

Place Shaping Panel

Agenda

Members of the Place Shaping Panel

Mr S A Vincent
(Chairman)

Mr G Everett
Mr R R Foulger
Mr I G Graham
Mrs L H Hemsall
Mrs J Leggett
Mr I N Moncur
Mr F O'Neill
Mr S Riley

Date

Tuesday 13 March 2018

Time

6.00 pm

Place

Council Chamber
Thorpe Lodge
1 Yarmouth Road
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich

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**The Chairman will ask if anyone wishes to
film / record this meeting**

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To consider options regarding additional support for Broadland's vulnerable residents.

P C Kirby
Chief Executive

Minutes of a meeting of the **Place Shaping Panel** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **14 November 2017** at **6.00pm** when there were present:

Mr S A Vincent – Chairman

Mr G Everett
Mrs L H Hemsall

Mrs J Leggett
Mr I N Moncur

Mr F O'Neill
Mr S Riley

Mr Nurden also attended the meeting for its duration.

Also in attendance were the Head of Planning, Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Planning), Housing Manager, Health, Housing and Partnership Officer, Housing Enabler and Committee Officer (JO).

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE NO 8

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 (GNLP).

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 as a Member of Cabinet and Council GNLP matters were considered.

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Foulger and Mr Graham.

16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 July and 5 September 2017 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 NEW HOMES SURVEY 2017

The report set out the results of the New Homes Survey of homes delivered between January 2014 and June 2015 in the district.

The aim of the survey was to review residents' satisfaction with their new home and to assess how well the Council was meeting its Business Plan Objective of 'to plan and provide well housed communities'.

In total, 141 responses were received from households living in 17 parishes; a response rate of 25%. Key findings of the survey were:

- 77% of respondents were living in a house, 20% were living in a bungalow with the remainder living in flats.
- 27% of respondents were aged 60+.
- There was reduction in ownership with a mortgage in the 18-30 group compared to the previous survey in 2015.
- 40% of respondents had children aged under ten.
- Shared Ownership and Housing Association rented properties had increased to 36%.
- Seventy nine respondents previously lived in Broadland, 15 respondents had moved from Norwich and 27 respondents had moved from elsewhere in Norfolk.
- 82% of Housing Association tenants had previously lived in Broadland.
- 15% of respondents reported a household member with a disability.
- 85% of disabled respondents felt their needs were met by their new home.
- 83% had gas heating, 10% had electric and 7% had air source heat pumps. Average heating bills were £48 per month.
- The majority of respondents felt room sizes were 'about right'.
- 70% of respondents had two car parking spaces and 55% had a garage, although 31% did not use their garage to park a car.
- 96% of respondents liked the outside of their property and 78% felt their garden size was 'about right'.
- 76% of respondents felt their development was well laid out.
- 82% of respondents felt part of their community and 96% felt that people were neighbourly.
- 98% felt it was safe to walk about in the daytime and 86% felt it was safe to walk about in the evening.
- 68% felt that existing services were within a good distance from their home.
- 89% felt their new homes were affordable.
- 24% had issues with the layout of their development.
- 17% were dissatisfied with parking arrangements.
- 18% of respondents did not feel part of their community.

Overall the majority of respondents (33%) lived in three bedroom houses; there was an increase in respondents living in affordable homes and there was a high level of satisfaction with the appearance and layout of properties, as well as satisfaction with personal safety and community inclusion.

The Chairman noted that it was pleasing that developers were listening to the Council and building well planned communities.

It was noted that car parking and narrow roads were raised as an issue by a minority of respondents, but it was also noted that areas where the roads were narrow and lined with parked cars could slow down traffic and make it safer for pedestrians.

It was also suggested that with emerging technology, such as driverless cars, there was likely to be less of a requirement for parking spaces in the future.

The Committee was advised that the information gathered from the survey would be circulated to colleagues in community development to assist with initiatives such as Social Prescribing and other community projects in the district.

The Panel was advised that the survey would also be presented at the affordable housing workshop on 21 November 2017.

18 AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP PRODUCTS WITHIN BROADLAND DISTRICT

The report described the types of affordable housing tenure available in the district and set out the findings from data gathered on affordable home ownership between 2015 and mid-2017. The approved process for applicants for affordable home ownership was also discussed.

