

Sustainable development panel**09:30 to 11:00****19 October 2016**

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Herries (vice chair), Grahame, Jackson, Lubbock and Thomas (Va)

Apologies Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Maguire

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2016.

3. Presentation on utilising water source heat pumps to provide heat for development next to River Wensum

The city growth and development co-ordinator said that the council had procured a study into the use of water source heat pumps as part of the development of the River Wensum strategy and presented the outcomes as a power presentation. (Copies of the report and presentation were circulated after the meeting.)

During discussion the city growth and development manager, the environmental strategy manager and the planning policy team leader (projects) answered members' questions. Water source heat pumps can be more efficient than ground source heat pumps. The panel noted that a closed loop water source heat pump was being installed in the lake at Blickling Hall and that the largest example of water source heat pump use was in Drammen, Norway. The use of closed loop systems could affect navigation and therefore would be difficult to install where the River Wensum was navigable. Open loop systems could be used in navigable rivers and service a wider number of houses. The study was a technical document which would be used to inform discussions on potential development along the River Wensum. The River Wensum Strategy would bring the study to the attention of its partners.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) thank the city growth and development co-ordinator for the presentation;
- (2) request the committee officer to make the presentation and study report available to members and publish on the council's website.

4. Retail Monitor 2016

The planning policy team leader (projects) presented the report and said that the city was a thriving retail destination and ranked thirteenth in the UK. During discussion the planning policy team leader referred to the report and answered members' questions.

A member commented that retail units outside the Norwich Business District (BID) in Magdalen Street had a higher vacancy rate than the city centre. The planning policy team leader commented that there had always been a high turnover in this area.

In response to comments from members on the future development of St Stephens Street, the panel noted that the retail and employment study, to be undertaken as part of the evidence gathering for the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), would reflect retail and national trends and would provide more up-to-date evidence than the St Stephens Street masterplan. Members commented that the area was becoming more residential with purpose built student accommodation and potential under permitted development rights to convert office buildings into residential use. Members also considered that there needed to be improved access between St Stephens and the area around the bus station.

Discussion ensued on the "tools" at the council's disposal to monitor retail trends through its supplementary planning documents (existing policies) and that this was weakened by the government's changes to permitted development rights enabling change of use from A1 retail use to other specified uses without the need for planning permission. Members noted that there was an emerging city centre strategy was being considered to support the city's retail offer.

A member suggested that the grouping together of the Cathedral Retail Park and St Benedicts as a secondary shopping area seemed a strange as the characteristics of large retail stores and small retail units, cafes and pubs were very different. The planning policy team leader said that she was not aware of any plans to delineate the retail park from St Benedicts.

A member said that some parts of the city were poorly served by public transport. He considered that there needed to be better bus access to St Benedicts and this would add vibrancy to the area with vacant shops being taken up. There also needed to be a cash machine. Other members considered that encouraging walking and cycling would change people's shopping habits and that people would stop at interesting shops en route.

RESOLVED to note the findings of the Norwich City Centre Shopping Floorspace Monitor and Local and District Centres Monitor, Survey of June 2016.

5. Extraordinary meeting

RESOLVED to hold an extraordinary meeting of the panel on Monday, 7 November at 16:00 to consider the site specific planning policies for Anglia Square.

CHAIR