

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
16	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies received from: Stephen Buddle, Eugene Cooper, Hilary Ellis, Emma George, Ben Hornigold, Keith Hutchinson, David Rowen, Christian Wilson, Shanna Jackson and Gemma Wildman.</p> <p>Present: Lee Bevens, Stephen Buddle, James Burton, Councillor David Connor, Marcel Cooper, Hannah Guy, Matthew Hall, Nick Harding, Peter Humphrey, Simon Jackson, Councillor Mrs Dee Laws, Claire Maloney, John Maxey (Chair), Dino Biagioni, Carol Pilson, Nick Seaton, David Thomas, Martin Williams and David Wyatt.</p>
17	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 14 October 2020</u>			<p>The action schedule from the meeting held on the 14 October 20, was agreed.</p> <p>Simon Jackson updated the forum with the outcome of the Developer and Agent meeting that was held regarding commercial land.</p> <p>He explained that a note will be circulated to those who attended the meeting and one of the major points that came out of the meeting, was the lack of ready to go land for light industrial use and significant issues around the lack of commercial opportunity for the private sector to get involved in putting in the infrastructure that was required. As a result of that meeting, the existing portfolio was to be reviewed to pick on 2 or 3 sites and to</p>

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				<p>cost out what infrastructure would be require to make them ready to go and that piece of work is being considered.</p> <p>There will be an up to date list provided of commercial land and property including what is being proposed in the new Fenland Local Plan and the intention is to formulate a couple of sector groups to facilitate discussion around business expansion and investment in those sectors. He added that a conversation has already taken place with Middle Level Commissioners regarding what support is provided on planning applications and this will be progressed.</p> <p>A question has been raised regarding Fenland Future, the Development Company owned by the local authority and its role and this information will be circulated to answer this. He added that it was agreed that a quarterly meeting will be held with developers and agents to discuss commercial land and property and dates for these meetings will be circulated.</p>
18	<u>Local Plan Update</u>			<p>Nick Harding gave the forum an update with regard to the Local Plan and advised that the key topic to start with is the housing requirement calculation and added that the Government did a consultation prior to Christmas with regard to the new methodology and as a result of numerous complaints received they are now reconsidering the methodology and republished a revised one which is now in place. As a result of this it means</p>

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				<p>that the Fenland housing requirement now stands at 538 dwellings per annum which is what is being planned for in the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Nick Harding referred to the second call for sites and the consultation for that ended in 2020 and consequently, from that additional piece of work an updated SHELA report has been published and is on the Councils website. As a result of those calls for sites, a list of the preferred sites will be in the first draft of the local plan and that will go out to public consultation in February. He added that there are significant risks in meeting that deadline, but that is the aim.</p> <p>The Annual Monitoring Report is available in draft and will be published on the Councils website by the end of January.</p> <p>The live local plan timetable is on the Councils website and the document library where any of the evidence base that will be used will be shown.</p> <p>Nick Harding explained that a further piece of work concerning open space is being undertaken following feedback from the County Council who are currently acting as a consultant for the council in that regard.</p> <p>John Maxey stated that he has seen the revised document on the website with the calculations that Nick had referred to and added that there is still the affordability factor included but with a cap and Nick Harding confirmed that was correct.</p> <p>Nick Harding confirmed that the first draft of the emerging local plan will have a 6-week</p>

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				consultation period.
19	<u>Navigation</u>			<p>David Thomas gave the forum an overview on navigation and explained that this would be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.</p> <p>He stated that the aspiration is to link things up that are navigation related and he added that having spoken to many people who have stated that navigation is an under exploited resource and that the Fens have the majority of settlements Chatteris, March and Whittlesey have all got navigation running through or past them and the value is all but lost. He added that people visiting the area through navigation, bring money to the towns, in different forms, and he added that he is aware of the current Market Town Bids which are being submitted and he is aware that there have been recent successes with those. He expressed the view that there is an opportunity to be investigated, in terms of navigation and not just in terms of tourism but to look at what else it can deliver. He added that it is a well-known fact that there can be undesirable individuals who live on boats which is often well reported but the small boating communities which can be positive for a local area are often forgotten if structured currently and small linear developments with planning permission for residential boats where charging council tax can be easily and economically delivered and can be self-policing in terms of community but has a very small carbon footprint.</p> <p>David Thomas stated that the amount of resources required for delivery can be quite small. He added that it can be a life choice where people</p>

