

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,
10th February, 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, M de Whalley, S Lintern, T Parish, S Sandell and
Mrs V Spikings

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fry.

2 **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting (10 March 2025) 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.

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

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

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

There was no Chair's correspondence.

8 **INTRODUCTION TO AND DEMONSTRATION OF THE
INTERACTIVE VERSION OF THE LOCAL PLAN - HENRY.**

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Henry Anthony (Graduate Planner) presented a demonstration of the new interactive local plan website. He explained that the interactive local plan website allowed users to access all local plan policies and associated interactive maps, including policy areas for specific topics such as gypsy and traveller sites, brownfield sites, and local development allocations. The site was designed to be more accessible and user-friendly than previous PDF or booklet formats, with features such as clickable links to full policy documents.

Interactive maps for various policy areas were demonstrated, including King's Lynn, Hunstanton, and Downham Market, as well as thematic layers such as ancient woodland and disused railway tracks. These maps allowed users to filter and view specific policy areas, and were intended to be updated alongside the local plan.

Councillor de Whalley enquired about the absence of parish boundaries on the interactive map, which officers acknowledged was due to their non-policy status but noted that feedback had been received requesting their inclusion. Officers committed to considering the addition of parish boundaries as a selectable layer in future updates, potentially before the next meeting.

Councillor Blunt enquired about the intuitiveness of the tool and whether training or support documentation would be provided. Officers responded that the tool was intuitive, included instructions and was designed to be as easy to use as common mapping platforms such as Google Maps, with contact details available for support. They encouraged members to try the tool and report any issues. The mapping had been available for a year and no issue had been reported.

The Task Group discussed recent technical issues with the development management planning site, including downtime and user frustration. Officers explained that the corporate web team managed site status notifications, and that contact details were provided on the website for users to report problems. Suggestions were made to improve the visibility of downtime notifications.

AGREED: (1) That parish boundaries be added as a selectable layer to the existing interactive map before the next meeting.

(2) That links be circulated to the interactive local plan tools with the minutes so Members can access and provide feedback on usability and potential need for training.

Interactive Local Plan: [King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040](#)

Local Plan Allocations: [Local Plan Allocations](#)

Interactive Policies Map: [Policy Plan 1](#)

Interactive Brownfield Registry: [King's Lynn & West Norfolk Brownfield Land Registry Site Map](#)

(3) That an agenda item be included for the next meeting to review feedback on the usability of the interactive local plan from Members.

9 **NEW LOCAL PLAN SYSTEM: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE NEXT LOCAL PLAN. TO COVER NEW PLAN-MAKING GUIDANCE & THE DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**

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Luke Brown (Senior Planner) outlined the government's introduction of significant planning reforms, including the new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, and 2025 Planning and Infrastructure Act. The reforms aim to accelerate housing delivery, introduce a five-tier planning system, and standardise local plan preparation across England.

Five-Tier Planning System and Strategic Plans: The new system introduced spatial development strategies (strategic plans) above local plans, particularly for areas with devolved mayoral combined authorities. While Norfolk did not yet have such an authority, officers explained that local plans must eventually conform to both the NPPF and any future strategic plan, creating challenges.

In the absence of an SDS, the Local Plan would need to set housing requirements, based upon the standard method. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) provides a current non-statutory framework for plan-making across Norfolk.

Local Plan Timelines and Gateway Process: Officers detailed the new 30-month timeline for local plan preparation, starting with a four-month pre-notification period from 30 June, followed by three gateway checks involving self-assessment and planning inspectorate reviews. The process was designed to streamline plan-making, with strict deadlines and standardised templates expected.

Challenges of Local Government Reorganisation: The Task Group discussed the impact of potential local government reorganisation, including the formation of new unitary authorities. Officers explained that emerging plans would need to be completed and then the new authorities would prepare new plans for their area.

