



SOUTH NORFOLK PLANNING & ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the South Norfolk Planning & Economic Growth Committee of South Norfolk Council, held on Tuesday, 7 January 2025 at 10.03 am.

Committee Members Present:	Councillors: V Thomson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), C Brown and D Sacks
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor: B McClenning
Substitute:	Councillor: J Webber (In place of B McClenning)
Cabinet Member in Attendance:	Councillor: L Overton-Neal
Officers in Attendance:	B Burgess (Assistant Director for Planning), A Banham (Place Shaping Manager), C Baker (Principal Planning Policy Officer) and J Hammond (Democratic Services Officer)

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr B McClenning, with Cllr J Webber substituting.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

13. GREATER NORWICH FIVE YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN AND ANNUAL GROWTH PROGRAMME

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which set out the draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (5YIIP) 2025 to 2030. The five-year plan included: a progress report on previously approved projects; proposals for new projects to be funded by pooled Community

Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in 2025/26, otherwise known as the 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme (AGP); updated forecasts of CIL income; and information on future project priorities.

It was noted that, in accordance with the CIL pooling arrangements for Greater Norwich's Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF), each of the three CIL charging authorities: Broadland District Council; Norwich City Council; and South Norfolk Council needed to separately agree to the recommendations for them to take effect.

The Place Shaping Manager explained that three of the projects considered for CIL funding were located within the South Norfolk District, these were:

- Rothbury Park
- Diss Leisure & Public Realm
- Wymondham Baptist Community Space

The 2025/26 education funding would be allocated to the School of Oral Health. The project would be delivered by the University of East Anglia, with Norfolk County Council acting as the sponsoring authority. It was noted that the third phase of the project had not been fully scoped, but the need for dental services across Norfolk had made it an important project to fund.

Members requested clarification on how the bid submission and consideration process was conducted. The Assistant Director for Planning outlined the process, stating that bids were submitted to the GNGB by officers, partner organisations or members during a 6-week submission period, often following many years work preparing the application. All bids would then be reviewed by the GNGB officer board – composed of Directors from each of the local authority councils, before proceeding to the member-led GNGB board.

The Committee requested that the Assistant Director for Planning provide an all-member training session on CIL.

One member expressed concern about the lack of infrastructure in Cringleford, the Assistant Director for Planning agreed to meet with the Ward Member to address their concerns outside of the meeting. It was then noted that to rectify poor infrastructure arrangements retrospectively, Councils, developers and partner agencies needed to work collaboratively to utilise all funding sources as they became available.

Members noted that there was a perception that CIL funding was not always spent in the local area which accrued the CIL. The Assistant Director for Planning advocated the adoption of Neighbourhood Plans to ensure a percentage of CIL could be retained by the local area. Neighbourhood Plans also provided an understanding of both existing infrastructure and what was needed. He encouraged all areas without a Neighbourhood Plan to contact the Council for advice on how to begin the process.

After further discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet recommends to Council:

1. Approval of the Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025/30 and the proposed 2025/26 Annual Growth Programme.
2. Inclusion of the Rothbury Park project (totalling £144,449 pooled CIL), Wymondham Baptist Community Space (totalling £250,000 pooled CIL), and the Diss Leisure Centre & Public Realm project (totalling £6,198,000, of which £1,100,000 is IFF pooled CIL) into the Council's capital programme commencing in 2025/26.

14. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE RECREATION AVOIDANCE MITIGATION STRATEGY (GIRAMS ACTION PLAN AND GIRAMS GOVERNANCE)

The Place Shaping Manager presented the report, which:

- Updated members on the joint work undertaken by the Norfolk Planning Authorities to protect the county's most important natural habitats, such as the Broads, from the pressures of increases in visitor numbers.
- Outlined the Countywide agreement for setting a revised tariff of £293.53 per new dwelling built and jointly employing a Delivery Manager to coordinate spending on projects that will mitigate the impact of visitor pressure on Norfolk's most important natural habitats.

The current Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) was introduced in 2020, with each of the 8 Norfolk Planning Authorities collecting the GIRAMS tariff from qualifying development. In 2023, Footprint Ecology were appointed to review and refine the existing mitigation approach.

To develop the GIRAMS Action Plan, survey work was conducted across Greater Norfolk, with over 70 projects identified as being required to protect the natural habitats. It was estimated that approximately £22M would be required to implement the Action Plan, thus, the GIRAMS tariff for every new home constructed in Norfolk was proposed to be increased from £221.17 to £293.53.

In relation to the implementation of a Norfolk Recreation Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Board, it was proposed that the Board be coordinated by Norwich City Council through the appointment of a GIRAMS Delivery Manager. In response to queries, the Place Shaping Manager explained that Norfolk County Council had determined they did not have the capacity to coordinate the Board, and so alternative options were considered.

One member raised a number of concerns regarding the principle of GIRAMS and the Countywide charging scheme, as they felt that:

- The 'add on' GIRAMS charge might deter the development of housing.
- The blanket charge across Greater Norwich was not equitable and did not take into account the lack of protected habitats in South Norfolk.
- It was not clear how the projects outlined in the Action Plan would benefit the

habitats.

- South Norfolk Council should opt out of the Greater Norwich scheme and set its own charge based on projects required within the district.

