

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

19 October 2023

**COUNCILLOR JIM MORIARTY - CABINET MEMBER FOR
DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**

For the period 24th August to 6th October 2023

Firstly, my thanks to officers who have done the work in compiling this report.

At the last Full Council meeting, to which I sent my apologies, I was asked a question by Cllr Devulapalli. I am including the question and answer here and intend to read it out so that it is on public record as well as in any minutes.

Q: In view of the housing needs assessment in 2020, (which is due to be revised), is this council confident that current house building plans are in line with that assessment?

A: "The Housing Needs Assessment work that is being commissioned does not determine the number of houses to be planned for in the Local Plan. The housing requirement figure for the Local Plan is calculated by using the standard methodology as set out in national planning policy guidance. It is anticipated that this work will not be completed until after the examination hearings for the Local Plan.

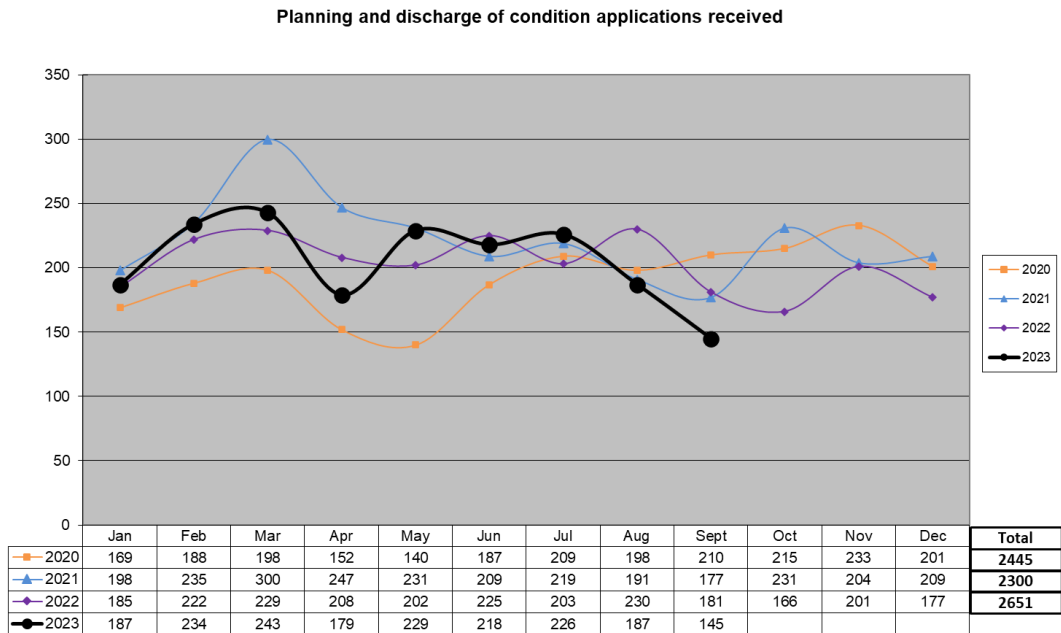
A Housing Needs Assessment essentially looks at specific housing needs of different community groups and the type and tenure of housing – like affordable housing, student accommodation, travellers, accessible housing etc.

The Housing Needs assessment that underpins the Local Plan was done in 2020 and is considered to be up to date evidence for the Local Plan. The new Housing Needs Assessment will be used to inform the new Local Plan or a review of appropriate policies should that be needed.

The Housing Needs Assessment is a very important piece of work as it will underline the nature and scope of our housing needs. It will then need to be compared with housing requirement as identified in our local plan. If the local housing need is shown to be greater than that required by the local plan, then we need to address how the updated Local Plan can be what it says on the label ie 'be 'local'."

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Planning and Discharge of Conditions applications received



Planning and discharge of condition applications continue to decline, although we are only 37 applications down on the same period as last year. Analysis is being carried out to identify if there is a shift in the type of applications being received.

Progress with recruitment

Planning control – one of the Planners and one of the Graduate Planners have been successful in gaining alternative employment. Adverts have been placed to recruit both posts, closing date of 18th October.

