

10 DECEMBER 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

Ms V Gay (Chairman)

Mrs S Arnold	J Punchard
Mrs A Green	S Shaw
Mrs P Grove-Jones	R Shepherd
N Pearce	D Young
Ms M Prior	

Mrs S Bütikofer – substitute for Mrs V Uprichard

Observers:

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett
M Knowles
J Rest
B Smith

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager
Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader
Mr S Harrison – Senior Planning Officer
Mr J Mann - Senior Planning Officer
Mrs M Moore – Senior Planning Officer
Mrs J Rhymes – Senior Planning Officer

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Reynolds and Mrs V Uprichard.

Councillors N Dixon and Mrs A Claussen-Reynolds, who were not Working Party members, had also tendered their apologies.

56. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor Ms V Gay paid tribute to Councillor Mrs S Arnold, the former Chairman of the Working Party, and stated that she would do her best to follow Councillor Mrs Arnold's example in chairing the meeting in an open and civil manner.

56. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

57. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

60. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy Manager reported that the Government had not yet published the housing delivery test results, which would provide information on the Council's performance against its targets. This would be extremely important in terms of the Council's 5 year land supply position. A report would be brought to the Working Party once the results were published.

61. LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION – HOUSING MIX POLICIES

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which considered the policy approaches to be taken in the new Local Plan in relation to dwellings sizes, tenures, affordability, self-build, and specialist elderly person's accommodation, and recommended draft policies for public consultation.

Councillor D Young asked if it was intended to split the dwelling types between two and three bedroom dwellings, as the policy as drafted would allow developers to build 100% three-bed dwellings, rather than two-bed which were less attractive to build.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the dwelling types had not been split in order to prevent the policy being too prescriptive. It also took a view over the entire district as some developers would only build two-bed and some only three-bed. However, the mix could be broken down into proportions of each type and evidence was available to support it. In viability terms, two and three bed dwellings were very similar.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if there was anything to prevent developers building on two separate plots in close proximity to each other to avoid planning obligations.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that plots could not be linked unless they were conjoined. He suggested that it could be made clear in the preamble to the policy that the policy would be applied in all circumstances and to make developers aware that low densities and subdivision of plots would not be supported.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones, seconded by Councillor D Young and RESOLVED that the preamble to the policy be made more explicit.

Councillor J Punchard expressed concern that the requirement for self-build plots to be kept available for a period of time would stifle development. He considered that

the original developer would not want to return to the site to build one dwelling In the event of the plot not being sold.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that it would be to the Council's advantage if the self-build plot was held for a longer time. Developers considered that it was more advantageous to sell a building plot than build on it themselves. The proposed approach would discharge the Council's duty with regard to self-build plots.

Councillor J Rest requested clarification of the policy wording as it used the terms "housing", "properties", "homes" and "dwellings".

The Planning Policy Manager stated that "housing" encapsulated all types of housing and the policy wording could be rationalised to ensure the same term was used throughout.

Councillor D Young referred to the requirement to provide specialist care facilities in developments of over 151 dwellings and each additional 300 dwellings, which resulted in a requirement of 60 units on developments up to 450 dwellings which rose to 120 units for a development of 451 dwellings, which he considered was very large step.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the draft policy should refer to 80 bed spaces and not 60. This was in line with the current position in the industry. The provision did not have to be in one block and could be expressed as a quantum.

Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor J Punchard, seconded by Councillor D Young and RESOLVED that for developments of over 151 dwellings, a requirement for the provision of 80 bed spaces be introduced for the first 150 additional dwellings and an additional 40 bed spaces for every 150 dwellings thereafter.

Councillor D Young referred to the delivery of affordable homes. He stated that starter homes were not affordable in the District and asked if other types of tenure which were more affordable could be provided instead.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the exclusion of starter homes was not supported by evidence or the NPPF and this approach was unlikely to be supported by the Inspector. The discount offered on starter homes needed to be controlled through policy and should be large enough to make them affordable.

The Chairman asked if the Planning Policy Manager was satisfied with the affordable housing policy zones.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the viability consultant had considered the two zones, which were broadly defensible, but he was not satisfied as there were some settlements in the east of the District where property values were quite high. The zones would be remapped to take account of these higher values. It was possible that three zones could be included in the final policy, which would need to be supported by evidence. He stated that regardless of the policies which were set, developers would continue to argue viability. The District-wide viability assessment considered site typologies. It was not possible to consider individual sites which were unknown.

