

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
AGENDA

Monday 11th May 2009
at 6.00pm at Park House Hotel, Sandringham

PLEASE NOTE VENUE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2009 (attached at Appendix 1) and the Special meeting held on 7th April 2009 (attached at Appendix 2).

3. MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

4. NORFOLK AND NORWICH ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

To receive a presentation on the work of the association, in particular reference to West Norfolk Services.

5. ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND – REACT SYSTEM

To receive an update regarding the above system.

6. FUTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

To receive a verbal report on the future of the Committee.

7. FEEDBACK FROM VISIT TO SANDRINGHAM HOUSE AND GARDENS

To receive feedback from the Members of the Committee who attended the visit to Sandringham House and Gardens.

8. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from Sylvia Pomeroy on current issues.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD

To nominate a representative from the members of the Committee with disabilities or representing organisations concerned with people with disabilities to attend the Improving Neighbourhoods Board Meetings.

For information, future meeting dates are as follows:

26th May

28th July

29th September

24th November

All meetings to start at 5.45pm.

10. ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE

To receive an update on the creation of the online access guide.

11. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

12. OPPORTUNITY AWARDS

To receive feedback from the recent meeting of the Opportunity Awards Working Group regarding arrangements for this years event.

13. (a) SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

(b) DISABILITY ISSUES CORRESPONDENCE

(c) FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities will be the Annual General Meeting and will take place on Thursday 9th July 2009 at 7.00pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street.

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities held on Monday 16th March 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), G Daniell, M Langwade, J Legg, D Murphy (substitute for Mrs J Murphy), G Sandell, Mrs S Smeaton

Representing People with Disabilities:

W Blades, P French, T Gilder, S Lowe, S Pomeroy, S Smith, T Smith.

Professional Advisors:

C Churchill, J Girdlestone, A Moulds.

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor Mrs A Clery-Fox, Councillor Mrs J Murphy.
E Burnham, R Cotton, J Evans, K Warner.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 9th January 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:

Kathy Warner was listed on the minutes as present and as given apologies. It was confirmed that Kathy Warner had given apologies for the meeting.

2. CO-OPTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chair reminded the Committee that it currently had one vacancy for a Member who was disabled or a representative of a voluntary organisation concerned with people with disabilities.

The Committee were asked to inform the Chair or the Secretary of any potential Committee Members.

Sue Lowe informed the Committee that she was aware of someone who may be interested and agreed to put them in touch with the Secretary.

3. MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

(i) Toilets at St James Swimming Pool

Trevor and Sue Smith reminded the Committee that they had previously raised an issue regarding the accessible showers and changing rooms at St James Pool at the Advisory Committee meeting on 11th November.

The accessible cubicle was used for showering and changing hence the floor was still wet when trying to get changed after showering. This meant that when someone used this cubicle some clothes would get wet.

At the meeting in November when this issue had been raised, Allison Bingham had agreed to pass on these comments to the necessary officers.

The Secretary agreed to follow this up and would report back to the Committee at its next meeting.

4. KING'S LYNN/WEST LYNN FERRY – DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS

The Chair introduced Andrew Moulds from Mott MacDonald who gave a presentation on the future operation of the King's Lynn/West Lynn Ferry.

He explained that Mott MacDonald were carrying out an access improvement study on the operation of the Ferry.

The Committee was informed that passenger numbers for the Ferry had constantly been on the increase. Andrew Moulds reported that approximately 43,000 passengers used the ferry in the year 2000 and this had increased to approximately 80,000 passengers in 2008, which proved that the ferry was an increasingly popular method of transport. Andrew Moulds informed the Committee that the improvement study was being carried out in liaison with the following stakeholders:

- Borough Council

- Norfolk County Council and its partners
- S N Kingston Marine Services (the ferry operators)
- King's Lynn Conservancy Board

In delivering his presentation, Andrew Moulds informed the Committee that the following constraints had an impact on the operation of the ferry:

- Tidal range and flow
- Wave height
- Navigation of the river
- Other vessels
- Operational Port
- Reeds

Andrew Moulds explained that work to improve access to the ferry would be carried out, taking into account the following:

- Health and Safety Implications
- Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Improvements to general access
- Improvements to lighting and waiting facilities.
- Improvements to the existing crafts
- Compliance with the Marine Design Standards

He confirmed that initially the study would look at remedial measures to improve the existing facilities and this would include:

- Lighting
- Surfacing
- Security
- Installation of handrails

Longer term improvement measures would consist of:

- Linkspans
- Installation of lifts
- Self levelling steps/ramps
- Possibility of moving the ferry, which would make it easier to provide access.

