

Neighbourhood Planning Summary Report

At its July meeting the parish council considered an update on progress with the preparation of the Neighbourhood plan, and noting that the planning consultant had produced a draft list of policy changes identified by the working group, and further additional policy changes which Places4People recommended be made as a result of the Worlington NP and other recent NP examinations which have used the same draft policies, (to give the draft plan the best chance of success), the meeting

The Parish Council approve the proposed changes to the draft Neighbourhood Plan brought forwards following consultation, acknowledging that the changes will require revisiting to incorporate and changes required arising from the independent Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitats Assessment. That revisit will also assess whether additional changes are required to bring the Plan up-to-date as a result of new national planning policy expected to be published in the interim.

Minute 24.07.07.3 refers.

West Suffolk Council indicated, as part of its initial screening opinion, that it required both a:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and a
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

of the Plan before it can be submitted. This is a common occurrence nationally and usually occurs where sites are allocated in neighbourhood plans. A grant from Locality in the form of Technical Support for this (in the same way that Design Guidance and Site Master-planning was undertaken by AECOM) has now been approved, and initial contact has now been made by the team undertaking the work.

There is likely to be a delay of some months before the draft plan may be submitted to West Suffolk for a further period of consultation and then on to the Examiner, as any policy changes identified as a result of the SEA and HRA will also need to be incorporated, both in terms of referring to it in the Plan and any changes to policies arising from the Assessment that are required to mitigate impact. There may additionally need to be some updating due to a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being published (resulting from the recent change in government).

A Referendum on the final plan is therefore likely to be in Q2 of 2025/26.