Planning Policy – advert has been placed to recruit an Assistant Planner, again closing date of 18th October.

Technical Support Team – an existing member of staff has been promoted to Team Leader position and commenced on 2nd October.

Planning Enforcement – the Customer Support Officer post has been advertised, closing date was 28th September. Shortlisting is complete and interviews will take place before the end of October.

Major and Minor dwelling applications and householder applications received comparison

	1/10/20 – 30/9/21	1/10/21 – 30/9/22	1/10/22 – 30/9/23
No. of Major dwelling applications rec'd	28	19	16
No. of Minor dwelling applications rec'd	337	314	291
No. of Householder applications rec'd	895	801	664
Total	1260	1134	971

*Minor dwelling applications = up to 10 units
Major dwelling applications = over 10 units

2022/23 performance for determining planning applications 1/10/22 – 30/9/23

	National target	Performance
Major	60%	86%
Non-Major	70%	85%

Appeal Performance – decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate 1/10/22 – 30/9/23

	Dismissed	Allowed
Planning appeals	32	15
	68%	32%
Enforcement appeals	8	0
	100%	0%

The higher the number of appeals allowed, the more The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is going against the council's decisions, so a low figure of appeals allowed (upheld) is clearly preferable. For context, the national average for planning appeals allowed annually has historically been around 34% post NPPF.

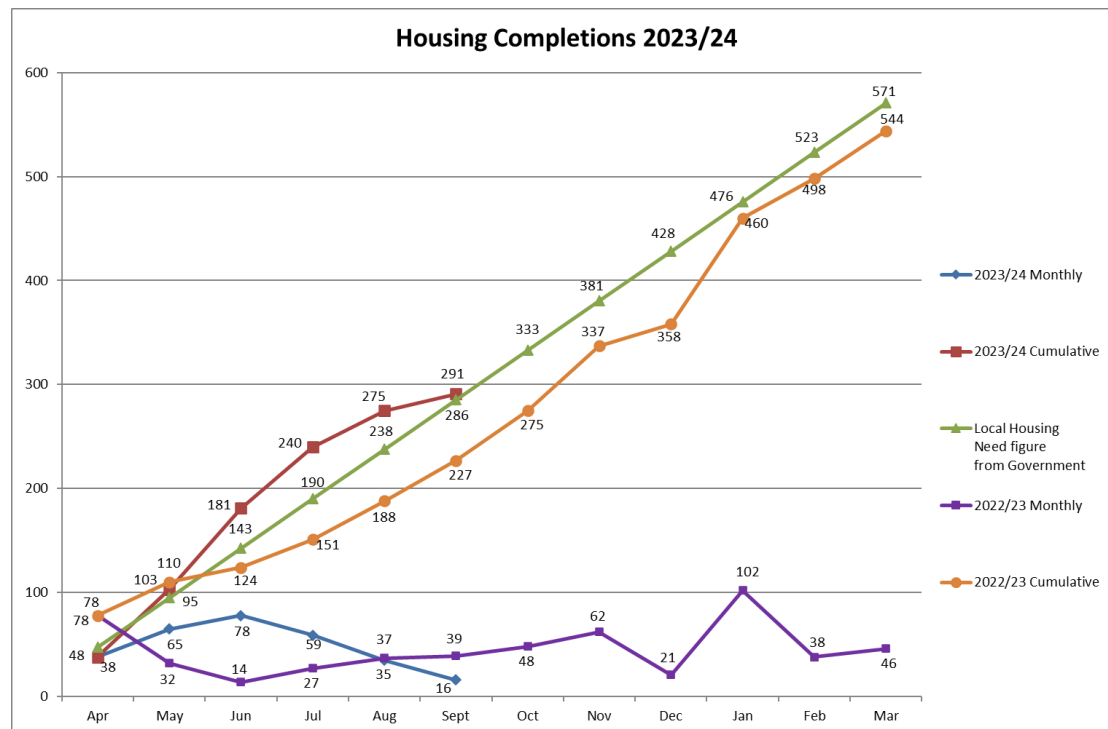
Revenue income 2023/24

Planning and discharge of condition applications are up slightly compared to the same period last year. However, income is significantly lower. We will continue to monitor against a current full year projected income of £1,600,000.

