

PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party held on Monday, 9 November 2020 remotely via Zoom at 10.00 am

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

Mrs A Fitch-Tillett (substitute for Councillor J Punchard)

Members also attending: Mr H Blathwayt
Mr V FitzPatrick
Mrs W Fredericks
Mr R Kershaw
Mr J Rest
Miss L Shires
Mrs L Withington

Officers in Attendance: Planning Policy Manager, Planning Policy Team Leader, Senior Planning Officer, Conservation & Design Team Leader, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Regulatory), Historic Environment Manager (Broads Authority)

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Punchard. There was one substitute Member in attendance.

43 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

44 MINUTES

The Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 12 October 2020 were approved as a correct record.

45 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

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

None.

48 LOCAL PLAN DRAFT POLICIES ECN4: RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT, ECN5: SIGNAGE AND SHOPFRONTS

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented a report relating to draft policies ECN4: Retail and Town Centre Development, and ECN5: Signage and Shopfronts, which summarised the feedback received in response to the Regulation 18 public consultation and the Officer responses, and recommended that Cabinet endorse the policy approaches as set out in the report.

The Chairman asked if it was feasible to extend the Primary Shopping Area (PSA) boundary for Sheringham northwards to include both sides of the High Street, as requested by Sheringham Town Council.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the area in question did not meet the definition of a PSA in national guidance as A1 retail was not concentrated in that area. However, it was part of the town centre, which meant that retail uses were not precluded per se but it was necessary to first consider areas where there were higher concentrations of A1 use.

Councillor Mrs L Withington stated that there was a growing demand for retail and other types of businesses on the seafront at Sheringham and asked if the policies would be sufficiently flexible to allow them to happen.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the policy was in line with the sequential approach in national policy, and there was a framework in place which could allow such development to happen provided the applicant could demonstrate that the policy requirements could be satisfied.

Councillor J Rest stated that Fakenham had public transport links but it was misleading to say they were good. There was no direct bus link to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and it was not possible to get to other parts of North Norfolk without changing buses.

The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that whilst he had referred to good transport links in his presentation, this was in the context that Fakenham was a higher order centre, with bus routes and services that other places did not have. Higher order centres were places where retail and residential development was concentrated, and the concentration of growth in larger town centres provided a better momentum of growth to improve services.

Councillor P Heinrich stated that he welcomed Policy ECN4 but there was an issue in respect of the future viability of town centres, and retail in particular, following the pandemic with the very fast move to online shopping. Most of the town centre shops in North Walsham were very small. They would not be viable for larger retailers and also possibly not for cafes and other leisure orientated uses. Additional retail would be required when the western extension was developed. He asked if it was a certainty that sufficient land could be allocated for more modern, larger retail units and if the Vicarage Street car park would be protected for future retail development.

The Planning Policy Team Leader referred to the retail study which indicated that North Walsham had the largest amount of expenditure capacity to support new retail development. Part of the policy aimed to retain that expenditure and the need for town centre improvements was already recognised by the Council. The development brief for the western extension would look at suitable employment

locations and outline the areas where future development could take place to satisfy the demand. This would come back to the Working Party as part of the land assembly for the western extension.

Councillor Heinrich considered that there was a need to address the problem of untidy shopfronts and inappropriate signage as soon as possible.

Councillor Ms V Gay wished to place on record that the process had been a co-operative one that had involved all North Walsham Members. She welcomed the reference to wider public benefit and public art in Policy ECN4. She stated that shopfronts and signage had a cumulative impact, and the Market Place was a Conservation Area. She welcomed the strengthening of the wording in the policies.

Councillor N Dixon asked if there were enough forward-looking policy provisions to reflect changing shopping trends, the needs of commerce and retention of historic character.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that there was a number of policies in the Local Plan that covered these issues, including historic environment policies which would be considered by the Working Party at a future meeting, and the policy approach to town centres which sought to demonstrate the impact of proposals on town centres. He considered that the proposed policies set a good framework to move forward. The Government was also bringing in changes to national policy that would increase the flexibility to allow changes of use of premises in town centres to happen without the need for planning permission.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones referred to the fluidity of premises in Stalham High Street and stated that there had been some growth outside the PSA. She expressed concern that the change to permitted development rights would not control how many businesses of the same type could set up in an area. She was pleased to see the policy regarding signage.

Councillor J Toye asked if businesses that were able to change under permitted development rights would still be required to comply with Policy ECN5.

The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that planning permission, and possibly Listed Building consent, would be required for replacement shopfronts. Advertisements were covered by Advertisement Control Regulations where the considerations related to visual appearance and highway safety. However, these Regulations included quite extensive permitted development rights for non-illuminated fascia signs and small projecting signs, even within Conservation Areas. There was a need to be mindful that there were many developments which were outside the control of the Planning Authority and the policies could not be applied where planning permission was not required.

