



Sustainable development panel

09:30 to 11:40

25 January 2017

Present: Councillors Herries (vice chair, in the chair), Brociek-Coulton, Davis (substitute for Councillor Maguire), Grahame, Jackson, Lubbock (to middle of item 4 (below)), Malik (substitute for Councillor Bremner) and Thomas (Va)

Apologies Councillors Bremner (chair) and Maguire

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 30 November 2016.

3. Joint Core Strategy Annual Monitoring Report 2015-16

The Norwich Local Plan team manager presented the report.

During discussion the team leader and the head of planning services referred to the report and specifically Appendix 2, Summary of Main Findings and answered members' questions.

The panel noted that the number of new employee jobs had increased during the period but it was not possible to extrapolate from the data how many of these were on zero hour contracts. Some economic indicators had not met the target. The policy JCS1 which sought to increase the number of employees in the high tech sector had not happened. Discussion ensued on the council's asset management policy and its approach to void business or commercial properties. Members considered that pop-ups and local community/co-operative use made better use than allowing a retail unit to remain vacant.

In reply to a question, the head of planning services explained the developers had to provide evidence as part of a viability assessment, which dependent on the scheme would either be assessed in house or by an independent assessor (normally the District Valuer). He explained the methodology used to assess the viability of a development and the reasons for the reduction in the amount of affordable housing that could be delivered. Officers advised members that there would be a review of the Affordable Housing SPD (supplementary planning document) in response to the Housing White Paper which the government was expected to publish in February.

The officers explained that the Joint Core Strategy's housing market assessment had not included student accommodation and therefore it could not be counted against target but was a "zero sum game". This had changed with the adoption of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment in January 2016 and would therefore the supply of student accommodation since 2012 would be counted against the delivery of the five year housing supply following the adoption of Greater Norwich Local Plan. Members noted that planning consents normally counted towards the five year housing supply. It would be amended if the planning consent was superseded by another planning consent which delivered an alternative use or either more or less housing on the site.

The head of planning services said that with the exception of in some listed buildings, the vast majority of new dwellings were delivered in accordance with the minimum space standards. Office conversions did not need prior approval and therefore there was no means to control that dwellings met the space standards. The city council had adopted the minimum space standard but this did not apply to Broadland and South Norfolk. This would be considered as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

In reply to the assessment of how many bat and bird boxes were used as a replacement to the natural habitat, the officers replied that it was difficult to monitor use but that it was important to ensure that the appropriate advice was used as to the location of the boxes.

Discussion then ensued on St Stephens and members commented on the large retail units vacated by Poundland and BHS, and the potential to provide a link between the bus station and Chapelfield. A member commented on the completion of the Hall Road District Centre and said that the developers should have delivered the community facilities alongside the commercial elements of the scheme.

In reply to a question, the head of planning services explained that there was little discretion about what could be considered as an asset of community value. A public house on Queen's Road had been turned down because it had been boarded up for over five years. It would therefore have been wrong to impose a further restriction on the sale of the premises. The Silver Rooms had been the first asset of community value to be registered in the city. The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) had applied for several public houses. Premises stayed on the register for five years and after that could reapply for re-designation if required.

Members commented on the Evening and Late Night Economy zone and noted that there would be a review of the planning policy in relation to Prince of Wales Road to reflect factors such as the phasing of the public realm and traffic in the road, the national trend that was away from larger nightclubs and encourage investment and daytime activity.

The team manager explained that the potential expansion of the University of East Anglia campus would be considered and the best possible sites identified as part of the call for sites.

In reply to a question the team manager stated that the car club, which was mentioned in the main body of the report, will be included in the summary of key issues.

RESOLVED to the publication and content of the 2015-16 Joint Core Strategy Annual Monitoring Report.

4. Greater Norwich Local Plan – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

(Councillor Lubbock left during consideration of this item.)

The Norwich Local Plan team manager presented the report. He thanked the Green Party group members for their comments in response to the consultation.

