

# Planning Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 09 October 2020

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## Present

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro – in the Chair, Harry Blathwayt (item 1-9), Stephen Bolt, Bill Dickson, Andree Gee, Gail Harris, Lana Hemsall, Tim Jickells, Bruce Keith (item 1-10), James Knight, Leslie Mogford, Vic Thomson, Fran Whymark.

## In attendance

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer, Sarah Mullarney – Governance Officer (meeting moderator), Cheryl Peel – Senior Planning Officer, Cally Smith – Head of Planning, Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services, Sara Utting – Governance Officer (minute taker)

## Members of the public in attendance who spoke

None

## 1. Apologies and welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Sara Utting, the newly appointed Governance Officer.

It was noted that Harry Blathwayt would have to leave the meeting by 11.30am.

## Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be held remotely in accordance with the Coronavirus Regulations 2020 and the Standing Orders for remote meetings agreed by the Broads Authority on 22 May 2020. The meeting would be live streamed and recorded and the Authority retained the copyright. The minutes remained the record of the meeting.

## 2. Declarations of interest and introductions

Members and officers introduced themselves, and members provided their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes and in addition to those already registered.

## 3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

## 4. Points of information arising from the minutes

### Minute 10 - Consultation from MHCLG – Changes to the current planning system

The Planning Policy Officer reported that the response had been amended following consultation with Lana Hemsall, signed off by the Director of Strategic Services, and sent to MHCLG.

## 5. Matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business

## 6. Chair's announcements and introduction to public speaking

There were no announcements and no requests for public speaking had been received.

## 7. Requests to defer applications and/or vary agenda order

No requests to defer or vary the order of the agenda had been received.

## 8. Applications for planning permission

There were no applications for consideration.

## 9. Enforcement update

The Committee received an update report on enforcement matters previously referred to the Committee. Further updates were provided for:

**Marina Quays, Great Yarmouth:** Demolition works had commenced but had been delayed due to the bad weather. However, these were nearing completion and should be completed by end of October. Once the site had been completely cleared, the case would be signed-off.

**Land at the Beauchamp Arms Public House, Ferry Road, Carleton St Peter:** a number of complaints had been received but some related to internal works, for which planning permission was not required. However, photographic evidence demonstrated that caravans were sited to the rear of the property and there was concern that these were being occupied. In addition, it had been reported that the Public House had been painted a vivid purple/turquoise but as this was not a Listed Building, permission was not required. A site visit was due to take place and the committee would be updated in due course.

**Blackgate Farm, High Mill Road, Cobholm:** the appeal was processing and would be determined via a Hearing.

**Ditchingham Maltings:** a landscaping scheme had been approved two months ago and subsequently a contractor had been appointed. They had confirmed that planting would take place next month and already the site was looking a lot tidier. The Parish Council and residents were pleased with progress.

**The report was noted.**

## 10. Consultation from MHCLG – Planning for the Future White Paper

The Head of Planning (HoP) introduced the report on The Planning for the Future White Paper, which proposed radical and wide-ranging reforms to the planning process and had five key strands:

- Streamlining the planning process “with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage”

- Taking a radical, digital-first approach “to modernise the planning process, moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data”
- Bringing a new focus on design and sustainability
- Improving infrastructure delivery and ensuring developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions
- Ensuring more land is available “for homes and development that people and communities need”

It set out 24 proposals, which were organised under three ‘pillars’, with a series of questions relating to each proposal. The pillars were:

- Pillar 1: Planning for development – focussing on local plans and decision-making
- Pillar 2: Planning for beautiful and sustainable places – focussing on design, environmental impacts and climate change
- Pillar 3: Planning for infrastructure and connected places – focussing on the infrastructure levy

Officers’ view was that the document was considered to be bold in its aspiration and objectives, but lacking in detail. The vision of the role of planning presented was not incompatible with the proposed reforms, but changes were needed if this was to be met. The key issues to be addressed were around engagement, the retention of the ability of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to make locally relevant policies and, through the national reforms, the embedding of the climate and biodiversity emergencies at the centre of the planning process.

Members acknowledged that the commentary and recommended responses related primarily to the impact of the White Paper’s proposals on the Broads, both as an area and as an LPA.

A Member commented that the timescale for the production of Local Plans was very ambitious and questioned whether this could actually be delivered. The Planning Policy Officer concurred with this view and highlighted that the 30 month period included 9 months for examination so this only left 21 months to prepare the Plan. The HoP added it would be very challenging and have an effect on resources.

A Member raised the issue of residential moorings and questioned how these would be dealt with if development management policies were taken away from the Authority, as they did not fall into the housing category. The HoP responded that this was an area which had been raised by officers, as well as peat, safety near water etc, which highlighted that individual authorities had issues which were specific to them only. The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) added that the MHCLG must be made aware of such issues and add clarity on how they proposed to address them – eg possible Design Code or allowing some local policies. The Member also expressed concern that planning committees would no longer have a function, which would result in a loss of local knowledge and input in shaping planning consents for its area.

A Member expressed concern at the removal of Habitats Regulations Assessments, which would be particularly relevant for the Broads area and this needed to be added to the response.

A Member referred to the threshold figures for providing affordable housing (40-50 dwellings) and whilst this issue was not necessarily applicable to the Authority in general terms, there had been developments with a low number of houses and the proposals would lead to a future shortage of affordable housing. Another Member responded that the change was only proposed to be temporary, to assist small builders (18 months). The PPO advised that this issue had been picked up in the previous consultation paper (discussed at the September meeting) as well as the issue of starter homes.

