



Sustainable Development Panel

16:00 to 16:50

13 June 2023

Present: Councillors Hampton (chair following election), Giles (vice chair following election), Carrington, Champion, Driver, Hoechner, Oliver and Osborn

Apologies: Councillor Lubbock

1. Appointment of Chair

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Hampton as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

RESOLVED to elect Councillor Giles as chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023, noting that the consultation response had been circulated by email to members.

5. Greater Norwich Local Plan: Proposed Examination Submission on the Requirement for Gypsy and Traveller Pitches and Allocation of Sites for Gypsy and Traveller Pitches

Mike Burrell, Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager, introduced himself to the panel. He was a city council employee who had been seconded to work on the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for the last seven years. He now managed the team which comprised officers from the city council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council. The team had moved from its base at County Hall to City Hall a year ago.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager confirmed that he would address a question that Councillor Osborn had raised regarding consultation with the local Gypsy and Traveller community and presented the report. Members were advised of an amendment to the fifth recommendation in the report to refer to the “additional” focussed consultation currently taking place, revisions to paragraph 20 to more clearly reference [H6.1 and H3.3 on consultation feedback](#), along with two corrections to paragraph 21 of the report:

First bullet point – note that 2 additional pitches were required at Foulsham not 3 as stated in the report.

Third bullet point – note that it the site is at Brick Kiln Road not Lane as stated in the report.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager referred members to Section 8 on page 10 of the [H3.1 Topic Paper – Policy 5 Homes Addendum on Gypsy and Traveller Sites 0.pdf \(gnlp.org.uk\)](#) and explained that the Norfolk & Suffolk Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Service (NSGRTS) had been engaged by the partnership to establish if the members of the Gypsy and Traveller community knew of existing sites that could be expanded or brought forward or whether any other landowners wanted to bring forward new sites. During November 2022, NSGRTS staff visited 14 existing Gypsy and Traveller sites, engaging directly with members of the community at eight sites. As a result, three new sites were brought forward through this process at Carleton Rode, Horsford and Foulsham. NSGRTS were engaged to assist in encouraging participation in the focussed consultation held between January and March 2023 and made written representations on behalf of the community. Their engagement work enabled a further site to come forward at Brick Kiln Road, Hevingham. Following assessment by officers, the sites at Carleton Rode and Foulsham were included in the focussed consultation and the site at Hevingham was currently out for consultation.

Members were advised that some negative comments had been made about the Gypsy and Traveller community during the January to March consultation. There were also adverse comments on social media and flyers which were reported to the police. The team had asked individuals to amend comments which were inappropriate. Comments that were derogatory were not published on the website.

During discussion, the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager answered questions from members, including questions raised by a member in response to an email that had been received from an activist and submitted as part of the consultation responses.

In reply to a question on the robustness of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said that it was presented in June 2022 and provided evidence that additional sites and pitches were needed. At the discretion of the planning inspectors, it would most likely be subject to discussion at the public examination stage. Members were assured that the assessment methodology was robust, and evidence based. It had been used by other authorities, most recently, at Central Lincolnshire, where the plan had been tested at public examination and found to be sound.

Regarding concerns about “security of tenure”, the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said that change of use (from a designated Gypsy and Traveller site) would be subject to planning permission. It was unlikely that any of these sites would be subject to an application for change of use as the majority of the sites were owned by the Gypsy and Traveller community themselves, with two owned by partner councils and two others by private landowners.

Members were advised that people living on boats were not part of this consultation. The rivers and broads were covered by the Broads Authority and would be subject to its local development plan.

Members were also advised that the consultation did not include sites for Travelling Showpeople. The partnership had signed a Statement of Common Ground with the Eastern Region Branch of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain which set out how the community's needs could be met with a permissive policy rather than a specific site allocation.

In reply to a member's question on how members of the Gypsy and Traveller community were allocated pitches, the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said that this was carried out by the NSGRTS or through networking within the community.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager answered a question on the reasons why two of the six sites proposed in the consultation were not being taken forward. Members were advised that one of the sites was not being progressed on highways grounds and the other had been withdrawn by the landowner. The plan-making process had to have confidence that a site could be delivered. Members were assured that once an allocation for site use had been made it would continue even if it was sold.

A member commented that only two of the proposed sites were under local authority ownership and asked if there could be more within the city council areas to provide the number of pitches needed. The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said there was a strong likelihood that after sites delivering the 5-year land supply had been built out then windfall sites under a permissive policy could come forward to deliver the remaining pitches. A suggestion that large developments allocated a section for Gypsy and Travellers, was a way of ensuring provision but not one that had been taken by the local authorities in the development of the GNLP 3 to 4 years ago. South Norfolk had put forward its depot at Ketteringham.

In answer to a question, the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said that the GTAA was based on "ethnic" need and included provision for members of the Gypsy and Traveller community who resided in permanent homes but had the option to travel as part of their cultural identity and therefore required pitches.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager outlined the next steps. Members were advised that the cabinet would consider the report on 14 June 2023. South Norfolk Council's cabinet had already approved it and it would be considered later that evening by Broadland District Council's cabinet. The public examination would be on 25-26 July 2023. Invitations would be sent to people who had responded to the consultation. It would be available to watch online. Modifications to the plan would be considered in September and October 2023. It was expected that the partner councils would adopt the GNLP, with the list of modifications, in the new year.

A member commented that he did not consider that he had sufficient knowledge on the RRR consultant's assessment (GTAA) and that the need would be met. The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager reiterated that the independent examination would make that decision.

A member asked what would happen if the GNLP could not be agreed. The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager said that it was critical to have a local plan to guide development. The submission on Gypsy and Traveller pitches and allocation of sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches was the last remaining issue to discuss at the examination. Without a plan in place local planning authorities could not resist unsustainable developments. It was critical to get the GNLP finalised.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report and recommend that Cabinet agrees to submit to the independent inspectors of the Greater Norwich Local Plan that:

- (1) the Greater Norwich Local Plan should include a minimum requirement of 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches to meet the full ethnic need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation from 2022 to 2038:
- (2) in order to ensure the minimum requirement for Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2022 and 2032 is met, that the Greater Norwich Local Plan should allocate 45 Gypsy and Traveller pitches comprising:
 - (a) 35 deliverable pitches from 2022 to 2027 through the allocation of the sites in Stratton Strawless, Carleton Rode, Foulsham, Wymondham and Cawston; and,
 - (b) 10 developable pitches from 2028 to 2032 at Ketteringham Depot;
- (3) the analysis of historic windfall demonstrates that at least a further 12 windfall pitches can reasonably be expected to meet unmet needs to 2038;
- (4) the proposed main and additional modifications to the plan set out in appendix 1 which provide the policy changes to enable recommendations (1) and (2) should be considered through the plan's examination.
- (5) Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Development and City Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth to negotiate further modifications as may be necessary, which may include proposals to allocate one or more of the additional focussed consultation sites, to ensure the Greater Norwich Local Plan is found sound through its examination.

CHAIR