

ACTION SCHEDULE FOR THE MEETING HELD ON Wednesday, 22 January 2025

No	Action Point	Allocation	Timeframe	Update
18	<u>Introduction and Apologies</u>			<p>Apologies received from: Hannah Albans and David Wyatt.</p> <p>Present: Chris Ball (CB), CHRIS Bailey (CBA), Lee Bevens (LB) Dino Biagion (DB), Mark Bonner (MB) Anne Dew (AD) Gareth Edwards (GE) Alan Faulkener (AF), Matthew Hall (MH) , Peter Harley (PH) , Zara Holland (ZH), Shanna Jackson (SJ) Simon Jackson (SJCK) Michelle Jeffrey (MJ) Mark Jones (MJ), Councillor Dee Laws (DL), Matthew Leigh (ML), Nigel Lowe (NL) , Jonathan Malings (JM) Kirsty Paul (KP), Martin Redding (MR), David Rowen (DR), Nick Seaton (NS), Tim Slater (TS) George Stone (GST), Bill Tilah (BT), Jordan Trundle(JT), Tom Vincent (TV), Chris Walford (CW) and Martin Williams (MW)</p>
19	<u>Review of Action Schedule from Last Meeting held on 2 October 2024</u>			<p>The Action schedule from the meeting on 2 October was agreed.</p> <p>AF asked for details of the offline conversation that ML had with John Maxey concerning viability assessment costs. ML stated that to a certain extent they continued to disagree, and he had made reference to a number of authorities that were adjacent to Fenland and added that they do not do it and ML had advised him that they all have CIL. ML explained that he undertook a review of other authorities that do not have CIL and they have adopted a similar approach to Fenland. He added that having spoken to another</p>

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				couple of Heads of Planning have all agreed with the approach that Fenland are taking.
20	<u>Local Plan update</u>			<p>Kirsty Paul (KP), the Planning Policy Manager provided the Forum with an update concerning the Local Plan.</p> <p>She explained that a Local Development Scheme has been drafted which is still awaiting the sign off from members and once signed off an updated LDS will be published on the website.</p> <p>KP explained that we are currently out to consultation on the sustainability appraisal scoping update. KP added that the reason for the update is due to the fact that the previous version is over 5 years old and there have been a number of changes in legislation and environmental material considerations. Primarily views are being sought from Statutory Consultees including the EA, Historic England and Natural England but anyone can submit representations to that consultation.</p> <p>KP added that the main focus for the team is around commissioning new evidence and as the NPFF has been published, the transitional arrangements have been set out. She explained that there is now a clear direction of where the gaps are and what needs to be worked on in order to reach the Regulation 19.</p> <p>KP stated the over the coming months there is going to be further work undertaken with Members to ensure that their current priorities are being reflected and looking at the definition of what good growth means for Fenland.</p>

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				<p>The Fenland Reservoir had not been factored into the previous draft plan with and therefore the plan period has been extended to 2050 so that the longer large-scale projects which are likely to have an impact on parts of the district.</p> <p>KP added that over the coming months a further call for sites process will be undertaken and she will be actively encouraging those people who have previously submitted sites to resubmit them and there will be slight adjustments to the form when it is circulated. She added that the main focus is to ensure an up-to-date position with regards to availability and achievability.KP explained that details with regards to the time frames are still to be confirmed as consideration needs to be taken with regards to the pre-election period.</p> <p>GST asked than with regards to the call for sites are additional sites, different sites or is a general review of the ones which are currently draft allocated. KP explained that at the current time the draft plan holds no status in terms of site allocations and sites can change between Regulation 18 and 19.She added tat it is helpful to receive an up-to-date position with regards to availability and achievability but there may also be sites which have not been looked at and have since now become available which are worth consideration. KP stated that the EA are releasing new flood risk mapping in the Spring and as a result of that, the suitability assessments of all existing sites will have to be reviewed anyway. She made the point that there needs to be a full understanding around what sites are being</p>

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				<p>actively promoted in the district and timeframes that those sites could potentially come forward. DB asked for an indication of when Regulation 19 will be reached. KP explained that it is very much dependent on the technical evidence and what the evidence says as well as how materially different we have to be in terms of particular policy positions or site allocations. KP stated that currently there is no intention to undertake a formal Regulation 18 Consultation, and it is hoped to have some focus engagement points which will take us in Regulation 19. She added that if there is the need to have a formal engagement point it will mean that Regulation 19 draft is slightly delayed. KP explained at it is likely to be Spring/Summer 2026 due to the fact that some of the studies which need to be undertaken specifically with regards to environmental factors will require 2 survey periods. She stated that is likely to be some targeted engagement under Regulation 18 with a view to Regulation 19 consultation following next year.</p>
21	<u>Planning Fees</u>			<p>ML explained that from the 1 April 2025 there will be changes in some planning fees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant increase in agricultural buildings. • Increase in householder planning application fee. • Increase in discharge of condition fee. • A variety of charges for planning applications made under S.73 of the act.

