



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

9.30am to 11.55am

19 October 2011

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Carlo (vice chair), Brociek-Coulton, Grenville, Lubbock, Sands (M), Stammers

Apologies: Councillor Little

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2011.

2. NORWICH SOCIETY - LOCAL LIST

The head of planning services, by way of introduction, said that that the authority had wanted to create a list of buildings of significance to local heritage which were not listed by English Heritage or were outside the local conservation areas. Conservation officers had worked with the Norwich Society to establish the criteria and methodology. The idea was to link the local list to the emerging development management policies (DMPs) on non-heritage assets.

Vicky Manthorpe, of Norwich Society, gave a power point presentation on the work of the society to draw up the draft local list starting with a slide of the Earl of Leicester public house which had triggered off discussions on the need to protect buildings that were significant to the city. She explained that the list applied to areas within the ring road but did not include the conservation area. Ten teams of volunteers from the society had worked to provide an area by area list of buildings for the city that, although not listed by English Heritage, were of local significance and met the criteria established by the council's conservation officers.

English Heritage had approved the methodology and a panel of experts had reviewed the draft local list before it was put out for public consultation. The slides had been taken by a professional photographer and used in a public exhibition in The Forum as part of the heritage open days. There were 122 properties on the draft list. All responses would be reviewed and the final lists would be published in early 2012 and available at City Hall, Norfolk Records office and Gressenhall. Further information was available on the society's website at

www.norwich.society.org.uk

(Copies of the draft Local List were available at the meeting.)

During discussion, Councillor Carlo referred to the ambiance of 19th century terraced streets, with the corner shops and public houses, and suggested that consideration should be given to including these areas in conservation areas. The head of planning services said that the council had a duty to periodically review conservation areas. There were areas of terraced houses in conservation areas and there were terraces that were well preserved and had historic value and significance. However there were practical considerations to consider if it were proposed to include all areas of terraced streets in the city with a conservation order and it affected the individual's rights to alter their own house.

RESOLVED to thank Vicky Manthorpe for her presentation and the Norwich Society for producing the draft Norwich Society – Local List.

3. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS

The head of city development services gave a power point presentation on proposals to introduce air quality management areas, which would incorporate all the existing “hot-spots” and avoid the need to develop separate declarations and action plans for King Street and Bull Close Road sites. The cabinet could be asked to approve this approach or continue with the individual “hot spot” approach to air quality management in November. The head of city development and the environmental protection manager answered members' questions.

During discussion members welcomed a holistic approach to air quality management, provided that “hot spots” continued to be monitored. Councillor Carlo expressed concern that new “hot spots” had been identified in King Street and Bull Close Road.

Discussion ensued in which members considered measures to ensure that traffic was reduced in the city and kept flowing to minimise pollution. Members noted the difference to air pollution made by bus drivers turning off engines when stationary and the importance of park and ride facilities. The environmental protection manager explained how air quality was monitored. There was a static air monitoring unit in Castle Meadow but elsewhere air diffusion units were used. The air quality monitoring station at Lakenfields was part of the government network.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) endorse the proposal to introduce air quality management areas in the city;
- (2) ask the head of city development services to inform Norwich Highways Agency committee of the proposed revised approach.

4. EVIDENCE UPADATE FOR SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (DPDS)

(Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Lubock left the meeting during this item.)

The head of planning services introduced the report.

The planning team leader (regeneration) presented the topic paper on housing and, together with the head of planning services and the planning team leader (policy), answered members' questions. In response to a question, the planning team leader (policy) explained that the requirement for new homes to meet the Code of Sustainable Homes (COSH) standard had been removed from the Greater Norwich Joint Core strategy (JCS) because it was being introduced nationally through building regulations. The JCS would still require developments to meet the COSH code for 10% water efficiency. Following the huge response to the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework, the government was unlikely to publish it at the end of the year and therefore the period of uncertainty would continue.

Discussion ensued on the allocation of sites. Members were also advised that "windfall" (sites that were not previously identified for development) could not be taken into account when considering the delivery of allocations for new housing. The panel discussed the potential to encourage the conversion of empty shops and the use of space above shops for residential use.

The head of planning services explained that this authority's definition of "affordable housing" was set out in national policy and developed in the JCS, as being housing that required some form of support for tenants from a local authority or registered social landlord (RSL). This should not be confused with references to "affordable" housing which was low cost housing available on the open market and or various other forms of tenure. It was noted that affordable housing must comply with higher standards of energy efficiency than new build private housing.

The head of planning then introduced the topic paper on employment, with the caveat that the figures were at a very local level and that the movement of an employer to another address could be misread as a large number of jobs being lost from the city. In response to a question on the effect of the economic downturn on the emerging DMPs and the JCS, the head of planning services said that growth of homes and jobs needed to be in parallel and that there was a need for good quality office space in the city centre. During discussion members expressed concern about the businesses moving out of the city and the loss of employment land to housing which resulted in a reduction of employment opportunities in the city centre where it was more sustainable. Councillor Sands pointed out that 75% of small businesses failed in the first two years. The head of planning services said that the council promoted small businesses through the provision of start up industrial units, grants and support from the economic development team. Discussion ensued on the JCS, which was adopted in March 2011, and it was noted that the evidence base had been prepared during 2010.

The panel then discussed the topic paper on open spaces. Councillor Carlo commented that the inclusion of churchyards as open spaces detracted from the amount of open spaces that the public had an opportunity to use. She suggested that vacant sites awaiting development could be used temporarily by communities to grow food. The head of planning services said that if landowners were in agreement there were a different number of mechanisms to effectively permit such use but that it should not reduce the viability of the land for future use. Members were advised that churchyards and cemeteries provided green infrastructure.

During discussion on the provision of sports halls in the city, the planning policy team leader said that Sport England had updated its statistics, taking into account smaller

sports halls and better methodology. The head of planning services said that the former Lincoln Ralph sports hall (situated at Wensum Lodge, King Street) was possibly not in the best location for a sports hall serving the city. Members also noted that school facilities were now available for use by the general public. The community infrastructure levy (CIL) would allow greater flexibility to provide public open space adjacent to high density development sites.

RESOLVED to note the update on the emerging evidence base for the Site Allocations Plan and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and that these continue to be work in progress.

(Subsequent to the panel meeting on 19 October, appendix 3 of the evidence update (the Draft Topic Paper on Open Space, Sports and Recreation) was revised and circulated to members and published on the council's website, to include:

- a summary of the findings of the October 2011 Sport England report on Sports halls in Norwich reported verbally to members at the panel meeting (see paragraphs 3.23, 3.24 and appendix 3 section 8);
- more information on green infrastructure projects (see paragraphs 3.15 and 3.16);
- conclusions, taking account of the additional evidence (see section 5).)

5. STANDING ITEM PROGRESS ON THE PHOTO-VOLTAIC PANELS

RESOLVED to note that the contract for the installation of the photo-voltaic panels on the roof of City Hall is going through the tender process and that it is expected that further progress will be reported at the next meeting.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED to reschedule the next meeting of the panel scheduled for 30 November 2011.

CHAIR