

# Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Thursday 23 March 2017

**Time:** 3.30 pm

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Broadland District Council, Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Norwich, NR7 0DU

## **Board Members:**

### **Broadland District Council:**

Cllr Ian Moncur, Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cllr Shaun Vincent (Chairman)

### **Norwich City Council:**

Cllr Mike Stonard, Cllr Alan Waters

### **South Norfolk Council:**

Cllr Colin Foulger, Cllr John Fuller, Cllr Lee Hornby

### **Norfolk County Council:**

Cllr Tim East

### **Broads Authority**

Cllr Paul Rice

**Officers in attendance:** Amy Broadhead, Mike Burrell, Phil Courtier, Richard Doleman, Angela Freeman, Ellen Goodwin, Tim Horspole, Andrea Long, Dave Moorcroft, Phil Morris, Vince Muspratt, Graham Nelson.

## **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman advised the meeting that through his consultancy Abzag, he was promoting, on behalf of the landowner, a site for residential development in Colney through the Greater Norwich Local Plan. When this site was under consideration he would declare a disclosable pecuniary interest and shall vacate the chair and leave the room.

In the interests of transparency, he also brought to the Board's attention, that his father, Malcolm Vincent, through his company Vincent Howes, was promoting, on behalf of the landowners, a site for residential development in Costessey/Bawburgh through the Greater Norwich Local Plan. In this case under the provisions of the Code of Conduct, there was no interest to declare which would prevent him from participating in the debate and chairing the meeting.

He added that he would be declaring the same interests when chairing

Broadland's Place Shaping Panel and when as a Member of Broadland District Council's Cabinet and Council GNLP matters were considered. Cllr John Fuller declared a non-pecuniary interest as a director of an employment site at Seething.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Bert Bremner, Cllr Stuart Clancy and Cllr Martin Wilby.

## **3. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

The report provided a progress update on the production of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), in particular on emerging evidence, and set out the next steps for plan-making.

The main issues covered in the report were:

- summaries of the current position in relation to a number of evidence studies, which were currently underway;
- progress on the Greater Norwich Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA);
- the next stages of the GNLP, including the implications of the Housing White Paper for plan-making.

The general evidence required to underpin the GNLP was required to include assessments of:

- the scale of housing need across the housing market area;
- economic and employment growth and the future development of the local economy;
- transport infrastructure, including existing improvement plans and further requirements to support growth;
- key infrastructure requirements to support growth, including energy, water supply, wastewater treatment, education and healthcare;
- environmental information, including landscape, ecology and air quality;
- the viability and deliverability of the Local Plan.

Some early-stage viability work had been undertaken, with a workshop held in February 2017 for planning agents, surveyors and housebuilders to discuss some initial results and findings on broad development costs and assumptions.

At the workshop it had become clear that the scale of infrastructure requirements on larger developments, as well as rising labour costs, were a major concern for developers. In particular, there was a reluctance to purchase and build out large housing sites, due to the perception of increased risks and higher costs.

In the face of these concerns it might be necessary to consider 'parcelling out' any larger allocated sites into smaller ones of around 250-300 dwellings, to stimulate the local housing market.

Consideration might also be given to how local planning authorities could influence the early delivery of infrastructure to reduce risk on allocated sites. Advice to support work on the Habitats Regulation Assessment, on internationally protected nature conservation sites, was being provided by the specialist consultancy the Landscape Partnership. Another specialist consultancy, Lepus, was providing advice on the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process.

The SA Scoping Report, which was the first stage of the SA process and established local criteria for appraising the sustainability of the GNLP, had been approved by the three councils.

It was noted that the SA would give equal weighting to Environmental, Economic and Social factors when being compiled.

A Member advised the meeting that large developments could put pressure on GP's surgeries and noted that local authorities would have the discretion to require surgeries to be delivered with the growth, if thought necessary. However, it was also noted that there was a shortage of healthcare professionals and there would be a risk of building a premises that remained unused. Members were informed that a county wide Health Protocol is being developed for planners and health providers to ensure liaison on health needs associated with growth is effective.

