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## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **At a Meeting of the**

### **LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP**

**Held on Wednesday, 6 March 2013 at 2.15 pm in  
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Dereham**

#### **PRESENT**

Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris  
Mr J.W. Nunn

Mrs L.S. Turner

#### **Also Present**

Mr S.G. Bambridge  
Mr A.P. Joel

Mr K. Martin

#### **In Attendance**

Feng Li

- Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)

Natalie Beal

- Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)

Julie Britton

- Senior Committee Officer

Phil Mileham

- Planning Policy Team Leader (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)

Sarah Robertson

- Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)

Jamie Smith

- Environmental Planning Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)

David Spencer

- Joint Deputy Planning Manager

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#### **1/13 CHAIRMAN (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

It was agreed that William Nunn be appointed as Chairman of the Local Plan Working Group.

#### **2/13 NON MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Gordon Bambridge, Adrian Joel and Keith Martin.

#### **3/13 TERMS OF REFERENCE (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

Cabinet had agreed to the establishment of a Local Plan Working Group to oversee the preparation of the new Local Plan and move away from the suite of LDF documents and set the direction for policy development and make recommendations.

The objectives listed within the Terms of Reference were highlighted.

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The Deputy Planning Manager explained that these Working Group meetings would be reasonably informal and there would be opportunities for external bodies to address the Group accordingly.

A Member commended the Terms of Reference to the Group.

Mr Bambridge had been asked by his Parish of Foxley how they could feed into this process. The Deputy Planning Manager advised that the Statement of Community Involvement under agenda item 10 set out how parishes could get involved. All parishes would have the opportunity to attend meetings in due course in the same way as they did before. A Member stated that he did not see any difference in this process as to what happened previously in the LDF particularly as the Group moved towards the site specifics. The Working Group allowed another level of scrutiny and community involvement was very key to what was considered sustainable particularly in villages.

Mr Joel agreed that the LDF process had worked well.

Members were reminded that the recommendations for this Working Group would be reported through to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet so there would be further opportunities for participation. The Chairman advised that there would be meetings held in the communities and it was agreed that additional wording would be added to the Group's objectives under objective 8:- To shape the Statement of Community Involvement, agreeing it for progression to the Executive or for public consultation *ensuring communities are involved in this process*.

**RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Local Plan Working Group be approved subject to the additional wording being added to objective no. 8 as mentioned above.

**4/13 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW PROCESS REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The Planning Policy Team Leader provided Members with a brief résumé of the key processes and key activities of preparing a Local Plan (see section 1.3 of the report).

The first stage in the process that the Council would need to develop was to agree a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out the timetable and project plan by which the Local Plan and any other Development Plan documents would be prepared against. Local Planning Authorities were still required under Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to prepare such a Scheme although these no longer have to be submitted and agreed by the Secretary of State.

The second key task was to adopt an updated Statement of Community Involvement (see section 1.8 of the report). A presentation would be provided by the Planning Policy Officer under agenda item 10.

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Members' attention was then drawn to section 1.9 of the report that highlighted all the documents that sat alongside the preparation of a Local Plan.

It was explained that the Local Plan would still be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal which would demonstrate how the Council's policies performed against a range of economic, social and environmental objectives. Mr Bambridge mentioned the word 'sustainability'. He felt that the definition of this particular word should be clearly defined as many people preferred to live in very rural areas and already classed their hamlet as sustainable.

The Planning Policy Team Leader reported that the new regulations gave more freedom through the key stages of consultation and he highlighted section 1.11 of the report. As per to the report to Cabinet in January, it was explained that there were options to include a more detailed section for the town of Attleborough. It was further explained that there were also a range of different ways that consultation could be carried out on sites and gave examples which could include undertaking consultation in 'bite-size' areas of the district.

Further stages of the development of the new Local Plan were explained which included the need for new/updated evidence, housing, economy and growth and job targets. Paragraph 173 of the National Planning Policy Framework required local authorities to ensure that Local Plans were deliverable and viable; this was a new process that would allow more detailed choices later on in the process. The Natural Environment had been quite a major topic during the LDF process – Breckland Council had commissioned further evidence on Stone Curlews and this area of work would hopefully inform refines policies within the new Local Plan.

The Localism Act's Duty to Cooperate section of the report was highlighted to Members. This was new and had been designed for each local authority to consider the impact of its Local Plan on neighbouring authorities, for example, the impact of transport and green infrastructure. Breckland Council was looking to take the lead on these strategic discussions as it was the first authority in Norfolk to commence the preparation of a new single Local Plan.

The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that various topics would be brought to the Local Plan Working Group as it moved forward plus items of evidence that would shape various topic areas of the Local Plan.

A Member felt that it would be a relief to be able to look at housing numbers without interference from the Government. He also agreed with the Member's point about sustainability in villages and felt that this was a matter that should be looked at.

