.south-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/>
  - Site notice(s) will be displayed at a prominent location, only where there is a statutory requirement to do so;
  - Emails to statutory consultees (including Town and Parish Councils, other organisations and interest groups);
  - Letters/emails to residents, businesses and other neighbours adjacent to the boundary of the site or opposite if the proposal relates to any frontage alterations, plus any other properties which are considered to be materially affected by the proposal;
  - Consultation letters to local South Norfolk councillor(s) and parish council(s);
  - A weekly list of all new applications will be sent to those who request it (electronic copies) The weekly list is also available on the Council's website <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/weekly-list-of-planning-applications-and-decisions> ;
  - Newspaper notices for specific applications based on their sensitivity (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas); size/complexity (Major Applications, proposals contrary to policy).
75. Notices and letters make it clear when and where the application(s) can be viewed, the name of the case officer and the date by which responses need to be submitted for them to be accepted. Any individual or organisation may make representations regarding a planning application, whether or not they have been personally notified. Responses can be made in writing, via e-mail or directly via the Council's website and all responses received will be published on line.
76. If an application is amended during the process of its assessment the Council will re-consult on amended plans (for a reduced number of days), but only if there is a material change in the application that warrants the need to re-consult. If a re-consultation is considered necessary then all those who were originally consulted (statutory consultees, internal consultees and neighbouring properties) and any persons or organisations that have made representations will be reconsulted on

the revised proposals. If necessary the case officer for the application will agree a new determination deadline with the developer/agent as required.

77. The results of any consultations will form part of any officer report. An application will only be referred to the relevant Committee in accordance with the Council's "scheme of delegation" (see Part 3, section 4 of the Council's Constitution, [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Scheme\\_of\\_Delegation\\_Constitution.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Scheme_of_Delegation_Constitution.pdf) . Although some exceptions exist in relation to enforcement matters, responses will usually be a matter of public record and any submissions should be made on that basis.
78. As part of the Committee process for those supporting or objecting to an application there is an opportunity to bring particular issues to the Committee's attention – this could include the results of consultation. In the event that an application is not determined by committee, the results of any consultation will form part of the case officer's assessment of the proposals and summary information will be included in a delegated report. All aspects of planning applications including supporting information are available via the Council's website, therefore increasing the availability of information and allowing a further opportunity to scrutinise consultation results. Details on how to speak at Committee are set out in the Council's leaflet 'Have your say on planning applications'. The leaflet is available on request and at the Council website: [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/DMC\\_Meetings\\_Public\\_Speaking.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/DMC_Meetings_Public_Speaking.pdf)

### **The post application stage**

79. Once an application has been determined the Council will inform the applicant (via a Decision Notice) and update the website with the Decision Notice. A weekly list of all planning decisions is also published and made available on the Council's website at website <https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/weekly-list-of-planning-applications-and-decisions>.
80. Once the Council has made a decision on a planning application the person who made the application has a right to appeal the decision if they disagree with it (an appeal can also be made if the Council has not made a decision within the statutory or agreed time-frame). Most appeals must be made within 6 months of the date on the decision notice issued by the Council (or date that a decision should have been made by). There are different deadlines for appeals under the Householder Appeals Service, the Commercial Appeals Service and those linked to enforcement action, further details can be found in the Planning Inspectorate Procedural Guide at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-appeals-procedural-guide> Planning appeals are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate and heard by an independent Planning Inspector.
81. Anyone can comment on a planning appeal and the deadline for comments is 5 weeks after the start date of the appeal. The Council has to inform anyone who commented on the original application that an appeal has been lodged to give

them a chance to comment. All comments received are passed to the Planning Inspectorate to consider as part of the appeal process.