Evidence Gathering and Call for Sites: The Task Group were informed that officers were commissioning new evidence, updating the housing and economic land availability assessment (HELAA), and conducting a fresh call for sites to identify deliverable land for housing, employment, open space, renewable energy and other uses. Officers emphasised the need for up-to-date evidence and encouraged resubmission of sites from previous plans to ensure current information. The previous

(2019/20) HELAA was produced using a Norfolk (NSPF) wide agreed template and this is currently under review.

Infrastructure, Housing Delivery, and External Stakeholder Engagement: The Task Group raised concerns about infrastructure constraints, housing delivery challenges, and the need for effective cooperation with external bodies such as Anglian Water, with officers outlining ongoing efforts to address these issues through evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement, and policy development.

Infrastructure, Housing Delivery, and External Stakeholder Engagement: The Task Group raised concerns about infrastructure constraints, housing delivery challenges, and the need for effective cooperation with external bodies such as Anglian Water, with officers outlining ongoing work and collaboration with such providers including through evidence gathering, and early stakeholder engagement.

Infrastructure Constraints and Water Capacity: The Task Group highlighted issues with water and sewage infrastructure, particularly in areas served by Anglian Water, and questioned how these constraints would be addressed in the local plan. Officers explained that they were working closely with Anglian Water, lobbying government for change, and sharing indicative housing numbers to inform business planning. The new system might formalise water companies as statutory consultees with a duty to assist in plan-making.

Housing Delivery and Site Viability: Concerns were raised about sites with planning permission that remained undeveloped, and the challenge of meeting increased housing targets. Officers described the rigorous process for assessing site deliverability, the importance of up-to-date evidence, and the need to allocate sufficient land to meet housing need, learning from previous plan examinations.

Role of Neighbourhood Plans and Local Input: The Task Group discussed the role of neighbourhood plans in allocating housing and addressing local issues such as second homes. Officers noted that neighbourhood plans must now allocate to specified numbers and cannot look to restrict development, and that local input from parish councils and communities was essential in the plan making process.

Engagement with External Stakeholders: Officers described ongoing engagement with infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities, and other departments to coordinate evidence gathering and address cross-boundary issues. The removal of the legal duty to cooperate was offset by continued requirements for soundness and statutory consultation, with new mechanisms proposed to ensure external bodies assisted in plan-making.

Plan Viability and Infrastructure Costs: Councillor Spikings raised the issue of infrastructure costs and site viability, particularly for large developments. Officers confirmed that a whole plan viability

assessment would be commissioned to ensure that policies and site allocations were deliverable, factoring in all required contributions and national standards. Much like was carried out to support the current and previous local plans.

The Task Group adjourned at 11.39 am and reconvened at 11.48 am

10 **DRAFT NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**
CONSULTATION RESPONSE DISCUSSION - SANDRA.

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Michael Burton (Principal Planner) outlined the main features of the draft NPPF, including a greater focus on climate change, a clear separation between plan-making and decision-making policies, and the introduction of national development management policies that would supersede equivalent local and neighbourhood plan policies, except those where additional detail was provided (over and above national policies, and allowed by the NPPF).

Implications for Local Plan Policies: Officers explained that the new NPPF will be more prescriptive and standardised, limiting the scope for local authorities to include general development management policies in their plans. Existing local policies that conflicted with national policies would carry little weight in decision making once the new framework was adopted.

Consultation Process and Member Involvement: The Council was preparing a response to the NPPF consultation, which included over 200 questions. Members were invited to submit comments by email for inclusion in the response, with a meeting planned between the Chair and Vice-Chair to finalise the submission before the 10 March deadline.

Planning Committee Reforms and Implementation: Questions were raised about the timing and scope of planning committee reforms under the new legislation. Officers clarified that whilst the legislation came into effect soon, further regulations and guidance were expected, and only certain aspects would be implemented immediately.

AGREED: (1) That comments be collected from Members via email for inclusion in the Council's response to the draft NPPF consultation, and a meeting be arranged with the Chair and Vice-Chair to agree the final response before submission.

(2) That a link be sent to all Members for the draft NPPF consultation documents to facilitate their review and input.

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged when required.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm