

**Sustainable Development Panel****09:00 to 11:00****18 March 2021**

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 21 January 2021.

**3. East Norwich Masterplan Update**

(Martyn Saunders (director of planning and regeneration, Avison Young) (the lead consultant), Tracey Coleman (project manager, Norwich City Council) and Amy Dunham (project assistant, Norwich City Council) attended the meeting for this item.)

The planning policy team leader presented the report.

The project manager and project assistant introduced themselves and explained their roles, which included working closely with the planning policy team, consultants and members of the East Norwich Partnership and the council. A site visit would be arranged for members of the panel.

Martyn Saunders said that Avison Young (the lead consultant) specialised in urban development and regeneration and had a highly skilled multi-disciplined team that would work with stakeholders to deliver the project. The masterplan would need to be deliverable and the net cost for all design options would be subject to independent consultation with the RPS Group, one of the sub-consultants. The consultants were currently working on the engagement strategy and gathering information to identify what the public's aspirations and expectations were for the development and regeneration of East Norwich.

Members of the panel then had an opportunity to ask officers and Martyn Saunders questions on the East Norwich project.

A member said that she was not a ward councillor for the area but that she considered that the aspirations for social integration, green spaces and healthy lifestyles as set out in the vision statement could be achieved by ensuring that 20mph speed limits were integral part of the shared spaces of this scheme. The chair confirmed that the aspiration of 20mph speed restrictions was a city council policy and would be built into this new development.

Councillor Grahame (Thorpe Hamlet ward councillor) asked about the calculation of 6,000 jobs on the site, and the mitigation for the risk of flood amidst rising sea levels. The planning policy team leader said that the figure of 6,000 was the potential capacity for employment on the site, which was set out in the vision statement as a starting point and would be challenged or refined as part of the masterplan development process. Flood risk was an important issue on this site and the team at Norfolk County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) would be involved in the development of the masterplan. Martyn Saunders acknowledged that there were a number of technical challenges, or opportunities, to the development of this site and that the process would be assessment, followed by mitigation in terms of technical solutions, before any urban design. This meant that open spaces and water storage would be part of the development and make the economic growth offer on the site distinct in terms of health and well-being, and sustainability from the city centre and Broadland Business Park.

In reply to a question from a member, the chair pointed out that the concept of traffic neutrality was outside the scope of the regeneration of East Norwich, which fulfilled the council's wider objectives of provision of homes and employment for people in Norwich, whilst managing private car usage. The planning policy team leader said that the project had wider environmental implications and that it was important to include Whitlingham Charitable Trust and the Crown Point Estate as stakeholders. She said that there were concerns that river taxis were unviable and these had not been included in the project brief but could be discussed at the stakeholders' group. The panel noted that the project was still in its very early stages, with partners being brought in and work currently being undertaken on the delivery objectives of the scheme.

Martyn Saunders answered members' questions on the sustainability of the scheme and said that the masterplan would need to stand the test of time in regard to carbon reduction to net zero, biodiversity gains and flooding. This included the elements around the reuse of existing buildings, for example, Carrow House, balanced with new development, with the opportunity to build in clean power generation into the design. Sustainability was at the heart of the masterplan, which would provide a site specific plan for East Norwich and was an important part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) that would provide plans to decarbonise this area, subject to viability on what could be achieved and delivered. In reply to a member's concern about the thoroughness of the ecological survey for the Western Link, Martyn Saunders thanked the member for the information and said that he would look at that and assured members that Hydrock would be the technical lead on environmental issues. A member pointed out that zero carbon added costs to the viability of construction and asked for a longer pay back period to be taken into consideration. Whilst it was not possible to give a fixed answer to this question on carbon zero payback, Martyn Saunders said that alternative models for delivery would be considered for the best mechanism for paying back the extra costs. This would also depend on whether the properties were rented out either privately or to a registered

social landlord, where the landlord could consider it as a long term investment, or where properties were sold and the seller was not worried about the pay back. Options could include a special energy company created and supported by the local authority.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) thank Martyn Saunders, Tracey Coleman and Amy Dunham for attending the meeting;
- (2) note the report and ask members with additional questions to contact Judith Davison, planning team leader.

**4. Revised Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF)**

The planner (policy) presented the report and explained the changes to the document, which needs to be kept up to date to take account of changing circumstance, changes to national policy and to ensure the Duty to Co-operate continued to be discharged.