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

RECOMMENDED unanimously

That Cabinet endorses the revised Policies ECN4: Retail and Town Centre Development and ECN5: Signage and Shopfronts, and delegates responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated policies and policies mapping, to the Planning Policy Manager.

LOCAL PLAN DRAFT POLICIES ECN1: EMPLOYMENT LAND; ECN2: EMPLOYMENT AREAS, ENTERPRISE ZONES & FORMER AIRBASES POLICY; AND ECN 3: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF EMPLOYMENT AREAS

The Senior Planning Officer presented a report relating to draft policies ECN1: Employment Land, ECN2: Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones & Former Airbases and ECN3: Employment Development outside of Employment Areas, which summarised the feedback received in response to the Regulation 18 public consultation and the Officer responses. He explained that he had made some changes to the ECN1 draft policy since the publication of the agenda in respect of the quantum of land protected for employment and stated that there could be further changes as a result of a further ongoing piece of work on Employment Area boundaries, which was previously agreed by this working party. The use classes quoted in Policy ECN2 would be amended to be consistent with the latest Use Classes Order. He recommended that Cabinet endorse the policy approaches as set out in the report.

Councillor N Dixon asked if there was enough choice of employment land sites to meet the differing needs of businesses. He referred to difficulties experienced by a business in finding a suitable site in Hoveton which could have resulted in the loss of economic activity from the area. He asked how such problems could be overcome.

The Senior Planning Officer explained that there had been quite substantial changes to the policies from the Core Strategy. The amount of employment land proposed (62.4 ha.) was substantially greater than that recommended in the Growth Sites Delivery Strategy Study so the amount proposed would allow flexibility and choice across the District over the Plan period. Policy ECN3 allowed for employment growth outside the designated Employment Areas, which would provide flexibility for the changing nature of the market. The first part of the Study looked at the market and what was happening in the District. The second part was a delivery strategy that would look at specific sites and how they could be brought forward. The Study would be brought to the Working Party in due course.

Councillor Dixon expressed concern that there were no new land allocations in Hoveton. He stated that it was often the case that a landowner might not be willing to negotiate an acceptable arrangement with a business. Some businesses that would have located to the District had been lost due to the lack of suitable employment land. He was not satisfied that enough land had been allocated in the right places to meet future needs, and stated that it was one thing to allocate land but quite another to ensure that it could be delivered when required.

The Senior Planning Officer explained that land could only be allocated if it had been put forward for particular uses. The strategic needs of the District had been considered and the policies were trying to protect existing employment land and make suitable employment allocations where land was available. The latest evidence indicated that there would be enough choice and flexibility in each part of the District. If a business could demonstrate that allocated land was not available, Policy ECN3 would allow it to look outside the designated area. The policies would allow for flexibility bearing in mind that the employment market was likely to change in the short to medium term. They would provide flexibility to allow employment outside the designated areas whilst designating employment areas in the most sustainable areas where land had been put forward.

The Planning Policy Manager reiterated that Policy ECN3 would allow the flexibility

that Councillor Dixon was arguing for. The new policies had moved to a more permissive approach to employment generating proposals which were not on employment land, and had deliberately addressed the problem in Hoveton and Cromer where employment land was at a premium. He did not advise allocating a large number of employment sites all over the District, which would require a further call for sites and constrain employment opportunities to designated sites. On large mixed use allocations in Holt, North Walsham and Fakenham there was a mechanism to link delivery of employment land in a phased way alongside residential development. Land would be made available on good commercial terms in locations where it was more likely to be taken up.

Councillor Dixon stated that he did not wish to see land allocated randomly around the District, but considered that the Council should be pressing for more mixed allocations to produce land where it was needed and where mixed schemes were more likely to be delivered. He sought assurance that there would be greater flexibility and use of that mechanism in the future.

The Chairman stated that the Senior Planning Officer had demonstrated that there was flexibility in ECN3 and that the matter had been addressed.

Councillor P Heinrich stated that he was satisfied that there would be sufficient employment land as part of the mixed use proposals for the western side of North Walsham, which was greatly needed. He asked if sufficient consideration had been given to attracting footloose industries that would appreciate the environment, particularly small scale workshops, studio space, flexible office space and shared workspaces, and if the policies would enable it to happen.

The Senior Planning Officer stated that this issue had been discussed with the consultants that had undertaken the study, and they were satisfied that there would be enough flexibility to allow such uses to come forward.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the policies under discussion were largely focused on industrial estate type development. Other services were accommodated in supporting economic development policies that would allow for the type of development referred to by Councillor Heinrich.

