

Minutes of a meeting of the **Greater Norwich Development Partnership Policy Group**, held at Norfolk County Council, Council Chamber, **Thursday, 24 June 2010 at 2.00 p.m.** when there were present:

Members Present:

Councillor Stuart Clancy
Councillor Roger Foulger
Councillor Andrew Proctor
Councillor Simon Woodbridge
Councillor Steve Morphew
Councillor Brian Morrey
Councillor John Fuller
Councillor Martin Wynne
Councillor Daniel Cox (Chairman)
Councillor Adrian Gunson
Councillor Ann Steward
Councillor Alan Mallett

Representing:-

Broadland District Council
Broadland District Council
Broadland District Council
Broadland District Council
Norwich City Council
Norwich City Council
South Norfolk Council
South Norfolk Council
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
The Broads Authority

Officers Present:

Sandra Eastaugh
Ruth Charles
H Smithurst (observer)
Roger Burroughs
Phil Kirby
Mike Burrell
Jerry Massey
Graham Nelson
Andrew Gregory
David Willis
Tim Horspole
Andrea Long
Phil Morris
Mike Jackson
Richard Doleman
Mark Fuller
Chris Starkie
David Wilson

GNDP Partnership Manager
GNDP
GNDP
Broadland District Council
Broadland District Council
Norwich City Council
Norwich City Council
Norwich City Council
South Norfolk Council
South Norfolk Council
South Norfolk Council
Broads Authority
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk County Council
Linstock Communications
Shaping Norfolk's Future
EEDA

1 ELECTION CHAIRMAN

Councillor Daniel Cox (Norfolk County Council) was nominated, seconded and duly elected Chairman of the GNDP Policy Group for the year ahead.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared an interest in the item listed below:

Minute	Councillor	Declaration
	J Fuller	Personal interest; having an interest in land in the Broadland area.
	M Wynne	Personal interest; as an objector to the development of a significant number of new homes on a site in Wymondham.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brenda Arthur (Norwich City Council), Councillor Alan Waters (Norwich City Council), Councillor Derek Blake (South Norfolk Council), Councillor Colin Gould (South Norfolk Council), Councillor Brian Iles (Norfolk County Council).

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2010.

THANKS TO OUTGOING CHAIRMAN

Daniel Cox gave his thanks to John Fuller for his contribution to the work of the Group over the past year, as Chairman.

STATEMENT OF EXPLANATION – ANDREW PROCTOR

Mr Proctor read out a statement which he made at a recent Broadland District Council meeting regarding changes to planning policy. A copy of the statement is attached at [Appendix 1](#).

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Chris Starkie, Chief Executive, Shaping Norfolk's Future gave a powerpoint presentation.

The following comments were made in relation to the presentation:

- There was an understatement of the impact from the reduction in public funding over the next 5 or so years on the importance of private initiatives, private financing and private input. In reply, it was agreed that more encouragement of private sector funding was essential but that there were already some good examples of good work e.g. the

Norwich Research Park.

- Private funding was vital if businesses wanted progress on such projects as the A11 dualling. In reply, the Chairman commented that there was no indication yet of any changes to such public schemes but the Comprehensive Spending Review in October would shed light on this.

RESOLVED: To note the presentation.

7 JOINT CORE STRATEGY (JCS) UPDATE

6a) JCS Strategy: Next Steps

Phil Kirby presented item 6a on the agenda, on behalf of the GNDP Directors. He explained that the Appendix set out options for taking the strategy forward and highlighted that Option 2 – “to continue with “minor” textual changes to address demise of RSS” accorded with an earlier approach taken by the Policy Group.

An alternative proposal for the policy on gypsies and travellers was presented to the Policy Group (attached to these minutes at [Appendix 2](#)). Members noted that this change required amendment to policy 4.

The following comments were made during debate on this paper:

- Information had come to light indicating the possible abolition of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) targets. Members noted that legislation would be needed to achieve this but the implications could be significant. It was suggested that work was needed now to determine the true size of the 5 year land supply from planning approvals in the GNDP area. An alternative suggestion was made, to advise the CLG of the GNDP’s concerns and to request their urgent advice.
- A proposal was put that a letter be sent to the CLG setting out what the GNDP would expect to achieve from a review of the 5 year land supply of the area before further action by individual councils was taken.

