

PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party held on Monday, 15 June 2020 remotely via Zoom at 10.00 am

Committee Mr A Brown (Chairman) Mrs P Grove-Jones (Vice-Chairman)
Members Present: Mr D Baker Mr N Dixon
Mr P Fisher Ms V Gay
Mr P Heinrich Mr N Pearce

Members also attending: Mr H Blathwayt Mrs S Bütikofer
Mrs A Fitch-Tillett Mrs W Fredericks
Mr R Kershaw Miss L Shires
Mr J Toye Mrs L Withington

Officers in Attendance: Mr P Rowson - Head of Planning
Mr M Ashwell - Planning Policy Manager
Mr I Withington - Acting Planning Policy Manager
Mrs E Denny - Democratic Services Manager
Miss L Yarham - Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Regulatory)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Punchard.

2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 16 March 2020.

4 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minute	Councillor:	Interest
7	Mrs W Fredericks (non-Working Party member)	Knows landowner for Mundesley site

6 UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (IF ANY)

The Acting Planning Policy Manager referred to an update report that had been circulated to the Working Party prior to the meeting, covering matters that had been dealt with under Covid-19 interim arrangements. Sites at Stalham, Sheringham and Ludham had been discussed and would be going forward for Cabinet approval for inclusion in the Local Plan. Discussions had also taken place on the timeline and a new Local Development Scheme timeline had been produced, which would be

published on the website (<https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/>).

An Inspector would shortly be appointed for the examination of the Ryburgh Neighbourhood Plan examination, which was expected to commence at the end of June/early July.

7 SITE SELECTION REPORT B: HOLT, HOVETON AND MUNDESLEY

The Acting Planning Policy Manager presented the report and site assessment booklets relating to proposed allocations for Holt, Hoveton and Mundesley. He outlined the main issues relating to each settlement and recommended sites for inclusion in the Local Plan, ahead of Regulation 19 consultation and subsequent submission.

Holt

The Acting Planning Policy Manager reported that in response to concerns raised by this Council, the Local Education Authority was seeking to vary its standard procedures for commissioning a new primary school at a meeting on 16 June. A proposal was being put forward that the Norfolk County Council Schools Capital Programme specifically included a commitment to a new primary school for Holt, which if approved would show the County Council's determination and commitment to delivering a school on site H04 and go some way to addressing delivery concerns.

Councillor D Baker, local Member, stated that he was comfortable that Holt had been identified as a Small Growth Town as there had been a large amount of growth in the town over recent years. He considered that the proposed sites were reasonable and would not impact the town centre, but conversely they involved building further away from the town, disconnecting properties and elongating the town so that it merged with High Kelling. There was no suitable access into H04 and although the Highway Authority did not object, it had recognised that there were issues.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager explained that the site had undergone a rigorous assessment, had scored positive in the Sustainability Assessment and had good connectivity to the town. Whilst the Highway Authority preferred two accesses, it considered that a suitable access could be achieved off Beresford Road provided that the layout included an internal loop road. He referred to a recent planning application on this site, when the Highway Authority had raised no objection to the single point of access proposed in the application and an independent highway consultant appointed by the Council had considered the single access to be acceptable. Although the planning application had attracted a great deal of feedback, there had been very little response to the Local Plan consultation. Officers considered that the site remained one of the most achievable, deliverable and sustainable sites in Holt. He referred the Working Party to the reasoned justification contained in the assessment booklet.

The Planning Policy Manager added that the proposed allocation allowed for a smaller number of dwellings than the planning application to enable a better layout to be achieved within the site. The applicant did not control sufficient land to provide two accesses, and the Highway Authority could not sustain an objection on highway grounds provided there was an internal loop road. The planning application had not been refused on highway grounds and it would be inconsistent and contrary to evidence to reintroduce it as a reason at allocation stage. The proposed policy had been amended to include a clear mechanism for the delivery of the school, to

address the reason for refusal of the planning application. The proposed allocation would not compromise the appeal against refusal of the planning application.

