

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

Minutes from the Meeting of the Local Plan Task Group held on Monday, 10th March, 2025 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 (on Zoom), M de Whalley, S Everett (on Zoom), A Kemp, T Parish, S Sandell and Mrs V Spikings

Members present under Standing Order 34 on Zoom:

Councillor J Bhondi
Councillor D Heneghan
Councillor B Long

Officers:

Alex Fradley - Planning Policy Manager
Michael Burton - Principal Planner
Luke Brown - Senior Policy Planner
Henry Anthony - Graduate Planner

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Ben Jones.

2 NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting 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**

Councillors Bhondi, Heneghan and Long

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

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The Chair informed the Task Group that all Parish Councils and interested parties had been written to regarding the current status of the Local Plan and he had received correspondence from former Borough Councillor Ives thanking officers, which he read out.

8 **LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040 - PROPOSED ADOPTION**

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Alex Fradley, Planning Policy Manager introduced the Planning Policy Team to the Task Group and thanked everyone who had been involved in the process and explained that the Local Plan journey started 9 years ago.

He explained that within the agenda was the report which would be considered by Cabinet and a covering presentation.

The Local Plan review would cover the period 2021-2040.

The Plan had been under preparation since 2016, where a significant level of consultation helped form the contents of the Plan.

It was explained that a final draft of the Plan was signed off by the Council in July 2021, and then formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in March 2022.

Two Inspectors were appointed by the Secretary of State as the Independent Inspectors to undertake the examination in public on the Local Plan. Three stages of public hearings then took place in January 2023, April 2024 and September 2024.

The Council received a report from the Planning Inspectors on the 'soundness' of the Local Plan in February 2025.

Once adopted, the Local Plan would entirely replace the current Local Plan (consisting of 2011 Core Strategy and 2016 Site Allocation and Development Management Policies Plan).

The presentation also covered:

- The Local Plan Examination Timeline

- Summary of the Main Changes to the Plan following Examination
- Distribution of Planned Growth
- Local Plan policies for:
 - Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
 - Windfall Development
 - Neighbourhood Planning
 - The Economy
 - Transport
 - Climate Change
 - Environment – Coastal Area and National Landscape Policies
 - Environment – Design, Green Infrastructure and Historic Environment
 - Environment – Open Space, Habitat Regulations and Flood Risk
 - Housing, Affordable Housing and Specialist Housing
 - Shared Housing, Housing in the Rural Areas, Custom and Self-Build Housing
- Policies Map

The Chair then invited questions, a summary of which is recorded below:

Councillor Mrs Spikings raised the issue of infrastructure on the A47, which was lacking in and around the Wisbech area and the impact this would have on existing residents, particularly where it bordered another authority.

In response the Planning Policy Manager advised that this raised an important point, something that the Planning Inspectors got into during the examination was the Duty to Co-operate. It was a key test which required Local Authorities to speak to their neighbours, infrastructure providers and consultees, etc. The Council had been very proactive in meeting its requirements on the Duty to Co-operate, both in meeting with neighbouring authorities in Norfolk and neighbours outside of Norfolk and had worked with Fenland District Council. He added that this point had been looked at in detail at the Local Plan Inquiry.

Michael Burton explained that in relation to the policy around windfall, again any development had to meet the criteria before it could be considered and that included impact on infrastructure. The Council had to work with their neighbours and were aware of the challenges but through the Local Plan was the best way to address them.

Councillor Kemp agreed with the point raised by Councillor Mrs Spikings in relation to infrastructure and made reference to the impact of new development on the A10. There would be the situation of unacceptable impacts on the highway and severe cumulative impacts. This was the concern of residents without the proper rail or road infrastructure and was a failure of the plan.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that it was about the impact of development on communities and the ability for that to be accepted

and integrated, not just about more housing but about place-making and integration with the existing settlement. In relation to the requirements of the Local Plan, he advised that they were quite clear and in-depth and rigorously explored through the examination process and made reference to the West Winch Growth Area Policy and the examination of it. The Local Plan would influence where development took place and the infrastructure which came forward in order to mitigate and make that development acceptable.

This had been looked at in-depth by the Local Plan Task Group and then the Inspector and the examination had been successfully navigated and there was a strong expectation that the Plan would be adopted, and then the Plan and Policies would take effect.

Councillor Parish referred to the A149, and the cumulative impact of development and asked if the policies were based on the holiday season rather than a quiet winter's day.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that transport had been looked at in detail at the Local Plan examination. He explained that sustainable and active travel needed to be considered. He explained that officers had worked closely with Norfolk County Council as the Highway Authority and also Consultants WSP had been employed to provide further data and modelling on transport and further impacts and that had all been tested through the examination. The Inspector concluded that the Plan was sound. The Plan did carry forward a lot of what was in the current local plan particularly in relation to allocations.

In response to a comment from Councillor Parish regarding the need for a windfall policy, the Planning Policy Manager explained that the plan's approach to meeting the housing need was through a combination of site allocations and an allowance for windfall sites.

Under Standing Order 34, Councillor Long made reference to out-of-town shopping and that High Streets had to be re-purposed, cycle-track and footpaths using disused railway lines, custom and self-build and whether a policy would help or hinder this?

The Planning Policy Manager responded and explained that there were specific policies and legislation in relation to custom and self-build. The policy looked to increase the supply of custom and self-build. Part of the incentive for custom and self-build housing was that CIL or Biodiversity Net Gain did not need to be paid.

Policy LP12 sought to protect the disused railway tracks, so they could be used for sustainable transport modes or potentially brought back into use.

In relation to retail policy LP08, this looked protect what was in the town centre and create communities and place, recognising that the role of a town centre was evolving.

The Committee adjourned at 11.25 am for a comfort break and reconvened at 11.35 am.

Councillor de Whalley thanked officers for their hard work in relation to the Local Plan. He asked what lessons had been learnt to streamline the process in production of the next Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the key Government priority was to boost the economy and tackle the national housing crisis. He added that there was a lot that was not known currently about the new local planning system but there was now a legal requirement to update the local plan every 5 years.

He explained that one of the things that might be coming in force was national development management policies. He suggested that there should be a separate meeting to go over lessons learnt.

The Senior Policy Planner outlined areas where improvements could be made including joint working with partners, joint studies and maintaining an evidence base.

Councillor Mrs Spikings congratulated the staff on the work and getting the Plan to this stage, and asked what might happen to the Plan in the future given LGR and Devolution.

The Principal Planner outlined what he envisaged might happen to the Local Plan in the future.

Councillor Heneghan also thanked the officers for the work involved and referred to LP32 – HMO's and the fact that planning permission was not required to turn a house into an HMO. The Planning Policy Manager advised that certain developments did not require planning permission and licensing was a method of control for HMO's.

The Chair added that he would also ask the Licensing Team and get back to Councillor Heneghan.

Councillor de Whalley made reference to the new requirements for developers for Climate Change. It was explained that this would be for major applications of 1 hectare or more and if it was not provided then the planning application might not be validated. The Senior Policy Planner advised that this needed to be included at the early stages of the planning application and not an after-thought. The questions were flexible, for when national policies changed.

Councillor Parish referred to Policy LP24 Renewable Energy and asked if there were any allocations for solar farms? In response the Principal Planner advised that there were no allocations for solar farms. There was a policy about managing proposals as they came forward. It would be an important topic in the next Local Plan.

The Chair took the Task Group to the recommendation, which was to endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, which was agreed.

AGREED: That the Task Group endorses the recommendations to Cabinet.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged when required.

The meeting closed at 12.02 pm