



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE - UPDATE SHEET

8 JANUARY 2024

Item 5 – Planning Policy and Delivery Update

Paragraph 2.2 – the closing dates for the consultations on the Easton Neighbourhood Plan and the Playford Neighbourhood Plan have been extended to Friday 19th January 2024, following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023.

Item 6 – Authority Monitoring Report 2022/23

Paragraph 3.2 - an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework was published on 19th December 2023. Where the Housing Delivery Test has been ‘passed’, under the previous version of the NPPF, a 5% buffer needed to be added to the housing supply needs figure. This has now changed in the current version of the NPPF, and the need to include the 5% buffer has now been removed. This does not affect the figures at the end of the 2022/23 year, as set out in the 2022/23 AMR, but will need to be reflected in future updates to the Housing Land Supply.

Item 7 – Southwold and Walberswick – adoption of conservation areas and conservation area appraisals

Following publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 19th December 2023, a number of NPPF paragraph references in the report need to be updated:

Paragraph 2.4 – this should now read:

“Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that the concept of conservation should not be devalued through the designation of Conservation Areas (or their extension) that lack special interest. ...”

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Paragraph 2.9 – this should now read:

“A Conservation Area is a designated heritage asset and, as such, great weight is given by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to its conservation when considering the impact of development proposals on its significance (paragraph 205).

The NPPF goes on to state at paragraph 212 that planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and their setting to better reveal their significance. This is akin to the statutory requirement in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at section 72(1) for development applications to be judged whether they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Conservation Area designation sets a test for good design which does not preclude development (they are not Preservation Areas).

The NPPF goes on to acknowledge at paragraph 213 that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. It further states that the *‘loss of a building... which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area... should be treated either as substantial harm or less than substantial harm’*. Therefore, the buildings identified as positive unlisted buildings will be protected by national planning policy. Identification of them is aimed at ensuring that planners, owners and agents are aware of the building’s positive contribution.”

Paragraph 4.3 – this should now read:

“Officers judge the proposed extensions are appropriate for designation and meet the requirement of the NPPF at paragraph 197 in that, when considering the designation of Conservation Areas, planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest. ...”

Item 8 – Making of New Article 4 Directions for the North Lowestoft and South Lowestoft/Kirkley Conservation Areas

Paragraph 1.3 – the latest update of the NPPF was published on 19th December 2023 by the Government.

For clarity, the NPPF paragraph referred to in paragraph 1.3 is correct and does not need updating.

Paragraph 3.1 – this should now read:

“New Article 4 Directions need to be implemented in the North Lowestoft Conservation Area and the South Lowestoft/Kirkley Conservation Area, as the existing Directions are outdated in terms of relevant legislation and planning regulations, and Government guidance provided within the latest NPPF (December 2023).”