82. An appeal can be dealt with through written representations or through a hearing or inquiry and there are opportunities for local people to be involved. More guidance about taking part in a planning appeal can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part-in-a-planning-listed-building-or-enforcement-appeal>

### **Planning Enforcement**

83. If our planning system is to work fairly for all, we must have a system that allows us, where necessary, to take action against those who break the planning rules but in doing so we need to act proportionately to the breach. A community or individual who may become concerned about problems relating to the planning of an area can report these and further information on how to do this can be found on the Council's Web site at <http://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/planning/283.asp>.
84. This guidance should be read alongside the Council's Compliance and Enforcement Policy (2015) [https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Compliance\\_and\\_Enforcement\\_Policy\\_14\\_September\\_2015.pdf](https://www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Compliance_and_Enforcement_Policy_14_September_2015.pdf) which explains how the Council approaches its planning, licensing and other legislative duties.

## **4. Resources, Management and Monitoring**

### **Resources and management**

85. This section discusses the management of the involvement process and the resources available to the Council.
86. The Local Plan is managed by the Council's Planning Policy team, supported by officers from other Council departments who will provide expertise, support and advice during the process. Resources are designed to ensure that the production of the Local Plan and other Council strategies are linked and that community involvement events are coordinated where appropriate.
87. The Council will aim to make the best use of limited staff time and financial resources to prepare the Local Plan and involve people throughout the plan-making process. The aim is to work closely with those involved to understand and agree policies and proposals at an early stage so that fewer resources are needed at the examination stage. From previous experience of consulting on planning policy documents the use of time and effort at earlier stages can reduce the length of examination time.
88. The Council may use specialised agencies or consultants for specific parts of the Local Plan such as master planning or background evidence studies. Where appropriate they will be expected to undertake participation and involvement on their proposals and results which will be consistent with this document.
89. The planning application process is overseen by the Council's Development Management Team supported by officers from other Council departments who provide expertise, support and advice to Case Officers in the determination of planning applications. The Council work to make the best use of resources and hold regular Development Team meetings to discuss major planning applications.

### **Monitoring**

90. The SCI remains an important local planning document and it will be monitored and reviewed to check that the methods and techniques being used are still the most appropriate. The success and effectiveness of the SCI will be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and a formal review/update of the SCI will be undertaken when necessary.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Duty to Co-operate consultees**

As required under the 2012 Planning Regulations (as amended by the National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2013):

- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- Natural England
- The Civil Aviation Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006)
- The National Health Service Commissioning Board
- The Office of Rail Regulation
- Integrated Transport Authorities
- Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council)
- The Marine Management Organisation

Note that consultee specific to London are not included in this list. Note also the emerging *Planning in Health – An Engagement Protocol between Local Planning Authorities, Public Health and the Health Sector Organisation in Norfolk* document. This document sets out engagement arrangements between Norfolk LPAs and the health sector on plan making and planning applications.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Local Plan/Neighbourhood Plan consultees**

#### **Local Plan - Specific consultation bodies**

In the Planning Policy making process, the Council has to consult a number of organisations which are known as either 'specific' or 'general' consultees. Many of the consultees required under the Duty to Cooperate (see Appendix 1) are also included in the list of 'specific' consultees below. Please note, as the legislation and regulations are frequently updated, the lists of consultees below may change over time and must be checked against the requirements set out in any new regulations.

The recent planning regulations set out the specific consultation bodies. Along with relevant government departments, the list contains the following bodies:

- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- Highways England
- Norfolk County Council
- Broads Authority
- Adjacent local authorities
- Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts (or successor health care bodies)
- Norfolk Constabulary
- Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant water and sewerage undertakers (Anglian Water)
- The Homes and Communities agency
- Local Nature Partnership (Wild Anglia)

### Local Plan - General consultation bodies

Through this Statement of Community Involvement the Council are committed to involving a wide range of other groups, organisations and interested individuals in the planning process. This will ensure that as many people as possible who are interested are involved in the future development of South Norfolk.