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				<p>choose to live on a boat during retirement and he expressed the view that it could be an opportunity to explore how this could be delivered which is something of high value within the Fenland environment and not to miss the opportunity within the new Local Plan, and to consider communicating with land owners that opportunities might be there.</p> <p>John Maxey asked David Thomas whether he was advocating an allocation for a residential marina site. He confirmed he was, but it is not within his gift and added that Middle Level tend not to own a lot of land, only just long straight channels and not the land on either side. He added he has been advised that small boating community do not need a lot of amenities if they have access to waste disposal within a short-boated distance.</p> <p>John Maxey asked Nick Harding whether this something that was included in the new Local Plan allocation and he confirmed that it was not included. John Maxey stated that it would be a case of a demand made or a proposal made by a landowner with a site suitable to be used as part residential and part tourism feature. John Maxey stated that he cannot see that there would be a major reason for objection in local plan overall policies if the scale was agreeable in the open countryside. David Thomas agreed to provide a presentation to the next meeting and added that Upwell have included as part of the Parish Plan the possibility of providing a new marina.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws expressed the view that there are good opportunities in Fenland for this type of project and is aware of landowners in Whittlesey</p>

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				<p>who may be interested and added that she would have reservations with some of the boating community and the antisocial behaviour that takes place.</p> <p>Councillor Connor asked whether Foxes Boat Yard have been approached. David Thomas added that Foxes Marina has not got planning permission for residential boats and is unsure whether they would consider a change of use and added that it maybe a case of looking at an alternative proposal to supplement that. He added that he takes on the points raised by Councillor Mrs Laws and added that if there is the opportunity for residential moorings to be in place where there is the requirement to pay council tax and annual maintenance fees and proper policing throughout the planning process, then there is the opportunity for there to be less excuses from boaters who say there are no residential moorings for them.</p>
20	<p><u>Planning legislation change, consultations and announcements</u></p>			<p>Nick Harding advised the forum that there is a live consultation in relation to Permitted Development Rights and Use Class E, which is broken into several parts.</p> <p>1. Central Government are stating that any existing property within Use Class E can be converted into residential use.</p> <p>2. Changes of use to educational establishments, hospitals, prison uses and streamlining of processes for that type of development to come forward.</p> <p>3. There is the proposal to simplify and consolidate existing Permitted Development rights following</p>

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				<p>formation of Use Class E.</p> <p>He explained that it is a short consultation exercise and it closes on the 28 January.</p> <p>John Maxey stated that class E to residential is quite a wide classification. Nick Harding stated that the NPPF needs updating to reflect class E or at least to clarify the interplay between the national approach to town and city centres in relation to the class E proposals.</p> <p>Nick Harding explained that the next topic is permitted development rights and stated that you can have upward extensions of buildings and this is tied into some of the recommendations following the Grenfell Tower incident. He added that where the building involved is 18 metres in height or more, the prior approval application needs to be accompanied by a fire report which confirms that the external wall construction is satisfactory in terms of resistance to the spread of fire. John Maxey stated that he is aware of a certification scheme is required when applying for mortgages to classify the existing building.</p> <p>Nick Harding referred to the formation of residential units through the permitted development process. He added the Government is keen to ensure that any properties that are created through the permitted development route are of a suitable internal standard and there is the requirement being introduced so that any such residential units needs to meet the National Internal Space Standard.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws added that she is pleased</p>

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				<p>that a regime regarding internal space has been highlighted.</p> <p>Nick Harding stated that due to Covid measures the Government have introduced several temporary measures to help authorities through the pandemic. These include permitted development rights in relation to health facilities, the operation of take away services through existing food outlets and local authority markets, temporary use of land and use of crown land for emergencies. He added that in addition, there are relaxations on the publicity requirement on certain application types, such as environmental impact assessments.</p> <p>He added that he anticipates that there will be an extension allowed for the time to implement expired or soon to expire planning permissions and stated that there a couple of government documents which have been published recently which are the white paper on energy and the other is the National Infrastructure Strategy.</p>
21	<u>Delays re S106 agreements</u>			<p>John Maxey highlighted that the Section 106 process appears to be taking a considerable amount of time once they reach the legal stage. Nick Harding agreed to do a review of all the live Section 106 agreements and identify what the historical issue has been regarding the delayed timescales and agreed to chase those outstanding.</p> <p>Marcel Cooper stated that regarding Section 106 and Section 38 agreements it appears the County</p>

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				<p>Council always wish to draft the documentation, rather than the developer's solicitors being able to do so which would speed up the process. Nick Harding stated that there are model Section 106 agreements which could be shared with any developer's legal representative if they make a track change alteration to that and therefore, they can prepare the first draft.</p> <p>Marcel Cooper asked why the costs are so high if there is a model template which is available for developers to use. Nick Harding stated he is unaware of the reasoning behind the charges applied but agreed to investigate further.</p>
22	<p><u>Communication with Planning Officers</u></p>			<p>John Maxey stated that he is aware that it is difficult to communicate with officers working remotely during the current pandemic and added that there have a couple of occasions where communication has been sent from officers to agents indicating that there are a number of aspects in an application that cannot be supported and at the same time a refusal notice has been received without giving the agents any time to review or withdraw the application. He added that there needs to be meaningful communication between officer's and agents. Nick Harding agreed to raise this with the case officers.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws stated that officers are doing a very good job, which is difficult under the current circumstances. She added that she would feel happy if officers with work mobile telephones relay their numbers to agents and developers. Nick Harding stated that some officers have their desk phones diverted to mobile numbers and others have left their mobile numbers on a voicemail</p>