Councillor Ms M Prior stated that developers had not built sufficient, if any, truly affordable properties for sale. She referred to towns such as Holt which had a

distinct mix of people and considered that those who had lived there the longest would be penalised.

It was proposed by Councillor Ms V Gay, seconded by Councillor D Young and

RESOLVED

1. **That the housing mix/types policies in Appendix A are published for public consultation as part of the draft Local Plan.**
2. **That the precise draft policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

62. LOCAL PLAN – APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT LAND

The Senior Planning Officers (JM, SH and JR) presented a report which addressed issues relating to

- The quality and suitability of existing Employment Areas;
- the quantum of proposed allocations;
- the policy approach to designated Employment Areas and proposed allocations; and
- the policy approach to employment outside of designated Employment Areas and employment allocations.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold asked what the plans were for the former Crane Fruehauf and Marricks Ropes sites at North Walsham.

The Senior Planning Officer (SH) explained that part of the site had been included, but not in its entirety as only part had been put forward in the call for sites. It was necessary to ensure that any development to the north of Cromer Road was serviced by improved highway access so the proposed allocations could help to bring forward other parcels of land which were outside the allocation.

Councillor Arnold stated that the sites had been a blight on the landscape for many years. She considered that definite proposals should be made in the Local Plan to ensure improvements to the area.

The Planning Policy Manager suggested an additional policy requirement to ensure that the masterplan should clearly demonstrate improvements to the visual appearance of the edge of the town.

It was proposed by Councillor Ms V Gay, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Arnold and **RESOLVED that an additional policy requirement be included to ensure that the masterplan clearly demonstrates improvements to the visual appearance of the edge of the town.**

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if an increased number of commercial/light industrial units could be included in the extended Stalham ST23/2. She asked if any marketing had taken place to establish requirements and feasibility.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that it was the intention to increase the number of commercial units. A study carried out now would not reflect the demand in a few years' time. There was a question as to how long sites would need to be held and how developers could be made to market the sites properly.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that the Highway Authority had objected to access onto the Yarmouth Road when considering the former abattoir site.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Highway Authority would not object provided there were controls over commercial use of the site. It might be necessary to consider other employment generating uses such as care homes, hotels etc.

The Planning Policy Manager read a statement from Councillor N Dixon, raising the following points (summarised):

- the need for a choice of sites for businesses and an element of healthy competition between landlords to help promote economic growth.
- The need for more mixed land allocations for housing and employment to help promote choice for businesses and encourage local work opportunities and more sustainable communities.
- More robust criteria and delivery certainty with mixed housing and employment allocations to ensure employment land remained available for a longer period.
- Infrastructure implications need to be included as part of an integrated approach to land allocations.
- The need to ensure housing allocations are made in proportions that can deliver wider benefits.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Planning Policy Team had tried to reflect Councillor Dixon's views.

It was requested that Councillor Dixon's comments be forwarded in full to the Working Party.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold asked if it was possible to introduce an incentive scheme for industrial and business premises.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that such a policy would be more appropriately addressed through economic development policy rather than planning policy.

Councillor D Young declared an interest at this point as there was an issue close to where he lived. He considered that the draft policy for employment development outside designated employment areas and employment allocations was weaker than the current policy, which did not allow developments which would involve loss of employment. He asked if the policy could be expanded to protect valuable local amenities. He suggested the wording be amended to include "... affect economic growth and employment opportunities or result in the loss of a valued amenity."

The Planning Policy Manager suggested that that the policy be strengthened to include a more robust set of criteria to ensure that beneficial uses were protected.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the provisional preferred employment policies and preferred sites to be included within the First Draft Local Plan for consultation be confirmed, subject to strengthening the policy to ensure the protection of beneficial uses.**
- 2. The final policy wording and content of the consultation document is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

63. LOCAL PLAN - OPEN SPACE, LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND ACCESS

The Senior Planning Officer (MM) and Planning Policy Team Leader presented a report which considered the draft policy approach to be taken in the new Local Plan in relation to open space, Local Green Space (LGS) and Public Rights of Way and recommended the future designation of areas of open space in relation to the settlement hierarchy.

