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FENLAND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2019

3.00 - 5.00 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL, COUNTY ROAD, MARCH AGENDA

Agenda Number	Topic for discussion
1.	Introduction and Apologies
2.	Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on April 3 2019 (Pages 3 - 12)
3.	Barriers to delivering sites following planning permission
4.	Affordable Housing and stalled sites
5.	Local Plan Review -update
6.	Update following meeting with Middle Level and Land Charges
7.	Royal Haskoning flood management report
8.	5 year land supply update
9.	Performance and Staffing Update
10.	Any other business

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No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
1	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies were noted from:</p> <p>Julia Beeden, Lee Bevens, Dino Biagioni, Charlotte Dew. Keith Hutchinson, Cllr Mrs Dee Laws, Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Emma Nasta, Nick Seaton and David Wyatt</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <p>Ted Brand, Stephen Buddle, Cllr Sam Clark, Eugene Cooper, Marcel Cooper, Hilary Ellis, Gary Garford, Nick Harding, Ben Hornigold, Peter Humphrey, Emily Hutchinson, Shanna Jackson, John Maxey (Chairman), Max McCarthy (CNC), Leigh Middleton, Graham Moore, David Rowen, Grahame Seaton, Adam Sutton, David Thomas, Martin Williams, Emily Hutchinson.</p>
2	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 16 January 2019</u>			<p>The action schedule of the meeting of January 16 19 was agreed and approved.</p>
3	<u>Barriers to Delivering Sites following planning</u>			<p>David Wyatt had intended to present this item but was unable to attend and therefore, it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed to circulate a brief synopsis of the issues to be discussed prior to the next meeting.</p>

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				<p>Gary Garford stated that with regard to solutions for the delivery of sites, the District Council are looking at a more proactive approach to assist with the delivery and there is some planned engagement with the District Council and the CPCA along other partners such as Clarion.</p> <p>John Maxey added that delivery from both sides is important and from a developers perspective it is important, so they can progress and make money and for the Council to be able to demonstrate their performance when it is marked on delivery figures.</p> <p>Gary Garford added that the impetus of the Council is to improve the economy and wellbeing of the district, so both economic and housing growth are the main focus.</p>
4	<u>CNC Building Control</u>			<p>Max McCarthy from (CNC) Building Control explained to the forum that there have been a number of staffing changes, some of which may have had an impact on performance. There have been six new staff recruited in the last four months and it is hoped that through communication between developers and the CNC staff, a good working relationship can be achieved. It is hoped that any performance issues which have been encountered, will be eradicated through the strengthening of the team.</p> <p>Nick Harding pointed out that Fenland District Council, started having the building control function supplied by CNC in 2015 and this has been extended to 2022/23. He highlighted that recruitment issues appear to be across the board and virtually every local authority that runs a building control service is encountering issues</p>

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				<p>with recruitment. He added that he is encouraged to hear that CNC has an active training programme in place for the development of staff.</p> <p>The point was raised that following an inspection by building control, the agents/developers are not provided with any paperwork to show that a site has passed its inspection.</p> <p>The Chairman agreed that he has been involved with a site where the drains were inspected at an early stage and when the final inspection took place, it was a different inspector who wanted to re inspect items which had already been approved and the applicant has no proof or evidence that items have been signed off as there is no correspondence provided.</p> <p>Max from CNC added that it is a common area of concern which is raised that there is a lack of continuity with regard to the consistency of Inspectors attending sites and that is looking to be addressed. Firstly the aim is to achieve staffing levels where the consistency can be put in place. He added that within the automated back office function there maybe systems which can be introduced to provide a communication stream between the applicant and building control.</p> <p>The Chairman asked whether there is currently the facility to book an inspection on line and Max confirmed that there is the facility and also an app, however it is not used as much as it could be. It was agreed that the link would be circulated with the action schedule.</p> <p>http://www.cncbuildingcontrol.gov.uk/</p>

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				<p>A question and discussion surrounding the clarity over the subject of surface water drainage and where building control sits in relation to the interaction with the local authority, the LLFA and Middle Level Commissioners took place.</p> <p>The Chairman added that there appears to be issues with regard to the local land charges that Middle Level add being cleared, and the standards that Middle Level adopt in terms of the design that they want for soakaways, compared with the standards that Building Control require. It was established that soakaways should be designed for 100 years plus climate change (for a new dwelling).</p> <p>It was agreed that a separate meeting should take place with Middle Level, CNC and FDC to discuss the issues being encountered and then to produce a guidance sheet for developers, which supports the flood authority and building control in their current approach and also supports the growth of the District.</p> <p>It was also decided that a member of the Forum also be invited to the meeting along with the LLFA, in order to have a Fenland approach.</p> <p>Max added that there is a planned legislation change later in the year following the Grenfell outcome. The scope may include what is deemed as high risk buildings, as opposed to just high rise, and currently there is no clear definition and it may just mean complex buildings, which are classed as outside the sphere of domestic buildings.</p>

