

20 AUGUST 2018

Minutes of a meeting of the **PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer at 9.30 am when there were present:

Councillors

Mrs S Arnold (Chairman)
R Reynolds (Vice-Chairman) in the Chair for Minute 37

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett	S Shaw
Mrs P Grove-Jones	R Shepherd
N Pearce	Mrs V Uprichard
Ms M Prior	

Observers:

Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds
N Dixon
B Hannah
M Knowles
Mrs A Moore
P Moore
J Punchard
E Seward
B Smith
N Smith
Ms K Ward

5 members of the public were in attendance

Officers

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

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bütikofer and Mrs A Green.

30. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

31. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2018 were approved as a correct record and at the request of the Chairman, who had not been present at the meeting, were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

32. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

34. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

All updates were contained within the Officers' reports.

35. LOCAL PLAN – OPTIONAL TECHNICAL STANDARDS

The Working Party considered a report and received a presentation by the Planning Policy Team Leader setting out the evidence for introducing optional technical standards around accessible & adaptable dwellings, national described space standards and water efficiency. The presentation expanded on the report and provided a summary of the evidence. A further detailed topic paper was also available and would be published to support the consultation version of the emerging Local Plan.

The evidence supported introducing a number of reasonable options which would also need to be subject to detailed Sustainability Appraisal and public consultation before the final approach for the Local Plan is agreed. The Planning Policy Team Leader sought a steer from the Working Party on the options for further policy development. In addition to the adoption of the optional technical standards set out in the report, he recommended that the nationally described space standards be implemented across all new dwellings and tenures, and that a policy approach be developed around base line sustainability requirements with an update to Policy EN6. The Planning Policy Manager circulated a letter which had been received from Norfolk Homes, which commented on all items on the agenda. There would be an opportunity to make the points raised on this item through the consultation process.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones considered that level access could be a problem in flood-prone areas. She considered that outwards opening doors for bathrooms should be mandatory.

Councillor R Reynolds stated that architects and developers were already meeting many of the optional standards and that imposing them could be restrictive in terms of affordable housing delivery.

Councillor J Punchard stated that many people of his generation were renting as they could not afford to buy, and he was concerned that imposing additional standards would increase rents and impact on people's ability to live.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if it had been proved that inward migration of elderly people was causing the rapid growth in the elderly population.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the number of people in the higher age brackets would increase due to people who were currently living in the District growing older and inward migration of people aged 55+.

Councillor Ms K Ward questioned the concerns raised in the letter from Norfolk Homes regarding viability as developers could charge a premium for accessible homes or adaptations.

Councillor R Reynolds considered there needed to be a balance as to whether or not the recommendations were adopted. He considered that elderly people were well looked after in North Norfolk. It was important not to restrict the building programme as it could have an adverse impact on elderly people in the future.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett referred to the disabled access issue. There were fewer planning applications for bungalows as they look up more land and were costly to build. She considered that the adaptability of dwellings for stairlifts should be considered and that the higher wheelchair standards should be applied to market housing as well as affordable housing.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that national policy did not allow the Authority to apply the higher wheelchair standards to market housing.

Councillor R Shepherd considered that developers would be selective as to how they met the standards to keep within acceptable viability limits.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that there had been a move to adopt the standards currently being put forward under the Code for Sustainable Homes so they were not new to the industry.

Councillor J Punchard supported the proposed space standards but considered that the resulting increase in the size of the building could lead to overlooking unless plot sizes were increased.

The Planning Policy Manager considered that it was more important to deliver homes that people wanted to live in and which were more suited to the District's needs, rather than try to achieve higher densities. It would introduce higher costs, but these had been fully costed in the Local Plan Viability Study and were not considered to be onerous. Some developers would have to amend some types of properties in order to comply with the national standards, but consideration had to be given to what was needed in the area based on the evidence, which clearly pointed to the need to address the deficiencies.

Councillor B Smith broadly supported the Government's approach. However, much of the discussion was around older people, whereas there were many younger people in wheelchairs who needed to be able to move around their homes. He considered that unless specialist accommodation was provided at ground floor level there could be problems accessing bedrooms.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that the standards provided for accessible lifts. There was evidence of need to accommodate people over 65 in the District as the largest proportion of the District's population and the fastest growing. In relation to younger people (18-64) the evidence identified that the need remained static over the plan period and accounted for approx. 4% of that age group.

Councillor Ms M Prior supported the recommendations for disabled accommodation. However there was already a requirement for 10% on major developments which had not been mentioned for some time. She expressed concern regarding enforcement of the standards. She stated that there was a need for 2-bed houses to keep young people in the District and that 5-bed houses were not needed.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that Building Control would be responsible for enforcing the standards, with the exception of the space standard which would be dealt with by planning conditions.

