

# Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 10 July 2020

**Time:** 11.00 am

**Venue:** hosted by video link

## **Board Members:**

### **Broadland District Council:**

Cllr Sue Lawn, Cllr Shaun Vincent (Chairman)

### **Norwich City Council:**

Cllr Kevin Maguire, Cllr Alan Waters

### **South Norfolk Council:**

Cllr Florence Ellis, Cllr John Fuller, Cllr Lisa Neal

### **Norfolk County Council:**

Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cllr Barry Stone, Cllr Martin Wilby

### **Broads Authority**

Cllr Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

**Officers in attendance:** Mike Burrell, Trevor Holden, Phil Morris, Graham Nelson, Matt Tracey, Marie-Pierre Tighe.

## **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 District Council's Cabinet and at Council when GNLP matters were considered.

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Cllr John Fuller advised the meeting that he owned some employment land in Seething. He also confirmed that he no longer owned land in Lingwood.

Cllr Wilby informed the Board that he was chairman of a charity that was putting forward a site for development, he also had a family interest in a site in Greater Norwich.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Lana Hemsall, Cllr Mike Stonard and Cllr Stuart Clancy.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

*Minute 4: Questions from the Public*

It was confirmed that the questions from Easton Parish Council had now been responded to in the Minutes.

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

There were no questions from the public.

## **5. DRAFT GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 18) CONSULTATION: HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY**

This report provided a high-level a summary of representations received through the Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) held in early 2020. It also covered the main issues raised on the Strategy and the next stages for plan-making.

The consultation had received a very good level of responses with a broad range of views being expressed from a wide section of community bodies as well as a large number of individuals.

The Chairman noted that it was fortunate that the the consultation had not been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A Member of the Board noted that some scepticism had been expressed over whether the GNLP would achieve its stated aims in respect of climate change and he suggested that it must be emphasised that mitigating climate change must be a key driver of the Strategy.

A Member observed that there was a preference for a greater urban concentration of development in Norwich, rather than a rural dispersal of development and also the recognition of the City as the key economic driver in

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Greater Norwich.

He continued that there were some strong aspirational statements made in response to issues raised in the consultation and it should be ensured that these were delivered. In particular, he suggested that an extensive model of rural dispersal would be inimical to addressing the problems of climate change.

A Member suggested that the report was not easily accessible and requested that in future it should contain a narrative commentary on site locations rather than just reference numbers. He also noted that a suggestion from a respondent that the GNLP was unsound should be balanced by officer comments to make it clear that this assertion was incorrect and that the Plan was sound.

The Chairman added that it was important to record consultation comments as opinion, rather than fact.

It was confirmed that the site names would be included in future summary reports and that the soundness of the GNLP would be robustly asserted.

## **RESOLVED**

to note:

1. the consultation attendance and feedback; and
2. the proposed actions to be taken in the light of the issues raised in the consultation responses.

## **6. DRAFT GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REVISED TIMETABLE**

This report presented a proposed revised timetable for the remaining stages of the GNLP in the light of the new circumstances arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the significant number of consultation responses received.

It was suggested, therefore, that additional time was required for proper consideration to be given to the comments received during the consultation to ensure that a robust evidence base for the GNLP was drafted.

Therefore, it was recommended that further work be carried out in three key areas; housing needs and delivery issues, a viability study and CIL evidence and economic evidence.

This work would be undertaken by consultants as well as through a six week focused consultation that could include progress made with the Norwich Western Link scheme.

The revised timetable would mean that there would be a three month delay to final adoption of the Plan in November/December 2022.

Concerns were expressed that the GNLP was being further delayed and it was noted that there could be other unforeseen obstacles ahead, but that they must

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not allow the Plan to be delayed any more than was absolutely necessary and the resources must be put in place to ensure the delivery of the Plan.

It was also suggested that the work on economic evidence be brought forward as soon as possible to reflect the efforts towards the economic recovery both locally and nationally.

It was confirmed that bringing forward the commissioning of the economic study would be looked at.

A Member noted that additional data from the Office for National Statistics had recently been published that would be useful in assessing housing demand, so there was some benefit to revising the timetable.

It was also noted that the significant changes to planning legislation that were proposed to be introduced by the Government, would need to be factored in to the GNLP as well.

## **RESOLVED**

To endorse the timetable for progressing the GNLP and recommend that districts update their Local Development Schemes accordingly.

## **7. EMERGING GOVERNMENT POLICY AND THE GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN (GNLP)**

The report looked at two key elements of emerging Government policy; Planning for the Future and the Environment Bill, along with a potentially significant Department for Transport (DfT) document, Decarbonising Transport. All three were likely to have some impacts on the GNLP.

The report contained an analysis of how the proposals in the Planning for the Future document would affect the GNLP. Overall it was thought that the draft GNLP provided a good basis to respond to the proposed changes, as it was a flexible Plan. Similarly the GNLP already had a significant focus on developing green infrastructure, which should go towards meeting the requirements of the Environmental Bill.

A Member noted that whilst some of the proposals in the document were welcomed, such as prioritising brownfield sites, others could cut across some of the ambitions of the GNLP, such as Permitted Development rights that were detrimental to the retail sector and jobs, damaged the core City Centre and could lead to some poor quality housing. He also noted that was Permitted Development was not subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy so there was the potential of a loss of income for the partnership as well. The Board was also advised that the self build was unlikely to bring along much housing as the financial framework to support it was not sufficiently mature at this stage.

Another Member endorsed this view and recommended that, as the Regulation 18 consultation required revisiting retail policies should be re-looked at to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

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The Chairman noted that these issues would be looked at and incorporated into the GNLP, as Government policy emerged.

## **RESOLVED**

to note:

1. the emerging Government policy for local plans; and
2. the intention to incorporate new national policy, where possible, into the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan.

The meeting closed at 11.40am.

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