

SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL

‘Consultant’s Brief’ - A Brief for the Engagement of a Consultant to Review and Refresh Sprowston Town Council’s Neighbourhood Development Plan (in accordance with the Localism Act 2011)

JULY 2024

SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL
1. Introduction and Context
<p>On 20 March 2014, following three years of preparatory work and consultation, Sprowston Town Council (STC) put its Neighbourhood Development Plan (NP) to referendum. More than half of residents who voted did so in favour of the Neighbourhood Development Plan. On 8 May 2014 Broadland District Council, decided to ‘make’ the Sprowston Neighbourhood Development Plan part of the Local Plan for Broadland District.</p> <p>The Sprowston Neighbourhood Development Plan covered the period between 2014 and 2026. 2026 is now approaching, hence the Town Council is seeking to refresh the plan in good time. Additionally, the ten years since the NP was made has seen huge change within Sprowston. The resident population has grown from 14,691 recorded in the 2011 census to over 17,000 in 2021. More than 2000 new homes have been built on the North East and Eastern fringes of the settlement, with several thousand more to follow in the North East (White House Farm phases 2 and 3) and North West (Beeston Park).</p> <p>Furthermore, in 2024, Broadland District Council adopted the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). This replaced much of the previous Joint Core Strategy. Sprowston Town Council therefore sees review of the NP as a timely means by which to achieve alignment with the new GNLP whilst also ensuring its neighbourhood development planning aspirations, objectives and policies are fit for the next ten years of change.</p> <p>In addition, the review presents an opportunity to shape future development through the use of Design Codes. This will be a ‘first’ for Sprowston’s Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
<p>1.1 What are we hoping to achieve by this process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Through this review process, the Town Council intends to gather a new and comprehensive evidence base. The evidence base will inform the Council’s thinking on which aspects of Sprowston the refreshed Neighbourhood Plan (NP) should seek to change and which it should protect➤ Creation of Design Codes for inclusion within the refreshed NP <p>As a reference point, the Key Aspirations from STC’s <u>current</u> NP to 2026 are given below:</p> <p>“Our Council’s key aspirations for the Neighbourhood Development Plan are to: ~ Plan holistically, addressing the needs and aspirations of all sections of the community and areas of Sprowston.</p>

- ~ Work across boundaries, to take into account the needs and aspirations of the neighbouring parishes.
- ~ Ensure the sustainability of the existing built-up area, not just new developments.
- ~ Ensure good spatial and functional integration of the new development on the northern fringe.
- ~ Reinstate a sense of settlement and community identity, which has been lost as a result of the rapid expansion of Sprowston.
- ~ Address the lack of certain community facilities in the area and agree the optimal location for them to ensure maximum benefit to the community.
- ~ Ensure good design quality of new developments in the area, to reflect the local character and sustainability aspirations”

1.2 Background work so far and other related studies and commissions that may be underway.

- **Existing Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2013)**

1.3 What is the purpose of this particular commission and what type of consultant expertise are we seeking to appoint?

Sprowston Town Council is looking for an accomplished Consultant to lead on, manage and draft a refresh of its existing Neighbourhood Plan, by May 2026. The Council envisages this will require the successful consultant to:

- **gather, analyse and report on a comprehensive evidence base;**
- **fully support, guide and facilitate a detailed review of our existing NP (adopted 2013), including reviewing it against the new evidence base and the recently adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan**
- **fully support, guide and facilitate the Council in identifying a new Vision, Objectives and any other key elements of a refreshed NP, as may be appropriate**
- **Work with Council's chosen urban planners to support creation of suitable Design Codes**
- **lead on writing a refreshed NP (in accordance with the Council's wishes and directions)**
- **manage the process of submitting and adopting the refreshed NP, before expiry of our current NP in 2026**

Nb: For the avoidance of doubt: the Council is not currently seeking to designate any new development sites in addition to those already allocated within the current NP (notwithstanding the results of the NP review).

The successful consultant will have considerable...

- **familiarity with the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (GT AAP) produced by Broadland District Council, or familiarity with similar area action plans**
- **familiarity with the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)**
- **experience working with Towns/Parishes of over 13,000 residents and obtaining sufficient representative and qualitative feedback from those residents to inform the evidence base**

- **experience supporting and producing Neighbourhood Plans for Towns/Parishes that have experienced, or are expecting to experience, significant growth (e.g.: 2000+ new homes mostly delivered by large housing developers or consortia)**
- **experience with the process of managing, facilitating and writing/refreshing a Neighbourhood Plan from start to its acceptance by Broadland District Council as part of the District's Local Development Plan**
- **experience with Design Codes**
- **Additionally; familiarity with Sprowston and/or our neighbouring Parishes/Town would be desirable**

2. Vision and objectives

- **Through this review process, the Town Council seeks to assess the current NP's Vision, Objectives and Spatial Policies against a new and comprehensive evidence base. It is anticipated the refreshed NP will utilise Design Codes as a means towards achieving the refreshed Vision and Objectives**

For reference, the Spatial Vision from STC's current NP to 2026 is as follows:

Our Spatial Vision

"By 2026 the community of Sprowston will be strong, cohesive, creative and forward-looking. The community will be safer, healthier, more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive. High quality homes will meet people's needs and aspirations in attractive and sustainable places. People will have access to good quality jobs, essential services and community facilities, with less need to use a car."