Mr Bambridge mentioned the bus services in the District which he felt that this Group should get involved in. He further felt that parishioners needed to have more involvement when gathering information on housing needs as their needs would be different even though the rules

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were the same. Members were informed that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment was currently being updated to determine what types of housing needed to be built moving forward. In response to the above concern in relation to bus services, a Member highlighted the Norfolk Community Transport Day that had recently been held and that she had attended which had been about joined up thinking processes and long term projects on such matters. Mr Joel asked how Breckland Council was going to calculate its housing numbers. Members were informed that this would involve a multi agency approach and all authorities would have to work together. Inward migration and housing numbers were discussed. The Group was informed that there would be a range of policy choices on these matters but the Government still expected local authorities to plan to meet their full objectively assessed housing needs. Mr Bambridge thought it would make sense to match housing growth to the economy of the area.

The report was otherwise noted.

**5/13 DRAFT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - FIFTH REVISION**  
**(AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The purpose of the report was to enable Members to consider the fifth iteration of the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This latest version had been significantly revised due to the changes in Local Plan Regulations and to reflect the Council's recent commitment to move to the preparation of a single Local Plan Development Plan Document.

The changes to the Act were highlighted and Members' attention was drawn to the full document at Appendix A of the report. Attention was also drawn to the proposed Local Plan timetable which indicated that between May 2014 and June 2015, there would be an opportunity for a further consultation to cover potential sites for allocation as had been carried out through the former LDF process. Details of the LDS were explained including the new risk under the Duty to Cooperate. The Council would need to ensure that policy decisions that could have multi-area effects were subject to ongoing engagement to meet this requirement. A number of local authorities were already falling foul of this process.

The options were explained.

A Member felt that some people would be concerned by the timescales and he hoped that this document would be flexible and the timetable shortened if required. Members were reminded of the LDF timescales (over 5 years) and highlighted the fact that the Local Plan process would be quicker even though there was quite a volume of work to be undertaken through this current administration but it was a realistic and pragmatic timetable for the amount of work that had to be covered.

Mr Joel mentioned the right that people had to submit land by 8 April 2013. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised that there had been strong interest with a number of new sites put forward and the Planning Policy Team had written to those on the previous LDF data base to

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confirm their interest in the Local Plan. The request for the submission of land had also been included in the final issue of the Breckland Voice magazine but further discussions would be had as it was very important to get this message out and encourage those people who had land to inform the Council. Mr Bambridge asked if there would be another deadline date available. In response, Members were informed that there would be other opportunities later on in the process.

A Member referred to the chapter in relation to Attleborough that was being carried forward from the LDF process. He pointed out that the Council would have to carry on with this work until such time as Attleborough decided to submit a Neighbourhood Plan – nothing had been received as yet. The context of Neighbourhood Plans was explained. Mr Martin highlighted the issues in relation to Attleborough particularly in respect of housing numbers and infrastructure.

The Chairman challenged the timescales and asked if this was due to lack of resources in the Planning Policy Team. A Member stated that the answer to this question was both yes and no, some work was resource rich and some was not. The Joint Deputy Planning Manager confirmed that there was not a single piece of evidence that would take that long but elements of studies could take longer. There were various sequences that had to be followed, notwithstanding consultations that had to be agreed. The Joint Deputy Planning Manager then acknowledged that some additional resource would bring forward some of the evidence based work. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised Members of the need for discussions with neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Cooperate. The Deputy Planning Manager also indicated that the Team was at the same time progressing the Community Infrastructure Levy which was highlighted on the LDS chart under Figure 3 on page 9 of the document. The Chairman felt that the Council could receive some criticism from Attleborough about the timetable. In response, Members were informed that there were a number of policies in the LDF process that still held weight and would continue until the new Local Plan was formally adopted. A Member explained that there would be a meeting with Officers to assess where processes could be expedited all the way through the process. He commented about the fears that some communities were expressing in relation to the possible refusal of future planning applications due to lack of infrastructure.

Mr Bambridge asked if wind turbine schemes would be included in the Local Plan. The Joint Deputy Planning Manager drew attention to the renewable energy paragraph that had been incorporated and would be embedded in the new policies.

It was **RESOLVED** that Option 1 of the report be approved.

**6/13 DRAFT BRECKLAND STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

The Planning Policy Officer provided Members with a brief overview of the content of the Statement of Community Involvement and circulated

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the copy of the report that would be presented to the Cabinet meeting on 26 March 2013.

The major changes between the current SCI and the new amended SCI were highlighted and how the Council proposed to engage and consult on the document was explained.

The suggested amendments from the Executive Briefing would be incorporated.

Mr Bambridge asked if there was any relevance to the consultation period being during the Norfolk County Council Elections. The Joint Deputy Planning Manager explained that there was no statutory regulation to consult, Breckland Council would be consulting out of courtesy and it did not relate to Purdah.

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement was noted.

**7/13 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 11)**

It was agreed that future meetings of the Local Plan Working Group would be held on the same day of Cabinet (if feasible).

The date of the next meeting on Tuesday, 26 March 2013 following the Cabinet meeting was noted.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm

CHAIRMAN