Members were informed that a report in June 2017 would set out the broad strategy for the distribution of housing and employment in Greater Norwich.

#### **RESOLVED**

to note progress and agree the next steps for the production of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

#### **4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

##### **Norwich City Councillor Denise Carlo**

How did the GNLP propose to address existing high levels of car travel to, from, around the suburban and urban fringes of Norwich highlighted by its failure to meet Objective 7 target, especially given that the Norwich Northern Distributor Road will open in the near future and encourage further orbital car trips?

##### **Response**

The Greater Norwich Local Plan is at its early stages of production. As the Plan is developed work will be carried out looking at the scale and distribution growth to 2036 and the area wide policies that will shape how this should

happen.

As the Plan is at its early stages decisions have not been made on the distribution of growth and consequently its impacts on travel patterns. The work to develop the plan will be supported by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that considered the social, economic and environmental impacts of alternatives for the Plan. The scoping for the SA, which set out an assessment framework with 16 themes for consideration, had been agreed.

In relation to the Transport and access to services theme (ref: SA12), the overarching objective was to 'reduce the need to travel and promote the use of sustainable transport modes'. As the Plan is developed alternatives will be assessed against this and the other SA objectives.

The strategic approach taken in the GNLP, along with the continued implementation and planned review of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) will impact on future travel patterns.

The public Regulation 18 consultation on the GNLP, scheduled to begin in October this year, would set out a favoured strategy and reasonable alternatives for housing and employment growth and would be supported by sustainability appraisal.

### **County Councillor Andrew Boswell**

Would the Board make a commitment to bring in appropriate, numerical, measurable, non-legally binding, carbon footprinting, accounting and targets in the GNLP Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report?

### **Response**

It was accepted that the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) should seek to address climate change and have policies to minimise the carbon footprint of the area. As agreed at the January 2017 GNLP meeting, the GNLP will include the objective '*to mitigate against and adapt to climate change*'. The adopted Joint Core Strategy (JCS) already did this. The main ways this was done were by promoting a sustainable distribution of development, the use of sustainable transport modes and other measures such as energy and water efficiency, the promotion of a green infrastructure network and flood risk mitigation. However, it was not necessary to establishing a specific numerical target for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction to achieve this.

The SA Scoping Report, which had now been agreed by the councils following consultation, covered this issue in some detail. It includes climate change mitigation and adaptation as a theme. It also has an objective to adapt to and mitigate against climate change. Emerging GNLP policies will be tested through the SA against the criteria "*Will it minimise CO<sub>2</sub> emissions?*" The indicator of "*CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per capita*" will continue to be used, with the target "*to reduce emissions*". The performance of reasonable alternative distributions of growth in terms of road transport emissions was also likely to be assessed

as part of the SA. However, it was not considered that a full numerical carbon assessment, as promoted in the question, was reasonably required as part of the SA of the GNLP because:

- National carbon reduction targets took account of large scale projects to address climate change e.g. decarbonising energy production, promoting energy efficiency within homes and fuel efficiency in vehicles. It was difficult to see how carbon reduction targets could be established locally as the effects of such national measures could not readily be separated from the impacts of local policies. Therefore establishing an effective local target for what could be achieved through the planning system would be problematic;
- The CO<sub>2</sub> emissions figures used to monitor the JCS and for the GNLP and its SA, were provided annually for local authority areas by Government. The figures covered transport, domestic and industrial/commercial emissions. The expense of establishing a monitoring regime locally and not using the national figures could be high and would be difficult to justify when high quality data was available for free;
- Specific carbon reduction targets were not required by SA regulations and their use was not advised either by our specialist SA consultants Lepus or supported by the JCS Inspector who stated that such an approach could lead to 'fictitious precision'.

In summary, the SA Scoping Report did have appropriate targets for the overall reduction of per capita carbon emissions rather than establishing specific targets for that reduction so changes to the agreed approach were not proposed.

It was agreed that henceforth Questions from the Public would be the first substantive item on the Agenda.

*The meeting closed at 4.06 pm.*