

Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party



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Friday, 10 February 2023

A meeting of the **Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **Council Chamber - Council Offices** on **Monday, 20 February 2023** at **10.00 am**.

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel: 01263 516108, Email: Lauren.Gregory@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so must inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed.

Please note that Committee members will be given priority to speak during the debate of agenda items

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Mr A Brown, Mrs P Grove-Jones, Mr N Dixon, Mr P Fisher, Ms V Gay, Mr P Heinrich, Mr R Kershaw, Mr G Mancini-Boyle, Mr N Pearce, Mr J Punchard, Dr C Stockton and Mr J Toye

All other Members of the Council for information.

Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public



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

If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us

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A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

3. MINUTES

1 - 14

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on Monday 16th January 2023 (meeting adjourned and resumed on Monday 30th January 2023)

4. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

15 - 20

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest. Members are requested to refer to the attached guidance and flowchart.

6. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (IF ANY)

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND AS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED UNDER ITEM 4 ABOVE

8. NORFOLK COAST AONB UPDATED MANAGEMENT PLAN (2019-2024), REVISED 2022

21 - 98

Summary:

This report provides an explanation and summary of the modifications made to the current Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) and seeks approval for formal endorsement of an updated Management Plan (2019-2024) by NNDC, as a member authority of The Norfolk Coast Partnership, the AONB Management Body.

Recommendations:

Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the contents of the updated Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) are endorsed for use as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
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Cllr Andrew Brown	All
All Members	All Wards

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Iain Withington, Team Leader Planning Policy – (01263) 516034

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Cathy Batchelar, Senior Landscape Officer – (01263 516155)

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9. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK - CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES 99 - 112

National Planning Policy Framework – Consultation on proposed changes

Summary: This report provides an explanation and summary of the proposed key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and seeks to agree responses to a current consultation on these proposed changes.

Recommendations: **Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend Cabinet that the Authority respond to the consultation as outlined in this report.**

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr Andrew Brown	Ward(s) affected All
All Members	All Wards

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

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10. LOCAL PLAN PROCESS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS UPDATE INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN (IDP) UPDATE - VERBAL REPORT/ PRESENTATION

11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution (if necessary):

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

12. TO CONSIDER ANY EXEMPT MATTERS ARISING FROM
CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BUSINESS OF THE AGENDA
13. ANY OTHER URGENT EXEMPT BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION
OF THE CHAIRMAN AND AS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED UNDER
ITEM 4 ABOVE

PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party held on Monday, 16 January 2023 at the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 10.00 am

Committee	Mr A Brown (Chairman)
Members Present:	Mrs P Grove-Jones (Vice-Chairman)
	Mr N Dixon
	Mr P Fisher
	Ms V Gay
	Mr P Heinrich
	Mr R Kershaw
	Mr G Mancini-Boyle
	Mr N Pearce
	Mr J Toye

Substitute	Cllr V Holliday
Members Present:	Cllr A Fitch-Tillett

Officers in Attendance:	Planning Policy Manager (PPM)
	Senior Planning Officer
	Democratic Services Officer (DSO)

62 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J Punchard, with Cllr A Fitch Tillett present as a substitute, and Cllr C Stockton, with Cllr V Holliday present as a substitute.

63 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

64 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party meeting held 12th December were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

- i. The PPM advised that feedback had been received regarding the adequacy of the Glaven Valley Rural Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation, due to close on 20th January. The PPM accepted the concerns raised and advised that the consultation would be extended to enable additional drop in sessions. The exact extension was to be determined based on availability of venues, but was approximated to be between 4 and 6 weeks.
- ii. The Chairman supported the approach set out by the PPM, and the need for the public to be satisfied that they were able to properly engage with the consultation process.

66 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

67 UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (IF ANY)

None.

68 ANY OTHER BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND AS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED UNDER ITEM 4 ABOVE

- i. The PPM advised that in December 2022 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities published their proposed revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework through a consultation period that will end on 2 March 2023. He advised the Working Party that the revised NPPF would impact on Local Plan submission and advised that this consultation would be brought for consideration to the scheduled Working Party meeting in February. It was noted that the revised NPPF would likely be published for summer 2023. As part of transitional arrangements, any Local Plans submitted over the next 16 months or so, would be examined in the same existing process. Once published, the revised NPPF would have an important impact on examination, as one of the legal tests pertained to compliance with national guidance. Should the Local Plan Inspector consider that the submitted Local Plan failed to accord with the revised NPPF, there would be scope to table further modifications. The PPM advised, based on the published consultation, that he did not consider the revised NPPF would have a significant impact on the emerging Local Plan.
- ii. Cllr G Mancini Boyle considered the core principles of the NPPF would remain the same, but asked if there were substantial improvements, how these would be reflected.
- iii. The PPM stated that he did not consider that there would be any radical changes to the NPPF, and none of which would have an adverse impact. The PPM highlighted the likely revisions to the NPPF including increased delivery of elderly person accommodation, which he considered the emerging Local Plan would accord with. Further, NNDC had introduced through its emerging Local Plan additional policy areas including first homes, based on evidenced need for social housing. The revised NPPF was expected to focus on Social Housing also and would review mechanisms for delivering this change.
- iv. The Chairman asked whether the revised NPPF would make reference to Councils which had declared a Climate Emergency. The PPM advised he was not aware of such specifics, though commented the revised NPPF would likely include a policy shift towards being more permissive of land based wind, subject to an expression of public support (the process of which was to be agreed).
- v. The PPM advised that a series of consultations were anticipated in the coming year including standard development management policies, the content of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, the test of public support of wind turbines and others.

69 LOCAL PLAN SUBMISSION: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS (SITE ALLOCATIONS)

- i. The Chairman reminded Members that the opportunity to make substantial modifications to the Local Plan had passed, and that this item was not an opportunity to dissect the Local Plan and to start again.

Employment Land Designation:

- ii. The PPM introduced the Officers report noting the deferred matter from the previous meeting, employment land provision, and summarised prior discussions including concerns raised about the Plans approach towards the designation of employment land and specifically if the outlined approach would be sufficiently flexible to meet future needs.

The PPM stressed that most employment development in North Norfolk came from existing businesses, with little inward investment, often these business were very site specific wishing to remain in their existing location. The Plan, as drafted recognises that there are sometimes difficulties with matching the specific requirements of developers with the available supply of land. To address this concern policies SS2 and E3 of the Plan both allow for employment growth on unallocated sites, including those in the designated Countryside Policy Area, provided it is first demonstrated that the designated sites are not suitable. This change in policy from the existing Local Plan was considered positively by Officers to better enable development.

Further, at the last meeting concerns about site viability were raised particularly in instances in which land owners are reluctant to release land, lacking sufficient incentive to do so. The case was made that any policy should also support mixed use developments as a mechanism to encourage land owners to release land. An example at Hoveton was referenced where permission had been granted for both a small housing scheme and an associated job creating development, where it was suggested that it was unlikely that the employment aspects of the proposal would have preceded without the 'enabling' housing development. The PPM advised that Officers, not disagreeing that such enabling approaches may be necessary in some circumstances, did not support the inclusion of enabling development provisions within the policy itself, considering it set an unintended precedent in which landowners may argue that they cannot release land for employment development unless housing was included. The PPM argued that this would likely undermine the delivery of allocated sites as these would risk being viewed as less desirable.

He noted that there was a small modification to the policy, as included in Appendix 4.

- iii. Cllr N Dixon thanked the PPM for his explanation, however expressed his concern about the willingness of land owners to release land for employment use, noting that many desire residential development value. As such, he considered that mixed use proposals offered a significant attraction, bringing forward employment opportunities alongside significant residential developments, whilst addressing issues of sustainable communities, and infrastructure. Whilst not suggesting that every major residential development should have employment allocation beside it, he considered that there had been missed opportunities. Cllr N Dixon reflected that employment land was

increasingly being lost to residential developments, and employment land was challenging to liberate from landowners.

- iv. The PPM reflected that although the authority received enquiries from businesses wishing to expand, it was difficult to find suitable sites. He considered that the locality of sites was an issue to accommodate the needs of business, and was unpersuaded that allocating additional plots of land for mixed use would resolve the problem, noting that there was no indication that additional allocation would be preferable. Further, at this stage of the Local Plan process, the opportunity to consider new sites had passed. The PPM considered that the proposed approach provided a high degree of flexibility in permitting employment land development outside of the prescribed setting, subject to other planning constraints including access, AONB designation and others. He noted that mixed use allocation sites had been a feature of the previous Plan, but that these schemes were not without their problems. Many of these sites were now being recycled for elderly person developments rather than employment developments.
- v. Cllr P Heinrich expressed his support for the flexibility described by the PPM, and contended it was important to consider the needs of modern small scale industry, including tech based businesses, as these had different needs and may not wish to be based from traditional industrial estates.
- vi. The PPM affirmed that employment land policy focused on new build employment generating proposals which formed part of a series of policy's towards an overarching strategy. He stated that the absence of opportunity and absence of sites should not become a constraint, and the policy as drafted, offering a high level of flexibility, would be able to accommodate needs as it arises in a sensible way.
- vii. Cllr N Dixon advised he did not wish to see employment land designated for the sake of designation, and expressed the need for targeted, evidence-based allocations where there is a good likelihood of delivery. He reflected on the situation in Stalham, and challenged the supposed lack of demand for development given the town was located equidistant between Scottow Enterprise Park and Martham, both of which were expanding. He expressed his concern for the lack of employment development in North Norfolk, when compared to its neighbours.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.21am to 10.00am 30th January due to an IT outage.

Cllr A Fitch- Tillett and Cllr G Mancini-Boyle gave apologies for the reconvened meeting.

30th January 2023

- viii. The PPM offered as a reminder following the reconvening of the meeting that Members had been discussing the adequacy of employment land provision, if the policy as drafted was sufficiently flexible or whether a permissive policy approach should be adopted for mixed use-development. He summarised his and Members earlier comments, and affirmed Officers support for the recommendation.
- ix. Cllr N Dixon advised he would be content with the Officers recommendation

provided that the flexibility for employment land development outside of the prescribed settings was made explicit within the policy document, ensuring it was obvious to the reader the way in which businesses may expand or move into the area. Cllr N Dixon reflected on the example at Hoveton, in which the lack of sites resulted in the associated business being dependent on co-operation from the land owner. Unfortunately the business and land owner were unable to reach an agreement, therefore making enabling development crucial. He noted feedback from businesses received when he was portfolio holder for economic development, which considered that their prime barrier to growth was planning; gain sites and permissions in a timely fashion. Cllr Dixon contended that where interest was known for an area, there should be a choice of site available, noting that there remained only one site available in Hoveton.

- x. The PPM noted the lack of designated employment areas across the district, but advised the policy was drafted to ensure flexibility in permitting development outside the designated setting. He advised that the Hoveton example was not representative of all cases, and noted that in Fakenham enabling development had not been required. The PPM reflected that Members were broadly supportive of the policy and suggested wording be included, possibly in the pre amble of the policy, to better establish the principle of enabling development in a positive way. He advised that through the second Officers recommendation, if agreed, he would draft a paragraph to proceed the policy stating in effect, that exceptionally it may be necessary to include enabling development, with a definition of enabling development in the glossary to the plan.
- xi. Cllr N Dixon asked if the choice and plurality of sites could be considered, noting the position of NNDC competing with other sites including Scottow Enterprise Park which were considered to be more attractive to businesses.
- xii. The Chairman reflected that there were inhibitors beyond the Councils control including access to A47 and funding from central government which affected the attraction of businesses to North Norfolk.
- xiii. The PPM reiterated that the opportunity to find and consult on additional employment land allocations had passed, as this process would have proceeded the Regulation-18 stage some two years prior. The PPM was sceptical that any additional call for employment land via consultation would result in an increase of sites.
- xiv. Cllr J Toye supported the policy as outlined by the PPM, and stated it was important that residents knew where employment land would be allocated, in particular where to expect industrial employment land. He considered, as a separate matter, that it would be beneficial to make more attractive to businesses those designated sites, encouraging these options be taken up in the first instance.
- xv. The PPM noted that there were a series of measures which could be introduced including investment strategies, advertisement and compulsory purchasing, which could serve to make land more attractive. However, such leavers were not a feature of planning policy documents, which focused on land use.
- xvi. Cllr N Pearce expressed his support for the comments made by Cllr N Dixon

and Cllr J Toye. He argued that the Council were charged to protect heritage, though supported the need to be flexible. Cllr N Pearce argued it was an unenviable problem to balance the needs and wants of businesses with protecting the districts heritage.

- xvii. Cllr P Heinrich affirmed that the bridges over the rivers at Wroxham and Coltishall were inhibitors of growth, and reflected that North Norfolk lacked sufficient transport links to support the easy movement of heavy goods. He considered that future businesses in the district would be small, modern tech-based industries, and it was important to work towards where such businesses could be accommodated.
- xviii. Cllr R Kershaw advised that over the last three years he had been part of the Norfolk and Suffolk economic strategy and referenced situations in which digital businesses, who had publically expressed an interest in coming to North Norfolk, were courted by Norfolk County Council inviting them to alternate sites and offering business rates reductions which NNDC couldn't match. Further, he considered that North Norfolk lacked the capability to host large delivery centres, nor had the capacity to supply enough electricity in the network to support all car charging requirements. Cllr R Kershaw further argued 5G and other improvements were needed to attract tech business, but that when applications were received for new Masts, these were highly contested by local residents. He supported the employment land provision policy, and in businesses looking first to the land register, before considering options elsewhere. Cllr R Kershaw noted that businesses North Norfolk would be and had successfully attracting tended to be digital, in the catering and hospitality sector, as well as eco-tourism. Importantly, given the districts demographic would lead to an increase in care homes and care facilities, which whilst not classed as a business, required land also. Cllr R Kershaw reflected that due to the cost of living crisis and fuel costs, businesses were having to reconsider their investment and business needs, he concluded that due to the reasons outlined, North Norfolk would be in the shadow of South Norfolk and Norwich for many years to come.
- xix. Cllr P Grove-Jones supported for the views outlined by Cllr R Kershaw, and asked if there was a minimum size for employment land designation.
- xx. The PPM advised there was no size limit, but employment land would be designated for specific use classes of development. Some use classes would be directed to industrial land, as the nature of these businesses required specific settings. The PPM advised that the new policy would better enable development and would shift the presumption from negative to positive.
- xxi. Cllr V Holliday stated that whilst wanting to diversify employment it was difficult to craft a policy that applies across the whole district. She further commented of her disappointment to lose the employment land designation in Holt which had been useful for residents in her ward.
- xxii. Cllr V Gay expressed her support for policy and position outlined by the PPM, in allowing discretion to the Development Committee to weigh considerations. Further, such a position would aid the Council in defending its decision making through a plan led system.
- xxiii. The Chairman summarised Members debate and advised, pending

acceptance of the Officers second recommendation, that the PPM would draft a paragraph to be included in the final document around enabling development, categorising this as a minor amendment encompassed within the recommendation.

Local Plan – Schedules 3 , 4 & 5

- xxiv. The PPM advised that public consultation had been completed, with representations made requesting specific modifications (Schedule 3). All representations would be submitted to the Inspector as part of the submission process regardless of whether the Council chose to approve, decline or vary the modifications. Included in the documentation supplied to the Inspector would be all representations, a schedule of modifications, and the version of the Plan incorporating those modifications. It is ultimately at the discretion of the Inspector whether to accept modifications or not, regardless of the Councils recommendation for adoption. Having reviewed the modifications, Officers recommended through schedules 4 & 5 a series of proposed modifications.

Schedule 4 comprised of minor modifications which do not materially affect policies, and could be considered clarifications and corrections and those which address inconsistencies such as presentational, typographical and grammatical errors.

Schedule 5 consisted of a main modification for policy HV01/B, the land at Hoveton.

The PPM noted Appendix 5 of the Agenda Park, 'Recommended Policies Map Modifications' and advised that the only substantial change was for the site at Hoveton (Schedule 5), which added a significant parcel of land into the modification. It was noted that this would importantly not adversely affect residents, with the land adjoining agricultural land. The PPM advised the larger site would accommodate approximately 150 dwelling as compared to 120 under the prior scheme, and though the scheme could be made larger, it was considered that the 150 dwelling figure would allow for the development of a nicer scheme with more open spaces, larger plots, and strategic landscaping. Critically, more of the enhanced value could be spent on infrastructure, particularly drainage works. Presently, both this and the adjacent site were dependent on the drainage system at Hoveton which was not considered adequate. If permitted this scheme and the neighbouring site would drain through alternate sewage treatment works which the PPM considered would be largely supported by the local community. As this was a proposed main modification, it was anticipated that the Inspector would go out to public consultation before reaching a decision.

- xxv. Cllr N Dixon added, in the case of Hoveton, that the proposed site formed part of a strategic infrastructure addition and through Anglian Water improvements, would be a significant investment in the future.
- xxvi. Cllr P Fisher enquired about the Wells-next-the-sea site, and what the ground either side of the new access road would be used for. The PPM advised the background for the modification, with Wells Town Council producing their own neighbourhood plan in parallel to NNDC. Wells Town Council had indicated that they would like to see the area either side of the access road designated as green open space. Officers therefore considered

it prudent to show the access works to the allocation, and to leave the remaining land outside of the allocation unmarked in anticipation of the successful acceptance of the emerging neighbourhood plan.

- xxvii. The PPM advised, unless the Working Party had any questions regarding Schedule 3, he would elaborate and take Members through Schedule 4.

Starting from p.67, the PPM highlighted modification PMIN/22.1/02, proposed to correct a duplication of policies. This correction would ensure a distinction between the matters.

P.68 - PMIN/E7/0, pertained to minerals on a site and the need to address Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy Policy CS16. The PPM described this as a standard clause to state where there is evidence of silica sand or some other mineral which may be worked, should be worked (if it is practical to do so) before the subject site is developed.

P.69 – The PPM noted the change of wording suggested in PMIN/11.1/02, PMIN/11.1/03 and elsewhere in the document, from ‘prior approval’ to ‘submission approval and implementation of’. The PPM considered this a useful change, as previously submission and implementation had been neglected in the wording of clauses.

P.70 – P.71 – 12.2 Land at Heath Farm, Holt – The PPM commented shortly before the Regulation-19 consultation the Landowner advised, in writing, that they didn’t want their land to be included within the plan. For a Local Plan to be considered sound it must be effective and deliverable, and including sites in which the landowner objected to development failed to meet the soundness test. As such, it was proposed that the site be removed from the Local Plans proposed allocations. However, the older designations remained in the Plan including Hempstead Road and elsewhere in the town. The PPM advised that the removal of this site posed a risk to the Plan, as the Inspector may determine provision of employment land in the specific catchment area (Holt, Cromer & Sheringham), inadequate. Should the Inspector consider the Plan short on employment land, they may determine the plan unsound. However, the PPM advised that it was highly improbable that a Local Plan be determined unsound based on a single issue. The Inspector may alternatively defer examination of the Plan and invite the Authority to find additional sites for employment land, or consider the provision of employment land adequate for the next 5 years but subject to a single issue review for the specific catchment area. It was noted that this was a significant change to the Plan and would be subject of discussion through the examination process.

P. 72 – North Walsham – In addition to the modifications included in Schedule 4, the PPM proposed a further modification, grounded in concerns regarding transport and access through to the industrial estate. The PPM considered the link between Cromer Road to the back of the industrial estate to be problematic as it would involve looking at Bradfield Road linkage, railway bridge improvements, and third-party land not controlled by the major consortium to get into the back of the industrial estate. Nevertheless, current evidence indicated the desirability for this to be undertaken, with a Public and Member expectation that this be delivered. The PPM proposed additional wording where the policy references delivery of the Bradfield Road/Railway Line/ Back of the Industrial Estate Link, ‘unless otherwise agreed’. It was

noted that there was not currently a full traffic impact assessment or model for traffic circulation, which would happen as a consequence of the development, and that although alternate access routes were considered unlikely, they should not be entirely ruled out at this stage. By including this wording, and proposed modification, it would allow opportunity for other options to continue to be explored without removing the backstop that the link must be provided, pending and informed by evidence.

P.76 - 16.2 Land North of Yarmouth Road, East of Broadbeach Gardens, Stalham – The PPM advised by including the site as part of the allocation, the opportunity would be created for the whole site to be looked at in a comprehensive manor, delivering a better scheme overall.

With reference to the Cromer Allocation – Land at Pine Tree Farm (p. 68), the PPM advised that there had been concern about unacceptable impacts of development on the highways network. Policy would require the submission of a traffic impact assessment, however the PPM considered that wording could introduced to tighten up the policy and its intention. The PPM proposed that early development of the roundabout adjoining the site be undertaken, before the inhabitation of the dwellings. Secondly, wording be added to the policy to ensure that the traffic impact assessment, when submitted, be subject to public consultation. Finally, as it was considered that construction traffic to large sites could have significant impacts on the highway network, the PPM proposed that the assessment include delivery routing agreements to cover off the impacts of construction traffic.

- cxviii. Cllr N Pearce stated, with reference to Land at Pine Tree Farm, that local residents understood the need for additional housing, and noted the current waiting list length for affordable/social housing, with more than 2500 families requesting accommodation. Cllr N Pearce considered the provision of social housing in such large schemes integral, and reflected that such housing often was lost or reduced when developers were made to pay for infrastructure improvements. Due to the nature of the site, infrastructure requirements were fairly substantive. Cllr N Pearce supported the proposed modifications put forward by the PPM, but stressed that more should be done to ensure that the allocation of affordable/social housing be secured. He advised that he could not agree with any undertaking on the site in which the affordable/social housing percentage was diminished. Cllr N Pearce asked that something be put in the policy to protect the 35% affordable housing figure.
- xxix. The PPM advised, with regret, that there was no mechanism to guarantee with absolute certainty the building of the described percentage of social housing, as it could not be predicted what position a developer may be in when they submit their planning application, and what the market conditions may be. However, Officers had been mindful throughout in the use of language to narrow down the scope for such variations to be negotiated and agreed at the planning application stage.
- xxx. Cllr N Pearce in response to the PPM's advice, asked if his proposed modifications would carry any weight.
- xxxi. The PPM advised the Local Plan sets out the policies which inform decision making. Section 38 of the Planning Act stipulates the legal requirement is to determine applications in accordance with the development plan unless

material considerations suggest otherwise. It is therefore for the Development Committee to consider each application on its merits, determine what constitutes as a material consideration, how much weight should be attached to it and how to balance the various competing factors, whilst having due regard for the starting position which is the presumption in favour of the Local Plan and its policies. In the case of viability, it may be that the Development Committee when presented with an application may accept a proposal for 30% affordable homes rather than 35%, as they make a planning judgement that it is better to achieve 30% than wait and get a lower offering or have the site sit undeveloped. The PPM further advised that Development Committee could depart from policy if justified.

- xxxii. Cllr N Pearce thanked the PPM for his explanation but expressed his disappointment that not more could be done. He concluded that he would support the Officers recommendation subject to the proposed modifications outlined by the PPM, which he saw as an improvement.
- xxxiii. The Chairman reflected on the situation in Fakenham. The PPM agreed that Fakenham was a good example, as it too required significant infrastructure improvement including a new roundabout to service around 1000 houses, the cost of which kept increasing. The Council in this circumstance had indicated a willingness to assist in the funding of the roundabout subject to an enhanced deal for additional affordable housing on the site. However, this would not adequately address the risk the developer feels in bringing the infrastructure forward. Nutrient Neutrality guidance had resulted in additional costs to the Fakenham proposal that was not perceived when the site was allocated.
- xxxiv. Cllr P Fisher noted an error at the top of P.70 – Wells and asked for a correction in wording from displays to splays.
- xxxv. Cllr P Heinrich with reference to the proposed site in North Walsham, affirmed the importance of improvement to the highways network to support development of the site, and noted the technical and financial issues with alternate access schemes, though accepted the PPM's recommendation which would permit flexibility pending further traffic management studies. He considered the Bradfield Road/Railway Line/ Back of the Industrial Estate Link essential to free up residential streets from unnecessary HGV traffic, and reflected on the support for this scheme by residents.
- xxxvi. The PPM clarified that the current policy weds itself to one specific solution, which whilst considered at present to be the best solution, would not allow for any other potential avenues to be explored. By adding the words 'unless otherwise agreed' the opportunity would be given for the site developer to consider alternatives, though noted that such options were unlikely given the associated costs. The PPM considered the proposed modification beneficial in the absence of a detailed model which would be required as part of any planning application, which would have informed Members decision making. The Norwich to Cromer Link was expected to be deliverable.
- xxvii. Cllr V Gay commented that she was satisfied with the proposed amendments put forward by the PPM, and advised with regards to the Bradfield Road/Railway Line/ Back of the Industrial Estate Link her concern that this may not be delivered given that support in the town for the entire policy had been based on the provision of the road link to the industrial site. She

enquired 'unless otherwise agreed' by whom.

