

**16 OCTOBER 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)  
J Punchard (Vice-Chairman)

Ms V Gay  
R Reynolds

Mrs V Uprichard  
Ms K Ward

Observers:

Mrs A Green  
B Hannah  
Mrs G Perry-Warnes  
Ms M Prior  
J Rest

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager

**26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J English, Mrs P Grove-Jones and N Smith. An apology was also received from Councillor N D Dixon.

**27. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

**28. MINUTES**

Minute 24 – Norfolk Strategic Framework Consultation

Councillor R Reynolds requested the following amendments:

Add the words “if this was not addressed” to the end of his comment under “Agreements 10 – 17”.

Add the words “and connection should be a requirement for all new properties” to his comment under “Agreement 20”.

Delete the sentence “It was vital that the windfarms were connected together to provide a decent supply.” from his comment under “Other Comments” and add specific reference to “offshore” wind farms.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that the survey she had offered to share had been

conducted by the Cabinet Office.

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 August 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**29. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

**30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**31. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

There were no additional updates.

**32. BROWNFIELD REGISTER**

The Planning Policy Manager presented an introduction to the duties and actions arising from the Town and County Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 and the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017. This placed a duty on the local authority to prepare, maintain and publish a register of previously developed (brownfield) land which was suitable for residential development. The Council was required to publish Part 1 of the register, comprising all brownfield sites which were appropriate for residential development, by 31 December 2017. Part 2 of the register would be produced in the new year and comprise those sites which were granted permission in principle.

In response to a question by Councillor Ms V R Gay as to whether or not gardens were included in the brownfield definition, the Planning Policy Manager agreed to circulate a briefing note concerning the status of garden land.

Councillor Ms V R Gay restated her long-held view that automatic presumption that gardens were brownfield was very detrimental. She hoped that the local plan would not support a presumption in favour of development in gardens.

Councillor Ms M Prior supported Councillor Gay's view and stated that such development had already happened in many towns.

Councillor R Reynolds referred to Policy SS2. He asked whether the register would help to develop infill sites.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that sites had to comply with adopted policy and infill sites outside of designated areas would not get onto the register.

Councillor Ms K Ward questioned the purpose of the Government's insistence on having a register.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that there had been a policy for a brownfield register for some time but nothing in place to identify brownfield sites. The Government would use the register to identify how much land was available and this could possibly lead to a performance indicator being introduced in the future.

Councillor Ms K Ward expressed concern that the policy was urban orientated and

might increase the Council's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN).

The Chairman asked if the register would help bring forward development of the former Crane Fruehauf site at North Walsham.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Crane Fruehauf site was not within the development area and would therefore be more likely to be designated for development in the Local Plan.

In answer to Members' questions regarding identification of brownfield sites, the Planning Policy Manager explained that brownfield land was defined in the NPPF guidance. However, there would be some sites where the status of the land was open to interpretation

## **RESOLVED**

**That Part 1 of the Brownfield Land Register be prepared and published.**

### **33. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT, REVISED APPROACH CONSULTATION**

The Planning Policy Manager presented the report which outlined a current Government consultation on proposals to alter the way in which Housing Needs Assessments are undertaken. The proposed approach was likely to increase the Council's Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) figure and result in a much higher housing target.

Councillor J Punchard raised concerns as to the affordability of deposits.

Councillor Ms K Ward was concerned that there was nothing in the Council's policies to prevent dwellings becoming second homes. She asked if there were any known problems with local data.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that if the Government adopted the proposed methodology the Council would need to calculate the new housing figure. The new Local Plan could be submitted for examination without that number of dwellings, citing reasons why the figure was not sustainable. If sites could be identified and allocated, it was unlikely that the required number could be delivered on a sustained basis, leading to challenge to the five-year land supply and consequently more appeal-led planning. The Planning Policy Manager considered that more houses would not have an impact on house prices or result in more affordable housing.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Council had been successful in the past in arguing that household migration rates had been overestimated. However, there was nothing in the revised methodology to allow this to be questioned.

Councillor Ms V R Gay considered that building more houses appeared to lead to inward migration of older people who had sold more expensive dwellings elsewhere.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that there was no policy tool to prevent inward migration of older people into the area.

Councillors Ms Gay and Ms M Prior raised questions regarding medical provision as part of the supporting infrastructure.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Council's role was to ensure that health organisations could respond to demand, by reserving land for health uses and securing contributions towards capital works where there was evidence to prove a shortfall in provision for a development. The Health Authority was consulted on all major applications.

Councillor J Rest considered that the housing requirement should come before need.

The Planning Policy Manager suggested that 'demand' would be a better term than 'need' as it was demand which was growing the housing numbers.

