

# Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Monday 6 January 2020

**Time:** 2.00 pm

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

## **Board Members:**

### **Broadland District Council:**

Cllr Lana Hempsall, 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 Stuart Clancy, Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cllr Martin Wilby

### **Broads Authority**

Cllr Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

**Officers in attendance:** Mike Burrell, Phil Courtier, Trevor Holden, Helen Mellors, Phil Morris, Graham Nelson, Jonathan Pyle, Marie-Pierre, Matt Tracey.

## **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.

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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 advised the meeting that he owned some employment land in Seething.

Cllr Stuart Clancy declared that he had a family interest in a site in the area.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Barry Stone and Cllr Mike Stonard.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

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

The Board noted the following questions from members of the public and the Officer responses:

### **Question 1 from Cllr Julian Halls**

*Can the Board please explain what exactly is meant by 'reasonable alternatives' as outlined in the report and what weight will the respective planning departments be expected to give to developers using this category in applications?*

*By way of illustration the preferred allocations for Wymondham are for a minimum of 100 houses but the report goes onto give a list of so called 'reasonable alternatives' which total nearly 10,000. How can this be in anyway considered a reasonable alternative?*

*Developers will simply see this as an opportunity and planning Departments will be under pressure to accede to applications otherwise what is the point of them being listed.*

### **Officer response**

The Sustainability Appraisal and plan-making process require the consideration of reasonable alternatives to help inform choices and demonstrate why the preferred options have been chosen.

Question 42 of the consultation specifically asks for comments on growth issues for Wymondham and the other main towns. Comments received will help to firm up the final Plan for submission to the Government.

Any planning applications determined before the adoption of the GNLP, scheduled for late 2022, will be determined in accordance with the current adopted Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise. The inclusion of sites as reasonable alternatives in the emerging GNLP would be expected to have very limited weight in determining planning applications.

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**Question 2 from Graham Everett**

- a. *Can information be provided regarding the review of CIL and whether potential changes will only be implemented to applications submitted post adoption of the GNLP circa August/September 2022 or to application approved prior to the adoption of the Plan?*
- b. *Will there be an opportunity for members of the public to comment on proposed changes to CIL as part of the GNLP consultation?*

**Officer response**

- a. A commitment has been made by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be reviewed in parallel with development of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). Any changes to the CIL will apply to planning applications determined after the reviewed CIL is adopted, which is currently anticipated for August/September 2022 in line with the GNLP.
- b. The CIL review includes its own separate consultation and examination process, so the main opportunity for members of the public to comment will come through the CIL review itself rather than through the GNLP consultation. The CIL consultation will follow the forthcoming consultation on the GNLP which includes evidence on viability which will help to shape the CIL review. Anyone is free to comment on that viability evidence through the GNLP consultation.

**Question 3 from Alan Presslee of Cornerstone Planning on behalf of Norfolk Homes**

*Ref. site GNLP0596; Norwich Road, Aylsham. Assessment of sites promoted in Aylsham has not taken full and proper account of all relevant information, leading to - we believe – incomplete evaluation of the relative merits of respective sites. Can you therefore confirm that the pending consultation will - in allowing us to submit further clarifying/supplementary information – facilitate a genuine opportunity for officers to properly review/re-evaluate the relative merits of sites identified as “Proposed Allocation” and “Reasonable Alternative”, and that such does not prejudice the prospect of changes to these in light of new information submitted?*

**Officer Response**

The identification of the proposed site as a “reasonable alternative” in the upcoming consultation does not preclude its further promotion for allocation. Any new site information submitted will be assessed, indeed entirely new sites could be submitted into the process as well. Sites are assessed on their individual merits, and new information submitted during the upcoming Regulation 18 consultation will be given full and proper consideration.

**Question 4 from Mr. Milliken of Easton Parish Council**

The following questions were submitted for the meeting but were not addressed as they did not reach the relevant officers. The questions and officer responses are addressed here:

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Q. How can this be regarded as a complete plan when SNC have chosen to engage in its own plan which later feeds into the GNDP after the GNDP has been consulted on?

The planning system allows flexibility in terms of the coverage of plans. The current local plan is made up of a number of documents: the Joint Core Strategy, setting out the strategic framework for growth; separately produced site allocation, area action and neighbourhood plans providing the sites to meet that strategic framework; and development management policies.

In the case of the emerging plans, the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) is the new strategic framework document. It includes proposed allocations higher up the settlement hierarchy and sets the amount of growth required in the village clusters in South Norfolk at a minimum of 1,200 homes in addition to the current commitment of 1,349. This figure will be consulted on through the forthcoming GNLP consultation.

The South Norfolk plan will provide the sites in village clusters for those homes. It will be consulted on separately.

Q. What is the effect of this decision in relation to the GNDP's legal standing and has legal advice been sought?

Legal advice has confirmed that the approach is sound. In line with the advice, the Local Development Scheme for South Norfolk will be revised to include the new plan.

Q. Why has Easton not been included as a site for consultation.

Easton has not been included as a location where a consultation event will be held as it is important to make cost-effective use of resources and have a geographical spread of events – an event will be held in nearby Costessey.

Q. Why have officers continued to refuse to provide a written response direct to me after I raised concerns at the last meeting on the 26th September 2019. Your chair requested that you formally respond to my question, why have the officers involved in this matter refused to comply with the chairs request? I note point 4 of the minutes just release however this does not provide a full response to my question as to the lawfulness of the governance of these meetings.

