

# Planning Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024

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## **Present**

Harry Blathwayt – in the Chair, Stephen Bolt, Andrée Gee, Tony Grayling, James Harvey, Tim Jickells, Kevin Maguire and Fran Whymark

## **In attendance**

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer, Jason Brewster – Governance Officer, Ruth Sainsbury – Head of Planning and Sara Utting – Senior Governance Officer

## **Members of the public in attendance who spoke**

No members of the public in attendance

## **1. Apologies and welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies** were received from Martyn Hooton, Vic Thomson and Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

### **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

The Chair explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy of the recording should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

## **2. Declarations of interest and introductions**

Members indicated that they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered.

## **3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **4. Matters of urgent business**

There were no items of urgent business

## **5. Chair's announcements and introduction to public speaking**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

## **6. Requests to defer applications and/or vary agenda order**

No requests to defer or vary the order of the agenda had been received.

## 7. Applications for planning permission

There are no applications for consideration.

## 8. Enforcement update

Members received an update report from the Head of Planning on enforcement matters previously referred to the Committee. Further updates were provided at the meeting for:

Beauchamp Arms, Ferry Road, Carleton St Peter (Unauthorised operation development and Unauthorised static caravan - Unit Z) and Land at Loddon Marina, Bridge Street, Loddon (Unauthorised static caravan)

The Head of Planning confirmed that the Planning Inspectorate of England (PINS) had undertaken an accompanied visit of sites at Beauchamp Arms and Loddon Marina on the 16 July 2024. These site visits would enable PINS to complete the appeals process and the Authority awaited the associated appeal decisions.

Blackgate Farm, High Mill Road, Cobholm (Unauthorised operational development)

In response to a question the Planning Policy Officer confirmed that the replacement contractor assigned to undertake the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment had completed an initial assessment of the site. Their assessment had been deemed to be incomplete and the contractors had performed a follow-up assessment and the Authority, in conjunction with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, were awaiting the updated written assessment.

## 9. East Suffolk Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document - adoption

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report, which proposed that the Authority endorse the East Suffolk Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The PPO reminded Members that the Authority defers to the policies and standards of its district councils in certain areas including open space and, as the East Suffolk Healthy Environments SPD incorporated open space, it was prudent for the Authority to endorse this document.

Tony Grayling proposed, seconded by Kevin Maguire.

**It was resolved unanimously to recommend that the Broads Authority endorse the East Suffolk Healthy Environments SPD.**

## 10. Local Plan – Preparing the Publication Version

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) presented the report which detailed the proposed responses to comments received during the Preferred Options consultations, a new Local Plan policy covering environmental quality, updates to the Local Infrastructure study, updates to the Peat Soils Local Plan policy, and updates to the areas covered by policies associated with Cantley

Sugar Factory, Hoveton and Whitlingham Country Park. The PPO proposed to discuss each section of the report in turn and welcomed members' feedback.

### Preferred Options consultation responses

The Preferred Options consultation had generated over 750 comments and the proposed responses to each comment had been documented in Appendix 1 of the report. The PPO explained that comments had been received from individuals or on behalf of organisations. The majority of comments sought clarification; there had been a couple of objections that had been countered and some comments had resulted in changes to the Local Plan and these outcomes were reflected in the responses.

In response to a question, it was noted that given the wide scope of the Broads Authority's remit, some comments related to matters beyond the planning system and the PPO explained that those items had been forwarded to the Chief Executive for resolution.

Members thanked the PPO and her colleagues for their time and effort in drafting the responses.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Tony Grayling.

### **It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Preferred Options consultation responses.**

#### Pollution and Hazards in Development and Protecting Environmental Quality policy

Comments received on behalf of Natural England, the Environment Agency and Norfolk Wildlife Trust had highlighted a need for an environmental protection policy (Appendix 2 of the report). The PPO had based the proposed new Pollution and Hazards in Development and Protecting Environmental Quality Local Plan policy on equivalent policies from the Local Plans produced by North Norfolk District Council and Great Yarmouth Borough Council. This policy encouraged all development proposals to protect the environment by considering hazards and pollution associated with the development and adopting mitigation measures where possible.

Members supported this new policy. A Member had noted the basis of Natural England's feedback regarding increased traffic and air pollution and wondered whether a focus on air quality would create a conflict with other Local Plan policies. The PPO responded that these comments and this new policy had both been reviewed by the Authority's Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) consultant and their judgement was that the references to air quality within the new policy and elsewhere in the Local Plan were adequate and acceptable. The PPO reminded Members that given the Authority's housing need equated to 17 dwellings per year, the resulting impact on air quality was very low in comparison to neighbouring Local Planning Authorities whose housing need equated to hundreds of dwellings per year.

