



**Sustainable development panel**

**09:30 to 12:20**

**13 September 2017**

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair), Thomas (Va) (vice chair), Brociek-Coulton, Grahame, Davis, Jackson, Lubbock and Malik

**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 19 July 2017.

**3. Norwich City response to Norwich Airport Draft Masterplan**

(A copy of a plan showing the location of Site 4 on the airport site was displayed at the meeting.)

The head of planning services presented the report and the proposed city council response to the Norwich Airport Draft Masterplan. The panel had an opportunity to comment on the draft response which would be considered by the cabinet at its meeting later that day. He highlighted the key issues in the council's response as summarised in paragraph 19 of the covering report. He explained the reasons for the request for the airport to arrange a surface access strategy within a 3 year period, supported by a transport assessment and an amended masterplan to ensure consistency, because the masterplan was "light" on details of non-car journeys to the airport and did not address the impact of the Northern Distributor Road. Members were also advised of the long term benefit of retaining part of Site 4 to attract other aviation maintenance and servicing operations which would be beneficial to the local economy. In terms of environmental impact one flight per month for servicing had less impact than regular passenger flights. Members were advised that the masterplan sought to offer more distant destinations, and consequently flight operators would need late night flights to enable return flights to return the same day which would require a variation of the current planning permission which restricted the use of the terminal building after 23:00 and before 06:00.

During discussion the head of planning services and the planning policy team leader answered members' questions. The extension of the runway was in the second phase and a long term aspiration which would enable the use of larger aircraft. It would also allow for operations to be brought under planning control as it would require planning consent. Passenger numbers could be increased by extending the

hours of operation of the airport and the number of flights, without extending the runway.

In reply to a question, members were advised that the masterplan would be taken into account when planning applications were assessed and would inform changes of policy in the next reiteration of the local plan. The masterplan was not a formal part of the development plan but would be a material consideration. Members were advised that the consultation which ended on 15 September had been extended (it had originally been scheduled to close on 17 August) and had included a wide range of consultation including the Norwich Passenger Action Group, the Norwich Airport Consultative committee, parish councils and members of public. Specific details had not been included in the consultation documents. A member said that there should be an expectation that consultation was in line with the council's Statement of Community Involvement because the masterplan would be given weight in the assessment of planning applications and that local people who had not had an opportunity to comment had been disadvantaged. The chair said that he would be reluctant to impose the council's rules and procedures on a third party and the majority of members agreed that the extent of the consultation was sufficient.

A member sought further information about the 22 late flights where planning consent had been breached in the first six months of this year. She considered that the masterplan failed to address night flights as in order to increase passenger numbers to 1.5 million it would be necessary to increase flights outside the hours of the current operation. The head of planning services responded that the 22 late flights were not a breach of planning control as the current planning regime allowed late flights in some circumstances. He said that the terminal building had the capacity to deal with more flights. Discussion ensued on the environmental impact and on the affect that the expansion of passenger flights would have on residents. Members noted technological advances to aircraft and surface vehicles which would reduce emissions and mitigate air quality concerns. The masterplan projected the growth of its current operations and was based on market trends, economic data and informed by expert consultants. Members noted the importance of realistic projections and that the expected growth of Norwich Airport over 20 years had seen flight levels fall from the peak in 2007 due to the recession.

Councillors Grahame and Jackson said that the council's response was missing a separate section on the climate change element. The Green Party group would be making a separate response to the consultation and they referred to the response from the Climate Hope and Action in Norfolk organisation. The council had a leadership role and as part owner of the airport a responsibility for its carbon footprint. The environment impact assessment did not refer to climate change and the increase in passenger flights would not be sustainable in the medium term. Solar powered planes were a long term aspiration. The head of planning services referred to the absence of a national strategy for the development of regional airports and confirmed that the masterplan was in line with the Joint Core Strategy which supported the growth of the airport.

