

FENLAND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 3 APRIL 2019

3.00 - 5.00 PM

**RICHARD YOUNG SUITE, THE BOATHOUSE
BUSINESS CENTRE, WISBECH, PE13 3BH
AGENDA**

Agenda Number	Topic for discussion
1.	Introduction and Apologies
2.	Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 16 January 2019 (Pages 3 - 14)
3.	Barriers to Delivering Sites following planning
4.	CNC Building Control
5.	Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Flood Authority -Whittlesey Surface Water Issues. Discussion concerning MLC and Local Land Charges
6.	Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Flood Authority - Joint working project between LLFA and Middle Level Internal Drainage Board.
7.	Discussion on The Local Plan Review
8.	Performance and Staffing
9.	Any other business

This page is intentionally left blank

ACTION SCHEDULE FOR THE MEETING HELD ON Wednesday, 16 January 2019

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
1	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies were noted from:</p> <p>Geoff Beel, Eugene Cooper, Leigh Middleton, Graham Moore, Emma Nasta, Martin Williams, Justin Wingfield, David Wyatt.</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <p>Stephen Buddle, Dino Biagioni, Cllr Sam Clark, Marcel Cooper, Gareth Edwards, Ben Hornigold, Peter Humphrey, Keith Hutchinson, Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Cllr Mrs Dee Laws, Rikki Parsons, Grahame Seaton, Nick Seaton, Cllr Will Sutton, Christian Wilson, Alex Woolnough, Gary Garford and Richard Cassidy.</p>
2	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 17 October 2018</u>			<p>The Chairman, Mr Maxey stated that he has had no correspondence from anybody wishing to assume the position of Chairman of the Forum going forward and he would encourage colleagues to do so.</p> <p>The Chairman added that with regard to planning for new school places there had been a consultation held recently concerning the new secondary school in Wisbech, at which he had pointed out that the route that has been identified in the Wisbech Access Study for potential western bypass appears to go through the site identified</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>for the new secondary school. He added that he had pointed out that there needs to be a discussion held between them, the Planning Department at Fenland and Cambridgeshire Highways.</p> <p>The Chairman asked members of the Forum to bring forward any topics that they wish to be discussed at future meetings.</p>
3	<u>Presentation from Rent Plus</u>			<p>Emma George from Rent Plus presented to the Forum and outlined the history of the company.</p> <p>She explained that Rent Plus are currently looking for sites primarily, and taking section 106 contribution on the sites. Rent Plus do not exist to replace affordable housing, they offer a rent to buy product. Rent Plus is pitched at key workers and a traditional person purchasing a rent plus product would on average £32,000 as a household income per year, whereas a help to buy product would on average be £62,000.</p> <p>The difference between Rent Plus and Housing Associations currently offering rent to buy products is that Rent Plus will gift a purchaser the 10% deposit, which gives the purchaser the opportunity to be able to fund an additional fund towards their purchaser period.</p> <p>She explained that Fenland District Council have embraced the product and there is a scheme in Doddington where Rent Plus have worked with Larkfleet Homes which is the first scheme in the East, which has been very successful.</p> <p>Rent Plus are privately funded and are not a</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>registered provider, which means that they do not have the constraints imposed on them. Currently they are funded by a British Aerospace pension fund, which may not sit comfortably, so it is not social housing in perpetuity but it does guarantee for 10 years. The scheme can also assist in unlocking sites which have stalled, which has been a big issue in the region historically, and work is underway within Peterborough to identify sites in the region and then the agents for those sites will be contacted. She added that previously viability has been an issue which meant housing associations had not taken schemes forward, however the Rent Plus model can due to their modelling. Currently the Rent Plus portfolio sits at 3500 properties and with another scheme in the pipeline 6000 units.</p> <p>Members of the Forum asked questions following the presentation.</p>
4	<u>Feedback on how the sequential test advice is working</u>			<p>Nick Harding advised the forum that the sequential test advice has been in place for over a year and has reviewed how the guidance is working. He added that he has not received feedback and added that he assumes that everybody is comfortable with how the system is working.</p> <p>It was mentioned that the methodology on a single dwelling and a 2 dwelling development has worked very well. John Maxey asked whether this was looking at the specifics in a village or in Wisbech. It was added that it was looking at specifics for Fenland District and around Wisbech and the methodology being used, ticks all the boxes and it is helpful to be able to apply the</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>system and see the final result and it is working well.</p> <p>John Maxey added that there have been a couple of experiences where sites have been promoted on the edge of a village where small extensions of the villages are permitted and he has been told that the sequential test will be considered in the context of the countryside as it is outside of the village, however village boundaries do not exist. He added that if a site is being promoted on the basis that it is an extension to a limited growth or growth village, it would be expected that the sequential test on the basis of that settlement and not on the whole of the district because it is in the open countryside.</p> <p>John Maxey explained that the Planning Officers are saying that they would be object as they don't see it as a suitable site for a village, but in the context of the sequential test, it was being promoted under the policy of a village extension but was being sequentially tested as 'elsewhere'.</p>
5	<u>Government consultation on changes to planning</u>			<p>Nick Harding advised the forum that the Government has carried out a consultation exercise regarding a number of changes to the planning system, with regard to 'looking after town centres', however when the proposals are looked at they do not seem to be confined to instances within town and city centres.</p> <p>He gave an outline of the proposals which included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting restrictions in place with regard to adverts in phone boxes.