Projected	Actual	Variance with projected
April 23 – Sept 23	April 23 – Sept 23	
£800,000	£500,076	-£299,924

Housing Completions

35 houses completed in August and 16 in September. Currently, completions are up 5 on projected based on local housing need figure from Government of 571 and 64 up compared to the same time last year.



2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Planning Control update

In my previous report, I referred to the fact the Government has consulted on raising planning fees, with likely implementation in April 2024. However, more recent announcements have indicated that the raised fees could come into force as early as November/December. An earlier increase could assist with our current income deficit. Pre application fees are charged based on a percentage of the planning fee and therefore pre application fees will also increase. The annual Parish Council update sessions will take place this month at King's Lynn Town Hall:

- 6.00pm – 8.00pm Tuesday 10th October
- 4.00pm – 6.00pm Wednesday 18th October

We have bid for the maximum £100,000 from the Planning Skills Delivery Fund. If we are successful the majority of the funds will go to developing a Design Code for the Borough, which will be a new national requirement, with the remainder going towards assisting with clearing older planning applications in the system.

West Winch Growth Area

The West Winch Local Stakeholder Group meeting took place on 9th September 2023 with the relevant Parish Councils and interest group.

A further West Winch Strategic Growth Area public information event will take place at the West Winch Primary School on 18th October 2023 between 4 and 9pm providing up-to-date information on the growth area and West Winch Housing Access road timelines.

CIL update

The reconvened CIL Spending Panel met on 6th October 2023 to conclude the applications for funding following the meeting of 29th August 2023.

A further meeting of the CIL Spending Panel will take place on 16th October 2023 to consider the Annual Funding Statement before it is published and to start making arrangements to review the CIL Governance Document for 2023.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Developers will be required to deliver 10 per cent biodiversity net gain (BNG) on Major applications from January 2024, delayed from November 2023.

For smaller sites, this will be applicable from April 2024, and implementation for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) is planned for 2025.

Local Plan Update

Consultation on the further work required by the Inspectors started on the 8 September and ends on 20 October 2023. Details are available on the Council's website. Representations received will be forwarded to the Inspectors of the Local Plan in due course. Examination hearing sessions anticipated to resume Spring next year.

The list of documents subject to the consultation are as follows:

- Topic Paper Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (including Neighbourhood Housing Requirements)
- Update on Technical Note on Transport Evidence
- Retail Impact Threshold for Hardwick Road Area
- Updated Housing Land Supply
- West Winch Topic Paper
- Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- Wisbech Fringe Updated Position Statement
- Response to Critique on Viability Assessment

Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Following the completion of the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (June 2023) the Council is looking to meet the identified housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the Borough. A Call for Sites will be undertaken as part of the Local Plan Examination between 13 October and 10 November 2023. Any sites put forward will be assessed and a further consultation will be undertaken early next year on potential sites. Representations received will be considered by the Council before any sites are proposed to the Inspectors.

Neighbourhood Planning update**Neighbourhood Plans passed at referendum and “made” (since June 2023)**

- Burnham Market – “made” 26 September 2023
- Stoke Ferry – “made” 29 August 2023

Emerging Neighbourhood Plans (Regulation 14 stage and beyond):

