

## **PLANNING POLICY & BUILT HERITAGE WORKING PARTY**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party held on Monday, 17 August 2020 remotely via Zoom at 10.00 am**

**Committee**                      Mr A Brown (Chairman)                      Mrs P Grove-Jones (Vice-Chairman)  
   Mr D Baker                                      Mr N Dixon  
   Mr P Fisher                                      Mr P Heinrich  
   Mr N Pearce                                      Mr J Punchard

**Members also attending:**                      Mrs W Fredericks (substitute for Ms V Gay)

   Mr H Blathwayt  
   Mr C Cushing  
   Mrs A Fitch-Tillett  
   Mr R Kershaw  
   Mr J Rest  
   Miss L Shires  
   Mr J Toye

**Officers in Attendance:**                      Planning Policy Manager, Iain Withington and Democratic Services & Governance Officer (Regulatory)

### **17        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ms V Gay. Councillor Mrs W Fredericks attended the meeting as her substitute.

(A subsequent apology was received from Councillor Dr C Stockton, who had been unable to join the meeting due to a technical issue).

### **18        MINUTES**

The Minutes of a meeting of the Working Party held on 13 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

### **19        ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman invited the Planning Policy Manager to present an item of urgent business relating to the Great Ryburgh Neighbourhood Plan. The matter was urgent due to the statutory time scale to issue a Decision Statement.

The Planning Policy Manager reported that the Planning Inspector had now examined the Great Ryburgh Neighbourhood Plan and had determined that it could progress to the referendum stage, subject to a number of modifications. It was now for the Council to consider whether it agreed with the conclusions and issue a decision statement within a statutory time limit of five weeks. Officers were content with the modifications, which would now be discussed with Ryburgh Parish Council. He requested that Cabinet be recommended to give delegated authority to the Planning Policy Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party, to progress the matter to the next stage.

The referendum would not take place until 2021 because of the Covid-19 restrictions. However, the Neighbourhood Plan would begin to carry weight as a material consideration in planning decisions once the Decision Statement had been issued.

It was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor P Heinrich and

**RECOMMENDED** unanimously

**That the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to progress the Great Ryburgh Neighbourhood Plan to the next stage, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Party.**

Councillor P Fisher was not present for the vote due to technical issues.

## **20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **21 UPDATE ON MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (IF ANY)**

The Chairman reported that the recommendations in respect of Blakeney, which were considered by the Working Party on 13 July, had been referred back to the Working Party by Cabinet to carry out further due diligence on the recommended site. Concerns had been raised by Cabinet regarding access, landscape impact and the nature and density of housing. Some of the allocations at Cromer had been deferred at the July meeting for further information. Reports on these matters, and on allocations at Mundesley which had been deferred at a previous meeting, would be considered by the Working Party at a later date.

At the July meeting, Councillor D Baker, in his capacity as MP, had offered to refer a letter from the Chairman of the Working Party to the relevant Government Minister in respect of the calculation mechanism for the 5 year land supply and housing numbers. The Government had since published a White Paper and Consultation Paper on Planning. The Chairman stated that he had withheld the letter and the Council would instead make its submissions through the consultation process in response to the White Paper.

## **22 JOINT COASTAL ADAPTATION SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD): INITIAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

The Planning Policy Manager presented for Members' information a report which set out the background and content of an Initial Consultation Document with the eventual objective of producing a Joint Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The purpose of the initial consultation was to inform the content and scope of the draft Coastal Adaptation SPD.

Councillor Mrs A Fitch-Tillett, Chairman of Coastal Partnership East, stated that she was very proud of the document, which demonstrated the importance of joint working along most of the coast of East Anglia. It was also timely as Coastal Partnership East had been appointed as national lead on coastal adaptation, and she had been appointed national chair. She explained that the document was an update of the Development and Coastal Erosion SPD 2009 and would be more in depth as the knowledge base had increased enormously since then. It was very important that coastal planning applications took the SPD guidance into account.

The Working Party noted the report.

## **23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Two members of the public presented statements (summarised below) to the Working Party, relating to the proposed allocations at Fakenham which would be considered under the next item.

George Acheson, speaking on behalf of Fakenham Town Council, stated that the Town Council had no objection to proposal DS6 (site F01/B) as it was a natural extension of the already planned "Trinity" site. He declared an interest on behalf of the Town Council as its Trap Lane field formed part of the site. The Town Council maintained its insistence that the road network must be upgraded to support the development.