Having discussed the options and proposed amendment, members:

RESOLVED:

1. That Option 2 – “to continue with “minor” textual changes to address demise of RSS be agreed as the way forward for the JCS, subject to the insertion of revised text relating to gypsies and travellers (attached at Appendix 2).
2. That a letter be sent to the CLG from the Chairman of the Policy Group setting out what the GNDP would expect to achieve from a review of the 5 year land supply of the area before further action by individual GNDP councils was taken.

6b) Joint Core Strategy: Preparation for the Examination in Public Work Programme

Members noted item 6b) and the introduction by Sandra Eastaugh (GNDP Partnership Manager). Members were asked to note that these are working documents and will be regularly updated.

An additional paper was tabled *Approaches to overall affordable housing target for the JCS* giving more detail about the issues raised in 2. Affordable Housing brief: 2.2 Affordable Housing target and 2.3 Affordable Housing Study. A copy of the paper is attached at Appendix 3.

The following comments were made during debate on this paper:

- Minor changes were presented relating to critical path preparations and affordable housing information, which were approved.
- Members noted that this post election period posed uncertainties for major schemes funding, including the NDR. Comment was made that government considerations would be on total resources first and there may be no further information known on individual schemes until after October. Members considered how to move forward in the meantime and agreed to do so, having already given support to the Joint Core Strategy for the GNDP area, to take a view on any new government information and if necessary convene an extra meeting of the Policy Group to consider its approach.

RESOLVED:

1. That the six briefs setting out the work required before the hearing and amendments to para 2.5 of 1: Infrastructure Brief to the GNDP Policy Group paper regarding the critical path be agreed. Additional minor changes will not be part of the focussed changes consultation.
2. That the consultation brief (7) and the sign-off requirements outlined in the tabled papers be agreed.
2. That the Policy Group wait for any new coalition government information regarding a public spending review of major schemes and if necessary convene an extra meeting of the Policy Group to consider its approach, once the situation was clearer.

6c) Joint Core Strategy: Preparation for the Examination in Public Infrastructure Categorisation

Members noted item 6c) and the introduction by Mike Jackson (Director of Environment, Transport and Development).

During debate on this paper it was proposed and agreed that community infrastructure prioritisation be phased over a longer timeframe, with some

investment brought forward to the pre-2016 period to give earlier support to homes' development.

RESOLVED:

1. That the definitions of Priority 1, 2, 3 be approved, subject to the community elements of the infrastructure prioritisation being spread over a longer timeframe, to give earlier support to the homes developed.
2. That the revised lists as presented under the priorities and phases be approved.

6d) Joint Core Strategy – Old Catton, Sprowston, Rackheath, Thorpe St Andrew Growth Triangle – Strategic Allocation Concept Statement

Phil Kirby presented item 6d on the agenda, and confirmed that a Place Shaping Committee, held the day previously, had raised the potential for minor drafting changes which would now be included in the Statement.

The following comments were made during debate on this paper:

- With reference to Brief 7: Consultation it was commented that the GNDP consultation distribution did not extend to all households and businesses in the area. To encourage a greater level of feedback a proposal was made and agreed, that districts would encourage feedback from communities as appropriate.
- David Wilson commented that the concept statement should include reference to digital infrastructure and the next generation of broadband should be included to highlight the commercial opportunities to developers.

RESOLVED:

1. To endorse the concept statement.
2. To endorse the proposed consultation approach and agree that partners will notify local communities as appropriate to encourage greater community feedback.

10 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the following future meeting dates, to be held at County Hall, as 23 September and 16 December 2010.

The meeting closed at 3.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN

Appendix 1

Since 6 May the new government has made its mark in setting out changes to planning policy through its intention to abolish the top down targets for housing in the Regional Spatial Strategies. In addition, it has made an absolute commitment to reducing the country's debt which in a changing and challenging financial climate will mean that significantly less public money is likely to be available to leverage the infrastructure and facilities needed to underpin growth on the scale previously envisaged. That combination of change means that Broadland District Council needs to take stock of its position.

The Council had planned a series of public exhibitions and consultations on plans for growth throughout the district to take place during the summer which had been widely publicised in the Council's magazine for residents – Broadland News. The EDP had also featured an article about the planned events and the issues that would be discussed.

However, until the new Coalition Government's planning policies are clarified and we know under what funding constraints we will be operating, Broadland District Council has postponed those exhibitions and consultations. In addition, the planned recruitment of a New Communities Team Manager has also been put on hold.

Broadland District Council wants to see growth in the local economy over time and recognises that growth will be through a combination of creating jobs for the future as well as building homes, facilities and the supporting infrastructure.

