

## INFORMAL AGENTS MEETING

13 MARCH 2024

### MINUTES

#### Present

John Maxey (Chair)  
Shaun Gayton  
Helen Morris  
Daniel Wallage  
Tim Slater  
Peter Gidney  
Jordan Trundle  
Hannah Wood-Handy, DC Manager  
Alex Fradley, Policy Manager  
Lee Osler, Service Manager

#### Not Present

Paul White  
Ben Hornigold  
Shannah Jackson

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of previous Informal Agents Meeting

None

3. Update on Local Plan Progress

Alex Fradley, introduced himself as the new Policy Manager. He worked for Kings Lynn Council for many years before leaving to work for the Department of Levelling up. He has now returned as the Policy Manager.

#### **Local Plan Update:**

- The emerging Local Plan is currently at Examination.
- Local Plan Examination Hearing Sessions set for March 26 -28, April 16-19, September 3-4.
- Details available to view via the BCKLWN website: [Local Plan review \(2016-2036\) examination | Local Plan review \(2016-2036\) examination | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#).
- