

HEARING STATEMENT

GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN (PART 1)

MATTER 6

ISSUE 4

FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Hearing Statement has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of the University of East Anglia, in respect of **Matter 6, Issue 4: Purpose Built Student Accommodation** of the Inspector's 'Greater Norwich Local Plan Inspectors Matters Issues and Questions (Part 1)' (14 December 2021).
- 1.2 The Statement is intended to assist the Inspector's consideration of the soundness of the Plan and will form the basis of the discussion at the Examination Hearing session.

2.0 Matter 6, Issue 4 Questions

Question 1

What does ‘will be supported’ mean in the policy in relation to development proposals at UEA? Should this be ‘permitted’ in order that the wording of the policy would be effective in seeking to secure student accommodation?

- 2.1 The UEA is supportive of the Inspector’s suggestion to amend the wording of Policy 5 to state that purpose-built student accommodation ‘will be permitted’ so that the policy remains effective in securing delivery of student accommodation on campus.

Question 2

Are the requirements for proposals away from the UEA campus justified and are they likely to be effective?

- 2.2 Requirements for proposals away from the UEA campus are considered justified, when considering the evidence presented in the UEA’s Development Framework Strategy (DFS). As set out in the DFS, the University’s current policy is that all first-year undergraduates and international students are offered residential accommodation on campus. Some other categories of students are also offered on campus accommodation but most of the remaining undergraduates reside off campus.
- 2.3 The UEA currently provides 4,500 bed spaces on campus (approximately 95,000m² (GIA). The DFS identified a shortfall of 1,210 bed spaces, and a need for 990 additional bed spaces to accommodate the forecasted growth of the University across the plan period. The required additional student accommodation floorspace requirement on campus by 2036 to accommodate this forecasted growth would be approximately 25,000sqm. Even with such provision in place, this would not address the existing shortfall, and therefore off-campus provision is also required to meet such demand.
- 2.4 Through a rigorous evaluation process, in partnership with the GNLP team, the DFS identified sites on campus to meet forecasted academic and non-academic (i.e. student accommodation, student welfare) floorspace requirements up to 2036. These sites, which have been proposed as draft site allocations in the emerging GNLP, are anticipated to capture the forecasted student accommodation requirements on campus. The delivery of student accommodation off Campus by third party providers would therefore be justified to help address the current shortfall of provision on campus and provide an appropriate range of accommodation available which are available to students beyond just first year undergraduates.
- 2.5 It should be noted that the DFS works up to 2036, to align with the timeframes of the GNLP at the time of writing in 2019.

Question 3

- **What is the status of the UEA Development Framework?**

- 2.6 The Development Framework Strategy (DFS) was first published in 2010, to guide and coordinate the growth of the Campus, and to inform the preparation of the adopted City of Norwich Local Development Framework (Joint Core Strategy, Development Management Document and Site Allocations Plan). The DFS provided an invaluable framework and successful planning tool for the University, Norwich City Council and other stakeholders, which has seen the delivery of many of its long-term aspirations through either site allocation or planning consent, earlier than originally anticipated. This required a review of the DFS in 2018, to re-examine the University's growth needs, in tandem with the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan.
- 2.7 The second iteration of the DFS was drafted in 2019, and this document is included as part of the evidence base for the GNLP, as it has been prepared in conjunction with a variety of stakeholders to frame University-related site allocations on Campus, to both inform and align the GNLP with the University's growth requirements.
- 2.8 The second iteration of the DFS was formally endorsed by Norwich City Council's Sustainable Development Committee on 17 July 2019 as an evidence base to inform the UEA aspects of the emerging GNLP. The minutes of this meeting are attached at Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PANEL MINUTES



Sustainable Development Panel

09:30 to 10:45

17 July 2019

Present: Councillors Stonard (chair), Maguire (vice chair), Carlo, Davis, Giles, Grahame, Maxwell and Stutely

Apologies: Councillor Lubbock

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019.

3. Development Framework Strategy for UEA

(James Aflatt, Bidwells (consultant) attended the meeting for this item.)

The chair by way of introduction, explained that members of the cabinet had received a presentation on the draft development framework strategy (DFS) for the UEA. He introduced the consultant and said that he had been invited to attend the panel to contribute to the discussion.

