



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

9.30am to 11.55am

28 September 2011

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Carlo (vice chair), Grenville, Little, Lubbock, Stammers and Westmacott (substitute for Councillor Brociek-Coulton)

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton (other council business) and Sands (M)

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bremner declared a personal interest in item x, Earlham Hall area – vision and development document because close relative was employed by the University of East Anglia.

(Councillors Bremner and Little also declared personal interest in item 4 materials recycling facility contract, as elected members of Norfolk County Council).

### 2. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2011.

### 3. CYCLE NETWORK PLAN

The design, conservation and landscape manager presented the report and with the aid of large scale plans (available at the meeting). The proposed cycle network would be considered by the Norwich Highways Agency committee at its meeting on 24 November 2011. Members were advised that the details of the public consultation would be released in due course.

Discussion ensued in which members welcomed the initiative and noted that they could submit comments as part of the consultation. Councillor Little suggested that the network provided links to the educational establishments on the Ipswich Road (City College Norwich and The Hewett School); improved links to the countryside (Wymondham and Long John Hill, Lakenham) and improved routes north and south of the city. In response to Councillor Little's suggestion that there needed to be a safe route for cyclists and that the junction at St John Maddermarket was unsafe,

the design, conservation and landscape manager confirmed that funding had been allocated to connect National Cycle Route 1 at the Colegate / Duke Street junction to the Market Place via a contraflow lane on Duke Street. The Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) included measures to close Exchange Street to general traffic and allow cyclists to ride in both directions, although members were advised that this could be some years away. Councillor Lubbock welcomed the strategic approach and said that it would be used to attract funding and needed to be bold to change habits in the future. She also pointed out that cycle routes needed to be maintained. In the winter the cycle path on Bluebell Road had not been treated and there were problems with over hanging branches. Community groups should be included in the consultation to benefit from local knowledge.

**RESOLVED** to note that the panel welcomed the approach as set out in the report and that there will be consultation on the draft cycle network plan.

#### **4. MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY CONTRACT**

(Councillors Bremner and Little declared an interest during this item.)

The head of citywide services presented the report and answered members' questions.

During discussion members discussed the treatment of materials and were advised that the majority of materials collected in Norfolk were recycled in the UK or Northern Europe. Councillor Westmacott (cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods) endorsed the report and said that the consortium approach would ensure that the best range of options was available for the city and county. Councillor Carlo suggested that an anaerobic digester could deal with organic waste and that there were business opportunities for recycling plastics, for example, making furniture. Councillor Lubbock suggested that metals were also collected for recycling.

Councillor Little suggested that a partnership approach might result in the council having less control over a shared service than if it contracted out the service on its own.

In response to a question from Councillor Stammers, the head of citywide services said that the NEWS facility required capital investment to be able to achieve the outcomes that the consortium required. Its future would be an issue for the contractor.

**RESOLVED** to endorse the following recommendations to cabinet:

That:

- (1) Norwich City Council continues with its membership of the MRF Consortium in Norfolk on the basis that all costs associated with the new procurement and future processing of income share will be equally shared amongst Consortium members;
- (2) through the MRF Consortium Norwich City Council enters into an EU approved procurement process for dry recyclables, sorting and processing

etc. (This contract to commence on 1 April 2014 or, subject to the outcome of further legal advice, on 1 April 2016.)

## **5. EARLHAM HALL AREA – VISION AND DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT**

(Councillor Bremner had declared an interest in this item.)

The head of planning services presented the report.

Councillor Carlo suggested that to mitigate local residents' concerns the development should support and enhance the historic parkland setting of the hall. Over the years there had been some inappropriate tree planting and management. The head of planning services said that there was more flexibility to require enhancements to the parkland to offset the impact of the development on the building under the proposed community infrastructure levy rather than under the current specific tests required for S106 contributions. The chair suggested that officers followed up this request with parks and open spaces as the city council owned the park. He also pointed out that the support from the local community had been supportive.

Councillor Lubbock suggested that S106 contributions could be used to provide historic interpretation of Earlham Hall and the history of the Gurney family and Elizabeth Fry, and that the building should be opened to the public one day each year as part of the Heritage Open Days.

**RESOLVED** to note the vision and development document and recommend that the document is endorsed by the cabinet on 12 October 2011.

## **6. EVIDENCE UPDATE FOR SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (DPDS)**

The planning team leader (regeneration) presented the report, and together with the head of planning services, answered members' questions.

Members confirmed the approach and sequence for management policies DPDs to come forward for consideration. Councillor Little pointed out that the development management policies would need to be evaluated against impacts emerging from the government NPPF.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the evidence update within the report;
- (2) request a further evidence update at the next meeting on 19 October 2011 as set out in paragraph 7, table 1.

