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FENLAND DEVELOPMENT FORUM

WEDNESDAY, 8 JULY 2020

3.00 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING HELD BY ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING SYSTEM AGENDA

Agenda Number	Topic for discussion
1.	Introduction and Apologies
2.	Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 15 January 2020 (Pages 3 - 16)
3.	100K Homes Project
4.	Fenland Viability Study - Latest Update
5.	Availability of Other Funding to Support Affordable Housing
6.	Delivery in Phases of Urban Expansion Areas - Update on Policy Position
7.	Letters of Support/Objection received by Applicants and Agents
8.	Any Other Business

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No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
1	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies: Ted Brand, Stephen Buddle, Keith Hutchinson, Graham Moore, Gary Roberts, Graham Seaton, Councillor Will Sutton and David Wyatt</p> <p>Present: Dino Biagioni, James Burton, John Dodge Councillor David Connor , Eugene Cooper, Marcel Cooper, Johnathon Gower, Nick Harding, Shanna Jackson, Councillor Mrs Dee Laws, John Maxey (Chairman), Harry Pickford. Carol Pilson, Lee Riches, David Rowen, Lee Russell, Adam Scott, David Thomas, Gemma Wildman, Martin Williams and Christian Wilson, Alex Woolnough</p>
2	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on</u>			<p>The slides from the validation workshop will be circulated and added to the Council's website as the workshop proved to be very informative.</p> <p>The action schedule of the meeting of 16 October 2019 was agreed and approved.</p>
3	<u>100k Homes (subject to confirmation from CPCA)</u>			<p>Councillor Mrs Laws provided an update to the forum.</p> <p>She advised the forum members that she had attended the Combined Authorities Housing Committee meeting on 13 January 20 and the</p>

Agenda Item 2

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				<p>presentation that should have been delivered at the forum today was not ready to be presented currently, however it was agreed that the presentation would be placed on the agenda for the next developers meeting.</p>
4	<u>Local Plan Update</u>			<p>Gemma Wildman provided the forum with an update on the Local Plan.</p> <p>She explained that the consultation ended in November and now the comments are being collated and reviewed. There were 3990 comments received from 129 individuals and a total of 385 sites.</p> <p>A key issues report is nearly complete and this will be published at the end of the month which will provide the headline facts from the consultation.</p> <p>A report will also be published on the website which details the individuals' comments.</p> <p>The strategic housing economic land availability assessment which lists every site suggested basic site information. (SHELA report)</p> <p>Throughout the consultation, the most consistent issue was the need for improved road, rail and public transport.</p> <p>She added that once the SHELA report has been published, the consultation with statutory bodies and County Council will commence. The sites will also then start to be assessed.</p> <p>She explained that to support the next version of the draft local plan, a number of studies have</p>

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				<p>been commissioned.</p> <p>The latest timetable is published and updated on the website at the start of each month.</p> <p>It was anticipated that a separate meeting will be held for the forum, once information and further consultation has been carried out.</p> <p>Forum Members asked questions and received responses as follows.</p> <p>John Maxey asked Gemma what the process for the viability assessment will be, given that at the first presentation the forum members had been told that it would be a collaborative process. Gemma stated that a further version would be issued with the next stage of the local plan. John Maxey requested that a working group or a meeting with the council's consultant before a further version was issued.</p>
5	<u>Garden Town Update including water</u>			<p>Nick Harding provided an update on the garden town project. He stated that the work in conjunction with the flood risk assessment was completed in the summer. It looked at the site in terms of performance, against a series of flood scenarios, including breaches in a number of locations and the assessment also included climate change and looked ahead to see if the site was sufficiently resilient. The conclusion of the work was that with relatively few areas subject to land raising, the site was capable of being resilient to the various flood risk tests.</p> <p>He added that within the current Local Plan, where development has been identified, the</p>

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				<p>scenarios that have been tested showed different areas for development based on which parcels of land showed that they were subject to flooding.</p> <p>He stated that any development proposal for West Wisbech and the garden town area would have to be subject to sequential testing if it is going to be identified in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Nick Harding provided an update with regard to connectivity, which is still being worked on. Improvements to the A47 and the Wisbech rail project are quite important in the context of making the Garden Town a more realistic proposition. The bid for the new garden town is still before MHCLG.</p> <p>David Thomas stated that the word 'resilience' when discussing flooding has different meanings in certain contexts and he asked for clarification. Nick Harding explained that his interpretation of resilient ion this case was with regard to the flood work that was carried out, it did not look at individual residential areas, but it looked at scenarios, where flooding was going to occur and at what depth would be appropriate. Containment of flood waters within the kerbs of highways is not considered to be of significant concern to anyone, apart from the highway authority.</p> <p>John Maxey asked that the flood investigation work that has been carried out will involve the area that is currently within the broad area of growth as well as the new garden town area. He asked whether it will have any implications to the current broad area of growth in terms of delivery of development which developers need to be</p>

