

REGULATION AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Regulation and Planning Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton, on Tuesday 18 February 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors:	F Ellis (Chairman), B Duffin, J Halls, S Nuri, J Savage, T Spruce and V Thomson
Apologies:	Councillors:	P Hardy
Cabinet Members in Attendance:	Councillors:	L Neal, A Thomas
Other Members in Attendance	Councillor	V Clifford-Jackson, R Elliott, T Laidlaw
Officers in Attendance:	The Assistant Director of Planning (H Mellors), the Principal Infrastructure and Planning Officer (S Marjoram), the Place Shaping Area Team Manager (P Harris) and the Senior Planning Policy Officer (K Fisher).	
Also in Attendance	One member of the public	

The Chairman welcomed Paul Harris, the newly appointed Place Shaping Area Team Manager, to the meeting.

62 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

63 SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGE CLUSTERS HOUSING ALLOCATIONS DOCUMENT – SITE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND DRAFT COUNCIL

The Principal Infrastructure and Planning Officer presented the report, which proposed an approach to assessing sites for the forthcoming South Norfolk Village Cluster Site Allocations Plan and set out a timetable for the initial stages of preparing the document.

A separate Village Clusters Plan was being drafted because it was recognised that the choice of sites available through the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was not delivering the requirement for South Norfolk, with some parishes having few sites, which were often detached from the settlement, leading to greater concentrations elsewhere. South Norfolk was also significantly more rural with a Village Clusters requirement more than double that of Broadland.

One of the first stages in developing the Village Clusters document would be to confirm with existing site promoters that they still wished their sites to go forward for consideration, within the criteria of at least 12 units on up to a hectare of land (which should equate to 20-25 dwellings). The threshold was set at 12 to ensure that the site

would deliver affordable housing, as required in the National Planning Policy Framework.

A minimum of 1,200 dwellings was required in these settlements across the District. It was also likely that the Village Clusters document would include a small number of generic policies to avoid repetition across multiple allocations.

It was proposed to define clusters based on primary school catchment areas, but account would also be taken of other facilities such as shops, pubs etc. Some villages would be clustered with a settlement that continued to be included in the GNLP.

It was proposed that the Site Assessment would use the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) methodology to identify a future supply of land which was suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development use over the Plan period. The suitability assessment criteria used red, amber and green scores for an agreed set of measures. The site assessment would look at basic requirements and planning history and, after being shortlisted, site visits would be held to look at their physical context. It would also focus on good accessibility to a minimum number of services/facilities from a core list. The site assessment process was likely to require specialist input from other organisations in order to establish whether the sites could be developed, and also to help formulate the site-specific policy for the allocation of the site.

Members were advised that sites with less than 12 units would not be disregarded, but these would be classified as windfalls sites and would not count towards the 1,200 dwelling requirement.

It was also confirmed that all proposed sites would be considered as part of this process, even those previously rejected. The document would also take account of Neighbourhood Plans, if possible.

A briefing would be held for parish councils on the development of the Plan.

It was intended to commence initial stages of this process this month and review existing sites under the new agreed approach over March and April 2020. The HELAA of new sites would begin in late March and end in April, whilst site assessment of new sites could start in parallel if resource permitted. The evidence base would be updated over June and July and Cabinet would be asked to agree the document for consultation in August ahead of a six week consultation beginning in September. It was confirmed that it would be made clear, in the consultation, if any changes to development boundaries were proposed.

The Committee was also informed that the enhancement of the landscape and green infrastructure would be written into policies in the Plan to ensure that the environment was protected.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that whilst 25 dwellings to a hectare was the preferred upper limit, it would be difficult to be too prescriptive if this figure increased slightly. The main criteria in respect of this would be to ensure that the site delivered a development that worked well, so there would have to be an element of flexibility.

It was also confirmed that preference would be given to sites with good accessibility to services, preferably within walking distance.

The Committee was informed that the GNLP was proposing to allow up to three self-build/custom build dwellings in each parish during the lifetime of the Plan in infill sites and/or adjacent to the development boundary.

Members noted that the timetable for the Plan was tight and would be subject to the resource available and the number of sites brought forward.

It was **RESOLVED:**

To note:

- that the South Norfolk Village Clusters are based on primary school catchments;
- where the primary school is in a settlement that continues to be covered by the GNLP, those remaining parishes previously clustered with the GNLP settlement are considered to be a cluster in their own right;
- to use the Norfolk Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) methodology as the starting point for appraising sites; the approach to site assessments as set out in Section 4 of the report; and

To **RECOMMEND TO CABINET** to agree an updated South Norfolk Local Development Scheme (LDS) in accordance with the timetable outlined in Section 5 of the report.

The meeting concluded at 3.26 pm.

Chairman