In recent years, there had been an increase in the number of affordable home ownership products available in the district. These included shared ownership and shared equity dwellings, but more recently had included Discounted Market Dwellings.

Shared ownership was a 'part buy part rent' product where applicants purchase a share of the equity, which could be between 25 and 75%. They would then pay rent on the remaining portion to the Registered Provider who owned the remaining equity. The applicants had the potential to purchase the remaining equity, if their financial situation improved.

Shared equity home ownership was a similar product where the amount of equity was usually set at an initial purchase of 75% of the property value with a nominal ground rent to pay on the remaining 25% equity. Again there was the potential to staircase to full ownership after five years.

The newest product was Discounted Market Sale, which was set at 80% of market value in perpetuity, via a restriction at the Land Registry.

The Government also delivered a Help to Buy Equity Loan Scheme, where it provided an equity loan of up to 20%, which was repaid when the home was sold, or after 25 years, whichever came first.

There was also a Help to Buy Mortgage Guarantee scheme available, which allowed applicants to buy a home with only a 5% deposit. The guarantee was to the mortgage provider (not to the purchaser) who would check that applicants could afford to make the repayments. Within Broadland, there had been 183 mortgage guarantee sales completions between October 2015 and March 2017.

There was also a savings scheme designed to assist First Time Buyers save into a Help to Buy ISA that the Government would contribute 25% too. The maximum Government Bonus they could receive was £3,000 (on savings of £12,000). These Government funded schemes were recorded separately to the Council delivery of Affordable Home Ownership products.

Applicants for affordable home ownership products must meet a local connection criteria, have a household income of less than £80,000, be unable to purchase on the open market and not be a current homeowner.

Overall, the data was collected from 55 sales completed between 2015 to mid-2017. Almost half of these sales (44%) were for Discounted Market Sales properties sold at 80% of market value. The remaining sales were for Shared Equity sold at 75% equity share (22%) and Shared Ownership units sold at between 35 and 50% equity share (34%).

The property types sold ranged from one bedroom house (4%), two bedroom units (47%) and three bedroom house types (49%).

Overall the data collected showed that affordable housing delivery within Broadland was providing a good mix of affordable home ownership products, with a large proportion of the products within the survey being accessed by First Time Buyers.

The data collection exercise also identified the following:

- Only one of the purchasers had moved on from an affordable rented property via a Housing Association.
- A significant number of applicants were selling due to a relationship breakdown.
- Discounted Market Sale units were expected to persist, as many developers continued to offer this product.

- Shared Equity products would continue to increase, based on recent approved planning applications.
- Shared Ownership was still the most 'affordable' home ownership product.
- The largest number of applicants lived within the Broadland area and all applicants for Affordable Home Ownership met the local connection criteria.

As a result of these findings, it was recommended that the Council should ensure that a proportion of shared ownership dwellings be delivered on all sites coming through the planning process.

It was also recommended exploring whether applicants for Affordable Home Ownership needed to meet the local connection criteria specifically for Broadland. An alternative consideration could be to allow applicants from adjoining local authority areas to be approved; provided that a reciprocal arrangement was in place in those areas.

As the exercise had identified some very useful information, it was also recommended that it be repeated after a suitable time interval to identify any further trends.

The report would also be presented at the affordable housing workshop the following week.

The Chairman confirmed that he would support the changes, as long as they would not adversely affect Broadland residents.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET

- (1) to include a proportion of Shared Ownership properties within all future planning applications;
- (2) to allow applicants from adjoining local authority areas to be automatically approved for affordable home ownership products in Broadland, as long as a similar reciprocal arrangement was in place in those areas;
- (3) to repeat the data collection exercise for all sites delivering new affordable home ownership products.

19 PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Broadland District Council had agreed to produce the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) jointly with Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council and in partnership with Norfolk County Council.

Consultation with the public and other stakeholders must be undertaken as part of the preparation of the GNLP.

The GNLP Growth Options document had been produced for the purposes of consultation with the public and other stakeholders. Agreement on the content of the document was being sought from each of the partners before public consultation was begun.

It was emphasised that the consultation presented a series of questions about the choices to be made for the allocation of 7,200 additional dwellings in Greater Norwich and was not attempting to provide the answers at this stage.

Consultation responses could be made to as many or as few questions as the consultee wished.

The consultation responses would be used to inform the evidence base for the Regulation 19 Publication version of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, on which it would be possible to make comments on the soundness of the Plan.

