



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

9am to 11am

29 January 2014

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair), Carlo (vice chair), Bremner (from item 4), Boswell, Kendrick, Gihawi, Lubbock and Stammers

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013.

3. GREATER NORWICH STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

The head of planning services presented the report and referred to the project brief, attached to the report at appendix 1. The strategic housing market assessment (SHMA) would potentially inform any replacement to the Joint core strategy (JCS), given that the timescale for a local plan should cover the period to 2031 or preferably 2036. The SHMA was a technical piece of work which underpinned the understanding of housing need. The government expected local authorities to ensure that this evidence was up to date and available. It needed to reflect the National planning policy framework (NPPF) and current trends. Some of the projections for the early years of the JCS based on housing need had not been realised, and whilst broadly sound, economic factors had changed expected employment led growth or prevented young people forming households.

During his presentation, the head of planning services elaborated on the government's definition of a housing market area as having "a propensity for self-containment". He explained that in the case of Greater Norwich this could include a larger area than originally identified. Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn were the other self-contained housing market areas in the area. Other places such as Diss, Attleborough and other towns in Breckland; and Sheringham and Cromer in north Norfolk, might not be considered to have a sufficient degree of self-containment to be identified as separate housing market areas, so there might be a case for inclusion within the Norwich housing market. However, this potentially wider

market areas had planning implications as a dispersed growth focussed in rural areas might not meet the housing needs of the city and growth in city might not meet needs arising in rural areas.

Discussion ensued in which the head of planning answered members' questions. A member expressed concern that in the rescinded East of England Plan, the Norwich growth policy area had been enlarged to include Thetford and had grave implications for transportation and carbon emissions. Members were advised that there had been no decision to enlarge the Norwich policy area. The JCS would need to be replaced by 2026 and would be reviewed at some point. There would be policy ramifications, if the Norwich policy area was expanded. There had been informal discussions at officer level with Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council, Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority. No decision had been taken. The head of planning services said that the timescale for completion of the assessment would not be met by May or June 2014 until the issues of the policy area had been resolved.

During discussion members considered that the housing market assessment would be complicated in more urban areas. Members also commented that Great Yarmouth had a degree of self containment and could be assessed as a housing market area. Members noted that housing market areas were not about size but about self-containment. There was an issue of overlapping and the relationships of places needed to be teased out when designating a housing market area, eg, Acle, had commuters to both Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

Discussion ensued on the evidence base and how granularity would there be against the model for housing growth contained in the JCS. The head of planning services said that updating the SHMA would be a similar process to the updates of the assessment in 2007 through to 2009 in preparation for the previous examination. It was not easy to update as the data provided a snapshot of the conditions at a particular time. The SHMA was important as it would inform a review of the JCS. He confirmed that it would provide sufficient granularity for the assessment of wider boundaries.

In reply to a question about the JCS being replaced as early as 2016, the head of planning services said that a timetable for the review of the JCS had not been established.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the report;
- (2) arrange for a separate session for members of the panel to consider the Greater Norwich strategic housing market assessment.

4. JOINT CORE STRATEGY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2012-13

The planner (policy) presented the report.

During discussion the planner and the planning policy team leader answered members' questions. Members were referred to page 10 of the JCS annual monitoring report for 2012-13 and advised to consider that the report covered the

period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Members were advised that data on CO₂ emissions was provided by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). In Norwich there had been a decrease in per capita emissions from 6.3 tonnes per capita in 2008-09 to 5.1 tonnes 2011-12.

A member welcomed the relaxation of policy in the JCS which enabled the change of use from A1 retail to other uses in the city centre. The ongoing trend was for more shopping on line rather than on the high street. Members considered that it was important to ensure that vacant premises were used to maintain the vibrancy of the city centre as a place people wanted to visit. Members also considered that the decentralisation of retail to retail parks on the outskirts of the city should be resisted. One member expressed concern that the transport model in the JCS encouraged decentralisation to the Postwick hub.

Discussion ensued on the methodology for evaluating places as retail destinations. Members considered that the city was no longer ranked in the national top ten retail destinations. Norwich was the only place in the East of England region to come in the top twenty and performed well for a place of its size.

RESOLVED to note the content of the Joint core strategy annual monitoring report 2012-13.

5. DRAFT CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME PHASE 2

The environmental strategy manager presented the report and together with the environmental strategy officer answered members' questions on the draft Carbon management programme phase 2 to reduce carbon emissions from the council's operations. The council had achieved a reduction in its carbon emissions of 24% over 5 years, or 29% when weather corrected data was used. Members were advised that whilst it was difficult to make straight comparisons with the performance of other local authorities in the county, but it would appear that the city council had made the most progress in reducing its carbon emissions to date. The city council had achieved twice the percentage reduction in carbon emissions to the second most successful council in its comparator group for performance indicator purposes.

During discussion members of the panel welcomed the success of the first phase of the carbon management programme and appreciated the collective effort of council employees and members through the one-small-step campaign, the introduction of ICT, pool car management and other initiatives. Members also considered the extent of the carbon management programme in the context of other council work streams relating to the Environmental strategy and the biannual Housing Energy Act report. It was noted that the council could reduce external lighting on its council estates. The council was considering the use of LED lighting which had been included in the housing capital programme. The housing service was reviewing technology for its communal heating systems to prevent fuel waste and charge tenants appropriately.

The panel then considered the proposed programme and were updated on the changes made to the council's pool cars, including the trial of four electric cars, which cost around 25p to recharge and the introduction of telemetrics to monitor driver performance.

Discussion ensued on contracted services and members were advised that tenders were assessed against the council's Environmental strategy. The council received an annual statement from each of the contractors. The panel was advised that it was in the interests of the contractor to ensure that its drivers were fuel efficient to keep the cost of the contract down. The head of citywide services had optimised the routes of the waste disposal fleet and reduced mileage and cut a day out of the schedule. It was suggested that members could encourage carbon management through the governance arrangements for each contract/shared service arrangement.

Discussion ensued on the targets set out in the carbon management plan and whether it was adequately resourced and realistic. The environmental strategy manager explained that the projects shown as green and amber were achievable and value for money. The cost of implementation for the projects shown as red would not justify the amount of saved emissions, though as technology advanced, these projects could be considered in the future.

RESOLVED:

- (1) to ask cabinet to raise awareness of the achievements of the carbon management programme and recognise the contribution of councillors and employees in reaching a 29% reduction in carbon emissions over the first phase of the carbon management programme.
- (2) that the panel will review the carbon management programme on an annual basis to ensure that it is on target to achieve a further 11% reduction in carbon emissions and if appropriate make recommendations to cabinet.

CHAIR