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				message on their desk phones.
23	<u>Communication from Agents and Developers</u>			<p>Nick Harding stated that the Council are only made aware of new development schemes coming forward and or being or implemented when a pre application is received or a discharge application is received. He added he appreciates that it can be difficult in terms of confidentiality, but it would be appreciated if the department could be made aware as early as possible for a number of reasons, economic and growth aspirations of the district, there is the budget side of things to be considered and also helps the council to be aware of the work pressures which maybe forthcoming. He added that it is important for the team who deal with the forward planning of the council in respect of keeping our information up to date regarding the five-year land supply.</p> <p>Marcel Cooper stated that the pre application system has had an impact on the forward warning that used to be given to the authority as agents are now told to submit a pre app which costs money. He expressed the view that an informal pre app process is required at no cost where the views of officers can be obtained prior to the submission of the actual pre app. Nick Harding stated that if a development proposal that is brought forward on an allocated site in the context of a new adopted local plan is acceptable in principle. Nick Harding added that any information given in advance would be appreciated and he would welcome discussions with agents and developers who wish to discuss a proposal prior to the submission of a pre app.</p>
24	<u>Any other business</u>			David Wyatt highlighted that the expectation for

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				<p>the submission of detailed information at an early stage in the application process is set too high, especially at the validation stage and he added that process is getting too detailed with time and money being wasted at a very early stage in the process.</p> <p>Nick Harding stated that he would be happy to review the recent applications submitted by David Wyatt and see the reasons why the applications have not been validated on the first time of receipt to ascertain whether the correct decisions were made at validation stage.</p> <p>David Thomas stated that there has to be sufficient information submitted at an early stage when dealing with drainage issues to be able to prove that a solution exists. He added that the recent flooding event that took place which proved that the local drainage systems which failed and not the major arterial systems.</p> <p>Peter Humphrey stated that validation process from Fenland appears to take longer, than it does from Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. He added that Kings Lynn validation team also contact him by phone to request minor changes, which are actioned on the same day. He added if Fenland could do the same process as Kings Lynn, it would expedite things. Nick Harding states that the validation backlog has been significant and currently there is a 1.5-week backlog which is being reduced so that the vast majority of applications are being validated within 5 working days. He added that there is the requirement to record and evidence any</p>

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				<p>application which is made invalid following the checks and there always need to be a communication sent in relation to invalid applications to satisfy audit requirements.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws expressed the opinion that it would be very helpful, if the agents submitted their applications correctly in the first instance. She added that the Planning Team are still being used as an extension of professional offices. Councillor Mrs Laws congratulated the team on their efforts and work ethic to assist with the validation process.</p> <p>Nick Harding added that in November, 15% of applications were valid upon receipt and in December it was 13%.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws stated that there is still the offer of another training workshop on validation if any developers or agents would find it helpful and useful. John Maxey stated that his team are using the validation checklist and submit it with the application which has proved to be useful as explanations can be added upon submission as to why things may have been omitted.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws stated that a change was made to the Constitution at Full Council in August and in December 2020. She added that one in August refers to other and minor applications where the officer's recommendation is refusal. The Head of Planning will now consult the Chairman of the Planning Committee and decide if the application should be determined by the Planning Committee or the application should be determined under delegated powers by the Head</p>

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				<p>of Planning. If in the opinion of the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee the recommendation is accepted, the Case Officers' recommendation will be countersigned by the Head of Planning. If in the opinion of the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee there are wider planning issues to consider, the application will be placed on the Planning Committee agenda.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Laws added that in December, Full Council, the Major applications were brought in line with the minor applications with regard to letters of support and added that 6 letters of support or objection will be taken into account and they must be from within the ward where the site is located or the adjacent ward. She reiterated that the 6 letters may come from the same household.</p> <p>Nick Harding provided the figures on planning application performance.</p> <p>Majors – 35% determined within 13 weeks but with extensions of times 100% was achieved.</p> <p>Minors – 55% determined within 8 weeks but with extensions of times 93%</p> <p>Other applications 78% determined within 8 weeks but with extensions of time 98%</p> <p>He added that following the surface water flooding event which happened just before Christmas, a meeting will be taking place with the MP, Fenland District Council,</p>

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				<p>Cambridgeshire County Council and Anglian Water. He added that the Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency have also been invited.</p> <p>The dates of the meetings going forward are as follows:</p> <p>7 April 2021 21 July 2021 6 October 2021 19 January 2022 13 April 2022.</p>

Finish: 5.00 pm