- xxviii. The PPM advised this would be 'unless otherwise agreed' by the local planning authority. He understood and expressed sympathy with the position of residents, that they had been consulted upon and agreed a position, which they wished for the Inspector to make a determination on. However, having heard representations from land owners, the consortium, and considered the practicalities of implementing the site, he was persuaded that greater flexibility was required should a different or better solution be offered following investigation. The current policy would not allow for this exploration, and would result in a departure. He considered that the additional wording would allow for the authority to retain control, whilst permitting some flexibility pending future evidence.
- xxix. Cllr V Gay enquired the answer to her question, raised at the last meeting between 'non-designated' and 'undesigned' (Minute 58 xxiv). The PPM advised that he was unable to offer the proper definition, but that the proper protective terminology would be used.
- xl. Cllr V Gay, with reference to P.72 asked about the use of wording between 'should' and 'must', as she considered there to be a distinct difference between the implications of each. Cllr V Gay explained her understanding that 'must' indicates a requirement, whereas 'should' indicated a preference. The PPM commented that there was not a deliberate difference in the choice of terminology used, and argued this reflected that the policies were drafted by multiple authors.
- xli. With regards to 'offset' and 'landscape buffer' (P.72) Cllr V Gay stated she was unclear of the meaning of the two, and what the implications may be. The PPM advised that 'offset' was default terminology for the distance between the interfaces of buildings or boundaries. That distance could encompass flat grass or anything else in the absence of a landscaping requirement. Officers did not consider that there need be intervening planting on the subject area to make the space effective.
- xlii. Cllr V Gay concluded, as an observation, that she appreciated the detailed wording around the protection of hedgerows along Weavers Way and elsewhere.
- xlili. Cllr J Toye commented that whilst it was disappointing that the landowner at Holt had changed their mind in allowing for development, he reflected that Members had fully considered Policy EC3 and the sequential test within the policy which would enable for other sites to be identified. On North Walsham and the outlined transport issue, Cllr J Toye agreed that there should be flexibility to accommodate solutions which had yet to present themselves, but considered it important that these delivered an improvement. He and the residents of North Walsham would not be satisfied, whatever scheme comes forward for there to be no traffic improvement, irrespective of whether a traffic survey determined there to be no additional or adverse impact. Whilst he accepted the proposed changes he believed that the authority should, in as strong words as it can, ensure the delivery of an improvement to the transport network.
- xliv. Cllr V Gay reflected on a change in sentiment, with people being much more persuaded for the need of housing and particularly affordable housing, but

the barrier to development related to concerns of traffic. She affirmed that such concerns must be taken.

- xliv. Cllr J Toye asked whether the Highways Authority, Anglian Water, and other relevant authorities considered the NNDC Local Plan in their planning. The PPM advised this should occur, and all relevant authorities had been presented with a draft version of the emerging Local Plan. At this stage of the Plan, junction detail, visibility splays or the precise nature of the highways works necessary were not considered. Had the Highway authority considered there to be a fundamental issue with the deliverability of the sites, they would have objected to the allocation at the various consultation stages. It was possible, though highly unlikely, that a site contained within the Local Plan be undeliverable because of a yet unknown constraint. It was considered that all sites, with the right mitigation packages in place would be deliverable.
- xlvi. In response to questions of funding, the PPM advised that sometimes a hybrid approach was undertaken between the Highways Authority and the developer, with the County Council wanting to deliver some form of betterment. However, the starting premise is that it is for the developer to fund the mitigation works which are necessary to make their proposal acceptable in land use terms. It was noted that development which depends upon expensive infrastructure delivery raises questions about viability, such matters were compounded in places like North Walsham where the average new build property price was lower than other towns in the district.
- xlvii. The PPM concluded Members questions and debate by summing up discussion and reiterating the Officers recommendation. He advised that subject to acceptance of the second recommendation, he would ensure the addition of some wording in the preamble to policy E3 on employment land to cover off positive approach to enabling development. As well as the addition of wording as discussed 'unless otherwise agreed' and inclusion of wording to ensure betterment be achieved through the proposal at North Walsham. With regards to Cromer, ensuring early access to the site prior to occupation, the need for traffic impact assessment and public consultation covering delivery traffic impacts.
- xlvi. Cllr R Kershaw proposed acceptance of the Officers recommendations, Cllr J Toye seconded.

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY AGREED by 10 votes for.

Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the appended Schedules of proposed modifications along with the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan be submitted for independent examination.

Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet to delegate minor amendments in the finalisation of the submission version & Schedules and associated documents to the Planning Policy Manager in conjunction with the Policy Team Leader and Portfolio Holder.

70 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not applicable.

71 TO CONSIDER ANY EXEMPT MATTERS ARISING FROM CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BUSINESS OF THE AGENDA

None.

72 ANY OTHER URGENT EXEMPT BUSINESS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND AS PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED UNDER ITEM 4 ABOVE

None.

The meeting ended at 12.01 pm.

Chairman

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Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

“Disclosable Pecuniary Interest” means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
 - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land and Property	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)



Agenda Item No_____

Norfolk Coast AONB Updated Management Plan (2019-2024), revised 2022

Summary: This report provides an explanation and summary of the modifications made to the current Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2014-2019) and seeks approval for formal endorsement of an updated Management Plan (2019-2024) by NNDC, as a member authority of The Norfolk Coast Partnership, the AONB Management Body.

Recommendations: **Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the contents of the updated Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) are endorsed for use as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.**

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr Andrew Brown	Ward(s) affected All
All Members	All Wards
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Iain Withington, Team Leader Planning Policy – (01263) 516034 iain.withington@north-norfolk.gov.uk Cathy Batchelar, Senior Landscape Officer – (01263 516155) cathy.batchelar@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) places a statutory duty on relevant local authorities to *'prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for carrying out of their functions in relation to it'* and *'to review the plan at intervals of not more than 5 years'*
- 1.2 The Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP) is the partnership body appointed to manage the designated area.
- 1.3 In accordance with this timescale, a revised draft Plan has been prepared by NCP, circulated to all of the partners on the Core Management Group (NNDC, GYBC, BCKLWN, NCC, Natural England) and feedback incorporated.
- 1.4 A copy of the revised Management Plan is attached to this report as **Appendix A.**

- 1.5 Changes made relate to aligning the Plan with changing national planning policy, updated national environmental and agricultural policy following Brexit, emerging Local Plans and County-wide Plans, new Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, 2021), new policy such as GIRAMS and updated evidence bases relating to coastal erosion, climate change.
- 1.6 The revised Plan also includes an assessment of the condition of the area's natural beauty. A detailed condition monitoring assessment was undertaken of the seven defined Key Qualities (see 3.2 of the Management Plan) to gain an update on the condition of all of the defined special qualities. (Red, Amber, Green (RAG rating).
- 1.7 A Summary Schedule of Changes is attached at **Appendix B**
- 1.8 The focus of an AONB Management Plan is to formulate policy for the management of the designated landscape by the relevant bodies in order to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the area. These policies are influenced by a wide range of different factors, such as conservation, amenity, social and economic issues. The AONB Management Plan does not override the Local Plan or wider Development Plan, but in its making should link in with the overriding policies in those plans. Once local authorities have endorsed the AONB Management Plan, those elements in it that relate to the development and use of land, and which supplement and support the policies set out in the Development plan, may be material considerations to be taken into account in determining a planning application.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 **Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the contents of the updated Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) are endorsed for use as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.**

3 Legal Implications and Risks

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to 'prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for carrying out of their functions in relation to it' and 'to review the plan at intervals of not more than 5 years'

4 Financial Implications and Risks

- 4.1 No financial implications or risks are identified.

Appendix A – Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) revised 2022
Appendix B – Schedule of Changes made to the current Management Plan (2014-2029)



NORFOLK COAST
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

NORFOLK COAST
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
(AONB)

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-2024
(Revised 2022)

Norfolk Coast Partnership, 2022
aonb@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan 2019-24

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Partner Commitment

In making decisions and managing activities that affect the area we will take account of the area's special qualities of natural beauty set out in this plan and how we can contribute towards maintaining and enhancing these. We will:

- Maintain a committed and effective partnership between organisations and interests within the Norfolk Coast Partnership, work together according to the principles set out towards agreed aims and objectives in the AONB Management Plan and participate in appropriate projects and initiatives to implement the plan.
- Ensure that appropriate representatives are appointed to attend meetings, liaise within their organisations to raise awareness of the AONB and the Norfolk Coast Partnership, provide information on relevant partnership actions and participate in review of the AONB management plan and in action plan progress reporting.
- Act to prevent things that would be detrimental to the area, to address problems that may affect its special character and to take advantage of opportunities for appropriate development.
- Maintain good communication within and between organisations managing the area and between them and the wider public, seeking and taking into account the knowledge and views of local people in making important decisions affecting the area and its communities.

1. Introduction and summary

The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers intertidal, coastal and agricultural land with a total area of over 450 square kilometres. Stretching from the silt expanses of the Wash in the west through the coastal marshes, soft cliffs and hinterland of north Norfolk, to the dune system at Winterton in the east, it is an area of remarkable beauty, diversity and scientific importance.

Although 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' is essentially a landscape designation, natural beauty includes wildlife and historic and cultural heritage as well as scenery, and all of these are closely linked. The Norfolk Coast today is the result of a complex interaction between people and their environment. The basic shape and contours of the land and the coast are the product of natural processes, linked to long term climate influence on the underlying geology, particularly the action of ice sheets and water. The action of the sea, both eroding and building, produces an ever-changing coastline. Geology and landforms influence land use, and many of the smaller scale features which give the area its unique character are the result of the actions of people, who have lived in and used the area for thousands of years. Even the present 'wild' coastline is a product of a combination of natural processes and human activities e.g. the enclosure of saltmarsh by protective banks to provide agricultural land has influenced coastal processes over a much wider area. Connections between people and the landscape remain important. Employment in 'traditional' industries such as agriculture and fishing has declined but these still have a key role to play in the area's character. This special character makes the area a unique regional and national landscape resource.

The Norfolk Coast Partnership aims to ensure that the natural beauty and special character of the Norfolk Coast are conserved and enhanced through the work of the Partnership; a group of stakeholders, including the community, who manage a range of issues affecting the natural beauty of the area. The Management Plan is primarily for use by the members of the Norfolk Coast



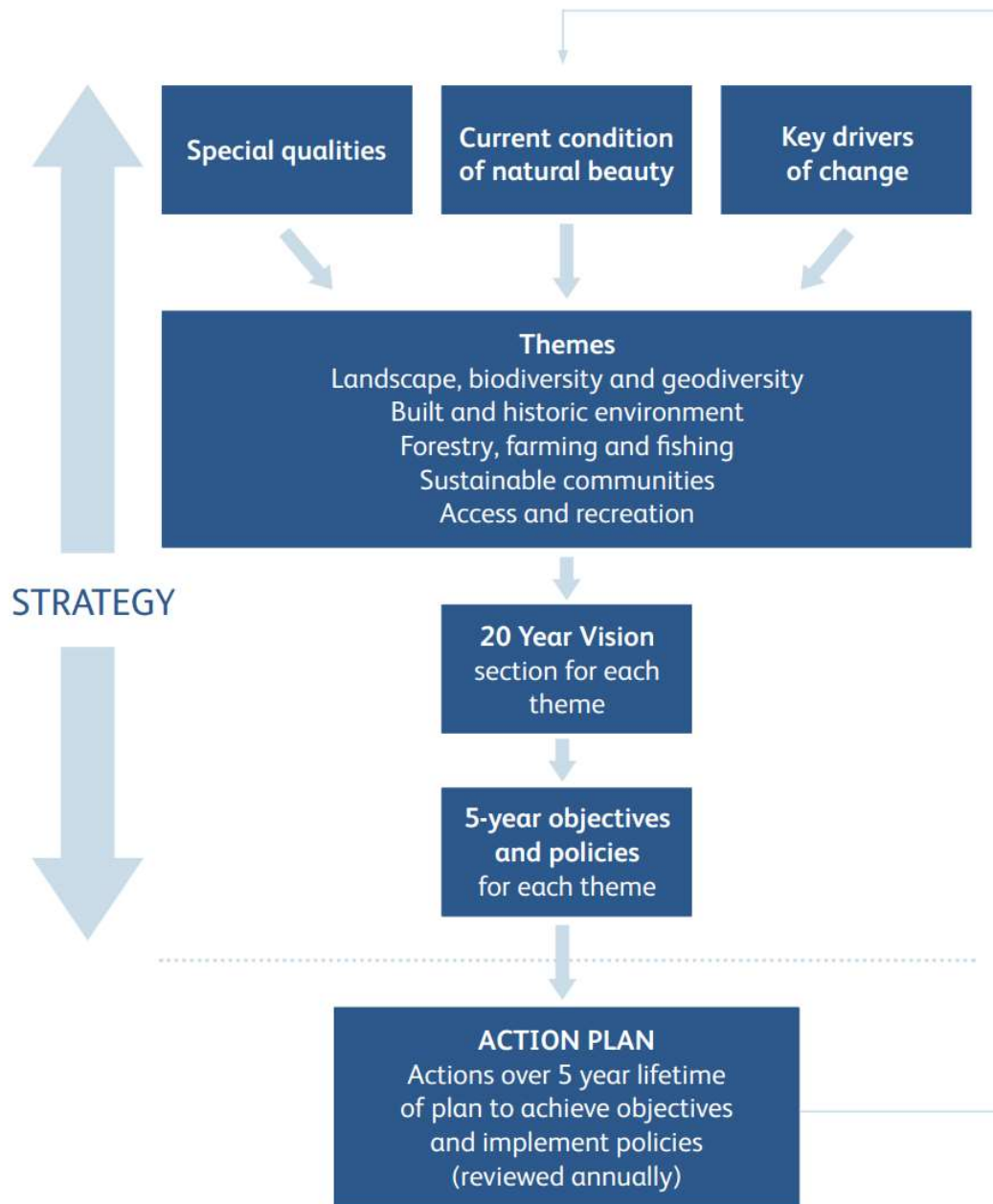
Partnership to inform, guide and influence their activities within the area, though it is hoped that other individuals and organisations may also find it of interest and use. This, the strategy for the 2019-24 Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan, presents the background and the approach of the Norfolk Coast Partnership to management of the area. A separate action plan, to be reviewed annually, details specific actions that the partnership will take forward.

Norfolk Coast AONB – some facts and figures

- Date of designation confirmation: 8 April 1968
- Total area: 453km²
- Length of Public Rights of Way: 287 km
- 5 Local Authorities: NCC, NNDC, BCKLWN, GYBC, BA
- Overlap with the Broads National Park along the east coast of Norfolk, around Horsey
- Highest point above sea level at Roman Camp, on the Cromer Ridge between Sheringham and Cromer (also the highest point in Norfolk): 102m
- Number of parishes partly or wholly in the area: 69
- Total length of coastline in the AONB: 90.8km
 - o 44.8 km in NNDC
 - o 42.8 km in BCKLWN
 - o 3.2 km in GYBC

Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan Structure

Only the vision, objectives and policies for each theme are presented in this summary; please see the full plan for further explanation of how these were derived.





2. Setting the scene

2.1 Designation and management – the statutory background

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), along with National Parks, make up our finest landscapes. Together they are a family of designated areas in England and Wales. AONBs came into existence through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and are recognised as being equal to National Parks in landscape quality, although arrangements for their management and provision for outdoor recreation are different. There are currently 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was designated in 1968. The final area confirmed (174 square miles but re-measured in the 1990s as 453 square kilometres) includes the greater part of the remaining unspoiled coastal areas between the Wash and Great Yarmouth. The western outlier, coming within two miles of King's Lynn, takes in part of Sandringham Estate including Sandringham House, and also about six miles of the south-eastern corner of the Wash. The holiday resort of Hunstanton, and the coast immediately to the south of it, is not included, but from nearby Old Hunstanton a continuous coastal strip, varying in depth between three to five miles, extends eastwards to a point near Bacton, excluding the built-up areas of the resorts of Sheringham, Cromer and Mundesley. The eastern outlier stretches from Sea Palling to Winterton, including the magnificent dune system of Winterton Dunes.

Though there are minor instances where boundary features have changed or disappeared, the statutory boundary remains as originally designated. Review of AONB boundaries is under control of Natural England and is a process requiring approval by the Secretary of State. Natural England has no plans for a boundary review at present.

The designation helps to protect not just the natural features – the trees, fields and open spaces - but also settlements and working environments that are distinctive characteristics of the countryside. The designation allows for sustainable development (i.e. development that takes account of the requirements of environmental, economic and social sustainability), in ways that further enhance the character of the area.

The statutory purpose of designating an area of land as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. This comprises the area's distinctive landscape character, biodiversity and geodiversity, historic and cultural environment. Two secondary non-statutory purposes of AONBs are also recognised

- i. To take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry, fishing and other local rural industries and of the economic and social needs of local communities, paying particular regard to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty; and
- ii. To seek to meet the demand for recreation so far as this is consistent with the statutory purpose of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty – and which preferably supports this purpose by increasing understanding, valuation and care for the area – and is also consistent with the needs of rural industries.

The Norfolk Coast AONB also includes the wider non-statutory objectives for the North Norfolk Heritage Coast:

- a) to conserve protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coasts, including their terrestrial, littoral and marine flora and fauna, and their heritage features of architectural, historical and archaeological interest
- b) to facilitate and enhance their enjoyment, understanding and appreciation by the public by improving and extending opportunities for recreational, educational, sporting and tourist activities that draw on, and are consistent with the conservation of their natural beauty and the protection of their heritage features
- c) to maintain, and improve where necessary, the environmental health of inshore waters affecting Heritage Coasts and their beaches through appropriate works and management measures
- d) to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and fishing, and of the economic and social needs of the small communities on these coasts, through promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development, which in themselves conserve and enhance natural beauty and heritage features.

Statutory duties for management

The 1949 Act gave rise to strong protection for National Parks and AONBs under the Town and Country Planning system but did not give a specific duty to anyone regarding their management. In 2000, Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (amongst other provisions) reaffirmed the objectives of designation of AONBs, gave a 'duty of regard' towards the purpose of designation to a wide range of bodies ('relevant authorities') and gave a duty to local authorities whose area included an AONB or part of one to prepare and review a plan for the management of the area.

Statutory duty of regard

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on relevant authorities and public bodies, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or which affect, land in the AONB to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. The term, 'public bodies' includes all arms of both central and local government:

- Broads Authority
- Environment Agency
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- English Heritage
- New Anglia Local Economic Partnership
- Forestry Commission
- Natural England
- Marine Management Organisation
- Parish councils and joint committees of local authorities
- Regulatory bodies of statutory undertakers such as Ofcom (Office of Communications), Ofwat (Office of Water Services), Ofgem (Office of the Gas and Electricity Markets), etc.

There are also other organisations and interests who do not have a formal statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act but who have been part of the partnership for management of AONBs prior to the Act and have long had a significant and valuable role in conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty. People who live and work in an AONB or who visit it and other organisations can also play an important part in conserving and enhancing the character of the area.

Statutory duties for AONB Management Plans

Section 89 of the CROW Act gives relevant local authorities (i.e. those whose area wholly or partly includes an AONB) a duty to "prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the



management of the area of outstanding natural beauty and for the carrying out of their functions in relation to it” and to review the plan at “intervals of not more than five years”. A later paragraph stipulates that where the AONB is not entirely within one local authority area the plan should be prepared by “the local authorities for all the principal areas wholly or partly comprised in the area of outstanding natural beauty, acting jointly”.

2.2 Managing the area

The AONB Management Plan

The relevant local authorities (Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, Great Yarmouth Borough Council, Broad Authority) have agreed that the Norfolk Coast Partnership should undertake the requirement of Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 20001 on their behalf. Although the legislation requires these local authorities ‘to act jointly to prepare and publish a plan which formulates their policy for the management of the AONB and for carrying out their functions in relation to it’ in practice, the plan extends to a much wider group of partners who also have important management functions.

This document is the fourth Management Plan produced by the Norfolk Coast Partnership for management of the Norfolk Coast AONB under the CRoW Act. The Management Plan is the framework for all organisations with a role in management of the AONB. All Partners have worked together to produce and agree the contents of this Management Plan and are committed to its delivery.

The Norfolk Coast Partnership

Since 1991 the Norfolk Coast Partnership has brought together the many stakeholders who have a role in managing the area, with an overall aim: “To bring about the sustainable management of the AONB in such a way that meets its specific environmental, social and economic needs whilst conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.”

The Norfolk Coast Partnership consists of:

Partnership Forum: Representatives from all Partners including those on the Core Management Group and five Community Representatives elected by parishes in the area

Core Management Group: Representatives from the relevant local authorities: Norfolk County Council, North Norfolk District Council, the Borough Council of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, Great Yarmouth Borough Council; the Broads Authority; Natural England; and community representatives.

Staff Team: Employed to facilitate and support Norfolk Coast Partnership operations. Coordinating and implementing actions in line with the AONB Management Plan under direction of the Core Management Group.

Funding

Core funding for the operation of the Norfolk Coast Partnership is provided by central and local Government, in recognition of both the national status and value of AONBs and local management arrangements. Central government funding is provided via the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra); the relevant local authorities (see above) are also core funders.



Core funding is supplemented by project work, utilising external funding from public, private, and charitable sources to achieve the objectives of the management plan. Details of current projects and funding sources are available on the Norfolk Coast Partnership website.

Other designations

The North Norfolk Heritage Coast, a section of the coast from Holme-next-the-Sea to Weybourne, was defined in an agreement between local authorities and the Countryside Commission in 1975, recognising this section of coastline as one of the finest stretches of undeveloped coast in England and Wales. 'Heritage Coast' is a non-statutory definition, although it is recognised within the statutory planning system. Management of the Heritage Coast is considered within the overall management of the area, as contained in this plan.

In a unique situation for the two national landscape designations, a small area of the eastern outlier of the AONB overlaps with the Broads, which has the same status as a National Park. There are also many sites or areas with other statutory designations at local, national and international level overlapping with, or contained within, the AONB. These are independent of the AONB designation but reflect the richness and importance of its natural beauty in terms of wildlife, architectural and archaeological interest and contribute to the protection and enhancement of these aspects of natural beauty. These other designations include:

International: 4 International Ramsar sites; 7 Special Areas of Conservation; 4 Special Protection Areas

National: 6 National Nature Reserves; 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), ranging in size from less than 1 hectare to several thousand hectares; 1 Local Nature Reserve; 85 County Wildlife Sites; 61 Scheduled Monuments; 7 Historic Parks and Gardens; 45 Conservation Areas; 36 registered commons (some with registered common rights); 849 listed buildings

For more information, see Appendix 'Summary of Conservation Designations'.

Working with other designations and plans

The area designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty extends down to the mean low water mark – the limit of planning authority for terrestrial planning authorities. The North Norfolk Heritage Coast has no formal seaward boundary, and there are many links between the area's natural beauty and the marine environment.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Protected Area Network encompasses 108,000 hectares of the marine environment covering the Wash and extending along the Norfolk coast to Weybourne, overlapping with the AONB designation in the intertidal area. It combines Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are close links between the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership and the Norfolk Coast Partnership – many representatives sit on both partnerships and staff cooperate closely to pursue joint interests and initiatives.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is located 200 metres off the North Norfolk Coast, beginning west of Weybourne and ending at Happisburgh. It was designated in 2016 for an area of seaweed-dominated infralittoral rock (321 km²) which is an important habitat for a variety of species in an otherwise predominantly sandy environment.

The combined East Onshore and Offshore Marine Plan, launched in April 2014, is a statutory plan to manage development and activities in a large marine area including the intertidal part and offshore from the AONB. Objective 5, policies SOC2 and SOC3 and paragraphs 153-156 in section 3.3 of the

Marine Plan are particularly relevant to coastal protected landscapes. Shoreline Management Plans are also important in managing the marine dimension (see section 3.3 of this plan).

There are many other plans, both statutory and non-statutory, ranging from local site management plans to international in their scope, which potentially affect the AONB or parts of it, either already in existence or in preparation. Almost all of these relate to management or enjoyment of aspects of its natural beauty or matters affecting it in some way. Many of these plans specifically refer to and recognise the AONB, those relating to the Town and Country Planning system being particularly important. Statutory powers available to partner organisations in AONB management play an important part in conserving and enhancing natural beauty.

It is intended that partners will ensure that broad objectives for the area, and the AONB Management Plan, are recognised in relevant plans they produce, and that they help to ensure these are also recognised in plans in which they have some influence. Conversely, the AONB Management Plan has been developed to maintain consistency with other relevant plans and initiatives that can help to meet its objectives, which are summarised in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for this plan.

The AONB Management Plan does not override or supersede these other plans, strategies and designations, or confer any additional powers on any organisations. All of the organisations involved will continue to have their own objectives, powers and limitations. What the AONB Management Plan does is to provide an agreement between organisations for how they will work together, towards agreed aims and objectives for the Norfolk Coast AONB. It also provides guidance for other organisations and individuals who wish to play their part in conserving and enhancing its natural beauty.

AONBs within National Planning Policy

National planning guidance and policies in Local Plans have been amongst the most important tools for meeting the objectives of designation of the Norfolk Coast AONB (and other AONBs) since its designation in terms of managing development within the AONB in a sensitive manner.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published as guidance in 2012 and revised in 2021 contains key guidance:

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

The planning system has three overarching, interdependent objectives for achieving sustainable development:

- a) Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- b) Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services

and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being

- c) Environmental – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

To ensure that sustainable development is pursued in positive way, a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the core of the NPPF.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to:
 - meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure
 - improve the environment
 - mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects
- b) Strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in NPPF paragraph 181) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in NPPF footnote 68); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)

- Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland
- Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate
- Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures
- Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans
- Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the NPPF; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of the:

- The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy
- The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way
- Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

Following through from this high-level guidance, local plans also contain policies designed to conserve and enhance natural beauty in designated AONBs, as well as provide protection for sites and areas designated for other reasons, usually biodiversity or cultural value. Local planning authorities therefore play a lead role in managing development within the AONB.

