



Sustainable Development Panel

09:30 to 11:15

25 September 2019

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

Apologies: Councillor Giles

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 17 July 2019.

3. Greater Norwich Development Partnership Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2017-18

The planning policy team leader presented the report. She explained that it had not been possible to prepare the Norwich appendix monitoring the development management policies for 2017-18 due to resources and it was proposed to produce an appendix covering the two year period 2017-19 for inclusion in the next AMR. During discussion the planning policy team leader referred to the report and answered members' questions.

Members expressed concern that office conversions were producing sub-standard housing and that the local planning authority had no control since the removal of permitted development rights for change of use from office to residential accommodation. The panel noted that this could be controlled by an Article 4 Direction but it would need to be evidence based and could be commissioned as part of the Greater Norwich Development Plan. Members considered that the market for office accommodation had changed and that in order to retain and attract businesses it was necessary to ensure that right type of office accommodation was available, including new build. A member pointed out that the advantage of retrofitting older office buildings for high quality housing or offices prevented demolition. The panel considered that an Article 4 Direction would ensure that all proposals for conversion of office accommodation would be subject to the planning application process and planning policies.

Members noted that the delivery of housing targets as set out in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was now considered to be unrealistic. The interim director of regeneration and development said that in 2009 when the targets had been set

under the East of England Assembly's Regional Spatial Strategy, the full extent of the global downturn of 2008 had not been fully appreciated. The Norwich policy area comprised the city and 50 rural parishes surrounding it in Broadland and South Norfolk. Delivery against the targets had not been met in the first years of the Joint Core Strategy and had only reached target during the last two to three years. Under-delivery against targets in the Norwich policy area had led to a pattern of development not as originally specified in the local development plan from appeals to the Planning Inspectorate or decisions by local planning authorities. The planning system had signed up to the growth targets and had been awarded City Deal Growth funding in 2012 with the risk of that funding would not be granted if markets did not support delivery against the strategy. The Greater Norwich Local Plan would need to ensure that targets were deliverable.

The interim director of regeneration and development then updated members on the Greater Norwich Local Plan and said that the board meeting the following day would not be considering the emerging local plan document as had originally been planned. There was some discussion amongst partners about whether the draft plan should be in the public domain. The timetable for the progress of the local plan had therefore slipped and as it was considered helpful for this panel to consider the emerging local plan before October cabinet it was proposed to hold a specific meeting if needed. Members considered that the emerging local plan should be in the public domain and that discussions at the Greater Norwich Local Plan board between partner authorities should be open and transparent.

Discussion then returned to the AMR and the planning policy team leader responded to questions. A member referred to increasingly larger numbers of young people being accommodated in houses of multiple-occupation (HMOs). The planning policy team leader said that HMOs did not provide a net gain increase in housing though conversions to flats did increase housing numbers. Discussion also included noting that the AMR monitored the reduction of CO² emissions. Members also noted that the Norfolk Environmental Waste Services (NEWS) would have data on refuse tonnage which could be extrapolated for each district council. It was acknowledged that there could be several reasons for a decrease in the levels of recycling such as people buying fewer items or less packaging of goods. Houseboats were not included in the AMR.

Discussion ensued on air quality and CO² reduction and the role of bus operators to use cleaner vehicles. The panel discussed how members could influence the county council and bus operators to encourage the use of cleaner vehicles. There could be an opportunity to improve air quality through Transforming Cities funding.

Members commented on the amount of affordable housing that was being delivered and that this was under target. The planning policy team leader explained the mechanism for assessing the percentage of affordable housing contributions and viability and government funding to support provision. The delivery of affordable housing was a key material consideration with each development being considered for its own merits. Members also considered that there should be an element of affordable housing from older people and student developments.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the contents of the 2017-18 Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) Annual Monitoring Report
- (2) hold an extraordinary meeting of the panel on 9 October 2019 to consider the emerging GNDLP (subsequently not required as the papers were not available);
- (3) move the November meeting of the panel forward a week to 13 November 2019 in order to consider supplementary planning documents in advance of cabinet.

CHAIR