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				He added that any application which are made valid after April 2025 will be against the new fees.
22	<u>Performance</u>			<p>David Rowen presented the performance data.</p> <p>Validation : 28- working day backlog Each week we give a validation backlog update on our web site: https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/15139/Planning-process</p> <p>Planning Applications (since July 2024) Major – 94% (October 2024 - 92%) Minor – 83% (October 2024 - 88%) Other - 92% (October 2024 - 85%)</p> <p>Against the Govt 24 Month Rolling Performance Requirement Majors 90% (October 2024 85%) (designation threshold 60%) Non-major 78% (October 2024 - 76%) (designation threshold 70%)</p> <p>AF referred to the planning fee increase and asked whether the fees will increase as of the date of submission or the date of validation. DR stated that usually it is the date of submission. AF questioned that the fact there is a 28 day backlog does not mean that applicants and agents do not have to submit by 1 March in order to still be charged at the current rate. DR added that the usual wording of the regulation state that it is applications submitted on or after a set date.</p>

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23	<u>Staffing</u>			<p>Matt Leigh presented an updated with regards to staffing.</p> <p>Principal Planning Officer – DM (start date end of March)</p> <p>Senior Planning Officer – DM (start date tbc)</p> <p>2 Part Time Principal Ecologists (Derek Richardson and Katie Smart), which means that Ecology will now become an internal service.</p> <p>Tree Support (External contract awarded)</p>
24	<u>The new National Planning Policy Framework and impacts on Fenland District Council</u>			<p>ML explained that the Government published a new NPPF in December 2024 and it becomes a material consideration as soon as it is published.</p> <p>He added that some of the key points for Fenland are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New standard methodology for calculating housing need (uplift of 84 homes pa for Fenland) • Strengthened duty to cooperate requirements specifically in relation to infrastructure planning • Requirement for plan making to consider the needs of a modern economy (e.g. laboratories and digital infrastructure) • Greater emphasis on the use of brownfield land for development • Changes to the sequential test requirement for flood risk - A test will only be required where built development, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements would fall within an area at risk of flooding now and in

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				<p>the future. MHCLG will provide further clarification on aspects of the sequential test in the Planning Practice Guidance in due course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Drainage Systems now form consideration at all levels not just major schemes. • Greater support local authority decisions that restrict hot food takeaways and fast-food outlets around schools and places where children and young people congregate, plus in locations where there is evidence such uses are having an adverse impact on local health, pollution and anti-social behaviour. • Requirement for climate change mitigation and adaption to “be considered in preparing and assessing planning applications, taking into account the full range of potential climate change impacts”. • Paragraph 116, which defines where development may be refused on highways grounds, updated to take into account “<i>all reasonable future scenarios</i>”. Reasonable future scenarios are defined within the glossary, which includes a range of realistic transport scenarios tested in agreement with the local planning authority and other relevant bodies.
25	<u>Negotiations during the lifetime of a planning application</u>			<p>ML explained that a number of Agents and Developers have raised concerns with regards the amount of time that applications have taken. He added that very often very extensive negotiations have taken place over the lifetime of the application and therefore a more formalised approach is being considered in order to try and speed up the determination of applications. He added that a document is going to be produced in</p>

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				<p>order to provide clarification and guidance so that Agents, Developers, Members and Officers will all understand the position. ML explained that there will be four categories in relation to applications.</p> <p>Category A – Scheme approved without negotiation as it was acceptable as submitted.</p> <p>Category B - Scheme unacceptable as submitted. However, needs only minor amendments to make it acceptable. These changes are so minor that they would not require re-consultation and would not affect the Council's ability to determine the application within the statutory timeframe.</p> <p>Category C - Scheme unacceptable as submitted. However, needs only minor amendments or further information to meet the objections or concerns of a consultee. These changes would relate solely to the consultee objection and would not require re-consultation to any other party. An Extension of Time must be agreed with the Applicant and the Council to cover the relevant process must be agreed otherwise, the application will be determined as submitted.</p> <p>Category D - Scheme refused without negotiation as it was fundamentally unacceptable as submitted.</p> <p>GST asked for implementation timescales. ML added that it is a work in progress, and he will right out to Agents and Developers with a go live date.</p> <p>DB stated that he welcomes this and referred to Category C and asked who will be responsible for deciding whether any other statutory consultee</p>

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				needs to be consulted with or not. ML explained that it will be down to the case officer to do that.
26	<u>Any other Business</u>			GE referred to the increase in pre application charges which came into force in November along with the £60 charge for invalid applications and he stated that he was not aware that those charges were being implemented.

Finish: 3.30 pm