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**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

**3 February 2009 – 4.30 pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Plant (in the Chair); Councillors Castle, Hacon, Linden, Peck, Shrimplin, Stone, D Thompson, Williamson and Mr M Pearson (LSP Representative).

Mr D Glason (Planning Policy Manager), Miss S Slade (Senior Planner – Policy), Mr K Balls (Planning Policy Assistant) and Miss S Davis (Senior Member Services Officer).

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2008 were confirmed, subject to the addition of the following:

- (a) It was agreed that there would be little or no impact on the Little Tern Colony at North Denes.
- (b) Brownfield sites should be considered first for development rather than greenfield e.g. Estcourt/Northgate Hospital site, Beach Coach Station car park, old railway land between Salisbury Road/North Denes Road/ Barnard Bridge and old Co-op Dairy site at Ormond Road.

Reference was made to (b) above and the Senior Planner reported that the comments made at the last meeting had been considered by Officers and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment would include the brownfield sites referred to. Members were reminded that the sites proposed had all been put forward by developers. The point was made however that it was always better to develop in areas where there was existing infrastructure ie in towns rather than rural locations.

**2. MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted that there were no matters arising from the above minutes.

**3. AMENDMENT TO THE CORE STRATEGY – ADDITIONAL HOUSING REQUIREMENT**

The Working Party received the Head of Planning and Development's confidential report which gave details of options for allocating the 800 dwelling shortfall for new housing for the period 2001-2025. Members were reminded that the Core Strategy needed to make provision for 6,000 new dwellings and in order to comply with Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing a 15 year supply of housing land was required from the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2010. This meant that the Core Strategy needed to make provision for an

additional 1,240 (310 per year) new dwellings for the period 2021-2025. Therefore, the Amendment to the Core Strategy which had previously been written prior to the publication of PPS3, needed to make provision for a total of 7,240 dwellings up to 2025.

The Chairman reported that, at a recent meeting with EERA, concern had been expressed that the target figures appeared to be excessive as there was no provision for increased infrastructure such as roads, doctors, water systems etc. He also pointed out that Great Yarmouth did not have many jobs available for the people to live in the extra houses and there were no proposals for new commercial developments as this was a deprived area. It was argued, however, that Great Yarmouth had tended to exceed the target number of houses in the Local Plan and bearing in mind the large developments such as the Outer Harbour and Casino, it was felt that these aspirations were quite modest and Great Yarmouth would be a growth town rather than contracting. Reference was made to the decision at the last meeting regarding the Regional Spatial Strategy target for dwellings up to 2031 and it was noted that Members viewed 400 dwellings as an appropriate target, which had been reported to Norfolk County Council. A suggestion was made that there was a need to look at the projected population growth and the point was made therefore that if sites were not identified then there would not be sufficient housing available bearing in mind the current numbers on the housing waiting list and the likely number to be attracted once the Outer Harbour and Casino were operational. The need to avoid a shortage of housing in the area was stressed particularly if Great Yarmouth wanted to attract people into the town. Great Yarmouth also had a serious flood issue and it was felt that the amount of land available to build upon was shrinking. It was pointed out that there was a need to ensure that all the agencies realised that the future of Great Yarmouth rested on the URC development and that whilst flood risk was a factor, thousands of people already lived with the risk of flooding so this should not be used as a reason for not developing those affected areas. It was added that if the Council became defeatist, there was a possibility that Great Yarmouth would not get economic regeneration and secure decent flood defences for the future.

Reference was made to the fact that the Outer Harbour and Casino would not mainly attract highly skilled workers and there was a need to get the current unemployed of the town back into work before people from outside were employed. The point was also made that consideration should be given to protecting agricultural land use and this should not be re-designated for residential development.

Members were reminded of the current allocations which included potential sites such as Beacon Park, the Urban Regeneration Company area and windfall sites. This had left a shortfall of approximately 800 dwellings which needed to be broadly identified in the Amendment to the Core Strategy. GO-East had requested that the Core Strategy Housing Policy detailed the percentage of development expected at appropriate settlements and that the broad location of greenfield allocations be identified. The broad locations and the percentage of development expected at the settlements would have to conform with the Core Strategy settlement hierarchy which provided a framework for managing the scale of development in different locations. It also guided most new development to sustainable locations in the main towns that offered the best access to facilities and services. Furthermore, a sequential test approach which gave priority to previously developed land over greenfield sites would need to be applied. Reference was made in particular to Martham which although currently designated as a larger village, met all five criteria used to rank the settlement as a key service centre. The need to act quickly, bearing in mind the availability of brownfield sites in the town centre was stressed and it was suggested therefore that the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment be commissioned as soon as possible to avoid the sites being lost. It was agreed that Bradwell needed more infrastructure and concern was expressed that there were lots of greenfield sites in that area which could be developed ahead of the brownfield sites such as Church Road and Yarmouth

