

19 FEBRUARY 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

Mrs P Grove-Jones

R Reynolds

N Smith

Mrs V Uprichard

Ms K Ward

Observers:

N Pearce

Ms M Prior

J Rest

B Smith

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager

Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Punchard and S Shaw.

54. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

55. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

58. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy Manager gave an update on progress. The following documents were complete:

Strategic Market Housing Assessment (2 versions)
Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment
Business Growth and Opportunities Study
Updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (countywide)
Town Centre Study
Settlement Profiles

It was anticipated that the draft Local Plan would be ready for consultation towards the end of the year.

The Planning Policy Manager suggested that Cabinet be requested to amend the Terms of Reference of the Working Party to enable the Working Party to agree to the publication of evidence without prior Cabinet approval.

The Chairman agreed to take forward this suggestion to Cabinet for consideration.

The Planning Policy Manager offered to bring a report to the Working Party regarding the Business Growth and Opportunities Study. This would be for information only. The Chairman considered that this would be beneficial.

The Planning Policy Manager reported that a revised timetable for preparation of the Local Plan would be brought to the next meeting.

The Chairman stated that a presentation was to be made to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the GIS system. She asked if it would be useful for the Working Party to also receive a presentation on the system.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Working Party could request a presentation and suggested that it might be useful for all Members.

59. NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Manager presented an update on the preparation of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework following a recent consultation. As a result of the consultation, the framework had been amended and the Planning Policy Manager recommended that the Working Party recommend to Cabinet that the latest version of the Framework document is formally endorsed and that the Council welcomes further on-going cross boundary co-operation. If endorsed, the Planning Policy Manager recommended that the following issues be highlighted for further consideration in future iterations:

- More emphasis throughout the document on the rural parts of the county including the unique natural environment, key sectors of the rural economy, and greater acknowledgement of issues facing rural areas.
- Consideration of further joint working in relation to the management of visitor pressures at wildlife sites including the joint production of a Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.
- Completion of further work on Green Infrastructure, Housing Delivery, Transport, and Broadband provision as identified in the document.
- On-going review and updating in response to national government legislation and any other significant new considerations.
- On-going production and maintenance of a joint evidence base to support the preparation of Local Plans.

RESOLVED

To RECOMMEND TO CABINET

- 1. That the '*Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and Statement of Common Ground*' and the agreements contained therein are endorsed by North Norfolk District Council.**
- 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 work on those areas identified above.**

60. BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER UPDATE

The Planning Policy Manager presented an update on the preparation and publication of the Brownfield Land Register. Seven brownfield sites had been identified for inclusion on Part 1 of the Register, which had been published in accordance with statutory requirements. Publication of Part 2 of the Register for sites which were considered suitable for 'permission in principle' was discretionary. None of those sites were currently proposed for permission in principle and therefore it was not recommended to publish Part 2 of the Register at the present time.

Members expressed concerns regarding non-implementation of planning permissions, land banking and the use of employment land for residential development.

Officers explained that sites which were designated as employment land were not included in the brownfield register as only housing led development was appropriate for the Brownfield register. Existing employment designations were protected for such use through policy. If sites were not available they would be removed from the register.

Councillor J Rest suggested that a tougher line needed to be taken with brownfield land, otherwise developers would put forward more development on greenfield land.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that there was no requirement to build only on brownfield land. A small number of sites which could accommodate a small number of dwellings might come forward. However, the public benefit of compulsorily purchasing sites to develop was doubtful.

RESOLVED

That the progress is noted and to agree to the recommended approach not to undertake Part 2 of the register at this time.

61. HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PRE SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented an update on the consultation version of the Holt Neighbourhood Plan and the response which had been prepared by the Officers. He explained that the Plan had been reviewed from the point of view of conformity, legislation and repetition of existing Development Plan policies. He explained that a Neighbourhood Plan was not a stand-alone document. It needed to be in alignment with the existing Development Plan and also take account of the emerging Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan as currently written was broad and general, and although it picked up the community's aspirations, many of them were

already covered in the Development Plan. As such the policy duplications ran the strong risk of deletion at examination. Detailed guidance on this element was included in the response along with further information around how other aspects of the emerging neighbourhood plan needed to conform closer with the existing Development Plan in order to meet the basic Conditions tests. In particular concerns around the approach to local lettings and affordable housing had been raised.

The Chairman acknowledged the amount of work which had gone into producing the Neighbourhood Plan and the Officers' response to it.