Councillor Mrs S Bütikofer expressed her disappointment that the site was still being put forward considering the discussions at a number of meetings of the Development Committee. She considered that it was disingenuous to suggest that the Highway Authority and independent highway consultant had no concerns when the consultant did not comment on the vehicular movements caused by the school and associated nursery unit. She expressed her concern that as County Councillor for Holt she had not been informed by Norfolk County Council that the school was being discussed. Holt needed a primary school but this was not the right location. There were issues with sewerage on a number of sites, which was unsurprising given the amount of development that had taken place in Holt. Concerns regarding the ability to unlock employment land for residents of the new developments were frequently raised at meetings of Holt Town Council. She was concerned that H04 was still being promoted given that there were a number of outstanding concerns.

The Head of Planning explained that, given the nature of the planning application, the Highway Authority and independent consultant had been tasked with considering the delivery of homes and not the delivery of a school. However, the Committee had been keen that the delivery of the school was required if residential development took place. He outlined the views given by the highway consultant at the time of the application. With regard to Anglian Water issues, any allocation in the Local Plan would require a detailed survey at planning application stage to ensure that development could be delivered. He reminded the Working Party that allocations dealt with matters of principle, whereas matters of detail were considered at planning application stage. The site was therefore retained in the Officer's recommendation.

The Chairman stated that the 'in principle' allocations could succeed or fail at planning application stage through the normal process. The planning application referred to had been wholly contrary to Local Plan policy, and the provision of a school was a material consideration that could outweigh policy. However, there had been no joined up procedure to ensure that the school would be delivered at the same time as the residential development or any commitment from the Education Authority, which was considered unacceptable to the Development Committee, and this remained the case.

Councillor N Pearce considered that there were many grey areas with the lack of joined up commitment and procedure and it would be dangerous to make the allocation at this time. He considered that the access was dangerous and that it was necessary to have clarity in terms of process and procedure and a unified proposal before the site could be allocated.

The Planning Policy Manager requested clarity as to what Members wanted and suggested that the Working Party defer consideration of this site.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager stated that the hierarchy and spatial strategy required a certain number of dwellings for Holt, and in the event that H04 did not go forward it would be necessary to find another site which would deliver the required number of dwellings.

Councillor D Baker stated that he objected to the site altogether. It had been rejected as it did not accord with policy and had poor access, and not just because there was no commitment to delivering a school. All growth was concentrated to the south of the town and no consideration had been given to the north of the town.

There were sites close to a new development by Norfolk Homes which was less contentious, would have less impact on the community and could be accessed without causing problems. He requested that more thought be given to allocating to the north of the town.

Councillor Mrs S Bütikofer stated that H04 was the wrong site for the town. Concerns had been raised with regard to impact on Holt Country Park and it was important to consider all of the issues. She referred to the age demographic of the town and stated that the pupil numbers for the primary school had not been proven. She considered that two accesses were required at a minimum. She considered that this site should at least be deferred.

The Working Party discussed the possibility of deferral of this site. The Planning Policy Manager requested clarity as to the reasons for deferral. He explained that his earlier suggestion to defer the matter had been based on Members' concerns regarding the delivery of a school, but if the access was considered to be unsuitable the Working Party may wish to remove it from the allocations. However, it would require an alternative site to be found for residential development and a school.

The Chairman considered that it was difficult to see whether the greater concern was the delivery of a school or suitability of the site because of restricted access. He therefore proposed that site H04 be removed from the Local Plan. This was seconded by Councillor N Pearce.

It was **RECOMMENDED** by 5 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions (one Member had left the meeting temporarily due to technical issues)

That site H04 is removed from the Local Plan.

It was further **RECOMMENDED** with 6 votes in favour (two Members had left the meeting temporarily due to technical issues)

1. That the following sites be included in the Local Plan:

Residential allocation:

Site Ref	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings
H17	Land North of Valley Lane	0.93	27
H20	Land at Heath Farm	7.11	200

Employment allocation:

Site Ref	Description	Gross Area (ha)
H27/1	Land at Heath Farm	6

2. That the final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.

Hoveton

Councillor N Dixon, local Member, stated that he did not have an issue with the village of Hoveton being designated as a Small Growth Town in the hierarchy, but requested that it was referred to consistently as a village elsewhere in the document.