Police Station. The point was made, however, that the Police Station site had never been designated for housing but was a potential car parking site and it had not been intended that the whole of Beach Coach Station would be used for housing. The Senior Planner (Policy) reported that approximately 90 dwellings had been allocated on previously developed land in the main towns of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston beyond the 2000 in the URC area. The Working Party agreed that brownfield land should be developed first with greenfield second. The Planning Policy Manager responded that the Core Strategy included 60%/70% of brownfield sites within its overall allocation. He reminded Members that the Regional Spatial Strategy required 6,000 units as a minimum target. The point was again reiterated that Great Yarmouth suffered from issues regarding flooding and with many brownfield sites, the aim was to develop these before any more greenfield if possible. The Planning Policy Manager clarified that where brownfield sites could be developed, including the 2,000 in the URC area, these would be developed first, however Members were being asked to identify sites to make up the shortfall because there were no further brownfield sites currently available. Clarification was sought as to whether a phased approach of brownfield sites being developed before greenfield would be possible, however, the Senior Planner (Policy) reported that the Council had to prove the Strategy included a deliverable five year supply of housing land which would be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report otherwise greenfield sites would need to be used. It was also pointed out that some greenfield sites would need to be used if the link road between Beccles Road and the A47 was ever to be created. It was then acknowledged that Bradwell needed some development in order to provide planning gains such as the link road and the necessary infrastructure, however, it was felt that the public should not be consulted on development in villages if there were no planning gains to be had as the public would then say no and this would discredit the process.

Reference was made to the Pontins site in Hemsby and Members were reminded by the Planning Policy Manager that this was currently zoned as a Prime Holiday Area in the Local Plan. However, it was highlighted that if the site remained vacant for some time and could not be sold on as a holiday site / proved to be unviable as a holiday site in this locality, then it was possible that other uses would need to be looked at. Windfall sites would always appear during the lifespan of the LDF.

The point was made that there appeared to be no regard for ground conditions when granting planning consents and it was suggested there was a need to know more about the ground conditions before sites were allocated. Whilst this was agreed in principle, it was pointed out that sites needed to be deliverable and it was likely that irrespective of the ground conditions making development more expensive, developers would always keep building if no greenfield sites were available.

With regard to the public consultation document, it was suggested that other brownfield sites in Great Yarmouth, such as the Beach Coach Station, Estcourt Road, Barnard Road, Ormond Road, Artillery Square etc be included for consideration and that it be stressed that brownfield sites were the priority. Reference was made to the potential housing sites map for Bradwell which gave details of the sites for development promoted by developers and it was agreed that sites 1 and 2 would not be supported and the other sites would be supported provided the relevant infrastructure was in place first. The Senior Planner (Policy) clarified that the housing site map for Bradwell would not be included in the Core Strategy consultation document and that individual sites would be included in the Site Specific Allocation Development Plan Document. The Senior Planner (Policy) indicated that the consultation document would be finalised by the end of February 2009 and go out to consultation for six weeks. The responses would then be discussed at an LDF Working Party in May/June 2009. Clarification was sought as to whether the Planning Section had sufficient capacity to undertake the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment at an earlier stage and the Planning Policy Manager responded that additional resources to

undertake the study more quickly would certainly help. The Chairman offered to look into this proposal.

A suggestion was made that the Nova Scotia Farm area of Caister could be developed as a new village or retirement community and this would then have a knock on effect in releasing housing in other areas. Concern was expressed that this could set a precedent for further development in that area and that high grade agricultural land was present in this area (with reference to the constraints map made available to the Working Party). However, the point was made that development either north or south of Caister was conceivable.

Clarification was sought as to why sites for employment use were not being identified. The Planning Policy Manager reminded Members that sites for employment, retail, office use etc would be included within the Site Specifics Development Plan Document and the URC Area Action Plan. The point was also made that land in the port area was under-utilised but would not be if the port began to thrive. It was also acknowledged that additional space would be required if a roll on-roll off operation commenced in a few years time and concern was expressed that no land had been allocated for future port expansion. The point was made, however, that land for car storage etc did not necessarily have to be within the town centre area. Clarification was sought as to whether higher storey developments would be acceptable within the town centre area. The Planning Policy Manager responded that the density of any development would depend on the site location and Members needed to bear in mind that the URC areas would probably see higher densities in order to make them financially viable.

Members' attention was drawn to the two options for providing the 800 dwellings shortfall and it was agreed that Martham should remain designated as a large village rather than a key service centre and that no other rural villages should be included. It was concluded that there was a need to try and develop Great Yarmouth and Gorleston first with sites in Bradwell only being developed if the necessary infrastructure was provided. It was stated that the intention was to provide an infrastructure plan which would go hand in hand with the URC Area Action Plan and would enable the Development Control Committee to condition planning consents. It was agreed that the document for public consultation would be amended as discussed with the final version being e-mailed to the Chairman for his approval prior to public consultation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Planning and Development's report be noted and the two options for providing the 800 dwellings shortfall be supported as amended above and be included in the Amendment to the Core Strategy for public consultation.

#### **4. AMENDMENT TO THE CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

The Working Party received the Head of Planning and Development's report, together with a copy of the Amendment to the Core Strategy Document. It was agreed that the document for consultation be amended in light of the earlier discussions, including the removal of Martham as a key service centre and the options being revised to reflect that development in Bradwell would only be considered once the necessary infrastructure was available.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Planning and Development's report be noted and the Amendment to the Core Strategy Document, as amended above, be published for consultation following formal agreement by Cabinet and Council.

**5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in May 2009 to consider the responses to the Amendment to the Core Strategy.

**6. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm.