

Minutes of a meeting of the **Place Shaping Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **Monday 1 July 2019** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Mrs L H Hempsall – Chairman

Mr N J Brennan
Mr S M Clancy

Ms J A Neesam
Mr G K Nurden

Mrs L A Starling
Mr J M Ward

Mr Adams, Mr Beadle, Ms Catchpole, Mrs Copplestone, Mr King, Mrs Karimi-Ghovanlou, Mrs Leggett, Mr Leggett, Mrs Prutton, Mr Riley, Mr Thomas, Mrs Vincent and Mr Whymark attended the meeting for item 3 - Greater Norwich Local Plan.

Also in attendance were the Director of Place, Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager, Interim Head of Housing and Environmental Services, Housing Enabler and the Committee Officer (JO).

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Miss Thomas.

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN

The Director of Place advised the meeting that the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was drafted by the GNLP Team for Broadland, Norwich City and South Norfolk Councils in conjunction with Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority.

The GNLP would replace the existing Joint Core Strategy when adopted in 2021 and would have a significant impact over where growth would go across the three districts, as planning applications must be determined in accordance with the GNLP unless material considerations, such as national policy, sustainability, permitted development and adequacy of infrastructure, indicated otherwise.

The GNLP would be a large document which would comprise a strategy and sites document, and would be complemented by Area Action Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. Together, these would cover the 42,000 new

dwellings required by 2036, as well as the jobs and infrastructure to support them.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager informed the meeting that the broad distribution of growth for draft Plan consultation in autumn 2019 was close to completion.

The draft Plan would show the basis for site allocation choices, ie where the broad growth would go and where the sites for growth were. The draft Plan would also include a degree of flexibility to adapt and change as it progressed to ensure delivery was achieved.

The growth needs in the Plan was evidence based. It showed that there was sufficient employment sites given expansion of committed strategic sites and some additional small sites in towns and villages.

In respect of housing, an additional 7,000 homes was required to bring the total to 42,000 by 2036. It was emphasised that the vast majority of these dwellings already had planning permission or were allocated through existing plans.

The principles set out in the plan for growth would seek to maximise brownfield growth (mainly, but not exclusively in Norwich) and broadly follow the settlement hierarchy, with the main focus on the 'strategic growth area' of the Cambridge/Norwich Tech Corridor and the north east growth area. There would also be growth in towns, key service centres and village clusters.

There would be a limited number of new large sites, but no new settlement. Small sites, with allocations of 15 plus, would be expected to provide affordable housing.

As well as a focus on delivery in the Plan, measures to address climate change would be included.

The benefits of the Plan were to produce a clear evolution of a current sustainable strategic approach, as well as the ability to access external funding and supporting a strong rural economy.

The main change in the GNLP from the JCS was some additional focus on village growth. Growth in village clusters would be based on primary school catchment areas and access to other services, as well as availability of sites.

A Member noted that the north west of Norwich lacked village clusters and requested that this be looked into, as the completion of the Western Link would make this area increasingly important.

In response to a query it was confirmed that, as currently drafted, the GNLP would allow for windfall sites in rural areas for self-build or custom build homes and for affordable housing.

The draft GNLP would be published in August and both District and Parish Councillors would be briefed on it before this date.

In response to a query, the Director of Place confirmed that the Government was encouraging the public sector to bring forward development and he was confident that Broadland and South Norfolk would continue to look for opportunities to do so. He drew Members' attention to a proposal to part fund a planning application that was for consideration at Cabinet on 9 July for a 293 hectare development site in north Rackheath as an example of this.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that integrating private and social housing was a preferred option for the Council, although a balance also had to be struck as registered providers found it more efficient to manage their properties if they were closer together.

4 AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP IN BROADLAND AND SOUTH NORFOLK

The report proposed taking a common approach to affordable home ownership eligibility in Broadland and South Norfolk.

Broadland had seen a large supply of affordable home ownership products on sites across the district and analysis of Broadland and South Norfolk affordable home ownership data had shown that the largest proportion of purchasers already lived within the local authority area in which they purchased. It was, therefore, felt that it was unnecessary to restrict home ownership eligibility to local people. It was emphasised that the proposed change in criteria was for affordable home ownership only, not social rent. Properties built under exceptions policy would also continue to be for local needs only.

The homes were currently offered on a first come, first served basis to those people registered with the Help to Buy agency, which checked their eligibility on income and current housing status. Ending the criteria for a local connection would save a significant administrative burden on officers at the Council. Members were also advised that housing associations were very supportive of the proposal to remove the local connection

It was noted that the recommendation included a clause to allow the local connection to be reintroduced by Portfolio Holder decision, if deemed necessary.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- (1) Ordinarily there will be no local connection priority for people wishing to purchase affordable home ownership, other than homes built to meet local needs under the exceptions policy (with flexibility to reintroduce local connection priority if deemed necessary); if this applies then a decision will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Wellbeing;
- (2) all applicants for affordable home ownership must register with the regional Help to Buy agency (or any successor body); and
- (3) Cabinet amends policy to introduce these changes.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm