

19 AUGUST 2019

Minutes of a meeting of the **PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 10.00 am when there were present:

Councillors

Mr A Brown (Chairman)
Mrs P Grove-Jones (Vice-Chairman)

Mr N Dixon
Mr P Fisher
Mr P Heinrich

Mr N Pearce
Mr J Punchard
Mr C Stockton

Observers:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mr R Kershaw
Mr J Rest
Ms K Ward

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager
Mr S Harrison – Senior Planning Officer (Planning Policy)
Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader
Miss L Yarham – Democratic Services & Governance Officer

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mr T Adams, Mr D Baker, Ms V Gay and Mrs M Millership.

11 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

12 MINUTES

The Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 22 July 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

15 UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy Manager reported that advice had been sought with regard to the housing requirement as agreed at the previous meeting. A response was awaited and a full report would be submitted to a future meeting.

The Chairman asked if this Council was alone in its concerns or if other authorities had raised issues.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that a number of other authorities were pursuing this matter independently. The issue mainly concerned rural authorities where there were high rates of inward migration which drove housing targets upwards.

16 NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Manager presented an update report on the progress of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework following a recent review and recommended that the Council formally endorses a revised document, subject to the modification of Agreement 10 as outlined in the report. He also recommended the amendment of recommendation 1 set out in the report by the addition of the words "... as an interim statement pending further review."

Councillor J Punchard referred to Agreement 19 and stated that he was pleased that the agreement included mobile technologies. However, NNDC had invested heavily in better broadband but the Agreement did not mention better broadband for rural Norfolk on a County-wide basis.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the supporting text to the Agreement included broadband but agreed that it could be worthwhile to include it within the Agreement.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones expressed doubts that some of the matters contained in the Agreements would come to fruition.

Councillor Mrs Grove-Jones questioned the inclusion of Egmere Business Zone as a Tier 1 Employment Site in Agreement 8 as she considered that this was not being pursued by NNDC.

As background, Councillor Ms K Ward explained that there had been no sites Tier 1 sites in the first version of the Framework and it had been agreed that Egmere and Scottow should be included.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that if Egmere was no longer of strategic significance the Working Party could either recommend its deletion or wait until a more substantive review of the Framework had taken place and make representations as to its removal at that time.

The Working Party discussed whether or not Egmere should be deleted from Agreement 10. It was noted that a report on the future of Egmere would be discussed at Cabinet later in the week.

Councillor N Dixon referred to possible interest in the site for seaweed processing. Egmere was currently designated as an Enterprise Zone and enjoyed certain benefits

from that designation. He considered that there would be no benefit from removing Tier 1 status.

Councillor Ms K Ward suggested that the Agreement needed to be considered in the context of the wider document. Tier 1 employment land was related to the Local Enterprise Partnership and extensive external investment. She considered that it would not be problematic for Egmore to remain until the substantive review of the Framework had taken place.

Councillor N Dixon considered that the severity of water shortage issues had not been adequately reflected in Agreements 17, 18 and 22. This was a County-wide issue and permanent damage was being done to wetlands from rising demand for domestic and agricultural use. He considered that these Agreements should be strengthened. He considered that the conclusion was deficient in that it did not reflect the current environmental impact of increased demand which exceeded supply and it was not going to improve. There was a major infrastructure issue. He considered that the Authority should put a marker down in the interim report that there was a problem and that further work was needed to scope it out and reflect it in more detail.

Councillor R Kershaw stated that he had been working with an abstraction group and NNDC had joined Water Resources East to look at the issues. He explained that evidence was being sought with regard to water levels. The evidence provided by water abstraction licence holders was that water levels were well below the Environment Agency statistics. DEFRA was reluctant to respond or send a representative to look at the issue.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that abstraction had been raised with the Strategic Director of the Environment Agency, who had thought the issue of abstraction licences had been resolved by the Association of Drainage Authorities. He had undertaken to check the situation.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that Anglian Water and the Environment Agency had attended a Strategic Forum meeting where all strategic partners had agreed that the water problem was not being taken seriously enough. Anglian Water was being lobbied to do more.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if there was a move to require grey water recycling facilities in new build developments.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that Building Regulations covered all aspects of construction with a national set of prescribed standards. Building Regulations were reviewed on an ongoing basis and they would improve. He suggested that agreement 17 could be made subject to water efficiency standards of not more than 110 litres per person per day and subject to the next review including a comprehensive review of water use and water supply.

Councillor J Punchard considered that the document did not recognise the gravitas of the water situation as a whole, not only with regard to use and recycling, but also surface water flooding which had increased dramatically over the last 20 years.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that 110 litres per person per day was the current maximum prescribed by Building Regulations. It did not prevent the Council's policies going further but there were financial implications for developers in doing so.

The Planning Policy Manager suggested that representations be made that version 3 of the Framework would be expected to include a specific new agreement on the management and use of water.

Councillor N Dixon supported the suggestion and considered that the conclusion should be tailored so that there was a clear message that something should be done. He considered that the problem was not with Anglian Water, but with the Environment Agency and DEFRA. He considered that mitigation measures should be considered wherever possible but it would not solve the problem. There was a need to support the Council's recognition of climate change and its implications.