Councillor Mrs L Withington requested clarification as to the status of the Kingsland site at Sheringham. The Planning Policy Manager stated that he understood the land would remain as employment land but he would confirm directly to Councillor Mrs Withington following the meeting.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones stated that there were a number of large industrial sites around Stalham that were starting to come forward through the planning process, whereas development of workshops on the mixed use sites in the town had not taken place as people were not prepared or able to build the units.

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

RECOMMENDED by 8 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions

That Cabinet endorses the revised Policies ECN1: Employment Land, ECN2: Employment Areas, Enterprise Zones & Former Airbases, and ECN 3: Employment Development Outside of Employment Areas, and delegates responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the

associated policies and policies mapping, to the Planning Policy Manager.

50 LOCAL PLAN DRAFT POLICIES ECN6: NEW BUILD TOURIST ACCOMMODATION, STATIC HOLIDAY CARAVANS & HOLIDAY LODGES & EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING SITES; ECN7: USE OF LAND FOR TOURING CARAVAN & CAMPING SITES; ECN 8: NEW-BUILD & EXTENSIONS TO TOURIST ATTRACTIONS; AND ECN 9: RETAINING AN ADEQUATE SUPPLY & MIX OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

The Senior Planning Officer presented a report relating to draft policies ECN6: New Build Tourist Accommodation, Static Holiday Caravans & Holiday Lodges & Extensions to Existing Sites, ECN7: Use of Land for Touring Caravan & Camping Sites, ECN 8: New-Build & Extensions to Tourist Attractions, and ECN 9: Retaining an adequate supply & mix of Tourist Accommodation, which summarised the feedback received in response to the Regulation 18 public consultation and the Officer responses. He recommended that Cabinet endorse the policy approaches as set out in the report.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett stated that she welcomed the flexibility in coastal risk areas and the protection and enhancement of the landscape.

Councillor Ms V Gay praised the added support for biodiversity gains in ECN6 and ECN8. She referred to the failure of the country to meet the UN biodiversity targets.

Councillor H Blathwayt expressed concern in respect of the apparent lack of control over some types of caravan sites.

Councillor P Heinrich stated that certificated sites were restricted to 5 caravans. However, he had concerns regarding larger, formal caravan sites, particularly with regard to highway issues.

It was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones and

RECOMMENDED by 8 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions

That Cabinet endorses the revised Policies ECN6: New Build Tourist Accommodation, Static Holiday Caravans & Holiday Lodges & Extensions to Existing Sites, ECN7: Use of Land for Touring Caravan & Camping Sites, ECN 8: New-Build & Extensions to Tourist Attractions and ECN 9: Retaining an Adequate Supply & Mix of Tourist Accommodation, and delegates responsibility for drafting such an approach, including that of finalising the associated policies and policies mapping, to the Planning Policy Manager.

51 LUDHAM AND STALHAM STAITHE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS AND MANAGEMENT PLANS 2020

The Broads Authority Historic Environment Manager presented the report. She stated that the Conservation Area Appraisals had already been approved by the Broads Authority and recommended that both documents be recommended for adoption by the North Norfolk District Council Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones referred to the improvement works that had already been carried out at Stalham Staithe and expressed appreciation for the help given by the Broads Authority. She stated that some of the buildings were within the

jurisdiction of the District Council and some within the Broads Authority, which caused problems.

Councillor H Blathwayt, as NNDC representative on the Broads Authority and Heritage Asset Review Group, commended the documents to the Working Party. He thanked the officers of the Broads Authority for their work and inclusive approach to the Ludham appraisal and stated that Councillor Varley, local Member for Ludham, had expressed his support.

The Democratic Services Manager shared Councillor Varley's comments on the Zoom chat facility. In summary, the Chairman stated that Councillor Varley was very supportive of the appraisal for Ludham and appreciated the efforts of the team and the Broads Authority for putting it together in difficult circumstances. Councillor Varley supported the removal of Latchmoor Park as a farmland area and was pleased that the school and district nurse's home had been included. The appraisal brought clarity to the management of the trees as they were in a protected area. Councillor Varley had been impressed by the quality of the work done in bringing the appraisal to the Working Party.

Councillor N Dixon stated that as County Councillor he could confirm that this had been an excellent example of joint working by Stalham Town Council, the Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council in addressing what had been a distressing and enduring problem at Stalham Staithe, and he thanked all parties that had been involved.

Councillor Mrs Grove-Jones endorsed Councillor Dixon's comments and also extended thanks to the NNDC Conservation and Design Team Leader and his team.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs P Grove-Jones, seconded by Councillor N Dixon and

RECOMMENDED unanimously

That Cabinet adopts the Ludham and Stalham Staithe Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans 2020.

The meeting ended at 11.58 am.

Chairman