

**2 JULY 2017**

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

Mrs S Arnold (Chairman)

Mrs J English  
Ms V Gay  
N Pearce

R Reynolds  
N Smith  
Mrs V Uprichard

Observers:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett  
J Rest  
B Smith  
Ms K Ward

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager  
Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader

**9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones.

**10. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

**11. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**12. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business. The Planning Policy Manager requested an informal discussion following the business of the meeting regarding possible policy approaches in respect of villages.

**13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **14. STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT 2017**

The Planning Policy Manager presented a summary of the main findings of an updated Strategic Market Assessment which took account of the most recent national household projections to determine the number of dwellings that were likely to be needed in the District over the period 2016-2036.

The conclusions of the updated study were not materially different from the previous study published in 2015. The population of the District was predicted to grow by around 10,000 over the period, with a projected need of 409 new dwellings per year, totalling 8,170. The age profile of the District was expected to continue to accelerate upwards with around 47% of the population being over 60 years of age by 2036, which was likely to have fundamental consequences for the type of housing required and provision of services. A substantial need for affordable housing had been identified. Approximately 25% of the new dwellings should be affordable and it would be important to maximise the amount of affordable housing that could be delivered through market housing developments.

In response to a question by Councillor Ms K Ward regarding the policy requirement for affordable housing, the Planning Policy Manager explained that a net 25% affordable dwellings was needed across the total requirement for new dwellings. However, some of the new dwellings would be delivered on sites which did not meet the threshold for affordable housing or where there were viability issues, therefore it was necessary to set a higher target for affordable housing on development which met the affordable housing threshold.

Councillor J Rest requested the Council's definition of affordable housing. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Government had widened the definition to include discounted starter homes as well as social rented and shared ownership housing. However, he questioned whether 20% discount on market value was affordable to buyers in North Norfolk. He considered that there would still be a desperate need for affordable dwellings at the end of the new plan period.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Central Norfolk Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017 is published.**
- 2. That the figure of 409 dwellings per year is used for the purposes of preparing five year land supply statements pending the identification of a housing target in the new North Norfolk local Plan.**

#### **15. ANNUAL FIVE YEAR LAND SUPPLY STATEMENT**

The Planning Policy Manager presented an overview of the quantity of housing land which had been assessed as being deliverable over the five year period commencing April 2017. He explained how the housing requirement and land supply had been calculated. Recent major planning appeals had tested the Authority's current position with regard to the housing requirement and five year land supply and in each case the Planning Inspector had found the Authority's assessment to be robust. The assessment for the five year period 2017-2022 had indicated that the Authority could demonstrate a housing land supply of 6.57 years. However, it was likely that further challenges to this figure would be made by developers.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that there was confidence in the volume housebuilding sector over the next two years that a significant number of new dwellings would be delivered. This was likely to slow down as large allocations were built out and allocations would need to be replaced.

The Chairman considered that the figures reflected the success of the Housing Incentive Scheme. She considered that it was extremely unfair that that the Authority had been penalised for the recession during the period 2001-2014. She stated that the 6.57 year supply was extremely good news.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the five year land supply statement for 2017-2022 is published.**

### **16. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GUIDANCE**

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented a report setting out guidance to support the preparation of neighbourhood planning in North Norfolk. It drew together the many sources of information available on neighbourhood planning, provided conformity advice in relation to the strategic policies of the North Norfolk Local Plan and basic conditions tests, and check sheets for pre-submission and submission stages. Officers were currently spending time directing neighbourhood plan groups to sources of advice and the bringing together of this information would aid the efficient production of neighbourhood plans and effective use of the Council's resources and signpost best practice.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that she had received feedback from her parishes that the guidance was very helpful. She asked if the documents would be available in pdf format.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the documents would be available on the Council's website.

Councillor Ms V R Gay considered that lobbying on the Local Plan was preferable to neighbourhood plans. However, she considered that public realm and retention of services were of interest and asked if there were any examples where Councils had used these effectively.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the current policy included retention of key facilities. Whilst closure of, eg. a post office could not be stopped, the Council could refuse to give permission for an alternative use and ensure that the premises was properly marketed.

The Chairman asked if identification of community assets by a community added weight.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that this was the case. Registration of an asset allowed the community priority to purchase it provided it could raise funds within 6 months. He also explained that public realm could be used as a negotiating tool to improve the quality of developments or encourage the Highway Authority to improve street works.

Councillor R Reynolds asked whether the new local plan would override the current plan, particularly in relation to the Council's position on greenfield sites.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the new local plan would replace the current plan in its entirety. It would contain policies similar to the current SS1, SS2 and SS3, with appropriate modifications. Neighbourhood plans had to be in 'general conformity' with the local plan. Strict conformity was not necessary and their policies could differ.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that there had been clashes between neighbourhood plans and local plans in other areas of the country and Inspectors had supported the local plans. In some policy areas eg. eco homes, neighbourhood plans were more up to date.

The Planning Policy Manager commented that neighbourhood plans were expected to be in general conformity with an out-of-date local plan. It was possible that neighbourhood plan groups would come up with approaches which were not in conformity but this authority would consider them to be the right approach.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that there was a need for communities to engage with the Council as the new local plan emerged.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the neighbourhood plan guidance be published as an additional source of supporting information in the production of neighbourhood planning in North Norfolk.**

## **17. GENERAL UPDATE**

The Planning Policy Manager updated the Working Party on the current position regarding staffing and workload.

The Chairman referred to the site visits which would be undertaken by the Working Party in the Autumn and suggested that the reserve dates for Development Committee site inspections be used.

The Chairman referred to the recent appeal decision in respect of a development at Sculthorpe. The appeal had been dismissed and she congratulated the Planning Policy Manager on this result.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Sculthorpe result was a team effort.

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At the request of the Planning Policy Manager the Working Party had an informal discussion regarding possible future approaches to development in villages in the new local plan.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

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CHAIRMAN  
24 July 2017