Development will be to the highest possible standards of design, enhancing the quality and distinctiveness of the area and will bring improved infrastructure, services and facilities to benefit both the new and existing community.

Existing built-up areas will be enhanced, and these and any areas developed in the future will be popular places to live. The community will be well served by shops, health and education services and other facilities, easily accessible by foot, bicycle and public transport.

For reference, the Key Objectives from STC's current NP to 2026 are as follows:

In order to achieve the vision, the identified, key objectives are:

- ~ A network of green links to connect existing and new open space.
- ~ A variety of suitable housing that reflects people's needs.
- ~ Access to high standards of health, education and social care.
- ~ Provision of high-quality leisure opportunities including public open space, sport and recreation and community facilities.
- ~ Investment at local employment locations to help create a stronger economy.
- ~ Improved access to, from and within the area.
- ~ Retention of features important to the character of the area, including historic assets, open spaces, woodland etc.
- ~ To enhance the Wroxham Road local centre and build on its importance for key local services.
- ~ Sustainable transport options to include a network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle links and public transport.

Sprowston's current NP also contains the 12 Spatial Planning Objectives from the Joint Core Strategy (2014), considered in relation to Sprowston. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was replaced by the GNLP in 2024 (although the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan, which was part of the JCS, has been carried forward into the GNLP).

In addition, Council would like to place increased emphasis on:

- Preservation and enhancement of the natural environment (including biodiversity)
- 'Designing-in' sustainability and carbon reduction in all types of future developments
- Climate change-readiness in all types of future developments
- Provision of suitable and sufficient public and private green spaces in all types of future developments
- Supporting and fostering an employer profile which, viewed as a whole, offers high quality employment opportunities for workers of all skill levels

3. Community and stakeholder involvement

- Recreational Facilities Survey (2020)
- Some feedback from the public during Sprowston Summer Fete 2024

4. Scope of work

1. Work closely with the Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group (NPRWG) and the Town Clerk to set out a project timetable (featuring key milestones and anticipated costs) for preparing a refreshed Neighbourhood Plan, in time to be 'made' by May 2026

2. Carry out necessary evidence base collection and prepare an analysis report against which a comprehensive review of our current Neighbourhood Plan can be conducted. The analysis report must also identify in the evidence base any emerging themes pertinent to creation of new Design Codes

3. Carry out comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement to inform the evidence base

4. Work with the NPRWG to review our current NP (including current vision, objectives and spatial policies) against the topics/themes that emerge from the analysis report and prepare options for consideration by Full Council

5. As may be required; support the NPRWG to work with Council's chosen urban planners to produce suitable Design Codes

6. Using the prepared options as a starting point; facilitate a workshop to assist and guide Full Council in agreeing an updated (or completely new) vision, set of objectives, and/or spatial policies, as may be desired

<p>7. Draft the refreshed Neighbourhood Development Plan (including the addition of Design Codes) and the statutory required supporting documents</p> <p>8. Working closely with the NPRWG (and the full Town Council as necessary) and the Council's chosen urban planners to achieve successful adoption by Broadland District Council of the refreshed NP for Sprowston</p>
<p>Key milestones and client sign-off procedures</p> <p>This commission will manage, support, facilitate and ultimately be responsible for delivering a refreshed Neighbourhood Plan</p> <p>Milestones to be agreed when project timetable is created by NPRWG and the successful consultant</p> <p>All sign-off will be by majority vote of the NPRWG, or Full Council, in accordance with NPRWG's Terms of Reference, or the Standing Orders</p>
<p>5. Outputs of the Commission</p>
<p>What Interim and final outputs do we expect from the commission?</p> <p>Over the course of this commission the consultant will be required to prepare and deliver <u>at least</u> the following outputs:</p> <p>1) Collection and collation of a suitable evidence base, and presentation of a detailed analysis and report thereon. At minimum the report should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify relevant current and emerging planning and other policy documents, including national, regional and local provisions • Identify and summarise the policy requirements within those documents for Sprowston and the implications of them for our refreshed Neighbourhood Plan • Identify what are considered to be Local Plan 'strategic policies' and those that are appropriate for local interpretation, commenting on which of those that might be sufficiently robust not to need local interpretation in a refreshed Sprowston NP • Present a statistical and qualitative analysis of the evidence base gathered from local residents and other stakeholders • Identify topics/themes emerging from the evidence base, commenting on any research gaps or sources of updated information that may require further work • Identify topics/themes emerging from the evidence base that may be pertinent to the creation of Design Codes <p>2) An Options Paper. At minimum the paper should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be informed by a review of our current NP (including current vision, objectives and spatial policies) against the topics/themes that emerge from the Evidence Base Analysis Report (see #1) • Be suitable for consideration by Full Council <p>3) An Options Workshop. At minimum, the workshop should:</p>

