

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, 14th May, 2024 at 10.30 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 Everett, B Jones, T Parish,
A Ryves, S Sandell and Mrs V Spikings

1 **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Local Plan meeting.

As some other members of the Task Group had been involved in an earlier meeting which was overrunning, he advised that the meeting be adjourned for 20 minutes to allow for their arrival. This was agreed by the Task Group.

At 10.50 pm the meeting reconvened and the Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to carry out a roll call to determine attendees. He advised that the meeting was being recorded and streamed live to You Tube.

2 **APOLOGIES**

There were none.

3 **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record subject to Councillor Spiking's declaration of interested being noted in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller Potential Sites, as her nephew was involved with one of the sites, and took no part in the discussion relating to that item.

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were none.

5 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Spikings declared that she had an interest in as her nephew was involved with one of the Gypsy and Traveller potential sites and would take no part in any discussion relating to this item.

6 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business to consider.

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

There were no Members present pursuant to Standing Order 34.

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

There was no Chair's correspondence.

9 **LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

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The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report and explained that the Borough Council formally submitted its Local Plan in March 2022 for Examination. In doing so, the Borough Council made a formal request to the Secretary of State Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities that the appointed Inspectors recommend any modifications required to make the Local Plan legally compliant and sound.

A first round of hearings took place in December 2022 and January 2023. These were then adjourned, with reconvened hearings taking place in March and April 2024. As part of this, an accelerated timescale through to adoption was agreed and published. This would result in the Local Plan being adopted before the conclusion of the financial year (March 2025). The process going forward included consulting on Main Modifications later this year (2024); required to ensure that the Local Plan was legally compliant and sound.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the main change to the regular process was splitting the plan in two – part one would be the majority of the Local Plan content and policies, part two would be the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Show people element. This would enable the Inspector to issue their report to the Borough Council as soon as possible, meaning a quicker time for overall adoption could be achieved.

The Main Modifications would be subject to six-week public consultations for each of the two parts. Representations received would inform the Inspectors Local Plan report. It was anticipated that this would recommend that the Local Plan could be adopted subject to the inclusion of a series of Main Modifications. Following this a report would be prepared and taken to Cabinet and Full Council, which would

recommend that the Local Plan be formally adopted (February / March 2025).

In response to comments from Councillor Blunt, the Planning Policy Manager advised that whilst the Plan was being split during the main modifications consultation period, there would be one Local Plan but to get to that point it allowed officers and the Council to get on and prepare the bulk of the plan, as hearings were scheduled in September for the Gypsy and Travellers work which was on-going. He further advised that the final report from the Inspector, which would consider both consultations on main modifications, was anticipated in January 2025.

The Chair added that he had attended the second week of the hearings, and it was very conducive atmosphere and he wanted to reassure the Task Group that the officers were very well informed, and there was contribution from agents and members of the public and other Councillors, and he was very pleased with how it went. He thanked the officers and team for all the hard work that had been carried out to get the Plan to where it was.

Councillor de Whalley added that he had also sat in on the hearings and the Inspector had been very complementary and he asked for that to be recorded and noted.

In response to a comment from Councillor de Whalley, the Planning Policy Manager referred the Task Group to the appendix attached to the report which set out the timetable. He also confirmed that all Parish Councils and everyone on the local plan consultation database would be informed of the main modifications consultation.

The Task Group then discussed whether it would be possible for them to see the report before it went to Cabinet.

It was advised that the timetable had been agreed with the Inspectors and could not be elongated and explained the reasons why the Local Plan needed to be adopted before the end of the financial year.

The Chair added that he felt that it would be beneficial for the Task Group to see the report before it went to Cabinet.

In response to a comment as to when the Local Plan became effective, the Planning Policy Manager advised that this would be as soon as it was adopted. He added that before adoption, some of the policies could be used as emerging policies for decision-making, and at the point of adoption it would carry full weight.

AGREED: That the Task Group note the report and endorses the process going forward to adoption, in accordance with the proposed timetable set out in Appendix 1, subject to a potential additional Task

Group meeting being arranged prior to the Inspector's Report being considered by Cabinet in February 2025, if the timetable allowed.

10 **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

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The Principal Planner (Policy) introduced the report and explained that during the 2023-24 financial year, 5 neighbourhood plans were successfully made. Others were expected to come forward during the current financial year (2024-25). The following Neighbourhood Plans are anticipated to come forward to referendum during the 2024-25 financial year:

- Grimston, Pott Row, Roydon and Congham
- North Wootton
- Ringstead.

Cllr Blunt advised that preparation of the draft Walpole Neighbourhood Plan was well underway, in addition to those listed in the Task Group report.

The report summarised the progress and / or current stage of preparation for individual Neighbourhood Plans.

The Chair raised the issue of what would happen if a general election was called when the Neighbourhood Plan was at an advanced stage and due for referendum. It was agreed to obtain advice from the Electoral Services Manager. *(An email was subsequently sent to the Task Group outlining the situation – the implication of a possible General Election in autumn 2024 for any Neighbourhood Plans that may come forward for referendum at the time).*

With regards to funding, it was explained that there was an organisation called Locality, and Town / Parish Councils could apply for funding towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It also produced guides to help with the process and access to professional consultants. The Borough Council had a duty to support those communities preparing a neighbourhood and whilst it did not provide funding directly it did provide officer time and advice, as well as arranging the examination and referendum processes.

AGREED: That the Task Group noted the report

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged when required.

The meeting closed at 11.41 am