Objections made in response to the Regulation 19 version of the Plan would be considered by an independent Inspector at the Plan's Examination in Public, which was currently expected to take place in late 2020.

Members of the Place Shaping Panel were invited to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Planning whether any amendments to the Growth Options document should be made prior to its publication for public consultation.

The Panel considered the document and the following amendments were proposed:

- Page 50 – Figure 5 Proposed settlement hierarchy – Option SH1 – Hierarchy tier 3 to be named 'Service Centres', not 'Key Service Centres'.
- Page 51 – Figure 5 Proposed settlement hierarchy – Option SH1 – Hierarchy tier 4, under **Growth Considerations:** Housing allocations, the scale of which would be dependent on the growth strategy chosen, the scale and range of local services and the relationship of the village to a Service Cluster (including access to services in the Norwich Urban Area).

Hierarchy tier 5, under **Growth Considerations**: Suitable for infill development within a defined development boundary and, where there is an accessible primary school, small scale housing allocations. ~~Larger allocations may be considered where the village forms part of a Service Cluster.~~

- Page 52 – Figure 6 Proposed settlement hierarchy – Option SH2 – Tier 4 Village Clusters to include the following text from para 4.155: All remaining parishes would be placed into Village Clusters *based on the premise that neighbouring villages share services. The implication of Village Clusters is that villages or hamlets with few or no services would be considered suitable for growth if services could readily be accessed in neighbouring settlements. We are consulting both on whether this is a suitable approach and how it could work in practice.*
- Page 79 Option AH7: Allow “small sites windfalls” to be permitted adjacent to development boundaries (i.e. sites of 10 or fewer, *to also include sub-division of garden plots*)

RESOLVED

to recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Planning that the Growth Options document should be published for public consultation, subject to the above amendments.

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT PROCEDURE

Portfolio Holder: Communities and Housing

Wards Affected: All

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 As a result of recent increases contributions from central Government, this report details additional service for Members to consider aligned to the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant procedure.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Previously part funded by contributions from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Council is responsible for the delivery of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The contribution received by the Council has, over the last two years, been diverted through the Better Care Fund. The contributions have recently risen. Last year the Council received £766,000. The actual budget is set at £750,000 by the Council. It is not expected that the Council will commit or spend the complete allocation this year. Next year the allocation may rise by up to 9 percent.
- 2.2 The Better Care Fund requires that the districts that are responsible for the delivery of DFGs provide locality plans. These plans are expected to supplement the grant process with services aligned to the aims of the Better Care Fund.
- 2.3 This report will provide service options for Members to consider enhancing the current locality plan with a range of packages that will be available to Broadland residents to supplement the DFG procedure.
- 2.4 The accessibility of the new services will be subject to the availability of funds throughout the financial year. The budget will be monitored by the Private Sector Housing Manager in consultation with the Head of Service and the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing.

3 THE ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council has over the last two years initiated additional services to supplement the priorities for the Better Care Fund. For example an initiative in GP surgeries has provided one-to-one interventions via a multi-disciplinary team. The objective has been to prevent and reduce demand on Social Services and National Health Services resource. An evaluation is currently in progress regarding the outcomes of this initiative.

