

	<b>Local Plan Review: Scoping Consultation</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	This report covers the early stages of Plan review and the requirement to undertake a scoping consultation
<b>Options considered</b>	None
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	Portfolio holder
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>That Cabinet resolves:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1) To progress the scoping consultation based on the material detailed in Appendix 1 in line with Government expectations, statute requirements and the project timescales.</b></li> <li><b>2) Delegates authority to the Planning Policy Manager to make any further necessary non-material modifications including consultation set up format as required.</b></li> </ol>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	To maintain an up-to-date Local Plan and to comply with statutory requirements in order to provide appropriate planning policy and guidance for the district.
<b>Background papers</b>	<p><a href="#">Plan-making regulations explainer - GOV.UK</a>  This is an explainer of the emerging regulations for the new plan-making system..</p>

<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Andrew Brown
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Caroline Dodden, Senior Planning Officer <a href="mailto:Caroline.dodden@north-norfolk.gov.uk">Caroline.dodden@north-norfolk.gov.uk</a>

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	Delivering and ensuring the Council maintains an up to date the Local Plan remains a key commitment and component part of the Corporate Plan covering all five themes: Our Greener Future, Developing Our Communities, Meeting Our Housing Need, Investing in Our Local Economy and Infrastructure and A strong, Responsible & Accountable Council
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Local Plan budget
Council Policies & Strategies	The Local Plan sets the Council's Planning and decision-making framework. Adoption of any new Local Plan would replace the current 2024-2040 Local Plan.

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	No
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	None

## **1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek authority to publish and conduct a six-week consultation on the Local Plan review through an early scoping document and questionnaire.

## **2. Introduction & Background**

- 2.1. As part of the new Plan Making System the Council is required to undertake an early scoping consultation inviting feedback from Stakeholders on how to engage with them and what the Plan should contain. This is timetabled to take place for six weeks starting 20.7.26 – 31.08.26 or sooner if achievable following the publication of the notice of intention to commence Local plan preparation.
- 2.2. The Council is required to publish its notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation on 30 June 2026 and the scoping consultation is timetabled to commence on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026 following cabinet endorsement on the 6 July 2026. If the consultation set up is completed sooner officers may bring forward the start and finish date as appropriate. Alongside the consultation it is intended to also run a second opportunity for potential development sites to be submitted for assessment through the call for sites.
- 2.3. Guidance advises that to provide meaningful early engagement in the plan-making process, local planning authorities must invite representations on matters including what the plan should contain and how future engagement on the plan should be carried out. This must take place after or alongside publishing the notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation. Representations must be invited from the defined general and specific consultation bodies and can be made by any persons, including local residents.
- 2.4. The consultation must conclude (*and allow time for assessment and decision making- my emphasis*) prior to the publication of the Gateway 1 self-assessment summary which is the start of the 30-month Plan making period and which is mandated for 31 October 2026.
- 2.5. At this stage (Gateway1) feedback from the early scoping document and internal work leads to the Council publishing a summary which sets out details of our readiness for Local Plan preparation. This assessment must provide details of the local planning authorities readiness in relation to:
- Project management and governance arrangement