2.3 How to use the management plan

Structure of the plan

The 2019-24 Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan is a working document which sets out the approach of the Norfolk Coast Partnership to the management of the area. The Management Plan comprises:

1) The Strategy (this document)

The strategy has a lifetime of five years and aims to:

- Highlight the special qualities and enduring significance of the area and identify those that are vulnerable to change
- Identify the key pressures for change on these special qualities
- Present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities
- Set out agreed objectives and policies which will help secure that vision
- Identify the means by which objectives, actions and overall management will be monitored and reviewed.

The Strategy is supplemented by a range of background information – ‘Supporting Information’ – which has contributed to the plan. This provides more in-depth background information to aid understanding about the history of the AONB and its designation, the management plan process and the Norfolk Coast Partnership.

2) The Action Plan and Annual Progress Report.

The Action Plan aims to:

- Detail specific actions for the five years of the plan which aim to achieve the objectives and enact the policies
- Define which Partners are involved in each Action
- Define the timing of delivery of each Action
- Monitor progress with each individual Action

The Annual Progress Report aims to:

- Review, and publicly report on, progress on the Action Plan in each 12-month period of the Management Plan.

3) Associated Guidance

Guidance produced by the Partnership to inform and assist management of the area by partners, other organisations and individuals. It is available via the web-based version of the plan and at the time of publication of this plan, it consists of:

- Integrated Landscape Character Guidance for the AONB (provides detailed spatial guidance on landscape, ecological, geodiversity and historic character, including sensitivities and recommendations);
- Visitor management zoning map and policies (published in 1995, continues to provide spatial guidance on sensitivities and management of visitors, review to be completed within the lifetime of this plan);
- Bird Hide Design Guide (published 2002 in a revised and updated form from an earlier draft, provides guidance on sensitive design and siting of bird watching facilities); and
- Signing guidance (published 2005, provides guidance on sensitive use of signage).

Further guidance may be produced during the 5-year life of this plan.

Issues affecting the area and its character have been identified in the previous AONB Management Plans and in studies by partner organisations and were reviewed during the process to produce this plan.

The combination of existing mechanisms, specific objectives and partnership policies is intended to ensure that progress is achieved on all of the issues identified. Many partner organisations will contribute to achieving the objectives, although there will normally be one organisation that leads on each action (see the Action Plan). A diagrammatic representation of the plan structure can be found in section 1.

Using the management plan

The Management Plan is intended to be used primarily by partner organisations of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, who have adopted the plan (see inside front cover of the plan), and its Staff Team. The three tiers of the Management Plan enable partners to:

Strategy

- Gain an overview of the AONB, its designation and how it is managed
- Understand what makes the area special
- Access the objectives and policies and use them to guide Partner decisions on their activities within the AONB.

Action Plan and Annual Review

- Access and monitor progress on Partner actions within the AONB.

Associated Guidance

- Access more detailed information produced by the Norfolk Coast Partnership, some of a spatial nature, and use it to aid decision making.

Implementation of the objectives, policies and actions will primarily be the responsibility of the organisations within the Norfolk Coast Partnership and the Staff Team (see the Action Plan). However, the plan is also intended to be used by other organisations and interests to guide management of the area and indeed by anyone with an interest in conserving and enhancing its special character.

The plan provides information and guidance on the AONB and its management for those who wish to contribute to conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty - individuals or organisations, with or without a statutory duty towards AONBs under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

3. A special place

Introduction

The Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is unique. What we see today is a result of the interplay of environmental influences on the area over millions of years and more recently its use and modification by people over thousands of years. The human influence is obvious in settlements and buildings, communications infrastructure, field patterns and agriculture, and in archaeological remains. Even the apparently wild parts of the area, for example coastal marshes and cliffs, have been modified by flood defence banks and erosion protection structures.

Section 3.1 briefly describes the combination of characteristics that make the area special and distinguish it from other places and summarises the key qualities that make the area unique and worthy of designation. More detailed information about the character of the area can be found in

the National Character Area Profiles produced by Natural England, the supporting information to this management plan and the Integrated Landscape Character Guidance for the AONB.

Section 3.2 provides a summary assessment of the condition of the area's natural beauty, based on the summary of its key qualities of natural beauty from section 3.1.

Section 3.3 considers the current and anticipated drivers of change experienced by the area – a range of environmental, economic, social and political influences that are acting, or may impact on the area's qualities of natural beauty. Overall, this section reflects the fact that the area has changed in the past and will continue to change. The qualities described in section 3.1 are those that it should be possible to conserve and enhance into the future through management of change, following a path of sustainable development that respects the needs of the environment and of people.

3.1 Qualities of natural beauty

SUMMARY OF KEY QUALITIES OF NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE NORFOLK COAST

1. DYNAMIC CHARACTER AND GEOMORPHOLOGY OF THE COAST

Movement and interchange of internationally recognised geomorphological features and habitats.

2. STRONG AND DISTINCTIVE LINKS BETWEEN LAND AND SEA

The area's distinctive and unique character is based on the visual, ecological, socio-economic and functional links between land and sea.

3. DIVERSITY AND INTEGRITY OF LANDSCAPE, SEASCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER

Key quality is based on maintaining diversity of character types rather than uniformity across the area, including landscapes and seascapes, settlement pattern, building materials and styles.

4. EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT, VARIED AND DISTINCTIVE BIODIVERSITY, BASED ON LOCALLY DISTINCTIVE HABITATS

Recognised by a range of national and international designations. Coastal habitats are particularly important and most famous for birds, supporting iconic species. Inland habitats and species are also important, particularly lowland heath.

5. NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT GEOLOGY

Mainly based on past glaciation and current coastal processes. Includes landforms and landscape scale features as well as individual sites.

6. SENSE OF REMOTENESS, TRANQUILLITY AND WILDNESS

A low level of development and population density for lowland coastal England, leading to dark night skies and a general sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from busier roads and settlements and, particularly for undeveloped parts of the coast, of wildness.

7. RICHNESS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT, PARTICULARLY THAT RELATING TO THE COAST AND ITS CHARACTER.

Evidence and features of human use of the area since prehistoric times and links to current uses and features.

The area designated as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty comprises three separate areas, extending to mean low water and including coastal hinterland up to about 6 kilometres (4 miles) inland that has a visual and functional relationship with the coast.

As with any area, geology underpins its character. For the Norfolk Coast AONB, the defining geological influences are the Cretaceous chalk and carstone in the west and glacial deposits further east, with more recent marine and freshwater formations near the coast also playing an important role. The geomorphology of the entire coastline is one of the most outstanding assemblages of coastal forms in Britain and is important internationally. The area also includes outstanding examples of glacial and glacio-fluvial landforms such as moraines, eskers and outwash plains. The Cromer Ridge is a terminal moraine revealing much information on past glaciation events.

Unlike some protected landscapes whose character is more uniform, the designated area is very varied in character, containing a wide variety of landscapes, seascapes and locally distinctive features, including variation in geology and topography, land use, field and settlement patterns, the character of settlements, buildings and materials. The orange-brown carstone is prominent in vernacular buildings in the west, with chalk and then flint and cobbles becoming more dominant travelling east.

Overall, the influence of the sea provides a unifying theme, with the variety and interrelationship of dynamic coastal features such as saltmarsh, sand dunes, shingle and soft, eroding cliffs especially important. The links between land and sea are an essential part of its unique character. On the low coast, the distinction between land and sea is blurred by the wide and varied band of intertidal habitats and former intertidal land claimed from the sea, some of which has recently been returned to an intertidal state, a trend likely to continue. On the cliffed coast, the distinction is sharp and provides a more immediate impression of change in the eroding cliffs. The quality and health of the marine environment is vital to the area's natural beauty.

Along the undeveloped coast, panoramic and spectacular views - from the coastal marshes, the higher land behind the low coast and from the cliff top are characteristic and varied but all give an impression of wildness and the dominance of the forces of nature.

Ecological interdependencies between land and sea are also important and characteristic, for example breeding and feeding common and grey seals, and four species of tern breeding on beaches and feeding in the sea. Estuaries and creeks provide nursery areas for fish and the unique and extensive intertidal and offshore chalk platform and reef between Weybourne and Trimingham is important for marine biodiversity as well as local fishing.

The links extend to local livelihoods and culture. Fishing and the 'longshore economy' have played and still play an important part in the character of coastal settlements. The quality of the beaches, coastal landscape and wildlife attract many visitors, providing a major component of the local economy and many local residents also enjoy the many recreational opportunities on offer, which include walking, water sports, bird watching and fishing.

The area is rich in archaeological and historical sites, many of which have roots in the coastal location, with remains and features dating back to the early Pleistocene and giving a strong 'time depth' to much of its landscape. The Happisburgh footprints (the oldest known hominid footprints outside of Africa), the Bronze Age intertidal Seahenge and Salhouse Heath burial ground, the ancient Roman fort of Branodunum, medieval harbours and Second World War airfields and defence structure are all examples. Ice Age landforms shaped by the most recent glaciation (18,000 years ago) further contribute to the sense of history within the AONB.



The three separate parts of the AONB and the exclusion of the main holiday towns of Sheringham and Cromer and the section of coast between them, and the villages of Overstrand and Mundesley, were decided during the designation process because of existing development at that time.

It includes the coastal plain of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast, a section of undeveloped coast from Holme-next-the-Sea to Weybourne, with its internationally important and dynamic saltmarshes, dunes and shingle, the best-known features being the barrier features of Scolt Head Island and Blakeney Point with the shingle bank connecting the latter to the coast. Creeks run through the marshes, connecting small, sheltered harbours to the sea.

At national level, it is one of the few remaining examples of relatively undeveloped and unspoilt coastal areas of this character. At a regional level it forms a wild, rich and diverse complement to the intensive agricultural landscapes that dominate East Anglia.

The transition from the flat marshes to the coastal slopes behind is sharp, marking a former cliff line and more or less following the coast road, which runs through a string of coastal villages and the larger town of Wells-next-the-Sea. Above the coastal slope, a rolling plateau landscape based on chalk covered by glacial drift, with large arable fields and cut by chalk streams to form quiet, secluded valleys is reminiscent of the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Wolds.

At Weybourne, spectacular and geologically important soft cliffs of sands, gravels and muds derived from glacial moraines start abruptly and continue eastwards in this main section of the area. The cliffs are unstable and of easily eroded material; the slumped cliff slopes contain a wide variety of habitats and are important for both plant and invertebrate communities. Inland, the moraine material of the Cromer Ridge, which meets the sea between Overstrand and Trimmingham, forms a relatively hilly landscape with woodland and heaths amongst arable farmland.

In the west, the 'outlier' between the Woottons and Dersingham includes part of the Sandringham Estate, the settlements of Sandringham, Wolferton and Castle Rising as well as a large area of Wash mudflats and flat arable land reclaimed from former intertidal areas. Inland, higher areas based on a north-south ridge of Cretaceous greensand, locally known as carstone and which extends into the southern extension of the main section of the AONB north of Snettisham, are covered by heath and woodland. Dersingham Bog is the largest and most intact example of an acid valley mire in East Anglia, which is bordered on one side by an escarpment marking the edge of an ancient coastline. In the eastern 'outlier' between Sea Palling and Winterton-on-Sea a band of acidic dunes, different in character from those of the north Norfolk coast, separates the sea from low-lying wet pastures and woodlands and the small villages of Waxham, Horsey and Somerton, providing a link to the distinctive landscape of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads.

The many nature conservation designations testify to the area's national and international importance for wildlife and geology. Coastal and intertidal habitats (cliffs, shingle banks, sand dunes, lagoons, saltmarsh, mudflats, sandflats and freshwater marsh) and the birds and other wildlife they support (particularly the wildfowl and waders in the areas of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast and the Wash), together with some inland habitats such as lowland heath, are particularly important. Iconic and easily seen coastal birds include vast skeins of pink-footed geese in winter and marsh harriers, as well as the more secretive bittern and marsh tit; natterjack toads inhabit the dunes. In the coastal hinterland, nightjars and woodlarks breed on the heaths, and the open, rolling farmland supports increasingly threatened birds such as grey partridge, corn bunting and turtle dove. Ancient woodland is relatively scarce in the area but more valuable locally as a result. More recent plantations and shelter belts add to the character and diversity of a mainly open landscape.

Much of the undeveloped coast, most notably the North Norfolk Heritage Coast but also parts of the Wash coast, the cliffed coast and the dune coast of the eastern outlier, have a wilderness quality rare in lowland England. Inland also, the area's perceived qualities of relative remoteness and tranquillity - it's quiet and peaceful atmosphere and relaxed pace of life - are qualities reflected in art and literature and are often mentioned today as those that people particularly value. The area is noted for the quality of its night skies, the relative lack of artificial lighting away from main roads and towns providing fine views of constellations and occasionally the northern lights.

3.2 Assessment of the condition of the area's natural beauty

The following summary assessment of seven key Qualities of Natural Beauty (QNB) is based on a detailed condition assessment, provided as a separate appendix.

GREEN quality is being conserved and enhanced

AMBER some grounds for concern

RED quality is not being conserved and enhanced

1) Dynamic character and geomorphology of the coast. Movement and interchange of internationally recognised geomorphological features and habitats.

Summary assessment

Some form of flood defence exists for much of the 'low' coast from the western outlier to Weybourne but extensive marshes, mud and sand flats in front of sea banks means that the coast is extensively subject to change through the action of natural forces and coastal processes at present, maintaining the existing range of dynamic coastal geomorphological features and coastal habitats. Realignment schemes and sympathetic management changes have taken place and the future trend is likely to be continued realignment. Extensive stretches of the cliffed coastline are able to erode and change naturally, maintaining a dynamic variety of habitats and providing vital sediment for beaches down-drift. Major settlements are protected by hard defences, which are likely to remain for the foreseeable future and constrain coastal change in these locations. Away from settlements, the current and future trend is for reduced defence.

Overall assessment:

Since designation: GREEN

2014-19: GREEN

2022 update: AMBER

2) Strong and distinctive links between land and sea. The area's distinctive and unique character is based on the visual, ecological, socio-economic and functional links between land and sea.

Summary assessment

Ecological links are generally sound. A few species depending on both land and sea are under pressure, although not necessarily because ecological links are failing. Intertidal areas are a key component in the area's biodiversity and landscape / seascape character. Coastal wildlife and seascapes are strong factors in the local tourism industry.

Economic and social links with the sea remain strong, although different in emphasis from the past. Many local people maintain an active involvement with the coast e.g. through recreational activities

such as sailing, through the 'longshore economy', including common rights (for example shellfish and samphire gathering), although wildfowling has decreased with increasing numbers of visitors. The local fishing industry, although employing few people, is relatively stable and continues to constitute a part of the area's character. Coastal water quality and the quality of beaches is generally good, providing a suitable environment for coastal recreation and bringing large numbers of visitors at peak times.

Panoramic coastal views and seascapes remain distinctive in character, although the wilderness quality of the seascapes of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast has been affected recently by the development of offshore wind farms, with additional wind farms consented (see QNB 6).

Overall assessment:

Since designation: GREEN

2014-19: AMBER

2022 update: AMBER

3) Diversity and integrity of landscape, seascape and settlement character. Key quality is based on maintaining diversity of character types rather than uniformity across the area, including landscapes and seascapes, settlement pattern, building materials and styles.

Summary assessment

Since designation in the 1960s some significant developments in the area have adversely affected the character of parts of the Norfolk Coast, mainly the A149 bypass in the western parts of the area and the expansion of some settlements outside or on the border of the AONB into the designated area – principally in the Cromer-Sheringham-Holt triangle. Considerable development has taken place on the edge of the AONB, either straddling or just outside the boundary. Bacton Gas Terminal was anticipated at the time of designation and the boundary drawn on its anticipated western edge; the terminal exerts a strong influence on the character of this part of the area. Boundary settlements where particularly significant expansion has occurred include Dersingham, Snettisham, Heacham and the Woottons in the western part of the area; Holt, Sheringham and Cromer in the northern part of the area – although most boundary settlements have expanded noticeably. These have some impact on the setting of the AONB as well as adding to recreational pressures.

Within the AONB settlements have generally expanded to some extent, although designation of the cores of most AONB settlements as Conservation Areas has helped to maintain the character of these areas. Growth has not necessarily had a significant effect on the area's character in itself, although insensitive changes to building and settlement character from building alterations / extensions and security lighting are a concern.

The wilderness character of seascapes on a large proportion of the undeveloped coast, principally the North Norfolk Heritage Coast, has been adversely affected by the development of offshore wind farms. Otherwise in the wider coast and countryside of the Norfolk Coast, diversity and integrity of character has remained relatively conserved, although agricultural production has generally intensified in line with national trends. Recent changes having a minor effect on character include agricultural irrigation reservoirs (relatively few) and onshore wind farms (none recently approved in the AONB, although some outside the area will be visible to some extent).

Overall assessment:

Since designation: AMBER

2014-19: AMBER

2022 update: AMBER

- 4) Exceptionally important, varied and distinctive biodiversity, based on locally distinctive habitats. Recognised by a range of national and international designations. Coastal habitats are particularly important and most famous for birds, supporting iconic species. Inland habitats and species are also important, particularly lowland heath.**

Summary assessment

Coastal nature reserves in the area were amongst the first to be established so sympathetic management by conservation organisations has long been in place. 95% of the area's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), comprising approx 27% in total of the area, are in good condition, comparing very favourably with other AONBs and national parks in general.

Populations of most high profile, characteristic bird species are stable or increasing at present. Some of the relatively few exceptions are affected by pressure from coastal visitors, although this is not the only factor.

50% of the area is covered by Environmental Stewardship agreements, including 29% of the area's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats.

The benefits of this on biodiversity in the wider countryside of the area are not quantified, however. Statistically valid data on farmland bird populations, a useful high-level indicator, are not available for the AONB although individual species such as turtle dove, for which the Norfolk Coast has been known as something of a stronghold, are known to be much reduced in line with national trends.

Assessment of the ecological status of the area's rivers under the Water Framework Directive suggests that 17% of their lengths are in poor condition, over 80% in moderate condition although initiatives are in progress to address these issues.

Overall assessment:

Since designation: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside

2014-19: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside

2022 update: AMBER for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside

- 5) Nationally and internationally important geology. Mainly based on past glaciation and current coastal processes. Includes landforms and landscape scale features as well as individual sites.**

Summary assessment

At least partly because of the relatively undeveloped nature of the area, large-scale geological formations, features and landforms are largely intact and visible in the landscape, and most are accessible. Coastal geomorphological features are dynamic and internationally known as classic examples (see QNB1). Individual sites are mostly the result of extractive activity, now almost all inactive. Many of these provide sites for geological record and study although not all are accessible or in good condition, and few have interpretation.

Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN

2014-19: GREEN

2022 Update: GREEN

6) Sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness. A low level of development and population density for lowland coastal England, leading to dark night skies and a general sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from busier roads and settlements and, particularly for undeveloped parts of the coast, of wildness.

Summary assessment

Given the amount of development in and bordering the AONB since designation in 1968, the population both in and close to has clearly increased significantly, although it is still arguably of low density compared with lowland England as a whole. Recent trends suggest a slight reduction in the population of some coastal parishes, possibly because of second / holiday homes. This may contribute to a sense of tranquillity but also has negative impacts on local services and communities and increases the pressure for developments including affordable housing.

Visitor numbers have increased significantly since designation and pressures arising from this were the main reason given for the foundation of the Norfolk Coast Project in the early 1990s. Evidence for the last five years suggests that visitor numbers remain high, with a large difference between peak and low season numbers on the coast.

Most of the area has been objectively assessed as tranquil or very tranquil in a 2006 national study by CPRE with western and eastern outliers and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast being the most tranquil areas.

Recent night sky surveys show dark skies away from the larger settlements of a quality to compare with areas that have been certified as 'dark sky reserves', although no data is yet available to show trends. Recent development of wind farms off the north Norfolk coast have had a significant negative impact on the wilderness quality of the undeveloped coast, as noted by local observers.

Overall assessment:

Since designation: AMBER

2014-19: AMBER

2022 update: AMBER

7) Richness of archaeological heritage and historic environment, particularly that relating to the coast and its character. Evidence and features of human use of the area since prehistoric times and links to current uses and features.

Summary assessment

Of the large number of designated heritage assets from a range of periods in the AONB, only around 1.5% are assessed as being 'at risk', which is at the lower end of the range for English AONBs as a whole. Two of the heritage assets 'at risk' assessments appear to be because of their vulnerability to coastal change / flooding.

Although agri-environment schemes have assisted in providing beneficial management for some archaeological sites, archaeological damage has occurred from ploughing and continues in some cases. There has also been some loss of historic landscape patterns, for example field boundaries since designation although this has also been reduced by changes in agricultural grants and incentives. Coastal and offshore development such as wind farms has affected the setting of some coastal heritage assets.

Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN

2014-19: GREEN

2022 update: GREEN

3.3 Key drivers of change in the area

There are key drivers of change acting on the area that have potential to affect its special qualities of natural beauty significantly now and in the future. The purpose of the management plan is not to preserve the area unchanged, which would anyway be unrealistic; it has changed over time in response to environmental and human influences and will continue to do so. Rather, the aim is to manage change so that its special characteristics of natural beauty are conserved and enhanced.

Some of these drivers of change can be managed directly and locally, through the powers of individual partners or by new partnership initiatives; others we can only aim to influence indirectly but all are legitimate considerations within this plan. These drivers for change and their potential impacts on the area's natural beauty are considered below and the general approach to management is based on the characteristics of the drivers. Not all of these drivers are likely to have significant impacts within the five-year timescale of this Management Plan, but these still require action to address longer term impacts. Most of these influences will have impacts under more than one theme in section 4.

Coastal processes

All coastlines are naturally dynamic, although changing at different rates; the coastline of Norfolk is especially so, subject to continuous and often rapid change. For the Norfolk Coast AONB, this is a major aspect of its special character. The geology and dynamic landforms of the AONB coastline (including submarine features), with its variety and combination of features responding to coastal processes, make it of international scientific importance, in addition to its landscape qualities.

As historical and archaeological records and geological research show, this coastline has been changing for millennia: there are records of many 'lost villages' along the cliffs; sediment cores drilled across the North Norfolk Heritage Coast show a succession of alternating intertidal and freshwater habitats; in Roman times the Broads area was a navigable estuary.

Sediment transport processes driven by tides and waves interacting with coastal and undersea geomorphology act on the coastline to change it, eroding in some places and building in others. These processes are large scale, so what happens in the marine and coastal environment well outside the area, as well as along its immediate coastline, needs to be considered in managing its coastline. Coastal defence structures exist along much of the area's coastline, in some cases affecting the natural operation of coastal processes.

The tidal storm surge in December 2013, the most severe for decades, highlighted the forces acting on the coast and particularly the changes that can take place in extreme events over very short timescales.

The British landmass is still adjusting to the removal of the huge weight of ice sheets over its northern parts during the last Ice Age, by tilting on a northwest / southeast axis (isostatic readjustment). This is still causing relative sea level rise of around 1-2 mm per year on the Norfolk coastline. Although this has some impact on erosion rates on the cliffed coastline, saltmarshes have easily been able to keep up with this rise through sediment accretion.

Offshore dredging of aggregates (sand and gravel) and offshore developments also have the potential to affect the coastline through complex interaction with sediment supply and transport systems (as well as potential effects on marine ecosystems and species). The actual effects, including potential cumulative and long-term effects, are difficult to assess in an environment of complex interactions and a lack of data, and often not fully understood or generally agreed, although there is no evidence that current offshore activities are having an impact on the coast. Based on historic rates of change, continuing coastal change in areas where defences currently allow this would support the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in general.

For the western parts of the AONB, including the western outlier, to Weybourne the current mosaic of intertidal features and habitats would be expected to change but to retain its character overall. Defences, where necessary to protect settlements, would be expected to be able to cope with limited sea level rise from isostatic readjustment. Former intertidal areas now protected from the sea by sea defence banks would gradually become further below the saltmarshes as the level of the latter would rise by accumulation of sediment, and would need to be returned to an intertidal state by careful management to maintain a functioning system. This would mean some loss of valued wildlife habitats and landscape elements, but replacement by others of a consistent character overall.

On the cliffed coastline, continued erosion and slumping would maintain the biodiversity, geological importance and landscape character of the cliffs. There would, however, be implications for some coastal communities where the cliffs are not fronted by defences or where these become ineffective and means of enabling settlements to 'roll back' in a way that is both sensitive to conserving natural beauty and the needs of local communities would need to be identified and implemented.

In the Horsey-Winterton part of the AONB, the current Shoreline Management Plan policy is to maintain coastal defences. However, the prospect of significant sea level rise caused by global warming, far above the rate from isostatic readjustment, is likely to affect future scenarios significantly. Shoreline Management Plans and relevant Local Plans are the recognised means of managing the coastline within the AONB.

Consideration of current and potential future effects of coastal processes and options for management can be found in table 5, Appendix 3 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for this plan.

The approach to management of coastal processes in this plan is:

- Ensure that the predictions of coastal change and its impacts are better understood and inform key decisions that affect the coastal zone.
- Work within the Shoreline Management Plan and relevant Local Plan policies to plan and prepare for managed change if necessary, which maintains the special qualities of the area in such a way that any negative impacts on coastal communities and habitats can be properly mitigated.

Climate change

Scientific research and historic records show that global and local climates have changed over geological and shorter timescales, through natural cycles and events. However, the emission of 'greenhouse gases', mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, is driving relatively rapid global climate change at an unsustainable rate. All areas of the UK are projected to experience warming, with greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.

The UK Climate Projections (UKCP) is a climate analysis tool which provides the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate may change in the future. The data used here are taken from the latest projections (UKCP18).

