



**Sustainable Development Panel**

**09:30 to 11:10**

**13 November 2019**

Present: Councillors Maguire (vice chair, in the chair for the duration of the meeting), Stonard (chair, from item 4 below), Carlo, Giles, Grahame, Lubbock and Stutely

Apologies: Councillors Davis and Maxwell

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2019.

**3. Terms of Reference**

The vice chair introduced the report.

Members noted that both the sustainable development panel and the climate and environment emergency executive panel were advisory groups to cabinet.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note that the council has established a climate and environment emergency executive panel (CEEEP);
- (2) approve the amendment of the terms of reference for the sustainable development panel by transferring the following terms of reference to the CEEEP:
  - (a) monitoring the progress of the council's environmental strategy and carbon management programme;
  - (b) consider how the council's environmental strategy, carbon reduction programme and associated policies tackle the issues of climate change, carbon reduction and sustainable development;

- (c) overseeing the implementation of the action plan for the integrated waste management strategy;
  - (d) the development of specific environmental strategies including trees, parks, play areas and natural areas;
- (3) approve the revised terms of reference as set appendix 6 of the report.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Regulation 10a Review of Local Plan

(Councillor Stonard, chair, joined the committee during this item. Councillor Maguire, vice chair remained in the chair).

The planner policy presented the report. She then referred to the Appendix 1 and highlighted the 15 DM policies that were considered “fit for purpose” for decision making until a review could take place, but which could benefit from minor updates or clarifications to make the policies easier to use or required further evidence to make the policies more effective. The Environment Bill was expected to have an impact on a number of policies if/when it became legislation.

During discussion, the planner (policy), the planning policy team leader and the senior planner, referred to the report and answered members’ questions.

A member said that she was frustrated that local planning authorities could not be more flexible when interpreting policies. She pointed out that large housing developments were still coming forward for determination with gas heating, when the government had stated that from 2025 that gas heating in new builds would no longer be permitted. The council should be encouraging the use of sustainable, renewable and low carbon energy. Other members considered that opportunities to increase the use of renewable energy were being missed and said that actions to mitigate the climate and environment emergency need to be taken now and the review of the policy should not be delayed. Members were advised that policy DM4 referred specifically to renewable energy schemes such as solar power farms rather than renewable energy provision on all development sites. There had been one solar farm application in Norwich but this policy was used infrequently. The Greater Norwich Joint Core Strategy required energy efficiency of new builds at 10 per cent. Any changes to policy in relation to new developments could not conflict with the JCS policy and would be reviewed as part of the strategic policies for renewable energy in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The senior planner pointed out that an unintended consequence of requiring all new build houses, for instance, to be provided with solar panels could be a reduction in the percentage of affordable housing provided.

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<sup>1</sup> The planning policy team leader subsequently advised that the reference to the “Local Development Framework” should be updated to “the Local Plan and other policy guidance”. 2 therefore should read:

2. Preparation and implementation of planning policy including the Local Plan and other policy guidance.

Discussion ensued on a number of policies. Councillor Stutely, as chair of the licencing committee, said that he welcomed the review of policy DM23 relating to the boundaries of the late night economy. Members noted that a number of policies needed to be tightened up to provide greater clarity, which included the policy itself, supporting text or guidance. The planning policy team leader said that input from members, particularly from planning applications committee members, when new policy was drafted could be considered, perhaps through workshops. Changes to DM23 would inform the emerging local plan. She also explained, in relation to DM27 (Norwich Airport) that the Airport Masterplan had now been endorsed and the operational area has also changed so these issues would need to be reflected when the policy was reviewed.

Councillor Stonard pointed out that it would be illogical to consider DM policies which could conflict or were not consistent with the strategic policies in the emerging GNLP. He explained the timescale for the review of local plan policies in the context of the broader process of preparation of the GNLP. Members of the panel concurred that DM4 should be “amber” and not “green” as it was considered desirable to address issues as renewable energy. The panel also requested a “roadmap” to explain the processes for reviewing the DM policies.

In reply to a member’s question Councillor Stonard explained that where 33 per cent of affordable housing was viable on a Greenfield sites, brownfield sites needed preparation such as demolition or decontamination and the policy needed to be flexible on viability grounds. The planning policy team leader advised members that the panel had considered the revised Affordable Housing SPD (27 February 2019) which was adopted by cabinet (12 June 2019 effective from 1 July 2019) and that the policy for affordable housing was in the Joint Core Strategy and outside the scope of the Regulation 10a review.

Discussion ensued on the site allocation for sites R14 and R15, both east of Bishop Bridge Road. A member suggested that the gasholder should be preserved to combine the gas holder and the natural heritage of the area. The planning policy team leader confirmed that both sites were designated as development sites in the current local plan. Members commented that there was a shortage of housing in the city and there was potential for these sites to be developed. It was considered that a lot of the trees on these sites were self-seeded. The same member also suggested that as Argyle Street had a history of subsidence, it was not sensible to designate CC11 for further development. In response the vice chair suggested that building techniques had improved making the site viable for development. The planning policy team leader confirmed that the council owned this site. Another member suggested that it was important to provide dense housing to meet housing need and to ensure that there were pockets of open space available rather than providing low density housing everywhere. Members also considered that the communal spaces at Goldsmith Street developed communities. Density of housing needed to be relevant to the site. Another member suggested that it was important to biodiversity to have areas that were not hard surfaced.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to cabinet that it endorses the Regulation 10A review of local plan policies and the proposal to commence review of the DM Policies plan following the Regulation 19 stage of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, likely to be in spring 2021, subject to:

- (1) further consideration as part of the 2021-22 budget process,
- (2) moving policy *DM4 Providing for renewable and low carbon energy* into the amber category because a further review is considered desirable to address issues such as renewable energy;
- (3) note that the sustainable development panel asked for a report comprising a “roadmap” to outline the process for addressing a number of policy issues as part of the forthcoming review of the DM Policies plan.

CHAIR