

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

LDF TASK & FINISH GROUP

**Held on Thursday, 25 February 2010 at 1.00 pm in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr D.S. Myers (Chairman)
Mr P.J. Duigan
Mr K. Martin
Mr B. Rose

Mr F.J. Sharpe (Vice-Chairman)
Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs L.S. Turner

Also Present

Mr R. Bishop – Representing
Swaffham Town Council

Mr. T. Needham – Representing Dereham
Town Council

In Attendance

Mark Broughton
Phil Daines

Helen McAleer
Phil Mileham

Sarah Robertson

Jamie Smith

David Spencer

- Scrutiny Officer
- Development Services Manager (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
- Committee Officer
- Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
- Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
- Environmental Planning Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
- Principal Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland)

16/10 MINUTES

(a) 19 January 2010

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(b) 28 January 2010

Subject to an amendment, deleting the words following 'Harling' in the final sentence on page 6, the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17/10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Chapman-Allen, Mr A Joel, Mr I Monson and Mrs A Steward.

18/10 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

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19/10 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Mr P Duigan and Mrs L Turner both declared personal and prejudicial interests in Agenda Item 5, Appendix A in relation to the Preferred Option for Dereham Cemetery, as members of Dereham Town Council which proposed to purchase the land. Mr Duigan further declared a personal interest in all matter concerning the Dereham Settlement Boundary, by virtue of being a Norfolk County Councillor representing Dereham South.

Mr F Sharpe declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5, Appendix C – Proposals for Swaffham Settlement Boundary, as a member of Swaffham Town Council which owned land within the town.

20/10 SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES & PROPOSALS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT 2001-2026 -TOWN BOUNDARIES AND REMAINING ISSUES

The Principal Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council) presented the report. He dispensed with his usual introduction explaining the purpose of the meetings, as everyone present had attended previously.

The report looked at the Settlement Boundaries for Dereham, Swaffham and Watton and also proposed some additional allocations of retail and open space.

Attention was drawn to item 3.2.1 of the report, which detailed the reasons for the proposed revisions to the Settlement Boundaries. It was also explained that the town boundary maps often went beyond actual parish boundaries: in the case of Dereham, parts of Scarning were included within the town boundary; and at Watton, parts of Carbrooke, Griston and Little Cressingham parishes fell within the town boundary. It was emphasised that these Settlement Boundaries were a planning tool only and were not for administrative use. Parish boundaries were unchanged by this process.

(a) Appendix A - Proposals for retail and other allocations in Dereham

The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council) presented this Appendix.

D.12 – Preferred Option for new retail development

The 2007 Retail Study had identified a need for additional comparison (non-food) floorspace in Dereham. Reasonable options for further town centre development were sought and the report identified an Area of Search. It was proposed that the consultation document should seek comment on the potential for intensification of comparison retail floorspace in that area.

A Member sought clarification of the statement, in the second paragraph of page 42, that there was “limited interrelation between the catchments of lower order market towns” and it was explained that

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this referred to the fact that each of the market towns had their own catchment area and a relatively high retention rate within that area.

The same Member suggested that the TA Centre could be replaced by a car park. Another Member asked if the MoD had been approached to ascertain if they were willing to give up the existing TA Centre and the Senior Planning Policy Officer said that such negotiations would be part of the system if this option was put forward.

A Dereham Member felt that the proposed retail usage was correct but he suggested that office uses should not be ruled out as there was a shortage of such facilities in the town centre.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer endorsed that and said there was a need for more evidence. This would be provided by an updated Retail Study to be carried out in August 2010. There would be further opportunities for discussion as the proposals moved forward.

D.13 and D.14 – Alternative Options

The Chairman noted that the alternative proposals did not appear on the map and it was explained that these were concept ideas only.

No further comments were made.

D.15 - Preferred Option for proposed Dereham Cemetery

Mr P Duigan and Mrs L Turner left the room whilst this item was discussed.

In response to a question it was clarified that the land to the west of the site was Dereham Town Football Club. A Member asked if access would be via the football club. He was concerned because he said that the amount of traffic generated by a cemetery was surprising.

Mr Needham, Clerk to Dereham Town Council, explained that there was an existing access to the site adjacent to the Football Club. There had been informal discussions with the Highways Authority about this access and it was likely that the Town Council would be required to pay for an extension to the 30mph limit past this point. A car park would be formed inside the site.

