

11 FEBRUARY 2019

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

Ms V Gay (Chairman)

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

J Rest – substitute for J Punchard

Observers:

M Knowles
Ms K Ward

Officers

Mr M Ashwell – Planning Policy Manager
Mr I Withington – Planning Policy Team Leader
Mr J Mann – Senior Planning Policy Officer
Mr P Rhymes – Conservation and Design Officer
Mr R Dholiwar – Planning Monitoring Officer
Miss L Yarham – Democratic Services & Governance Officer

92. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Pearce, J Punchard, R Reynolds and Mrs V Uprichard.

There was one substitute Member in attendance.

93. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

94. MINUTES

Minute 73 – Draft Approach to Growth in Villages

Councillor D Young referred to a statement that the new service requirements imposed an obligation on service providers to provide broadband where a quantum of development was built. However, Members had since received a document which stated that this obligation related to all residential development.

Ms K Ward explained that the reason she had asked why broadband was not a criterion for selection was in the context of discussions at a previous meeting.

At the request of the Chairman, Members of the Working Party confirmed that they were satisfied with the telecommunications report which had been circulated by the Planning Policy Manager following the meeting.

Minute 74 – Coastal Policies – Draft Policies for Consultation

Councillor D Young stated that he had queried the first bullet point and not the first three as stated in the report.

Minute 75 – Approach to Town Centres and Retail

Councillor D Young stated that he was not concerned by “wholly ancillary role” in the final paragraph of the proposed policy but considered that the words “only where” were restrictive and conflicted with the proposed policy relating to the provision and retention of local facilities and services.

Councillor Young also considered that the Planning Policy Manager had agreed that the wording would be reviewed and not that it could be reviewed as quoted in the minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

97. UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Planning Policy Team Leader reported that an application had been received for the designation of the parish of Wells-next-the-Sea as a Neighbourhood Plan area. This would be dealt with under delegated powers.

98. PLANNING POLICY - MONITORING REPORT 2016-18

The Planning Monitoring Officer presented an overview of the Monitoring Report 2016-18, which set out the main development trends in the District in the period 2016-2018 and measured performance against adopted Core Strategy policy and corporate objectives. He reported that the full Monitoring Report would be available on the website shortly.

Councillor D Young was concerned that the published figures would show a five-year housing land supply of 5.02 years. He requested an update on the current position.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the five-year housing land supply figures were already published in the Interim Five-year Land Supply Statement. The Monitoring Report was a factual document and accurate at the time of publishing. The housing land supply figure was constantly changing as developments were completed and permissions granted. Work to monitor completions up to 31 March would commence in April and the annual figure would be again published in May. A considerable amount of work would be involved in order to produce the updated figure.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that there was a requirement to have a five-year supply of housing land and 5.02 years was sufficient to continue to attach full weight to the Council's policies. If the supply dropped below five years, there would be a presumption in favour of development until the land supply was replenished. The Government was expected to publish its revised methodology for calculating housing requirements. The forthcoming consultation on the draft plan would be on the basis of 550 dwellings per annum subject to the review of the methodology. If the housing requirement was above 550 dwellings per annum, further discussions would be required as to whether the increased number of dwellings could be delivered.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold considered that the land supply was not as robust as it was a few years ago as the allocations were coming to an end and the situation should improve when the new plan was in place. She stated that retail was not mentioned in the Employment and Retail section and she could not recall any recent retail permissions being granted.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the completions table only reported employment land. The Monitoring Report contained figures for permissions granted for 2016/17 and 2017/18 but he was not aware of any completions as yet. The Planning Policy Team leader explained that there had been limited new retail permissions.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones referred to permission which had been granted for residential development outside the development boundary of Stalham when the land supply had dropped below five years, and shortly afterwards the Council could demonstrate a five-year land supply.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that only one application had been affected and the Committee had been advised that it was obligated to grant permission. The five-year housing land supply had been topped up by granting the permission. However, in the event of the housing land supply falling below five years, the Council would not be obligated to grant permission in unsustainable locations.

The Working Party noted the report.

99. NORTH NORFOLK DESIGN GUIDE - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR INCLUSION ALONGSIDE THE EMERGING FIRST DRAFT LOCAL PLAN (CONSULTATION VERSION)

The Senior Planning Officer presented a report which gave an update on the review of the national policy context and set out the approach taken within the proposed design policies for the draft Local Plan, which provided hooks to the North Norfolk Design Guide.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold referred to the draft High Quality Design policy. She stated that she did not wish to see garages built in front of dwellings and considered that facilities should be provided for storage of bins. She asked if the policies could be worded to ensure that affordable housing was of good quality design and not identifiable.

