



NORWICH
City Council

Council

Supplementary agenda

Members of the council are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the council to be held in the council chamber, City Hall, Norwich, on

Tuesday, 12 March 2024

19:30

Agenda

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Date of publication: **Wednesday, 06 March 2024**

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Motion to: Council

Item 12(c)

12 March 2024

Subject: Anglia Square

Proposer: Councillor Stonard

Seconded: Councillor Fulton-McAlister

Anglia Square is the most significant development opportunity within Norwich City Centre, it sits at the heart of the city and will play a vital role in defining the culture of Norwich moving forwards. Since 2008 there have been various proposals to redevelop the site. The 2008 proposal fell through, despite the best efforts of Norwich City Council, due to the financial crisis.

The various redevelopment proposals by Weston Homes, running from 2018 – 2024, received the support of the Labour and Liberal Democrat groups on the council.

Again, despite the best efforts of Norwich City Council, the developer has withdrawn due to a lack of viability and the unhelpful policies and unhelpful intervention of the Tory government. The Developer, Bob Weston, himself stated "The core contributor to a lot of the issues in this saga is the Conservative government, which seems to have no understanding of the importance of supporting the housebuilding industry, regional cities and local communities in the UK."

As a result of this Tory Government's mismanagement, and the efforts of opposition councillors to obstruct progress, we have lost 2,211 direct construction jobs, 288 jobs in the retail and commercial premises and more than 1,000 badly needed new homes, as well as additional spending by residents in the local economy of up to £36.4 million each year.

Council notes that the change in political composition of the council and the submission of a motion to remove the CIL exemption, at a time when Green councillors also opposed the CIL exemption policy, added to an environment of uncertainty for developers of large sites such as Anglia Square, and contributed to Weston Homes' decision to withdraw the project.

This Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Work in partnership with the site owners Colombia Threadneedle and the local community to examine all options to secure the regeneration of the site delivering on the objectives of the local plan as a matter of urgency, including the following:
 - a. Engaging with the Secretary of State and government agencies seeking to maximise funding to de-risk the housing led development of the site and

make it more attractive for investment. This is to include examination of potentially taking the site into public ownership if this is ultimately required in order to facilitate redevelopment;

- b. Work to attract the widest possible range of developers to regenerate the Anglia Square Site as a key housing led development for the city; and
- c. Examining measures to support existing businesses and community organisations operating in the area until clarity is gained on the site's future.

Motion to: Council

Item 12(f)

12 March 2024

Subject: The future of Anglia Square

Proposer: Councillor Schmierer

Seconder: Councillor Osborn

The decision by Weston Homes to pull out of the proposed Anglia Square development has reopened the debate around the future of this key site in the north city centre.

Anglia Square, sitting alongside Magdalen Street, is a vital part of the local community in the north city centre and NR3, providing a place for people to meet and affordable cafes and shops, including many independent businesses. It has also provided a home for the city's artists.

Unfortunately, since Weston Homes had said that they were planning to demolish existing buildings and businesses would need to relocate, many businesses in Anglia Square have already closed their doors.

The process that the council has gone through with Weston Homes since 2017 has meant that other options for Anglia Square have not been sufficiently proactively explored.

Council notes:

- 1) That many people wish to see Anglia Square redeveloped, but the nearly 800 objections to the original 2018 Weston Homes plans show that they want a development that respects the city's heritage.
- 2) That people also want to see a development that will not result in local people being priced out of the area, and that retains the community aspect of the Square.
- 3) That provision of social and affordable housing is of the highest priority and every effort should be made to ensure that at least 33% of housing at Anglia Square should be available for social rent or at affordable rates.
- 4) That certainty is essential to the confidence of businesses in the area and that the risks involved in private company-led development have not been conducive to that essential certainty.

- 5) That large parts of the Anglia Square site have remained unutilised for many years.
- 6) That areas surrounding Anglia Square, for example the St Saviours Lane carpark, offer opportunities for further brownfield redevelopment.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 7) Ask Cabinet to immediately produce a plan to support businesses in Anglia Square, who have suffered due to the uncertainty around the development.
- 8) Ask Cabinet to bring forward a report within six months exploring options for future ownership of the site, including the potential for the city council to purchase the site.
- 9) Ask Cabinet to consider a report setting out potential models for redevelopment of the site and identifying partners with whom the Council could work to develop it within twelve months.
- 10) Support the Norwich Over The Wensum neighbourhood forum in producing planning policy that is specific to the area surrounding Anglia Square.