The Town Council also supported proposal DS7 (site F03) as it was a suitable site bounded by the bypass.

The Town Council supported proposal DS8 (site F10) for low density housing and considered that this was the best use of a site adjacent to the town centre. It did not support local objections which had been raised in respect of this site. The land was not part of a SSSI. The area proposed for housing was currently grazing meadow with an animal crematorium between it and the river, with the remaining part being brownfield industrial land. Houses on the grazing land above the flood plain would be within walking distance of the town centre and would not increase traffic in the town centre. The proposal would improve the pedestrian route and open up pedestrian access from Norwich Road to the town centre, and could also open up pedestrian access to open space areas elsewhere in the town. The Town Council sought assurance that no houses would be built on the flood plain and that open space below the housing site would be publicly accessible. Most importantly, development of the housing site would free up land for employment space which was believed to be needed for the expansion of Kinnerton, a major employer, which had run out of space and may otherwise need to relocate out of Norfolk.

Tim Duffy, on behalf of the landowners of site F10, stated that the proximity of the land to the town centre would allow improved pedestrian and cycle access to the nearby facilities and businesses. The area proposed for the residential element of the site was outside of the flood zone and would be designed to allow for low density housing taking into account the total site area. The area closest to the river was in the flood zone and formed part of the overall site, but was not part of the residential proposal. The right scheme and plan should open up the available green space and enhance pedestrian and cycle access through to other recreational facilities.

The brownfield land adjoining the residential would remain designated for employment and light industrial use until circumstances indicated otherwise.

A traffic management and highways survey had been undertaken using highway authority guidelines and all appropriate measuring and monitoring had been carried out over a period of months.

A full biodiversity and European protected species survey had been carried out by consultants over a period of two years. The consultants had concluded that there would be no negative impacts on the Special Areas of Conservation.

Mr Duffy concluded that the proposal presented a unique opportunity to provide a number of benefits to Fakenham.

## **24 LOCAL PLAN SITE ALLOCATIONS : WELLS NEXT THE SEA AND FAKENHAM**

The Planning Policy Manager presented the report and site assessment booklets relating to proposed allocations for Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea. He gave a brief overview of the methodology and decision making framework for the finalisation of site selection in the Local Plan. He outlined the main issues relating to each settlement and recommended sites for inclusion in the Local Plan, ahead of Regulation 19 consultation and subsequent submission.

In addition to the recommendations set out in the documents, the Planning Policy Manager recommended that a caveat be attached to site F02 to require confirmation from the Highway Authority that an acceptable access could be provided.

The Planning Policy Manager emphasised the need for Working Party to identify an alternative preferred site if it did not agree with a recommended site. He recommended that any alternative sites identified by the Working Party be deferred for a detailed report at a later meeting.

The Chairman endorsed the comments of the Planning Policy Manager, both in view of the need to maintain the required housing numbers and the transition arrangements recently announced in a Government White Paper which would speed up the timeline to Regulation 19 to allow the Plan to proceed.

### Fakenham

Councillor J Punchard, Member for Lancaster South Ward, considered that all the sites, in particular F01/B and F03, presented a good opportunity to extend planned growth for the town and deliver a large proportion of the required housing for the District. There were some concerns regarding F10 but he understood a great deal of work had been done with regard to environment and access issues, as outlined by Mr Duffy. Fakenham had regularly delivered sites of 30-50 houses over the last 10-15 years as it was viable for developers to do so, and he therefore considered that it was more likely that F10 would be delivered than the larger "Trinity" site which would take a long time to deliver. F01/B and F03 required a £10,000,000 worth of infrastructure to be provided to the north of the town before the site could be developed and the larger the site could be made, the more affordable the infrastructure would be.

Councillor C Cushing, Member for Lancaster North Ward, endorsed the proposals made and the contributions made by the speakers. He considered that it was important that sites F01/F01A in the current Local Plan and site F01/B were seen as one site when developing plans for the former. It was likely that there would be a sizeable increase in the population of Fakenham and he hoped there would be some consideration to finding employment sites in addition to sites for housing. He referred to plans by Norfolk County Council for a site around Fakenham College which had potential for some social housing, and asked how it tied in to the Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Fakenham College site was designated as an open land area in the existing and new Local Plans. Some of the school buildings and ancillary areas were within the designated residential area and

proposals for small scale housing development could come forward without specific allocations being made. The County Council was not in a position to make detailed proposals but opportunities existed through current policies and would continue to do so. It was intended to retain the sense of openness at the frontage of the site through designations in the Plan and associated policies.

