



Sustainable Development Panel

09:00 to 11.05

3 December 2020

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair) Maguire (vice chair), Carlo, Giles, Grahame, Lubbock, Maxwell and Stutely

Apologies: Councillor Davis

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020.

3. Greater Norwich Local Plan Update

The chair said that the agenda papers for the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) meeting on 7 December had been published the previous evening and that members would not have had an opportunity to digest the information. He explained that the late publication was due to negotiations between the partner authorities.

The director of place said that the GNDP would also be holding an additional meeting on 16 December to consider the site allocations plan. The Regulation 19 consultation on the emerging plan was subject to decision making by the partner councils and would be considered at cabinet in January. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the city council's representatives (Councillors Waters, Stonard and Maguire) before the GNDP meeting and to raise issues as considered appropriate. The GNDP had been formed in 2007 and had assisted in securing external funding, such as the City Deal. The adoption of a local plan provided assurance for private and government and other external investment. The GNDP had agreed to accelerate the plan process, having regard to the proposals in the White Paper on planning, under the transitional arrangements to proceed to the Regulation 19 consultation on the soundness of the plan. The report to the GNDP highlighted the changes made to the plan since the panel had last reviewed it in January 2020.

The planning policy team leader presented the covering report and the GNDP report and highlighted the changes made to the plan, as set out in Tables 1 and 2. The city council had submitted other changes that would be included but were yet to be incorporated into the plan. There were still gaps to the plan, as the evidence for

viability, retail and employment had not been completed. The updates to the plan were in response to the Regulation 18 consultation and reflected changes to national policy or for clarification.

A member said that she objected to the plan in that it did not propose to use local targets to measure carbon reductions. The Tyndall Centre had advised that there needed to be a 13 per cent carbon reduction year on year in Norwich to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. It was important that the policy sought to achieve that.

In response to a member's question, the planning policy team leader said that flood resilience was one of the constraints of development in East Norwich that was being considered but it did vary across the site. Members were advised that there was a contingency site of 800 dwellings in Costessey which would be developed if required if other sites did not come forward.

A member questioned why there was no land allocated for the Western Link. Natural England had advised that the route was the natural habitat of a rare species of bats. Also the government was likely to divert spending to national highways rather than local roads. The director of place said that the county council had announced a preferred route and its business case had been approved by the DfT. It would seek planning approval in 2021. The GNDP did not seek to allocate land for the Western Link and this was not uncommon. The link was shown on the plans because the county council had announced the route. The chair said that they would clarify this point at the GNDP meeting. A member said that wind turbines needed allocation on plans but roads did not. The director of place agreed that this was an inconsistency of the planning system.

The planning policy team leader said in relation to Policy 5, the comments from the city council concerning affordable housing had yet to be included. Affordable housing was proposed at 33 per cent in the Greater Norwich area and 28 per cent in the city centre. The council was concerned that, historically, the percentage of affordable housing, as set out in the policy, could not be achieved due to viability.

A member suggested that recent trends leading to closure of high street retail units and office accommodation could release potential "windfall" housing units. The planning policy team leader said that the methodology used to assess windfall was based on historic evidence of sites coming forward. The director of place said that it was too early to assess the impact of Covid-19 on the retail and office market and it was not possible to demonstrate delivery. The plan allocated sites to a form of development. The member commented that the plan, which covered the period to 2038, should provide a steer for future development as there was evidence that the high street was changing. The director of place said that with the changes to the planning system, there was no expectation that the plan would last beyond 5 years but it would give confidence to developers. The chair said that there needed to be evidence of the trends in home working and internet shopping and include provision in the plan.

In relation to Policy 6, the planning policy team leader explained that the terminology in the NSPF (Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework) had been revised and there had been updates to the consultation response. The site at the Showground would be included in the site allocation policy. In relation to Policy 7.1, there would be a masterplan for the East Norwich sites. The director of place explained that the level

of growth and housing units needed were calculated by a government methodology. There was a pressing need for affordable rented housing and this would be met through urban development of underused or derelict sites.

A member commented that there were plenty of references to the historic built environment but not to the natural environment. The planning policy team leader replied that the table set out the changes made following the consultation and the references were taken from the comments from Historic England. The chair said that he noted the comments but that the document recorded the changes made in the plan.

During discussion members were advised that the Royal Mail site on Thorpe Road was likely to come forward for development towards the end of the period covered by the plan. The South Norfolk village cluster consultation had not been published yet. It would be subject to consultation in parallel with the GNDP but would be one stage behind. A member suggested that if the village clusters were not identified it would be difficult to ensure that the necessary infrastructure was in place. The director of place said that this was a deficiency in the GNDP and a risk to tests for its soundness. However the provision in the South Norfolk village clusters was a comparatively minor element that was being dealt with by a separate process. At the time of the public examination of the GNDP, it would be sufficiently advanced.

The chair suggested that members emailed to the planning policy team leader with comments by first thing Monday, 7 December and she would produce a briefing note for the council's GNDP representatives.

A member commented that the tables of changes were helpful but that as a general comment on the plan it did not comply with the duty to reduce carbon emissions by 2050. The Prime Minister was talking of targets of 69 per cent reduction by 2030. She commented that the plan promoted road building, village clusters and dispersal of housing, and set growth targets for employment and new housing which would not contribute to meeting this target. This was a view supported by Client Earth. She would like this point made at the meeting on Monday. The chair and vice chair confirmed that the city council had pushed environmental issues at every opportunity. Where they differed was in the view that growth was necessary. The best method of managing growth was to plan for it in a sustainable way. The GNDP was a partnership and there needed to be consensus. They understood and had sympathy for the concerns raised by the member and her colleagues, whilst acknowledging the constraints of partnership working. The director of place referred to the next item and said that the impact of growth on climate change was about ensuring sustainable transport policies were in place

There was a short discussion on whether an additional meeting should be convened to discuss the site allocations plan before the GNDP meeting on 16 December and it was agreed that members would submit comments to the planning policy team leader.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the progress of the Greater Norwich Development Plan;

- (2) ask members to submit further comments on the Reg 19 consultation plan in advance of the GNDP meeting to Judith Davison (judithdavison@norwich.gov.uk) by first thing on Monday, 7 December;
- (3) note that links to the site allocation plans will be circulated to members and to ask members to submit comments to Judith Davison in advance of the GNDP meeting on 16 December 2020.

4. Norfolk County Council – Local Transport Plan

(Councillor Stutely left the meeting during this item.)

(Councillor Lubbock experienced technical problems and was unable to speak at the meeting.)

The design conservation and landscape manager presented a power point presentation of the proposed council response to the county council's consultation on its local transport plan. The draft response would be considered at cabinet on 16 December 2020.

The chair pointed out that group leaders would have an opportunity to comment at cabinet and that comments from members at this panel meeting or received by email would be taken into consideration.

A member expressed concern that the transport plan did not remove transport from the city centre and that there was more development proposed around the periphery and edge of the city. There should be lobbying for national road charging when there was a move to electric vehicles and this would be more equitable for occasional drivers as it would benefit them. She considered that there should be 20 mph speed limit on all roads within the outer ring-road. The chair said that the administration supported 20 mph in residential streets across the city but were not looking to include main arterial roads and considered this would benefit the whole city. The member argued that 20 mph schemes were already in the corporate plan and that her group wanted it to go further. The chair commented that there was a safety issue in reducing speed limits to 20 mph on arterial roads.

RESOLVED to ask members to send comments to Ben Webster, conservation and landscape manager benwebster@norwich.gov.uk

CHAIR