Andrew Moulds explained that a passenger survey for ferry users would be conducted, before compiling recommendations and a final report submitted to Norfolk County Council for consideration.

The Chair thanked Andrew Moulds for his presentation. Questions and Comments from the Committee are summarised below:

- In response to a question regarding moving the ferry, Andrew Moulds explained that the course of the ferry would be twice as long, if moved, and this would obviously have an impact on journey times and fuel consumption. He hoped that, as the ferry ran every 20 minutes, the operation would be maintained. He confirmed that in moving the ferry a pontoon could be created on the King's Lynn side as well as the West Lynn side, in its current location, however, this would not be feasible.
- Andrew Moulds confirmed that potential increased fares had not yet been considered, but this would be up to the ferry operators.
- Andrew Moulds clarified the current access arrangements to the ferry. He explained that to get onto the ferry passengers needed to step over the front of the vessel and then step down to the seated area. Sylvia Pomeroy commented that she was aware of some boat operators on the Norfolk Broads who had installed accessible lifts on their vessels for wheelchair access. Andrew Moulds agreed to investigate this.
- The Committee generally agreed that the installation of ramps would be preferred over self-levelling steps. The Committee appreciated that the gradient of the ramp would vary with the tide, but asked that consideration be given to ensuring that the ramp was safe to use and compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. A comment was made regarding the possibility of using hydraulics on the ramps.
- It was suggested that a moving walkway/escalator could be used, but it was felt that the operation and maintenance costs of this would be too high.
- In response to a query, Andrew Moulds confirmed that currently the ferry could accommodate 12 passengers per journey. He explained that if the ferry was accessible, it would probably accommodate two wheelchair users. He explained that an anchor system would be made available for any wheelchair users.
- It was confirmed that currently the ferry operated from Monday to Saturday from 7am to 6pm all year round and there was a continuous service from 8am to 9am

and from 5pm to 6pm for commuters. At all other times the ferry ran every 20 minutes.

- Andrew Moulds explained the ferry operators were currently conducting risk assessments and making improvements to signs displaying safety information.
- Certain members of the Committee raised concerns regarding the viability of the proposed improvements. It was felt that any changes needed to be cost effective.
- Sylvia Pomeroy felt that the changes to the ferry would be cost effective as people with disabilities would use the ferry. She suggested that the proposed survey be sent to disabled groups and organisations so that their opinion could be taken into account. Sylvia Pomeroy also suggested that information could be published in the press and on the radio asking people to forward their comments and suggestions for the proposals. Sue Lowe suggested that Andrew Moulds may like to contact the WNVCA as they may be able to provide a list of contacts.
- Jemma Girdlestone explained to the Committee that the access improvements to the ferry would form part of the King's Lynn Area Transport Study and other issues such as the provision of car parking for the ferry and promotion of the facilities as 'park and sail' would be included as part of the study.
- In response to a query regarding bus services to the ferry, it was explained that currently there was not a bus service running in this area.

The Chair thanked Andrew Moulds and Jemma Girdlestone for the presentation and hoped that they would take on board the Committee's comments.

He explained that the Committee would be happy to be consulted on future proposals as necessary.

5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY – YOUR VIEWS

Claire Churchill from the Local Development Framework Team at the Borough Council informed the Committee that the Borough Council's planning team had prepared a document that would guide future development across the whole of the area up to 2025. The document, referred to as the Core Strategy was currently the subject of a public consultation running from 23rd February to 6th April 2009.

The draft Core Strategy shared the Sustainable Community Strategy vision and objectives for the Borough. In particular it would aim to deliver the spatial elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council was working closely with the West Norfolk partnership to preserve, protect and enhance the qualities of West Norfolk.

