

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

20th December 2023

COUNCILLOR A BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & ENFORCEMENT

For the period 22nd November 2023 to 11th December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

The new National Planning Policy Framework due to be revised shortly will vindicate the Council's decision to publish the new district **Local Plan** last April with cross-party approval. Councils who paused and suspended their draft Local Plans because of delayed planning reforms or similar concerns will be criticised by the Planning Inspectorate. Our Local Plan Examination is due to start on 23rd January 2024. Further details of the timetable of the Examination Programme can be found at: [North Norfolk Local Plan Examination Programme](#).

The final **Development Committee** meeting of the year took place on 7th December – and lasted more than 6 hours and considered applications in Cromer, West Beckham, Thursford, Weybourne, Salthouse, Trunch and Sheringham. The reports are all available at: [Development Committee Thursday 7th December 2023](#).

At the end of November the Government published further information related to '**Biodiversity Net Gain**'. This information made it clear that the new system will only affect developments where applications are received after given dates. The exact dates haven't been announced but are likely to be some time in January 2024 for major developments and some time in April 2024 for other types of development. Further information can be found at: [Biodiversity Net Gain - Government Documents](#).

A public drop in event on the proposed development known as '**North Walsham West Sustainable Urban Extension**' was held on Wednesday 6 December 2023. It was aimed at residents of Coltishall and Horstead and was held at Coltishall Village Hall. The purpose of the event was to present details of off-site highway mitigation proposals and to enable discussion with staff from the developers and the Council on this and other aspects of the proposed development. Further information on the development is available at: [North Walsham West Sustainable Urban Extension \(NNDG\)](#) and [North Walsham West \(stand-alone web-site\)](#).

New legislation via the **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act** introduces several changes to planning processes. Planning application fees – which are set by Government - will increase by 25% for household applications and 35% for developers. Some applicants (for non-major applications) will also be entitled to a refund if councils do not decide their applications within 16 weeks - instead of within 26 weeks as used to be the case. Further information is available at: [Government Press Release LURA](#).

The government has changed permitted development rights for some **solar panel** installations to allow homeowners so no planning application will be necessary

providing prior approval is obtained from councils. Panels can also now be placed in front of properties in conservation areas between the house and the highway if placed well away from a dwelling. Previously there was a ban on panels for domestic properties fronting a highway in a conservation area. Now properties with flat roofs can install solar panels in conservation areas and in car parks. Until now panels could not protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall or roof slope and no higher than the highest part of a roof so previously these rights did not extend to flat roofs. But note, that they cannot protrude more than 0.6 of a metre above the highest roofline height excluding the chimney. Further information is available at: [Government Press Release Solar Panels](#).

Having chaired this since 2019, I have decided to resign as Chair of the **Planning Policy and Built Heritage Working Party** having completed delivery of the new Local Plan (subject to the Independent Examination outcome) and both Glaven Valley CA appraisals for our villages and the wider valleys. I will remain as an active member of the PPBHWP in future. I will continue as Planning and Enforcement portfolio holder in the cabinet and will use the freedom afforded to concentrate my efforts on navigating the Local Plan through the government inspection next year. The policy management document for the rural Glaven Valley Conservation Area approved by the PPBHWP last month is due to be ratified and finally adopted by the Council at the cabinet meeting on 8 January. The guidance it provides will be considered in deciding future planning applications across our conservation areas.

Government has announced that the revised **National Planning Policy Framework** will be published this month and that it will include a clearer basis on which a local authority can argue for a divergence from objectively assessed housing need in specific circumstances. It is expected to support Councils in protecting land of environmental importance or aesthetic significance (like green belt land) without having to build new homes on it just to satisfy housing need calculations. It was announced that there will be further consultation on the development of Government's proposed National Development Management Policies - which will attempt to standardize development management rules across a series of policy areas to avoid replication in council local plans. However, it is expected that when a council has submitted a Local Plan for inspection, as in our case, this will give significant protection from national policies challenging local plan policies in the process of being approved. The current version of the Framework is available at: [National Planning Policy Framework](#)

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

The next (and third) Town and Parish Council road-show will be held in Holt on 1st February 2023.

The next Development Committee is due to be held on 11th January 2023.

Local Plan Examination dates are scheduled to be:

- 23rd to 25th January 2024;
- 13th to 15th February 2024; and
- 5th to 7th March 2024.

3 Meetings attended

November

- 23 Portfolio Holder Meeting
- 23 Brinton Parish Council
- 30 Development Committee site visit in Weybourne

December

- 4 Business Progress Meeting
- 7 Development Committee
- 11 North Walsham Development Brief
- 11 Stody Parish Council
- 13 Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- 18 Pre-Cabinet & Business Planning
- 20 Full Council