

Sustainable development panel**16:00 to 18:00****7 November 2016**

Present: Councillors Herries (vice chair, in the chair), Bremner (chair) (arrived during the meeting), Davis (substitute for Councillor Brociek-Coulton), Grahame, Lubbock, Schmierer (substitute for Councillor Jackson) and Thomas (Va)

Apologies Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Jackson and Maguire

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Anglia Square Policy Guidance Note – draft for consultation

(Peter Luder, planning director of Weston Homes plc attended the meeting for this item.)

The head of planning services presented the report and together with the director of regeneration and development, the planning policy team leader (projects) and the senior planner (development), referred to the report and answered members' questions. Members were advised that there was a discrepancy between reference to page numbers in the report and the page numbers in the agenda pack. Therefore, appendix 1 of the draft policy guidance note (PGN) was on page 49 of the agenda papers (not page 43, as stated in paragraph 6) and that in paragraph 9, the reference to the plan of the area covered by the PGN was on page 10. The head of planning services said that it was intended to commence the consultation on 21 November 2016. He suggested that members agreed the principles for consultation at the meeting and invited members to submit further comments for consideration to him by the end of the week.

The panel then considered the PGN in detail section by section. Members considered that the plans of the area could be larger but were satisfied that colour versions of the plans were easier to understand. (Colour versions of the plans were circulated at the meeting.) The panel noted that it made sense to consider the development of Anglia Square with that of adjacent sites, St Mary's Works and St Crispin's House.

During discussion the panel noted that later sections of the document provided detailed information about issues that some members raised under the background and site analysis section. The vice chair also reminded members that the purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the document was fit for purpose as a consultation document rather than an opportunity to comment on the details of the scheme.

The panel considered the background and site analysis section. It was noted that the purpose of the PGN was to facilitate redevelopment of Anglia Square. The demolition of Sovereign House was considered by the owner and council as the local planning authority to be necessary to open up the site for redevelopment. A member asked that a reference be made to the architectural merit of Sovereign House as an example of brutalist architecture. In reply to a question, the head of planning services explained that the reference in paragraph 3.8 to Surrey Chapel Free Church was an established use and that the Men's Shed, a print works and car wash were considered to be temporary use of the buildings in Pitt Street and appropriate notice would be given to the occupants of the intention to demolish the premises. Members also considered that the document needed to highlight the need for tactile surfaces given the proximity to headquarters of the Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind in Magpie Road. The panel noted that there would have been contamination testing in the 1960s but it was necessary for further testing before redevelopment.

During discussion a member asked whether the shutting of the subway on St Crispin's Road would open up access to the site from the north. The head of planning services explained that the subway and the flyover had the effect of separating Anglia Square and that the proposal was to improve connectivity of Anglia Square and the area beyond it with the rest of the city centre. The chair said that the Yellow Pedalway would provide surface crossing to replace the subway and provide a more pleasant experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

The panel noted that government guidance on the NPPF was expected at the end of this year and would therefore be received during the PGN consultation period. Members also discussed the viability assessment and the instability of the market and that the provision of affordable housing would be subject to rolling assessment during the development of the site.

The director of regeneration and development pointed out that there was demand for some types of offices in the city centre and therefore advised that paragraph 7.16, second sentence be amended by inserting the word "some" or "large-scale" between "for" and "offices" to reflect this.

A member suggested that it would be helpful if the historic streets severed by the construction of the St Crispins flyover were named in paragraph 7.35. The head of planning services said that it was unrealistic to expect the developers to remove the flyover. The Norwich Highways Authority did not consider that there was reason to remove it: the costs would be massive and there would be considerable disruption during its removal. The proposal coming out of the PGN was to open up access and make better use of the space under the flyover. During discussion members considered that there was an opportunity for innovative ideas to come forward for the use of the area under the flyover and links to public realm spaces within the PGN site. Members considered that it would be useful for examples of other urban solutions to the space under the flyover to be considered. Members also considered that it should reflect the cultural diversity of the community around Magdalen Street.

The panel discussed the leisure uses for this site and noted that, although not part of the city's designated night time economy, there would be the cinema and restaurants and it was in the vicinity of live music venues, the Blueberry, Cactus Jack's and Epic studios. Members suggested that the PGN should make reference to a wider

range of potentially acceptable leisure uses, and that a consultation question should be added on leisure. The consultation should take account of current residents but also the wider community and that of future occupants of the housing on the site.

During discussion on energy efficiency a member asked for the use of solar panels to be encouraged. The head of planning services referred to the PGN and said that reference would be made to solar panels and use of green roofs in it. He pointed out that the site was constrained by the existing buildings and street patterns and that it was not a green-field site. The primary approach would be for fabric first, with a low carbon district heating system, which could be supported given the scale of the development.

The panel discussed the phasing of the development and that it would take several years to complete. In reply to a member's request for assurance that the development would take place, the planning director of Weston Homes plc confirmed there was a financial incentive for the company to complete the development to receive the return on investment in the early parts of the development. The company was large and experienced at delivering similar projects. Discussion then ensued on viability and the head of planning services referred to paragraph 7.107 and said that the viability information was not in the public domain. A member asked if planning applications committee members could have access to this information and the head of planning services said that viability information provided to the planning applications committee must be openly available.

A member asked whether there had been prioritisation in the case of the scheme not being delivered. It was agreed that an additional consultation question would be helpful in the Conclusions section to seek to identify key priorities for the site.

Members noted the appendices to the PGN.

RESOLVED, having considered the draft Anglia Square Policy Guidance Note, for consultation:

- (1) to make the following recommendations to the head of planning services for incorporation into the draft document:
 - (a) include reference that Sovereign House is considered to be an example of brutalist architecture;
 - (b) highlight the need to use tactile surfaces to be used through-out the scheme to assist blind and visually impaired people;
 - (c) amend paragraph 7.16 to amend second sentence so that it reads as follows:

“Recent evidence in the form of commercial market intelligence suggests a current lack of market demand for some/large-scale office and substantial pool of hard to let, poor quality office floorspace in the city.”
 - (d) amend paragraph 7.35 to insert historic street names of streets severed by the St Crispins flyover;

- (e) add examples of use of the spaces underneath urban flyovers;
 - (f) ask an additional question about leisure needs;
 - (g) ensure reference to use of solar panels and roof gardens is made in the section on Energy and Water; and
 - (h) include an additional question in section 9 ('Conclusions') about key priorities of the development.
- (2) ask members to submit further comments on the draft PGN to the head of planning services by 11 November 2016;
 - (3) note the timetable for the consultation and that the panel will consider the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 25 January 2017.

CHAIR