Across the East of England:

- Winter and summer mean temperatures are predicted to increase by between 0.5 - over 2°C by the 2020s, 1-4°C or more by the 2050s and about 1.5- 6°C or more by the 2080s.
- Summer mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures are predicted to increase by about 0.5- 3°C or more by the 2020s, 1-5.5°C or more by the 2050s and 1.2 to 8-10°C by the 2080s.
- Winter mean precipitation is predicted to increase by anything up to 16% by the 2020s, up to 35% by the 2050s and up to over 50% by the 2080s
- Summer mean precipitation is predicted to change by around -20% to +15% by the 2020s, -40% to +15% by the 2050s and -50% to +10% by the 2080s

Marine impacts

Global sea level has risen over the 20th Century and will continue to rise over the coming centuries. Linked to climate change, a warmer global climate causes thermal expansion of sea water and input of additional water through melting ice sheets, ice caps and glaciers. Water warms more slowly than air, causing ocean warming and sea level rise lag behind atmospheric temperature changes. Even if the trend of global air temperature increase were to stop now, sea temperature rise, and other associated changes would continue for decades or longer.

Mean sea level around the UK has risen by about 17cm since the start of the 20th century (when corrected for land movement - see 'Coastal processes'). UK tide gauge records show substantial yearly changes in coastal water levels, typically in the range of several centimetres.

Based in UKCP18 projections, in London (the nearest reference point to the East of England), sea level rise by the end of the century is very likely to be in the range of 0.29 – 0.70 metres in a low emission scenario. In a high emission scenario, this increases to 0.53 – 1.15 metres.

The shelf seas around the UK are projected to be 1.5 to 4°C warmer and ~0.2 practical salinity units (p.s.u.) fresher (lower salinity) by the end of the 21st century. The strength and period of summer stratification is projected to increase in the future.

Current and potential future effects

Although there are no current significant clear-cut changes in natural beauty due to local climate change, there is already evidence that climate change and associated changes are acting on features and species that are characteristic of the area, for example the migration and distribution of wintering wildfowl and waders and ranges of mobile invertebrates and marine species. In the longer term, climate change is likely to be a very significant driver of change for the area's current characteristics of natural beauty.

Although it is not possible to predict detailed impacts with any certainty, over the coming decades climate change could have profound effects on:

- Characteristic habitats, landscape features based on these and the species they support (including Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species), and on the marine environment (sensitivity etc).

- Agriculture, and agricultural landscapes and habitats through changing viability of crops and production methods (e.g. irrigation)
- The local economy and pressures for development, through a changing climate for tourism
- Conservation, understanding and enjoyment of heritage assets (including more frequent flooding).

A study on the implications of climate change for the Norfolk Coast's characteristic species and habitats was commissioned by the Norfolk Coast Partnership in 2013. Broadly, the results of the study suggested that:

- For many terrestrial species, significant increases in mean and maximum temperatures in themselves might be expected to have little negative impact
- However, associated changes such as precipitation, soil moisture and extreme weather events could mean that this is too simplistic, and that the dependence of many species on complex ecosystems could mean that 'generalist' species are favoured over more specialist, characteristic species.
- Nevertheless, for at least some terrestrial habitats and landscapes, with suitable management it may be possible to maintain something like the current characteristics of the habitats and species they support in their current landscape context for at least some time yet.
- For aquatic habitats and species, both freshwater and marine, changes associated with increased temperatures and associated effects are likely to be more significant.
- Although the factors identified for terrestrial and aquatic habitats also apply to the low-lying coastal habitats around the western and northern coast of the AONB, which comprise the best known and richest landscapes of the AONB in terms of the variety, abundance and rarity of its wildlife, the overriding factor for these is sea level rise, which is likely to give rise to very significant change to these habitats and landscapes at some time in the future.

The sea level rise effects of global climate change also greatly magnify and accelerate the effects of coastal processes. Whereas it might be possible, if not necessarily desirable from all perspectives, to maintain and even extend sea defences in some places for a considerable period into the future under the historic scenario, this would not be viable with rapid sea level rise.

This would cause additional and increasing problems in maintaining sea defences in their current position, giving rise to threats to coastal settlements, archaeology and buildings (including some of architectural/historical value). It also threatens to damage or destroy characteristic and designated coastal habitats, although it could also lead to the creation of other valuable and characteristic habitats at the same time.

A more detailed consideration of effects of climate change can be found in table 5, Appendix 3 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Approach to management

Effective action by individuals and organisations locally to reduce carbon emissions and reduce contributions to climate change are important and will all help to affect the global picture. However, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is a global issue that requires concerted action from all countries. However, reducing greenhouse gas emissions locally or even nationally, although important, is not by itself an effective option in terms of managing the local effects of climate change and development of resilience and adaptation to climate change are also important as well as achievable through local action. There is still much uncertainty about local changes in climate and their potential impacts on the area's natural beauty. The main focus within this plan is therefore:

- continuing to improve and update understanding of local impacts of climate change on natural beauty
- improving resilience and ability to adapt to climate change for key components of the area's natural beauty

Policy and socio-economic drivers

Policy decisions and changes at national and international level can affect what happens in the area, either directly or through influencing local policy. Difficult economic conditions persist following the national and global financial crises that developed in 2008 and are a strong driver of national policy. Market forces, the result of society's preferences and decisions, are also a powerful driver of change for example through impacts on the land and sea-based economies, and commodity and property prices. Understanding changes that may potentially arise as a result of such drivers is difficult and likely to change during the lifetime of the plan. The ability to manage the effects of both high-level policy and market forces at a local level is limited, although not completely absent.

Current potential and actual key drivers of change in the AONB under this heading include:

Environment policy

The Defra 25 Year Plan for the Environment (2018) is part of the UK Government's goal to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. It is supported by the Environment Act (2021), which provides the Government with powers to set new, binding targets for air quality, water, biodiversity and waste reduction. Key for AONB management is the creation of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN), a national network of wildlife-rich places designed to address biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. This will be mapped via Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), a new mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature, designed to be tools to encourage more coordinated, practical and focused action and investment in nature. A new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approach to development and land management will also influence future management and increased use of nature-based solutions within AONBs.

Development and economic policy

In 2019, economic growth is a high priority for the Government and likely to remain so for at least the lifetime of this plan. This may have implications for the AONB. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) retains strong protection for AONBs and national parks, and for many other environmental and cultural designations and assets. It also includes a strong 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' (as a driver of economic growth), which although it does not override this protection, may be leading to further pressure for development in or on the fringe of the AONB.

Any development in the AONB must aim to promote the purpose of designation of the AONB (i.e. conservation and enhancement of natural beauty) and 'major' development must consider the provisions of the NPPF. Local Development Frameworks/Local Plans, developed and administered by local authorities, are the prime local planning policy documents for managing development in the AONB (see also section 2.2 in this plan).

The District of North Norfolk is one of the most rural in lowland England and had a reported resident population of 103,587 in 2016 and is predicted to have a population of 112,078 by 2036 according to the latest Office for National Statistics projection (2016 base). Approximately half the population lives in the major towns and villages, with the other half living in the large number of smaller villages, hamlets and scattered dwellings which are dispersed throughout the rural area.

Estimates of population and trends from the 2001 and 2011 census suggest that the population for parishes wholly within the AONB in 2011 was 13,235, which is 652 (4.7%) fewer than in 2011. The fall in population is apparently much greater than 4.7% in some parishes (see table 4, Appendix 2 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment). Within North Norfolk, household growth between 2018 and 2028 is projected to be an average of 402 households per year, derived from the National Household Projections (2014 base).

The emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk District Council, along with emerging Neighbourhood Plans, makes provision for housing growth within the AONB. Housing allocations are planned in Cromer, Blakeney and Wells where appropriate locations have been selected.

Modest allocations for some AONB villages are suggested in the draft allocations for the West Norfolk Local Plan, although significant growth is anticipated close to the AONB around Hunstanton and Kings Lynn. Great Yarmouth has an adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and Local Plan Part 2 (2021), while Winterton-on-Sea is identified as a Primary Village the plans do not specifically allocate any sites for development. Winterton-on-Sea Neighbourhood Plan generally seeks to protect and enhance the parish and the plan does not contain any allocations for development.

New housing in and around the AONB is likely to remain a strong economic proposition for developers due to the quality of the local environment. New housing provision in and close to the AONB has potential benefits for the local economy and viability of services and there is a need for housing provision to meet local needs so that a wide range of people are able to continue to live and work within the AONB.

Local Plans have specific policies that facilitate the adaptation of coastal communities to climate change and specifically to consider the relocation and replacement of dwellings affected by coastal erosion.

Tourism-related development, including services and provisions for the local tourism industry and diversification of farming enterprises into visitor-related economic activities, can have economic benefits for local communities but also has potential for significant adverse impacts on the natural beauty on which tourism depends - for example tranquillity, the area's landscape character and through increasing pressures on sensitive habitats and species, especially on the undeveloped coast.

There are also pressures for other forms of development in the countryside and in some cases potential conflict between government and other guidance and AONB protection – for example telecommunications masts and broadband infrastructure – and there may be others, unforeseen at present, in the future. Although development is likely to bring economic benefits, impacts on the area's natural beauty can undermine the natural capital that underpins the tourism industry and makes this an attractive area to live in and visit. We need to manage development so that it is compatible with AONB designation.

National energy policy

The UK Government's commitment to meet 15% of the UK's energy demand from renewable sources by 2020, and its desire to provide a more secure supply of energy for the UK, is driving renewable energy development. For the AONB, this is currently apparent in the development of wind farms and solar photo-voltaic arrays.

For wind energy, the main focus at present is on offshore development, although a few relatively small-scale onshore wind farms are present in or close to the AONB. The North Norfolk Landscape

Sensitivity Assessment (2021 Supplementary Planning Document) identifies suitable areas within the AONB where onshore wind energy may be appropriate, and this is set out in the emerging Local Plan. Offshore, large wind farms are operating and frequently clearly visible from the AONB - in the Wash off the Lincolnshire coast (Lincs, Lynn, Inner Dowsing), off Sheringham (Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal) and off Winterton-on-Sea (Scroby Sands). Three further offshore wind farms are already consented off the North Norfolk Heritage Coast (Dudgeon, Race Bank and Hornsea Three).

One solar PV array has been granted planning permission in the AONB and a few others on the edge of the area, although visual impacts from these are expected to be limited compared to wind farms.

Marine planning

Since the AONB is a coastal designation which includes the intertidal zone, with many ecological, cultural and visual links with the sea, what happens in the marine area is highly relevant to the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty.

An important provision of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (2009) is the development of Marine Plans, which interpret the principles of the high-level marine objectives from the Government's Marine Policy Statement in a detailed spatial management plan for sections of offshore and inshore waters (up to high water on the coast).

The combined East Marine Plan, covering inshore and offshore areas from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe, and so including and relating to part of the AONB, was published in April 2014. The objectives and policies of the plan need to be taken into account by public bodies in making decisions that may affect the marine environment. The plan can potentially help to support the objectives of AONB designation by managing development in the marine area to conserve seascapes, habitats and species that contribute directly or indirectly to natural beauty.

Housing development in the visitor catchment

Data from 2017 paints a clear picture of the importance of the tourism sector. Within North Norfolk alone, the total number of trips (day and overnight) was more than 8.8 million. There was ~6% growth in day trips and ~12% growth in overnight stays from 2016. The total value of tourism for the area grew by 3% from 2016 to £505 million and the number of people employed in the tourism industry reached 11,352. The 12% increase in the number of overnight trips to North Norfolk is against a 3% increase in the same statistic across England as a whole.

As examples of the scale of numbers at some sites, the Holkham Estate estimates that around 800,000 people and 300,000 dogs visit every year whilst Norfolk Wildlife Trust receives more than 110,000 to Cley and Salhouse marshes.

Within the mix of more traditional recreational activities such as sailing and other forms of boating, windsurfing, wildfowling, sea angling, walking, cycling, walking dogs, browsing in villages and scenic drives, new recreational activities may arise either as short-term fashions or more permanent features of the recreational scene. A recent example is kite-based activities on beaches. It is difficult to predict new activities and the opportunities and pressures they may bring, but they need to be managed in a way that is compatible with existing activities and conservation of the area's natural beauty.

Significant housing growth is anticipated in areas within the wider catchment area of potential day visits to the area over the next five years and beyond – for example around Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Thetford, King's Lynn, Peterborough and Cambridge.

In conjunction with Natural England, Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk have adopted a strategic mitigation package (GIRAMS) to offset adverse impacts from new residential and tourism development and increased visitor pressure on the designated European sites which form much of the valued landscape of the AONB.

The development of the England Coast Path with associated 'spreading room' by Natural England around the coast under the Marine and Coastal Access Act will continue during the period of the AONB plan. The route currently runs from Hunstanton in west Norfolk to Hopton-on-Sea, with the final section along the coast of the Wash (King's Lynn to Hunstanton) in development. This is likely to attract additional visitors, with associated economic benefits, although development of the routes and spreading room will take potential impacts on nature conservation into account.

Current / potential effects – development and economic policy drivers

Even small-scale development can have impacts on the character of existing settlements, heritage assets and the landscape and seascape character of a wider area depending on design and location. There are also potential associated environmental impacts such as:

- Water resources and effects on natural features dependent on these
- Capacity of sewage and sewage treatment systems and consequent water quality
- Transport infrastructure and traffic
- Light pollution
- The tranquillity of the area.
- Unexpected consequences of development on complex relationships and processes, especially in the marine environment (e.g. coastal processes, species and food chains)

Properties bought as second homes, for retirement, as holiday homes, or for buy-to-let cause high property prices, excluding people on relatively low incomes who work in the area from the market. This has impacts on the character and cultural distinctiveness of communities and settlements, with many properties empty for much of the time, and on the local economy.

Depending on the ability and resources to influence and manage recreational activities, an increase in visitor numbers driven by local and, perhaps more significantly, regional housing development could potentially have impacts through:

- pressures on some sensitive habitats and species, particularly in coastal locations, through inadvertent damage and disturbance. There are already known pressures and impacts on some sensitive habitats and species in some locations, for example dunes and beach nesting birds. Impacts on ground-nesting, feeding and roosting birds from people walking dogs is a contentious issue on some sections of coast and poorly controlled dogs can also cause problems with livestock. Impacts may be experienced in conjunction with other pressures, such as those arising from climate change, and may affect habitats and species covered by European designations
- increased traffic levels and associated impacts e.g. erosion of tranquillity, pressures for signage and infrastructure (visual / landscape character impacts), increased local air pollution and carbon emissions, increased congestion and impacts on settlement character
- increased damage to heritage assets
- increasing noise and disturbance from some recreational activities (e.g. aircraft, jet-skis)
- Conflicts between different recreational activities
- increase in litter, including dog fouling (already a recognised problem in many parts of the area, which affects people's enjoyment of natural beauty as well as carrying health risks)

Although there is a likelihood of impacts, there is currently limited information available to predict likely increases in numbers, potential impacts and areas of most sensitivity. A more detailed consideration of effects can be found in table 5, Appendix 3 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and other local economy

The UK is no longer part of the European Union and is in the process of replacing the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with alternative schemes. Farming in England is moving away from top-down, arbitrary land-based subsidies towards schemes which recognise farmers as stewards of the natural environment. Policy reforms aim to support productive and sustainable farming and food production alongside environmental, climate and animal welfare outcomes.

This is supported by an updated plan from Defra – The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021-24 – which outlines initiatives to increase biodiversity, restore landscapes, promote animal welfare and increase productivity through investment in new equipment and technology. Three new, complimentary Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) are proposed to support the vision for the future of farming payments. Schemes are voluntary, and designed to be accessible, supportive and with fair compensation to incentivise high levels of uptake leading to ambitious outcomes. All schemes will be designed to pay for public goods which go above and beyond regulatory baselines.

- Sustainable Farming Incentive. Making agricultural activities more sustainable, will pay for actions at scale across the whole farmed landscape.
- Local Nature Recovery. More ambitious successor to Countryside Stewardship. Supports local collaboration to make space for nature in the farmed landscape and contribute to targets for trees, peatland restoration, habitat creation and restoration and natural flood management.
- Landscape Recovery. Pays landowners or managers who want to take a more radical, long-term and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes through land use change and habitat and ecosystem restoration.

A large proportion of the AONB is farmland, with many environmental organisations also relying on agri-environment funding to manage reserves. The development and implementation of ELMs is therefore likely to have a significant influence on the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty.

The Water Framework Directive, for which the Environment Agency is the key competent authority, is a powerful policy driver for river catchment improvement. The Directive commits European Union member states to achieve good ecological and chemical status of all water bodies (including marine waters up to one nautical mile from shore) by 2015, or if this is not possible, it allows interim targets to be set for 2015 and 2021 with full compliance by 2027. Under all conditions, it requires that there should be no deterioration in status.

Following Brexit, the UK is no longer part of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It is now an independent coastal state, fully responsible for managing fisheries in the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), extending 200 nautical miles from shore. The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) includes provisions for fisheries, but these remain contentious. Despite this, the UK remains part of wider international agreements and treaties which manage fish stocks which provide a basis for continuity and an ongoing baseline for engagement with EU actors. The impacts of these changes

on the small-scale local fishing industry within the AONB (which contributes to the distinctive character of the area and its communities and economy) remain to be seen.

The majority of funding available to support other economic development in Norfolk and Suffolk will be distributed through the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The LEP's Economic Strategy (2017-2021) outlines ambitions for the future of growth across the two counties.

The Norfolk Rural Development Strategy (2013-2020) is designed to help focus how rural Norfolk needs to develop over the next decade and beyond. The 2020 vision for Rural Norfolk is to 'Achieve inclusive, sustainable rural areas which provide their inhabitants with a high quality of life through a dynamic economy, vibrant community and healthy natural environment'.

Potential effects – agriculture, forestry, fishing and other local economy drivers

Given the state of development and change in policy and programmes, it is very difficult to assess potential effects on the AONB, although this is likely to become clearer over the next year. These could include:

- Changes to agricultural policy and national delivery of this, as well as commodity prices and operational costs, may have significant effects on agricultural habitats, species and landscapes
- Some operations that are not currently viable may be able to attract funding through ELMs
- Changes in crops may affect wildlife and the historic environment, both positively and negatively. For example, loss of sugar beet as a prominent local crop through loss of production support and market viability would be likely to affect farm economics and wildlife, although it could benefit some archaeological sites. Beet is an important 'break' crop in the rotation with no obvious alternative at present and is important for farmland bird species such as skylarks. Wintering geese use harvested beet tops as an important food source and may transfer to other crops (e.g. winter barley), with impacts on the value of the crop
- Demand and profits for increased biofuels/biomass production may increase, with potential changes in crops and characteristic biodiversity and landscapes
- Difficulty in sustainable economic management of some characteristic habitats e.g. heathland, grassland (grazing), woodland may continue, with effects on landscape and wildlife from lack of active management – although ELMs funding might be available
- ELMs may not be widely adopted if funding levels are insufficient or compare unfavourably with market prices
- There is a risk of loss of continuity in transferring from pre-existing Environmental Stewardship and woodland grants to new schemes, with possible loss of sensitively managed landscape/ habitats and damage to the historic environment
- Economic development funding may drive diversification into other activities e.g. tourism, for smaller farms in particular, with possible landscape impacts but also potentially some relief of recreation pressures on the coast

Reduction in public sector funding

Following the economic crash of 2008, Government policy has included reducing the cost of the public sector as part of reducing the UK budget deficit. This has included significant reduction in Government funding to local authorities and AONB partnerships, with further reductions likely for most organisations for the foreseeable future.

Local authorities and other public sector organisations such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage have an important role to play in conserving and enhancing aspects of the area's natural beauty.

Potential effects

Whether, and if so how, the roles and operation of AONB partnerships and partner organisations who play a critical role in meeting AONB objectives are affected by continued reductions in funding remains to be seen. Overall, the approach in this plan is to:

- Improve understanding of issues where necessary
- Manage development to conserve and enhance natural beauty through the local planning system, achieving a consistent and co-ordinated approach across the area, including by using the Integrated Landscape Character Guidance for the area and other guidance such as that provided for National Character Areas.
- Develop a consistent and co-ordinated approach to influencing policy and development issues outside local control that have potential impacts on the area's natural beauty, through the National Association for AONBs and by coordination between local partners.
- Develop local approaches for adaptation to high level policy initiatives, where possible.
- Develop effective and coordinated local targeting and promotion of grant schemes that help to conserve and enhance natural beauty and promote sustainability
- There is a risk of inappropriate tree species (such as Paulownia) being planted for carbon sequestration, causing damage to both landscape and biodiversity

4. Themes, objectives and policies

20-year vision for the area

In developing the 2004-09 Management Plan, local people and organisations were asked what they wanted for the future of the Norfolk Coast. Their views were developed into a vision for the area in 20 years' time, divided into sections following the themes in this section of the plan. This vision was taken forward into the 2009-14 plan with only minor modifications. This vision was continued in the 2014-19 plan and is refreshed in this current 2019-24 plan.

The vision covers what needs protecting - and what needs changing. The aim is not for everything to remain the same and it is important to recognise the tension between the character of the area, as seen today, and change and adaptation required to meet the future. Everything in the Management Plan is linked to this vision.

Themes in this section of the plan

There are five themes, covering aspects of management of the area:

- Landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity
- Built and historic environment
- Farming, forestry and fishing
- Sustainable communities
- Access and recreation

The objectives and policies have been developed through consideration of the qualities of natural beauty, its condition and the drivers of change from section 3, and what is needed to help to achieve the vision. Each theme section contains:

- An introduction containing background information relating to the theme
- The section of the twenty-year vision relating to this theme
- A summary of key issues relating to this theme
- Objectives, which are an expression of specific goals over the five-year period of the plan and relate to the achievement of the twenty-year vision for that theme, against which progress (and possibly setbacks) can be assessed, probably annually, as part of management plan monitoring
- Policies, which set out broadly how the Partnership intends to address key issues and achieve the objectives

Actions for each theme section are presented in a separate Action Plan, which will be reviewed and updated annually. Actions may contribute to both objectives and policies; their relevance to these is indicated in the action plan. The actions are intended to be specific initiatives or projects involving the staff team and /or partners, which are over and above partners' normal management operations that contribute to AONB management, and their day-to-day application of AONB policies.

Understanding and education

Understanding of the area, its unique and special qualities and its sensitivities, is an additional cross-cutting theme throughout this section and there are objectives and policies relating to understanding and education in all of the sections.

Appreciating what the natural and managed environment of the area provides for people is essential to maintain these vital environmental goods and services (sometimes called ecosystem services). Understanding the natural and managed systems, habitats and species and their sensitivities is essential to enable sustainable use of the area – for environmental and other organisations managing the area, but also for local residents, landowners and farmers, businesses and visitors.

4.1 Landscape, biodiversity and geodiversity introduction

The landscape, in its broadest sense, including its wildlife, habitats, cultural and historic features – how the area looks and how it is perceived by people, using all their senses including emotional response – is the basis of AONB designation. The details of the landscape will change as they always have done in response to physical, economic and social influences but the challenge is to recognise and act to conserve the essential character of the area.

The area's landforms are based fundamentally on its geology and the forces that have acted on it over time – particularly the effects of glaciation, followed by marine erosion and deposition. It is nationally and internationally recognised for its geological and geomorphological features, especially the coast with its variety and combination of features responding to coastal processes.

The qualities of the coast and its relationship with the marine environment and its hinterland are fundamental to the character of the area, and the foundation of its designation. This is a particularly dynamic coastline, subject to continuous and often rapid change, which is an essential part of its special character.

The area's landscapes, and the habitats and species within them, are diverse. The many layers of international, national and local statutory and non-statutory conservation designations for wildlife and geodiversity testify to the area's importance and are fundamental to protecting the key habitats, features and species which make a major contribution to the area's natural beauty. The

international importance of the wildlife and habitats of the marine and intertidal areas of the Wash and North Norfolk Coast is also recognised by its designation as a Marine Protected Area Network. Many of the species and habitats are listed in the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan, and a number of species are protected in their own right.

Inland from the highly designated coast, important areas of lowland heath remain as remnants of once much more extensive habitat, with relatively small blocks and belts of woodland, including a small amount of ancient woodland.

Opportunities to remove overhead electricity supply lines in sensitive landscapes have arisen since 2005 for national parks and AONBs, through an agreement between the Government regulator Ofgem and the Distribution Network Organisation in this area, currently UK Power Networks. Three schemes have been completed so far, with a further scheme in the pipeline and others anticipated in the lifetime of this plan.

Integrated Landscape Character Assessment for the AONB

An Integrated Landscape Character Assessment and guidance for the AONB have been produced by Partners working together to integrate information on landscape, biodiversity and historic environment. The full Integrated Landscape Character Guidance is a large document, accessible via the Norfolk Coast Partnership website. It consists of:

- An introductory section giving background to the study and explaining how to use the guidance for different user groups;
- An overview of the data used to compile the integrated character types and guidance
- A section on general character and pressures for change in the area; and
- A section for each of the 16 distinct landscape character types in the area, comprising:
 - An integrated description of its character and development, including sub-areas
 - The key characteristics that are sensitive to change, and key forces for change in this landscape character type
 - A vision for the future of this landscape character type
 - Recommendations / guidance for management to achieve the vision
 - Maps showing local landscape character areas and the information layers that have gone into producing the integrated guidance.

Biodiversity 2020

Launched in 2011, “Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services” outlines the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade on land (including rivers and lakes) and at sea, building upon the Natural Environment White Paper, ‘The Natural Choice’ and linked to the National Ecosystem Assessment and the recommendations in a report on the State of England’s wildlife sites by Prof John Lawton in 2010, ‘Making Space for Nature’.