Plan	Current Stage	Anticipated date for referendum
Downham Market	Regulation 14 – pre-submission draft Plan consultation autumn 2021 – some indication from Town Council that they are looking to submit the Plan in the near future (early 2024?)	Late-2024
Gayton and Gayton Thorpe	Regulation 18-19 – Decision Statement, 7 August 2023, allowing Plan to proceed to referendum (referendum date now set)	9 November 2023
Grimston, Pott Row, Roydon and Congham	Regulation 17 – Plan now under independent examination – examination anticipated to conclude December 2023/ January 2024	Spring 2024
North Wootton	Regulation 15 – Legal check concluded (19 September 2023), allowing Plan to proceed to Regulation 16 consultation (October – November 2023)	Summer 2024
Pentney	Regulation 14 – pre-submission draft Plan consultation March-May 2023; possible submission spring/ summer 2024 (dependent upon availability of funding)?	Late 2024/early 2025
Old Hunstanton	Regulation 17 – Examiner’s Report published 3 July 2023, followed by consultation on proposed deviations from Examiner’s Recommendations (closing	Early 2024

	date 18 October 2023); e.g. re retention of second homes/ principal residences policy	
Watlington	Regulation 18-19 – Decision Statement, 23 September 2023, allowing Plan to proceed to referendum (referendum date due to be finalised imminently)	December 2023

Plans at an early stage in the process:

The following Neighbourhood Plans are at an early stage (pre-Regulation 14) in the process:

- Great Massingham
- Marshland St James
- Ringstead
- Shouldham
- Syderstone
- Walpole
- Walpole Cross Keys (2017 Neighbourhood Plan review)

Town Deal Projects Update 3-10-23

Riverfront Regeneration:

Graeme Massie Architects (GMA) has been developing the RIBA Stage 3 designs for the Custom House and Devils Alley areas of the Riverfront site. The Custom House is being developed with three levels of intervention, for negotiation with conservation officers and Historic England.

Andrew Morton Associates are working on the cost plan and ensuring the design proposals fit within the cost plan signed off in the business case. The scheme for Devils Alley is also developed further with possible interpretations/uses for the tower explored, however a value engineering exercise is being undertaken to ensure the cost plan is not exceeded.

A decision on the feasibility of the tower being included in this phase of work is being considered, with three options:

- Included as per RIBA 2 within cost plan,
- The foundations and groundworks included for its later construction in phase 2 when additional funds become available,
- Excluded completely. It should be noted that the tower is not an output/outcome of the Town Deal Funding and the remediation of the site can be achieved without it.

The project costs however are being reviewed for the project as a whole, and the budgets are being rebalanced to as necessary whilst still ensuring the outcomes of the Town Deal Funding are met. A procurement strategy has been developed separating the works in the Custom House for the rest of the public realm works as this requires a contractor with specialist heritage

experience.

An enabling works package will be procured for the Devils Alley area of the project to de-risk the project, by carrying out necessary decontamination, excavation and infills to secure the new build works at optimal cost and risk, ensure the smoothest transition to the creation of the new public realm. Work is progressing on developing the stakeholder management plan and public consultation work for the events/cultural uses of the Riverfront using a placemaking specialist, We Group, and meetings are now scheduled with conservation officers to review the proposals prior to dialogue with Historic England and preparation of the planning application.

Rail to River: Art Trail:

The designs for 2 pieces of artwork have been developed. The Grey Goose Feather will be located at the railway station forecourt and the River will be mounted on the St James Swimming Pool building façade wrapping round the building from the car park to Blackfriars Street. The railway station artwork planning application has been submitted and works are in train to submit the swimming pool artwork planning application this month. Installation is scheduled for February/March 2024.

The digital sign located at the railway station is planned for installation at the end of this month. We are working with the comms and tourism team to create some initial content and protocols for content creation with the operations team taking over the running of the sign when works are complete. Purfleet Street arch and the pop ups/street furniture designs are complete and the planning and licensing applications to NCC have been made. NCC have raised objections to the location of the containers, and so additional information has been submitted for tier consideration prior to the planning application being signed off. The local conservation area consultees have also asked for additional time to respond. The local planners have advised this application can be dealt with under delegated powers and it is supported by our conservation officers. The target date for installation is now late January. Similarly the archway has been supported by our conservation officers, and recommended for approval by the planner and can be dealt with under delegated powers. The licenses with the building owners for the archway are in progress. Installation of utilities to service these works are in progress. These schemes have been presented to the Public Realm Working and Repurposing Group. Overall, the project is still within budget but under pressure from rising infrastructure costs.