



**Sustainable development panel**

**09:30 to 10:15**

**29 June 2016**

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

Apologies Councillor Bremner (chair), Brociek-Coulton and Maguire

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2016, subject to the following amendment to item 2, Appointment of vice chair, to delete the word "Grahame" and replace with "Jackson" so that the sentence reads begins follows:

"Councillors Herries and Jackson were nominated as vice chair .... "

**3. One Planet Norwich Festival 2016**

The environmental strategy manager presented the report. He advised members that the One Planet Norwich Festival 2017 would take place on 6 and 7 May 2017.

During discussion members congratulated the officers on the success of the festival and asked whether the funding of the festival could be sustained at a time when the council's financial position was under pressure. The environmental manager said that they were working to make the event cost neutral though officer time was considerable. Members noted that the festival was combined with the Eco Awards, in partnership with the county council, and this reduced the council. However members considered that the event could generate income. Some stall holders would be willing to pay and fees could be proportionate to the size or type of organisation (ie not-for-profit or commercial). Other suggestions for generating income included gate fees, food stalls and entertainment such as "environmentally friendly bands". The environmental strategy manager said that some stall holders would be willing to pay for stalls. The venue (The Forum) constrained the nature of the event and the number of activities that could be carried out.

Several members said that the festival had unquantifiable value as it promoted and raised awareness of sustainable living. Members particularly praised the activities

for children and families. The panel also noted that the majority of visitors (67%) were city council residents.

A member said that councillors had been invited to tour the festival before it opened and a few members had taken up this invitation. Some members had been on stalls with non-for-profit organisations. However she considered that there should be a specific role for councillors at the festival as many members felt excluded and would like to be involved, not in a political way, but for themselves and to promote the unquantifiable benefits of sustainable living.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the report;
- (2) congratulate the officers involved for the success of the One Planet Norwich Festival 2016 and for their innovative ideas to link to other projects and activities in the city;
- (3) note that the One Planet Norwich Festival will be held on 6 and 7 May 2017 at The Forum;
- (4) ask the environmental strategy manager to consider the panel's comments about the festival and to discuss event sponsorship and member involvement with the executive head of customers, communication and culture.

**4. Houses in Multiple Occupation – Options**

The head of planning services presented the report and explained the background to the report and the options available to the council.

Discussion ensued in which the head of planning services referred to the reports and answered members' questions. He explained that it was necessary for the council to give a year's notice of an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights, ie. the change of use, or there could be significant risk of compensation being payable to residents by the council.

A member pointed out that there was and always had been a need for single person accommodation and that converted houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) fulfilled this purpose. To remove this type of accommodation was to deny "our youngsters" the opportunity to live independently. There was not enough housing to meet the needs of people on low incomes.

Other members considered that the problems reported by residents in Nelson Ward related to behaviour of the residents rather than the fact it was a HMO. There should be better liaison with the universities and educational establishments to address concerns between communities and students living off campus. There was a working group looking into managing student accommodation and addressing issues with landlords, such as sorting out bin storage and garden maintenance.

During discussion the head of planning responded to a members' suggestion that there could be a combination of options A and B based on a threshold of 25 per cent, similar to Oxford's, and said that it would be possible to apply policies but it would

require the introduction of compulsory licensing for HMOs which would be costly for the council. An application for a HMO that was below the threshold in an Article 4 Direction area could be refused if there was a demonstrable policy that could be enforced or it would fail.

Some members also noted the impact that an Article 4 Direction would have on adjacent areas and noted that the survey responses were low, which did not justify the cost of compulsory licensing. The panel also noted that the council was engaged in the promotion of development of accommodation types to slow HMO conversion rate through planning and assess licensing options (as set out in the appended report to the meeting on 25 March 2015).

During the debate the head of planning services referred to the housing needs assessment and said that there was a high level of need for small households at affordable rents. The market provided larger units responding to demand rather than need. There was an issue about bike and bin storage as HMOS were more densely occupied than houses used for families and therefore needed more storage and generated more waste. Housing stock did not turn over very quickly. The council's main source of information was a survey conducted by BRE in 2014.

Some members expressed concern that they did not want to see parts of the city being empty for part of the year during university vacations or people not being able to afford to buy or rent large family homes which landlords could rent out as HMOs for £2,000 a month.

The chair said that option B would cost in excess of £100 K per annum and the council would find it difficult to support this. She therefore moved the recommendations individually as follows:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) with 6 members voting in favour (Councillors Lubbock, Grahame, Jackson, Driver, Thomas and Herries), 1 member voting against (Councillor Kendrick), and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Malik) to recommend that the council pursues an Article 4 Direction to control the development of small HMOs;
- (2) with 5 members voting in favour (Councillors Lubbock, Driver, Thomas, Kendrick and Herries), 2 members voting against (Jackson and Grahame) and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Malik) that the Article 4 Direction would be based on option A (as set out in paragraph 47 of the report):

The panel then considered the threshold that would be applied to an Article 4 Direction based on option A and members referred to the maps attached to the reports.

Councillor Driver moved and Councillor Thomas seconded that the Article 4 Direction should be applied to the areas shown on the map at 30% and with 3 members voting in favour (Councillors Driver, Thomas and Herries), 4 members voting against (Councillors Lubbock, Grahame, Jackson and Kendrick) and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Malik) the motion was lost.

Councillor Jackson moved and Councillor Grahame seconded that the threshold should be 20% as shown on the map but with the boundaries extended to incorporate Newmarket Road, St Stephens Road, Chapelfield Road, Grapes Hill, Barn Road, Heigham Street, Waterworks Road, Dereham Road up to Colman Road, and back to Newmarket Road; and with the areas in Sewell Ward and Thorpe Hamlet Ward excluded. The head of planning services said that incorporating streets where the threshold was not 20% could weaken the application of the Article 4 Direction and mean that there were lower densities (5 to 10%) in some parts of the area covered by the Direction. Councillor Jackson said that he was seeking to protect the roads adjacent to those with a high density of HMOs which would not be protected unless included in the Article Direction. On being put to the vote with 3 members voting in favour (Councillors Lubbock, Grahame and Jackson), 4 members voting against (Councillors Driver, Thomas, Kendrick and Herries) and 1 member abstaining (Councillor Malik) the motion was lost.

Councillor Kendrick proposed a threshold of 40% but it was not seconded and therefore it was not considered further.

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Jackson seconded a threshold of 20% as shown on the map and with 3 members voting in favour (Councillors Lubbock, Grahame and Jackson), 5 members voting against (Councillors Malik, Driver, Thomas, Kendrick and Herries) the motion was lost.

The chair moved and Councillor Lubbock seconded that the threshold should be 30% as shown on the map and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (3) with 6 members voting in favour (Councillors Lubbock, Grahame, Jackson, Driver, Thomas and Herries) and 2 members voting against (Councillors Kendrick and Malik) to recommend that the threshold for the Article 4 Direction is set at 30% of HMO area (as shown in the plan attached to the report);
- (4) request the head of planning services to prepare a report for cabinet seeking authority to take forward this matter.

CHAIR