Councillor Ms M Prior explained that the demographic in Holt was towards the upper age group and there was a desire to encourage young people to stay in the town. It was recognised that Holt would have to take its share of housing but there was a strong desire to be able to influence the type, character and design of housing to be provided.

Councillor Ms K Ward stated that she was helping to set up a Community Land Trust and asked if this would give more influence over lettings.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that general needs affordable housing could be let to anyone, but local lettings would apply to housing provided by Community Land Trusts on rural exceptions sites.

Councillor Ms M Prior stated that possible exceptions sites around Holt were being investigated.

Councillor R Reynolds considered that marketable affordable housing should be investigated. It was necessary to find the means to get young people onto the housing ladder.

Councillor Ms V Gay stated that neighbourhood plans were subject to expensive constraints. She referred to comment 9 of the response regarding the need for supporting evidence. She asked what evidence the Inspector would expect.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that departures from the Development Plan had to be supported by evidence. This could take the form of commissioned studies or even updated evidence that is published as part of the Local Plan review. However in order to be transparent and to help justify a policy approach at examination all the evidence from a neighbourhood plan should be made available by the steering group for all to see, especially at a consultation stages.

The Planning Policy Manager added that neighbourhood plan groups were not expected to commission evidence as much was already available elsewhere.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Council welcomes and supports the progress that has been made.**
- 2. That Appendix 4 to the Officer's report is agreed as the basis for this Council's response to the consultation.**

62. HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (PART 2)

The Planning Policy Manager reported that the Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment Part 2 (HELAA) had been prepared to determine the employment land supply from identifiable land in North Norfolk over the next 20 years. He recommended that the report be published as a source of information to support the emerging Local Plan.

In response to a question by Councillor Ms K Ward, the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that non-inclusion of a site in the HELAA did not preclude its inclusion in a Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED

That CABINET BE RECOMMENDED:

- a) To accept and publish the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment Part 2 which covers employment land as a source of evidence to support the emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk to cover the period 2016-2036.**
- b) To give delegated authority to the Planning Policy Manager to undertake minor amendments to the report and associated mapping in order to publish the document.**

63. LOCAL PLAN – APPROACH TO AMENITY LAND

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report in respect of a review of open land designations which formed background evidence to inform the preparation of the emerging Local Plan. Final proposals would undergo public consultation as part of the consultation on the 1st Draft Plan Regulation 18 consultation.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that this was a significant piece of work and wished to thank the whole team.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if the Broads Authority had been involved.

The Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the Broads Authority had not been involved and that the study covered the North Norfolk area only.

Councillor Ms K Ward asked at what point the public were able to comment on the proposals. She also asked if neighbourhood plans could include open space proposals if they were out to consultation before the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the evidence would be used to designate the types of green space, which would be included on the proposals map for public consultation with the evidence to support the assessments. Separate consultation would not take place on the evidence, but it would be published. Neighbourhood plans could include open space proposals and use the open space study as evidence to support any such designation.

Councillor Ms V Gay considered it would be helpful to local Members if they knew if their parishes had not responded to the invitation to submit suggestions.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that local Members had been sent the letter as well as Parish Councils. Some Members had responded on behalf of their Parish Councils.

Councillor N Smith stated that some of the Parish Councils in his Ward were not clear on what was required.

RESOLVED

That CABINET BE RECOMMENDED to accept and publish the Amenity Green Space Topic paper as a source of evidence to inform the emerging Local Plan for North Norfolk to cover the period 2016-2036.

64. SITE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report informing Members of the proposed process for Site Assessment and seeking agreement on the timetable for the selection of preferred options for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan consultation. He reported that the site inspections should commence at 9.30 am and not 11 am as stated in the report.

The Planning Policy Manager explained the process and stated that it would inform the decisions but did not determine which sites were allocated.

Local members and Parish Councils would be invited to attend the site inspections.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett referred to the need to consider sites further inland for rollback in the event of coastal erosion.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the proposed methodology be agreed as a basis for future site selection.**
- 2. That the proposed site visit dates set out in the report be agreed, subject to commencement at 9.30 am.**

(Note: agreed timetable amended following the meeting)

65. LOCAL PLAN SPATIAL AND HOUSING STRATEGIES – PREPARING STRATEGIES FOR CONSULTATION

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which considered the options that could be taken in the new Local Plan in relation to the overarching Spatial Strategy and the Housing Strategy including the quantity of new homes in the District, their distribution and the policy approaches which could be used to manage the delivery of the required development. The report presented options for discussion in order to provide a steer for further policy development.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett considered that the inclusion of villages and more flexibility on barns was common sense and that rural exceptions sites could be open to well-designed “flat pack” development.