A key conclusion of ‘Making Space for Nature’ is that England’s collection of wildlife sites does not currently comprise a coherent and resilient ecological network that is capable of coping with the challenge of climate change and other pressures. The report recommends that we address this by:

- Improving the quality of current sites by better habitat management.
- Increasing the size of current wildlife sites.
- Enhancing connections between, or join up, sites, either through physical corridors, or through ‘stepping stones’.
- Creating new sites.

- Reducing the pressures on wildlife by improving the wider environment, including through buffering wildlife sites.

In short – more, bigger, better and joined up sites to create a sustainable, resilient and effective ecological network. AONB Partnerships clearly have an important part to play in helping to deliver Biodiversity 2020 targets. Action 1.1.9 states: “Encourage and support new and existing large-scale initiatives for improved ecological networks across the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designated landscapes”. The key outcome in Biodiversity 2020 for AONB Partnerships is Outcome 1c: “By 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, conserved through effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas.” This plan aims to promote a coordinated, landscapescale approach to conserving and enhancing ecosystems and to contribute to Biodiversity 2020 targets. One example of a current large-scale ecosystems project is the Nine Chalk Rivers programme to restore and enhance the area’s rivers.

Vision: in 2034...

The Norfolk Coast will be richly diverse, with distinctive landscapes, wildlife, settlements, geological features, building styles and materials, communities, history and culture.

Necessary development, including outside the area and in the marine environment, will have been managed so that the area will still be essentially unspoilt with a strong feeling of remoteness, peace and tranquillity, with wide skies, seascapes and dark night skies that show the richness and detail of constellations. The marine environment will be sustainably managed in a way that takes full account of the area’s important links with the sea.

The coast will retain a strong feeling of wilderness and of being exposed to and shaped by the elements. In general, there will have been a managed approach to achieving a more naturally functioning coastline, which will be increasingly valuable for its habitats and the species they support, including breeding, migrating and wintering birds. Where it has been deemed necessary to maintain coastal defences, this will have been done in the most sensitive way possible in terms of sustainability and visual and wildlife impacts.

Habitats will have been improved, increased and linked to enable adaptation of the area’s biodiversity to climate change. The area’s rivers and estuaries will be in good ecological condition, providing a passage for migratory species. All parts of the area, not just designated sites, will support a rich diversity of characteristic wildlife and habitats associated with local environmental variations and management, including species and habitats of national and international importance, although these will not necessarily be exactly the same as in 2019. Where coastal habitats have been lost through realignment they will have been replaced elsewhere and plans for managing future loss will have been developed.

The landscape will show many links with history, with features and patterns created by past cultures and land use, and with its geological past through large scale features and individual sites. The value of the landscape and the story it tells will be widely understood.

Key issues relating to natural beauty for 2019-24 plan

In the longer term, there is likely to be potential loss of, or at least major change to, existing dynamic coastal geomorphology and coastal / intertidal habitats of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast through

sea level rise. To provide for effective mitigation and adaptation there is a need to plan well in advance.

Impacts on biodiversity and landscape features from climate change (other than sea level rise); are also expected; although uncertain, these are likely to be more significant for aquatic (including marine) than terrestrial species and habitats. Ground water availability and flows in water courses are likely to be affected, and acidification of the sea through increased dissolved carbon dioxide affects marine ecology. Some impacts are beginning to be apparent now but there is also a need to plan for increased resilience in the longer term.

Changes to marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecology from climate change are likely to have impacts on species relying on one or more of these e.g. marine food sources. A general decline in biodiversity is apparent, particularly away from designated sites. There is an international, national and local responsibility to reverse this decline and meet Biodiversity 2020 targets.

Non-native invasive species exist in places but are not currently a major issue affecting native biodiversity in the area. There is a possibility that they may become more of a problem in future, possibly driven by climate change in some cases and including marine species.

In addition to development that has been planned and consented, there are potential additional impacts of future offshore, coastal and terrestrial developments on existing landscape and seascape character, which may need to be avoided, mitigated or as a last resort compensated for.

Development both within the area and within travelling distance to it may lead to continued gradual erosion of tranquillity and wilderness quality, for example through roads, car parking, lighting, traffic and numbers and activities of visitors (see section 4.5).

There is generally a low awareness and understanding of geodiversity and its importance, with little information aimed at non-specialists available. Some individual sites are in poor condition through lack of maintenance.

The area's rivers, which are important ecological and landscape features in their own right and key links between land and sea, are not currently in good ecological condition, although work is underway to address this.

Objectives 2019-24: by 2024...

Landscape:

OL1 The integrity and diversity of the area's landscapes and seascapes will have been maintained and preferably enhanced, assessed with reference to the Integrated Landscape Guidance for the AONB

Biodiversity:

OL2 Internationally and nationally designated sites for wildlife will be in favourable condition and under effective management

OL3 Locally designated sites for wildlife will be under positive management

OL4 A local expression of Biodiversity 2020 targets for the area will have been developed and a programme for their achievement nearing completion

OL5 The area's rivers and estuaries will be in good ecological condition or approaching this state

Geodiversity:

OL6 Large scale geodiversity features, including dynamic coastal features will have been conserved so that their integrity and their influence on the landscape remains apparent

OL7 Significant local geodiversity sites will be in positive management

OL8 The area's geodiversity will be better understood and appreciated by decision-makers and the public, and public access and information for a range of sites will be available.

Policies 2014-19

Members of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, including the staff team will, cooperating where necessary...

PL1 Refer to and use the Integrated Landscape Character Guidance for the AONB to guide decision making and delivery of conservation objectives across the area

PL2 Continue to promote understanding of the area's key qualities of natural beauty, particularly those less understood and valued at present and including seascapes and the marine environment, and take account of these in decision-making

PL3 Continue to improve understanding of changes to landscape and biodiversity arising from climate change (including sea level rise and other effects) and other drivers, and plan to adapt to and mitigate these changes

PL4 Work together on a landscape scale to improve resilience to change for key habitats and species through development of ecological networks that increase, extend, link and buffer key habitat areas

PL5 Be proactive to reduce and manage adverse impacts on the key qualities of natural beauty from past development and activities, as well as resist and mitigate damaging new impacts and influence decisions by organisations outside the Partnership

PL6 Protect the area's distinctive native biodiversity from the impacts of invasive non-native species where possible by restricting pathways of introduction and carrying out targeted eradications

PL7 Plan and prepare for implementation of coastal realignment where necessary to allow maximum ability to adapt and maintain active coastal geomorphology, landscape and seascape character including ecological links between land and sea, taking into account conservation objectives for coastal sites and the interests of coastal communities (see also policy PC8)

PL8 Identify and implement opportunities for the relocation of key habitats and features that are threatened by coastal change

PL9 Take into account in plans and decision-making the services to society that habitats in the AONB provide (eco-systems services)

PL10 Work with landowners to bring Sites of Special Scientific Interest, County Wildlife Sites and other Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and non-statutory geodiversity sites into positive management where this is required.

4.2 Built and historic environment

Introduction

Important archaeological features and artefacts have been found in both terrestrial and intertidal areas. Flint tools made by Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers are the earliest evidence of human occupation and use of the area, dating back to around half a million years ago. Recent nationally important discoveries at Happisburgh (outside the AONB) dating back at least 780,000 years emphasise the importance and potential of this stretch of coastline. More recent archaeological evidence, following the end of the last Ice Age about 10,000 years ago, is more plentiful. Artefacts and sites from the Mesolithic period (about 10,000 to 6,000 years ago) and Neolithic period (about 6,000 to 4,000 years ago) have been discovered. The Bronze Age (about 4,000 to 2,700 years ago) is well represented, with numerous burial mounds and the famous timber circle at Holme-next-the-Sea, discovered in the late 1990s. Iron Age forts and treasures, Roman forts and villas and Saxon

settlements and cemeteries enrich the picture, which continues through medieval times with the development of fishing and trading ports. Further information on the area's heritage assets in the coastal zone, historic landscape character and other heritage information can be found via English Heritage and the Norfolk Historic Environment Record.

Traditional buildings make a strong contribution to the distinctive character of the area through the use of local vernacular materials, particularly flint in the eastern sector, and chalk and carstone to the west. Villages, consisting largely of modest 18th and 19th century cottages, are clustered along the coast road, most markedly in the chalk downland area where the hinterland is noticeably empty of settlement, punctuated with an occasional isolated farmstead. In the eastern half, small settlements are found inland amongst a network of narrow, winding country lanes. Flint churches, mainly with square towers, are often prominent features in villages, particularly where they are sited on ground rising from sea level, as at Salhouse and Morston. A number of surviving windmills form landmarks in the coastal villages. Traditional farm buildings of flint and soft red brick are common, particularly in the area east of Holkham. Barns and other agricultural buildings often form characteristic blank boundary walls within villages. Many have been converted to residential use or have become redundant.

Historic parks shape a significant part of the landscape and contain country houses of great variety (Old Hunstanton, Felbrigg, Bayfield, Sheringham, Holkham, Sandringham). There is also a strong Arts and Crafts influence on the design of a number of early 20th century country houses found between Holt and Mundesley. In addition to their visual contribution, these historic buildings are important for providing wildlife habitat, in particular for bats, barn owls, swallows and house martins. Traditional lime mortar also provides habitat for lichens.

The design of some more recent housing development has not always respected local character, although the Town and Country Planning system has been generally effective since designation in managing levels of development, including some affordable housing. The area still has a generally undeveloped character, in common with much of Norfolk.

Traditional materials and designs do not always lend themselves easily to improved environmental performance or for conversion to other uses, but this should be achievable with thought and care. Some new buildings, e.g. the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Visitors Centre at Cley and the Millennium Centre at Brancaster, include innovative sustainable design features, as well as complementing their surroundings.

The highway corridor

The network of narrow roads, often hedge-lined and with wide grass verges, makes a significant contribution to the area's landscape and historic character and biodiversity, and needs sensitive management when undertaking signing, maintenance or other traffic management work.

Vision: in 2034...

The quality and locally distinct character of the historic environment, including settlement form, character and patterns and in the marine environment, will be evident and valued. It will be understood, recorded, maintained and conserved as far as possible.

Archaeology and historic ruins will have been well conserved and managed, or where this is not feasible will have been recorded. Traditional buildings that contribute to the character of the area will have been well maintained and conserved, including through appropriate productive use where

possible. New buildings will have been located and designed to conserve and enhance landscape and settlement character.

Buildings will have been sensitively adapted where necessary to incorporate features that enhance their performance in terms of both local and global environmental sustainability. New buildings, including those using innovative design, will also have these features as well as complementing their surroundings.

Within the constraints of rising sea levels and storm activity the area will retain characteristic coastal settlements and road networks. Coastal settlements will be adapting to change, with new buildings and roads located where they are sustainable in the long term in respect of coastal erosion and flood risk from rivers and the sea while retaining local distinctiveness.

Key issues relating to natural beauty for 2019-24 plan

Relatively minor individual developments and changes to buildings can accumulate to cause a larger change in overall settlement character. 'Exceptions' sites for affordable housing can deliver affordable housing in response to proven local needs, with minimal landscape impacts. However, affordable housing requirements are often met through a proportion of market housing developments, leading to more housing overall than is required to meet local needs.

New development, both residential and for tourism, can lead to additional pressures on the local environment such as water resources and sewerage (see also section 4.5)

Some historic environment sites are likely to be at risk from climate change related impacts in the longer term, including sea level rise and flooding. Planning to adapt and mitigate impacts needs to happen in the short term. Understanding and awareness of some historic environment sites may be affected by poor management and information. Some historic / vernacular buildings are no longer required for their original use and may be unsuitable for modern uses without alteration. It may be necessary to convert some buildings to enable a modern use to preserve them overall.

Objectives 2019-24: by 2024...

OB1 The area's designated heritage assets will be under positive management

OB2 Measures to improve understanding and conservation of the area's historic and archaeological heritage amongst partners and public will have been implemented

OB3 The area's key historic environment sites most at risk from climate change-related and other impacts will be known and where appropriate mitigating measures investigated and in progress

Policies 2019-24

Members of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, including the staff team will, cooperating where necessary...

PB1 Ensure that historic and archaeological heritage assets within their ownership or powers of regulation, particularly heritage assets at risk, are recorded, conserved and enhanced

PB2 Provide opportunities for public understanding and appropriate access to historic environment sites within their ownership and promote this elsewhere, where consistent with conservation objectives

PB3 Ensure that new development, including changes to existing buildings and infrastructure, within their ownership or powers of regulation are consistent with the special qualities of the area and relevant conservation objectives

PB4 Demonstrate good practice and provide examples of how to incorporate measures for energy, water use, resource reduction and biodiversity enhancements sensitively into new, vernacular and historic buildings and structures

PB5 Support new development and conversion that is consistent with local and national planning policy and the principles above, in order to retain and develop residential and employment opportunities that support natural beauty.

4.3 Farming, forestry and fishing

Introduction

Our landscapes and wildlife heritage have been shaped by the decisions of land managers over thousands of years. The management of farmland and woodland for food and other products has been, and still is, the key human influence on the landscape of most of Britain, including most of the Norfolk Coast AONB; approximately half of the designated area is farmland, mainly arable, with about a further 17% woodland or parkland. Agricultural and parkland landscapes, with field boundaries, hedgerow trees, and belts and blocks of woodland, are an important part of the area's character, contrasting with the relative wildness of coastal landscapes. Parkland and wood pasture includes rare and valuable habitat including occasional veteran trees.

The economic health of farming and woodland management, and the ability of these land uses in the future to deliver environmental benefits at the same time, are vital for the maintenance of a landscape worthy of the AONB designation. The decisions that farmers and land managers take, often influenced by EU and Government policy, determine to a great extent whether society's ambitions for water, wildlife, healthy soil and production of food and other goods can be achieved. Historically the farmed landscape has reflected the economic and social needs of the time and the area has played an important role in the history of agricultural innovation, for example by 'Coke of Norfolk' in the 17th century. Arable farming has been a major land use since designation, and although profitability has varied over the last decade high quality malting barley is a notable local crop favoured by the soils and climate of north Norfolk. When arable margins are high compared to livestock enterprises, the availability of suitable grazing livestock has made it harder to manage valued conservation habitats such as heathland, downland and grazing marshes. There has been a consequent decline in the quality and quantity of some habitats over many years. However, agri-environment schemes have contributed to conservation and enhancement of landscape, biodiversity and the historic environment and there may be opportunities for new approaches to habitat creation and management, and linking isolated habitats, using socio-economic drivers.

Woodland, copses and even individual trees make an important contribution to the area's landscape character, although it is not rich in woodland generally, particularly ancient woodland. The economic viability of woodland for timber products is relatively low at present but woodland can provide recreational and wildlife benefits as well as supporting income from shooting or other activities. There is also scope for more woodland in appropriate locations, as well as for improved management for a range of uses.

Like agriculture, fishing still has a key role to play in the area's natural beauty. Now based mainly on shellfish and much reduced in economic importance, local fishing activity has shaped the character of coastal settlements. It still contributes to that character in many cases, through activity at harbours and beaches, and through quays, boat and building styles. The area is widely recognised for the quality of its local seafood.

Vision: in 2034...

Agriculture will still be the prime means of maintaining the natural beauty of the majority of the area's countryside. Farming and forestry will provide an economically sustainable livelihood through producing crops for a wide range of uses including food and biofuels as well as providing recreational opportunities and habitats for wildlife. Economic sustainability will be assisted where necessary through environmental grants to enable farmers and land managers to maintain and enhance specific landscape features, habitats and species and heritage assets, and use of this support will be actively encouraged.

Farming, the management of woodland and food production in general, including some new crops that are being grown in response to climate change and market demand, will be in tune with the local climate and soil characteristics.

Crop and animal production methods will not impact adversely on water resources and quality, soil structure and local eco-systems and at least maintain, and often enhance, landscape character, local distinctiveness, biodiversity and heritage assets through a mixture of smaller tenant and family-owned farms sitting alongside larger estate-based businesses. Farm businesses in the area will be considered to demonstrate good practice and to be at the vanguard of sustainable agricultural management.

Fishing will be an environmentally sustainable and economically viable activity, at least in combination with other economic activities, and will continue to contribute positively to the distinctive character of the area.

Key issues for 2019-24 plan

Agricultural changes driven by a range of drivers (agricultural transition, market forces / commodity prices, climate change) may have impacts on the viability of farming businesses, existing landscape character, biodiversity and the historic environment.

The area's chalk rivers have been affected by run-off of silt and artificial nutrients from farmland and by modification of their courses and profile to improve drainage, affecting diversity of river habitats and species. Many farmland ponds have been filled in or have effectively disappeared through neglect as they are no longer relevant to current farming.

Major impacts of climate change on agriculture and woodlands are likely to be over a longer timescale than the five years of the AONB management plan, but adaptation is needed to mitigate predicted impacts, which could include new diseases and invasive species. Changes in temperature, rainfall patterns and extreme weather events (drought, flood and storms) may all affect viability of current crops, cultivation methods and irrigation.

Changes in freshwater and marine ecology linked to climate change are likely to be more rapid than for terrestrial species. For marine habitats and species acidification is an additional factor; marine impacts may increasingly affect the local fishing industry through changes in traditional target species.

Although woodland is not a major feature of the AONB, opportunities exist for improving it as an economic resource as well as benefitting biodiversity, landscape and recreation, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Objectives 2019-24: by 2024...

OF1 High take-up of ELMS, which is appropriate to the area and supports AONB objectives, delivering landscape, biodiversity and historic environment enhancements and supporting sustainable agricultural enterprises, will be in place in the area

OF2 Improved efficiency of water use and storage, and management of soil and nutrient run-off by agriculture in the area will be in development, reducing impacts on ground water, rivers and other water dependent features, respecting landscape character and contributing to Water Framework Directive and biodiversity objectives.

OF3 Changes to new types of crops, such as energy crops, will have taken landscape and ecological character and the historic environment into account

OF4 There will be increased and improved management of woodland in the area with benefits for biodiversity, businesses and recreation, and development of local supply chains for woodland products

OF5 The local fishing industry will have remained viable economically and as a way of life and measures / initiatives to support adaptation, if necessary, and sustainability of the local fishing industry will have been continued

Policies 2014-19

Members of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, including the staff team will, cooperating where necessary...

PF1 Aim to develop and maintain understanding of the key issues affecting local farming, farmland habitats and wildlife under changing circumstances within the framework of the new Common Agricultural Policy and influence the development and implementation of the new agri-environment scheme in the area to benefit farming in the AONB and farmland landscapes, habitats and wildlife and its historic environment features

PF2 Continue to develop support for grazing infrastructure and local grazing networks as a means of maintaining specific areas of distinctive agricultural landscapes and habitats, including historic environment features, and meeting conservation objectives

PF3 Support development and diversification associated with farming, forestry, fishing and other marine industries which respects, and ideally contributes to, conserving the special qualities of the area, including their enjoyment and understanding

PF4 Promote and support the development of sustainable practice in farming, forestry and fishing, including through promotion of appropriate grant schemes and advice, and support for cooperation to develop local initiatives and marketing of sustainable local products

PF5 Promote and implement an integrated catchment-based approach to all aspects of water management throughout the area to achieve benefits for landscape, biodiversity, the historic environment and the economy.

4.4 Sustainable communities

Introduction

The natural world touches our lives every day and we rely on the natural systems that support us. Our natural environment underpins our health, wealth and happiness and gives us a sense of place, pride and identity. A healthy natural environment can support economic growth and social regeneration, improve public health, improve educational outcomes, reduce crime and antisocial behaviour, improve quality of life and help communities adapt to climate change. Good businesses recognise that maintaining and enhancing natural capital, the services and materials provided by the environment are essential for them as well as for communities.

The interaction of people with their environment, resulting in living, working landscapes that respond to environmental, social and economic changes, has made the area what it is today. As well as clear differences in the character of buildings and settlements, different local customs, festivals, historical associations and language all contribute to the area's distinctive and diverse cultural character. Common rights are important in embodying traditional relationships with the land, particularly in the western part of the North Norfolk Heritage Coast. Maintaining natural beauty includes maintaining its distinctive communities, and sustainable communities will only be possible if their economic and social needs are met at the same time as they continue to adapt to change. This Management Plan focuses on the conservation and enhancement of the area's special qualities of natural beauty, the pressures that affect them or may do so in the future and their management in order to meet the purpose of designation of the area. Although the importance of social issues in the area are recognised by the Norfolk Coast Partnership, it is beyond the scope of this plan to put forward policies and actions to address most of these issues, since they do not directly affect the area's natural beauty. The relevant partners have policies and mechanisms to manage them, however, and will do so whilst taking account of the area's sensitivities and managing potential impacts on its natural beauty.

Two key issues that do relate more closely to natural beauty, however, are affordable housing and second homes. The availability of affordable housing and local jobs are inseparable, although the need for affordable housing in different parts of the area varies. The main issue for this plan is how affordable housing is provided while respecting the area's character (see section 4.2). A study in 2005 investigated the subject of affordable housing in the AONB.

Houses bought and used as second, holiday or retirement homes contribute to the shortage of affordable housing in many areas. This in turn contributes to young people moving away from the area and results in changes in the area's age profile and in the structure of its communities. Empty second and holiday-let houses also tend to affect community vibrancy and character, especially in the winter months. There are local initiatives in place or in progress to provide affordable local housing, in addition to provision as part of commercial housing development schemes.

There can be tension and differences between people moving to the area and families who have lived here for generations, and a weakening of the character of local communities, but 'incoming' people can also bring valuable new perspectives, skills, knowledge and employment opportunities which benefit the area, as well as helping to build support and understanding of the AONB.

Coastal settlements have long existed with the risks of flooding and erosion, but the difficulty of managing this while maintaining functioning coastal communities is increasing under the pressures of increased rates of sea level rise and communities need support in adapting to change.

Vision: in 2034...

The Norfolk Coast will be a living, working area with individuals and communities working together where necessary for the benefit of the whole community or a wider area. The economy will be broadly based, with a range of environmentally sustainable economic activities, including opportunities to earn a living through 'traditional' activities for the area as well as activities based on new technology and communications, and others that draw on and support the area's distinctive and special features. Tourism will remain an important part of the local economy, generating money that benefits a wide section of the local community. Appropriate tenures of housing, including affordable housing will be available for people working locally. Although diverse in terms of age, income and occupation, communities will include people with family ties to the area and people will share an understanding and appreciation of the area's special qualities.

The area will be widely recognised as leading in environmentally sustainable practice, including mitigating climate change. While adapting to climate and coastal change, the area will be maintaining characteristic and viable coastal settlements and infrastructure. Various forms of renewable energy will be produced and used in locations and in ways that are consistent with the key qualities that give the area its special character. Effective local food and products networks will be in operation, with local producers working together to promote their products and the links to the area. Networks and services providing alternative low-impact forms of transport to the car, reducing congestion and the need for additional car parking, will be available and widely used by both visitors and residents.

Pollution from all local sources will be avoided or its impacts minimised. Water quality will be high and water will be used and managed efficiently with maximum benefits to the local environment. Generation of waste will have been minimised and waste will be used as a resource wherever possible.

Key issues relating to natural beauty for 2019-24 plan

The area has large numbers of second / holiday homes, particularly in some coastal settlements, which affects the cost and availability of housing for local workers and others e.g. new businesses and their owners. The shortage of both affordable housing and secure, full-time, well-paid local jobs in the area affects the ability of young people with family connections to live and work in the area, affecting the character of communities. For a sustainable future for the area and its communities, all aspects of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), within which conserving natural beauty needs to be included and integrated, need to be taken into account. Communities need planning and support to achieve this. Coastal communities are additionally affected by coastal change, which will be increased by sea level rise. They need support for planning and adaptation to coastal change.

Objectives 2019-24: by 2024...

OC1 The area will be improving as an environment for local businesses and availability of local jobs, assessed against regional averages

OC2 Public transport and other alternatives to car travel in the area will have been maintained and improved as a service for both local residents and visitors

OC3 Pupils in all schools in the area will have been involved in learning about its special qualities

OC4 Further understanding and means of supporting coastal communities in adapting to coastal change will have been developed

Policies 2014-19

Members of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, including the staff team will, cooperating where necessary...

PC1 Support opportunities for economic growth that invest in the natural capital and sustainable management of the special qualities of the AONB

PC2 Promote and support services and products from the local area and use these whenever possible, especially those that are sustainable and high quality, and which contribute to maintaining natural beauty in some way, in order to support the local economy and jobs and to reduce 'supply miles'

PC3 Continue to develop understanding amongst second home owners to enable them to contribute to maintaining sustainable local communities and natural beauty

PC4 Continue to involve and develop communication and cooperation with local people and communities in the work of the Norfolk Coast Partnership

PC5 Support the development of renewable energy in the area in ways and locations that contribute to the area's local economy and jobs and maintain its natural beauty

PC6 Continue to investigate and develop ways of securing a mix of different housing tenures which will enable local people or those with local connections to live and work in the AONB, in ways that maintain the area's natural beauty

PC7 Manage traffic and transport issues, including car parking and provision and promotion of effective public transport and other non-car means of travel, to reduce traffic congestion at peak times, conserve tranquillity and manage pressures on sensitive sites in the area

PC8 Involve local communities in the development of plans and projects that may affect them, for example Shoreline Management Plans, and inform them of progress on plans and programmes

PC9 Support the provision of necessary facilities and new development to meet proven needs of local communities and businesses, in ways that maintain the area's natural beauty, including the provision of fast broadband throughout the area

PC10 Seek to maintain support for community projects in the area that contribute to AONB objectives and sustainable development, including through availability of grants

4.5 Access and recreation

Introduction

The area has long had a strong attraction for visitors based on its qualities of tranquillity, its beaches, its sense of remoteness and wilderness (for parts of the coast), the character and charm of its landscapes and settlements, and its wildlife. Historical and cultural attractions such as Castle Rising castle, Sandringham House, Holkham Hall, Blakeney Guildhall, Binham Priory, Felbrigg Hall and the North Norfolk Railway add to this attraction, as does its reputation for high quality local produce and eating places.