- 3.2 The Private Sector Housing Team at present is up to speed with the current demand level of applicants for DFGs and waiting periods between enquiry and initial visit are on average, below a month. Taking the above factors into account the current level of service is not expected to deliver the increased allocation expected via the Better Care Fund.
- 3.3 A Low Level Adaption Grant (below the scope of DFGs) was approved by Cabinet, carried out by the Handyperson+ it has been introduced to assist residents and help them stay safely in their homes. Introduced in the late summer of 2017 so far 26 have been approved. However, due to the current cap of £500 for these grants, taking into account material costs, the Handyperson is limited to a day's work at each property. This restricts the options available to the Handyperson when carrying out these works.
- 3.4 In January 2018 the Council received £74,395 of additional resource to be spent on DFGs or other initiatives in agreement with local health partners. This sum has to be spent in the current financial year. As a result the Private Sector Housing Team has introduced a special project to deliver efficient heating systems to residence with health difficulties which is aligned to a modified means testing approach and thus assist this cohort of residents from fuel poverty issues.
- 3.5 The current cap of DFG is £30,000. This means that if adaptations required at the applicant's property require work beyond the scope of £30,000, a maximum grant of £30,000 will not meet the need for the applicant. Therefore the grant cannot be approved until the applicant can demonstrate the additional funds required beyond the £30,000. As a result applications can stall or require cancellation.
- 3.6 When works require adaptations that require structural alterations, architect drawings that detail plans to meet the need are required. Grants are then approved in consultation with the architect commissioned. The architect therefore needs to be commissioned before approval and will require payment whether the works are approved or in some cases not approved. Therefore the commission of architects can stall the procedure for the applicant. In some cases this can result in no progress and a cancellation of the procedure.
- 3.7 The District Direct Service places housing officers from district authorities across the county into the Discharge Hub at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital. The approach is to prevent housing issues causing delayed discharge from the hospital. Interventions include installation of a key safe, commencement of a DFG process and installation of grab rails. However, as these activities have taken place, it has become clear that further interventions are required that previously were beyond the scope of the Council's current service provision. This is not only to enable a smooth discharge from hospital for patients but also to prevent readmission and to ensure patients can remain independently in their homes for longer, for

example, purchase of a bed, where previously the patient had been sleeping in a chair.

- 3.8 The above issues provide opportunities where additional money can be used to help residents with health difficulties beyond the scope of the mandatory DFG procedure. To initiate such a procedure any new proposals will require amendment of the Council's DFG Better Care Fund, Locality Plan. However in addition, any additional financial assistance to applicants beyond the scope of the Mandatory DFG procedure will require a policy decision by the Council in accordance with procedures detailed in the 'The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002'.

4 OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- 4.1 Refinement of the Heating System Project to allow the upgrade of heating systems at residential properties to continue using a tightened health and financial criteria. The grant would remain at a maximum £4,500 per property. However a tighter eligibility will be required.
- 4.2 A Get You Home Grant of up to £1,000 to pay for essential maintenance works at residents' properties identified through the District Direct Service. The grant would be used for trade services such as plumbing and electrical works and other works beyond the scope of the Handyperson+ service or one off capital expenses, such as purchasing of necessary furniture or appliances or skip hire for decluttering.
- 4.3 Increase the Handyperson+ current low level adaption grant to £750. This would mean that the Handyperson could task beyond the current £500 that place limitations to his time on site for these jobs.
- 4.4 A top up grant or loan of up to £15,000 to be available where works required to adapt the property are beyond the current cap of £30,000.
- 4.5 The introduction of an architect fee grant to a maximum of £4,500 for complex cases where structural works are required.
- 4.6 Initiate no additional service which may lead to a request for a return of unspent funds by the administrators of the Better Care Fund.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Private Sector Housing Team is experienced in the provision of grants and loans for residents and therefore is in a position to absorb the additional services within current work streams.

- 5.2 As the finance is external no additional capital resource is required by the Council.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As detailed, a policy decision from the Cabinet will be required regarding any additional financial services.

7 EQUALITY

- 7.1 The options available are designed to enhance current services and at present it is believed that impacts on any group would be positive. However where the options would form the basis of a policy decision by Cabinet a full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report details opportunities regarding additional external funding to support Broadland's vulnerable residents.
- 8.2 The Private Sector Housing Manager seeks the views of the Panel on the following points:
- (1) to refine and continue the current heating system service;
 - (2) to provide an Architect Fee Grant up to £4,500 for adaptations that involve structural works and thus require detailed drawing beyond the schedule process initiated by the Council's technical officers;
 - (3) to provide a top up grant for the DFG service of up to £15,000;
 - (4) to provide a top up loan without interest placed as a charge at the Land Registry.;
 - (5) to increase the Handyperson+ Low Level Grants cap to £750;
 - (6) to provide a grant of up to £1,000 to assist the District Direct Scheme and therefore help patients return to and remain safely in their homes;
 - (7) to subject all new services to availability of funds in the relevant financial year and for a monitoring procedure to be initiated by the Private Sector Housing Manager in consultation with the Head of Service (in the absence of the Head of Service this to be undertaken

by the Deputy Chief Executive) and Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing;

- (8) any other recommendation.

Kevin Philcox
Private Sector Housing Manager

Background Papers

None

For further information on this report call Kevin Philcox on (01603) 430578@ or e-mail kevinphilcox@broadland.gov.uk