



Sustainable development panel

9am to 11am

23 July 2014

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair), Sands (M) (vice chair), Ackroyd, Bogelein (substitute for Councillor Boswell), Bremner, Herries, Jackson and Stammers

Apologies Councillor Boswell

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2014 subject to the following amendments:

- (1) to insert the panel's resolution to thank Councillor Carlo for her contribution to the panel as vice chair;
- (2) delete item 3 Apologies from the minutes; and correct the reference in the list of members present to record that Councillor Grahame was a substitute for Councillor Stammers and not Councillor Boswell as stated..

3. Representations on local plan modifications

The policy team leader (projects) and the policy team leader (planning) presented the report and, together with the planner (policy) answered members' questions. The policy team leader (projects) pointed out that the public consultation on the proposed main modifications would be extended to 15 August 2014.

The panel considered each of the proposed "inspectors' modifications" and the council's response. Members had no objections to the proposed modifications in relation to the Site allocation plan policies CC11 – Land at Garden Street; R10 Deal Ground; and, R32 – The Paddocks, Holt Road, and the proposed response of the council.

Members then discussed the proposed council representations set out in appendix 1 of the report objecting to the site's allocation on landscape grounds and that there was no need for an additional allocation in terms of housing numbers. Members considered that there was no need for low density housing and accommodation for older people at this site which would impact on the Yare Valley as other sites were available. Members considered that it was important to protect the Yare Valley and its biodiversity and therefore supported the council's representation as set out in appendix 1.

Members noted that the council had agreed to the inspector's modifications to policy DM14 – gypsy and traveller provision following discussion at the public examination. This would ensure that the council had flexibility to get funding in place and identify sites by the end of 2014.

RESOLVED to accept the recommendations of the officers and support the proposed representations on the local plan modifications on behalf of the council.

4. Retail monitor 2014

The policy team leader (planning) presented the report and answered questions. He said that in 1989 the city council had ranked 49th as a retail destination nationally. Since then it has improved dramatically as a retail centre and was now ranked in the top 15 centres. This long term success had continued with the low retail vacancy rates shown by the retail monitor.

In reply to a question, the policy team leader (planning) explained that the data included the provisions market but it would require a lot of work to differentiate between independent retailers and chain stores.

During discussion members considered that the city as a retail centre was doing well when compared with Ipswich, where out of town development had affected the town centre. The council's policies had resulted in restricting out of town development more than other comparative towns; however, centres such as Longwater, were outside the jurisdiction of the council.

Discussion ensued on the purpose of the retail monitor and whether the report could provide a more holistic overview of the health of the city. Members considered that transportation policies and information about bars, restaurants and other leisure uses were also important and should be considered alongside the retail monitoring report. The policy team leader (planning) said that the focus of the retail monitor was the retail vacancy rate. He could look at resources to see if it was possible to pull together the retail monitor with other information and acknowledge links with other pieces of work for future meetings. He pointed out that there was extensive evidence to support the city council's local plan policies and the Joint core strategy.

A member referred to the Northern distributor road and said that it would be important to respond to predicted changes to retailing in the city as an impact of the road being built. Members were advised that the regular monitoring ensured that the council could assess the implementation of its retail policies. There had been a number of changes to retailing since the implementation of the plan in 2008. The next item for consideration would look at how a supplementary planning document

could be used to support policy DM20 and respond to the changing needs of retailing in the city.

Officers had consulted the Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) had been during the preparation of the report.

RESOLVED to note the low vacancy rates across Norwich in all areas and the city's success as a retail destination and that the Retail monitor 2014 will be published on the council's website

5. Main town centre uses and retail frontages SPD – draft for consultation

The policy team leader (planning) introduced the report.

The planner (policy) presented the report and explained the need for a supplementary planning document (SPD) which could be reviewed more rapidly in response to changing circumstances or where monitoring showed evidence of a need for a change in approach.