A Member noted that the proposed new policy referred to avoiding potential hazards and pollution and wondered whether, if avoiding these issues was not possible, the policy should encourage action to minimise these issues. The PPO would consider this change and amend the policy accordingly.

In response to a question the PPO confirmed that Nutrient Neutrality was covered under its own policy in the Natural Environment section and there was no need to reference it in this new policy.

It was agreed to enhance the new policy's supporting text relating to water quality to highlight its scope across the whole catchment including marine and estuarine by including a reference to catchment management.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Tony Grayling.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse, subject to further changes returning to committee, the Pollution and Hazards in Development and Protecting Environmental Quality Local Plan policy.**

#### Local Infrastructure Study update

The PPO had updated the Local Infrastructure Study to replace references to the 2019 Water Resource Management Plans with more up-to-date emerging equivalents from Anglian Water and Essex & Suffolk Water (the updated study formed Appendix 3 of the report). The PPO confirmed that the conclusion remained unchanged and that the reduced water efficiency target of 110 litres/head/day was justified.

A Member asked whether more support should be given to the creation of water abstraction reservoirs and suggested a dedicated Local Plan policy for this type of development. The PPO confirmed that the planning team had considered this and they had concluded that these developments were adequately covered by existing policies within the Local Plan. The Head of Planning reminded Members that the Authority provided free pre-application advice and this channel would facilitate the specific advice required in this context.

The PPO agreed to update the infrastructure study to reference water abstraction infrastructure.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by James Harvey.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse, subject to subsequent changes being agreed by the Chair of the Planning Committee, the updated Local Infrastructure Study.**

#### Peat Soils policy update

The PPO explained that the Preferred Options version of the Peat Soils policy had been updated to reflect a recent decision by the Planning Inspectorate of England (PINS) regarding the importance of peat and in particular its role as an "irreplaceable habitat". Subsequently the PPO had discussed this matter with the Authority's Environment Policy Advisor and the Authority's Ecologist and concluded that peat was not a habitat per se however it was such a key component in the environments where it was prevalent that it could be equated to a habitat. The policy had been updated to state that peat, given its qualities and the time required to regenerate, was deemed equivalent to an irreplaceable habitat. The PPO accepted that this clarification to the policy, although it did not alter its scope, would present a high bar

for any development wishing to excavate peat. This high threshold reflected the significant role played by peat from an environmental perspective for example as a sequester of carbon.

Members supported the updated policy and it was agreed to strengthen the supporting text to reflect peat as a key component within a habitat. A Member noted that some of the comments received relating to this policy reflected confusion regarding planning policy and the wider peat conservation work undertaken by the Broads Authority. It was agreed to add some guidance to this policy to help clarify this distinction.

Andrée Gee proposed, seconded by Tony Grayling.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse, subject to the agreed changes, the updated Peat Soils Local Plan policy.**

**Area associated with policy CAN1**

The PPO confirmed that there had been no objection to the extension of the area covered by policy CAN1 (Cantley Sugar Factory) as assessed by the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

Andrée Gee proposed, seconded by Stephen Bolt.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse the extended area associated with Local Plan policy CAN1.**

**Area of Green Infrastructure associated with policy HOV1**

The consultation on a proposed new area of Green Infrastructure associated with policy HOV1 (Hoveton and Wroxham) had resulted in one objection, one comment in support and an indication from Wroxham Parish Council, who had requested this change as part of the examination into the current Local Plan, that they no longer wished to pursue this matter. As the Parish Council no longer supported the inclusion of the new area of Green Infrastructure in policy HOV1 it was recommended that it be removed from the policy.

Fran Whymark proposed, seconded by Stephen Bolt.

**It was resolved unanimously to remove the new area of Green Infrastructure associated with Local Plan policy HOV1.**

**Area associated with policy WHI1**

The PPO confirmed that there had been no objection to the extension of the area covered by policy WHI1 (Whitlingham Country Park) as assessed by the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. There had been one comment in support and some suggested wording changes that would be incorporated into the next version of policy WHI1.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Kevin Maguire.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse the extended area associated with Local Plan policy WHI1.**

## **11. Notes of the Heritage Asset Review Group meeting held on 14 June 2024**

The Committee noted the minutes of the Heritage Asset Review Group meeting held on 14 June 2024.

The Chair indicated that the next HARG meeting would be on Friday 06 September 2024.

## **12. Appeals to the Secretary of State**

The Committee received a schedule of appeals to the Secretary of State since the last meeting.

## **13. Decisions made by officers under delegated powers**

The Committee received a schedule of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from 10 June 2024 to 8 July 2024 and any Tree Preservation Orders confirmed within this period.

## **14. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be on Friday 16 August 2024 10.00am at The King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich.

The meeting ended at 11:00 am

Signed by

Chair