In response to the concerns raised, officers explained that whilst none of the protected habitats were location in South Norfolk, the GIRAMS scheme considered the effect of increased tourism to the sites as a result of development in neighbouring areas and districts.

The Place Shaping Manager advised that, were the Council to choose to set its own tariffs, a footprint ecologist would need to be employed to calculate the ecological impact of development on a case-by-case basis. Alternatively, the onus could be put on developers to calculate the ecological impact of their own developments, which would be time consuming and expensive.

With regard to the impact of the GIRAMS charge on developers, it was noted that the GIRAMS charge was already in place, with only a relatively small increase proposed. The simple and coherent tariff gave certainty to developers when determining the costs associated with development.

Following the detailed discussion on the concerns raised, most members felt that, at present, GIRAMS was a suitable charging mechanism, but that the Committee should request Cabinet to consider looking into alternative methods of charging in the future.

It was then,

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet:

1. Agree to the increase to the existing Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS) from £221.17 to £293.53 per property.
2. Instruct officers to investigate alternative methods of charging developments to mitigate the effects of new housing, and in turn more visitor pressure, on protected habitats.
3. Agree to the employment of a Delivery Manager funded through tariff contributions who reports into the Norfolk Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Board.
4. Recommend to Council the appointment of an elected Councillor, with relevant portfolio, to the Norfolk RAMS Board.

Cllr C Brown left the meeting after the consideration of this item.

15. **NORFOLK STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK: PLANNING IN HEALTH PROTOCOL**

Members considered the report of the Place Shaping Manager, which outlined the Planning in Health Protocol.

The Protocol set out how NHS organisations, public health and local planning authorities would collaborate in the preparation of local plans and the determination of planning applications.

The revised Protocol focused on two issues, those being:

1. Understanding the demand and capacity of dentistry services.
This had been the responsibility of NHS England and had not previously been addressed by the Protocol.
2. Better quantifying the demands on NHS services
By adding additional metrics to measure existing services, their capacity, workforce pressures, and the additional demand new development creates.

With regard to the consideration of planning applications, members highlighted a concern in the lack of representation responses from the NHS. The Place Shaping Manager explained that the Protocol outlined the types of applications the NHS were expected to respond to in future. He added that the NHS's new approach of modelling was expected to aid them in responding to applications. The Assistant Director for Planning noted that across the County the number of NHS representations were beginning to increase.

Discussion turned to the additional metrics and modelling being utilised by the NHS and the Place Shaping Manager explained that the model used was regarded as a sensible approach to consider population needs and was being used to evidence representations made to planning applications as well as requests for CIL and S106 funding.

In response to a query, the Place Shaping Manager confirmed he had contacted the NHS for the original documents at appendix 2 and 3 of the report and would circulate to the Committee once received.

After further discussion it was unanimously,

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet:

1. Note the approach to embedding health and wellbeing in spatial planning.
2. Endorse the revised Planning in Health Protocol.

16. DRAFT CUSTOM AND SELF-BUILD HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report, which presented the draft Custom and Self-Build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and sought members sign off for public consultation in mid-January 2025 for four weeks.

Custom and self-build housing had many benefits in allowing people to choose the design and layout of their own home, it could also lead to innovative approaches to design and construction, diversify the market, increase choice and improve rates of housing delivery. The requirement to make provision for custom and self-build housing was laid out in legislation and guidance.

South Norfolk Council made provision for custom and self-build housing through policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which was adopted in March 2024. Policies in the GNLP specifically related to custom and self-build housing were Policy 5 (Homes) and Policy 7.5 (Self-Build and custom build windfall housing development outside defined settlement boundaries).

Following the adoption of the GNLP in March 2024 it was recognised that there would be a need for additional guidance to support the policies in the plan. The best way to provide the guidance was through an SPD.

In response to a query regarding the custom and self-build register, the Principal Planning Officer advised that there were previously 800 people on the register. When the Council began administering the register 'in-house' and implemented an eligibility criteria, local connection testing and a charge the number on the register reduced to 8. Following concerns, members were further advised that without the criteria and administration charge, a large number of people put their names onto multiple registers across the County, which skewed the figures on the demand for custom and self-build plots in the district.

It was proposed that the draft SPD went out for a four-week public consultation commencing in mid-January 2025. The consultation would be the first stage towards adopting the new SPD, and depending upon the results, it was expected that the finalised SPD would be published in Spring 2025.

Members queried whether a 4-week consultation gave enough time to gain valuable insight from all parties. The Assistant Director for Planning advised that developers and interested parties were expecting the consultation and would respond quickly. It was noted that a number of Parish Councils met monthly or 6-weekly, so the consultation may fall outside of their meeting schedule. The Committee requested that the consultation be held for 6 weeks to ensure adequate time for responses. Officers explained that the 4-week period was set according to best practice guidance on developing SPDs, but that extending the consultation period would not impact the timescales. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Growth requested that officers inform all District Councillors when the consultation began so that they could inform their relevant Parish Councils.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

To recommend that Cabinet:

1. Agree that the draft Custom and Self-Build Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can go out for a **six**-week public consultation to commence mid-January 2025.
2. Delegate to the Assistant Director for Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Economic Growth, the sign off for any minor amendments to the SPD prior to public consultation.

17. PLANNING & ECONOMIC GROWTH COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the work programme.

(The meeting concluded at 11.50 am)

Chairman