The planning policy planner presented the report. (A copy of the presentation was circulated at the meeting.) He explained that refresh of the DFS for the UEA took account of the university's planned future growth and would form part of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). Members were advised that the proposed development of Sky House, subject to planning permission, on the site of the security lodge, to provide additional teaching space and an entrance and arrival point to the university site, was not a proposal of the DFS but was included in its baseline. The purpose of the new building would be to act as a decamp facility during the refurbishment of the 1960's Lasdun Teaching Wall. Therefore this additional academic floor space would not be available during the period of this DFS (2020 to 2036) but would be available for future DFSs going forward.

The chair explained the process for the consultation as part of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) evidence base and that the outcome of the consultation would be considered at future meetings of the panel and cabinet. In reply to a member's question, the head of planning services said that the DFS for the UEA was one of several evidence based documents that would support the emerging local plan and it should not receive greater resources or priority than these other documents. The

university had commissioned the DFS and might consider holding an independent consultation on the document. In reply to a member's question, the consultant confirmed that all the proposed growth sites shown on the plan (circulated at the meeting) had been put forward for site allocation under the GNLP. Members were advised that the sites shown in green were being proposed.

During discussion members commented on the proposals. A member commented on the proposed loss of the Old Sports Hall (now Congregation Hall) which had been one of the original campus buildings. The head of planning services explained that one of the solutions to accommodate the university's projected growth was to make better use of the existing campus. The UEA was committed to containing its academic teaching on one campus. The chair asked the panel to look at the draft DFS in the context of the wider brief of the beneficial impact that the university had on the local and regional economy and balancing this with sustainable development for its projected growth.

Discussion ensued on the extension of the university campus. Some members expressed concern about development by the broad and that it would result in further loss of green space along the Yare Valley. The head of planning services pointed out that public access to the river valley had been improved as a result of previous developments. The chair said that the ziggurats were set back from the broad and, in the original plans for the university campus, it had been intended to build out to be far closer to the broad. He explained that that some sites around the campus had been discounted for expansion, such the area adjacent to the SportsPark, because it would encroach on to Earlham Park. A two campus model would undermine the university's intention of having all the academic facilities on one compact site. The consultant said that some of the proposed development sites shown on the plan had been approved under the current LP and that the proposed expansion of the campus was less than 10 per cent of the existing campus boundary. A cabinet member pointed out that the proposed development on the grounds depot site would open up the site, creating a park like setting. There was no intention to enclose the broad with buildings. It was noted that the shared path and cycle way was used for recreational use and that most people stayed close to the broad. A member commented that many people were attracted to the broad and the wide open space of the meadow.

The head of planning services explained that the development of the walled garden and former nursery site would be low rise and sensitive to Earlham Hall's listed building status and setting. Discussion ensued on the proposed redevelopment of the existing campus to accommodate the projected growth as set out in the draft DFS. This included consideration of the university's accommodation needs and that an additional 990 units would be required. This was expected to be provided in the city centre as purpose built accommodation and would benefit the local population by relieving the pressure on the housing market as student HMOs were either family homes or provided accommodation for young professionals or young people, particularly in the light of benefit changes for single people under 35.

Discussion ensued on the increasing urbanisation of green spaces and the impact that this had on climate change. The chair said that there should be a balanced approach to the development of the city and that the draft DFS supported the sustainable development of the UEA. During discussion members commented that development needs changed over time and that, originally, the UEA broad had a

meadow. The consultant said that the UEA was a world leader in research into Climate Change and that the buildings would be the most sustainable. Two members expressed concern that the proposals would increase the footprint of the campus and suggesting that the large surface car park could be developed. A member commented that, on balance, improved public green space is often provided when sites are re-developed referencing postwar Manchester and London and providing the Mile Cross Depot as an example of an area for opportunity in Norwich. The head of planning services referred to the draft DFS and said that the university's travel plan was exemplary and that carbon reduction was integral to its development; including good use of public transport, reduction in car journeys and the provision of accommodation on campus. He explained that the university had not implemented the car park element of the district heating planning consent. The university had reduced its carbon footprint by reducing car journeys and would be seeking planning permission to develop part of the surface car park. This was separate to the DFS because it was on the existing campus.

RESOLVED to note the emerging Development Framework Strategy for the University of East Anglia (2019) that will form part of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan, which will be publicly consulted upon as part of the Regulation 18 consultation expected later in 2019.

CHAIR