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5	<p><u>Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Flood Authority - Whittlesey Surface Water Issues. Discussion concerning MLC and Local Land Charges</u></p>			<p>Officers from the LLFA presented to the Forum and explained that there is a bi annual meeting specifically for Fenland where various Partners attend. Issues are discussed where there have been incidents of recent flooding and other risk concerns are highlighted.</p> <p>At the last meeting in November, an issue was raised with regard to the number of reports received of flooding in Whittlesey. Much of the flooding has been linked to groundwater. Many of the reports were from residents reporting that they had water rising underneath their homes. As a result of this further investigation has taken place with some student placements being utilised to review the reports in Whittlesey.</p> <p>Officers highlighted on the maps the various planning applications that County Council had reviewed and explained the various aspects that were looked at.</p> <p>Officers asked for assistance with regard to the collection of data going forward.</p> <p>Gary Garford stated that there has been liaison with Anglia Water, who have highlighted that in the next 20 to 30 years the East of England has been identified as a water scarce area.</p> <p>David Thomas added that he sits on the Lower Nene Resources Planning Committee, along with North Level IDB, The Whittlesey Washes, RSPB, Great Fen Project, Anglia Water and WRE, who are looking at revisiting the model from the River Nene as it is the main supply of water for agricultural and irrigation and they are looking at</p>

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				<p>extending the model.</p> <p>Nick Harding added that there is a round of consultation on the Minerals and Waste Plan for the County and there maybe the opportunity to make comments regarding water storage.</p> <p>Ben Hornigold added that with regard to Fenland becoming involved with water resources. Farmers are expecting to encounter problems this year with regard to irrigation as the saline water table level is rising which have greatly reduced the availability of fresh water.</p>
6	<p><u>Cambridgeshire County Council Lead Flood Authority - Joint working project between LLFA and Middle Level Internal Drainage Board.</u></p>			<p>Officers from the LLFA highlighted that there has been work carried out with new graduates and trainees from the County Council who have undertaken a period of work with Middle Level and looked at the systems used by the Internal Drainage Board.</p>
7	<p><u>Discussion on The Local Plan Review</u></p>			<p>Nick Harding gave the forum an update with regard to the Local Plan and said that at the last meeting it was agreed that the plan would be broken down into a series of component parts and for these to be discussed at future meetings.</p> <p>The topic to be discussed today is the 'Distribution of Growth' and is concerning the principles rather than the numbers.</p> <p>He added that there is not an expectation to make provision for any more development on a per annum basis than is stated in the current Local Plan, which is approx. 550 dwellings per year.</p>

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				<p>Nick Harding asked the Forum Members whether the new Local Plan should have the same distribution or something significantly different.</p> <p>The comment was made with regard to the amount of development taking place in the District currently. Nick Harding stated that it is a reflection around the challenges of delivering developments of the larger allocations and that is a topic which is going to be discussed with the forum members.</p> <p>The comment was made with regard to the growth of villages and whether they will be developed further. Nick Harding commented that a certain level of growth would be allowed to take place but he could not say how much as this would be established through the Local Plan process.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that in his opinion the requirement of having BCP's in advance of getting applications in the major strategic site have acted as a barrier of bringing those forward, due to the need of getting cooperation of so many land owners to formulate the BCP. Due to this, there have been many approvals for areas which don't require a BCP, ie below 249 dwellings or the villages. He added that in his opinion, the demand sites are primarily from local or regional developers in this area as opposed to National Companies.</p> <p>The Chairman stated that if considerations for larger allocations are still to be an option, then there must be the provision to allow sites to be parcelled up, into size, to give opportunities for all types of developer.</p>

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				<p>Nick Harding commented that there are many different options and decisions for the Local Authority to consider. He also said that there was a requirement for a significant proportion of the requirement to be met through small sites.</p> <p>Gary Garford mentioned that the CPCA have provided a small amount of funding to Fenland where a financial incentive can be offered if additional affordable housing is built on top of the already agreed affordable housing on developers planning consents. It was agreed to invite Dan Horn, Head of Housing and Community Support at the District Council to the next Developer Forum to present to the group on small stalled sites that Developers can identify.</p> <p>Action: Dan Horn to be invited to the next Fenland Developer Forum.</p> <p>Nick Harding advised the Forum that a broad timetable is currently being looked at, which will be published and circulated when it is available.</p>
8	<u>Performance and Staffing</u>			<p>Nick Harding presented the performance and staffing update to the Forum.</p> <p>With regard to validation, the month of March shows a 3 week backlog of applications, as there has been an increase in the amount of submissions in March.</p> <p>There is also an issue with long term sickness within the team.</p> <p>There will be an additional member of staff</p>

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				<p>recruited in order to assist.</p> <p>With regard to appeals and performance the department is performing well ahead of Government targets on both major and minor applications.</p>
9	<u>Any other business</u>			<p>Gary Garford updated the group on the work taking place with Royal Haskoning looking at flood management of the town of Wisbech and there is a subsidiary document which looks at the Nene Barrier, where some of the findings can be shared with the forum in due course.</p> <p>The Homes and Community Association are very interested in using Wisbech as a pilot location, with regard to creating a climate change resilient town of the future.</p> <p>Gary Garford updated the group on the actions and proposed timetable of the study with regard to the Garden Town proposals.</p> <p>The Garden Town status is awarded in tranches and Wisbech has not been identified in the most recent announcement.</p>

Finish: 5.00 pm

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