

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK**LOCAL PLAN TASK GROUP**

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Local Plan Task Group held on
Wednesday, 11th May, 2022 at 10.00 am in the Assembly Room, Town Hall,
Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT:

Councillors R Blunt (Chair), A Bubb, C J Crofts, M de Whalley, C Hudson (Zoom),
A Kemp, J Moriarty, T Parish, S Sandell and D Tyler

Officers:

Claire May, Planning Policy Manager
Wendy Vincent, Democratic Services Officer

The Chair welcomed Claire May, new Planning Policy Manager to her first meeting of the Task Group.

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

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The notes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING

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Councillor Moriarty asked what was the point of the Local Plan Task Group (LPTG) working on plans when they seemed to be ignored by the Borough Council's Planning Committee. In response, the Chair explained that it was a democratic process the Council had a policy for the Borough in association with Neighbourhood Plans and the NPPF and commented that the Planning Committee determined the application. The Chair commented that it was law that the Borough Council had a Local Plan and that document carried a significant amount of weight but the LPTG could not enforce it and advise the Planning Committee that it must adhere to the Local Plan.

Councillor Moriarty asked under what circumstances planning decisions could be taken away from a Council and handled by an

external authority or other organisations. In response, the Chair there was a process that if the Borough Council had so many major applications refused then approved by the Inspector, there was a point when the Council would lose the right to make decisions.

Councillor de Whalley provided an overview as to why he thought the appeals process was unbalanced.

4 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

5 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

6 **MEMBERS PRESENT PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 34**

There were no Members present under Standing Order 34.

7 **CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no Chair's correspondence.

8 **LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND NEIGHBOURING PLANNING - VERBAL UPDATE**

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Local Plan Review

The Planning Policy Manager provided a verbal update, a summary of the key points are set out below.

- Local Plan was submitted on 29 March 2022 and was now under Examination.
- Correspondence between the Inspector and Borough Council to resolve any administrative issues in order to progress the Examination.
- First official Letter received from Inspector week commencing 9 May 2022 setting out initial questions regarding the Plan and which had been published on the Council's website on the Examination Page
- Timeline set out to response to initial questions set out in the letter.
- Second official letter setting out a list of questions expected end May 2022.

- Official letters would continue to be sent to the Council until the Inspector had an idea of matters and issues to be discussed at the Examination hearing.
- No exact dates yet confirmed for hearings which will be held in public over a two to three week period on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Suitable venue being sought.
- Early indication that the Examination will be scheduled for October/November 2022.
- Borough Council continue to work with the Programme Officer who was the intermediary between the Council and the Inspectors.
- One of the questions asked by the Inspector related to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) was approved in 2021 was out of date and did not truly reflect the publication and submission of the Local Plan. The Inspectorate had asked the Borough Council to update the LDS, a report would be presented to Cabinet in June 2022 to set out a new LDS to reflect the timeline taken place which was one of the legal requirements.

The Chair/Planning Policy Manager responded to questions in relation to:

- Local Development Scheme/timeline through to adoption.
- Official letters from the Inspector – seeking clarifying and justification in relation to the Local Plan and officer's responses.
- Duty to co-operate between local planning authorities.
- Queen's speech and any likely changes brought about levelling up and any potential impact on the Council's Local Plan.
- Any potential impact relating to nutrient neutrality.

AGREED: The Planning Policy Manager would email the Task Group when the second official letter was received from the Inspector and available to view on the Council's website.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Chair provided a verbal update and explained that Referendums would take place in June 2022 for Heacham and Hunstanton Neighbourhood Plans. The Chair added that whole resource profile was being looked at for the whole planning department including recognition of need for neighbourhood planning in the process and to find resources to undertake the work going forward which was a key role.

9

HOUSING LAND TRAJECTORY AND FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY (2020/21)

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Housing Delivery Test HDT)

In presenting the report, the Planning Policy Manager explained that the report provided details of the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results for 2021 that were published on 14 January 2022 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and provided an update to the five-year housing land supply position for the period 2021 – 2026. Members were informed that it had been confirmed that the Borough Council had achieved 96% and therefore no further action was required or penalties incurred.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the result of the HDT were used to determine the 'buffer' to apply in housing land supply position statements and whether the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.

The Task Group was advised that to reflect the disturbances to planning services during the national lockdown the Government reduced the 'homes required' within the 2019/20 year by a month and within the 2020/21 year by four months. It was explained that going forward it was not known which figures the Government would use next year and whether a concession would be applied.

The Planning Policy Manager responded to questions and comments in relation to:

- HDT for forthcoming years and projected results to keep above the 75%.
- Impact of nutrient neutrality on development in the Borough – it was confirmed that this would not affect the Local Plan.
- Building out houses and impact of increase in house prices and building materials.
- Complete site of affordable homes for people in West Norfolk including build to rent, first home policy.
- Reduced target during the Pandemic and given West Norfolk being at a high risk of flooding, flood zone 3 and the effect of climate change and rising sea level and being more vulnerable it was assumed there was no provision to reduce the Council's target because of vulnerabilities. It was noted that lobbying had been undertaken with the local MP.
- Need for housing for older people, particularly social housing and plans to provide this type of housing.
- Potential impact of major housing schemes such as West Winch being delayed/housing numbers required on an annual basis.
- When a house was counted within the Council's target - it was confirmed this was when the house was completed.
- Second Homes/Lodges – potential to lobby MP to change the current rules - lodges to be recognised as second homes and council tax being applied to them, this would add to the number of completed properties in the Borough and bring revenue to the Council.

5 Year Housing Land Supply

The Planning Policy Manager explained the Council had to calculate the local housing need for the Borough based on standard method set out in the Government guidelines with a 5% buffer that the HDT required the Council to have. It was explained that the Housing Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory confirmed that there was an identified supply of 3,595 dwellings for the 5-year period from 2020/21 to 2025/26 and the Council could show 6.24 years supply of deliverable housing against a local housing need of 576 dwellings per annum.

The Chair/Planning Policy Manager responded to questions in relation to:

- Calculation of housing need set out in report in HDT and was standard calculation set by the Government
- Local Housing need would have been undertaken as part of the evidence base study of local plan looked at types of housing.
- HDT and 5 year land supply were published on an annual basis.
- Higher building quality design/standard and demand.
- Viability test.

The Chair thanked the Planning Policy Manager for the update report.

AGREED: The Local Plan Group noted the result of the HDT and the Housing Land Supply Statement for the period March 2021 to April 2026.

10 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Local Plan Task Group would be held on 14 July 2022 at 10 am in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 11.11 am