

**19 MARCH 2018**

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 A Fitch-Tillett  
Ms V Gay  
Mrs A Green

Ms M Prior  
R Reynolds  
Mrs V Uprichard

Ms K Ward

Observers:

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds  
N Dixon  
N Pearce  
B Smith

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager  
Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader  
Mr S Harrison – Planning Policy Officer

**66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P Grove-Jones and S Shaw.

**67. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

**68. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**69. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

**70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## 71. PLANNING POLICY UPDATE

The Planning Policy Manager updated the Working Party in relation to the work of the Planning Policy Team (with a particular focus on the review of the Local Plan) and on recent changes to planning policy and legislation.

The Planning Policy Manager reported on the current position with regard to the evidence which was required to prepare the new local plan. Much of the evidence had now been prepared and published. Other work had been commissioned or was in progress and would be reported to the Working Party in due course.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett asked if the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be broadened to include coastal erosion risk. The Planning Policy Manager explained that coastal erosion was not part of this study but would be addressed separately.

In response to questions by Councillor Ms V Gay regarding the purpose of the District Wide Viability Assessment, the Planning Policy Manager explained that it was intended to test different types of sites, and not the individual sites themselves, to provide evidence that the plan in its entirety could be delivered. It indicated how much money would be available but did not specify what the money would be spent on.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Government had suggested that viability work done at the allocations stage would not need to be revisited when planning applications were made, to ensure that developers were committed to the benefits they offered when putting their sites forward for allocation.

Councillor R Reynolds considered that the current Design Guide was very good and questioned the need for a new Guide.

Councillor Ms V Gay shared Councillor Reynolds' concerns and added that the current Design Guide had been produced with a group of Members.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that new materials had come into use since the current Design Guide was published, such as Corten Steel, and there was no guidance when considering their use.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that there had also been significant changes in national policy and the Design Guide needed to be updated with new codes etc.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Conservation and Design Officer was writing the Design Guide and he would ask him to attend the next meeting.

Councillor N Dixon referred to the Visitor Pressure Study and considered that there was a need to consider carefully the impact of development on the characteristics which attracted visitors to the area, which could have a negative effect on tourism.

In response to a question by Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett, the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that the Norfolk Coast Partnership had carried out initial survey work on the Visitor Pressure Study. Councillor Mrs Fitch-Tillett added that the Marine Partnership had carried out a large amount of work on the Council's behalf.

The Planning Policy Manager reported that the report incorrectly stated that the Settlement Profiles had published. They had been prepared but were not yet published.

Councillor N Dixon referred to the Infrastructure Position Statement. He asked what the position was with regard to surface water drainage and propensity for flooding.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Lead Local Flood Authority had prepared surface water management plans for various parts of the District. If there were specific problems with sites, they would either not be allocated or be allocated subject to measures to alleviate the problems.

Councillor R Reynolds asked if the Habitat Regulation Assessment would look at routing of birds, badgers, small animals etc. The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that it would.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that issues relating to construction, e.g. energy efficiency, would fall under the Building Control Regulations.

Councillor R Reynolds asked for confirmation as to whether or not non-compliance with Building Control Regulations was an offence.

Councillor B Smith reported that he had heard an interesting discussion on the revised NPPF on the radio, stating that planning should be community led and not dictated by developers. The Chairman stated that a transcript of the discussion would be obtained if possible.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that it had been reported at a recent meeting in her ward that there were some firms acting on behalf of developers to find plots of land to develop.

The Planning Policy Manager reported that despite detailed responses to consultation, the Government had now published a revised housing methodology which would increase the number of new dwellings to be provided in North Norfolk to 10,000+. Work on the new Local Plan had to date assumed a figure of 8,000-9,000 new dwellings. A report would be brought to a future meeting of the Working Party to consider whether to adopt the new methodology or if there were reasons to depart from it. However, there would be a significant risk to the Plan at examination. Historic delivery rates could provide evidence that the development industry may not be able to deliver that number and there was little point in setting an undeliverable target.

Councillor N Dixon asked if failure to deliver a higher number would result in a higher buffer being applied.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the five-year land supply test had been softened in the new methodology. A full evidence-based report would be brought to the Working Party.

Councillor Ms V Gay stated that there would need to be clear recommendations regardless of the Council's decision.

