

REGULATION AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Regulation and Planning Policy Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Tuesday 30 November 2021 at 10am.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: F Ellis (Chairman), B Duffin, J Halls and V Thomson
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors: P Hardy
Cabinet Member Present:	Councillors: J Fuller and L Neal
Officers in Attendance:	The Place Shaping Manager (P Harris), the Business Improvement Team Leader (S Pontin), the Principal Infrastructure and Planning Policy Officer (S Majoram) and the Senior Policy Planner (S Jones)
Also in Attendance:	Mr Smith (from Bunwell Parish Council) and Mr Gledhill (local resident)

86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J Halls declared an 'Other' interest in respect of minute number 91, Update to the Local Development Scheme, as a member for the South Wymondham ward.

87 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Regulation and Planning Policy Committee held on Thursday 27 May 2021 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the removal of references to a remote meeting, as the meeting was held in person.

88 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

Members considered the report presented by the Business Improvement Team Leader, which sought members' views on the proposed changes to the

Street Naming and Numbering Policy, which was adopted by the Council in 2017. He explained that the proposed minor changes aimed to:

- Clarify the information needed with applications
- Clarify street naming conventions
- Encourage engagement with Town and Parish Councils

One member felt that the Policy should require (not just encourage) developers to liaise with Town and Parish Councils. They referred to an example where a street name was imposed which did not fit with the local area, and that by the time the Parish Council was informed of the name, the deadline to object had passed. The Business Improvement Team Leader explained that unfortunately current legislation did not allow the Council to set a requirement for developers to liaise with Town and Parish Councils.

In response to a question, the Business Improvement Team Leader advised the Committee that it was the developer's duty to provide the street sign, and that the Council would replace the sign if it was damaged. He further explained that the Council could provide the initial sign if the developer failed to do so, and would seek to recharge the developer for the cost. He clarified that this would apply to any legally named road, whether adopted or not.

Members discussed the policy further and it was proposed that sections 5.1 and 5.3 of the policy (which related to Street Naming Conventions) be merged to provide better clarity.

A vote was taken and it was

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet agree the Street Naming and Numbering Policy as set out in Appendix 1, with effect from 1 April 2022, subject to the amendment outlined above.

89 INTRODUCTION OF MONITORING FEES FOR S106 AGREEMENTS

The Business Improvement Team Leader presented his report, which recommended the introduction of monitoring fees on developers in relation to developments granted planning permission. He explained that this was to cover the Council's cost of overseeing compliance with legal obligations under Section 106 Agreements. He further explained that this report reflected the legislation changes enacted by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No2) Regulations 2019, which came into force on 1 September 2019.

Members were advised that the Council was currently monitoring 37 legal S106 Agreements, which involved the monitoring of 107 obligations with approximately 513 triggers. The monitoring process involved:

- conducting site visits to determine progress, occupancy rates and occurrence of triggers
- reviewing and formally approving schemes for affordable housing, open space, play areas and other on-site amenities
- calculating financial contributions for off-site provisions and commuted sums for affordable housing clawbacks
- raising invoices and following up overdue payments
- ensuring contributions are spent within stipulated timescales and projects comply with legal obligations
- issuing formal letters to developers confirming discharge of obligations
- involvement in open space land transfers
- working closely with developers and parishes with all matters relating to the s106
- answering general enquiries and FOIs
- annual completion of the Infrastructure Funding Statement

The Business Improvement Team Leader highlighted the proposed range of charges, as outlined at section 4 of the report. The Cabinet Member for Stronger Economy added that S106 Agreements needed to be monitored and that this was very resource intensive, so recovering the costs from developers made sense.

In response to a query regarding the charge levels, the Business and Improvement Team Leader explained that the Council could not make a profit from the charges, as the new legislation stated that “monitoring fees must be proportionate and reasonable and reflect the actual costs of monitoring”. He assured members that, if agreed by Cabinet, the charge levels would be reviewed over the coming years.

One member raised a concern over charging monitoring fees to developments with affordable housing, as they felt that every charge added would make the housing less affordable. The Business and Improvement Team Leader assured the Committee that the proposed monitoring fees would not impact on the provision of affordable housing.

A vote was then taken, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED

To recommend to Cabinet that the monitoring fees for Section 106 Agreements, as set out in Appendix 1, are adopted from 1 April 2022.

90 SOUTH NORFOLK VILLAGE CLUSTER HOUSING ALLOCATION PLAN (VCHAP) PROGRESS REPORT

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which provided an update on the progress of the production of the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan (VCHAP) following the Regulation 18 Public consultation which took place between 7 June 2021 and 2 August 2021. He explained that over 2000 responses had been received as part of the consultation, in addition, 61 new or revised sites had been submitted for assessment. He explained that a temporary resource had been brought in to help with the assessment of the new/revised sites.

The Place Shaping Manager informed members that given the volume and detail of the responses received, as well as the additional work needed with regard to flooding and heritage sites, the timeline for the production of the VCHAP needed to be revisited. At present it was thought the VCHAP would be delayed by three months.

In response to a query, the Place Shaping Manager explained that the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) had its own timeline and would not be affected by the delay to the VCHAP.