He did not object to the proposed allocation of HV01/B subject to a number of caveats relating to infrastructure issues. He referred to the Market Town Network Improvement Strategy which had been strongly contested by Hoveton Parish Council, Wroxham Parish Council and himself in relation to the way the document had been produced by Norfolk County Council. Highway network issues would need to be dealt with at a later date. There were foul water issues which would require much more progress by Anglian Water before any development could take place. Although the Education Authority had said there was capacity in the high school and primary school, the head teachers of both schools had confirmed that there was no capacity and there was a need for clarity and consistency in this matter. The Practice Manager of the health centre had stated that there was insufficient capacity to take growth from the current planning application on this site. He considered that these constraints needed to be resolved in order for the site to be confirmed as deliverable without time constraints, and that at the present time it could be concluded that the site was suitable but not deliverable and a timescale may be required as part of the allocation.

Councillor Dixon stated that there was an employment land shortage in Hoveton and he considered that the lack of employment provision in the Local Plan was a missed opportunity. There was also no mention of allotments. He stated that the open space area OSP067 was incorrect as it had been converted into two car parks.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that he was happy to add the caveats to the policy context and some were already included. He sought confirmation as to whether Councillor Dixon was seeking the identification of a site for employment land or contributions towards employment.

Councillor Dixon confirmed that he was not seeking an allocation of employment land on HV01/B but would seek additional land or a contribution to avoid a situation where a business wanted to come into Hoveton but there was no land to progress on. He added that the NCC road network document was open to serious challenge as to how it had been produced.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager explained that employment land would be dealt with under Policy ECN1 which would be brought to the Working Party in due course. At the time of Regulation 18 consultation, there was 2 ha. of undeveloped employment land in Hoveton. An employment land study would provide evidence as to whether or not there was a need to amend the policy. Boundary reviews of existing employment zones would also be undertaken at a later date.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones and

RESOLVED unanimously

1. That the following site be included in the Local Plan:

Site Ref	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings
HV01/B	Land East of Tunstead Road	6.41	150

2. That the final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.

Mundesley

Councillor Mrs W Fredericks, local Member, stated that there were 11 new build market homes in Mundesley that had been empty for some time. Local employment was limited and many people were on low incomes and could not secure mortgages or afford private rents. There was a disproportionately high percentage of second homes and retired people in the village and there was a need to address the balance by providing secure, affordable rented accommodation for local families. She expressed concern that the maps available at the consultation roadshow did not make it clear that only MUN03 and MUN04 were the only options on the table. She stated that development on MUN03 had already been refused twice on landscape grounds and the development of 50 homes would block the view of local heritage landmarks, including the church, be visible for miles around and have a severe impact on the Victorian terraced properties at the bottom of the hill. She stated that the Parish Council had a scheme for 35 affordable dwellings which it wished to discuss. She had requested, and been promised, a dialogue on this issue on several occasions but it had not happened. She requested deferment until discussions had taken place with the Parish Council regarding their plans and dialogue had been opened up with the landowner.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that a thorough assessment of options had taken place and the conclusions had been drawn from the objective evidence as to the most suitable site. Engagement had taken place with the landowner and the options were limited. A meeting had been set up with the Parish Council, which had been cancelled due to Covid-19 and the Parish Council had not come back or said what they wanted to discuss at the meeting. He had no knowledge of their proposals, but they could bring forward a site at any time through the exceptions policies of the existing or emerging Local Plan or through the neighbourhood planning process. The purpose of housing targets was to meet both market and affordable needs of the District.

The Chairman stated that he was not clear as to whether the Parish Council was proposing development on a site which had been put forward or an entirely new site.