Discussion ensued on the need for the surface access strategy and the need to improve the road infrastructure around the airport. Members commented on the lack of public transport and the need to encourage people to use it rather than use their cars. Members also discussed the use of Site 4 for employment. A member suggested that the number of jobs on the site were of a low concentration per

hectare and questioned the robustness of the predicted creation of jobs. The panel noted that it would be more beneficial in the long term for aviation related jobs to be created on the site than the location of other unrelated businesses on this site. It was acknowledged that a concentration of business operations was required on the site to increase the viability of putting in services and infrastructure.

Discussion ensued. Councillor Grahame suggested that the council had a leadership role to ensure that the masterplan addressed the impact of an increase in the airport passenger numbers on climate change and that an independent assessment should be made to ensure that it did. In response, the head of planning services suggested that the council response should include a statement about the lack of information on climate change issues and ask for it to be included in the masterplan. Following discussion and on being put to a recorded vote, it was:

**RESOLVED,**

- (1) unanimously, to ask that cabinet amends the proposed city council response to the draft masterplan by requesting that officers add text to address the issue of climate change and longer term environmental impacts and request that further research be done to understand the potential emissions that would result from the growth envisaged in the masterplan in order to inform any proposals about the extent of mitigation that may be necessary;
- (2) subject to this change, with 6 members voting in favour (Councillors Stonard, Thomas (Va), Brociek-Coulton, Davis, Lubbock and Malik) and two members voting against (Councillors Grahame and Jackson), to endorse the proposed council response to the draft masterplan.

#### **4. Carbon Footprint Report**

(Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment, attended the meeting for this item.)

The environmental strategy manager and environmental strategy officer presented the report and answered members' questions. Members congratulated the environmental strategy manager and team on its success in reducing the council's carbon footprint ahead of target. A member commented on the reduction in council services had whether this had an effect on the council's carbon footprint. Members were advised that contractors were appointed through a tender bid process which assessed energy efficiency and that they submitted data on energy use.

Discussion ensued on future measures to maintain the momentum to achieve further reductions in carbon emissions. The environmental strategy manager acknowledged that most of the "low level fruits" had been actioned. The introduction of new technology helped lower emissions, for instance installing LED lights into stairwells would reduce emissions.

Members were advised that where a third party rented or used property owned by the council the carbon footprint was recorded under the performance indicator NI186. Norwich Airport's carbon footprint was counted under NI186 and was not

captured under the city council's footprint. A member commented on NI186 and pointed out that the increase in food poverty could correlate with a reduction in energy use rather than efficiencies.

The panel noted that the council's car fleet had been reduced from 84 to 45 vehicles and that these were more energy efficient. Officers were cycling or walking between meetings.

Members noted that targets would need to be reset and that these should be more efficient.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the progress made on the delivery of the council's Carbon Management Programme;
- (2) congratulate the environmental strategy manager and members of the team on their contribution to the reduction of the council's carbon footprint ahead of target

## **5. Norfolk Strategic Framework Consultation**

The head of planning services introduced Trevor Wiggett, the Norfolk Strategic Framework project manager. The Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) was a list of agreements between the councils and was a material consideration for the local plan. As the process required agreement by all councils the agreements tended to be lowest common denominator that all could agree. There was flexibility for councils so as not to limit the development of local plan documents. The framework assisted with demonstrating that the councils were complying with the duty to co-operate and improved consistency between local plans across Norfolk.

During discussion the head of planning services and the NSF project manager referred to the report and answered members' questions. He explained agreements 10 to 17 and said that the 33 per cent affordable housing target was not county wide and applied only to the area covered by the Joint Core Strategy. The chair confirmed that the agreement did not alter the city council's commitment to affordable housing. In reply to a question the head of planning services said that there was not a lot of detail on measures to improve the delivery of housing but that the use of eco-prefabs could be one factor for consideration. A member pointed out that in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan the housing needs buffer was 23 per cent yet the NSF was only 10 per cent, which ensured that all authorities would meet this level and that adjacent authorities would meet the need if the Broads plan could not. The head of planning services said that the NSF shared objectives included the reduction of greenhouse emissions and a number of measures to mitigate climate change.

