



Sustainable development panel

09:40 to 10:20

17 October 2018

Present: Councillors Maguire (vice chair, in the chair), Carlo, Fullman, Hampton, Lubbock and Maxwell

Apologies: Councillors Stonard (chair) and Stewart

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2018.

3. Update on Strategic Planning and Housing Development

The planning policy team leader presented the report.

During discussion members expressed concern about the effectiveness of the government's new standard methodology for assessing housing need introduced as part of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Members commented that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for Greater Norwich, which was based on the new standard methodology for assessing housing need, was less than in the Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA 2017). A member pointed out that Norwich and Great Yarmouth, areas with the highest levels of deprivation, showed the greatest reductions under the new methodology. Members also noted that the need for affordable housing would also likely be reduced under the new methodology. The government would be conducting further consultation on the standard methodology for assessing housing need in late 2018 or early 2019.

The planning policy team leader referred to the report and advised members of the implications of the new assessment for housing need on the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF).

The head of planning services commented on the housing delivery test (HDT), and the implications that this would have for the city council, Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council. The Central Norfolk SHMA had been the result of a lot of research. The Greater Norwich partner authorities had indicated that there should be a joint approach to HDT calculation which was consistent with the Joint Core

Strategy and strategic objectives of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan. There was concern that the application of HDT in rural areas would make it more difficult for local planning authorities to resist developments which did not meet local needs.

In reply to a member's question, the head of planning services said that he considered there was a fundamental flaw in the standard methodology for assessing housing need in that it aligned population projection and housing need on historical trends. The housing market had been severely affected by the economic crash of 2008, with home ownership being out of reach for many people aspiring to own their own homes particularly in the South and the South East. This approach did not address the wider housing need. The nationwide application of the standard methodology would not deliver the government's delivery target of 300,000 and the government was expected to re-consult in the early 2019.

The head of planning services replied to a member's question and said that affordable housing would clearly need to be looked at as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan. The demand for affordable housing in the city was greater than in rural areas. The affordable housing needs in the city were largely for rented accommodation, whilst in the rural areas a greater proportion of affordable housing needs could be met through intermediate tenure or shared ownership. There was no single policy on affordable housing for the three districts in the Greater Norwich area. The NPPF sets affordable housing at a level which could be delivered on the vast majority of sites. A member said that one size did not fit all and that the city was very different from the rural districts. In reply, the head of planning services said that, for example, housing needs of people in Mile Cross could be met in Sprowston or any part of the urban area around Norwich but the Greater Norwich area did not amount to a single market area. He argued that the needs of the city could not be met by growth in market towns such as Harleston or Aylsham.

In reply to a question, the planning policy team leader explained that the city council would have a greater resilience to meeting the HDT by identifying a good range of different sized sites for development. The head of planning services said despite local planning authorities being penalised for failing the HDT, no additional powers had been granted to them to ensure that sites came forward for development. Some landowners did not bring sites forward for development whilst they waiting for land to increase in value and were free from business rates etc. Compulsory purchase was a difficult procedure to negotiate.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

4. Carbon Footprint Report 2018

The environmental strategy manager presented the report. The carbon management plan would become more difficult as most reductions in carbon emissions had already been made. It was also variable. The severe winter meant that more gas for heating had been used last winter.

Members congratulated the environmental strategy manager and team for the success of the council's carbon management programme.

Discussion ensued on the opportunities arising from bring contracts back in house to reduce carbon emissions from vehicle use. The environmental strategy manager said that there could be an opportunity to use larger vehicles and route optimise to save fuel and resources. There would be further opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and synchronise vehicle use when refreshing the vehicle fleets.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

CHAIR