

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

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Local Plan Task Group held on Tuesday, 16th June, 2026 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Moriarty (Chair)  
Councillors R Blunt, C J Crofts, M de Whalley, S Everett,  
T Parish and C Rose

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Moore and Sandell.

**2 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes from the previous meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026 were agreed as a correct record.

**3 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

**4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**5 URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to consider.

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

Councillor Lintern was present under Standing Order 34.

**7 CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE (IF ANY)**

There was no Chair's correspondence.

## 8 **LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE**

The Principal Policy Planner provided an update on the new local plan timetable, outlining the 30-month timeframe, the four-month pre-notification period starting 30th June, and the steps being taken to prepare for Gateway One and the scoping consultation.

It was explained that the four-month pre-notification period was intended for gathering evidence, preparing for the scoping consultation, and updating the evidence base before any policy or site decisions were made. Officers had commissioned studies and were preparing materials for publicising the consultation, with site visits planned to inform the evidence base.

The timetable for the local plan had been sent to the web team for imminent publication and would be updated periodically to reflect progress and provide information on related events, ensuring transparency for stakeholders and the public.

Interviews were scheduled for a local plan support officer, whose role would be to manage the timetable, create a detailed project plan, and ensure key milestones were met within the 30-month period.

The Task Group were informed that the Borough had been broadly divided into five areas, each assigned to an officer who would oversee site visits, community engagement, and evidence gathering for their respective settlements throughout the local plan process.

## 9 **SCOPING CONSULTATION**

Officers advised the Task Group of the upcoming scoping consultation, focusing on engaging diverse demographics, framing questions in accessible language, and targeting groups such as people in poverty, young people, and working people, with input from Councillors and stakeholders.

It was explained that the scoping consultation aimed to determine what the local plan should cover, how stakeholders wished to be engaged, and any additional questions, as required by regulations. The process was designed to avoid consultation fatigue and was scheduled for September to maximise participation, following the summer break.

Philippa Sillis, the Communications and Engagement Officer described targeted engagement efforts, including outreach to food banks, freshers week at the College of West Anglia, and collaboration with the regeneration team to reach underrepresented groups, ensuring meaningful feedback from those affected by the local plan.

The Task Group were advised that consultation questions had been iteratively refined to remove jargon and technical language, with input

from the communications team, focusing on quality of life, housing needs, and preferred methods of engagement, supported by explainers to clarify concepts like 'local plan' and 'infrastructure'.

The consultation process was designed to be flexible, allowing adjustments based on the responses received. If certain demographics were not reached or questions were misunderstood, the team would adapt the approach to improve engagement following feedback from the scoping consultation.

It was explained that engagement with neighbouring Parish councils and authorities would take place to inform them about the upcoming consultation and relevant feedback would be shared, especially where responses might impact adjacent areas such as Wisbech and Fenland. The Communications and Engagement Officer agreed to review and consider how to frame consultation questions to specify the geographic area respondents should consider, particularly for those living near borough boundaries.

Special attention would be given to engaging Parish Councils and members representing unparished areas, with in-person and online drop-in sessions planned, ensuring no community was left behind in the consultation process.

## 10 **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA) SCOPING**

### **Emerging evidence base**

Officers explained the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) process, and its legal requirements. SEA ran in parallel with the local plan, and statutory bodies throughout, with iterative updates and integration with site selection and mitigation strategies.

The SEA was a five-stage process required by law, culminating in a report published alongside the final local plan. Stage one (scoping) involved establishing the baseline and consulting with Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.

The SEA would be conducted in parallel with the local plan scoping consultation to avoid consultation fatigue and confusion, ensuring environmental, social, and economic policies were considered throughout plan development.

It was explained that the SEA informed site selection and policy scoring, including cumulative impacts, with mitigation strategies such as allocating additional open space to protect sensitive habitats, and compliance with statutory instruments and government guidance.

The SEA progress would be reported as part of the Local Plan Timetable standing item at future meetings. The iterative updates as

part of the LPTG provided opportunities for Councillors to provide input and raise concerns, fostering collaborative working and transparency.

## 11 **EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE INCLUDING OPEN SPACE**

Officers outlined the commissioning and progress of key evidence base studies, including housing needs assessment, strategic flood risk assessment, landscape character assessment, renewable energy capacity, and green infrastructure.

The housing needs assessment was at the draft stage, aiming to identify the types and numbers of homes required for the Borough, including specialist housing, with consultation involving the strategic housing team and external consultants.

A new strategic flood risk assessment and water cycle study had been commissioned, including engagement with Anglian Water, internal drainage boards, and Norfolk County Council, to address flood zones, water efficiency, and sewage capacity, ensuring development was safe and sustainable.

It was explained that the landscape character assessment was being updated for the first time since 2007, focusing on baseline character and the impact of growth. The renewable energy study was refined to assess smaller-scale opportunities and barriers, including district heating and community schemes. It would focus upon locations with the greatest potential to accommodate renewable energy schemes.

The green infrastructure assessment would build on previous work (2010 study), aiming to enhance connectivity and opportunities for development-led improvements. The open space audit, with 11 bids received, would map and assess all open spaces, play areas, cemeteries, and allotments, setting local standards and informing planning policy.

Additional studies, such as local plan viability and transport assessment, were planned to ensure development proposals were feasible and address infrastructure needs, with timing dependent upon site selection and growth modelling.

### **Open Space Audit**

Officers outlined the open space audit process, mapping over 650 sites, engaging Parish Councils and members, and setting local standards for play areas, cemeteries, and allotments, with input from Councillors on maintenance, viability, and community benefit.

The Task Group was advised that the audit covered all open spaces maintained by the Borough, Parish Councils, charities, and community groups, assessing quality, accessibility, and quantity against national

standards, with an online map and forum for community verification. It was explained that the mapped open spaces data would be sent to Parish councils and members in non-Parish areas for verification and feedback,

Findings from the audit would inform local planning policy, setting standards tailored to the Borough's rural context, ensuring new developments provided appropriate open space and addressing gaps in provision.

The audit would review management agreements and explore options for developers to contribute financially to existing spaces, improving quality and maintenance, and supporting Parish Councils in securing investment.

Privately owned spaces used for public events and large rural allotments would be included in the audit, with consultants determining their suitability for inclusion in planning policy, and engagement with landowners to address potential concerns.

The audit would identify spaces eligible for local green space designation, providing planning protection equivalent to green belt, and ensuring community assets were safeguarded for future generations.

#### Next Local Plan Notice of Intention (NoI) & Local Plan Timetable

It was advised at the meeting that the Notice of Intention & Timetable had been published and was available to view on-line.

[Next Local Plan 2026-2044 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

The NoI and Local Plan Timetable were issued on 15 June 2026.

#### 12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged when required.

**The meeting closed at 12.10 pm**