With regard to water efficiency standards, Councillor P Moore stated that 25% of water was leaked and pressure should be brought to solve the problem. He asked if the installation of water butts could be encouraged.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that there were a number of measures which could be taken by developers to meet the standard. There were many technical measures to increase water efficiency at minimal additional cost and most developers were already meeting the standards in this area as a matter of course. Installation of water butts could be one of the possible measures.

The Chairman reported that the Duty to Co-operate Forum had requested a presentation by Anglian Water at its next meeting. Anglian Water had said that it could service any new development but needed to be challenged.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to develop a policy approach based around the adoption of Optional Technical Standards based on

- a) **100% dwelling requirement for Optional M4(2) - Accessible and Adaptable dwellings;**
- b) **5% dwelling requirement on affordable properties for optional M4(3) - Wheelchair User Dwellings;**
- c) **Implementation of the Higher Water Efficiency standards across all new dwellings;**
- d) **Implementation of Nationally Described Space Standards across all new dwellings and tenures;**
- e) **Development of a policy approach around base line sustainability requirements which updates Policy EN6.**

36. LOCAL PLAN – WHOLE PLAN VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

The Working Party considered a report and received a presentation by the Planning Policy Team Leader in respect of the viability evidence supporting the Local Plan.

In general terms, housing development proposed in all locations in the North Norfolk District Local Plan is broadly viable with maximum affordable housing percentages of 45% and 25% across geographical zones identified.

The findings would be shared with the development industry through a workshop scheduled for later this month where an opportunity would be given to comment on the findings and the assumption used. It was intended that the study would inform policy making around affordable housing rates and support the Local Plan through examination.

The Chairman asked if the housing Incentive Scheme would form part of the new policy.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the new Local Plan would determine viability by setting the levels which would encourage developers and landowners to release land.

Councillor E Seward asked if the affordable housing ratios of 25%/45% would make inroads into the waiting list.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the waiting list was not a good indicator of need as it included people who were currently in affordable housing and wanted to transfer. Some of the people on the waiting list would find their own accommodation. The assessment looked at whether the overall housing target would deliver enough affordable housing. There was a need for 20% of all housing to be affordable and the Authority was currently delivering 18%. The proposed ratios would deliver around 20%.

RESOLVED

That the results of the study are noted and following industry engagement and any necessary amendment the study is published as part of the evidence base for Local Plan preparation.

The Chairman left the meeting at this point to attend another meeting. The Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the remaining business.

37. PLANNING POLICY UPDATE – PUBLICATION OF NEW NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which summarised the key provisions of the new National Planning Policy Framework and its likely impacts in relation to the on-going review of the North Norfolk Local Plan particularly in relation to housing provision.

The new National Planning Policy Framework retained much of the thrust and detailed content of the earlier version but included some significant changes in relation to housing provision, targets for delivery of growth and the types of sites which should be identified for residential development. These would need to be addressed as part of Local Plan preparation.

The final housing target remained unclear and the Government was considering a further revision to its methodology.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones referred to a first-time buyer development in her Ward, where owners had been able to sell the dwellings on with no restrictions and as a result, the dwellings were no longer in the first-time buyer market. She asked how this would be dealt with for future developments.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that there were no provision in the legislation for recycling of first-time buyer developments.

Councillor P Moore suggested that legal agreements (Section 106) would help to ensure that first-time buyer developments remained in the first-time buyer market.

Councillor Ms K Ward asked what impact the additional work on small sites would have on the timetable.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the impact was unknown at present as consideration would need to be given as to how small sites would be approached. There were a number of potential options to consider. The team did not have the resources to consider a large number of sites without impacting on other work and there could be a significant risk to the timetable. There was also a risk in terms of the 2019 Council elections if the draft plan was not out to consultation by February as the Council would be in purdah and consultation may have to be delayed until after the elections.

Councillor Mrs A Moore stated that she was in favour of the proposed large development in North Walsham to deliver infrastructure. A relief road was needed to take lorries out of the residential areas.

Councillor E Seward supported Councillor Moore's view. He considered that the critical mass of development was needed to secure funding for infrastructure for other facilities as well as roads. It was necessary to allow the developers to build but also maximise their contributions towards infrastructure. He considered that the County Council should be approached to help with funding.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett requested that her vigorous opposition to any incursion into the AONB be recorded.

RESOLVED by 6 votes to 0 with 1 abstention

- 1. That preparation of the draft plan proceeds on the basis that 'up to' 11,000 dwellings *may* be required.**
- 2. That the plan identifies approx. 15 smaller sites of around 1 hectare for allocation *provided* such sites were put forward and are suitable for development.**
- 3. That the additional large sites identified in Section 5 of the report are identified as provisional preferred options.**

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

CHAIRMAN