A member suggested that there should be some consistency across all councils in the way that they conducted consultations and made information available to businesses and the public.

In reply to a question, the head of planning services explained that the Planning for Health protocol was a best practice approach to ensure that local planning

authorities liaised with health providers to ensure that services met the need of the local area.

**RESOLVED** to note the comments on the emerging framework that will inform discussions at future meetings of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum and note that a further iteration of the framework will be considered by the panel before it is adopted by cabinet.

## 6. Public Consultation on Draft River Wensum Strategy

(Councillor Lubbock that due to the length of the meeting she left the meeting during this item.)

The planning policy team leader presented the report and together with the head of planning services referred to the report and answered questions. Members were advised that 180 responses to the consultation had been received to date and that the consultation would close on 15 September 2017.

A member said that it was not appropriate for the panel to “endorse” the draft strategy and that he considered the panel should “receive” it at this stage and endorse the draft strategy when the outcome of the consultation was available. The chair said that the purpose of bringing the report to the panel was for an opportunity for the members to comment on the draft strategy during the consultation period. Members agreed to the amendment to the officer recommendation.

During discussion, Councillors Grahame and Jackson advised the panel that the Green Party group considered *that there should be more focus on the environmental quality of the River Wensum and its biodiversity, within the strategy*, rather than *primarily focusing on it as an economic and leisure/tourism asset*<sup>1</sup>. The group also considered that the metal sheeting on the bank at some points of the river gave it a “canal like” appearance and should be replaced with a more natural alternative. Other concerns included that as far as possible access should be made to the river on one side first before extending the riverside walk on both sides; that community imperatives were important; that “private sector” funding should not be singled out in the objectives; and that there should be biodiversity corridors rather than patches of trees. The group would be submitting its own response to the consultation.

Discussion ensued in which the panel noted that the creation of the riverside walk was a long term priority of the council and was a policy in the local plan. Parts of the river side were in differing ownership and the path was extended as land became available through the planning process. A member pointed out that there was an inaccuracy on the plans around Whitefriars bridge (page 24 of the strategy) and the planning policy team leader undertook to look into this and ensure that it was amended if found to be inaccurate. Members noted that residents at St Edmunds Wharf were opposed to the extension of the riverside walk in this location and their responses to the consultation would be given serious consideration alongside all other responses. The action plan prioritised projects where funding had been identified and were judged to be capable of implementation in the short to medium term. A member said that he disagreed with the order of prioritisation; considered

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<sup>1</sup> On 15 November 2017, the panel approved the minutes subject to this sentence being amended with the addition of text in italics to accurately reflect the views of the Green Party Group.

that the city centre riverside walk was given more importance than the riverside walk upstream of New Mills; and that the strategy, working with the county council, should include greater flood risk mitigation.

In response to a member's question, the panel was advised that there was a protocol in place between the Broads Authority and the city council to deal with issues of illegal mooring.

Councillor Jackson said he felt strongly that the biodiversity in the objectives for delivering the vision should be amended and as moved by Councillor Grahame it was proposed that paragraph 9(c) be amended by the insertion of "biodiversity corridors and trees". He explained that it was necessary to include biodiversity corridors as the reference to green infrastructure and the natural environment was not specific enough. The planning policy team leader confirmed that there was a reference to biodiversity corridors in the document and that she considered that it was too specific for the strategic objectives. The panel concurred with the addition of the word 'biodiversity' into the objective to read "Enhancing the natural environment, biodiversity and green infrastructure".

The chair took the opportunity to welcome the draft strategy and commended the officers involved in coordinating the strategy together.

**RESOLVED** to receive the vision (subject to the amendment of (c) as minuted above), objectives and proposed content of the draft River Wensum Strategy.

CHAIR