Councillor Jackson thanked the officers on behalf of the Green Party members and together with Councillor Grahame commented on the officer response and proposed changes to the scoping report as follows:

- Paragraph 1.3.1 Scoping report - Air quality, should include all diesel vehicles not just taxis and buses. Members of the panel and officers responded that the report was dealing with baseline information which predated the latest phase of public realm works and had already made an impact.
- Paragraph 1.3.2 Scoping report – list of policies omitted and therefore inconsistent with other sections of the report. The team manager accepted that this should be raised with the author and addressed.
- Page 31 (agenda papers) Monitoring indicators – not satisfied that the response reflects the intention of Natural England to monitor green infrastructure. The team manager said that he would discuss with Natural England the most appropriate measures to assess green infrastructure.
- Page 37 (agenda papers) Connections to the countryside to “enhance links to the countryside” was ambiguous and it was not clear whether it included roads as well as bridleways and footpaths. The team manager replied that the links were multifunctional and included footpaths. The purpose was to promote biodiversity and to increase the green habitat in general.
- Paragraph 2.3.2 Scoping report – Carbon dioxide emissions – did not agree with the statement and an explanation should be added to explain why there had not been a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions. The construction of the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) would increase carbon emissions (more road/more vehicles). The head of planning said that the Northern Distributor Road was based on complex modelling which would be monitored once built.
- Paragraph 2.3.3 – questioned why this paragraph had been included. The head of planning services said that there was a typographical error in that the Planning Inspector was being quoted and the closing quotation marks were missing at the end of the paragraph.
- Clarity required that all carbon dioxide emissions also included all greenhouse gas emissions.
- Paragraph 2.2.4 Scoping report – tracked changes typographical error which should read as “now”.
- Reduction in carbon dioxide measures should be target in line with the national targets. The head of planning services said that whilst the government had signed up to minimise Climate Change on a national basis it was not possible through the Local Plan process to introduce measures which were outside the local authorities’ control.

- Page 36 (agenda papers), Section 2: Climate Change (and flood risk) – a Green Party group member suggested that emissions to vehicles should be reduced to zero through electrification of vehicles should be added to the issues list. The contention was that with the NDR transport emissions were rising but there were other reasons why emissions were coming down.
- Page 48 (agenda papers) - suggestion that community cohesiveness should be measured. The officer response was as national indicators for sense of wellbeing and place were no longer collected it was not possible to extrapolate local data. The planning team manager undertook to look for any existing data but pointed out that there was no resource to monitor any new indicators.
- Paragraph 2.3.15 Scoping report – why was there a specific reference to the Utilities Site. The officers responded by explaining that the reference was to the current policy provision of two existing combined heat and power facilities and the Utilities site which had been designated as a potential site for a third facility in the current local plan.

Councillor Grahame made some further comments on the scoping report, including asking whether there was evidence that travel plans were carried out. She also referred to the future use of the Utilities site. The head of planning services explained that the use of the Utilities site would be a policy decision and was not a matter for the scoping report.

RESOLVED to recommend that cabinet agrees the proposed amendments to the Greater Norwich Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and its subsequent use as the basis for appraising policy options and choices in the Greater Norwich Local Plan, subject to asking the head of planning services and the Norwich Local Plan team leader to integrate minor factual changes to the report and provide a further list summarising changes to the report following the discussion as minuted above.

5. One Planet Norwich – ReFashion Update

The environmental strategy manager and the environmental communications co-ordinator gave a presentation on the community engagement project – ReFashion Norwich. The event cost less than £400 and achieved the objectives of promoting the reuse of textiles, saving on energy and water and reached 45,000 people.

During discussion the environmental strategy manager explained that the council's collection of textiles was to recycle end of life textiles. Other garments or textiles that still could be used or refashioned should be donated to charities. Members expressed concern that the collection of textiles would reduce the supply of clothing and other textiles to charity shops. The textile collection service would be officially launched in Citizen. A member pointed out that the message should be that the collection was for end of life fabrics and not for "good jumpers".

Members noted that refashioning textiles would be an activity at the One Planet event on 6 and 7 May 2017.

RESOLVED to note the update on the ReFashion event.

CHAIR