During discussion, a member expressed her concern that this policy document could not be amended at this stage, as she was concerned about the government's endorsement of Free ports and the use of fossil fuels; and, that there was no reference in the document to the reuse of materials. The planning policy team leader explained that the NSPF was an important document for the GNLP that set out the co-operation of the local planning authorities in Norfolk as required through the Duty to Co-operate. It was acknowledged that some parts of the strategy could be strengthened but that the document presented was a compromise with the other Norfolk authorities. The panel had reviewed the NSPF in 2018 and 2019, and noted that the section on climate change had been strengthened. A member noted that there needed to be more about speed reduction in the document to ensure that it was carried out across the county, especially as walking and cycling provided health benefits to combat obesity and improve life expectancy. The chair pointed out that the city council had influenced the strategy but it was frustrating that there could not be more agreement. The government had announced its investment in buses but this was ironic as most of the district councils supported the use of private vehicles, considering that electric vehicles would reduce carbon emissions. The planning policy team leader pointed out that the joint strategy reflected the minimum level of agreement across all the authorities.

A member expressed concern the GNLP would not pass the test of soundness on climate change because of the lack of alignment of policy and strategy between the partner authorities on this issue, and that by the time the plan was produced, it would be out of date because of changes to the NPPF. The planning policy team leader said that she was not aware of what the specific soundness issues were, and noted that the GNLP team was involved in the development of the climate change report. The planner (policy) said that she would raise these concerns with the GNLP team and pointed out that there would be evidence related to addressing climate change to support the GNLP.

**RESOLVED** to endorse the changes to the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework, and requested that some reservations noted above about the extent to which the document addresses issues including energy efficiency, the circular economy, climate change, sustainable transport and healthy lifestyle objectives are considered further in the next iteration of the document.

## **5. Right to Regenerate Consultation**

The senior planner (policy) presented the report. The council had submitted a response to the consultation by the original submission date of 13 March, reserving the right to make further comments. The consultation had subsequently extended to 20 March. The chair confirmed that he had signed off the consultation response.

The panel then considered and commented on the council's responses to the consultation, as set out in the report. The panel agreed to oppose the government's *Right to Regenerate* as it was ideologically driven and not evidence based, and it did not tackle the issue of private landowners not bringing forward development until land values had increased. The senior planner (policy) referred to the response to Q3 and explained that there was no clarification of the definition of "unused" or "underused" in the consultation document. Members considered that clarity on this point would be useful as it was questionable as to whether it applied to an underused park for instance.

During discussion, Councillor Stutely asked for clarification on the response to Q9. He had been present at the cabinet portfolio holder's briefing and had requested that community groups should have the right of first refusal, even if the request came from a private company. The senior planner (policy) agreed to add it.

**RESOLVED** to agree the contents of the Norwich City Council's response to the *Right to Regenerate* consultation, subject to the amendment to the response to Q9 to enable community groups to be given the right of first refusal to purchase land on the open market when the request has been made by the community group or a private company.

## **6. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Model Design Code Consultation**

The senior planner (policy) presented the report.

The panel considered the draft consultation responses set out in Appendix 1.

The panel agreed to strengthen the council response to Chapter 2, to include climate change and the legal target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. Another member suggested that the interim target of carbon reduction by 68 per cent by 2030 should be included. The chair suggested that officers considered this in the response.

In reply to a member's question, the senior planner (policy) explained that the council had not responded on the chapter on the Greenbelt because the council did not currently have a Greenbelt, although there were references to issues relating to green infrastructure and the natural environment within other chapters of the NPPF.

The senior planner (policy) explained that the council strongly objected to the proposed changes to Chapter 4 as the proposed wording could prevent the introduction of an Article 4 direction to prevent the uncontrolled loss of offices to residential across the city centre.

The senior planner (policy) explained that the council did not support Chapter 5 because the proposed type of affordable housing did not meet local needs for social rented housing.

Members did not have any questions of the design and conservation manager in relation to the proposed response for Q15, National Model Design Code consultation.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Norwich City Council response to the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Model Design Code Consultation.

## **7. Five Year Land Supply Statement 2019-20**

The planning policy team leader said that there had been a delay in the production of the Five Year Land Supply Statement and it was not available yet on the Greater Norwich Growth Board's website. The figure was 6.16 years for 2019-20, which was good news as this meant that the Greater Norwich planning authorities would retain control over planning decision-making for new housing.

Members commented that a copy of the statement would be useful when commenting on the GNLP Regulation 19 consultation.

**RESOLVED** to:

- (1) note the report;
- (2) circulate a copy of the five year statement to members of the panel.

CHAIR