The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail provides a key coastal access route through the area. The English Coast Path secures further opportunities for the public to enjoy the natural environment along with other local and regional trails. The Norfolk Coast Cycleway runs through the area, forming part of the Sustrans National Route 1 and Regional Route 30, and has numerous associated loops and links. Norfolk County Council manages trails and public rights of way in Norfolk; the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) which incorporates Norfolk's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029 contains objectives and actions for improvements to public access and rights of way in the county.

Parts of the area, particularly the North Norfolk Heritage Coast, are heavily used for a wide range of recreational activities, by local people and those who live within easy travelling distance as well as visitors from further away, either on day visits or longer stays. The effects of increasing numbers of visitors and recreational use on the area was one of the main concerns that led to the setting up of the Norfolk Coast Project as a partnership of organisations for its management in 1991.

These activities benefit the health, well-being and quality of life of those taking part, as well as helping to support the local economy in many cases. Those using the marine environment are especially important and well established, in particular sailing, but also including other forms of boating, windsurfing, wildfowling and angling. The area is also popular for more informal activities such as short walks, walking dogs, cycling, browsing in villages and scenic drives, by both local residents and visitors.

The tourism industry, for which the area's environment and natural beauty is the key asset, now plays a more important part in the local economy than 'traditional industries' such as farming,

fishing and boat building, although its strength is linked to their influence and products. A study in 2000 estimated that annual visitors to six nature reserves on the north Norfolk coast spent £5.3 million on the day of their visit and £20.8 million during their trip as a whole. Another study in 2006 estimated the annual economic value of tourism in the area as £163 million, supporting over 3,500 jobs. Tourism supports many local jobs directly as well as other businesses indirectly, and helps to support community services such as village shops, post offices and pubs. It also helps to support conservation and management activity on important nature and historic environment sites in the area.

However, visitors can generate conflict with nature and historic environment conservation objectives, with tranquillity and with local communities, depending on numbers, locations and activities. In order to work towards a truly sustainable tourism destination, tourism businesses and site managers need to be actively involved in understanding the behaviour and impact of visitors, both positive and negative, and in visitor management plans and policies that help to inform visitors of ways to enjoy the area while minimising impacts and maximising benefits.

Traffic levels and infrastructure can have significant impacts on landscape and tranquillity, and the majority of visitors still reach and move around the area via the road network, although many alternatives are available including the excellent Coasthopper bus service.

Vision: in 2034...

The Norfolk Coast will be a place where people can refresh both body and soul. Tourism, recreation and enjoyment of the area will provide benefits to both its communities and landscape. Tourism businesses, visitors and residents will understand the area's special qualities of landscape, wildlife and cultural and historic heritage and their sensitivities and support their conservation through how they use, and promote use of, the area.

Tourism businesses will understand the value of the natural capital that underpins their businesses and be actively contributing to initiatives that conserve and enhance natural beauty and support local communities.

Recreation by both visitors and local residents, including long-standing traditional activities for the area, will be managed in a way that provides opportunities for all users to experience and enjoy the special qualities of the area without conflicting with those qualities or with other people's enjoyment of them.

Public access routes and areas, both statutory and discretionary, together with non-car forms of transport, will form an integrated network which is widely used by both local residents and visitors. Information on these, and on areas suitable for a variety of recreational activities, will be easily and freely available to the public.

Key issues relating to natural beauty for 2014-19 plan

Understanding and support for the area's special qualities by people who use the area and enjoy these qualities is needed to ensure these qualities are conserved and enhanced.

Some habitats and species, particularly in coastal locations, are currently affected by human disturbance, largely as a result of lack of understanding of the pressures caused by recreational activities. Beachnesting birds are a particular cause for concern, as are impacts on sensitive habitats such as saltmarsh and sand dunes.

Housing development locally and in nearby growth areas, combined with predictions that changing climate may increase numbers of coastal visitors, suggests that visitor numbers are likely to increase in future, which may potentially increase pressures on sensitive habitats and species.

Awareness of wildlife, landscape and historic environment sensitivities, and of ways to enjoy the area sustainably, need raising to encourage sensitive behaviour by visitors and recreational users, with consistent messages communicated throughout the area.

High levels of car traffic in peak periods causes congestion and parking problems in coastal settlements, and affects tranquillity, landscape and settlement character.

Some parts of the area are more sensitive and under pressure from visitor numbers, while other parts are less sensitive and could potentially accommodate more visitors without detracting from natural beauty, with economic benefits.

Objectives 2014-19: by 2019...

OR1 Information on current and future site user numbers, behaviours, visit profiles and recreational activities, particularly those that may affect coastal Natura 2000 sites, will have been further improved and used to develop information for the tourism sector, visitors and recreational users, and management of pressures on sensitive sites.

OR2 Cooperation will have been further developed between the tourism sector, conservation organisations and local communities to develop understanding and more sustainable enjoyment of the area by visitors and local residents, and to manage pressures on key sites, particularly for coastal Natura 2000 sites, by providing clear and consistent information and guidance

Policies 2014-19

Members of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, including the staff team will cooperate and share information to...

PR1 Continue to improve communication of the area's special qualities, including seascapes

PR2 Continue to improve understanding about current and future visitor numbers, behaviours, visit profiles and recreational activities, particularly for coastal Natura 2000 sites

PR3 Investigate and seek to secure funding contributions from new housing development, both within and outside the area, that are likely to provide sources of recreational pressures on Natura 2000 sites, to enable their mitigation

PR4 Develop consistent messages with the tourism sector and local communities about promotion of the area that takes into account sensitivity to visitor and recreational pressures and capacity to manage these

PR5 Work with tourism businesses to develop and promote ways for visitors to contribute to conserving and enhancing the features and qualities that bring them to the area, and to maximise benefits and minimise impacts from visitors to communities

PR6 Develop integrated and holistic management of recreation activities along the area's coast to provide opportunities that do not impact on sensitive sites, especially coastal Natura 2000 sites

PR7 Ensure that opportunities, information and incentives for visitors to enjoy the area without using the car, including new public access links, are easily available and increased where appropriate

PR8 Encourage the provision of appropriate levels and types of visitor facilities and information at key sites, including public lavatories and facilities for visitors with restricted mobility, together with information that promotes the aims of the AONB management plan in a coordinated way and ensure that opportunities and information are easily available for all actual and potential users to enable enjoyment of the range of the area's natural beauty sensitively and encourage suitable activities away from sensitive areas.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This document, i.e. the Strategy, including the visions, objectives and policies, will continue to be reviewed at five-yearly intervals, so the next plan will be published in 2024. A new five-year Action Plan will also be prepared as part of this review, based on the objectives and policies. This will enable the plan to continue to adapt to changing circumstances as necessary.

Monitoring the condition of the area's natural beauty

Monitoring of the condition of the area, in terms of the state of its natural beauty, is covered in Section 3 'A special place'. The assessment of current condition is based on a set of indicators, which are limited by currently available information and by resources required to survey and set up new indicators specifically for the area and to repeat surveys at five yearly intervals.

The current condition includes some assessment of trends, where information is available to support this. The assessment will be repeated before the next review of the Management Plan i.e. at approximately five years from the assessment presented in this plan and published as part of the review. In this way, the condition monitoring will continue to provide input to management of the area.

Monitoring implementation of the Management Plan

The objectives, policies and actions within the 2019-24 Management Plan have all been formulated with the intention of conserving and enhancing the area's natural beauty, which is the focus of the plan. It may not always be possible to relate observed improvements in the condition of natural beauty to specific policies or actions, but maintenance and improvement of the area's natural beauty observed through condition monitoring should provide a strong indication that policies and actions are having a positive effect. Similarly, negative changes will highlight aspects where further consideration is required, both in the current Action Plan and in the next five-year plan.

In the revised Strategy (this document) the objectives and policies are drawn from the issues (including those arising from condition assessments), and from the vision for the AONB and its management. An Action Plan based on these objectives and policies has also been developed by Partnership representatives. The action plan sets out specific actions agreed by the Partnership and assigns lead partners and indicative timescales to these actions looking five years ahead. Other key plans and initiatives that have an important influence on the area, and which may help to implement policies and achieve objectives are summarised in Appendix 1 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for this strategy.

While objectives and policies will remain unchanged over the five years of the plan, the Action Plan will be reviewed and updated at least annually to take account of actions completed and to allow review and updating of actions and priorities. Monitoring of progress on the Action Plan will be done through a review by the Partners and there will be a publicly available document to show actions completed, in progress, modified or added. An annual progress report will also be published.

APPENDIX 1 – GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

- **Agri-environment schemes.** Grant schemes supporting farmers and land managers in providing environmental benefits according to set criteria as part of farming or management operations. In England, from 2015 these were known as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
- **Biodiversity.** Shorthand for biological diversity, defined in the Convention on Biological Diversity as: the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
- **Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).** Biodiversity Action Plans (national, regional and local) were the response to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity, focusing on characteristic and rare habitats and species for that area and how to conserve these assets. The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', published in July 2012, succeeds the UK BAP and 'Conserving Biodiversity – the UK Approach', and is the result of a change in strategic thinking following the publication of the CBD's 'Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011– 2020' and its 20 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets', at Nagoya, Japan in October 2010, and the launch of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS) in May 2011. However, BAP habitats and species remain relevant as priorities for conservation.
- **Biofuels and biomass.** Biofuels are gases or liquids – for example methane, alcohols, and biodiesel (which may be made from agricultural crops or waste). Biomass is solid material e.g. woodchip or dried vegetable material such as elephant grass (*miscanthus*), used to provide heat by burning, which may also be used to produce electricity.
- **Bronze Age.** In Britain this refers to the period of approximately 1,700 years from around 2500 BC until around 800 BC (around 4,500 to 2,800 before present). It was preceded by the Neolithic era and was in turn followed by the Iron Age era. It was marked by the use of copper and then bronze by the prehistoric Britons to make tools also saw the widespread adoption of agriculture. During the British Bronze Age, large megalithic monuments similar to those from the Late Neolithic continued to be constructed or modified, including such sites as Avebury, Stonehenge and Silbury Hill. This has been described as a time “when elaborate ceremonial practices emerged among some communities of subsistence agriculturalists of western Europe.
- **Carstone.** Carstone is an iron-rich sedimentary sandstone conglomerate formed between about 103 and 110 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. It varies in colour from light to dark rusty ginger and can be found used as a building stone in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and extensively in the historic buildings of North-west Norfolk. One of the oldest exposed geological strata in the AONB, spectacularly seen underlying the younger Red Chalk and upper Cretaceous Chalk in Hunstanton cliffs.
- **Chalk river.** Chalk rivers are fed primarily by springs emanating from chalk aquifers, producing clear waters and a generally stable flow and temperature regime, which potentially support a rich and distinctive ecosystem of plant and invertebrate life and higher animals. English chalk rivers are all located in the south and east, from Dorset to East Yorkshire and constitute the principal resource of chalk rivers in Europe. The small rivers

that flow into the North Sea through the AONB are all chalk rivers, although their quality varies because of drainage operations and pollution.

- **Coasthopper.** A successful bus service currently operated along the Norfolk coast. Runs very regular services between Hunstanton and Sheringham, with connections and extensions on some services to King's Lynn and Cromer.
- **Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act.** Passed in 2000, the Act consists of four parts. Part I contains measures to improve public access to the open countryside and registered common land ('open access'); Part II amends the law relating to rights of way; Part III amends the law relating to nature conservation by strengthening protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest and provides a basis for the conservation of biological diversity; Part IV provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including a duty of care for public bodies and a duty to produce AONB Management Plans.
- **Ecosystem.** An ecosystem is a community of living organisms (plants, animals and microbes) in conjunction with the non-living components of their environment (things like air, water and mineral soil), interacting as a system. These biotic and abiotic components are regarded as linked together through nutrient cycles and energy flows. As ecosystems are defined by the network of interactions among organisms, and between organisms and their environment, they can be of any size but usually encompass specific, limited spaces (although some scientists say that the entire planet is an ecosystem)
- **Environmental Stewardship (ES).** Agri-environment scheme for England introduced in 2005 and administered by Natural England, replacing previous Countryside Stewardship scheme. To be replaced in 2015 by a new Countryside Stewardship scheme following CAP reform.
- **European Marine Site.** A marine area, including intertidal areas, designated under the European Union Habitats Directive and the UK Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 as a Special Area of Conservation or a Special Protection Area. Unlike on land where SACs and SPAs are underpinned by Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), there is no existing legislative framework for implementing the Habitats Directive in marine areas. Therefore, the Regulations have a number of provisions specifically for new responsibilities and measures in relation to marine areas. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site consists of a large marine and intertidal area from Gibraltar Point on the northern edge of the Wash to Weybourne on the north Norfolk coast.
- **Geodiversity, geomorphology.** Geodiversity may be defined as the natural range (diversity) of geological features (rocks, minerals, fossils, structures), geomorphological features (landforms and processes), soil and natural water features that compose and shape the physical landscape. Geomorphology is the physical features and natural processes operating on the surface of the Earth which enable us to understand landforms and their origin.
- **Glacial, glaciation, glacio-fluvial (see also Ice Age).** Terms referring to a period marked by colder temperatures and the advance of glaciers and ice sheets. Also referring to the physical processes associated with the activity and impact of glacier ice. The term glacio-fluvial refers to meltwater streams associated with glaciers and ice sheets and the deposits and landforms they produce.

- **Greenhouse gases.** Gases in the atmosphere, both natural and produced by man's activities, that allow radiation from the sun to reach the Earth's surface but reflect the different frequencies of heat radiation that are emitted back from the Earth. Greenhouse gases are essential to maintaining the temperature of the Earth but an increase in their concentration causes warming of the atmosphere. The most prominent greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide, which is produced by burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas but other gases such as methane, although present in lower concentrations, have a more powerful greenhouse effect.
- **Heritage Coast.** Heritage Coasts are the finest scenic areas of undeveloped coast in England and Wales. These non-statutory definitions have been agreed between the former Countryside Commission and local authorities. 32% (1,027km) of English coastline is defined as Heritage Coasts, most of which are within National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- **Ice Age.** An informal term for the Pleistocene period, lasting from c.2.5 million to 12,000 years ago, during which the world's climate markedly oscillated between colder (glacial) and warmer (interglacial) phases. Also sometimes used to refer to one of the colder glacial phases.
- **Marine Protected Area (MPA), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).** A Marine Protected Areas (MPA) is a clearly defined geographical space in the marine environment, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. The main types of marine protected areas in English waters are: European Marine Sites giving legal protection to species and habitats of European importance; Marine Conservation Zones and SSSIs with marine components giving protection to species and habitats of national importance. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site overlaps with the AONB in its intertidal area. There are currently no MCZs designated around the AONB, although there are some candidate sites.
- **Mesolithic, Neolithic, Palaeolithic.** Three divisions of the Stone Age, characterised by the use of stone tools by humans. The end of the Palaeolithic is traditionally positioned some 12,000 years ago, coinciding with the end of the Ice Age (the Pleistocene) but the beginnings of the Palaeolithic are more mysterious, perhaps over 3million years ago. During this long period, many different species of humans populated Earth, lived on a non-productive economy (scavenging, hunting, gathering), and based most of their technology on stone tool-making. In the Neolithic, from around 6000 to 4500 years ago there were farmers in settlements with domesticated animals and wheat, with over 100 kinds of tools and with pottery. The Mesolithic, from around 12,000 to 6,000 years ago, was a transitional period between the two and happened at different times in different places. Mesolithic tools are small tools produced by chipping, and are hunter-gatherer tools, often arrowheads and points. Neolithic tools are often polished and far more varied. They are tools of more settled societies with some agriculture.
- **Moraine.** An accumulation of unconsolidated soil and rock formed by the eroding and transporting action of a glacier or ice sheet. Terminal moraines are deposited at the leading edge of a glacier or ice sheet.

- **Natura 2000**, A European Union wide network of sites designated as Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation, which are intended to form a coherent ecological network of protected areas to conserve and enhance special and characteristic biodiversity and assure the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. The establishment of this network of protected areas fulfils a European Community obligation under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.
- **Renewable energy**. The most common definition is that renewable energy is from an energy resource that is replaced by a natural process at a rate that is equal to or faster than the rate at which that resource is being consumed. Renewable energy (sources) or RES capture their energy from existing flows of energy, from on-going natural processes, such as sunshine, wind, wave power, flowing water (hydropower), biological processes such as anaerobic digestion, and geothermal heat flow. Most renewable forms of energy, other than geothermal and tidal power, ultimately come from the Sun. Some forms are stored solar energy such as rainfall and wind power which are considered short-term solar-energy storage, whereas the energy in biomass is accumulated over a period of months, as in straw, or through many years as in wood.
- **Rural Development Programme**. The England Rural Development Programme is the instrument by which the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) fulfils its rural development obligations in England, as set out by the European Union under the Common Agricultural Policy with funding from the European Commission. The programme provides money for projects to improve rural life and businesses (administered through Local Action Groups) and to promote environmentally friendly ways of managing land and to sustain existing and create new areas of woodlands (administered by natural England and the Forestry Commission). There are separate rural development programmes for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- **Seascape and skyline**. Seascape, like landscape is about the relationship between people and place and the part it plays in forming the setting to our everyday lives. Seascape results from the way that the different components of our environment – both natural and cultural - interact together and are understood and experienced by people. Seascape is defined by Natural England in its position statement on All Landscapes Matter (2010) as: "An area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors". A skyline is a view in which the sky plays a significant or dominant role in the experience, either during daylight or at night, in which the colours and forms of sky and clouds or star constellations are an essential and dominant aspect of the viewing experience.
- **Setting (of heritage assets)**. The significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence and historic fabric but also from its setting – the surroundings in which it is experienced. Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as "The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral." This may form an important part of its historic environment and context or affect the quality of people's experience of the asset. The careful management of change within the surroundings of heritage assets therefore makes an important contribution to the quality of the places in which we live.

- **Sustainable / sustainability / sustainable development.** Any activity which we can predict will have unacceptable environmental or social consequences in the future, or which will not be possible to maintain financially, is not a sustainable activity. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from Our Common Future (1987), also known as the Brundtland Report: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.” The five principles from the UK Sustainable Development Strategy still form the basis for sustainable development in the UK and devolved administrations under the Government’s refreshed vision for sustainable development. These are living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; using sound science responsibly; promoting good governance. Sustainable policy must respect all five of these principles, though some policies, while underpinned by all five, will place more emphasis on certain principles than others.
- **Tranquillity.** Tranquillity is often thought of as a peaceful, calm state, without noise, violence, worry, etc and the undeveloped countryside and coast is often associated with tranquillity. Work undertaken by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) sought to quantify tranquillity on an objective basis, using people’s perceptions and including a wide range of factors such as naturalness, openness, distance from noise, development, numbers of people, light pollution etc. This culminated in a tranquillity map for England’s in 2008.
- **UKCIP and UKCP09.** The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) was established in 1997, based at the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford University, to help coordinate scientific research into the impacts of climate change and to share the outputs in ways that are useful to organisations in adapting to those unavoidable impacts. UK climate projections were initially produced in 2002 (UKCP02). Following discussions between Defra, the Met Office Hadley Centre and UKCIP to discuss possible improvements, UKCP09 was produced in 2009, funded by several agencies led by Defra. It is based on sophisticated scientific methods provided by the Met Office, with input from over 30 contributing organisations. UKCP09 can be used to help organisations assess potential impacts of the projected future climate and to explore adaptation options to address those impacts. There have been developments in climate modelling since its release but UKCP09 continues to provide a valid assessment of the UK climate and can still be used for adaptation planning. Options to update UKCP09 are currently being explored by government.

APPENDIX 2 – SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- 25 Year Environment Plan, 2018 (Defra): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>
- Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, 2011 (Defra): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services>
- Common Agricultural Policy reform: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-common-agricultural-policy-reform/2010-to-2015-government-policy-common-agricultural-policy-reform>
- Common Fisheries Policy reform: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05957/>
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>
- Designation History of the Norfolk Coast AONB (Ray Woolmore / Countryside Agency, 2001).
 - <https://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Designation-history-summary.pdf>
 - East Inshore and Offshore Marine Plan (Marine Management Organisation)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/312496/east-plan.pdf
- England Coast Path (Natural England):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/england-coast-path-improving-public-access-to-the-coast>
- Environmental Land Management Scheme (Natural England):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023/natural-england-action-plan-2022-to-2023--2>
- Heritage Coasts. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heritage-coasts-protecting-undeveloped-coast/heritage-coasts-definition-purpose-and-natural-englands-role>
- Landscapes for Life (National Association for AONBs) <http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk>
- Local plans for the relevant local authorities:
- Norfolk County Council: (Minerals and Waste Development Framework):
<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/environment-and-planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policies/norfolk-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-review>
- North Norfolk District Council: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/local-plan-current/>
- Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk: <https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/article/5194/Emerging-Local-Plan>
- Broads Authority: <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/planning/planning-policies/development>
- Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/contents>
- National Character Area (NCA) profiles can be found on Natural England's website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>
- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97>

- National Planning Policy Framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>
- National Trails: Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path: https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/peddars-way-and-norfolk-coast-path/
- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership: <https://newanglia.co.uk/>
- Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plans <https://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/what-we-do/>
- Norfolk Historic Environment Record, Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service; accessed via the Norfolk Heritage Explorer at <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk>
- Norfolk Rights of way Improvement Plan: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/out-and-about-in-norfolk/public-rights-of-way/norfolk-access-improvement-plan>
- Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act, 1988: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/4/contents>
- Norfolk Rural Development Strategy (Norfolk County Council): <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/business-policies/rural-development-strategy>
- Shoreline Management Plans relevant for the Norfolk Coast AONB:
 - SMP4 The Wash (Gibraltar Point to Old Hunstanton): <http://www.eacg.org.uk/smp4.asp>
 - SMP5 North Norfolk (Old Hunstanton to Kelling Hard): <http://www.eacg.org.uk/smp5.asp>
 - SMP6 Kelling Hard to Lowestoft Ness: <http://www.eacg.org.uk/smp6.asp>
- Sustrans National Cycle Network <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network>
- UK Climate Impacts Programme report (UKCP 2009): <https://catalogue.ceda.ac.uk/uuid/077fd790439c44b99962552af8d37a22>
- Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership <https://wnnmp.co.uk/>
- Water Framework Directive: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/407/contents/made>

Schedule of changes made by KO following input on Revision 1 text (Revision 2)

Section	Page #	Current text	Proposed change
2. Setting the Scene	8	N/A	Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) is located 200 metres off the North Norfolk Coast, beginning west of Weybourne and ending at Happisburgh. It was designated in 2016 for an area of seaweed-dominated infralittoral rock (321 km ²) which is an important habitat for a variety of species in an otherwise predominantly sandy environment.
2. Setting the Scene	9	AONBs in the Town and Country Planning System	AONB's within National Planning Policy
3. A special place	19	suggests that visitor figures are stable	suggests that visitor figures are growing (where is this evidence from?)
3. A special place	19	Most of the area has been objectively assessed as tranquil or very tranquil in a 2006 national study by CPRE, with western and eastern outliers and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast being the most tranquil areas, although the study has not been repeated to enable an assessment of trends	Text re-instated.
A special place	22	Shoreline Management Plans are the recognised means of managing the coastline within the AONB.	Shoreline Management Plans and relevant Local Plans are the recognised means of managing the coastline within the AONB.
A special place	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work within the Shoreline Management Plan to plan and prepare for managed change if necessary, which maintains the special qualities of the area in such a way that any negative impacts on coastal communities and habitats can be properly mitigated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work within the Shoreline Management Plan and relevant Local Plan policies to plan and prepare for managed change if necessary, which maintains the special qualities of the area in such a way that any negative impacts on coastal communities and habitats can be properly mitigated.
3. A special place	22	Scientific research and historic records show that global and local climates have changed over geological and shorter timescales, through natural cycles and events. However, there is almost unanimous consensus in the scientific community, based on a vast body of evidence, that emission of 'greenhouse gases', mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, is driving relatively rapid global climate change. Although the overall global effect is climate warming, there may be local cooling effects through changes in ocean currents and large-scale weather systems.	Scientific research and historic records show that global and local climates have changed over geological and shorter timescales, through natural cycles and events. However, the emission of 'greenhouse gases', mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, is driving relatively rapid global climate change at an unsustainable rate. All areas of the UK are projected to experience warming, with greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
3. A special place	24	N/A	Environment policy The Defra 25 Year Plan for the Environment (2018) is part of the UK Government's goal to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than we found it. It is

			supported by the Environment Act (2021), which provides the Government with powers to set new, binding targets for air quality, water, biodiversity and waste reduction. Key for AONB management is the creation of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN), a national network of wildlife-rich places designed to address biodiversity loss, climate change and wellbeing. This will be mapped via Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), a new mandatory system of spatial strategies for nature, designed to be tools to encourage more coordinated, practical and focused action and investment in nature. A new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) approach to development and land management will also influence future management and increased use of nature-based solutions within AONBs.
3. A special place	25	N/A	The District of North Norfolk is one of the most rural in lowland England and had a reported resident population of 103,587 in 2016 and is predicted to have a population of 112,078 by 2036 according to the latest Office for National Statistics projection (2016 base). Approximately half the population lives in the major towns and villages, with the other half living in the large number of smaller villages, hamlets and scattered dwellings which are dispersed throughout the rural area.
3. A special place	25	Estimates of population and trends from the 2001 and 2011 census suggest that the population for parishes wholly within the designated area in 2011 was 13,235, which is 652 (4.7%) fewer than in 2011 – possibly because of a continuing increase in second / holiday homes. The fall in population is apparently much greater than 4.7% in some parishes (see table 4, Appendix 2 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment)	Estimates of population and trends from the 2001 and 2011 census suggest that the population for parishes wholly within the AONB in 2011 was 13,235, which is 652 (4.7%) fewer than in 2011. The fall in population is apparently much greater than 4.7% in some parishes (see table 4, Appendix 2 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment). Within North Norfolk, household growth between 2018 and 2028 is projected to be an average of 402 households per year, derived from the National Household Projections (2014 base).
3. A special place	25	Provision for 560 new dwellings in the AONB has been made in the North Norfolk Local Development Framework (LDF) (Site Allocations, 2011), most of these being on the fringes of Sheringham and Cromer, and at Wells.	The emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk District Council, along with emerging Neighbourhood Plans, makes provision for housing growth within the AONB. Housing allocations are planned in Cromer, Blakeney and Wells where appropriate locations have been selected.