Councillor Ms K Ward referred to the references to light pollution in the Protection of Amenity policy. She stated that there were significant areas which had dark sky protection and dark sky status and considered that the policy should be strengthened to protect them. She stated that domestic outside lighting was of particular concern.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that there was more specific reference to dark skies and light pollution in the environmental section of the draft Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the majority of lighting which was of concern to Councillor Ward did not require planning permission and there was nothing the Authority could do to control it.

Councillor Ms M Prior considered that “pepper potting” of affordable housing should be a requirement when considering mixed sites, with no separation of affordable housing.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the pepper potting principle was contained in the draft plan in both the affordable housing and housing mix policies. It had been agreed that the maximum number of affordable dwellings in a group would be raised from 8 to 15. Design issues should relate equally to affordable and market dwellings and reference had been made in the draft Plan to “tenure blind design”. He considered that wording to that effect could also be included in the preamble to the design policy.

Councillor Mrs A Green asked if there was any reference to windmills.

The Conservation and Design Officer confirmed that there was a section on light pollution in the Design Guide, which offers guidance on external glazing and external lighting as part of the design process. The affordable housing section included information on layout of development, place-making and how affordable housing should be readily integrated into a scheme rather than in separate blocks. There was also a section which dealt with renewable technology and how it could be successfully integrated into development without harming the character and appearance of the area.

Councillor D Young suggested that the Protection of Amenity policy should make a clear distinction between the positive impacts in points 1 and 2 and the negative impacts in points 3 to 8.

Councillor Ms V Gay referred to point 6 of the High Quality Design policy which referred to *up to date* Conservation Area Appraisals. She was concerned that the wording should not appear to weaken the existing Conservation Area Appraisals.

The Conservation and Design Officer explained that the District had 81 Conservation Areas which were being reviewed on a rolling programme. There were Conservation Appraisals which were now several years old but they were meaningful documents and he agreed that the wording may require amendment to make it clear that they were included.

The Conservation and Design Officer presented the draft Design Guide. There had been significant changes since the current Design Guide was published, including national guidance and policy, development pressures, construction methods, materials and housing needs. As a result, the current Design Guide was out of date and its use and relevance had diminished. The updated Design Guide would be available as an interactive, electronic document only, which meant that it would be a living document which could be updated when necessary. It would be more accessible for all users, with more functionality. He explained the functions of the document and gave a demonstration of how it would be used. The design policies would link to the relevant sections of the Design Guide.

Councillor D Young considered that the Design Guide looked very impressive but he was concerned that it would be not accessible to many individuals, although developers would be able to access it very easily. He asked if it would be possible to print pages of the document as laid out on the screen.

The Conservation and Design Officer appreciated that an electronic only version was a big step but he considered that the benefits of what could be achieved through the electronic guide far outweighed the lack of a paper version. He confirmed that it would be possible to print off individual sections. The Guide would be available for use on a smartphone or tablet so it was fully portable.

Councillor Young referred to a section of the Guide on windows which had an image of large areas of glazing. He asked the Conservation and Design Officer to comment on this in the context of light pollution.

The Conservation and Design Officer explained that the landscape and biodiversity section of the Design Guide dealt with landscape considerations, including dark skies, light pollution and noise and impact on the sensitive landscape. He would add more detail, including examples of glazing and its mitigation. He explained that he did not want to rule out certain forms of glazing at this stage without justification. Examples of good and bad design had been included in the Guide.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold asked when the Design Guide would be available. She also asked how developers would find information.

The Conservation and Design Officer explained that the Design Guide would be publicly available alongside the Regulation 18 consultation of the Local Plan.

The Conservation and Design Officer stated that the Design Guide included a materials choice and selection guide which would tell developers which materials would be acceptable.

The Chairman considered that the materials section was particularly useful.

Councillor J Rest asked if a glossary of terms would be included in the Design Guide.

The Conservation and Design Officer confirmed that a glossary had been included as many architectural terms were used.

Councillor J Rest asked for a definition of “conservation” and “preservation”.

The Conservation and Design Officer explained that conservation involved managing change by considering the value of the heritage asset, assessing how changes would impact upon it and mitigating the impact to ensure that the quality and significance of the asset was retained for future generations. Preservation meant that nothing could be changed, which was not an approach taken by the Authority.