Councillor R Kershaw supported Councillor Dixon's views. He had attended a water resources conference where the use of grey water for agriculture was discussed. However, supermarkets were reluctant as it had a higher phosphate content than potable water. He added that the Environment Agency was pumping 1.3 megalitres of clean water into the North Sea which equated to the water shortage problem.

Councillor J Rest asked if the Planning Policy Manager considered that Agreement 2 was robust enough. He considered that the timescale was too long and that measurable targets were needed.

The Planning Policy Manager considered that it would be reasonable to express concerns that the vision as drafted lacked measurable outcomes and was not specific enough.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the agreement referred to the Local Plan as a vehicle to deliver the vision. He considered that targets should be set out in Local Plans.

The Chairman suggested that the lack of measurable targets should be raised as a matter for discussion at the next Duty to Co-operate Forum meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor N Dixon, seconded by Councillor Dr C Stockton and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the *Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and Statement of Common Ground 2019* and the Agreements contained therein are endorsed by North Norfolk District Council subject to the modification of Agreement 10 as outlined in the report as an interim statement pending further review.**
- 2. That the Council supports and welcomes the commitment to continued co-operative working and periodic review of the framework and in particular would support further collective work in relation to climate change.**
- 3. That the Council requests that the next version of the document should deal with water issues as a topic area.**
- 4. That the Council requests that the reference to better broadband be strengthened.**
- 5. That the lack of measurable targets be raised as a matter for discussion at the next Duty to Co-operate Forum.**

17 NORTH WALSHAM: PROPOSED SUSTAINABLE WESTERN EXTENSION DEVELOPMENT BRIEF

The Senior Planning Officer presented a report which gave an outline of the proposed approach for the delivery of a comprehensive development brief for the North Walsham Sustainable Western Extension. He recommended that the Working Party agree to the approach, with the addition of the need to consider the extension to the link road and possible inclusion of further land to enable the delivery of the extended road.

The Chairman stated that he was pleased that it was recommended that NNDC take the lead in this matter. Councillor Ms V Gay, who was unable attend this meeting, had expressed the view that there should be two or possibly three local members on the Delivery Group. He supported her view.

Councillor P Heinrich welcomed the report. He considered that it was critical that NNDC took the lead on this matter. He also considered that two or three local members should sit on the Delivery Group. It was important to avoid a fait accompli presented by the developer and he was concerned at one developer taking on the delivery of the western extension. North Walsham did not oppose the scheme provided there were safeguards with regard to the quality of the overall design. He considered that the extension of the link road was most important and could not see that any proposals would work effectively without it. He recommended that recommendation 3 of the report should be amended to require decisions on the project lead and constitution of the Delivery Group to be made by the Working Party and that a minimum of two councillors from the affected Wards be included together with the Cabinet Member for Planning. He also recommended that the Delivery Group should report to the Working Party on a regular basis and at least every three months.

Councillor N Dixon requested assurances that work on the Development Brief would not prejudice Local Plan work or place a workload on the Planning Policy Team which was not sustainable and that the current priorities would be maintained.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the recommendation allowed the possibility of engaging external consultants where required. The resource implications were not clear at present and the preparation of the Brief would be a lengthy process. However, he considered that there were resources and capacity in the team to proceed with preparation of the Brief without too much impact on Local Plan work. It had been agreed to prepare the Brief prior to undertaking Section 19 consultation. At the request of North Walsham members it had been agreed to address ongoing concerns regarding deliverability before the Plan was submitted for independent examination. It would be within the gift of the Council to revisit that decision if the Plan was slowed down.

Councillor J Punchard asked the Planning Policy Manager to confirm if the process would be similar to the Fakenham Development Brief.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the outcome of the process would be similar in that it would produce a document which specified master planning for the site, but the process itself would be different in that the Fakenham brief had been developer led.

Councillor Ms K Ward reassured the Working Party that Cabinet was mindful of the importance of the North Walsham brief and the implications for the Local Plan, and that additional funding would be available if it was needed to expedite the work.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that none of the representations made on the draft Plan had been considered and a decision could not be made until the responses had been considered. He recommended the amendment of the recommendation to make it clear that the Development Brief was prepared without prejudice to the ongoing preparation of the Local Plan and consideration of the representations made during recent consultation.

It was proposed by Councillor P Heinrich, seconded by Councillor J Punchard and

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That NNDC Officers to lead on the delivery of the North Walsham Sustainable Western Extension including consideration of the extension of the link road across the railway to the industrial estate and whether other land may need to be included in future consideration;**
- 2. That a Delivery Group be set up to oversee and guide the production of the Development Brief, without prejudice to the ongoing preparation of the Local Plan and considerations of the representations made during recent consultation;**
- 3. That decisions on the project lead and constitution of the Delivery Group be made by the Working Party and include a minimum of two councillors from affected wards together with the Cabinet Member for Planning; and**
- 4. That the Delivery Group should report to the Working Party on a regular basis and at least every three months.**

The Working Party discussed the composition of the Delivery Group in terms of Members to be appointed. As a result of those discussions and notwithstanding the above decisions it was agreed that membership of the Group should be cross-party.

RECOMMENDED

That the Delivery Group include the following Members:

**Councillor Ms V Gay or Councillor P Heinrich
Councillor N Dixon
Councillor J Punchard**

The meeting closed at 11.44 am.

CHAIRMAN