3. A special place	25	N/A	Great Yarmouth has an adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and Local Plan Part 2 (2021), while Winterton-on-Sea is identified as a Primary Village the plans do not specifically allocate any sites for development. Winterton-on-Sea Neighbourhood Plan generally seeks to protect and enhance the parish and the plan does not contain any allocations for development.
3. A special place	25	<p>New housing in and around the AONB is likely to remain a strong economic proposition for developers; the quality of the local environment and its popularity with visitors means that new houses sell well at high prices. New housing provision in and close to the AONB has potential benefits for the local economy and viability of services and there is a need for 'affordable housing' to enable people working in local jobs, at least some of which contribute to maintaining the area's natural beauty, to live in the area. It can be difficult to finance affordable housing provision without subsidy as part of a commercial housing development, which can lead to development pressures beyond the housing actually required in the area.</p> <p>In the longer term, it may be necessary in accordance with the Shoreline Management Plan to plan for at least some coastal settlements to 'roll back' or to relocate inland in order to maintain living, working communities on the coast as the coastline changes (see the 'Coastal processes' and 'Climate change' sections above). This may mean planning to build on areas that have previously been outside the settlement development envelope, and in some cases allowing settlements that are currently 'hemmed in' by the AONB boundary to roll back into the AONB.</p>	<p>New housing in and around the AONB is likely to remain a strong economic proposition for developers due to the quality of the local environment. New housing provision in and close to the AONB has potential benefits for the local economy and viability of services and there is a need for housing provision to meet local needs so that a wide range of people are able to continue to live and work within the AONB.</p> <p>Local Plans have specific policies that facilitate the adaptation of coastal communities to climate change and specifically to consider the relocation and replacement of dwellings affected by coastal erosion</p>
3. A special place	26	Housing targets also contribute to pressures for expansion of some of the larger settlements on the AONB boundaries, particularly where areas for expansion are limited by the coastline and other factors, and some incursions into the AONB have already taken place. Even new housing outside the AONB boundary can have visual impacts on the setting of the AONB as well as some indirect effects, as noted above.	Deleted

3. A special place	26	For wind energy, the main focus at present is on offshore development, although a few relatively small-scale onshore wind farms are present in or close to the AONB. Offshore, large wind farms are operating and frequently clearly visible from the AONB - in the Wash off the Lincolnshire coast (Lincs, Lynn, Inner Dowsing), off Sheringham (Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal) and off Winterton-on-Sea (Scroby Sands). Two further offshore wind farms are already consented off the North Norfolk Heritage Coast (Dudgeon and Race Bank) although it looks likely that any other future offshore wind farms will be well offshore	For wind energy, the main focus at present is on offshore development, although a few relatively small-scale onshore wind farms are present in or close to the AONB. The North Norfolk Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2021 Supplementary Planning Document) identifies suitable areas within the AONB where onshore wind energy may be appropriate, and this is set out in the emerging Local Plan. Offshore, large wind farms are operating and frequently clearly visible from the AONB - in the Wash off the Lincolnshire coast (Lincs, Lynn, Inner Dowsing), off Sheringham (Dudgeon and Sheringham Shoal) and off Winterton-on-Sea (Scroby Sands). Three further offshore wind farms are already consented off the North Norfolk Heritage Coast (Dudgeon, Race Bank and Hornsea Three).
3. A special place	27	N/A – new text	In conjunction with Natural England, Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk have adopted a strategic mitigation package (GIRAMS) to offset adverse impacts from new residential and tourism development and increased visitor pressure on the designated European sites which form much of the valued landscape of the AONB.
3. A special place	30	N/A additional text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a risk of inappropriate tree species (such as Paulownia) being planted for carbon sequestration, causing damage to both landscape and biodiversity

Schedule of changes made by KO to original text (Revision 1 & RAG rating updates)

Section	Page #	Current text	Proposed change	Status
Appendices + References	All	N/A	Please note – references, numbering and appendices will be updated once the draft text is finalised.	N/A
Forewords	2	Deleted. Will be replaced with new text in next MP	N/A	Agreed
2. Setting the Scene	5	There are currently 36 AONBs in England, five wholly in Wales with one straddling both countries, and a further eight in Northern Ireland.	There are currently 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.	Agreed
2. Setting the Scene	6	as Oftel (Office of Telecommunications),	as Ofcom (Office of Communications),	Agreed

2. Setting the Scene	7	a small team of five people, who facilitate and support the operation of the Norfolk Coast Partnership, coordinating and leading on actions to implement the AONB Management Plan	Employed to facilitate and support Norfolk Coast Partnership operations. Coordinating and implementing actions in line with the AONB Management Plan under direction of the CMG.	Agreed
2. Setting the Scene	7	Core funds alone are not sufficient to undertake many of the actions in the AONB Action Plan. One of the functions of the Staff Team is to generate additional funding to implement priority actions. At any particular time during the lifetime of the plan, there are likely to be a number of projects involving different partner organisations and coordinated by the Staff Team, utilising funding from public, private and charitable sources to achieve the objectives of the management plan. Details of current 'external' funding and projects will be available on the Norfolk Coast Partnership web site.	Core funding is supplemented by project work, utilising external funding from public, private and charitable sources to achieve the objectives of the management plan. Details of current projects and funding sources are available on the Norfolk Coast Partnership web site.	Agreed
2. Setting the Scene	8	The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site (EMS), which was protected in 1996 for its significance in a European context, encompasses 108,000 hectares of the marine environment covering the Wash and extending along the Norfolk coast to Weybourne, overlapping with the AONB designation in the intertidal area. It combines Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under European Union legislation and is part of the 'Natura 2000' network of European sites for nature conservation. There are close links between the Wash and North Norfolk Coast EMS Management Scheme partnership and the Norfolk Coast Partnership – many representatives sit on both partnerships and staff cooperate closely to pursue joint interests and initiatives.	The Wash and North Norfolk Coast Marine Protected Area Network encompasses 108,000 hectares of the marine environment covering the Wash and extending along the Norfolk coast to Weybourne, overlapping with the AONB designation in the intertidal area. It combines Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are close links between the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership and the Norfolk Coast Partnership – many representatives sit on both partnerships and staff cooperate closely to pursue joint interests and initiatives.	Edited – see new draft
2. Setting the Scene	8	Government has committed to ensuring that a well-managed UK Marine Protected Area	N/A – text deleted	Agreed

		network, covering in excess of 25% of English waters, will be in place by the end of 2016. This could entail the designation of further Marine Protected Areas overlapping or offshore from the AONB, such as Marine Conservation Zones and Special Protection Areas for bird species reliant on the marine environment		
2. Setting the Scene	9-11	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework, published as guidance in March 2012, contains key guidance in the following paragraphs:</p> <p>14. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking.</p> <p>For plan-making this means that local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted. <p>For decision-taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where the development plan is absent, silent or</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published as guidance in 2012 and revised in 2021 contains key guidance:</p> <p>“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”</p> <p>The planning system has three overarching, interdependent objectives for achieving sustainable development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure. Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being Environmental – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. 	Agreed

		<p>relevant policies are out of date, granting permission unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted. <p>For example, those policies relating to sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives (see paragraph 119) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park (or the Broads Authority); designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion.</p> <p>10 Unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>113. Local planning authorities should set criteria-based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites,²⁴ so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks.</p> <p>114. Local planning authorities should:</p>	<p>To ensure that sustainable development is pursued in positive way, a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the core of the NPPF.</p> <p>For plan-making this means that:</p> <p>a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure improve the environment mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects <p>b) Strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole <p>For decision-taking this means:</p> <p>c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or</p> <p>d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁷; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole. 	
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<p>Page 86</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and • maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast. <p>115. Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.</p> <p>116. Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy; - the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and - any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and 	<p>The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in NPPF paragraph 181) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in NPPF footnote 68); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.</p> <p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan) - Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland - Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate - Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures - Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans - Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate. <p>Plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the NPPF; take</p>	
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		<p>recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.</p> <p>24. Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system</p> <p>25 English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.</p> <p>Following through from this high-level guidance, local plans also contain policies designed to conserve and enhance natural beauty in designated AONBs, as well as provide protection for sites and areas designated for other reasons, usually biodiversity or cultural value. Local planning authorities therefore play a prime role in managing the AONB, in terms of managing development.</p>	<p>a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.</p> <p>Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.</p> <p>Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy - The cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way - Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated. <p>Following through from this high-level guidance, local plans also contain policies designed to conserve and enhance natural beauty in designated AONBs, as well as provide protection for sites and areas designated for other reasons, usually biodiversity or cultural value. Local planning authorities therefore play a lead role in managing development withing the AONB.</p>	
3. A special place	14	The area is rich in archaeological and historical sites, many of which have roots in the coastal	The area is rich in archaeological and historical sites, many of which have roots in the coastal location, with remains and features dating back	Agreed

		location, with remains and features dating back to the Palaeolithic and giving a strong 'time depth' to much of its landscape. The intertidal 'Seahenge' and Salthouse Heath burial ground from the Bronze Age, Branodunum Roman coastal fort, medieval harbours and structures and coastal airfields and bases from the Second World War are all examples. It's important heritage of Ice Age landforms contributes another time-depth dimension.	to the early Pleistocene and giving a strong 'time depth' to much of its landscape. The Happisburgh footprints (the oldest known hominid footprints outside of Africa), the Bronze Age intertidal Seahenge and Salthouse Heath burial ground, the ancient Roman fort of Branodunum, medieval harbours and Second World War airfields and defence structure are all examples. Ice Age landforms shaped by the most recent glaciation (18,000 years ago) further contribute to the sense of history within the AONB	
3. A special place	17-20	N/A	2022 update to assessment of the 7 key qualities of natural beauty (QNB)	Agreed
3. A special place	19	1. Dynamic character and geomorphology of the coast. Movement and interchange of internationally recognised geomorphological features and habitats. Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN	Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN 2022 update: AMBER	Agreed
3. A special place	19-20	2. Strong and distinctive links between land and sea. The area's distinctive and unique character is based on the visual, ecological, socio-economic and functional links between land and sea. Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: AMBER	Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: AMBER 2022 update: AMBER	Agreed
3. A special place	20	3. Diversity and integrity of landscape, seascape and settlement character. Key quality is based on maintaining diversity of character types rather than uniformity across the area, including landscapes and seascapes, settlement pattern, building materials and styles. Overall assessment: Since designation: AMBER 2014-19: AMBER	Overall assessment: Since designation: AMBER 2014-19: AMBER 2022 update: AMBER	Agreed

3. A special place	21	<p>4. Exceptionally important, varied and distinctive biodiversity, based on locally distinctive habitats. Recognised by a range of national and international designations. Coastal habitats are particularly important and most famous for birds, supporting iconic species. Inland habitats and species are also important, particularly lowland heath.</p> <p>Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside 2014-19: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside</p>	<p>Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside 2014-19: GREEN for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside 2022 update: AMBER for designated sites, AMBER for wider countryside</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	21	<p>5. Nationally and internationally important geology. Mainly based on past glaciation and current coastal processes. Includes landforms and landscape scale features as well as individual sites.</p> <p>Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN</p>	<p>Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN 2022 Update: GREEN</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	22	<p>6. Sense of remoteness, tranquillity and wildness. A low level of development and population density for lowland coastal England, leading to dark night skies and a general sense of remoteness and tranquillity away from busier roads and settlements and, particularly for undeveloped parts of the coast, of wildness.</p> <p>Overall assessment: Since designation: AMBER 2014-19: AMBER</p>	<p>Overall assessment: Since designation: AMBER 2014-19: AMBER 2022 update: AMBER</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	22-23	<p>7. Richness of archaeological heritage and historic environment, particularly that relating to the coast and its character. Evidence and features of human use of the area since prehistoric times and links to current uses and features.</p>	<p>Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN 2022 update: GREEN</p>	Agreed

		Overall assessment: Since designation: GREEN 2014-19: GREEN		
3. A special place	20	suggests that visitor figures are stable	suggests that visitor figures are growing	Agreed
3. A special place	20	Most of the area has been objectively assessed as tranquil or very tranquil in a 2006 national study by CPRE, with western and eastern outliers and the North Norfolk Heritage Coast being the most tranquil areas, although the study has not been repeated to enable an assessment of trends	Deleted.	Agreed
3. A special place	22	Scientific research and historic records show that global and local climates have changed over geological and shorter timescales, through natural cycles and events. However, there is almost unanimous consensus in the scientific community, based on a vast body of evidence, that emission of 'greenhouse gases', mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, is driving relatively rapid global climate change. Although the overall global effect is climate warming, there may be local cooling effects through changes in ocean currents and large-scale weather systems.	Scientific research and historic records show that global and local climates have changed over geological and shorter timescales, through natural cycles and events. However, it is widely accepted that emission of 'greenhouse gases', mainly carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, is driving relatively rapid global climate change. All areas of the UK are projected to experience warming, with greater chance of warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.	Agreed
3. A special place	22	Recent analysis suggests that the global target of a limit of 2°C beyond which more serious impacts of climate change are unavoidable, is unlikely to be met under realistic emissions scenarios. The unknown contributions from 'feedback' mechanisms that are as yet poorly understood and unpredictable, such as the release of carbon from permafrost and marine methane hydrates, which might be triggered by higher global temperatures, could further magnify the effect.	Deleted	Agreed
3. A special place	22	The figures used here are based on those from the latest UK Climate Impacts Programme with Predictions report (UKCP 2009). However, predictions are being constantly revised and	The UK Climate Projections (UKCP) is a climate analysis tool which provides the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate may change in the future. The data used here are taken from the latest projections (UKCP18).	Agreed

		there have been continually increasing global greenhouse gas emissions since the baselines on which these predictions are founded, so revised predictions are likely to suggest higher figures / shorter timescales for change.		
3. A special place	22	However, within this context of longer-term climate change, shorter term forecasts are uncertain and weather may not follow these trends within the five year timescale of the Management Plan. Other indirect impacts of atmospheric carbon dioxide increase and climate change, including jet stream disruption, frequency of extreme weather events, polar ice recession, changes in ocean currents and ocean acidification are not quantified but all are likely to have additional impacts. The assessment within UKCP09 is that it is very unlikely that an abrupt change to the Atlantic Ocean Circulation (Gulf Stream), which exerts a strong influence on UK climate, will occur this century.	Deleted	Agreed
3. A special place	23	Sea level rise is related to climate change, a warmer global climate giving rise to both thermal expansion of sea water and input of additional water through melting of land ice (Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, and mountain ice caps and glaciers), with temperature increases predicted to be more marked for polar and high latitude regions. The seas warm much more slowly than the air, so ocean warming and sea level rise lag behind atmospheric temperature changes. Even if the trend of global air temperature increase were to stop now, sea temperature rise, and other associated changes would continue for decades or longer.	<p>Global sea level has risen over the 20th Century and will continue to rise over the coming centuries. Linked to climate change, a warmer global climate causes thermal expansion of sea water and input of additional water through melting ice sheets, ice caps and glaciers. Water warms more slowly than air, causing ocean warming and sea level rise lag behind atmospheric temperature changes. Even if the trend of global air temperature increase were to stop now, sea temperature rise, and other associated changes would continue for decades or longer.</p> <p>Mean sea level around the UK has risen by about 17cm since the start of the 20th century (when corrected for land movement - see 'Coastal processes'). UK tide gauge records show substantial yearly changes in coastal water levels, typically in the range of several centimetres.</p>	Agreed

		Sea levels rose by about 1 mm a year during the 20th century, allowing for isostatic readjustment (see 'Coastal processes'). The rate since the 1990s has been higher than this, and globally sea level rise is currently about 3mm a year.		
3. A special place	23	<p>In UKCP18, the range of absolute sea level rise around the UK (before land movements are included) is projected to be between 12 and 76 cm for the period 1990–2095. Taking vertical land movement into account gives slightly larger sea level rise projections relative to the land in the more southern parts of the UK where land is subsiding. For London (the nearest reference point to the East of England) sea level rise is predicted to be between about 8-11cm by 2020, between about 18-26cm by 2050 and between about 30-43cm by 2080.</p> <p>Future projected trends in storm surge height are small everywhere around the UK, and seasonal mean and extreme waves are generally projected to experience little change in the southern North Sea. The shelf seas around the UK are projected to be 1.5 to 4°C warmer and ~0.2 practical salinity units (p.s.u.) fresher (lower salinity) by the end of the 21st century. The strength and period of summer stratification is projected to increase in the future.</p>	<p>Based in UKCP18 projections, in London (the nearest reference point to the East of England), sea level rise by the end of the century is very likely to be in the range of 0.29 – 0.70 metres in a low emission scenario. In a high emission scenario, this increases to 0.53 – 1.15 metres.</p> <p>The shelf seas around the UK are projected to be 1.5 to 4°C warmer and ~0.2 practical salinity units (p.s.u.) fresher (lower salinity) by the end of the 21st century. The strength and period of summer stratification is projected to increase in the future.</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	25	Provision for 560 new dwellings in the AONB has been made in the North Norfolk Local Development Framework (LDF) (Site Allocations, 2011), most of these being on the fringes of Sheringham and Cromer, and at Wells. Modest allocations for some AONB villages are suggested in the draft allocations for the West Norfolk LDF (2013), although significant growth is anticipated	<p>The emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk District Council, along with emerging Neighbourhood Plans, makes provision for housing growth within the AONB. Housing allocations are planned in Cromer, Blakeney and Wells where appropriate locations have been selected.</p> <p>Modest allocations for some AONB villages are suggested in the draft allocations for the West Norfolk Local Plan, although significant growth is anticipated close to the AONB around Hunstanton and Kings Lynn.</p>	Agreed

		close to the AONB around Hunstanton and Kings Lynn. No draft allocations have yet been published for the Great Yarmouth LDF.	Great Yarmouth has an adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) and Local Plan Part 2 (2021), while Winterton-on-Sea is identified as a Primary Village the plans do not specifically allocate any sites for development. Winterton-on-Sea Neighbourhood Plan generally seeks to protect and enhance the parish and the plan does not contain any allocations for development.	
3. A special place	27	<p>A study in 2006 estimated that there were almost 2 million tourism day trips to the area per annum, with a value of around £51 million. More recent estimates available for some individual sites and attractions, together with traffic count figures on the A149 coast road and the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail, suggest that numbers have probably been fairly stable recently after increasing during the 1990s.</p> <p>As examples of the scale of numbers at some sites, Titchwell Marsh, Cley Marshes and Lady Anne's Drive at Holkham are estimated to receive up to about 1,000,000 visitors per year, whilst high numbers are also estimated for others such as Sheringham Park (180,000) and Blakeney and Morston quays (140,000).</p>	<p>Data from 2017 paints a clear picture of the importance of the tourism sector. Within North Norfolk alone, the total number of trips (day and overnight) was more than 8.8 million. There was ~6% growth in day trips and ~12% growth in overnight stays from 2016. The total value of tourism for the area grew by 3% from 2016 to £505 million and the number of people employed in the tourism industry reached 11,352. The 12% increase in the number of overnight trips to North Norfolk is against a 3% increase in the same statistic across England as a whole.</p> <p>As examples of the scale of numbers at some sites, the Holkham Estate estimates that around 800,000 people and 300,000 dogs visit every year whilst Norfolk Wildlife Trust receives more than 110,000 to Cley and Salthouse marshes.</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	27	The development of the England Coast Path with associated 'spreading room' by Natural England around the coast under the Marine and Coastal Access Act will continue during the period of the AONB plan. The route of the section from Sea Palling to Weybourne has been approved and is expected to open in 2014, with Hopton to Sea Palling and Weybourne to Hunstanton to follow in succeeding years. This is likely to attract additional visitors, with associated economic benefits, although development of the routes and spreading room will take potential impacts on nature conservation into account.	The development of the England Coast Path with associated 'spreading room' by Natural England around the coast under the Marine and Coastal Access Act will continue during the period of the AONB plan. The route currently runs from Hunstanton in west Norfolk to Hopton-on-Sea, with the final section along the coast of the Wash (King's Lynn to Hunstanton) in development. This is likely to attract additional visitors, with associated economic benefits, although development of the routes and spreading room will take potential impacts on nature conservation into account.	Agreed

<div> <div>Page 94</div> <div>3. A special place</div> </div>	28-29	<p>Review of the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has recently been completed although exactly how this will translate into national policy and schemes has yet to be finalised.</p> <p>Environmental schemes and the Rural Development Programme will get a higher proportion of the CAP budget than they did under the previous CAP (12% rather than 9%) although this is less than the maximum 15% that many environmental organisations would have preferred and the overall budget is smaller. From 2015, support for farmers under a new agrienvironment scheme³⁰ will replace support under existing Environmental Stewardship and forestry grant schemes as agreements under these expire. A large proportion of the AONB is farmland and environmental organisations also rely on agri environment funding to manage reserves, so how the scheme is developed, targeted and applied in the AONB, as well as the funding available, will have a significant influence on the conservation and enhancement of the area’s natural beauty.</p> <p>Global market commodity prices remain volatile, subject to variations from supply and demand, and profit margins in agriculture, forestry and fishing are also affected by high input costs, including fuel and fertiliser. The take-up of the new agri-environment scheme will depend on the availability of funding and judgements by farmers of security of income, environmental and financial considerations, and flexibility of management.</p>	<p>The UK is no longer part of the European Union and is in the process of replacing the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with alternative schemes. Farming in England is moving away from top-down, arbitrary land-based subsidies towards schemes which recognise farmers as stewards of the natural environment. Policy reforms aim to support productive and sustainable farming and food production alongside environmental, climate and animal welfare outcomes.</p> <p>This is supported by an updated plan from Defra – The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021-24 – which outlines initiatives to increase biodiversity, restore landscapes, promote animal welfare and increase productivity through investment in new equipment and technology. Three new, complimentary Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) are proposed to support the vision for the future of farming payments. Schemes are voluntary, and designed to be accessible, supportive and with fair compensation to incentivise high levels of uptake leading to ambitious outcomes. All schemes will be designed to pay for public goods which go above and beyond regulatory baselines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Farming Incentive. Making agricultural activities more sustainable, will pay for actions at scale across the whole farmed landscape. • Local Nature Recovery. More ambitious successor to Countryside Stewardship. Supports local collaboration to make space for nature in the farmed landscape and contribute to targets for trees, peatland restoration, habitat creation and restoration and natural flood management. • Landscape Recovery. Pays landowners or managers who want to take a more radical, long-term and large-scale approach to producing environmental and climate outcomes through land use change and habitat and ecosystem restoration. <p>A large proportion of the AONB is farmland, with many environmental organisations also relying on agri environment funding to manage reserves. The development and implementation of ELMs is therefore</p>	Agreed
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			likely to have a significant influence on the conservation and enhancement of the area's natural beauty.	
3. A special place	29	<p>Following more than three years of negotiations, fundamental reform of the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been agreed. The reforms include a commitment to end overfishing and gradually eliminate discards, providing scope to deliver more sustainable management in European fisheries and support for the owners of small fishing boats in coastal ports. The reforms are due to come into effect from 2014 onwards. A new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will help to implement the new CFP.</p> <p>In theory, at least, this should help to support the small-scale local fishing industry in the AONB, which contributes to the distinctive character of the area and its communities as well as the local economy although the effects of the revised CFP remain to be seen.</p>	<p>Following Brexit, the UK is no longer part of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). It is now an independent coastal state, fully responsible for managing fisheries in the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), extending 200 nautical miles from shore. The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) includes provisions for fisheries, but these remain contentious. Despite this, the UK remains part of wider international agreements and treaties which manage fish stocks which provide a basis for continuity and an ongoing baseline for engagement with EU actors. The impacts of these changes on the small-scale local fishing industry within the AONB (which contributes to the distinctive character of the area and its communities and economy) remain to be seen.</p>	Agreed
3. A special place	28-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to the CAP and national delivery of this, as well as commodity prices and operational costs, may have significant effects on agricultural habitats, species and landscapes Some operations that are not currently viable may be able to attract funding through the RDP e.g. small scale woodland management Changes in crops may affect wildlife and the historic environment, both positively and negatively. For example, loss of sugar beet as a prominent local crop through loss of production support and market viability would be likely to affect farm economics and wildlife, although it could benefit some archaeological sites. Beet is an important 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to agricultural policy and national delivery of this, as well as commodity prices and operational costs, may have significant effects on agricultural habitats, species and landscapes Some operations that are not currently viable may be able to attract funding through ELMs Changes in crops may affect wildlife and the historic environment, both positively and negatively. For example, loss of sugar beet as a prominent local crop through loss of production support and market viability would be likely to affect farm economics and wildlife, although it could benefit some archaeological sites. Beet is an important 'break' crop in the rotation with no obvious alternative at present and is important for farmland bird species such as skylarks. Wintering geese use harvested beet tops as an important food source and may transfer to other crops (e.g. winter barley), with impacts on the value of the crop 	Agreed

