



Sustainable development panel

09:30 to 11:30

22 February 2017

Present: Councillors Herries (vice chair, in the chair), Bremner (panel chair), Brociek-Coulton, Grahame, Jackson, Malik (substitute for Councillor Maguire), Lubbock and Thomas (Va)

Apologies Councillor Maguire

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 25 January 2017.

3. Updated Anglia Square Policy Guidance Note

The planning policy team leader (projects) presented the report, and together with the head of planning services, answered members' questions. The owner of the site had also held a public consultation but the comments were not yet in the public domain. A planning application was expected in the spring 2017.

During discussion the planning policy team leader explained that the reference to studio accommodation related to artist studios and not studio accommodation.

Councillor Brociek-Coulton, local member for Sewell, said that it was important to ensure that connections with surrounding businesses in the Magdalen Street area were promoted and adequately signposted from Anglia Square.

Discussion ensued on the responses set out in appendix 2. The panel congratulated Councillor Jackson for providing detailed comments in response to the consultation. Members noted that the city council's and developer's consultations had run concurrently. The developer's consultation would inform the detailed planning application. The purpose of the council's policy guidance note was to guide future development on this site.

During discussion the panel considered that the guidance note should be amended to incorporate the following:

- Paragraph 3.2.1 members considered that the text should reflect people's divided opinion about the architectural merits of Sovereign House. The panel considered that the text should be amended to reflect that a minority of people

appreciated its Brutalist architecture yet at the same time give guidance that there needed to be a change.

When discussing the Visions and Objectives section of the report and members noted that the guidance was a response to the proposal from the site owner. A concert hall and demolition of the flyover were not part of this proposal. A member pointed out that viability was at the heart of the development. The panel suggested that the text be amended as follows:

- Paragraph 5.3 – to correct typographical error by replacing “on” with “in”.
- Paragraph 5.5, bullet point 8 - It was also suggested that as well as improving cycling and pedestrian connection there should be text to incorporate access to all areas for people with impairments.

The following changes to section 7 were proposed:

- Paragraph 7.11- would be amended to reflect that the Housing white paper had been published.
- Retail section – include text to reflect the retail connection with Magdalen Street and its cultural identity.

Discussion ensued on the retail nature of the Anglia Square development and noted that the smaller scale units would not be as conducive to large retailers and therefore did not seek to compete with the city centre shopping malls. Members wanted to propose that the retail units were all small ones but were advised that it would be difficult to provide evidence to cover that policy stance. Members were also advised that rental value was due to market forces. A member said that she was concerned that there would be too many hot food takeaways.

The panel then discussed the transport and movement issues through the site and the surrounding area and provision for the residents of the new housing. Members noted that the site was well served with public transport and that there would be less traffic around the site. Car ownership was undergoing a modal shift for city centre residents. The level of car-parking would be designed to meet the needs of the new residents bearing in mind how accessible the site was for cycling, walking, car-sharing and public transport. There would be separate parking provision to support the district centre and retailers in the area.

Members noted that there was a new Design section. Members considered that

- Paragraph 7.47 Air quality – that the use of “appropriate” and “required” duplicated each other and therefore “if required” should be removed.

During discussion a member referred to paragraph 7.43 and said that “external amenity space is accessible to the majority of new residents” and suggested that this be extended to all new residents. The head of planning services advised against this amendment as it would unduly limit the design of the buildings and limit the number of units available as it would not be possible to provide external space for flats, however it was agreed to delete the words “majority of”.

Members also considered the use of fountains under the section on the public realm. It was noted that the former fountain on the Haymarket was often vandalised.

Members agreed that disability groups should be involved in the design at an early stage and paragraph 7.62 should be amended accordingly. A member expressed concern that there was danger that the area under the flyover would become too “sanitised” and that there was room for Banksy style graffiti. It was important to retain some of its character. Members agreed the text in paragraph 7.69 should be amended accordingly.

In response to a question, the head of planning services said that the detailed planning application and the number of bed spaces would be looked at carefully to assess the need for a school. Discussion ensued on the whether a school on the site would be more viable if used for another use as well. During discussion members noted the number of schools in the vicinity and commented on whether there was capacity within the existing schools and not to put too onerous obligations on the developer.

The panel then considered the Heritage and Views section. Members noted that the excavations for the 20th century development were not deep and that an advisory note had been added regarding the need for archaeological investigation. Members asked that:

- Paragraph 7.89 – views should be referenced on the map.
Heritage assets in the area need to be protected.

Members noted that the construction would need to be phased to minimise disruption to existing retailers and businesses. The head of planning services pointed out that it was in the interest of the site owners for the long term viability of the district centre to keep existing tenants and integrate businesses into the scheme and retain the rental income.

Councillor Jackson thanked the officers for taking on board the comments he had submitted in response to the consultation.

RESOLVED to recommend the Anglia Square Policy Guidance Note to cabinet for adoption subject to minor amendments as minuted above.

4. Self and Custom Build – Government Initiative, Legislation and the Council’s Proposed Approach

The planning policy team leader (projects) presented the report, and together with the planner (development) and the head of planning services, answered members’ questions.

Members considered the duties set out to the local planning authority and what the fee to register for serviced plots of land to bring forward for self or custom house building projects would cover. There was a lack of government advice about this. The council needed to cover its costs. During discussion the panel considered what incentive was there for an individual to register when they could buy a piece of land and build on it. Members discussed the criteria and noted that the legislation stipulated that the new build could not be for second homes.

Discussion ensued in which members considered the fees. A member suggested that the fee of £50 was small considering the cost of land and construction. Another suggested that the fee was a revenue cost and that the register was basically a data collection exercise to identify the interest in self/custom build. The fee of £50 would be too much for someone saving up for their own home. The head of planning services explained that the government required councils to maintain registers without providing any financial assistance. Fees would be monitored to ensure that costs were covered.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note:
 - (a) the government's initiative with regard to self and custom building;
 - (b) the council's current approach to maintaining a self-build register;
- (2) with 6 members voting in favour (Councillors Herries, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Malik, Lubbock and Thomas) and 2 members abstaining (Councillors Grahame and Jackson) to recommend to cabinet that it adopts the annual fee and a local connection test for the council's self-build register.

CHAIR