



Sustainable Development Panel

16:00 to 18:15

22 June 2021

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair, following appointment), Giles (vice chair, following appointment), Carlo, Davis, Everett, Grahame, Lubbock, Maxwell and Oliver

1. Appointment of Chair/Vice Chair

RESOLVED to appoint, for the ensuing civic year:

- (1) Councillor Stonard to the chair;
- (2) Councillor Giles to the vice chair.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillors Giles and Davis declared that they represented the council on the Anguish Educational Foundation (Norwich Charitable Trusts) which was a landowner in relation to item 5, Submission of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021.

4. Article 4 Direction to Remove Permitted Development rights for the Conversion of Offices to Residential

The senior planner (policy) presented the report. There was evidence to support a non-immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the conversion of offices to residential use but there was a risk from the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

During discussion the senior planner (policy) referred to the report and answered members' questions. Members were advised that it would cost around £1,000 for the essential publicity in order to proceed with a non-immediate Article 4 direction (i.e. 1 x press notice for making the direction and 1 x press notice for confirming the direction). The majority of the work (ie collating the evidence base) had been completed so the remaining officer work in order to complete the process includes

arranging the publicity, considering consultation responses and notifying the Secretary of State.

Members commended the senior planner (policy) on the clarity of her report.

RESOLVED to recommend to cabinet that the council proceeds with the introduction of a non-immediate Article 4 direction, and that:

- (1) delegated authority be given to the executive director of development and city services, in consultation with the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, to make an Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights for the conversion of offices to residential within Norwich city centre;
- (2) if the government change the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to require Article 4 directions to be limited to situations where this is necessary to protect an interest of national significance, delegated authority should be given to cease its introduction without having to seek further authority from cabinet.

5. Submission of the Greater Norwich Local Plan

(Phil Morris, the Greater Norwich strategic planner adviser, attended the meeting for this item.)

The executive director of development and city services presented the covering report. He explained that the background to the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for the benefit of new members. A continuation of the Joint Core Strategy Local Plan, adopted in 2014, in partnership with Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils made sense as it had benefited the city, laying out the groundwork for the City Deal funding and pooling of Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL). He then referred to the report to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) meeting on 24 June 2021. There were around 1,000 objections and 260 representations in support of the plan which would be subject to the examination stage. He then commented on the report to the GNDP and outlined the main issues surrounding the GNLP for consideration. No agreement had been reached with Natural England on the mitigation required to preserve protected sites under the Habitats Regulations. The allocation of sites for Gypsy and Travellers was insufficient and a process and timescale for identifying these was necessary or the plan would be unsound. It was not possible for the GNLP to be modified at this stage, but councils could agree minor modifications which would be considered during the examination process.

Discussion ensued in which the executive director of development and city services and the Greater Norwich strategic planner adviser answered members' questions around the soundness of the plan. A member expressed frustration that the partner district councils had not identified the additional Gypsy and Traveller sites and that the GNLP would then be subject to legal challenge. Members also sought assurance how comments from statutory bodies in response to the Regulation 19 consultation would be considered. Large developments always raised issues of power and water supplies. The duty to cooperate with Breckland District Council was not considered to be an issue as there had been discussions and New Anglia

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was a member of the GNDP. Discussions were ongoing with Natural England regarding the mitigation to preserve protected sites. Historic England had concerns about the impact of tall buildings in the city. The city council considered that its own policies provide adequate protection. This could be addressed through the main modifications route, as part of the examination process, if not resolved sooner.

In reply to a member's concern about the plan was unsound because of the lack of transport evidence, the executive director of development and city services said that the Local Transport Plan was deemed acceptable and that the growth being brought forward in the GNLP was catered for within the current road network. The GNLP strategic planning adviser confirmed that the majority and pattern of growth was the same or similar to that in the existing plan.

The committee then confirmed the issues that it would like the cabinet members to take into consideration when attending the GNDP meeting on 24 June and at cabinet on 7 July.

RESOLVED to provide the following comments to inform members attending the Greater Norwich Development Partnership on 24 June and to recommend to cabinet that it notes the panel's comments in its consideration of the submission of the Greater Norwich Local Plan at cabinet on 7 July 2021:

"Members' comments included noting the need for clarification on the timescales for further work on the identification of additional Gypsy and Traveller sites, and the need for further clarification on Environment Agency concerns about water resources. The cumulative impact of extensive development around Norwich on protected species was also noted and interest was expressed in the outcome of the discussions currently taking place with Natural England on the mitigation necessary to protect sites protected under the Habitats Regulations."

6. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The design conservation and landscape manager presented the report. Norfolk County Council's consultation on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWHIP) closed on 28 June 2021.

The design conservation and landscape manager explained that when the city council had been the highways authority, he had been heavily involved in the development of the city's cycle network as part of the Cycle Ambition work. The city council had therefore formulated schemes going forward with Transforming Cities funding and schemes identified for the next phase of development that were not currently funded. The following issues were proposed to be included in the council's response to the consultation:

- a) There was insufficient reference to speed management in the plan, in particular the introduction of 20 mph limitations in residential areas;
- b) The city council would like to see low traffic neighbourhoods included in the plan.