- Be an in-person Full Council ‘Options Workshop’ based on the Options Paper (see #2), as a starting point
- Facilitate, assist and guide Full Council in agreeing an updated (or completely new) vision, set of objectives, and spatial policies, as may be desired
- Ensure the emerging options work together to form a coherent strategy
- Enable Full Council to assess the options for Design Codes (in conjunction with Council’s chosen urban planners)
- Be followed up with a report summarising the workshop and identifying the main next-step elements and work briefs for either the NPRWG and/or Full Council

4) A refreshed and adopted Neighbourhood Plan for the period 2026 to 2035 which is fully compliant with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, and provided with any and all statutory required supporting documents. At minimum, the refreshed and adopted NP will include:

- A description of the changes transpiring since writing and adoption of our first Neighbourhood Plan, in 2014
- A realistic vision and a set of achievable objectives and policies informed by a review of our current plan against the findings of the evidence base analysis report (see #1 above)
- Design Codes in service of the refreshed plan’s Vision and Objectives
- A 10-year life span within which all objectives should be able to be completed (excepting those of an ongoing nature)
- A statement of Council’s aspirations regarding areas, themes, topics and services for which the Town Council does not have responsibility or legal powers to directly intervene, but which the Town Council deems to have a material impact on Sprowston’s residents

Requirements in terms of format

- The finished NP must be made available to us in PDF format and a format suitable for commercial printing
- All reports, plans and other documents are to be supplied to the Council in PDF format, plus a copy in Word, Excel, etc (whichever best suits the material in question)
- All written materials to be in ‘plain English’ with high readability
- Unnecessary jargon is to be avoided. Where jargon or technical language is unavoidable, an explanation should be given

6. Management Arrangements

Bids and key documents are to be submitted to the Town Clerk, in PDF format.

All sign-off will be by majority vote of the NPRWG, or Full Council, in accordance with NPRWG’s Terms of Reference and the Standing Orders

<p>All rights pertaining to the use and ownership of the whole or parts of the finished NP, supporting reports and any other related documents produced under this commission will belong to the Town Council.</p>
<p>Details of BDC Link Officer</p> <p>Richard Squires (Broadland District Council)</p>
<p>7. Programme and Timetable</p>
<p>Draft outline project programme including provisional daters for key events / deadlines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 26th July 2024: Tender for consultants opens ➤ 4.00pm 2nd September 2024: Tenders close ➤ 4th September: NPRWG meets to evaluate tenders and decide recommendation/s to put to Full Council. NPRWG also reviews results of community feedback gathered at the fete ➤ 25th September: Full Council makes decision on which consultant to appoint (if any) (subject to standstill period) ➤ 7th October: End of standstill period ➤ w/c 14th October: First meeting with NPRWG and appointed consultant. At this meeting project timetable will be sketched out. ➤ May 2026: The refreshed Neighbourhood Plan is accepted as part of the Development Plan for the district by Broadland District Council.
<p>8. Value of Contract</p>
<p>Consultants are invited to submit a fixed price quotation for this commission.</p> <p>Quotations must include a breakdown of costs in relation to section 4 ('Scope of work'), sufficient to produce the outputs detailed in section 5 ('Outputs of the Commission').</p> <p>The fixed price should account for all reasonably foreseeable costs, including (but not limited to) the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant's fees • Facilitation fees • VAT • Travel • Reasonable expenses • Materials • Advertising • Staff hire • Venue hire • Design work • Printing • Legal fees

9. How to Apply

Consultants wishing to be considered for this commission should submit an application comprising at least the following:

- **An explanation of their suitability in line with the details and requirements given in Section 1.3 ‘What is the purpose of this particular commission and what type of consultant expertise are we seeking to appoint?’**
- **A description of how they would approach Section 4 ‘Scope of work’ (Note: Examples of previous work would be advantageous)**
- **A description of how they would approach Section 5 ‘Outputs of the Commission’. (Note: Examples of previous work would be advantageous)**
- **A fixed price quotation, in accordance with Section 8 ‘Value of Contract’**

Applications, quotations and any supporting documents or evidence must be submitted in electronic format by 4.00pm on Monday September 2nd 2024.

This can be done either via email or WeTransfer to: townclerk@sprowston-tc.gov.uk; or on a USB drive delivered to: The Town Clerk, Sprowston Town Council Office, Recreation Ground Road, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8EW.

For an informal discussion, please contact the Town Clerk on townclerk@sprowston-tc.gov.uk or 01603 408063.