



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

9.30am to 12.15pm

28 March 2012

Present: Councillors Bremner (chair), Carlo (vice chair), Brociek-Coulton, Kendrick (substitute for Councillor Grenville), Little (to end of item 5), Lubbock, Sands (M) and Stammers

Apologies: Councillor Grenville

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2012.

**2. JOINT CORE STRATEGY (JCS) – OUTCOME OF LEGAL CHALLENGE
NEXT STEPS**

The head of planning presented the report and answered members' questions. Members were advised that the court had not issued the Order and therefore the legal advice relating to both development management issues and CIL had not yet been received.

Discussion ensued in which members discussed the outcome of the legal challenge. The head of planning referred to the report and said that the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) was being asked to demonstrate that alternatives to the North East Growth Triangle (NEGT) had been considered. In response to a question, the head of planning explained that the government policy on Ecotowns had been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The chair reminded members that the GNDP was not a decision making body and that the individual councils made the decisions.

RESOLVED to note the implications of the judgement and the likely need for further work to address it.

3. EVIDENCE UPDATE FOR SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES DPDS

The planning policy team leader (projects) presented the report and together with the head of planning answered members' questions.

Discussion ensued in which members discussed the recommendations of the independent review of the soundness of the plans and the implications of the key findings. It was noted that the county council's timetable for the completion of preliminary design investigations at all network bottlenecks and determining the need for new school site allocations was on a different to that of the city council, but officers would press for this work to be completed.

During discussion reference was made to the council's aspirations to achieve affordable housing and the balance with bringing forward sites for development that were economically viable. The panel noted that the council could influence the development at Three Score beyond that of a planning authority and make it more sustainable and achieve more affordable housing.

A member referred to the cross references between policies DM3 and DM6 and asked for clarification of the term "offsetting bio-diversity". She said that the panel was still waiting for an update on the possibility of merging of the two policies DM3 and DM4 as previously reported to the panel. The chair reported that he and the vice-chair had an informal briefing on bio-diversity with the planning policy team leader planning and that this had been useful.

RESOLVED to note the report's key findings and its implications for additional work required prior to the Regulation 27 consultation due to be held in autumn 2012.

4. BUILDING FOR LIFE: ASSESSMENT OF DESIGN QUALITY FOR HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

The head of planning introduced the conservation and design officer and explained that the developments assessed against the building for life criteria that were completed last year and would have been granted planning permission in around 2003 and 2004. The planning applications committee held an itinerant each year to view new developments assessed against the criteria so that the members could appreciate what made good design and assist them when determining planning applications.

The conservation and design officer explained how the scoring was applied to the developments with the aid of slides and plans, and pointed out aspects of the designs that either worked well or did not. (The presentation will be available on the council's website.)

Discussion ensued in which the conservation and design officer answered questions and explained that officers liaised with architects and developers at the design stage. He pointed out that information on Building for Life was available on an archived website and that a lot of local authorities had adopted this standard. A member suggested that it would be useful for planning applications committee members to be aware of the potential Building for Life score when determining an application. The conservation and design officer pointed out that the schemes that achieved the

highest scores had been in the ownership of registered social landlords. These schemes had used careful design to make the best of cheaper materials.

The conservation and design officer referred to Three Score and said that a colleague had worked on the masterplan and would oversee its construction. The scheme had received a score of 14 during the application process.

Members were advised that Building for Life was attached to developments of over 20 units. Officers in development control could request a Building for Life assessment for developments over 10 units if required.

RESOLVED to note.

5. DRAFT AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY

The environmental strategy manager presented the report and the draft affordable warmth strategy. He invited members to comment on the report and to email him further comments. Members were advised that more people died as a result of fuel poverty than as a result of road accidents.

The chair pointed out that the strategy applied for all homes in the city and not just those owned by the council. Discussion ensued in which members considered that energy companies and landlords should be discouraged from installing pay as you go meters in rented properties. A member suggested that the council should consider becoming an energy provider itself so that it could bulk purchase energy and pass it on to residents at cost. The environmental strategy manager said that this was one of a variety of government schemes and could be investigated further. In reply to a comment that the "Green Deal" was not mentioned in the action plan, the environmental strategy manager said that the council's corporate leadership team had recently been discussing how to take advantage of this initiative and he pointed out that the affordable warmth strategy was closely linked to the council's environment strategy. He advised members that one of the measures to improve insulation in the council's housing properties was the rendering and painting of properties with solid walls.

RESOLVED to note the comments on the draft affordable warmth strategy and to ask members to email the environmental strategy manager with any further comments.

6. UPDATE: CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME AND ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY 2011-2014

The environmental strategy manager presented the report and answered members' questions.

During discussion the environmental strategy manager explained the meaning of server virtualisation and that a super server could provide for all of the council's IT storage needs and be secure. A member suggested that small steps contributed to an improvement of the council's carbon footprint. The environmental strategy manager explained that open windows at City Hall were a result of the difficulty in maintaining adequate heating throughout the building but this should be addressed through the capital programme scheme for refurbishment.

The environmental strategy manager then referred to the environmental strategy as set out in the report. During discussion members commented on the Eco Awards and the Warm and Well scheme as being good initiatives. Members were advised that they could contribute ideas towards the development and delivery of the Eco investment fund.

In response to a question, the environmental strategy manager explained that the Anglia Water utility review and baseline would be conducted through all of the council's office buildings, parks and other facilities but not its council housing. He explained it as reviewing all of the water that the council uses in delivering its services.

RESOLVED to note the progress to date on the carbon management programme and the environmental strategy 2011-2014.

(The chair left at this point. Councillor Carlo, the vice chair, was in the chair from this point of the meeting.)

7. STANDING ITEM – PROGRESS ON THE PHOTO-VOLTAIC PANELS ON CITY HALL

The environmental strategy manager reported that the panels were now in place and were generating electricity. A slide showing the panels in place on the roof was displayed at the meeting. The cabinet housing the meters was also situated on the roof. Office facilities could check this periodically. Whilst an expensive display cabinet for members of the public had not been purchased, it would be possible to display powerpoint presentations in the customer contact centre to promote the use of photo-voltaic panels.

The environmental strategy manager advised members that by the summer solstice the council would have a better idea of the amount of pay back it would receive from the feed in tariff.

RESOLVED to note the progress on the photo-voltaic panels on City Hall.

8. WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The head of planning presented a table setting the proposed work programme for the panel in relation to planning services. It was noted that this was not a full list because other heads of service would be consulting the cabinet members with responsibilities for planning, transport and environment in the new civic year. (A copy of the work programme is available on the council's website.)

Discussion ensued on concerns about water shortages in the city and the development of policy. Members could be updated periodically as part of the site allocations plan.

The environmental strategy manager said that the eco investment fund would be considered at a future meeting.

RESOLVED to note the work programme and the dates of future meetings for 2012-13 as follows:

13 June 2012
27 June 2012
25 July 2012
26 September 2012
24 October 2012
28 November 2012
23 January 2013
27 February 2013
27 March 2013

CHAIR