Councillor Mrs Fredericks reiterated her request for deferral to establish the Parish Council's plans. She considered that the proposed allocation was not deliverable as there was unsold high priced housing in the village and there was a danger that the majority of the allocated dwellings could remain empty. She considered that harm would be caused to the AONB, Conservation Area, landscape and the village, and that the proposals should be reconsidered.

The Head of Planning accepted that this was a difficult issue for the local Member. However, policies changed over time and there was a requirement to advance the Local Plan to ensure that the Council had a five year land supply, otherwise there was a danger that planning decisions could be taken out of the Council's hands. He added that the proposed allocation would deliver 18 affordable dwellings.

The Chairman asked if there was an expectation that the heritage impact statement would lead to conditions to mitigate the impact on the church and its surroundings.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that all sites would have a heritage assessment and very good progress had been made with Historic England with regard to agreed criteria. Any specific requirements would be included in the policy and consulted upon at Regulation 19 stage.

Councillor N Pearce asked if the site could be put forward with a caveat to require negotiations as requested by the local Member. The age profile indicated that the majority of residents were over 45 years and he agreed with the local Member that there was a need to help local families get houses of their own.

Councillor P Heinrich stated that he shared the local Member's concerns to a large extent, but it was necessary to allocate land to meet the requirement to maintain a 5 year housing supply. He considered that in many respects, the proposed site was reasonable if concerns regarding the landscape, views and impact on the AONB could be addressed at a later date. The real issue was lack of affordable housing in coastal towns and villages. Developers would not build dwellings if they could not sell them. He supported the Officer's recommendation.

The Chairman considered that a dangerous precedent would be set if all sites that had been subject to a previous refusal were deferred. Equal treatment should be given to all allocations across the District. He considered that the likelihood of affordable housing being provided in Mundesley would be reduced if a site was not allocated unless an exceptions or windfall site came forward.

Councillor V Gay proposed deferral of the allocation for Mundesley as requested by the local Member.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that a deferment of this allocation would be acceptable in this case. It was a contentious site and although the recommendation would remain the same, he was uncomfortable that the discussions had not taken place as promised.

Councillor N Pearce seconded the proposal to defer this allocation.

RESOLVED unanimously

That consideration of the allocation for Mundesley be deferred.

8 OPEN SPACE

The Acting Planning Policy Manager presented a report in respect of the Open Space Assessment and recommended modifications to Policy ENV7 within the draft Local Plan.

Councillor Ms V Gay welcomed the Study, and in particular the argument on the wellbeing value of parks and open spaces, and emphasis on biodiversity, climate change and ecological networks. She also welcomed the reference to the health profile of North Norfolk and diabetes rates in particular. The recent weeks under Covid-19 lockdown had highlighted the importance of open spaces.

Councillor Ms Gay highlighted errors in the study. She requested a correction to state that the Green Flag had been re-awarded to Sadlers Wood and was no longer an aspiration. She stated that the study stated that there was no need for allotments in North Walsham, whereas there had been a waiting list for a number of years and they were greatly in demand and much appreciated. She considered that allotments were as important for exercise and health as a sports pitch.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones supported Councillor Ms Gay's comments. She also pointed out some slight discrepancies relating to allotments at Sutton and availability

of school buildings for community use. She stated that the study had highlighted that youth provision was poor and youths often had to travel to facilities but transport links were a problem.

Councillor Mrs Grove-Jones asked if the Council had teeth when it came to negotiating with developers.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager explained how the study would be used in assessing the amount and type of open space required. It would provide evidence to defend the Council's policy requirements and would be used when assessing viability.

The Chairman asked if there was any difference in terms of viability between a development with a freehold management company and one which did not.

The Acting Planning Policy Manager explained that the study took account of delivery of the open space provision but not its management.

It was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Councillor Ms V Gay and

RECOMMENDED unanimously

- 1. That the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (Part 1) are accepted and the Open Space calculator used for subsequent planning applications and the proposed allocations within the Local Plan.**
- 2. That the revised wording of Policy ENV 7 is endorsed and that responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated policy is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

The meeting ended at 12.49 pm.

Chairman