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				<p>aware of, especially for those developers who sit on the West Wisbech Broad Concept Group and is the information readily available to the group. Nick Harding added that the new Local Plan is currently being prepared and if people are looking to have the West Wisbech area allocated for a level of development within the plan period, then the parcel of land needs to be identified as something they wish to be seen brought forward. Within the local plan process there needs to be the evidence that bringing forward those parcels of land has certainty around it.</p> <p>Nick Harding added that with regard to the Garden Town project, he is not expecting that any land will be allocated in the new local plan that forms part of the garden town proposal for delivery within the plan period that is being planned for as a housing requirement in the new local plan.</p> <p>John Maxey asked whether there is a more up to date flood modelling information available, which could be fed into the broad concept working group. Nick Harding agreed to look into this further.</p> <p>John Maxey asked Nick Harding to ascertain whether the flood risk report was available.</p> <p>Nick Harding gave an update into the March Access Study.</p> <p>He advised the Forum that the research work and forecasting has now been concluded. Solutions to the transport problems have been identified and are now being tested. Once that part of the process has been completed, the transport</p>

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				improvement proposals will undergo a public consultation in spring 2020.
6	<u>Wisbech Rail Link Update</u>			<p>Nick Harding stated that the group 3 study is taking place and is testing single option. This information will be available spring/summer this year. The aim is to identify a viable station location in the Wisbech area. The overall engineering solution is also being looked at and also reviewing the level crossings on the route. The feasibility of a direct link from Wisbech through to March and Cambridge is also being looked into.</p> <p>John Maxey asked whether there will be any public consultation with regard to this. Nick Harding agreed to talk to the lead officer to ascertain further information.</p> <p>John Maxey added there needs to be adequate parking facilities such as a park and ride and a decent bus shuttle service.</p> <p>Following the meeting a report from Mott Macdonald has now been published and is in the public domain. This can be viewed but accessing the following link.</p> <p>https://cambridgeshirepeterboroughcagov.cmis.uk.com/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/890/Committee/67/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx</p>

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7	<u>Growing Fenland Market Town Master Plan update</u>			<p>The Combined Authority have provided some funding to the Council to assist with the production of the Master Plans for the Market Towns.</p> <p>There is one for each of the market towns, plus an overarching master plan. These are not land use planning documents as they would overlap with the local plan, however the master plans seek to look into how investment into education, skills and commercial industry, would have growth in the market towns and create more employment and make them more vibrant and attractive places to be.</p> <p>The reports have been to Cabinet and will be reviewed by County Council and the Combined Authority at the end of January.</p> <p>Nick Harding gave a presentation on each of the market towns to identify the priorities which have been brought forward for each of the areas.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws added that all of the market towns are not replicated. They have all been thought about and there has been a public consultation. The town and parish along with the local community have had an input into the information gathered.</p> <p>Councillor Connor stressed the importance of good transport links especially for HGV vehicles.</p> <p>Nick Harding advised the forum members that the Chief Executive has attended a series of meetings concerning issues and ideas with regard to the subject of 'water' and the feasibility of a new</p>

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				<p>reservoir in West Wisbech and also the barraging of the River Nene. Nick Harding agreed to ascertain the most appropriate way of disseminating information concerning this project.</p>
8	<u>Fen Biosphere Project</u>			<p>Nick Harding provided an update on the biosphere project. He stated that the project is being run by a separate entity. It is run primarily by Cambridgeshire Acre.</p> <p>The project will be put forward to UNESCO by September 2021.</p> <p>If the project is successful in gaining its status, it will be managed by a group of local organisations and community members and it will operate a series of projects and initiatives that are set up towards facilitating events that are conducive to highlight the Fenland environment.</p> <p>He stated that this project will not introduce anymore planning restrictions within the Fenland area.</p> <p>https://fenlandbiosphere.wordpress.com/</p>
9	<u>Performance and Staffing update</u>			<p>Nick Harding provided an update with regard to performance and staffing.</p> <p>With regard to validation, 73% of applications were processed in 5 working days.</p> <p>Major Applications - 100% in 13 weeks of eot (21% wo eot)</p>