The list below provides some examples of general consultation bodies contacted by South Norfolk Council:

- Community groups (area and topic based)
- Town/Parish Councils in and adjoining South Norfolk
- Local Members of Parliament
- Housing Associations
- Housebuilders
- Business and Commerce Organisations
- Economic Development agencies
- Educational bodies and schools
- Community Safety bodies
- Environment, heritage and amenity organisations
- Equal opportunities bodies
- Ethnic minority groups
- Disabled people's organisations
- Older People's groups
- Faith groups
- Health and social care groups
- NHS Norfolk
- Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Trust
- Doctors surgeries, health centres and hospitals
- Youth organisations
- Agents and developers
- Landowners
- Tourism bodies
- Transport bodies
- Sports and recreation organisations
- Health and Safety Executive
- Royal Mail
- Emergency Services
- Gypsy and Traveller organisations
- Design Review Panel
- Norfolk Historic Environment Service
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Utility and Service Providers (Anglian Water)

Neighbourhood Plan - Statutory consultation bodies:

As set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- Where the local planning authority is a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A local planning authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage)
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- The Highways Agency (Highways England)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus in any part of the area of the local planning authority
- Where it exercises functions in any part of the neighbourhood area – a Primary Care Trust, a person to whom a licence has been granted under the Electricity Act (1989) or the Gas Act (1986), a sewerage undertaker and a water undertaker
- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit all or any part of the neighbourhood area
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area
- Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the neighbourhood area and
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the neighbourhood area.



## **Appendix 3**

### **Consultation methods**

#### **Make consultation information and documents available on the Council's website, in our Council Office receptions**

Consultation information can take a variety of formats, both formal and informal. Language will be straightforward, avoiding jargon and clearly explaining any technical terms. Consultation material will be made available for public inspection on the Council's website, through the Council's offices (where possible) and maybe sent to consultees directly where the Council considers this appropriate. The Council may produce summary leaflets to present the highlights of a consultation in a shortened, more easily digestible format. Responses to consultations are preferred electronically via the website or email but paper copies of responses will also be accepted.

#### **Send out letters/emails to statutory/general consultees (as appropriate)**

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 define two specific groups of consultation bodies for the purpose of plan making. These are specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies as set out in Appendix 2. The Regulations also require the Council to involve local businesses and businesses in the area as considered appropriate.

#### **Involve Local Councillors and Town/Parish Councils (as appropriate)**

The Council's elected Members and Town/Parish Councils will have an important role to play in distributing information to their communities and, in the case of elected Members through the Committee process, taking decisions about the content of Local Plan documents using the results of consultation. As with other decision taken through the democratic process the public will be able to make representations directly to their local member.

#### **Lodge copies of consultation material at libraries in the district in paper and/or electronic form (as appropriate)**

The Council recognises that not everyone has access to a computer at home on which to view consultation material so the Council will make consultation material available at libraries within South Norfolk in paper and/or electronic form

#### **Engage local print and broadcast media (as appropriate)**

Press releases publicising the overall process(es), individual publications and events, important/controversial topics, feeding back results etc and formal press notices when required.

#### **Publish articles in the Council's Link magazine/ Parish Magazines (as appropriate)**

The Link magazine is the Council's twice yearly newsletter delivered to every house, to include regular updates including timetables of events, progress on particular topics and feedback of results. The Council have also used Parish magazines to publish the Local Plan in the past but use of both of these sources depends upon being able to fit with publication deadlines.

**Produce posters/notices for Town/Parish Council noticeboards and other methods of advertising (as appropriate)**

At appropriate stages in the consultation process the Council may produce posters/notices for Town and Parish Council to put on their noticeboards to advertise Local Plan consultations, exhibitions etc. Other forms of advertising could be used to target particular groups or areas. As well as local newspapers and parish magazines locations/methods could include radio advertising or adverts on beer mats (targeting the 18-35 age group), bus stops/tickets on particular route and hoardings close to particular sites/locations.

**Hold exhibitions/meetings (as appropriate)**

These provide an opportunity for Council officers to present information about the Local Plan with opportunities for attendees to ask questions, provide verbal or written feedback on questionnaires, forms, discussion boards etc. The choice of times and venues will influence the types and number of people who attend and the Council will endeavour to hold exhibitions/meetings in venues with good accessibility for everybody and at times when people will be able to attend e.g. evenings and weekends. Specific meetings could be used to address particular groups and topics.