Members discussed the 61 new or revised sites and queried whether the Committee and/or public would have the opportunity to comment if any of these sites were considered 'preferred sites'. The Place Shaping Manager advised that the VCHAP was due to be brought before the Committee in March as part of a technical consultation. However, the next public consultation would be the Regulation 19 consultation, where the public would be asked to consider the final proposed plan. Some members raised a concern that the public would not be able to formally comment again until the final plan had been produced. The Place Shaping Manager stressed that there was a risk in holding too many consultations, which could result in long delays to the Plan's adoption. One member reminded the Committee that local members could report public views to both the Committee and officers, at any point in the process.

The Chairman invited Mr Smith, a representative from Bunwell Parish Council to make a comment. Mr Smith queried when the development of sites in Bunwell would begin and whether the development of sites could be phased in order to reduce congestion. The Place Shaping Manager explained that there were a number of factors which would influence the start date of a development, and he explained that it was too early to give specific start dates for individual sites. He added that all developers had confirmed that they would be able to commence within five years. With regard to the phasing of developments, he explained that the Highways Agency had not raised a concern of congestion or the need to phase projects, however officers would take into consideration local concerns.

The Chairman invited, Mr Gledhill, a local resident of Bunwell, to address the Committee. Mr Gledhill raised his concerns regarding the lack of public consultation on the new/revised sites. He explained that Bunwell had a Building Development Group which could have provided views on the new site(s). The Place Shaping Manager explained that whilst there was no formal public consultation. Bunwell Parish Council and residents could provide any evidence or thoughts on the new sites via their local member or direct to officers.

It was then

RESOLVED

To note the progress on the South Norfolk Village Cluster Housing Allocations Plan.

91 UPDATE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Place Shaping Manager introduced the report, which advised members on the proposed amendments to the current Local Development Scheme (LDS). He explained that these amendments reflected the change in timetable of the Village Cluster Housing Allocation Plan (VCHAP), as well as the introduction of the East Norwich Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). He further explained that it was a legislative requirement for the Council to publish a LDS and keep it up to date.

Members were informed that the East Norwich Masterplan SPD arose following the Greater Norwich Local Plan's (GNLP) identification of East Norwich as a strategic regeneration area. The SPD included the development of the land adjoining the railway between the Deal Ground and Carrow Works. Due to the cross-boundary nature of the site, the SPD would be progressed jointly by South Norfolk Council, the Broads Authority and Norwich City Council, who were leading on the project. The Place Shaping Manager advised members that phase 1 of the project was near completion and had been reported to Norwich City Council's Cabinet on 17 November 2021. Once the SPD was completed, members would need to approve sections of the SPD which related to the South Norfolk area. He assured members that South Norfolk Council would retain its autonomy to make decisions as a planning authority, with the SPD providing additional weight to planning decisions.

Cllr J Fuller relayed his support of the SPDs progression under Norwich City Council's lead.

In response to a members' question the Place Shaping Manager explained that phase 1 of the project included the assessment of the appropriate mix of

land uses, infrastructure requirements, abnormal development costs and viability.

One member raised a concern with regard to the location of development sites within Wymondham, as outlined at Appendix 2 of the LDS, given the amount of development already underway. The Place Shaping Manager clarified that the Local Action Plan guided development in the town, but explained that over time the situation and requirements could change.

A vote was taken and it was,

RESOLVED

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

92 ADOPTION OF THE NORFOLK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND RECREATIONAL IMPACT AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which sought members approval for the adoption of the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) as well as the collection of related obligations from applications for residential development and other relevant development proposals, in accordance with the GIRAMS evidence and Policy 3 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). He advised the Committee that adoption of the GIRAMS would ensure that the Council continued to meet its legal duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The Place Shaping Manager explained that assessment work carried out as part of the production of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework and GNLP, had identified that residential and tourism accommodation as well as its associated increase in footfall would have a major impact on protected sites.

Members were advised that the implementation of a Norfolk-wide GIRAMS would offset the impact on protected sites through tariff-based contributions towards a mitigation package as well as the provision of green open spaces.

The Place Shaping Manager advised that a review of the GIRAMS would be carried out as part of the work programme of the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework to ensure that the mitigation package was delivered as effectively as possible.

Cllr J Fuller noted that to date, not all of the Councils/Planning Authorities within Norfolk had signed up to the GIRAMS, and it was suggested and

agreed by the Committee, that the recommendation to adopt the Strategy should be subject to the approval from all relevant Planning Authorities.

Concerns were raised on the contents and effectiveness of the mitigation package. One member drew attention to the mitigation that staff be hired to work at the protected site and suggested that a more effective use of the revenue available would be to support existing staff/volunteers at the sites. Members agreed that an immediate review of the GIRAMS and mitigation package was required.

A vote was then taken and it was

RESOLVED

That subject to agreement by all planning authorities, and an immediate review of the GIRAMS and mitigation package, to advise Cabinet to recommend to Council that it adopts the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and resolves to begin collecting obligations from applications for residential development, and other relevant development proposals in accordance with the following requirements of Policy 3 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan:

All residential development will address the potential visitor pressure, caused by residents of the development, that would detrimentally impact on sites protected under the Habitats Regulations Directive through:

- the payment of a contribution towards the cost of mitigation measures at the protected sites (as determined under the Norfolk Green infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy plus an allowance for inflation); and,
- the provision or enhancement of adequate green infrastructure, either on the development site or nearby, to provide for the informal recreational needs of the residents as an alternative to visiting the protected sites. This will equate to a minimum of 2 hectares per 1,000 population and will reflect Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard.

(The meeting concluded at 11:31am)

Chairman