Mr Needham went on to say that the Town Council welcomed this site's inclusion in the LDF as the current cemetery only had about six or seven years' space left.

D.16 - Reasonable alternative option

No comments were made.

CONCLUSIONS

- (1) Site D12 be endorsed as the Preferred Option for new retail development.

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- (2) D.13 and D.14 be endorsed as Reasonable Alternative Options.
- (3) Site D.15 be endorsed as the Preferred Option for the proposed Dereham Cemetery.
- (4) Site D.16 be endorsed as a Reasonable Alternative Option.

Mr Duigan and Mrs Turner returned to the room.

(b) Appendix B - Proposals for Dereham Settlement Boundary

Eight amendments were proposed.

Mr Duigan declared a personal interest by virtue of being a Norfolk County Councillor. He was pleased about the proposal to exclude school sites from the Settlement Boundary to protect them from development.

CONCLUSION

Members supported all eight proposed amendments (DSB/1 – DSB/8) as recommended.

(c) Appendix C - Proposals for Swaffham Settlement Boundary

Two allocations of Open Space were proposed.
Five amendments were proposed to the Settlement Boundary.

Open Space Allocation

Mr Richard Bishop, Clerk to Swaffham Town Council, said that they supported the two proposed allocations.

No further comments were made.

Settlement Boundary Changes

Mr Bishop noted that land at Stanfield House, adjacent to SW.1, had recently received planning permission for residential development. He asked if the Settlement Boundary would be redrawn to include that.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that if the planning permission was for care home accommodation they would still recommend that the land remained outside the Settlement Boundary as it was not an established residential land use.

Mr Bishop explained that there was a combination of accommodation on the site including 14 half-way house units. A Member clarified that these were for people not requiring full-time care.

A Member suggested that a separate Policy was needed to cover Residential Homes. He felt that they should not be included within

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other categories. There were likely to be many more such applications in the future and he thought that they should have a separate planning category.

The Development Services Manager (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council) agreed that this should be reviewed.

Mr Bishop said that in discussions with the developer this site was put forward on a 'stand alone' basis as it provided both accommodation and employment. He was concerned that this housing provision would be taken from the allocation for Swaffham.

The Principal Planning Officer said that they needed details of the planning permission. If the units were for independent living they would count towards the housing figures for Swaffham. However, if they had communal kitchen facilities and other shared areas, they would not. He agreed to liaise with Swaffham Town Council to clarify this matter.

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Mr Sharpe then spoke about the proposed revisions to the Settlement Boundary, as permitted under the Code of Conduct, before leaving the room. He said that Swaffham had been allocated an additional 250 houses and that the preferred site was to the south of the town, immediately adjacent a site with planning permission for 400 houses. There had been a great deal of local objection to that permission because it was felt that the existing road could not cope with the traffic generated by 400 houses. If the additional 250 houses were also developed in this location he was sure that it would cause problems as there were already queues on the road at rush hour and in the summer.

He proposed that the allocation should be split, with half of the houses being developed on the site to the south and the other 125 being built on a site to the north of the town to the east of site SW.5 abutting the A47. This would relieve some of the pressure on the south of the town. If this proposal had an effect on the amount of Open Space, he suggested that some Open Space allocation could be moved to the south of the town.

Mr Sharpe then left the room.

The Chairman asked for clarification of the land allocations agreed for Swaffham and the Principal Planning Policy Officer said that at the meeting of the Group on 14 October the recommendation for the allocation of site H.1 to the south of the town had been agreed. However, the Group had also instructed officers to look at a split, like the one suggested today, with 100 of the houses going to a site to the north of the town adjacent SW.5. There were a number of issues on that site, including Highways concerns and the fact that the land was in multiple ownership. The suggestion would be fed into the Cabinet process for determination of the allocations.

Currently the allocation for 250 houses was outside the Settlement Boundary, but once it was approved the boundary would be redrawn around it.

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In response to a question, it was noted that the land to the east of SW.5 was originally allocated for employment.

A Member recalled that the Group had supported the idea of splitting the allocation to balance the town and because it was supported by the Town Council.

Mr Bishop confirmed that they were not concerned with including the proposed sites within the Settlement Boundary at this stage, as long as they would be included if their allocations were approved.

CONCLUSIONS

The Group supported the proposed allocations of Open Space at SWOS.1 and SWOS.2 as recommended.