Councillor Mrs V Uprichard reported that, according to a recent television report, the whole of East Anglia was failing to deliver. The number of homes which had not been delivered was quite high. She stated that North Norfolk had done well at providing second homes. She suggested that MPs should be pressed to talk to the Government and propose measures to help.

The Chairman stated that North Norfolk had delivered better than other Norfolk Authorities.

Councillor R Reynolds stated that care was needed that the housing number which was set for the future did not cause difficulties for the Authority or the developers. He considered that Section 106 was working well but that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) could be a major risk.

In answer to a question by Councillor B Smith, the Planning Policy Manager explained that the Local Enterprise Partnership did not establish a housing target for North Norfolk. It received funding from the Government and Local Authorities could bid for a share of the money to fund infrastructure etc.

The Working Party discussed the revised timetable for production of the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Plan production was currently around a year behind the original timetable and there was a need to progress. Developers had expressed concerns at the lack of progress and there were risks to the five-year land supply. Changes to the process had not been helpful and there had been staffing issues. However, the team was now fully resourced.

Councillor Ms M Prior asked if HO1 was likely to be progressed. It had permission but had not been developed.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the five-year land supply position was mainly dependent on sites which were still under construction. There were a significant number of houses in reserve. There were concerns regarding the Fakenham site and a need for greater understanding as to why the Holt site had not progressed.

A representative of the developer of HO1 was present to observe the meeting. At the Chairman's invitation, he explained that the developer was awaiting discharge of conditions relating to foul water drainage but this was being held up by the drainage authority.

Councillor R Reynolds asked the Planning Policy Manager if he was confident that the proposed revised timetable could be met.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that he was dependent on retaining current resources to deliver the Plan. There was some room in the timetable. There was an issue around having to get Cabinet sign-off of Working Party decisions, and he was hoping that decision-making powers would be delegated to the Working Party to enable work to progress more quickly.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that additional funds had been put into the budget to build more resilience in the team and asked what was needed to ensure that the timetable was delivered.

The Planning Policy Manager understood that the Working Party wanted more rigour in the timetable and if there was a requirement for resources he would do everything possible to ensure the timetable was delivered.

It was proposed by Councillor R Reynolds, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett and

**RESOLVED** unanimously

**That the revised timetable for Local Plan production is published.**

The Chairman thanked the Planning Policy team for their work.

**72. LOCAL PLAN - IDENTIFICATION OF SITES FOR INCLUSION WITHIN THE FIRST DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report outlining the sites at Hoveton, Ludham, Mundesley and Stalham which were proposed to be included as preferred options within the First Draft Plan (Reg 18). A list of sites which were not preferred, and the reasons for their dismissal, was also included. The preferred sites, and those which had been dismissed, would be included in a public consultation document. He referred to uncertainties around the revision of the NPPF relating to housing numbers and a possible requirement to allocate smaller sites which could require the sites to be revisited prior to publication of the consultation document.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it was not intended to publish sustainability appraisals in future Working Party reports, but these would be publicly available on the Council's website.

The Working Party discussed the Officer's recommendations.

Hoveton

The Chairman stated that a preference had been expressed at the site visits for HV06 to extend to the rear of the already developed site.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the preferred site (HV01) could include land for expansion of the school and could be made as large as necessary.

The Chairman stated that there was potential to move the primary school adjacent to the high school to create an education campus.

Councillor N Dixon, the local Member, stated that the preferred site was the obvious choice and would be easy to accept. However, he considered that it would be a good idea to reserve land for the school when it was not known what the school might need. He considered that HV06 could be enlarged to provide the required capacity. He disagreed with the Officer's assessment that HV06 would extend into open countryside beyond the confines of the village as any development on the field would extend into open countryside and the village had already extended beyond the site. He stated that the Parish Council had expressed a preference for HV06. He considered that HV01 and HV06 should be put forward as options for consultation.

The Planning Policy Manager advised the Working Party that if two options were put forward without indicating which was the preferred option, it would introduce a further layer of consultation.

Councillor N Dixon considered that it was better to take longer and make the right decision.

Councillor Ms K Ward asked if further information could be sought regarding the requirements for the school.

Councillor N Dixon explained that it could be 15-20 years before there was certainty around the education needs for the site. There had been no desire to move the primary school but it needed a great deal of investment to bring it up to standard. However, if the land were allocated for residential it would close that option.