- The timetable for the preparation of the plan
  - Consultation and engagement
  - Anticipated Local Plan content
  - Environmental assessments
- 2.6. In order to ensure appropriate feedback is obtained the scoping document is set out in sections.
- Section 1 outlines how to respond
  - Section 2 outlines base line information with regard the New Plan making requirements and process
  - Section 3 outlines base line information with regard to more recent changes to the national planning system and hence the planning context that plan making has to work in.
  - Section 4 provides base line information though a district overview in a social economic and environmental context
  - Section 5 sets out the parameters of the scoping consultation around what the plan should contain and its approach to engagement during the plan preparation stages.
  - Section 6 sets a series of questions around each theme.
- 2.7. Governance arrangements will be subject to a separate report.
- 2.8. In particular and in line with guidance the scoping document seeks opinions on potential Vision of the Plan and up to 10 measurable objectives. It does this through an initial and iterative SWOT analysis of North Norfolk's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and concludes with a number of potential key priorities that will be important for inclusion within the Local Plan's vision.
- 2.9. The document then outlines the minimum housing requirements that the Council must seek to plan for in accordance with the new mandated national standard methodology and seeks views and reasoned argument around the identified options in seeking to accommodate growth and the establishment of an appropriate spatial strategy in the context of the district and national policy consideration. At this stage it is emphasized that no decisions have taken place these are potential options and the purpose of the consultation is to gauge feedback on the potential approaches.
- 2.10. Any strategy and the Local Plan as a whole needs to be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence and be tailored to the area and Plan objectives. Evidence must be **relevant, proportionate, up to date and adequate to justify policy choices and soundness matters at examination**. It is therefore important to collate the required base line evidence to support plan making in the early plan making stages and to ensure it remains iterative throughout the process. As such the document outlines the indented evidence documents and seeks feedback on their appropriateness.

- 2.11. The scoping document is set out in **Appendix 1**. As this material will be uploaded along with the response questionnaire into the Council's digital objective keystone publishing and consultation portal (an updated version of the software previously used for the Local Plan) the final format and layout of the consultation documents may appear different. The vast majority of feedback from stakeholders and members of the public is anticipated to be via the questionnaire and this platform in line with the government's digital agenda the tight timelines and resource constraints. However alternative methods will be made available for submission for the questionnaire.

### **3. Proposals and Options**

- 3.1. As the requirement is mandatory no other options have been considered

### **4. Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1. Local Plans give Councils the unique ability to shape land-use across administrative areas, which makes it one of the most influential documents Councils prepare. A Local Plan influences government and stakeholder policy on matters like inward investment for jobs growth and infrastructure, locally it is the basis on which local communities can write a neighbourhood plan for their town or village, and on a day-to-day basis it guides every planning application that is determined.
- 4.2. Delivering and ensuring that the Local Plan remains current and delivers on the minimum housing requirements and site allocations is a key commitment and component part of the Corporate Plan covering all five themes: Our Greener Future, Developing Our Communities, Meeting Our Housing Need, Investing in Our Local Economy and Infrastructure and A Strong, Responsible & Accountable Council

### **5. Financial and Resource Implications**

#### **Budget**

- 5.1. The consultation is undertaken within the current staffing and Local Plan budget. The Council is currently advertising two further growth position and one replacement officer within the team.

#### **Comments from the S151 Officer:**

*The S151 Officer (or member of the Finance team on their behalf) will complete this section.*

### **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1. The new plan-making system covers plans prepared and adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023. The scoping stage is mandated as part of the early pre-commencement work required to be undertaken at this stage

### **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.*

## **7. Risks**

- 7.1. There are a number of current risks which are not considered exhaustive:
- A failure to endorse at this stage would impact on the time scales and the ability of the Council to meet the mandated Gateway one and the overall scheduled 30-month period.
  - Changes in staff resources could negatively affect the ability of the Council to progress feedback and make the necessary timely process on evidence gathering and early preparatory work.
  - Staff recruitment could be unsuccessful and as such impact on resources, moral and next stages of the review.

## **8. Net Zero Target**

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

## **9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

- 9.1. Any new Plan would need to undergo Equality Impact Assessment, (EqIA) in accordance with The Equality Act 2010, as amended 2023. This would take place as a significantly more advanced stage.

## **10. Community Safety issues**

- 10.1 None.

## **11. Conclusion and Recommendations**

- 11.1 Production and consultation on the Scoping Document is necessary in line with instruction from MHCLG, statutory secondary legislation, and published guidance.

### **11.3 Recommendations**

**That Cabinet resolves:**

- 1) To progress the scoping consultation based on the material detailed in Appendix 1 in line with Government expectations, statute requirements and the project timescales.**
- 2) Delegates authority to the Planning Policy Manager to make any further necessary non-material modifications including consultation set up format as required.**

## **Appendices**

**Appendix 1:** Draft Scoping Document (PDF version)