We also need to provide more affordable housing in the area, through a mix of shared equity, low cost market and rented tenures, as the housing shortage has not gone away. It is essential that we engage with our communities to find out about their needs and aspirations for housing and services in their communities in response to the new government's reformed community lead approach to planning. However, we cannot really enter into a meaningful conversation with residents about any form of growth at this time until the uncertainties are resolved.

We also need a plan for the management of development for the future and for that reason work on the Joint Core Strategy will still be progressed to deal with the questions raised by the independent planning inspector prior to its examination.

The Council has received some £10.2m of funding for the Rackheath Programme of Development. We will ensure this is used to work in partnership to deliver the "exemplar project" to provide much needed affordable housing and demonstrate how high environmental standards can deliver a low carbon development that contributes to a high quality of life for the community by ensuring that their future fuel supplies are sustainable, energy bills lower and their environment protected. Other major projects that we will continue to work on include retro fitting of existing homes to bring them up to more efficient energy standards and improving public transport.

Revised text for insertion into policy 4

“Gypsies and Travellers

The former regional spatial strategy required a minimum of 58 permanent residential pitches between 2006 and 2011, provided on the following basis: Broadland 15, Norwich 15, and South Norfolk 28. This scale of need was broadly accepted by the local planning authorities. Provision beyond that date will be based on updated local evidence.

Residential pitches will be provided on a number of sites. Generally sites will not have more than 10 to 12 pitches, but may be varied to suit the circumstances of the particular site. The sites will be provided in locations which have good access to services and in locations where local research demonstrates they would meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller communities. Some of the pitches provided after 2011 are expected to be provided in association with large scale strategic housing growth.

In addition, transit pitches will be provided based on local evidence of need. These will generally be in locations providing good access to the main routes used by Gypsies and Travellers such as the A11, A47, A140 and A143/A1066. Again sites would not normally be expected to accommodate more than 10 to 12 pitches.

Research also shows the need for additional plots for Travelling Show People. The expectation is that approximately a further 27 plots will be provided by 2026, on sites within the Norwich urban area, or if sites within the urban area cannot be identified, with easy access to it.”

Replace paragraph 5 .32 with

“A partial revision to the former East of England plan set a requirement for the scale of provision to be made for Gypsies and Travellers with a target between 2006 and 2011. The figures in the policy are derived from this source, but will be subject to a future local review of need. It should be noted that a pitch represents a family unit and may therefore accommodate more than one caravan. On average about 1.7 caravans occupy each pitch. Since 2006, 11 pitches have been permitted or completed in Broadland, and 14 in South Norfolk.”

Delete Paragraph 5.35

Replace paragraph 5.36 with

“There is a large existing site for traveling show people in Norwich, which is fully occupied, and local evidence suggests there is a need for further accommodation. Each plot will need to include room for vehicles providing accommodation and also for the maintenance and storage of fairground rides and equipment.”

Appendix 3

Overall housing target for the Joint Core Strategy – potential amendment

Following an exploratory meeting on the 13th of May, the inspectors appointed to examine the soundness of the JCS indicated a number of areas where they wanted further work to be done before the formal examination. One area was affordable housing where the inspectors clearly signaled that specific work looking at the viability of the policy should be undertaken, and any amendments to policy as a consequence of this work should be advertised. The Inspectors also raised some other questions about the way the JCS addresses the need for affordable housing. One of these concerns was around the need for an overall plan-wide target for affordable housing.

The specific comments made by the inspectors are set out below:

- “1 PPS3 para 29 requires that LDDs should set an overall (ie plan-wide) **target** for the amount of AH to be provided. It is not clear that such a numerical target for the plan period has been devised, taking account of committed housing developments with existing planning permission and developments on sites below the proposed JCS site size threshold. Without such an overall target it may be more difficult to monitor the success or otherwise of the policy. [On a related matter, it would also be helpful to the understanding of the JCS if it gave some perspective on the number of units expected to result from the rural exceptions schemes clause of policy 4.]
- 2 PPS3 para 29 also indicates that LDDs should set separate targets for social rented and intermediate AH where appropriate; specify the size and type of AH likely to be needed in particular locations; and set out the approach to developer contributions. The JCS appears to indicate that other LDDs will fulfil some of these functions, but greater specificity on this point would be helpful to the clarity of the JCS.”