The Planning Policy Officer explained that all sites, including HV06, had been put forward by their landowners. The owner of HV06 had put forward the parcel of land with an indication of the number of dwellings which could be accommodated. The landowner's agreement would be needed to extend the site.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett, seconded by Councillor R Reynolds and

## **RESOLVED**

**That consideration of sites in Hoveton for inclusion in the first draft Local Plan be deferred to obtain further information to include the availability of additional land in conjunction with HV06 and future education requirements.**

### Ludham

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the preferred sites had both been included in the current Plan but had not been developed. There was potential to extend one of the sites if necessary.

It was proposed by Councillor Ms K Ward, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett and

## **RESOLVED**

**That sites LUD01/A and LUD06/A be rolled forward for inclusion as preferred sites in the first draft Local Plan.**

### Mundesley

Councillor B Smith, the local Member, stated that the site identified as the preferred site had been rejected when the current Plan was drawn up due to its proximity to the farm and would be likely to result in complaints if the site were developed. He considered that MUN03 was preferable to the proposed site and that other sites were also more sustainable. The proposed site currently brought the open countryside into the village and this would be lost if it were developed. He stated that the Working Party had only viewed two sites, and had stopped short of the proposed site and had not viewed the farm buildings. He requested that the other sites be revisited before making a decision.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it would be very difficult to make a case for sites on the edge of the village, rather than in the village itself. The other sites had been dismissed as they were not well related to the fabric of the village and did not compare favourably with the identified site.

Councillor Smith stated that there was a parcel of land owned by the Parish Council at the far end of the village.

In answer to a question by Councillor Ms V Gay, the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that both the proposed site and MUN03 would be large enough to accommodate the required number of dwellings.

Councillor Smith considered that insufficient consideration had been given to the other sites and reiterated his request for further consideration of those sites.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Arnold, seconded by Councillor R Reynolds and

## **RESOLVED**

**That site MUN04/A be identified as the preferred site for inclusion in the first draft Local Plan.**

### Stalham

Councillor N Dixon did not support the proposed sites. He stated that the site which had been allocated in the current plan was not popular locally, and considered that the proposed sites would also not be popular locally. He disagreed with the Highway Authority's views with regard to the road network. Stalham was currently served by two access points from the A149 and a third through Sutton and he considered that an additional access point to the A149 was needed. He considered that the proposed site would exacerbate the current problems and would not provide development of sufficient scale to deliver the necessary infrastructure improvements. He suggested that development to the north-west of the town would help to deliver a further access point onto the A149, with possibly a roundabout in the long term.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that several hundred dwellings would be needed to deliver the suggested highway network improvements. He considered that development of that scale would alter Stalham in such a way that it would undermine its role, function and character. He considered that 100-150 dwellings would be deliverable with minimum impact on the existing infrastructure.

Councillor N Dixon questioned the degree of consultation with local representatives and the local community. He had not been involved in any debate.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that Town Council workshops had been held and he had not sensed an opinion in favour of such large scale growth. The Town Council had always taken the view that the site at Stepping Stone Lane was preferable and were not in favour of the recommended site.

Councillor Ms K Ward proposed that the preferred sites go forward for consultation but with an additional question on the basis that if an additional exit onto the A149 was desired, the level of growth proposed would not deliver it.

Councillor Ms M Prior supported Councillor Ms Ward and stated that all Town Councils had had the same opportunity to discuss the matter at several meetings.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that the consultation should identify the preferred options and the other options which had been considered, with opinion also being sought on an alternative scenario which provided greater growth.

It was proposed by Councillor Ms K Ward, seconded by Councillor Ms M Prior and

**RESOLVED** by 5 votes to 1 with 1 abstention

**That sites ST19/A and ST23 be identified as preferred sites for inclusion in the first draft Local Plan, with consultation also on an alternative scenario which would provide greater growth to deliver highway infrastructure improvements.**

The Planning Policy Manager requested delegated authority to agree the final policy wording and content of the consultation document. The final document would come back before the Working Party prior to publication.

It was proposed by Councillor R Reynolds, seconded by Councillor Ms K Ward and

**RESOLVED**

**That the final policy wording and content of the consultation document is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

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CHAIRMAN