## **7. DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION**

Councillor Bremner referred to his response to Councillor Stammers' question at council on 27 September 2011 and introduced the report.

The head of planning services presented the report and said that since drafting the report the council had received informal advice that the government would be revising parts of the draft national planning policy framework (NPPF) and therefore suggesting more positive wording might exert more influence on the part of the city council.

Discussion ensued. Councillor Carlo referred to the length of the document and said that she considered that it would be subject to legal challenge. She pointed out that there was no reference in the framework to reducing the need to travel and no assessment of carbon reduction targets. She suggested that the city council's response therefore should be more challenging on the issue of sustainable development. There were 3 pillars of sustainable development: economy integrated with social and environment pillars as well.

Members then considered brownfield sites developments and the need to ensure that city centres were vibrant and did not lose out to less sustainable developments such as out of town business and retail parks. The head of planning services pointed out that the NPPF did not stipulate that brownfield sites should be developed first before greenfield sites.

Councillor Bremner said that local planning authorities had limited powers available to make local decisions, given that planning inspectorate could overrule decisions at appeal, and expressed concern that the NPPF could exacerbate this situation.

Discussion ensued on any transitional arrangements for the implementation of the NPPF. Councillor Stammers suggested that development management policies if required would need to be more detailed. The head of planning services said that existing planning policy statements would remain in force for the time being and still could provide evidence to support recommendations on planning applications. A further report on the impact of the NPPF and its implications for emerging policy documents would be considered at a future meeting of the panel.

**RESOLVED** to note:

- (1) the comments of the panel on the draft consultation response and recommend it to cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 12 October 2011;
- (2) the potential implications for Norwich and the work of the panel.

## **8. DRAFT ENVIRONEMENT STRATEGY 2011 – 2014**

(The chair had agreed to take this item as an urgent item to give the panel an opportunity to comment on the final version before it was considered by the cabinet at its meeting on 12 October 2011.)

The environmental strategy manager presented the report and answered members' questions. He undertook to send members of the panel details of the performance indicators if they required them.

Councillor Carlo took the opportunity to thank the environmental strategy manager and colleagues for their contribution to developing the strategy. She said that she could not agree that the delivery of the Norwich area transport strategy (NATS) would contribute to carbon reduction because it included the construction of the northern distributor road (NDR). The increase in recycling rates was to be welcomed but more could be done to minimise waste materials in the first place by reducing consumption.

The environmental strategy manager said that an action of the Norfolk Climate Change Taskforce, funded by Climate Change East, was to set up a website similar to the community project "Oxford is my world" to provide information on choices to reduce greenhouse emissions that were available to the public, such as car clubs, travel etc. The project was endorsed by Archant.

The chair referred to the increase in recycling levels and said that it was important that the council worked on what it could control and do something about. Councillor Lubbock raised the issue of bedding plants to promote bees and drought resistant tree planting and asked how the community could be involved. The environmental strategy manager said that the strategy was high level document based on service plans and was regularly updated. An annual statement was published each year which gave an overview of the council's position but the detail was contained in service plans.

In response to a statement from Councillor Carlo about reducing packaging, the environmental strategy officer agreed that some retailers were responding well to this and referred to the work of WRAP and other organisations. The use of plastics in packaging had been reduced from 50 or 60 to fewer than 20 types that could be recycled more readily. This was true across industry generally with many more cars being able to be recycled.

Discussion ensued on trade waste and the encouragement of businesses to recycle through initiatives.

In response to a question from Councillor Stammers, the environmental strategy officer said that officers were trained to make appropriate decisions with regard to procurement and sustainable energy. For instance a torch with a rechargeable battery would be preferable to one without.

**RESOLVED** to note the discussion as set out in the minutes and to recommend the draft environmental strategy 2011-2014 to the cabinet for approval at its meeting on 12 October 2011.

## **9. STANDING ITEM - PROGRESS ON PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS**

The environmental strategy manager gave an oral update on the progress of the installation of the photovoltaic panels on the roof of City Hall. Tender documents had been prepared and subject to planning permission and listed building consent the installation of the panels would commence towards the end of December or early January, with a view to being fully operational by March 2012 (to benefit from FIT). It might be possible to save £7,000 to £8,000 on the list price by not using a big screen in the foyer to demonstrate the generation of electricity and using less technical equipment to produce data on a spreadsheet which could be updated

monthly instead. It was expected that further information on the level of investment could be reported to the next meeting but it was expected that investment could be realised in 8 years instead of the figure of 13 years as previously stated.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

(The following item was received for information and not discussed at the meeting.)

**10. GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF WASTE POLICY IN ENGLAND 2011**

**RESOLVED** to receive the report of the head of citywide services.

CHAIR