



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

2pm to 4.10pm

2 December 2011

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Carlo (vice chair), Kendrick (sub), Little Lubbock, Sands (M), Stammers

Apologies: Councillor Brociek-Coulton

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2011.

2. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – DETAILED PROPOSALS AND DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR REFORM – RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

The head of city development services introduced the report and outlined the main issues for consideration, including the options around use of CIL receipts to provide affordable housing and how the levy could be used within the city. Members welcomed the opportunity to use CIL receipts for affordable housing. The head of planning said that housing need was evident and would come at a significant cost. However, some Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) authorities were therefore concerned that the majority of CIL receipts could be diverted into affordable housing rather than, for example, infrastructure.

In response to members' questions, the head of city development services said that affordable housing was the largest element of section 106 monies and therefore remained relatively protected. The CIL would be calculated based on floor area and not potential profit. This would enable developers to identify the cost of the CIL before buying the site. The potential tariff (£135 to £175 per square metre) had been consulted on and responses were being considered. In response to a question from Councillor Little regarding the CIL funding for green infrastructure and renewable energies, he said that the city council would be responsible for deciding where the money would be spent. In response to members stating that local communities should be involved in the discussions on how to spend the money, he said that local community involvement would be a recurring theme in all policies as a result of the Localism Act.

RESOLVED to recommend to cabinet that a response be made to the Department of Communities and Local Government consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy detailed proposals and draft regulations for reform in line with appendix 1 of the report, with the exception of answers to questions nine and 11. The response to those questions should be based on paragraphs seven to 10 of the report.

3. INTERIM STATEMENT ON THE OFF-SITE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The head of planning services presented the report and answered members' questions. The new approach to affordable housing had been monitored by officers and evidence showed that registered providers had difficulties taking on the management of properties on some small urban sites due to the higher costs. In limited circumstances, it was considered that some flexibility should be allowed to allow money to pool for provision off-site. Failure to do this may reduce the overall numbers of affordable dwellings provided and could increase the risk of challenge to decision if the council were to insist a single property be provided on site. The interim statement provided examples and circumstances in which off-site provision may be acceptable.

RESOLVED to recommend that cabinet endorse the interim statement on the off-site provision of affordable housing.

4. NORWICH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) PROGRAMME UPDATE

The planning team leader presented the report. He outlined the reasons for the need to change the timetable and ensure that the site allocation plan and development management policy plans ran simultaneously. Councillor Lubbock queried why the council had to delay the decision and publication of the sites to be included. In response, the head of planning said that outstanding issues with three controversial sites would need to be considered and decided upon first because the outcome could impact on which other sites would be developed. He said it was unfortunate but that a holistic decision on the package of sites to go forward was required. Officer capacity was also an issue and resource redeployment would be considered over the next few months. The period in the run up to local elections next May could affect any future consultations. The chair advised that a press release would be issued with an update to the public. Councillor Kendrick welcomed the delay and said that a robust approach would help to reduce the number of appeals.

Councillor Carlo informed the panel that the biodiversity partnership group had shown an interest to contribute to the policy wording of the built environment (and biodiversity). A planner (development) explained that the policy had been redrafted based on previous discussions and work with various bodies including the environment agency. The planning team leader said that there would be some discussion in the future on a county wide basis on the biodiversity management policy and supporting documents.

In response to a question from Councillor Stammers, the head of planning services explained that it would benefit the council to retain some of the policy areas in which the national planning policy framework was now silent. Certain policy direction could

be retained within the local policy, as long as it could be justified. The planning team leader said that strong policies had retained the strong retail sector in the city centre.

RESOLVED to note the change of the timetable for LDF production, which would be confirmed through a revision to the Local Development Scheme.

5. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2010/11

The planning team leader presented the report. He highlighted the main issues to members including the building for life (BfL) scheme which had enabled officers to work closely with developers at the beginning of planning applications to improve the quality of schemes; and also that the total CO₂ emissions per capita had fallen within Norwich from 6.8 tonnes to 5.2 tonnes. It was not clear whether this was a result of the recession or council policies but it was a positive result. He also informed members that employment within the city had declined by nearly 15,000 jobs between 2007 and 2010. Policies were in place to encourage use of empty offices within the city however many companies were moving to offices outside of the city, for example to the Broadland Business Park. Evidence showed a need for higher quality offices within the city centre and policies would need to promote this.

The planning team leader responded to members' questions and welcomed suggestions to help improve the monitoring report including amending the executive summary to include key achievements as well as targets not met; providing definitions where necessary; including additional indicators; and clarifying data sources.

In response to a question from Councillor Sands, the head of planning services confirmed that outcome of the high court challenge could impact on the future of the monitoring report.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note the content of the annual monitoring report;
- (2) ask officers to send a copy of the DEC spreadsheet to sustainable development panel members; and
- (3) ask members to send any further comments to Mike Burrell, planning team leader.

6. STANDING ITEM - PROGRESS ON THE PHOTO-VOLTAIC PANELS

The environmental strategy manager provided members with a brief update. The project had received the necessary planning approval and the tendering process had been completed, identifying two suppliers. Officers had received notification that the 40kW system could be added to the grid network within the city, inline with the initial deadline of installation by April 2012. However, the government had since proposed changes to the Feed-in tariff (FIT) charges. Officers were exploring the potential affect of the proposals to the PV project on City Hall, and would develop a timeline of decisions and actions to be taken.

RESOLVED to:-

- (1) note that officers would explore the impact of the government's proposed changes to the FIT tariff charges on the PV project at City Hall; and,
- (2) receive a further update at the next meeting.

CHAIR