The Chairman considered that the Design Guide was a very rigorous reference tool. Whilst she regretted the lack of a physical version, the reasons for it had been covered. She asked the Conservation and Design Officer to explain how the Guide might be used more easily both within and outside the Authority.

The Conservation and Design Officer explained that Officers wanted the Guide to be used and for it to be a living document. The existing Guide sat on the shelf and was not referred to enough in planning decisions. The new Guide was an opportunity to align decision making with the design objectives that the Authority was signed up to. It was an opportunity to re-engage with the expected design standards.

The Chairman considered that the “Comply or Justify” section of the document was very useful and made clear that there were principles which should be considered.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the provision preferred policy approaches be confirmed for inclusion within the First Draft Local Plan for consultation.**
- 2. That the final policy wording and content of the consultation document is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**
- 3. That the Design Guide be subject to a minimum six-week public consultation period alongside the emerging Local Plan.**

100. FIRST DRAFT LOCAL PLAN (PART 1) CONSULTATION: COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented a report which set out the draft programme of community engagement for the First Draft Local Plan (Part 1) Consultation and sought the Working Party's agreement to the proposed consultation arrangements. He outlined the engagement which had been carried out to date, the requirements of the plan making regulations and the proposed approach to consultation and engagement.

The Chairman asked if a coastal topic paper would be added to the consultation documents listed in Appendix C to the report.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the coastal topic paper was a technical document which was not yet complete. The purpose of the document would be to provide clarification around the approach for the Authority and the Inspector. It would be included in the next round of consultation.

Councillor Ms M Prior asked if the Infrastructure Position Statement would include health in the same way as education.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the Infrastructure Position Statement provided information on existing location and type of infrastructure but did not consider capacity. There was much more information in the Health Protocol, which the Council had signed up to under the Duty to Co-operate. Some of the proposed policies contained sections on health and promoting the Health Protocol, which would also be published as part of the Consultation background documents.

Councillor D Young referred to Table 1 of the report in relation to news releases. He commented that there were other publications covering the west of the district, such as the Glaven Valley newsletter, which were not listed. For his benefit as a recently appointed member of the Working Party, he requested clarification as to which of the documents in Appendix C had been considered by the Working Party.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that all except the Consultation Statement and Interim Habitats Regulation Assessment had been considered by the Working Party. The Consultation Statement was a factual record of the consultation which had been carried out to date. Its primary purpose was for the Inspector's information but it was good practice to publish it for reasons of openness and transparency. The Interim Habitats Regulation Assessment had not yet been received. It was a statutory consultation document undertaken by specialists and the findings would be brought back to this Working Party as part of the feedback process in order to refine the approach and policies.

Councillor Ms K Ward pointed out that the Rapid Review of the Local Plan had taken place in June 2018 and not October 2018 as stated in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

Councillor Ms Ward requested clarification as to the dates of the consultation events and whether or not they would be included in the letter to be sent out with the Council tax mail-out.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that it had been hoped to include the dates in the letter but it had not been possible given the deadline for the printers and the need to finalise times and venues for the events. The dates for the consultation would be included.

Councillor Ms Ward considered that it was important to give a time-frame in which the events would take place if it was not possible to give precise details.

The Planning Policy Manager agreed to include wording in the letter stating that it was expected to hold local consultation events in the first two weeks of the consultation period.

Councillor Ms M Prior suggested that notice of the events could be publicised in the local press and wording included in the letter to ask people to watch for details.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that details would be publicised on the website, via the Communications Team and through emails to Town Councils and posters in local Libraries etc. when they had been finalised.

The Chairman added that the events were likely to be publicised on social media.

Councillor Mrs S Arnold considered that the data processing issues under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) needed further explanation for the general public.

Councillor Ms K Ward considered that it needed to be made clear that names would be published when responding to the Local Plan consultation, as people could confuse it with commenting on planning applications where names were redacted.

The Planning Policy Team Leader considered that it could be made clear on the representation form and in the information on how to engage with the process that names would be made public.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Arnold, seconded by Councillor Ms M Prior and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Communications and Engagement Plan be agreed as the basis for conducting public consultation on the First Draft Local Plan (Part 1), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and supporting documents.**
- 2. That final decisions as to which promotional tasks and events are carried out is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

The meeting closed at 11.50 am.

CHAIRMAN