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be more generous allowances to allow Local Authorities to install vehicle charging points by the roadside. • Through the prior notification process, it may enable vertical extensions to commercial premises if the extension is going to be used to provide residential accommodation. • With regard to house extensions, the government had introduced a temporary system where a larger than normal extension to a property was permitted providing criteria was met and in those cases the local authority had to notify the abutting neighbours and if there was no objection it was approved and if there were objections then consideration was given to the impact on the neighbours and no other factor. • The ability to demolish commercial buildings and replace them with dwellings, under a prior notification system, however there was no further information in the consultation as to how the Government thought how that might work. • Applications for changes of use to residential, properties used for the purposes of shops and professional services, takeaways, betting shops, payday loans and launderettes are to subject to a simpler application process. <p>John Maxey commented that whilst the high street is struggling at the moment should large passes of the high street be converted into residential.</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The previous changes allowed temporary permitted changes of use between certain uses and that lasted for 2 years, however the Government is thinking of increasing it to 3 years. <p>John Maxey commented that the only situation he has come across is health facilities in retail premises, for example if a dentist comes in you have to get a change to D1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are also looking to broaden the definition of what constitutes a shop, so that includes what is currently separates uses such as professional services and restaurants and cafes. With regard to the Wisbech Garden Town project, the Government has noticed that it has no got any compulsory purchase guidance in respect of the use by Development Corporations. The guidance is broadly saying that the Corporations could buy up more land earlier which is all around focussing on delivering large scale projects.
6	<u>Local Plan Review</u>			<p>Nick Harding advised the forum that there is a report being presented to Full Council in February asking for consent to formally commence work on the new Local Plan. It is estimated that it will take between 3 and 4 years to produce that document. As part of the process, it is planned to engage with the Development Community.</p> <p>Nick Harding suggested that at future meetings, a particular topic could be discussed, which will give the forum an opportunity to raise what their ideas</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>are for change, what their grips are regarding the existing local plan, which could then be factored into the new plan. This interaction at the Development Forum would be in addition to other engagement opportunities.</p> <p>John Maxey agreed this would be very beneficial. Councillor Mrs Laws agreed a topic at each meeting would be the way forward. Nick Harding agreed that at the next meeting, discussions could commence with regard to strategic matters and then going forward by the end of the year other topics can be brought forward for debate.</p>
7	<u>Pre Start Condition Arrangements</u>			<p>John Maxey asked the Forum for feedback as to whether they will that the pre start condition arrangements are working.</p> <p>The question was asked with regard to how far in advance the pre commencement conditions should be supplied. Nick Harding stated that the application cannot be determined until the applicant/agent has been notified and given 10 days.</p>
8	<u>Performance and Staffing</u>			<p>Nick Harding agreed to circulate the figures on performance. He added that there had been no staffing changes.</p> <p>A comment was made with regard to encouraging Planning Officers to deal with major applications in 13 weeks.</p> <p>Nick Harding added that currently excluding extensions of time, deciding approximately 43% of</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				major applications within the 13 week timeframe.