During discussion the planner (policy) and the policy team leader (planning) answered members' questions. Members were advised that this SPD covered retailing in the city centre and other policies were designed to strengthen local and district centres in the city. The SPD would be an important document to protect the retail frontages and minimum threshold of retail as opposed to different city centre uses such as banks, cafes and restaurants which would be controlled by applications for change of use and the grant of planning permission in the city centre. Members concurred with the key policy changes set out in paragraph 13.

A member pointed out that the consultation document should contain a clear key to explain the categories of A1, A2 and A3 use. The planner (policy) said that a table explaining the categories would be appended to the consultation document. Members also pointed out that references to PR02 The Lanes East (table in paragraph 4.1 and heading on page 86 of the agenda papers) should be amended to The Lanes East and London Street to reflect that London Street was included in this area. The planner (policy) explained that unfortunately it would not be possible to make such an amendment at this stage as the titles and boundaries of the retail sub areas had been set in the Local plan policy. The SPD which was being consulted on focussed on the thresholds for each of the established retail sub areas.

In reply to a question the planner (policy) explained that the Cathedral retail park was included with St Benedicts for historic reasons and had not developed as anticipated. The retail park had a very different function to St Benedicts. .

Discussion then ensued on the extent of the consultation over a 6 week period to obtain a wide range of views, which included the Chamber of Commerce, representative of the Norwich Lanes, large retailers, market traders, public transport providers and the Norwich BID. A member pointed out that the consultation should also include "users" of retail outlets in the city, local or district centres. In reply to a question, the planner (policy) said that part of the consultation would straddle the school holidays. Members were also advised that Prince of Wales Road was not

included in the consultation document because it was not classified as a retail area and was within the late night activity zone.

RESOLVED to note that the Main town centre uses and retail frontages SPD will be issued for public consultation for a 6 week period (in accordance with the requirements of the Statement of community involvement) subject to the inclusion of the amendments minuted above; and as soon as is practicable after the date of this meeting, and that the consultation responses will be reported back to the panel before being considered for approval by the cabinet in the autumn.

6. Climate Local commitment

The environmental strategy manager, together with the environmental strategy officer, presented the report and explained that the Climate Local list of commitments comprised a summary of the work that the council was currently undertaking and listed existing policies. The council was the first authority in Norfolk to develop an environmental strategy in 2008 and had continued to be ahead of the neighbouring authorities. The Local Government Association (LGA) Climate Local was another way that the council could share its activities and visions and publish annually its progress. The nine commitments were top level statements which reflected the work streams and commitments in the Annual environmental statement.

Discussion ensued around the work that the council did to provide leadership and actively encourage citizens to reduce their environmental impact. The environmental strategy manager referred members to the Eco issues page on the council's website (<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Environment/EcoIssues/Pages/EcoIssues.aspx>) which explained the council's policies and strategies and provided practical advice to residents and businesses on energy efficiency. He also referred to the work that the council did to advise the Transition Norwich Group and in the community. Performance indicators were used to measure progress on the housing services' carbon management plan (NN185) and adaption to climate change by helping people to reduce their energy bills (NI 188). Under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 the council produced an annual report which set out the energy conservation measures that the authority considered practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area. The council also helped people reduce their energy (gas and electricity) bills and promoted the Green Deal.

Members noted that the panel would be considering the environmental strategy later in the year. Climate Local was a way of pulling the strands together from the existing strategy and annual environmental statement. The LGA in initiating Climate Local was encouraging authorities with less well developed strategies to engage in reducing carbon emissions.

A member expressed concern that the reduction in carbon emissions needed to be around 80 to 90% for future generations and that the council was falling short of this. The chair said that the council was ambitious and would do its best to reduce carbon emissions but as a district council it needed to be realistic on what it could achieve.

Councillor Bremner, pointed out that the council's achievements had been recognised by receiving awards and took the opportunity to congratulate Richard

Willson, the environmental strategy manager, for receiving the energy manager of the year, 2014, award from ESTA.

RESOLVED to note the report.

CHAIR