

13 NOVEMBER 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

J Punchard (Vice-Chairman) in the Chair

Ms V Gay	S Shaw
Mrs P Grove-Jones	N Smith
R Reynolds	Mrs V Uprichard
Ms K Ward	

Observers:

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds
N Dixon
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
Mrs A Green
N Pearce
R Price
Ms M Prior
J Rest
G Williams

Officers

Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Arnold and Mrs J English.

37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

38. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

At the request of Councillor Ms K Ward, the Planning Policy Team Leader agreed to circulate the consultation response relating to the Housing Needs Assessment.

39. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

41. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no additional updates.

42. LOCAL PLAN – ACCOMMODATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT, GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS, AND TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE, BOAT DWELLERS AND RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN DWELLERS

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the Norfolk Caravans and Houseboats Accommodation Needs Assessment including for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People final report. The study provided an evidence base which was required to aid the preparation of Local Plan policies for the provision of new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and Travelling Showpeople plots, which would ensure that the Council complied with planning policy and legislation.

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the main findings relating to North Norfolk. There was an identified need for 8 permanent Gypsy and traveller pitches.. North Norfolk had one of the best transit provisions in the region and there was no further need identified. There was also no accommodation need identified for travelling showpeople, boat dwellers or residential park homes in North Norfolk. In response to questions by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones, the Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the Council was only required to consider the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers who still travelled.

Councillor J Punchard stated that the transit site at Fakenham was well used and there was a need for it. The Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the Council's transit site provision enabled illegal encampments to be moved on quickly and they served their purpose well.

Councillor Ms K Ward referred to a presentation by Norfolk Constabulary at a recent meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee which outlined the measures put in place following the traveller incursion over the Cromer Carnival weekend, which included identification of weak spots. She asked if this would feed into the Local Plan process in any way.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the study identified the need for permanent (private) pitches based mainly on the growth of existing families in North Norfolk. There was very little need identified from Gypsies and Travellers moving into the District. The issues experienced in Cromer related to transient people moving through who chose not to use the transit site. This was a Police matter and not a planning policy issue.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked why Gypsies and Travellers did not stay in North Norfolk, unlike other areas such as South Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that most people were passing through to attend events in the summer. There were no large gatherings.

Councillor J Rest stated that the Fakenham transit site was well used but there were issues regarding cleaning around the site when users had left. He considered there should be more monitoring and penalties levied if cleaning was inadequate.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that Environmental Services had responsibility for Gypsies and Travellers and also waste disposal and clearance.

At the request of the Chairman, Councillor Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds agreed to take up this issue as Portfolio Holder for Waste and Environmental Service

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that it was likely that a similar approach to the existing policy would be developed.. It was not proposed to allocate sites and any applications for Gypsy and Traveller pitches would be considered through specific policies in the Local Plan. The policy approach would be developed and brought back to the Working Party in due course.

It was proposed by Councillor J Punchard, seconded by Councillor Mrs V Uprichard and

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet note the contents and publish the Norfolk Caravans and Houseboats Accommodation Needs Assessment (ANA) including for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as a source of evidence to support the emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk and be used as a basis of further work and policy development.

43. LOCAL PLAN - APPROACH TO POLICY DEVELOPMENT – WIND ENERGY

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented a report and discussion paper on the potential policy approaches available to the Council in identifying suitable areas for wind energy development, and sought Members' views as to the preferred approach to subsequent policy development. In developing the local plan the current policy approach could potentially conflict with the provisions of national policy supported by current NPPF guidance.

Councillor J Punchard referred to air traffic and the number of airfields in the area.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that the flight path of geese also had to be taken into account.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that the AONB coincided with most of the coast and if excluded it was likely to deal with the geese and low flying areas. In addition, the Council tried to encourage any wind energy proposals to be taken offshore.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that one of the options for consideration excluded the AONB. This would, however, also exclude microgeneration which could be at odds with views of the AONB Partnership.

Councillor Mrs V Uprichard considered that there should be a policy which covered the onshore impact of the infrastructure associated with offshore development.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the NPPF required the local plan to address onshore energy generation. Offshore schemes were subject to national Government policy.

Councillor R Reynolds stated that even if turbines were erected outside the AONB they would have an impact on it because of the flat nature of the landscape. Current

Local Plan policy was not to accept turbines for that reason. It was extremely important to protect the AONB.

Councillor R Price endorsed the views already expressed. He was concerned at the impact which the DONG and Vattenfall offshore schemes would have on the landscape, small businesses and tourism, as development would last many years and damage a large area of land. He considered that the Government should bring the National Grid supply further into North Norfolk to reduce the reliance on windfarms. He considered that North Norfolk was already playing its part at Bacton. Solar panels had much less impact and any change to existing policy could damage the things which people liked about North Norfolk and made it special.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that existing development had been heavily weighted towards solar energy, with very few wind turbine schemes.

Councillor R Reynolds stated that schemes under 1MW were unlikely to generate sufficient power to justify financing them. He referred to a previous decision to require all wind turbine and solar farm applications to be determined by Development Committee and considered that this should remain the case.

The Planning Policy Team Leader outlined five potential approaches as set out in the report. He highlighted the associated risks and asked for a Member steer with regard policy development. The preferred policy approach and alternatives would be developed and brought back to the Working Party in due course. He recommended that Option 2, a constrained approach based on the identification of important landscape designations and criteria to aid in the determination of applications on a case by case basis outside sensitive areas, be recommended to Cabinet as a basis for further work and policy development.

Councillor J Punchard asked how the approach would work across District boundaries.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that only areas within North Norfolk would be identified. The policy would not cross boundaries but neighbouring Districts may wish to comment on proposals.

The Planning Policy Team Leader displayed a map showing sites which had been put forward for consideration as potential allocations through the call for sites. These had not yet been assessed as to their suitability.

Councillor R Reynolds considered that Option 2 would enable the Authority to retain the control that it currently had over wind turbine applications.

Councillor Ms K Ward agreed that Option 2 was the best approach but she was concerned as to the risk if no sites were designated.

It was further suggested that former airfields could potentially be seen as a site specific location for suitable turbine development.

Councillor J Punchard requested the policy consider the exclusion of SSSIs.

The Planning Policy Team Leader considered that further evidence would be required to help differentiate between landscape types and sensitivity in such an approach and that the reasons behind the SSSI's designation would have to be investigated.

Councillor R Reynolds considered that turbines on former airfields were likely to be visible in the landscape given the open nature of airfields.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that submitted sites RE04 and RE05 were either in the AONB or would have an effect on it. She advised caution as to how the policies were worded.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that any policy would include the wording "the setting of" so this would have to be considered.

RESOLVED

To recommend to Cabinet that Option 2 be used as a basis for further work and policy development subject to the further consideration of SSSIs, in combination with further investigation into possible allocations on airfield sites.

The meeting closed at 11.15 am.

CHAIRMAN
11 December 2017