Councillor Mrs S Bütikofer queried why Holt Sure Start had been removed from the list as it was one of the Sure Start schemes to be retained.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Sure Start Centre was formerly allocated as open space as a large part of the area had not been developed. Since then, buildings had been erected on the site and it was considered not to meet the criteria as visibly open space and was not available for public recreational use.

Councillor Ms M Prior, local Member for Holt, stated that she did not consider that the site was green space and it was not open to the public.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that representations could be made during the consultation period. Holt Sure Start was borderline and either designation or removal could be justified.

Councillor D Young considered that few rural villages met the current aspirations for open space.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the space standards allowed improved provision under planning applications and provided evidence to identify the current deficiency. The Sports Pitch Strategy was being reviewed and would identify the deficiencies which the Council wished to address.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett referred to Cabbell Park, Cromer and asked if the designation would remain if the sports facilities were relocated, as she did not wish to see the potential for the site lost.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the policy allowed for the relocation of the sports pitches elsewhere in the town and would allow for the development of the existing site if relocation took place.

Councillor Ms M Prior asked how the Sports Pitch Strategy would account for the sports facilities at Gresham's School.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the study was primarily considering publicly accessible sports pitches. He was not sure how Gresham's would be considered and would report back on this matter.

It was proposed by Councillor J Punchard, seconded by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the provisional preferred open space designations and policies to be included within the First Draft Local Plan for consultation be confirmed.**

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

64. LOCAL PLAN PREPARATION – RE-USE AND CONVERSION OF BUILDINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which considered the draft policy approach to be taken in the new Local Plan in relation to the re-use and conversion of buildings in the Countryside to both residential and commercial uses and recommended a draft policy for public consultation.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that buildings which had already been converted to holiday use would be dealt with in a further report to the next meeting.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones referred to an application which had been considered by the Development Committee for conversion of a former building where only one wall remained. She asked if the proposed policy would allow conversion of such structures.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that such applications would not be permitted. The policy referred to conversion and would not allow development where there was insufficient structure to convert. There was also a need to prevent the restoration of barns prior to submission of applications for conversion. He suggested that wording be added to the policy to state that recently erected and recently altered buildings would not benefit from the policy.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett asked how the conversion of boats would be dealt with.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that he would need to reflect on this matter.

Councillor Mrs S Bütikofer supported the use of buildings such as former potato stores for commercial uses but stated that it was important to protect the amenities of local residents.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that developments would also need to comply with other policies in the Local Plan, such as highways, visual appearance and amenity. He suggested the addition of wording in the policy regarding the need to comply with these matters to provide a relationship with other policies in the plan.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold referred to the quality of the buildings to be restored. She requested that the policy be tightened to give more control over this issue.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that the previous Local Plan had required buildings to be “worthy of retention”. The new permitted development rights included the wording “capable of conversion” and this wording would need to be used in the new policy.

Councillor Mrs A Green referred to the requirement to demonstrate that a building was redundant or disused. She asked if a building was considered to be in use if it was only used to house a tractor.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that judgement would need to be applied as there were many different circumstances. He considered that the descriptions used in the policy were correct and aligned with the NPPF.

Councillor D Young referred to the preservation of services and amenities. He considered that the policy was weak in terms of preventing the closure of a valued amenity in order to comply with the policy.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the supporting text would assist in interpreting the policy and was likely to refer to existing or last use over a reasonable period of time. It should not create an incentive to displace a valued community facility.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones asked if buildings which were subject to permitted development rights could be required to comply with the design criteria.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that buildings which did not require planning permission could not be controlled under planning policy. Buildings which needed planning permission for conversion would be required to comply with the Design Guide.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones, seconded by Councillor R Shepherd and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the draft Rural Building Conversion policy is published for public consultation as part of the draft Local Plan.**
- 2. That the precise wording of the policy is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

65. FUTURE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

It was agreed that future meetings would start at 10.00 am and consideration should be given to avoiding a clash with Norfolk County Council's Full Council meetings so that all Members had the opportunity to attend the Working Party meetings.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am.

CHAIRMAN