Councillor J Punchard considered that if there was a one-time only calculation for the life of the plan, there could be a significant change in terms of affordability and earnings.

The Planning Policy Manager considered that whilst the Local Plan could be sound for 10 years, it was likely that a new plan would be started in a short time scale. Household projections changed every two years, household income was also assessed every two years at a different time. The Government was considering locking in housing targets for a period of time so they could not be challenged. He considered that the plan-led process was being eroded.

The Chairman referred to the point made by Councillor R Reynolds at the previous meeting regarding the shortage of builders and questioned whether there would be sufficient numbers to build the additional dwellings, and whether pre-fabricated buildings would be introduced. There was a need to be mindful that North Norfolk attracted the smaller housebuilders.

The Working Party noted the report and that a response to the consultation would be considered by Cabinet.

#### **34. LOCAL PLAN – DRAFT VISION AND OBJECTIVES**

The Planning Policy Manager presented a draft Vision and set of Local Plan Objectives for inclusion in the consultation draft of the new Local Plan. These reflected national policy requirements, the Vision and Objectives agreed for the County as a whole and the key land use issues which the District would face over the plan period. The Vision and Objectives were expected to evolve over the coming months prior to being published for consultation as part of the draft Plan.

Councillor Ms V R Gay stated that there was a shift in public opinion with increasing resistance on the part of the public in North Walsham due to lack of consideration of infrastructure of all kinds.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that infrastructure was being considered but this authority could only plan for it, eg. through policy obligations. It was important that the authority did not over-promise and under-deliver.

Councillor J Punchard stated that Fakenham was one of the most self-sustaining communities in the county if employment reached its maximum people would have to commute elsewhere to work.

Councillor R Reynolds considered that better housing could lead to better jobs, pay and an influx of younger people.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that this was not necessarily the case as setting targets did not necessarily lead to success.

Councillor Mrs A Green considered that modern farming methods would lead to a continuing reduction in agricultural employment.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the economy was dominated by low paid sectors and the District was not well placed to attract good jobs.

Councillor Mrs Green asked how many of the allocations in the current plan had not been developed, and whether “flat-pack” housing could be considered on the smaller plots for self-build.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the larger sites had progressed well, but smaller allocations in villages had proved more difficult. It would be necessary to consider self-build projects.

At the request of the Chairman the Planning Policy Manager agreed to investigate whether there were any examples of modern pre-fabricated dwellings in the District which the Working Party could view.

Councillor B J Hannah considered that there should be references to community safety in the document. The Planning Policy Manager agreed to add appropriate references.

Councillor Ms V R Gay considered that there should be specific reference to the coast and that “historic environment” should be made more explicit, with specific reference to the number of Conservation Areas in the District. She supported the aspiration for higher paid jobs.

The Chairman requested that the Vision should refer to “higher skilled and better paid jobs”.

Councillor Ms Gay stated that professional services were needed. Consultancies and similar small businesses were important to the economy.

Councillor Ms K Ward considered that the diversity of jobs needed broadening out and that microbusinesses should be included.

Councillor J Punchard asked if there should be reference to the proximity of the District to the Broads.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Broads was part of the context of the District and agreed that it would be correct to refer to it.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it was important that the Objectives were correct and that it could clearly be seen how they flowed through to the Development Management policies.

The Chairman stated that Objective 1, third bullet point should read “... where services *will be* available” and not “... *are* available” .

Members raised issues regarding the ability of new dwellings to be ready for new technology, e.g. fibre broadband. The Planning Policy Manager explained that Building Regulations covered these issues, as well as sustainable construction. He

suggested that Objective 2, bullet point 3 be amended to include “making the most of improvements in technology”.

Councillor Mrs V Uprichard considered that electric charging points for cars should be freely available.

The Planning Policy Manager considered that in the future developers would be encouraged or required to provide electric charging points at large buildings. Any requirement for domestic dwellings to be provided with this facility would be a Building Regulations issue.

The Chairman considered that pressure should be put on manufacturers to standardise electric charging connections.

Councillor Mrs G Perry-Warnes stated that in its response to the Dong Energy consultation her parishes had suggested that electric charging points be installed along the cable corridor as a community benefit.

It was proposed by Councillor J Punched, seconded by Councillor R Reynolds and

#### **RESOLVED**

**That subject to the above amendments and ongoing modifications, the draft Vision and Objectives identified in Appendix A to the report be agreed as a basis for policy development and public consultation.**

#### **35. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Stuart Harrison and Jill Fisher who had recently joined the Planning Policy team.

Site visits to sites which were suggested for future allocations would be arranged on dates allocated for reserve Development Committee site inspections.

The meeting closed at 11.44 am.

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CHAIRMAN  
13 November 2017