9	<u>Any Other Business</u>			<p>Gary Garford updated the Forum with regard to the Wisbech Garden Town project. The flood mitigation study has now been completed with Royal Haskoning and discussions are now taking place with the Environment Agency. A connectivity study has been completed with regard to capacity on the A47. The rail study has commenced for the link between March and Wisbech and this is being led by the Combined Authority and County Council.</p> <p>There is also a further A47 study from the preliminary work, looking at an option appraisal on preferred routes.</p> <p>There has been a bid submitted to Central Government to include Wisbech in the Garden Town prospectus, however there is no timescale regarding this, but by the Spring, it will mean that there is Government support, so it can be quoted to other partners that Wisbech is on the prospectus.</p> <p>Work has also commenced with the Combined Authority with a consultant called Inner Circle, where the next stages are being developed with regard to viability, master planning and dealing with the Planning Team at Fenland with regard to planning options, as it will also need to link in with the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Part of this work will include a public and stakeholder engagement process.</p> <p>Works on the Garden Town project are also linking in with the Wisbech Access Study work</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>together with the consultants who are involved with that as well as flood mitigation and an option appraisal that had been carried out with regard to the barrier or barrage on the River Nene has just been completed which looked 23 options, a barrier or barrage, north of Wisbech and one north of the Cross Keys bridge at Sutton Bridge and another South of the Cross Keys bridge. The preferred one is the one just South of the Cross Keys Bridge.</p> <p>John Maxey asked whether the studies that have been carried out are published documents, due to the fact that when discussions start with regard to the Local Plan, if there is a wider flood study around Wisbech, it might inform the Local Plan review and also the connectivity study with regard to traffic issues. Gary Garford stated that the documents are not yet in the public domain, as the relevant sign off still needs to be achieved by the Environment Agency.</p> <p>John Maxey added that when the Local Plan is reviewed, it is important that all the technical information including infrastructure and strategy are included.</p> <p>The comment was made that there is a great deal of important and encouraging work taking place, however it needs to be promoted to the general public, to keep them informed of the progress to date. Gary Garford commented that the project is still in its infancy and therefore, the Authority does not wish to raise expectations or blight land on both sides too early. Once the concept is agreed, then the next stage will be proper engagement, however he took the comments on board and</p>

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<p>agreed to raise it at the next steering group meeting.</p> <p>Gary Garford highlighted to the Forum the various projects and feasibilities that are currently in progress.</p> <p>Nick Harding commented that the Lead Local Flood Authority have advised that they have been working with the IDB with regard to the use of soakaways in the Whittlesey area and therefore they maybe changes made with regard to surface water in the Whittlesey area in the future. They have asked the planning department to consult them on more applications than what is normally the case, however whilst he is happy with that arrangement, he intends to let the LLFA and the IDB know is for small developments coming back with issues concerning soakaways not being appropriate for them, as the smaller developments have the risk of not being surface water disposed of, by any other means due to in adequate network piping due to the site location.</p> <p>The comment was made with regard to how expensive pre application fees appear to be, compared with other authorities and a review of the costs was requested.</p> <p>The Lead Local Flood Authority will be in attendance at the next forum and Nick Harding agreed to invite the Middle Level IDB.</p> <p>Topics for the next meeting will include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Issues re Local Plan • LLFA and IDB with regard to progress in joined up thinking.

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whittlesey Surface Water <p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>3 April 2019.</p>

Finish: 5.00 pm

This page is intentionally left blank