The Chairman asked if villages would require a sustainability assessment.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that there would need to be sustainability criteria to avoid a scattering of dwellings in the countryside. He considered that opening up everywhere in the District to development would be too permissive. There would be a restricted number of fifth-tier settlements where a small amount of development would be acceptable. Smaller villages would not have a development boundary but development would be controlled by policy.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that allocations in the 16 current service villages had not produced much development. It was now proposed to allocate land in the towns and four service villages and development elsewhere would be delivered through an infill policy.

Councillor R Reynolds supported the suggestions. In addition, he stated that North Norfolk was one of the lowest paid areas of the country and young people found it difficult to get a mortgage. He considered that mortgageable affordable housing should be included in recommendation (b) and that parameters would need to be set to prevent such dwellings becoming second homes.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it was too early to consider this suggestion for inclusion in the recommendations. A further report would be required on low-cost market housing. The implications needed to be understood and there was some concern that it could make it harder to provide affordable rented housing. A further report would be brought to the Working Party on this issue.

Councillor N Smith stated that concerns had been expressed to him by social workers that social housing was being built in the wrong place. People had to travel for employment which placed an additional burden on the finances of those who were already struggling. There was also an issue for people who could not afford to live in a large house after being widowed. He asked if one-bed accommodation could be provided so people could stay in their communities. Developers did not want to provide such accommodation as it took up more land.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the last plan had failed to address the issue of elderly people. It was possible to compel developers to provide it through policy.

The Chairman referred to a Victory Housing development of smaller houses in her Ward which had proved popular. She asked if Victory Housing could be invited to give a presentation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Ms K Ward (Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee) stated that many of the new schemes were provided by Broadland Housing and suggested that they also be invited to attend.

The Working Party discussed the provision of specialist housing for elderly and infirm people. The detail of such accommodation would require further detail in the policies.

Councillor Ms V Gay welcomed the report. She considered that the five-tier settlement hierarchy was sensible, although four main villages was restrictive. She considered that case by case decisions on the basis of a well-worded policies led to better decisions than with arbitrary lines around settlements. Design criteria was necessary in relation to the landscape.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett asked if the housing strategy included replacement of dwellings lost to coastal erosion, or whether rollback was still included under Policy EN12 which required revisiting.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the new Plan would include a policy for rollback. It was an important issue. Wording could be included in the overarching strategy if Members wished.

The Working Party requested that wording be included in the overarching strategy in respect of the replacement of dwellings lost to coastal erosion.

The Planning Policy Manager referred to Table 3 of the report relating to potential consultation options for the dwellings target for 2016-2036. He considered that options A, B and C were reasonable and proposed to consult upon them.

The Chairman stated that if unrealistic targets would result in failure.

RESOLVED

That CABINET BE RECOMMENDED that the options identified in the Officer's report are subject to further development and Sustainability Appraisal prior to public consultation and that the Council indicates that, pending this further work, its preferred/intended approaches are:

- a) An overarching Spatial Strategy based on three defined geographical areas (West, East and Central North Norfolk) with growth focussed around existing settlements and that the strategy recognises the specific issues facing the coast, with additional wording to include reference to the replacement of dwellings lost to coastal erosion.**
- b) A Housing Strategy which seeks to deliver not less than 9,000 dwellings over the 20 year plan period of which around 3,500-4,000 will be provided for on allocated sites, and around 2,000 (21% subject to viability) of which will be affordable, with specific provision made to address the needs of elderly people.**
- c) A distribution of development based on a five tier settlement hierarchy (Large Growth Towns, Small Growth Towns, Service Villages, Villages and Countryside) with acceptable locations for development defined via the use of development boundaries in Growth Towns and Service Villages, designated residential areas, and specific allocations of residential land.**
- d) The acceptance of rural building conversions to residential use across the district (a separate report will be prepared on the detail of a rural buildings policy).**
- e) Continued application of a rural exceptions policy to the delivery of affordable homes and acceptance of a proportion of market housing within such schemes (a separate report will be prepared on the detailed approach to affordable homes).**

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm.

CHAIRMAN