

REGULATION AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Regulation and Planning Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Thursday 27 May 2021 at 10am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: F Ellis (Chairman), B Duffin, J Halls, P Hardy, W Kemp, S Nuri-Nixon, J Savage and T Spruce

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: V Thomson

Cabinet Member Present: Councillor: L Neal

Officers in Attendance: The Assistant Director for Planning (H Mellors), the Place Shaping Manager (P Harris) and the Principal Infrastructure and Planning Policy Officer (S Majoram)

Also in Attendance: Five members of the public (Mr Smith from Bunwell Parish Council, Mr Bramley, Mr Gledhill, Mr Mayes and Mr Woolorton)

82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P Hardy declared an 'Other' interest in respect of Item 84, as he is employed by Parker Planning Services who may hold sites outlined in the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan, however he has not had any involvement in these sites.

83 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Regulation and Planning Policy Committee held on Friday 9 April 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

84 SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGE CLUSTERS HOUSING ALLOCATIONS PLAN – REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

Members considered the report presented by the Place Shaping Manager, which sought members' agreement of the Regulation 18 version of the South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP) for an 8 week consultation.

The South Norfolk VCHAP sought to fulfil the requirement of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) to provide at least 1,200 new homes.

The Place Shaping Manager advised Members that approximately 450 sites had been considered for inclusion in the VCHAP, of these 66 had been identified as 'Preferred' sites, 24 identified as 'Shortlisted' sites, with the majority of the remaining sites rejected as either unsuitable sites or as they had been considered in individual Neighbourhood Plans. He explained that officers considered the specifications of the GNLP and core policies, representations from stakeholders as well as the views of members when decisions on the inclusion of sites into the VCHAP was made. It was felt by officers that the VCHAP reflected members wishes for smaller sites as opposed to a large number of major developments.

With regard to the public consultation, the Place Shaping Manager advised that, subject to the Committees approval, the consultation would be opened on 7 June for 8 weeks. As a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the consultation was designed to be taken remotely by way of email, online webchats, and video calls.

One member noted that there appeared to be numerous development sites in Hethersett and queried whether preferred development sites could be spread out into neighbouring areas. The Place Shaping Manager advised the Committee that focus had been made to the Hethersett area as it fell outside of the scope addressed in the GNLP, and that neighbouring areas had be considered within individual Neighbourhood Plans.

The Chairman invited Mr Smith, a representative from Bunwell Parish Council to make a comment. Mr Smith queried how shortlisted sites could be designated as preferred sites. The Place Shaping Manager advised that as the Regulation 18 consultation progressed to Regulation 19 it might be felt that a shortlisted site was a more suitable site than one previously listed as preferred, he also advised that a site shortlisted in this VCHAP could be repromoted as a preferred site in a review of the VCHAP.

The Chairman invited the public speaker Mr Gledhill to make his representation to the Committee, Mr Gledhill queried that whilst the plan looked to fulfil housing requirements would it also control the number of sites

smaller than 12 dwellings approved for planning permission through Settlement Limit Extensions and also whether shortlisted sites would be outright refused planning permission for the duration of the GNLP on the basis that the allocation requirement had been filled.

The Place Shaping Manager explained that where Settlement Limit Extensions were proposed, the VCHAP explicitly stated under which preferred site they were allowed. He noted that more development would likely come forward than had been provided for in the allocation plan. He further explained that in terms of the ongoing control of development, it would not be possible to state what the outcome of individual planning applications would be as all applications were considered on their own merit. In response to additional concerns raised, the Place Shaping Manager reiterated that current policies stated that development should occur within defined settlement boundaries unless particular allocation or exception policies applied, and that it would be wrong to indicate that there were no circumstances in which other applications might be approved based on material considerations officers were obliged to take into account.

Members heard a written representation from Mr Durrant with regard to site SN2119 – Brooke North of High Green/West of Astley Cooper Place, which requested that the shortlisted allocation description might be amended to take into account:

1. A footpath link could be achieved and would not require third party land acquisition.
2. The freehold for land had been transferred to the owners of number 66
3. The land to the east and north is owned by the applicant and changes in land use could be effected as required on this other land.
4. Access through Astley Cooper Place: the proposed access to High Green had the required visibility splays, junction geometry and the advantage of simplicity in implementation.

In response to the written representation the Place Shaping Manager advised the Committee that the assessment of this shortlisted site in Brooke, held within the VCHAP accurately reflected discussions with the technical consultees, he explained that an engineering plan had been provided by Mr Durrant however there was a disagreement between the Highways Authority and the engineering plan which would need to be assessed before the submissions of the written representation were accepted. The Principle Infrastructure and Planning Policy Officer added that whilst it might technically be possible to place a footpath along the main road, the impact this would have on the conservation area in terms of the removal of trees and hedgerows would need to be assessed. He further explained that the plan had previously been submitted to Norfolk County Council who were not convinced that it could be achieved.

Members thanked officers for their thorough and well scrutinised work and it was unanimously;

RESOLVED

To advise Cabinet to agree to;

1. Publish the draft South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan and the accompanying supporting documents for eight weeks consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;

And,

2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for External Affairs and Policy, to make any minor factual amendments to the consultation document, prior to consultation beginning.

85 UPDATE TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager which sought members to advise Cabinet to recommend to Council the approval of the updates to the Local Development Scheme.

The Committee was advised that there had been a number of updates to the Local Development Scheme over the course of the last year, which reflected the changes to the timetables of both the GNLP and the VCHAP. The Place Shaping Manager clarified that the Council was obliged to keep the Local Development Scheme up to date. He explained that revisions to the time table, to allow an extension until March 2022 were needed to give sufficient time for the Regulation 19 document to be finalised following the end of the Regulation 18 consultation, which was due to begin on 7th June.

He further clarified that the timetable may need to be reviewed again once all consultation had been received to take into account the scale and complexity of the responses.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED

To advise Cabinet to recommend that Council approves the proposed amendments to the current Local Development Scheme.

(The meeting concluded at 10:49am)

Chairman