Councillor J Rest, Member for Lancaster South, supported the previous comments. He appreciated that Fakenham was primed for development and had sufficient land to allow it to take place, but he questioned whether there would be sufficient facilities and other services to support it, such as healthcare and infrastructure.

Councillor N Dixon requested assurance that future climate change would not place any of F10 in the flood plain for the foreseeable future. He requested that the appropriate phasing of employment and infrastructure alongside housing development be included in the Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment had recently been updated. In consideration of this, the residential area of F10 had been reduced in size to avoid development in the flood risk area, taking account of the full impacts of future climate change.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the current proposals for the Trinity site included in principle the future delivery of a further 5 hectares of employment land provision. Mixed use proposals with employment and other facilities were embedded in the scheme. It would be a matter for Development Committee to consider how the phased delivery of the employment land could be secured. He outlined the current opportunities in Fakenham for employment development. He considered that the overall plan for Fakenham struck a fairly good balance between employment and housing growth. However, significant investment in drainage capacity and highway works were required before the Trinity proposals could come forward. The smaller sites would be easier to deliver and would maintain housing growth in Fakenham whilst the larger schemes were comprehensively planned and brought forward.

The Planning Policy Manager pointed out that the recommendations also included open space designations.

It was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor J Punchard and

**RECOMMENDED** unanimously

1. **That the following sites are included in the Local Plan, subject to the Highway Authority confirming that safe access can be provided in respect of site F02:**

Site Ref	Proposal No.	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings
F01/B	DS 6	Land North of Rudham Stile Lane	26.54	560
F02	-----	Land adjacent Shell petrol station	2.4	72
F03	DS 7	Land at Junction of A148 & B1146	2.16	65
F10	DS 8	Land South of Barons Close	4.11	35-55

2. **The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**
3. **That all other sites are discounted at this stage.**

**4. That the green open space designations shown on the site assessment maps are agreed.**

Wells-next-the-Sea

Councillor P Fisher, Member for Wells with Holkham, stated that W01/1 was well supported, although W07/1 was less so. However, the Town Council was content with both sites. He considered that the main problem would be ensuring there was enough affordable housing.

The Chairman stated that Wells was in Zone 2 for affordable housing and therefore sites over 6 dwellings were expected to deliver 35% affordable housing. It was uncertain as to what impact the reform of the planning system would have on the delivery of affordable housing over the course of the Plan.

Councillor D Baker considered that it was difficult to get affordable housing built in Wells and it was good to see that 28 were proposed through the Plan. He asked how the Council could ensure that developers built the quantity of affordable housing that was required.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that the policies were often seen as a starting point for negotiation regarding viability. The Plan had been subject to a viability assessment and Officers were confident that a requirement of 35% would be deliverable and unforeseen development costs had been identified. The allocated site in the current Plan had delivered the required number of affordable dwellings. A paper would be brought to the Working Party at a future meeting regarding housing mix and tenure. He explained that it would not be possible to restrict affordable dwellings on allocated sites to local lettings dwellings, which were normally delivered through exceptions schemes. Affordable dwellings on allocated sites were for general needs affordable housing.

Councillor P Heinrich asked if W07 would be at risk in a storm surge.

The Planning Policy Manager stated that only a very small area of the site was in the flood risk area. The site was elevated and high above the flood risk area.

It was proposed by Councillor A Brown, seconded by Councillor P Grove-Jones and

**RECOMMENDED** unanimously

**1. That the following sites are included in the Local Plan:**

Site Ref	Description	Gross Area (ha)	Indicative Dwellings	Affordable dwellings
W01/1	Land at Market Lane	0.78	20	7
W07/1	Land Adjacent Holkham Road	2.69	60	21

**2. The final policy wording is delegated to the Planning Policy Manager.**

**3. That all other sites are discounted at this stage.**

**4. That the green open space designations shown on the site assessment**

**maps are agreed.**

(Councillor D Baker had left the meeting and did not vote)

The Chairman thanked the Planning Policy Manager, Planning Policy Team Leader and the Planning Policy Team for their work in producing the booklets, and thanked the Planning Policy Manager for his input at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.40 am.

---

Chairman