For reference, Para 29 of PPS 3 is appended to this note. This states that the overall i.e. plan - wide target for the amount of affordable housing to be provided should reflect an assessment of likely economic viability of land, taking account of risks to delivery and drawing on informed assessments of the likely availability of finance. It also states local planning authorities should aim to ensure the provision of affordable housing meets the needs of both current and future occupiers taking into account information from the strategic housing market assessment.

There are inherent difficulties in forecasting need so far ahead, given the time horizon of plans which is expected to be a minimum of fifteen years. Equally there are difficulties in forecasting viability and the availability of finance. The PPS text does not however appear to specify that the target should be based on committed housing developments with existing planning permissions and development on sites below the proposed JCS site size threshold. The implication of this approach is more concerned with forecasting delivery, and presumably should be extrapolated into the future on the basis of current policy i.e. seeking 40% affordable housing on qualifying sites.

An equally valid approach would be to look at the levels of need according to the latest evidence (in our case the 2006 ORS study, updated by the refresh of the HMA published in 2010) and an acknowledgment of what has been achieved since the ORS study was prepared. This would enable some assessment of the share of affordable housing which might be met by intermediate tenures, and that which could only be met through social rented accommodation.

It would however be sensible to look at commitment to provide affordable housing at the base date, and the potential for new allocations to provide additional affordable housing, at least as a “reality check”.

Exceptions sites

Further research will also need to be undertaken on expectations for exceptions sites. Given that these are, by definition, not allocations, future performance beyond current planned schemes is speculative, but a combination of past experience and current planned schemes might give some insight into the potential from this source.

Next steps

The substantive piece of work required to test the viability of the current policy is currently underway, being undertaken by Drivers Jonas Deloitte. Assuming some amendment to the policy is required, even if it is essentially presentational, to clarify the approach to be adopted in those instances where viability is a real issue, there will be a need to undertake the advertisement of focussed changes. These will need to be formally agreed. Given the need for Drivers Jonas Deloitte to undertake the work first, and the need to meet the Inspectors’ implicit timetable, it is likely that agreement to these changes, particularly if they are of a relatively presentational nature, will need to be delegated to Portfolio Holders in consultation with Directors, though they will need to be formally agreed by the local planning authorities.

It is suggested that in the meantime, some work to establish an overall target on the lines described above should be undertaken, alongside an assessment of the potential for affordable housing on exceptions sites, and any consequential changes to the joint core strategy approved for consultation by the same process as the substantive affordable housing work.

Appendix: Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3, Paragraph 29

29. In Local Development Documents, Local Planning Authorities should:

- Set an overall (ie plan-wide) **target** for the amount of affordable housing to be provided. The target should reflect the new definition of affordable housing in this PPS.¹⁹ It should also reflect an assessment of the likely economic viability of land for housing within the area, taking account of risks to delivery and drawing on informed assessments of the likely levels of finance available for affordable housing, including public subsidy and the level of developer contribution that can reasonably be secured. Local Planning Authorities should aim to ensure that provision of affordable housing meets the needs of both current and future occupiers, taking into account information from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- **Set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing** where appropriate. A sufficient supply of intermediate affordable housing can help address the needs of key workers and those seeking to gain a first step on the housing ladder, reduce the call on social-rented housing, free up existing social-rented homes, provide wider choice for households and ensure that sites have a mix of tenures.
- **Specify the size and type of affordable housing** that, in their judgement, is likely to be needed in particular locations and, where appropriate, on specific sites. This will include considering the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and any specific requirements, such as the provision of amenity and play space for family housing, and, where relevant, the need to integrate the affordable housing into the existing immediate neighbourhood and wider surrounding area.
- **Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required.** The national indicative minimum site size threshold is 15 dwellings. However, Local Planning Authorities can set lower minimum thresholds, where viable and practicable, including in rural areas. This could include setting different proportions of affordable housing to be sought for a series of site-size thresholds over the plan area. Local Planning Authorities will need to undertake an informed assessment of the economic viability of any thresholds and proportions of affordable housing proposed, including their likely impact upon overall levels of housing delivery and creating mixed communities. In particular, as the new definition of affordable housing excludes lowcost market housing, in deciding proportions of affordable housing to be sought in different circumstances, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the need to deliver low cost market housing as part of the overall housing mix.
- Set out the **approach to seeking developer contributions** to facilitate the provision of affordable housing. In seeking developer contributions, the presumption is that affordable housing will be provided on the application site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing. However, where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision (of broadly equivalent value) may be accepted as long as the agreed approach contributes to the creation of mixed communities in the local authority area.