**Facilitate Focus groups/workshops (as appropriate)**

These involve trained facilitators (external or from within the Council staff) gathering information, assisting discussion/debate and providing the opportunity to give feedback within a structured session; particularly useful in trying to engage hard to reach groups or for discussing specific topics.

**Consult with Neighbourhood Planning bodies and take account of Parish Plans (as appropriate)**

Where these exist they will provide a valuable source of information on the local community's views on a range of planning related issues.

**Make use of social media (as appropriate)**

The way that the Council utilises the internet and social media is rapidly evolving. The Council is steadily expanding the use of web based technology to enable direct access to its services across a range of devices and to allow people to interact directly with the Council online to make payments, submit comments, report problems etc. The Council will endeavour to extend the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to publicise Local Plan consultations with the aim of engaging with 'hard to reach' groups such as young people.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Neighbourhood Planning Support**

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced into the planning system under the Localism Act 2011 and it enables parish/town councils (or neighbourhood forums, in areas without a parish council) to produce their own Neighbourhood Plan to guide the future development of their local area, setting out policies that shape the development and use of land. An adopted Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the district and, as a result is one of the primary considerations when determining planning applications affecting the parish/ Neighbourhood Plan area. Similarly, a Neighbourhood Development Order can be prepared by a community to allow certain types of development which meet the prescribed criteria. If adopted, it also forms part of the statutory Development Plan. Under the Localism Act, local planning authorities have a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to communities choosing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

Under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, the local planning authority is required to set out in its Statement of Community Involvement the advice and support that it can offer to communities that are involved in the preparation or modification of Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders in South Norfolk.

The range of support available from the Planning Policy team at South Norfolk Council is set out below.

- Initial advice provided to town/parish councils (or Neighbourhood Plan groups) on the suitability, the process and the scope of neighbourhood planning, including an indication of the support available. This is usually best provided through a meeting with parish/town councillors.
- Day-to-day advice and guidance via telephone/ email or by officer attendance at meetings (e.g., related to process, community engagement methods, evidence gathering, policy development etc).
- Reviewing and commenting on draft documents that are produced by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group (e.g., timetable, consultation material, vision and objectives, draft plan etc).
- Liaising with other relevant bodies and internal Council consultees (e.g., statutory consultees).
- Funding advice and potential financial support for developing the Neighbourhood Plan
- Support through the provision of various materials (e.g., hard copies and/or digitalised versions of maps, exhibition/ event display boards etc).
- Working in collaboration with Broadland District Council to deliver networking and training opportunities, including Neighbourhood Plan Network meetings and

Community-led planning training sessions and other bespoke workshops/sessions relating to neighbourhood planning issues.

- Access to a suite of guidance documents and templates prepared by Broadland District Council to assist Neighbourhood Plan groups in the process, including the Broadland Neighbourhood Planning blog which provides regular local and national news updates and a resource base for online guidance and toolkits (<https://broadlandneighbourhoodplans.wordpress.com/>).
- Producing a basic 'Parish Profile' document for newly-established Neighbourhood Plan steering groups, setting out key statistics, local plan policies and allocations, and statutory designations relevant to the Parish.
- Overseeing of the production of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

The Council will endeavour to accommodate the needs of the Neighbourhood steering groups, where appropriate and where resources are available. However, there are limits to the support that the Council is able to provide and there are some areas in which the Council will not be able to assist. General advice may be given but the Council will not be able to undertake matters such as:

- Holding consultation exercises, distributing consultation questionnaires or collecting and analysing responses to consultations, other than for formal stages following submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council.
- Providing project management or funding application services for the production of Neighbourhood Plans.
- Preparation of tender documents for the employment of consultants to assist in the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- Drafting the Neighbourhood Plan, or any part of the document.

The above lists are not exhaustive. For any further information regarding South Norfolk Council's Neighbourhood Plan support, please contact the Planning Policy team at: [localplans@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:localplans@s-norfolk.gov.uk)