Claire Churchill explained that it was important that the Core Strategy Document reflected the views of the communities within West Norfolk. She explained that the Council had carried out widespread consultation with exhibitions and workshops for residents. It was now important that other groups, that had so far had little involvement, be targeted to get their views.

Claire Churchill asked if it would be beneficial to arrange a special meeting of this group to specifically discuss the content of the draft Core Strategy.

AGREED: That a special meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities be held to discuss the content of the Core Strategy.

The Secretary agreed to arrange the meeting and inform the Committee of the date and time.

6. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE

Sylvia Pomeroy provided the group with an update on activities at Freebridge Community Housing. She informed the group that Freebridge Community Housing was currently undergoing an Audit and Inspection, which she felt was going well.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD

The group were informed that there was currently a vacancy on the above Board for a representative of this group. The Neighbourhood Management Board requested that the representative be a member of the Committee with a disability or a representative of an organisation concerned with people with disabilities.

If any members were interested in becoming involved with this Board they were to inform the secretary. For information the future meeting dates would be as follows:

24th March
26th May
28th July
29th September
24th November

All meetings would start at approximately 5.45pm

8. ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE

The Secretary provided the group with an update on the progress of the online access guide.

She explained that progress to date included:

- Input of data onto the website.
- Testing undertaken by Trevor and Sue Smith and the Council Information Centre staff.
- Cleansing and checking of data for accuracy and spelling mistakes corrected.
- Amendments following the testing of the site to be undertaken and updated, including ability to change the font colour and increasing the size of the command buttons.

The Secretary explained that a links page would be made available on the website and asked the Committee for any suggestions of links that could be included. The following links were suggested:

- Tourism For All
- Dial a Ride
- Community Transport
- Accessible Taxi services
- Direct Gov
- Age Concern – national information and advice
- Age Concern – nationally available factsheets and information sheets
- Age Concern West Norfolk District

With regards to publicity and a launch of the site, the Committee agreed that it would be good to hold a 'coffee afternoon' to celebrate the launch of the website. The press and other relevant organisations could be invited to the launch to promote the website.

The Secretary informed the Committee that the site would also have an area for latest news and events to be published, and asked members of the Committee if they had any ideas to contact her. The following items were suggested as news items:

- Hanse festival
- Festival at Park House Hotel, Sandringham

Sue Smith asked if she would have the chance to re-test the site and the secretary agreed to ask Allison Bingham if this would be appropriate.

The Secretary agreed to feedback information to Allison Bingham, who was leading the project.

9. **SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) – React System

The Secretary had been passed correspondence from Allison Bingham regarding a RNIB React System. The system was a versatile talking sign system that helped people who were blind or partially sighted find their way around external environments with increased confidence and greater independence.

The system could be used to deliver location information and additional messages for a variety of purposes such as tourist information.

The concept was to provide a number of strategically placed speaker units around the chosen area, and in this case the facility was being investigated for use along the pilgrimage trail in King's Lynn. Users would carry a 'trigger fob' device, which would send out a constant radio frequency signal. When an active trigger fob was within range of the speaker unit, the unit would automatically deliver a pre-recorded audio message at a suitable volume for the surrounding ambient conditions. The initial audio message would help users to confirm their location and orientate themselves with their surroundings. Further messages could then be used to provide more detailed information.

The Secretary informed the Committee that Allison Bingham was currently leading on this project and would keep the Committee updated on progress.

(ii) Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities – Annual General Meeting – 9th July 2009

The Secretary reminded the Committee that its Annual General Meeting would be held on 9th July 2009. She asked the Committee to give consideration to any potential guest speakers.

Sue Lowe suggested Jonathan Langham from Norfolk County Council who was leading on “assistive technology”.

The Secretary agreed to contact Jonathan Langham, and asked the Committee to inform her if they were aware of any other potential guest speakers.

(iii) Opportunity Awards

The Secretary informed the Committee that she was now starting to look at arrangements for the Opportunity Awards. She reminded the Committee that this year would be the 25th Anniversary of the Awards.