In respect of Pillar 2 – “planning for beautiful and sustainable places”, Members concurred with the officer view that the White Paper was lacking in detail on how this would be achieved and by whom. In addition, the objectives for this Pillar should be the main focus. Whilst acknowledging that the Authority would raise its concerns through the joint response from the National Parks, there were issues specific to the Authority’s area which needed to be addressed separately. A Member commented that levels of development would alter the hydrology of the area and, decades later, there would be a resultant decline in species etc through loss of habitats and land. The HoP responded that the joint response had been prepared as well as the Authority’s own response. Furthermore, there was a duty on neighbouring local planning authorities to recognise the need to protect areas within their catchment. However, it was accepted that the Broads area was slightly different to other National Parks areas, being in a built-up area, and not remote like Exmoor or Dartmoor. In response to a suggestion that the joint response be circulated to members, the PPO advised that this had not yet been finalised. In addition, she would reiterate the comments on housing numbers from the previous consultation paper as part of the Authority’s response on this White Paper.

A Member commented that the loss of duty to co-operate was of concern and the Government’s drive for development could damage the Broads area.

Regarding the new Infrastructure Levy, Members concurred with the officers’ concerns at the loss of Section 106 payments as these were regularly used by the Authority. It was also of concern that the White Paper contained very little detail, which made it difficult to make meaningful comments.

In conclusion, Members thanked the officers for the very comprehensive but clear report and concise presentation, including the suggested response and, based on the discussions above, it was suggested that the following additional points be added to the consultation response:

- Loss of local policies and issues together with the need to recognise the importance of area specific issues, such as navigation;
- Loss of SEA, SA and HRA – these needed to be replaced with documents of equivalent strength

- Affordable housing thresholds – these limited the ability to provide affordable housing
- Conflict with National Parks’ objectives and also the role of the Planning Committee – how would these issues be resolved
- Need to reiterate concerns on housing methodology and affordable housing
- Loss of duty to co-operate
- Infrastructure Levy – concern at the principle and any impact on adjacent land

Lana Hempsall proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells, and

**It was resolved** unanimously to approve the responses attached at Appendix 1 to the report as comprising the formal response of the Broads Authority (including the additional comments raised above), with a simple statement identifying the key concerns as outlined at 5.4 of the report, with final sign off of the consultation delegated to the Chair of the Planning Committee.

Bruce Keith and Leslie Mogford left the meeting (due to a loss of internet connection)

The live-stream was suspended at 11.40am for a 10 minute break

## 11. Policy – Government consultation on Accessible Homes

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report on the Government consultation on Accessible Homes which considered how to raise accessibility standards, recognising the importance of suitable homes for older and disabled people.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Fran Whymark, and

**It was resolved** unanimously to approve the responses as outlined at 4.1 of the report.

Leslie Mogford joined the meeting.

## 12. Planning policy - Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report which informed the Committee of the officer’s proposed response to a planning policy consultation received from Fleggburgh Parish Council on the Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan, and invited members’ comments and guidance. The PPO advised that the consultation ended the previous day but the Authority had been granted additional time in which to submit its response.

A Member commented that the Plan made no reference to cycling as a mode of transport and the PPO responded that she would raise this issue with the parish council.

Lana Hempsall proposed, seconded by Leslie Mogford, and

**It was resolved** unanimously to note the report and endorse the proposed response in Appendix 1 of the report.

### 13. Circular 28/83 Publication by Local Authorities of information about the handling of planning applications (Q1)

The Committee received the development control statistics for the quarter ending 30 June 2020.

A Member questioned if the 8 and 13 week targets would be changed as part of the White Paper discussed earlier in the meeting. The Head of Planning responded that she was unaware of any change to the timescales but the targets would be binding and could result in a possible return of fees to applicants, if not met.

A Member referred to those applications which had exceeded the target and asked for more details on the time taken to determine, commenting that he found the figures lacked transparency. The Head of Planning responded that the reporting mechanism was stipulated by the Government and the report was a standard format. It was agreed to provide the information requested by the Member outside of the meeting.

**The report was noted.**

### 14. Appeals to the Secretary of State

The Committee received the latest schedule of appeals to the Secretary of State since January 2020. The Senior Planning Officer also reported the following updates:

- **Black Gate Farm, Cobholm, Great Yarmouth:** the Authority's statement would be provided by 12 October and the Hearing should be within 12 weeks of the starting date (just before Christmas).
- **48 The Sidings, Norwich – erection of external balcony to replace existing south facing Juliet balcony:** missing off report. Start date of 2 October.

**The report was noted.**

### 15. Decisions made by officers under delegated powers

The Committee received a schedule of decisions made by officers under delegated powers from 29 August 2020 to 25 September 2020.

**The report was noted.**

### 16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Planning Committee would be on Friday 6 November 2020 at 10.00am and would be held remotely.

The meeting ended at 12.12pm

Signed by

Chairman



## Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Planning Committee, 09 October 2020

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Andree Gee	15 Application BA/2020/0168/FUL	Ward Councillor
Lana Hemsall	10 Consultation from MHCLG – Planning for the Future White Paper	Portfolio Holder for Planning at Broadland District Council
Fran Whymark	10 Consultation from MHCLG – Planning for the Future White Paper (insofar as it related to affordable housing)	Portfolio Holder for Housing & Wellbeing at Broadland District Council