

Sustainable development panel**09:30 to 13:10****23 September 2015**

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair). Herries (vice chair), Bogelein, Grahame, Jackson, Lubbock and Thomas (Va)

Apologies: Councillor Woollard

1. Declarations of interest

Councillor Herries declared an other interest in item 6 (below), Solar Together update, as she had participated in the reverse auction for solar panels scheme.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2015.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Revised process for engaging with local communities on the expenditure of the community element of CIL

The city growth and development manager presented the report and, together with the head of planning services, answered members' questions.

The panel considered the community element of CIL received by the charging authority. The chair commented that it was important that expectations of local communities were fulfilled and therefore a cautious approach should be taken to the commitment of funding which had not yet been received. The panel was advised that whether communities received 15% or where there was a neighbourhood plan 25% of CIL revenue, it all came out of the "same pot of funding", ie the CIL neighbourhood funding administered by the council.

Discussion ensued on the proposal that the four community and neighbourhood managers would act as the lead officers to receive ideas for CIL funded schemes from the community and local councillors. Members sought clarification that this would not put an additional burden on the community and neighbourhood managers and were assured that this was an integral part of their engagement with the community and through their regular meetings with councillors and residents' groups. All schemes would be evaluated to ensure eligibility against agreed criteria and that there was not a more appropriate alternative source of funding. The process would

be ongoing and therefore new residents would be included as development progressed. Some members expressed concern that they had been unaware that this was in process and that they needed to start exploring opportunities for projects within their wards.

The panel considered the position of urban councils without parishes. The head of planning services explained that, where there was a neighbourhood plan, the area covered by the plan would need to be designated and that the council would probably retain the expenditure of CIL funding in consultation with a body convened for the purpose.

RESOLVED to note the revised process (Appendix 1 of the report) for engaging with the local community on how the community element of CIL is spent.

4. Air quality management plan

The environmental protection officer presented the report and together with environmental protection manager, answered members' questions.

During discussion the panel was advised that although there was legislation to enforce bus drivers to turn off engines in the designated low emission zones, it was more effective to work with the bus companies to ensure that all drivers were compliant. There was strong support within the panel that buses should only be retrofitted once to comply with Euro standard 6 as this would be more cost effective in the long term and achieve the greatest results in improving air quality. Members were advised that there was government funding from the Clean Bus Technology fund to bring buses up to standard.

The environmental protection officer said that the management plan was a continual process. She pointed out that, based on work produced by the Civitas project at the University of East Anglia, the target for nitrogen dioxide reduction would be met if all buses were Euro standard 4. Therefore the air quality target was achievable. Improving the standard of buses would also improve air quality in the rest of the county too.

During discussion, members noted that there had been positive changes such as the use of electric cars. A member suggested that the city council's fleet should be all electric. A member asked what had happened to the consolidated freight transport scheme and whether it still operated.¹ The scheme sought to reduce the number of vehicles coming into the city centre. The panel also noted that the congestion charges also resulted in a decrease in the volume of traffic.

RESOLVED to note the report and ask that panel's comments, as minuted above, should be taken into consideration by the cabinet at its meeting on 7 October 2015.

¹ The freight consolidation service is in operation on a small scale.

5. Carbon footprint report

The environmental strategy officer presented the report and together with the environmental strategy manager answered members' questions. It was noted that new targets had been set which would be more challenging to achieve. The panel welcomed the news that the council's energy performance certificates for its buildings, including City Hall, were all Grade C or above.

During discussion members were advised that the environmental strategy officer was working closely with the procurement team to review the council's contract for electricity and to ensure that the successful bidder complied with the Ofgem Green energy supply guidelines. The panel also noted that the council was constrained by the legislation surrounding procurement and that cost was also a factor.

Discussion ensued on the data. Members were advised that the presentation of the data in this report was in accordance with Defra/DECC methodology for easy comparison with other years and local authorities' data. The use of raw data would be problematic as it would not take into external conditions, such as a bad winter for instance. The chair suggested that those members who wished to see the raw data had a discussion with the officers outside the meeting.

Members asked for a breakdown of the number of flights that the council had used in the reporting period.

The panel also commented on the work that the council had undertaken to ensure that its contractors reduced carbon emissions, such as revising the routes for refuse vehicles to save energy and through procurement.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the report;
- (2) ask the environmental strategy manager to provide details of flights to members of the panel.²

6. Solar Together update report

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

The environmental strategy officer presented the report, and together with the communications officer, answered members' questions.

During discussion members questioned whether there was a case to repeat the Solar Together project despite the government's reduction or removal of the feed-in-tariff incentive. Members considered that the scheme should be run again, if it were feasible with iChoosr. The collective purchase scheme ensured that solar panels were installed by a reputable supplier at a fair cost.

Discussion ensued in which the environmental strategy manager said that following the auction, the uptake had been 850 and there was still capacity for a further 150

² Civic office visit to twinned city Novi Sad

households to have solar panels installed before December 2015 and benefit from the current feed-in-tariff. Members considered that people might come forward if they were aware that this was the last opportunity to benefit from the higher tariffs.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the report;
- (2) ask the environmental strategy manager to investigate the feasibility of holding another Solar Together auction despite the removal or reduction in the feed-in-tariff;
- (3) note that there is capacity for a further 150 dwellings to take up the offer and have solar panels installed before the end of December 2015.

(Given the length of the meeting, the panel agreed to rearrange the agenda.)

7. Environmental strategy communications plan

RESOLVED to defer consideration of the environmental strategy communications plan to the next meeting.

8. Open space and play supplementary planning document – response to consultation

RESOLVED, having noted that the report outlines the main issues raised in response to the consultation document considered by the panel in July 2015, to ask members of the panel to contact the head of planning services with any comments before the Open space and play supplementary planning documents is considered for approval by cabinet on 7 October 2015.

9. Local plan implementation issues resulting from the housing standards review

RESOLVED, having noted the report, to ask members of the panel to contact the head of planning services with any comments regarding the proposal to ask cabinet to approve use of the revised Greater Norwich water efficiency advice note and the Norwich only information notes on internal space standards and accessible and adaptable dwellings to aid implementation of the Norwich local plan.

(Councillors Herries (vice chair) and Thomas left the meeting at this point.)

10. Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment

(Nigel Moore, consultant, ORS, attended the meeting for this item.)

The head of planning services presented the report as an introduction to the Central Norfolk Strategic housing market assessment (SHMA).

Nigel Moore, consultant, ORS, presented a power point presentation and explained the methodology used for the assessment and the implications for the city. (A copy of the presentation is available on the council's website.)

During the presentation members' questions were answered by the consultant, head of planning services, the planning policy team leader and the senior development officer (enabling) and the housing development officer.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the progress of the emerging assessment before it is finalised and becomes an important part of the evidence base for future planning in Norwich;
- (2) thank Nigel Moore, ORS, for his presentation.

CHAIR