The need for a written response was not recorded in the minutes of the September GNDP meeting. However we re-iterate the minutes which state that "The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) was a body that advised and gave a steer and made recommendations to its constituent authorities. The GNDP was not a decision making body and is not governed by the Local Government Act 2000, but it had been decided in the interests of transparency that its meeting would be held in public".

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### **Correspondence from Mr Stephen Eastwood about site GNLP0379 on Post Office Road, Lingwood**

Whilst not expressed as a question, concerns relate to the increase in the scale of the site since the first Regulation 18 consultation in early 2018. Explanation is sought by Mr Eastwood for how site GNLP0379 can now be consulted upon with an extended boundary. He also sought clarity on the exact number of homes and the extent of green space that could eventually be provided on the area of land opposite Millennium Green on Post Office Road.

### **Officer Response**

This is identified as a “preferred site” for 50 to 60 homes with open space. Like all allocations, it is not possible to be absolutely definitive until a planning consent is granted - about housing numbers or the amount of open space to be provided. The changes to the original submission are the consequence of ongoing plan-making work since the last public consultation in 2018 to address potential highways issues and to ensure that development would provide a suitable setting for the church by providing a neighbouring open space. We look forward to receiving comments on the site through the upcoming consultation to assist in shaping the submission version of the Plan.

A Member of the public advised the meeting that his parish council had submitted a question to the Board, but this had not been included in the Agenda papers or answered.

In response, the Chairman confirmed that this matter would be looked into and responded to as appropriate.

## **5. APPROVAL FOR DRAFT GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 18) CONSULTATION**

The report proposed that the Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board recommend to the constituent authorities that the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) should be consulted on from 29 January to 16 March 2020.

The consultation draft GNLP was made up of two documents: the GNLP Strategy document, which contained the planning strategy for growth in Greater Norwich from 2018 to 2038 and the GNLP Sites document, which contain the policies for the sites that were proposed to be allocated for development to help deliver the GNLP.

At the last Board meeting in September 2019 the Board raised a number of issues with the GNLP as presented and asked that further work be undertaken on the Plan and supporting documentation, this had included:

- Looking at the Plan provision which was in line with the defined Government criteria, the objectively assessed need and a ten percent buffer;
  - Clarifying the level of small sites;
  - Engaging a copywriter to assist with the wording of the document;
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- Assessing the draft Plan alongside the criteria in Towards a Strategy, including the overall number of homes, hierarchy and small sites;
- Reviewing the key messages and current thinking on climate change; and
- Updating the consultation strategy.

The following had been considered when drafting the content of the Plan:

- ensuring that the new homes were delivered;
- promoting inclusive economic growth;
- encouraging low carbon development;
- to deliver an enhanced environment as a result of development;
- to ensure that the infrastructure needed to support growth was provided.

A Member advised the meeting that it had been right to defer the consultation to undertake further work, as the documents now clearly set out what the Board were seeking to achieve and they would give the public a rational and cogent Plan to comment upon. He added that the reason that South Norfolk was preparing a separate Village Clusters Housing Allocations Document was due to the more complex housing market in the District, which had 97 parishes in clusters. This needed a bespoke local approach and a greater focus on smaller sites, within the overarching Greater Norwich Plan. He requested that greater emphasis be placed in the report on the soundness of the argument for a separate Village Cluster document for South Norfolk.

Another Member noted the positive start to the consultation process and welcomed the views of residents. He emphasised that Norwich was the key driver of economic growth, but that 25 percent of office space in the city had been lost due to permitted development rights and that Article 4 directions could be used to limit this. He noted that there was a tension between urban concentration and rural dispersal, but stressed that the City Deal should be the benchmark for building out brownfield sites in Norwich, as well as urban areas across the whole of Greater Norwich. He did however, question if the measures for a low carbon future set out in the Strategy were robust enough.

A Member complemented the Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager and his team for all their hard work in putting together such a well drafted Plan. She emphasised that the proposed growth and development represented an opportunity for young people who did not yet have a home of their own to get on the property ladder. The GNLP would also complement the recently launched Industrial Strategy.

Another Member emphasised that delivery was a crucially important part of the Plan, as was the wider infrastructure provision and economic growth.

In summing up, the Chairman noted the extension of the Plan to 2038 and that consultation feedback would be crucial in shaping a robust and deliverable Plan.

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## **RESOLVED**

to recommend that the constituent authorities endorse the proposed content and its finalisation (under delegated authority to Directors) of the draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (Regulation 18) for consultation.

### **6. DRAFT (REGULATION 18) PLAN CONSULTATION – COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

This report presented the proposed Communication Plan for the forthcoming draft Greater Norwich Local Plan (Regulation 18) consultation that would take place between 29 January and 16 March 2020.

Consultation events would take the form of roadshows held in libraries, council buildings and village halls and in The Forum in Norwich, during afternoons and evenings. Exhibition packs featuring display boards, pop ups and posters would be displayed at each venue.

## **RESOLVED**

that the Board endorses the approach to the consultation to partner authorities.

### **7. DRAFT GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN (REGULATION 18) REVISED TIMETABLE**

The report presented a proposed revised timetable for the remaining stages of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The consultation has been deferred previously due to the need to resolve issues raised by partner authorities.

As a consequence of the deferment of the consultation (as noted above at Minute 5) the timetable for adoption had been extended to August/September 2022. The Local Development Schemes would, therefore, need to be amended.

## **RESOLVED**

that the Board endorses the timetable for progressing the GNLP and that districts update their Local Development Schemes accordingly.

The meeting closed at 2:46 pm.

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