

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Notes of a Meeting of a Special Meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities held on Tuesday 7th April 2009 at 6.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT:**Representing the Borough Council:**

Councillors D Harwood (Chair), Mrs A Clery-Fox, G Daniell, M Langwade, J Legg, Mrs J Murphy, G Sandell, Mrs S Smeaton.

Representing People with Disabilities:

W Blades, T Gilder, S Lowe.

Officers Present:

C Churchill.

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor G Sandell. J Evans, P French, S Smith, T Smith.

1. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY

The Chair welcomed Claire Churchill, Principal Planner to the meeting.

Claire Churchill gave a presentation to the Committee that briefly outlined what the Borough Council was attempting to achieve with the Core Strategy.

She explained that the Core Strategy set out the key elements of planning framework for the area and comprised the following:

- Spatial vision
- Strategic objectives and spatial strategy
- Core policies
- Monitoring and implementation framework.

The Core Strategy formed part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). Other components of the LDF were outlined as follows:

- Local Development Scheme (project plan)
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Annual Monitoring Report
- Other plan documents and supplementary planning documents
- Site specific allocations and policies.

She informed the Committee that the Core Strategy document was still in its early stages and consultation was ongoing. Following closure of the consultation period, responses would be analysed to assist preparation of the final draft version of the strategy. The final draft would then be submitted to Regional Government for examination, before final adoption in 2010.

A copy of the slides from the presentation are attached as Appendix 1.

Following the presentation the Committee was invited to ask questions and provide feedback on the presentation and strategy as summarised below:

(i) Development on Flood Risk Areas

Councillor Mrs Smeaton asked if future development to the East of the Thames barrier would have an impact on development in West Norfolk.

Claire Churchill explained that development on flood risk areas was to be avoided where possible. If development was to take place on an area of land at risk of flooding, the Council would have to prove to Regional Government that this was the most suited site to be used and all other alternatives had been investigated.

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to the map on page 92 of the Core Strategy Regulation 25 document and explained that the areas marked as at risk of flooding included fluvial flooding and sea flooding. He explained that the Internal Drainage Board was currently working to alleviate the risk of fluvial flooding in some areas in King's Lynn, which would hopefully expand the areas available for potential development.

(ii) Areas for Development

Councillor Mrs Murphy informed the Committee that she was aware of potential development of one thousand houses in the Leziate/Ashwicken area.

Claire Churchill explained that this site had been identified by a developer and an expression of interest in developing the site had been submitted to Regional Government for the East of England. At present, Claire Churchill was unaware if a submission had been made to the Borough Council for this site.

She explained that following the consultation process for the Core Strategy, the Borough Council would then analyse responses and prepare a final draft version of the Core Strategy. At this stage significant sites would be identified that the Borough Council believed would be suitable for development and those sites would be suitable, available and deliverable.

(iii) Current Economic Climate

Concerns were raised regarding the impact the recession could have on potential developments and the amount of growth proposed in the Core Strategy.

The Committee was informed that Government Housing requirements meant that the Borough Council would have to deliver about 5000 new sites by 2025.

The share of new growth would be split as follows:

- 43% of development in King's Lynn
- 21% of development in Hunstanton and Downham Market
- 21% of development in key service centre villages
- 2% of development in other villages.

Claire Churchill explained that key service centre villages were villages that already had certain service provisions in place, mainly the larger villages in the Borough.

She explained that the Borough Council shared the concerns of the Committee regarding the current economic climate, but as yet the Government had not provided any guidance on an alternative

approach if the Borough Council was unable to deliver the required development.

Claire Churchill informed the Committee that the Borough Council would have to come up with realistic, cost effective solutions. Eg. where promoting development on brownfield land which was often considered less economically viable.

The Chair commented that the Government Minister for Housing had recently announced that many of the house building targets suggested by Government were unlikely to be reached. The Government had also recently announced that they felt the recession was to last longer than expected.

The Chair explained that, by having documents such as the Core Strategy in place in readiness for the market to pick up, developments could start as soon as possible.

(iv) Transport and infrastructure

In response to a question from Councillor Langwade, Claire Churchill explained that Norfolk County Council, in partnership with the Borough Council, were currently carrying out a King's Lynn Area Transport Study (KLATS). This study was being used to identify which directions of growth would have the least impact on transport and travel in King's Lynn. Results from the study would be incorporated into the final draft of the Core Strategy.

The Borough Council and Norfolk County Council were jointly working on their plans and priorities for the Borough and alternative methods of transport were being investigated.

Claire Churchill explained that the Borough Council shared the concerns of the Committee regarding transport issues and had made concerns known to Norfolk County Council.

The Committee commented that Norfolk County Council tended to focus more on infrastructure issues in Norwich and felt that West Norfolk was sometimes neglected.

Councillor Daniell reiterated concerns that traffic problems in King's Lynn would need to be rectified before any further development commenced.

Claire Churchill reminded the Committee that the recent bid to the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) had been successful resulting in £5.2 million being awarded to make improvements to infrastructure in King's Lynn.

Councillor Mrs Clery-Fox raised concerns regarding the amount of Heavy Goods Vehicles using the centre of King's Lynn. She hoped that consideration would be given to ways to prevent this extra traffic using the centre of town. She suggested using an area near the Hardwick, adjacent to the railway line, where lorries could unload onto trains, and then goods transported, by rail, to the Centre of Town.

Claire Churchill explained that problems such as this would be investigated as part of the KLATS. Investigations on how to utilise existing infrastructure and providing alternatives would be carried out.

(v) Sustainable Development

Councillor Mrs Murphy asked how good sustainable design practice would be promoted and Claire Churchill explained that at this stage the guidance was not prescriptive but the Borough Council would assist developers where possible. Issues regarding drainage and utilities would be the responsibility of the developers, but would be monitored by the Borough Council, where appropriate.

The Chair explained that development would be very site specific, therefore design guidance would have to be broad. The varying financial input from developers on sites would also have an impact, for example larger developments sometimes provided infrastructure alongside the development.

Councillor Mrs Murphy informed the Committee that she was aware that a British Standard Code of Good Practice for design in flood risk areas was soon to be published and agreed to pass details of this onto Claire Churchill.

(vi) Housing needs

Councillor Mrs Clery-Fox asked that consideration be given to providing rentable properties as part of future developments.

Claire Churchill explained that a Government requirement was in place to provide 30% affordable housing in any new development of more than ten houses.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Smeaton, it was explained that the Borough Council now employed an Empty Homes Officer who would be working to try and make use of empty properties.

The Chair explained that there was a possibility that future Government legislation may enable Council's to use Compulsory Purchase Orders on empty properties under special circumstances.

The Committee was informed that new build properties were not eligible to pay Council Tax until they were fully completed. This meant that sometimes developers did not connect utilities until the property had been sold so that they did not have to pay Council Tax.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their questions and thanked Claire Churchill for attending the meeting.

Any further comments or questions on the Core Strategy Regulation 25 Document should be directed to Claire Churchill or by using the contact details on the back page of the document.

2. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities would take place on Monday 11th May 2009 at 6.00pm, at Park House Hotel, Sandringham.

The meeting closed at 6.55pm