The Group supported the proposed changes to the Settlement Boundary (SW.1 – SW.5) as recommended, subject to resolving the issue of the housing allocation at Stanfield House.

(d) **Appendix D - Proposals for Watton Settlement Boundary**

It was noted that the Watton town boundary had the greatest contention with parish boundaries and the proposals sought to make the parish boundaries clearer on the proposals map.

15 changes to the Settlement Boundary were proposed.
One additional area of Open Space was proposed.

The Chairman reiterated that the changes to the Settlement Boundary did not affect the administrative parish boundaries.

In response to a question regarding the proposal to exclude one of the schools from the Settlement Boundary it was confirmed that this would not affect future proposals for extension but would limit any potential housing development.

The Chairman asked why the Junior School could not also be excluded, for completeness and the Principal Planning Policy Officer agreed that for consistency that could be done if it was the Group's wish.

A Member asked why the boundary was to be drawn so tightly around WAT.7 as there appeared to be room for expansion to the west and east there. He also asked if more land was allocated for employment following the grant of permission for new houses. He suggested that if enough land was made available it might encourage a new employer to come in as there were so many new houses being built.

It was confirmed that there was employment land available to the east of the town. Two sites had been brought forward through the LDF process at WAT.14 and also within the Former RAF site.

The Chairman knew that there was still room available within WAT.7 for expansion, despite the proposed tightening of the boundary and he also noted that the area had a flood problem.

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CONCLUSIONS

Members supported all 15 amendments (WAT.1 – WAT.15) to the Settlement Boundary as recommended.

An additional change, to exclude the Junior School was also proposed.

Members supported the proposed Open Space designation of W.OS.1 as recommended.

(e) **Appendix E - Monitoring and Implementation Framework**

The Principal Planning Policy Officer drew Members' attention to page 38 of the agenda, which contained the two final sections of the Site Specifics document.

Gypsy and Travellers

Breckland Council was required to provide 15 permanent pitches by 2011 along the A11 corridor. The focus of search would be in the Attleborough area. Temporary transit provision would also be required.

Officers were recommending that no action be taken until more evidence was available.

A Member suggested that it would be a good time to discuss this matter with South Norfolk. He understood that they were considering a site near the A11 at Spooner Row, which was close to Breckland Council's boundary, and might provide an opportunity for the two Councils to work together for the benefit of both.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that they had been consulted on South Norfolk's proposals which were progressing as part of their LDF process. However, with respect to Breckland, Officers considered that there was insufficient evidence to recommend a specific site.

Members generally felt that the Council should be pro-active and it was suggested that the Group should send a message suggesting that the Chief Executive or Chairman should speak to South Norfolk.

The term 'pitch' was clarified. This related to a concrete pad for the standing of up to two caravans – one permanent and one visitor.

A Member noted that at the site in Swaffham some people were resident that did not qualify as gypsies or travellers. The Principal Planning Policy Officer explained that from a planning perspective, such sites were conditioned for occupation by 'nomadic' people only.

Monitoring and Implementation Framework

This section was included in the document to give developers and all other stakeholders, information on how plans would be assessed and

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monitored. It would be updated after the Cabinet meeting.

The Chairman asked if the Cabinet meeting would be a joint meeting. He was concerned that the Group had met eight times but that the Cabinet would only have a short time to discuss the Group's conclusions.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer said that the Core Strategy Document had gone through a similar process and the minutes and outcomes from the LDF Group meetings had formed the basis of the report to Cabinet. Where there had been consistency between the Officers, Group and Town and Parish Councils Cabinet had not discussed those items, they had focussed on those areas where there had been contention.

The Chairman asked if the Group's recommended changes counted as agreement or not and the Principal Planning Policy Officer said that a number of changes had been agreed and others, that were considered to affect the 'soundness' of the document, had been flagged as areas of concern.

CONCLUSION

The Chairman requested that the Officers' report to Cabinet should be circulated to Group members before it was submitted. If Members were not satisfied with the contents of the report another meeting of the Group would be arranged.

21/10 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Site Specifics work had been concluded. Only two further documents were outstanding: The Attleborough and Snetterton Heath Action Plan and the Thetford Area Action Plan.

A future work programme would be needed but there was not likely to be a meeting before April. When more information was available a date would be notified to Members.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm

CHAIRMAN