She informed the Committee that the awards would most likely take place in October 2009 and asked the Committee for suggestions on locations to hold the awards. Committee Members suggested the following locations which would be investigated:

- Knights Hill
- Corn Exchange
- Professional Development Centre.

The Secretary agreed to keep the Committee updated on progress and asked that if any members had suggestions on ways to promote or improve the awards that they should contact her.

10. FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

The Chair reminded the Committee that it had previously discussed visiting attractions as a group to investigate how accessible they were and then pass on suggestions on how they could be improved.

He informed the Committee that the Secretary had contacted Sandringham Estate, who had offered six complimentary tickets to the Committee for the visit.

The Chair explained that the six complimentary tickets would be offered to members of the Committee who had a disability, accompanied by Allison Bingham, and a checklist would be created for completion on the visit.

Members of the Committee who were interested on going on the visit, which would take place on the afternoon of 11th May 2009, were asked to contact the Secretary to the Committee on 01553 616632. The Secretary agreed to arrange the visit and would confirm arrangements in due course.

The group agreed to hold the next Committee meeting, scheduled for 6pm on 11th May 2009, at the Park House in Sandringham, so that those members attending the visit could then feedback at the meeting.

Once the visit had taken place and feedback received, the tourist attraction would be added to the online access guide.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Dropped kerbs in Hunstanton

Councillor Mrs Smeaton informed the Committee that she had been in contact with Norfolk County Council regarding the necessity to install dropped kerbs in certain areas in Hunstanton. She informed the Committee that Norfolk County Council were now looking into this issue.

(ii) Dropped kerbs at drop off point to rear of Boots, King's Lynn

Tess Gilder informed the Committee that Park House transport bus often used the rear of Boots in King's Lynn as a drop off/pick up point. She explained that it would be beneficial for a dropped kerb to be installed to make it easier to access the bus.

The Chair informed the Committee that he was attending a Stake holders meeting regarding future planned works in King's Lynn and agreed to raise the issue at this meeting and keep the Committee informed of progress.

(iii) Parking Fine

Councillor Mrs Smeaton informed the Committee that she had been approached by a lady with a disability who had not managed to return to her car before her car parking ticket had expired and so was fined.

Councillor Mrs Smeaton queried if the lady who got the ticket could appeal. The Chair confirmed that people who were issued with parking fines could appeal the excess charge, but each case would be determined on its own merits.

(iv) Hoist at St James Swimming Pool

Trevor and Sue Smith informed the Committee that a new hoist had been installed at St James Pool. Sue Smith explained that the new hoist was difficult to use as the seat on the hoist was not as stable as the one used previously.

Trevor and Sue Smith had consequently contacted the company who had provided the hoist and the company had confirmed that different seats were available for the hoist. They requested that consideration be given to using a flat bottomed seat with small holes in it so that water could drain off, rather than the new seat which was the style of a toilet seat.

The Secretary agreed to contact the necessary officers regarding this issue and would keep the Committee informed of progress.

(v) Accessible Toilet at the Corn Exchange

Sue Smith informed the Committee that she had recently been involved in a production at the Corn Exchange. She explained that she had used a dressing room on the first floor, but when trying to use the disabled toilets on the first floor they were out of order, meaning she had to go back down in the lift to use the ground floor toilets.

The Secretary agreed to pass on concerns to the relevant officer at the Corn Exchange.

(vi) Pavements surrounding St James Pool

Trevor and Sue Smith informed the Committee that the quality of the pavements surrounding St James Pool were

poor. They asked if any works were likely to be carried out to improve the pavements.

The Chair informed the Committee that he would raise this issue at the meeting he was attending regarding planned works in the Town.

(vii) Seated Sports Facilities in the Walks

Trevor and Sue Smith informed the Committee that they had previously written to the Council regarding the possibility of providing disabled sports facilities in the Walks, but had not had a response.

Sue Lowe informed the Committee that she was currently working with the Borough Council to investigate possible funding routes to provide this.

She agreed to speak to Trevor and Sue Smith outside of the meeting to gain their views and comments on proposals.

12. 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 7.52pm

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