

# Greater Norwich Development Partnership Board

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Monday 7 December 2020

**Time:** 2.00pm

**Venue:** hosted by video link

### **Board Members:**

#### **Broadland District Council:**

Cllr Lana Hempsall, Cllr Shaun Vincent (Chairman)

#### **Norwich City Council:**

Cllr Kevin Maguire, Cllr Mike Stonard, Cllr Alan Waters

#### **South Norfolk Council:**

Cllr Florence Ellis, Cllr John Fuller, Cllr Lisa Neal

#### **Norfolk County Council:**

Cllr Andrew Proctor, Cllr Barry Stone

#### **Broads Authority**

Cllr Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

**Officers in attendance:** Nick Booth, Mike Burrell, Judith Davidson, Phil Courtier, Trevor Holden, Helen Mellors, Phil Morris, Graham Nelson, Jonathan Pyle, Marie-Pierre Tighe and Matt Tracey.

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## **1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman advised the meeting that through his consultancy Abzag, he was promoting, on behalf of the landowner, a site for residential development in Colney through the Greater Norwich Local Plan. When this site was under consideration he would declare a disclosable pecuniary interest and shall vacate the chair and leave the room.

In the interests of transparency, he also brought to the Board's attention, that his father, Malcolm Vincent, through his company Vincent Howes, was promoting, on behalf of the landowners, a site for residential development in Costessey/Bawburgh through the Greater Norwich Local Plan. In this case under the provisions of the Code of Conduct, there was no interest to declare which would prevent him from participating in the debate and chairing the meeting.

Cllr John Fuller and Cllr Barry Stone confirmed that they were Members of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association.

Cllr L Hemsall and Cllr S Vincent advised the meeting that they were directors of Broadland Growth Ltd.

Cllr M Stonard informed the meeting that he was a director of Norwich Regeneration Ltd.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr S Lawn and Cllr S Clancy.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

## **4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions from the public had been received.

## **5. GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 19 PUBLICATION STAGE – INTERIM PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT STRATEGY FOR REPRESENTATIONS ON SOUNDNESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE**

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The Chairman noted the significant amount of work that had gone into bringing forward the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) to the Regulation 19 publication stage for representations on soundness and legal compliance.

He drew the Board's attention to the updated version 1.4 of the Strategy that had been circulated electronically to Members and had a significant number of changes from version 1.3, which was appended to today's Agenda.

The Greater Norwich Planning Policy Manager added that the Board were being asked to recommend to their respective council's the publication of the GNLP Strategy. The sites document would be considered by the Board on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

A Member noted that although version 1.4 had a large number of modifications, there were still some areas that needed further work, although these should be possible to address without too much difficulty. For example, greater clarification was required for the South Norfolk Village Clusters was needed, as this had raised a lot of questions at the Regulation 18 stage. It should also be noted that the Strategy brought the number of new homes up to 49,000, which was an over-allocation of 22 percent against the 2014 baseline need.

The Board was also reminded that the Strategy had identified a contingency site in Costessey and that it must be ensured that there was a significant trigger point before the requirement for the contingency was reached, as Costessey had a large population, but comparatively few facilities.

He also suggested that there were some gaps to be filled in the Strategy, in areas such as hydrogen power and better pen portraits of the market towns and that it was critical that the Economic Study be incorporated into the Strategy, otherwise it would risk being found unsound.

It was also noted that the City would be losing a significant proportion of Business Rates resulting from the collapse of Debenhams and Arcadia and that this should also be a consideration.

The Board was informed that Avison Young were drafting the Economic Study using the most recent data. Their view was that in terms of jobs the recovery from the pandemic would be 'V' shaped and should begin to recover at the start of the next financial year. It was suggested that this could see an additional 33,000 jobs by 2038, with about 25,000 of these across all sectors and would lead to an employment land requirement of around 75 hectares. However, it was noted that Greater Norwich had an employment land supply of 280 hectares in its key strategic sites, so there was significant oversupply.

In respect of retail it was predicted that there was some capacity for growth in the food sector outside of the Norwich urban area, in places such as Diss, but little need for growth in the City. Non-food retail was predicted to be severely impacted, with negative growth for the next ten years and possibly reduced turnover.

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A covering report and the Economic Study would be brought to the 16 December meeting. Overall, the message was the need to take a flexible approach to the economic challenges ahead.

A Member noted that there was going to be a significant transition in the economy and that funding local government via Business Rates was looking an increasingly poor model. He emphasised that uncertainty made it crucially important, however, to use the transition period to drive forward the GNLP ahead of what would emerge as a result of the Planning White Paper.

However, the Board was advised that there were also encouraging signs for the future such as the East Norwich Partnership, which was made up of the City and County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, all the landowners and Network Rail and had been set up to coordinate the development of three major brownfield sites in the east of the City.

A Member suggested that an emphasis on the delivery of these major projects and others should be strengthened in the final Strategy. It should also be made very clear that the GNLP was going well beyond the housing numbers required by the baseline need study.

In summing up the Chairman noted the key elements that need to be incorporated in the Strategy, which including ensuring that the housing numbers and other data added up and the links between the Economic Study were made clear, as well as the trigger points for the Costessey contingency site.

The Chairman also noted the timetable for bringing the Regulation 19 consultation forward, which would see cabinets agree the plan in mid-January and the consultation take place from 1 February to 15 March 2021.

## **RESOLVED**

That subject to the inclusion of the amendments proposed above the Board:

- Recommends to the councils that they should agree to publish the Regulation 19 Pre-submission Draft Greater Norwich Local Plan Strategy, for representations on soundness and legal compliance; and
- Delegates authority to directors to make changes agreed today and at the GNLP meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December, plus other minor changes to the plan, prior to it being reported to councils in January.

*The meeting closed at 2.34 pm.*

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