

Endorsement of the Updated Joint Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework	
Executive Summary	Endorsement of the updated joint Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) June 2025. The NSPF represents a Statement of Common Ground on potential strategic cross-boundary planning matters and helps enable the Council to comply with the statutory 'Duty to Co-operate'.
Options considered	There are no other alternatives in place to demonstrate the ongoing requirements of the Duty to Co-operate.
Consultation(s)	The Norfolk Strategic Framework Member Forum have reviewed and endorsed its circulation.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Endorses the updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework. 2) Provides delegated authority to the Acting Planning Policy Manager to make necessary minor/factual amendments, following the progress of the framework through other local authorities, prior to signature & publication
Reasons for recommendations	The updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework is a key piece of evidence supporting Local Plan production. The framework is a Statement of Common Ground which sets out how strategic cross-boundary matters have been considered and provides much of the evidence that is required to demonstrate compliance with the 'duty to cooperate'.
Background papers	Updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (June 2025)

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Andrew Brown
Contact Officer	Iain Withington, Acting Planning Policy Manager iain.withington@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	The updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework is a key piece of iterative evidence supporting Local Plan production across the region. The framework is a Statement of Common Ground which sets out how strategic cross-boundary matters have been and will be considered, and provides much of the evidence that is required to demonstrate compliance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' on an ongoing basis.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	Local Plan

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	NO
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Previous version endorsed in April 2021 and 2018

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (June 2025).

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) is a structure comprising of officer and councillor membership from each Norfolk Local Authority set up to demonstrate compliance with the “duty to cooperate”. The duty to co-operate was introduced by Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 and requires authorities to ‘engage constructively, actively, and on an ongoing basis for all strategic and cross boundary planning matters. To demonstrate that local planning authorities have met this duty, the National Planning Policy Framework requires authorities to prepare Statements of Common Ground (SoCG’s) to document the cross-boundary matters that have been addressed, as well as any progress made in co-operating to address such matters.
- 2.2 In order to address these issues, the nine Norfolk planning authorities (Districts, County and Broads Authority) have worked together for a number of years under the oversight of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum to produce a ‘Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework’ (NSPF). The first version of the NSPF document was produced and endorsed in 2018 and the most recent version endorsed by Cabinet in April 2021. The latest, fourth iteration, updates this and responds to broader changes in national planning policy and guidance which have occurred over the intervening period. The document was reviewed and agreed at the Member Forum meeting on 29th May 2025 and now requires endorsement and sign-off from the participating LPAs.
- 2.3 The NSPF provides an agreed broad framework, in a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), to support all individual authorities’ Local Plan production across the district. It is a non-statutory document; however, it will guide the content of Local Plans with respect of cross-boundary issues and will satisfy the requirements of the statutory Duty-to-Cooperate and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework

- 3.1 The updated NSPF responds to updated national planning policy and guidance, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was published in December 2024, (a document that has been updated four times since the current NSPF). These updates have required a review of the vision, objectives and agreements contained within the statement including areas such as housing, employment, health and minerals and waste.
- 3.2 The impact of the changes is relatively low as the Council's emerging Local Plan is advanced having now reached main modifications stage following the conclusion of the examination hearing sessions and receipt of the inspector's initial letter. The NSPF recognises the NPPF's transitional arrangements which allow relevant local plans to progress under the arrangements of the previous framework, as is the case with the North Norfolk emerging Local Plan. It is arguably more relative for those neighbouring LPA's who are currently at submission / hearings stage and/or advancing Local Plan review at this time and for any subsequent Local Plan update scoping exercise following the anticipated adoption of this Council's Local Plan later this year.
- 3.3 Through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Group, officers from the Norfolk Local Planning Authorities have worked with other partner agencies including Natural England, the Environment Agency, Marine Management Organisation, and the NHS to refresh information, data and agreements. Of particular note, is the NPPF requirement to boost housing supply by meeting the Government's new standard method for calculating Local Housing Need (LHN).
- 3.4 Other main changes to this version of the NSPF include:
 - The removal of an objective to produce and maintain an assessment of housing needs (as the NPPF now sets a standard approach)
 - Removal of references to New Anglia LEP (following disbandment) & updating of the strategic priorities for Norfolk's economy
 - Removal of the climate change best practice guidance/brief (this work has been completed)
 - Removal of the requirements for future Local plans to include policies to support high speed broadband following updates and incorporation into the Building Regulations
 - Updated agreement with Norfolk County Council on the use of Planning Obligations Standards
 - Updated areas of common strategic issues with the Marine Management Organisation
 - Updated references to bodies, strategies and programmes e.g. AONB is now formerly known as a 'National Landscape'
 - Updated all data inputs to the latest available data/date
- 3.5 Given the nature of the process, it is likely that there could be some further minor/factual changes proposed for officer consideration.

4. Proposals and Options

- 4.1 Whilst there is the option not to sign up to the updated Framework document, there are no other alternatives in place to demonstrate the ongoing

requirements of the Duty to Co-operate and to meet the Council's legal responsibilities of cross-boundary co-operation as set out in planning legislation.

5. Corporate Priorities

- 5.1 Delivering the Local Plan remains a key corporate priority. Local planning authorities, county councils and public bodies have a legal responsibility to work together on strategic matters when preparing Local Plans. The NSPF provides a structure for tackling these planning issues across the county, especially those which have a strategic impact across local authority boundaries. It includes guidance relating to housing, economic growth, infrastructure and the environment. The NSPF informs the Local Plans produced by all the authorities.

6. Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.1 The Council currently contributes £10,000 annually to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework work programme. This is covered within the existing Planning Policy Planning budget. Joint-working under this framework creates efficiencies on the commissioning of evidence base on strategic planning matters.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The Council's £10,000 annual contribution to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework is already provided for within existing budgets. Endorsing the updated framework has no additional financial implications and supports efficiencies through joint commissioning of evidence base work.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The NSPF recognises the NPPF's transitional arrangements which allow relevant local plans to progress under the arrangements of the previous framework, as is the case with North Norfolk emerging Local Plan.

Comments from the Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.

No specific legal implications are highlighted with regard to this updated NSPF.

8. Risks

- 8.1 It is considered that there are no risks associated with endorsement of the updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework. However, not endorsing the framework could mean that a future Local Plan prepared by the Council could fail to meet the requirements of the Duty to Co-operate. Failure to endorse would also impact the council's position with regard to the statutory requirements through the Duty to Co-operate with neighboring authorities.

9. Net Zero Target

- 9.1 No assessment has been made against the council's Net Zero 2030 Strategy & Climate Action Plan.

10. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 10.1 There are no direct implications on equality within this report.

11. Community Safety issues

N/A.

12. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 12.1 The updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework is a key piece of iterative evidence supporting Local Plan production across the region. The framework is a Statement of Common Ground which sets out how strategic cross-boundary matters have been and will be considered and provides much of the evidence that is required to demonstrate compliance with the 'Duty to Co-operate' on an ongoing basis (for each Norfolk local planning authority)

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1. Endorses the updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.**
- 2. Provides delegated authority to the Acting Planning Policy Manager to make necessary minor/factual amendments, following the progress of the framework through other local authorities, prior to signature & publication.**

Appendix 1 – Updated Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework June 2025