- c) Suggest that some of the schemes on the list were prioritised to ensure that there was less risk of these projects being lost;
- d) The plan lacked clarity on alternative sources of funding, other than Transforming Cities, that were currently available for schemes where funding had not been secured;
- e) With regard to pedestrians and walking, there should be a reference to the *City Centre Public Space Plan* (cabinet, 29 July 2020);
- f) The LCWHIP identified funding for the first 5 years of the plan, further schemes need to be specified as going forward within the lifetime of the plan;
- g) The council welcomed the transportation hubs and suggested that the following locations on main transport corridors were also included: Ipswich Road and Drayton Road for development in the period covered by the plan.

Discussion ensued in which members considered the draft LCWHIP and the council's response.

A member pointed out that lower speed limits would encourage more people to walk and cycle. There was a lack of funding for engineering highway solutions to reduce speed and it made sense to lower the speed limits to 20 mph, particularly in streets with a high footfall of pedestrians and cyclists, making it safer for drivers too. There was also a lack of space on roads for dedicated cycle lanes and increased use of public transport and park and ride to reduce congestion should also be included in the comments.

With regard to cyclist and pedestrian safety and the use of shared spaces, a member said that information on cycle proficiency training should be available on the county council's website as it was necessary to educate cyclists as well as drivers. Another member expressed concern about the danger to pedestrians from shared cycle/pedestrian spaces which should be segregated where possible, and particularly in relation to the use of electric scooters in shared spaces.

In reply to a member's question, the design conservation and landscape manager explained that each scheme listed in the plan would be subject to the routine highways consultation process following the joint committee for Transforming Cities Fund projects. The council was represented on this committee by Councillors Stonard and Stutely. Schemes were modified through the consultation process. Consultation on the general principles of the Norwich Lanes project would commence next month and this would be followed by the detailed design plans. Consultation on low traffic neighbourhoods might include community meetings to talk to local residents to ensure the correct approach.

A member expressed concern about an overall increase in the volume of traffic on the road networks and that she considered that it was unacceptable for the bus link crossing the Yare valley to be linked to a pedestrian and cycle scheme just to reduce bus journey times by four minutes. The design conservation and landscape manager said that this scheme rationalised and improved the Pink Pedalway for

cyclists and pedestrians and the reliability of the bus service to the Research Park and hospital.

In reply to a suggestion that schemes were implemented and then altered, with particular reference to Tombland, the design conservation and landscape manager explained that he disputed the suggestion that it did not improve facilities for cyclists. The scheme sought to reduce traffic and speeds, making overtaking less frequent, and removed the unsafe roundabout outside the Maid's Head. Cycle parking had been provided which made Tombland more of a destination for cyclists to visit businesses or the Cathedral and had transformed the space. The provision for cyclists had been provided in two phases and their needs had not been overlooked.

A member suggested that reference to Suffolk County Council's experience of the installation of wands to separate cycle lanes from roads should be taken into consideration. There had been significant issues reported in Ipswich regarding access for emergency vehicles and mechanical street cleaners, and cyclist perception that they were 100 per cent safe from traffic, particularly where there were multiple access points. Members were advised that wands provided some segregation for cyclists where there was space on the carriageway. The proposals to implement wands on Earlham Green Lane and St Williams Way would be subject to public consultation and if used correctly should not prevent street cleaning or emergency vehicle access. It was relatively new technology but was a legitimate use to segregate cycle lanes. The county council would consult with all emergency services.

In reply to a member's comments on changes to Grapes Hill roundabout scheme and cyclists, the design conservation and landscape manager pointed out that the Grapes Hill scheme was well documented in the report to the Transforming Cities committee.

RESOLVED to note that officers will produce a response to the Norfolk County Council's consultation Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWHIP) in consultation with the chair, cabinet member with the portfolio holder for sustainable and inclusive growth, for submission by 28 June 2021.

(Councillors Davis, Everett and Lubbock left the meeting during the following item because of other council business.)

3. East Norwich Masterplan Update

(Martyn Saunders (director of planning and regeneration, Avison Young) (the lead consultant) attended the meeting for this item.)

The planning policy team leader presented the report and explained that due to the long meeting, the East Norwich Project manager apologised to members, but she had been unable to stay for this item. The executive director of development and city services said that the Carrow House sale was in progress and should be completed in the next week or so. The East Norwich Project manager was working closely with Allies and Morrison on the engagement process and details were set out in the Appendix 1 of the report. A dedicated webpage had been set up for the project on the council's website.

Martyn Saunders gave a presentation which updated members on the progress of the East Norwich Masterplan, which included technical analysis of the site. The Environment Agency had provided new models of flood risk on the site. There was also the need to retain the social heritage of the Carrow Works and other heritage assets on the site. Green infrastructure provided the opportunity to address this and would be incorporated into the design. He then spoke of the engagement with landowners and interested parties and briefings for members of the partner authorities before wider community engagement. The open day for the public was intended to be on 24 and 25 July 2021. It was hoped that a solution to access the Utilities site would be available in the next month or two.

Discussion ensued in which the chair pointed out that Lakenham Ward councillors should be included in the engagement activities for local councillors. East Norwich Project covered areas within both Thorpe Hamlet and Lakenham wards and the project was of significant interest to members.

A member suggested that there was an opportunity to strengthen the railway network and to reopen Trowse Halt railway station, which would also serve County Hall, Trowse and the new residents of the development.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) thank Martyn Saunders for the presentation.
- (2) note the report and ask members with additional questions to contact Judith Davison, planning policy team leader.

CHAIR