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				<p>Minors 96% in 8 weeks or eot (62% wo eot) Others 96% in 8 weeks or eot (83% wo eot)</p> <p>He added that with regard to major applications, there is currently work taking place on a template for section 106 agreements, which it is hoped will quicken the process.</p> <p>Against Government 24 month rolling tracker targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majors – 100% • Minors – 96% • Appeals Major – 1.35% allowed • Appeals Minor – 1.73% allowed <p>It was to be noted that the authority win in the region of 75% of appeals.</p> <p>With regard to staffing, two of the team have now left. Jennifer Seaman and Sandeep Bains.</p> <p>There are two new members of the team. Tracey Ranger and Kimberley Crow.</p> <p>A new planning officer's directory has been circulated with the action notes.</p>
10	<u>Consultation - Cambridgeshire County Council Climate Change Strategy</u>			<p>Nick Harding provided the forum on the Cambridgeshire County Council Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p>The consultation document is currently available till the 31 January. He stressed the importance of all forum members to review the document as it could have implications for planning applications</p>

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				<p>in the context of anything that relates to County Council matters. This could include the specification for educational buildings and also what comments could come from the Highway authority in the future.</p> <p>The County Council are looking to have zero energy carbon buildings, transportation including electric vehicles, waste management strategy to reduce carbon and looking to increase the amount of tree cover in the county.</p> <p>They are also looking at resilience of their buildings and staff, flood risk management, and supporting vulnerable people in different weather episodes.</p> <p>The question was asked as to what the position is with regard to Fenland District Council and action being taken in conjunction with climate change.</p> <p>Nick Harding stated that the District Council has a series of work streams which are designed around reducing the carbon footprint, reducing single use plastics and looking at smarter working.</p> <p>The question was asked as to whether Carbon Neutrality will be factored in the new Local Plan with regard to development.</p> <p>Nick Harding stated that the decision needs to be made as to whether the authority wants to introduce higher standards, in terms of space standards. He added that he is conscious that under the proposed changes to the building regulations, it may not be possible to prescribe a high standard of energy efficiency. He added that</p>

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				<p>as part of the preparation of the Local Plan, there is a working party and topics such as the standards to be achieved for a new housing development, such as health and wellbeing and the environment is a subject that is considered.</p>
11	<u>Government Planning News</u>			<p>Nick Harding commented that the consultation for future homes standard for building regulations is now closed.</p> <p>The Government is going through a 2 step process in terms of changing the building regulation standards to achieve a 75% to 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025. The consultation paper details stage 1 of that process, which is due to be implemented later this year.</p> <p>The Governments preference is for a 31% reduction in co2 emissions.</p> <p>The Government is indicating that by 2025, there is going to be no new gas mains going to new housing developments. They are looking at air source and electric heating systems as proposals for the way forward.</p>
12	<u>Any Other Business</u>			<p>Nick Harding advised the forum that the Parson Drove Neighbourhood Plan, has been through the examination stage and the next step will be the referendum. This is planned for the 27 February, when the community will be given the opportunity to express their views on the document, as to whether they think it should be adopted.</p>

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				<p>Nick Harding advised that there will be a special meeting concerning the local plan viability report. It was agreed that the meeting should be open to all. Emails would be circulated to set a date.</p> <p>John Maxey updated the forum with regard to local land charges and drainage. There has been a conversation with the Legal Team at Fenland. Currently Fenland are not putting local land charges on and are stating that they never have been. John Maxey has stated that in his opinion it would be better if there was a condition, however Fenland have stated that they do have the internal expertise or resources to have to have conditions that would have to be discharged.</p> <p>Peter Humphrey asked whether there are any initiatives from the Council with regard to promoting the Nene Waterfront or whether there are any initiatives proposed with regard to delivering affordable housing or industrial land.</p> <p>Carol Pilson advised that the Council has recently approved the Commercial and Investment Strategy and asked officers work towards a business case for the Nene Front Development. With regard to affordable housing, the Council is looking at facilitating and joining with developers and the Combined Authority, for 118 homes on March Road. Others schemes are also being looked at.</p> <p>The dates for the Developer Forum for the forthcoming year are;</p> <p>1 April 2020</p>

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				<p>8 July 2020 14 October 2020.</p> <p>All meetings are from 3pm to 5pm and are held in the Council Chamber at Fenland Hall, unless advised to the contrary.</p>

Finish: 5.00 pm

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