		<p>‘break’ crop in the rotation with no obvious alternative at present and is important for farmland bird species such as skylarks. Wintering geese use harvested beet tops as an important food source and may transfer to other crops (e.g. winter barley), with impacts on the value of the crop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand and profits for increased biofuels/biomass production may increase, with potential changes in crops and characteristic biodiversity and landscapes • Difficulty in sustainable economic management of some characteristic habitats e.g. heathland, grassland (grazing), woodland may continue, with effects on landscape and wildlife from lack of active management – although RDP funding might be available • The Environmental Land Management Scheme may not be widely adopted if funding levels are insufficient or compare unfavourably with market prices • There is a risk of loss of continuity in transferring from pre-existing Environmental Stewardship and woodland grants to the new agri-environment scheme, with possible loss of sensitively managed landscape/ habitats and damage to the historic environment • Economic development funding may drive diversification into other activities e.g. tourism, for smaller farms in particular, with possible landscape impacts but also potentially some relief of recreation pressures on the coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand and profits for increased biofuels/biomass production may increase, with potential changes in crops and characteristic biodiversity and landscapes • Difficulty in sustainable economic management of some characteristic habitats e.g. heathland, grassland (grazing), woodland may continue, with effects on landscape and wildlife from lack of active management – although ELMs funding might be available • ELMs may not be widely adopted if funding levels are insufficient or compare unfavourably with market prices • There is a risk of loss of continuity in transferring from pre-existing Environmental Stewardship and woodland grants to new schemes, with possible loss of sensitively managed landscape/ habitats and damage to the historic environment <p>Economic development funding may drive diversification into other activities e.g. tourism, for smaller farms in particular, with possible landscape impacts but also potentially some relief of recreation pressures on the coast</p>	
3. A special place	32-33	The European Landscape Convention	Deleted	Agreed

		<p>The convention was ratified by the UK Government in 2006 and was reaffirmed as being part of Defra's delivery framework in the Natural Environment White Paper, 2011. The UK is recognised as already putting much of the principles of the ELC into practice, for example through the Joint Character Area (now National Character Area) map of England and also through the well-established practice of using landscape character assessment to inform local policy making.</p> <p>It defines landscape as: "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors." The convention highlights the need to recognise landscape in law, to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and creation of landscapes, and to establish procedures for raising awareness and understanding of landscapes and the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. It also encourages the integration of landscape into all relevant areas of policy, including cultural, economic and social policies</p>		
4. Themes, objectives and policies	44	Norfolk County Council manages trails and public rights of way in Norfolk; the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-17 contains objectives and actions for improvements to public access and rights of way in the county.	Norfolk County Council manages trails and public rights of way in Norfolk; the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) which incorporates Norfolk's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2019-2029 contains objectives and actions for improvements to public access and rights of way in the county.	Agreed
5. Monitoring and review	47	Fixed-point photography of key views in the area has been developed as part of the 2009-14 action plan to contribute to monitoring of change and the Action Plan for 2014-19 may contain actions	Deleted	Agreed

		<p>to further improve information for monitoring the condition of the area’s natural beauty. Over time this will enhance our understanding of what is happening in the area, how it is changing and the causes of the changes. Information will enable more effective partnership working by providing a sound basis for making decisions on how to try to influence and manage those changes.</p>		
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Agenda Item No _____

National Planning Policy Framework – Consultation on proposed changes

Summary: This report provides an explanation and summary of the proposed key changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and seeks to agree responses to a current consultation on these proposed changes.

Recommendations: **Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the Authority respond to the consultation as outlined in this report.**

Cabinet Member(s) Cllr Andrew Brown	Ward(s) affected All
All Members	All Wards
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Mark Ashwell, Planning Policy and CDL Manager, 01263 516325 Mark.ashwell@north-norfolk.gov.uk	

1. Introduction

1.1 Government has published a prospectus for proposed changes to the NPPF and is seeking views by the beginning of March. The consultation seeks views on the proposed approach to updating to the National Planning Policy Framework. A fuller review of the Framework will be required in due course, and its content will depend on the implementation of the government's proposals for wider changes to the planning system, including those in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill.

1.2 Consultation responses are encouraged on-line via the completion of a questionnaire.

1.3 The main areas of proposed changes are outlined below together with officer views and suggested draft responses (*italics*).

2. Proposed changes and commentary/recommendations.

The government says it will review the implications for the standard method of new household projections data based on the 2021 Census, which is due to be published in 2024. It is not proposing any changes to the standard method formula itself through the consultation.

This is disappointing. It means that the current formula used to establish the need for new homes which is derived from the 2014 based National Household Projections is retained until at least 2024 when the final results of the 2021 Census are due for publication.

However, it is proposed that the NPPF should be amended to describe the standard method formula as an advisory starting point rather than the current language, which requires the use of the standard approach other than in 'exceptional circumstances'. This softening of position arguably gives authorities more scope to make the case for departures from the standard methodology although it should be noted that the reasons for such departures will still need to be evidenced and will be scrutinised at Plan examinations. Indeed, the government's Chief Planner has recently stated that departures from the methodology should still only happen in exceptional circumstances. It also remains the case that Plans should provide for all needs, with need determined through robust evidence.

North Norfolk does not currently follow the standard methodology to establish housing need in the District and relies on an argument that errors in the 2014 based Household Projections are of such a magnitude that they constitute 'exceptional circumstances' which justify the use of the more recent 2016 based projections. In order to be successful in defending its approach the Council currently needs to show why it considers that 'exceptional circumstances' should apply in North Norfolk. This is a high bar and is contested at appeals particularly as current national guidance provides no indication in relation to what might constitute acceptable reasons for departures. The 2014 based projections are now increasingly old and were only retained by government to provide certainty whilst alternatives were considered. It is regrettable that government has not taken the opportunity to modify the methodology to allow for the consideration of later national projections which are widely regarded as more accurately reflecting likely future need.

Assuming this change is retained following the current consultation, government intends to modify the Framework in the Spring of 2023. It is assumed that Plans which are being examined after publication of the revised Framework, which would include North Norfolk's Plan, would be considered against the revised Framework wording when applying the 'conformity with national policy' soundness test.

Suggested response – *that NNDC supports the proposed modification, would welcome further guidance on grounds for using different approaches but would object if such guidance was to prevent local considerations being taken into account.*

2 More explicit indications will be given in planning guidance (not published) of the types of local characteristics which may justify the use of an alternative method of assessing housing need, the document says. *Examples could include islands with a high percentage of elderly residents, or university towns with an above-average proportion of students.*

It would be helpful if government were to provide clear guidance in relation to what might constitute grounds for departing from the standard methodology.

However, any advice would best be expressed in terms of examples rather than a specific closed list of reasons. It should remain the case that each LPA should be able to present evidence and reasons why they think an alternative approach is justified at a local level.

It is regrettable that government has not, at this stage, given firm indications as to what factors might constitute grounds for departing from the standard methodology, although the consultation seeks views on what might be included.

Suggested Response – *would welcome greater guidance and clarity but would object if such guidance did not allow for local factors to be taken into account when setting housing requirements.*

3 The need to avoid development that would be uncharacteristically dense for the area can outweigh the requirement to meet local housing need, the draft NPPF revision says. This calculation should be made taking into account the principles in local design guides or codes, the document says.

This measure is more likely to be applicable to urban areas which will often face high levels of need and little space to address that need other than by building at higher densities.

Suggested response – *no comment*

4 Authorities would not need to review their green belts, even if meeting housing need would be impossible without such a review. A draft NPPF revision is intended to make clear that local planning authorities are not required to review and alter Green Belt boundaries if this would be the only way of meeting need in full.

Not applicable in North Norfolk as there is no Green Belt in the District.

5 Councils would be able to take past over-delivery of housing into account when assessing housing need. The draft NPPF is intended to make clear that, if permissions that have been granted exceed the provision made in the existing plan, that surplus may be deducted from what needs to be provided in the new plan.

This is a welcome change as up to now an Authority which provides more housing than is needed in the early years of a counting period (Plan period or five-year supply period) has not been able to deduct the 'over-delivery' in previous years from its future requirement.

Suggest Response – *support proposal*

6 The test of 'soundness' for local plans is to be softened. The draft NPPF revisions say that plans will no longer be required to be 'justified'.

Instead, the examination would assess whether the local planning authority's proposed target meets need so far as possible, takes into account other policies in the Framework, and will be effective and deliverable, the consultation says. For the purposes of the changes to the test of soundness, the government proposes "that these will not apply to plans that have reached pre-submission consultation stage, plans that reach that stage within three months of the introduction of this policy change, or plans that have been submitted for independent examination". Such plans would be examined under the current tests.

This would mean that North Norfolk's Plan would continue to be examined under the current soundness tests, would need to be 'justified' and despite proposals below (No.8), would continue to need to discharge the legal Duty to Co-operate.

This appears to be a somewhat illogical transitional process with government saying on the one hand that it recognises that the current legal and soundness tests are too onerous but on the other proposing to retain these for Plans already in preparation. Officers are supportive of the proposed modifications which would significantly ease the process of Local Plan examinations whilst ensuring that Plans remain effective and deliverable. These changes could be introduced with immediate effect and therefore be beneficial to the many Plans already in production.

Suggested response – support the proposal but would encourage implementation for all those Plans already in production rather than delaying until new Plans are prepared.

7 The government intends to retain the uplift of 35 per cent to the assessed housing need for the 20 largest towns and cities in England. The draft NPPF revisions would require that this uplift is, "so far as possible", met by the towns and cities concerned rather than exported to surrounding areas, except where there is voluntary cross-boundary agreement to do so.

This provision does not relate to North Norfolk.

8 The duty to co-operate is to be replaced with an as-yet-unformulated "alignment policy". The duty will remain in place until those provisions come into effect, the document says, and "further consultation on what should constitute the alignment policy will be undertaken".

Suggested response – Support this proposal as the legal duty has resulted in the unnecessary failure of Plans when a broader 'alignment' or conformity test would have been sufficient.

9 Some authorities with emerging local plans will benefit from a reduced housing land supply requirement. For the purposes of decision-making, where emerging local plans have been submitted for examination or where they have been subject to a Regulation 18 or 19 consultation which included

both a policies map and proposed allocations towards meeting housing need, those authorities will benefit from a reduced housing land supply requirement, the consultation says. This will be a requirement to demonstrate a four-year supply of land for housing, instead of the usual five. These arrangements would apply for a period of two years from the point that these changes to the Framework take effect, the document adds.

Suggested response – Support the proposal. This is a sensible proposal which takes account of the likelihood that over the transitional period some Plans will be reconsidered and potentially delayed and that during that period it would be reasonable to reduce expectations around maintaining a five year land supply.

CHANGES TO THE HOUSING DELIVERY TEST AND FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY TEST

10 Authorities with an up-to-date local plan will no longer need to continually show a deliverable five-year housing land supply. In this case, “up-to-date” means where the housing requirement as set out in strategic policies is less than five years old, the document says. The government proposes the change to take effect when it publishes the revised National Planning Policy Framework, “expected in Spring 2023”.

This is a welcome change but is likely to shift the emphasis on to the Local Plan examination with developers and the Inspector scrutinising the first five years of the Plan to ensure it includes sufficient growth.

11 Councils would no longer have to provide five-year housing land supply buffers

This would be a welcome change as up to now in addition to showing a continuous five year supply of land authorities have needed to apply further delivery buffers of 5,10 or 20% depending on local circumstances. Similar buffers are also often required in Local Plan preparation.

12 Local planning authorities would be allowed to include historic oversupply in their five-year housing land supply calculations. This would be implemented by amending the Framework and planning practice guidance, the document says.

This is a similar provision to that outlined at No.5 above but relates explicitly to Five Year Land Supply requirements rather than when establishing a housing target in a Local Plan. This would mean that ‘over-delivery’ in previous years could be deducted from future year’s requirements.

13 Evidence of sufficient deliverable permissions could save councils from the most severe Housing Delivery Test sanction. The document proposes to add to the test an additional permissions-based test. This will ‘switch off’ the application of ‘the presumption in favour of sustainable development’ as a consequence of under-delivery, where a local planning

authority can show sufficient permissions for enough deliverable homes to meet their own annual housing requirement or, where lacking an up-to-date plan, local housing need, plus an additional contingency based on the number of planning permissions that are not likely to be progressed or are revised (which the government proposes defining as 115 per cent of the housing requirement or local housing need).

Again this is a welcome change meaning that ‘permissions granted’, rather than ‘dwellings built’, would be used as a performance measure when deciding if the penalties of failing to meet the Housing Delivery Test are applied.

MEASURES TO TACKLE SLOW BUILD-OUT OF PERMISSIONS

15 Past “irresponsible planning behaviour” by applicants could in future be taken into account when applications are being determined. As examples of such applicant behaviour, the document cites “persistently breaching planning controls or failing to deliver their legal commitments to the community”. Primary legislation would be needed to enact such measures, on which the government is seeking views, the document states.

16 Government data will be published on developers of sites over a certain size who fail to build out according to their commitments. This, like the measures mentioned in points 17 and 18, will be introduced via changes to national planning policy following the passage of the Levelling Up Bill, the document says.

17 Developers will be required to explain how they propose to increase the diversity of housing tenures to maximise a development scheme’s absorption rate (which is the rate at which homes are sold or occupied).

18 Delivery will become a material consideration in planning applications. “This could mean that applications with trajectories that propose a slow delivery rate may be refused in certain circumstances,” the document says.

19 A financial penalty for developers that are building out too slowly will be consulted on separately, the document says.

Suggested responses – *That the Authority is supportive of all measures designed to increase delivery rates and reduce land banking and failure to deliver on commitments*

ONSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT/ENERGY EFFICIENCY

20 Onshore wind power schemes would in future be able to go ahead on sites that have not been designated in the local plan. The government says its proposed changes to the existing NPPF footnote 54 will ensure that

“local authorities have a range of routes to demonstrate their support for certain areas in their boundaries to be suitable for onshore wind”

Commentary: Footnote 54 (63 in revised version) would now allow LPA's to identify an area suitable for on shore wind energy development through an SPD with a supporting renewable policy, as well as through a development plan. Proposed rewording would also see demonstration of planning impacts identified by a local community to have been 'satisfactorily', rather than 'fully' addressed and that the proposal has 'community support', rather than 'their backing'.

Local implications: The changes will not be relevant where a LPA has already submitted it's Reg 19 plan (see Appendix 1 NPPF consultation version, new para. 225) and so this will not be relevant to NNDC's emerging local plan. Potential changes: Policy CC2 at criterion 3 uses the word 'fully' as a nod to footnote 54 and so we may wish to amend this to 'satisfactorily', to better align wording and which would also helpfully soften the current high bar of this requirement. Para. 3.2.8 would also require a consequential change in this regard.

Council response: Although this matter would not be relevant to the Council's emerging plan, the principle of the changes would be supported.

21 Replacing the old turbines with more powerful and efficient models will be made easier. Changes to paragraphs 155 and 158 of the existing NPPF will enable the re-powering of renewable and low carbon energy schemes where planning permission is needed, and providing that the impacts of any development proposal are or can be made acceptable in planning terms, the document says.

Commentary: New Paras. 157 (new reference to future repowering and maintenance of suitable energy development) and 160 part c) 'approve an application for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewables sites, where its impacts are or can be made acceptable. The impacts of repowered and life-extended sites should be considered for the purposes of this policy from the baseline existing on the site.'

Local implications and potential changes: Policy CC2 and supporting text are silent about repowering and life-extension of existing renewables sites and, given the known sensitivity of recent onshore wind energy applications, we may wish to add a sentence to the supporting text to pick up on this matter, particularly as the new criterion c) highlights that such a proposal 'should be considered from the existing baseline on the site' (see below).

Council response: support.

22 The NPPF will be amended with a new paragraph 161 to give “significant weight” to the importance of energy efficiency through

adaptation of buildings. But the document says that this will be done in a way that ensures that local amenity and heritage continues to be protected.

Commentary: the new para. 161 makes specific reference to large non-domestic buildings, but would apply to any such adaptations that are not covered by PD rights.

Local implications: Support for the adaptation of buildings with renewable technology is mentioned within criterion 2 of Policy CC2, but the new para 161 seeks to attach significant weight to the benefits of such energy efficiency adaptations, while also caveating that 'proposals affecting conservation areas and listed buildings should also take into account' the policies in Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Potential changes: No amendments considered necessary to the policy, but there is potential to include sentence about 'significance of weight' to the adaptation of buildings' within supporting text, as this is not mentioned anywhere at the moment.

Council response: support.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

23 Steps will be taken to prevent developers 'gaming' Biodiversity Net Gain rules by clearing habitats before submitting applications. "We will work with Defra to review the current degradation provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain", the document says, "to reduce the risk of habitat clearances prior to the submission of planning applications, and before the creation of off-site biodiversity enhancements".

24 Use of artificial grass by developers in new development would be clamped down on. "We will consider how we can halt "the threat to wildlife created by the use of artificial grass by developers in new development (noting the importance of some uses of artificial grass such as on sports pitches)", the document says.

25 The possibility of embedding a broad form of carbon assessment in planning policy will be explored. "We are interested in whether effective and proportionate ways of deploying a broad carbon assessment exist, including what they should measure, what evidence could underpin them ... and how they may be used in a plan- making context or as a tool for assessing individual developments", the document says.

26 Policy and guidance in relation to the production of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments will be reviewed. "This will be done to encourage maximum coverage and more frequent updates", the document says.

Suggested response – that nndc supports all of these proposals

PLAN-MAKING

27 Steps are being taken to maximise the amount of authorities who can make use of policy changes around plan-making intended to be introduced by NPPF revisions in the Spring, before the revised plan-making system set out in the Levelling Up Bill is introduced in late 2024. Plan-makers will have until 30 June 2025 to submit their local plans, neighbourhood plans, minerals and waste plans, and spatial development strategies for independent examination under the existing legal framework. The government is also proposing that, to be examined under existing legislation, all independent examinations of local plans, minerals and waste plans and spatial development strategies must be concluded, with plans adopted by 31 December 2026.

28 Authorities will be required to start work on new plans by, at the latest, five years after adoption of their previous plan, and to adopt that new plan within 30 months. “Under the reformed system, which we expect to go live in late 2024, there will be a requirement for local planning authorities and minerals and waste planning authorities to start work on new plans by, at the latest, five years after adoption of their previous plan, and to adopt that new plan within 30 months,” the document says.

This effectively means that any Plan submitted before the 30th of June 2025 will be examined under the current process but would have a maximum life of five years from the date of its adoption by which time it should be replaced with a new style Plan, namely a slimmed down more strategic document with site allocations but fewer development management style policies. Given the suggested 30 month preparation timetable work on this new Plan would need to commence very shortly after adoption of our current Plan.

29 Authorities that do not meet the 30 June 2025 submission deadline for ‘old-style’ plans will need to prepare plans under the new plan-making system.

30 Plans that will become more than five years old during the first 30 months of the new system will continue to be considered ‘up-to-date’ for decision-making purposes for 30 months after the new system starts. Where a plan has been found sound subject to an early update requirement, and the Inspector has given a deadline to submit an updated plan within the first 30-months of the new system going live, this deadline will be extended to 30-months after the new system goes live, the document says

31 Authorities will no longer be able to prepare supplementary planning documents (SPDs) in the revised planning system. Instead, they will be able to prepare Supplementary Plans, the document says, which will be afforded the same weight as a local plan or minerals and waste plan. The government proposes that, when the new system comes into force (expected late 2024), existing SPDs will remain in force for a time-bound period; until the local planning authority is required to adopt a new-style plan. Current SPDs will automatically cease to have effect at the point at which authorities are required to have a new-style plan in place, it says.

This appears to be a dramatic change with the requirement for all SPDs to become Supplementary Plans once an Authority shifts to a new style Local Plan. This would mean that documents such as the Design Guide and Landscape Character Assessments would be subject to examination? It is not clear but it is assumed that these could be prepared either at the same time as a Local Plan (probably preferable) or on a separate timetable following Local Plan adoption?

Such Supplementary Plans, once adopted, would have the same weight as Local Plans rather than the current system which gives such documents lesser weight in the decision making process. This would also have significant resource implications as well as removing flexibility from the system for LPAs

Suggested response – That nndc supports the proposed transitional arrangements which allow for the completion of Plans already in production over a reasonable timetable. Without a significant increase in resources there is little realistic prospect of revised style Plans being prepared in the suggested 30 month timetable,

Neighbourhood Planning

The exception from the “tilted balance” in situations where the presumption of sustainable development is applied is proposed to be extended from 2 yrs to five in the case of adopted neighbourhood plans but this is clarified that this would only apply if the neighbourhood plan included additional growth sites to meet its identified housing requirements. The proposed NPPF also removes the existing additional conditions which stipulates that only where the neighbourhood plan’s parent local authority can demonstrate at least a three-year supply of housing land and has delivered at least 45 per cent of its housing requirement in the last three years, does the protection apply.

This changes the amount of protection from speculative development in a Neighbourhood Plan Area significantly and gives neighbourhood plans a significant layer of protection and more incentive to produce neighbourhood plans and perhaps the confidence to rely on them in a meaningful way. This addresses an issue that is present in neighbourhood planning across North Norfolk and around the country around the reluctance of communities to include allocations despite identifying high levels of need. The change is welcomed by officers and could go a long way to providing further reasoning for parish councils to allocate sites in a neighbourhood plans to address local need. Such sites will give parish council control of growth for a meaningful period and contribute to the windfall requirements of the Council and it is seen as an alignment with the purpose of neighbourhood plans which is to provide for additional growth in respect of locally identified need rather than an over reliance on protectionist approaches.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

32 There is intended to be a consultation next year on how National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) are implemented. They will cover planning considerations that apply regularly in decision-making across England or significant parts of it, the document says, such as general policies for conserving heritage assets, and preventing inappropriate development in the Green Belt and areas of high flood risk. Before any NDMP was designated by the secretary of state, there would be a public consultation

Suggested response – NNDC strongly objects to this proposal. Any national policies should be for guidance only (model templates) and should not replace, or outweigh, locally produced policies which will have been subject to local consultation and independent examination.

33 The starting point for creating NDMPs would be existing parts of the NPPF that apply to decision-making. “However, we welcome views on whether there are other topics that should be added,” the document says. Two other categories for NDMPs, in the government’s “initial view”, are firstly, “selective new additions to reflect new national priorities, for example net zero policies that it would be difficult to develop evidence to support at a district level, but which are nationally important”, and secondly “selective new additions to close ‘gaps’ where existing national policy is silent on planning considerations that regularly affect decision-making across the country (or significant parts of it)”. Indicative examples of ‘gaps’ where national policy is silent on common decision-making issues, which the documents says NDMPs might address, are: carbon reduction in new developments; allotments and housing in town centres and built-up areas.

34 NDMPs will cover “only matters that have a direct bearing on the determination of planning applications. Other key principles, according to the consultation, are that they would be “limited to key, nationally important issues commonly encountered in making decisions on planning applications across the country (or significant parts of the country); and that they would solely address planning issues, “in other words that concern the development and use of land”.

OTHER

35 Authorities will be expected to take particular care to ensure that they meet need for retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes. The government proposes to do this by adding an additional specific expectation to the NPPF.

Suggested Response. NNDC welcomes and supports this provision

36 Authorities will be encouraged to use planning conditions to require clear details of a scheme’s design and materials. The document says: “We propose to amend the Framework to encourage local planning authorities to consider how they can ensure that planning conditions associated with applications reference clear and accurate plans and drawings which provide visual clarity about the design of development, as well as clear conditions

about the use of materials where appropriate, so they can be referred to as part of the enforcement process”.

37 Mansard roofs would be encouraged. The government is proposing that “a reference to mansard roofs as an appropriate form of upward extension ... where appropriate” should be added to the NPPF.

Suggested response – that NNDC should object to such detail prescription appearing in national policy given that mansard roof additions are widely regarded as an unacceptable architectural feature outside of urban areas.

38 Protection against development that conflicts with neighbourhood plans is to be extended to older such plans. The NPPF currently says that the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the Neighbourhood Plan is likely to outweigh the benefits, but not if that plan is more than two years old. The government is proposing that the protection should be extended to plans that are up to five years old. It is also proposing removing tests which currently mean local planning authorities need to demonstrate a minimum housing land supply and have delivered a minimum amount in the Housing Delivery Test for Neighbourhood Plans to benefit from the protection.

As above, this measure is likely to incentivise those preparing neighbourhood Plans as it would increase the confidence that the provisions of such Plans which propose to deliver housing growth will protect communities from alternative proposals.

Suggested response – that NNDC supports this provision

39 Planning for provision of social rent homes is to be given higher priority in the NPPF, the document says although views are sought via the consultation about how this might be achieved.

Suggested response – that nnDC strongly supports this proposal

3 Recommendations

3.1 Members of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the Authority responds to the consultation as outlined in this report.

4 Legal Implications and Risks

3.1 None

4 Financial Implications and Risks

4.1 No financial implications or risks are identified.

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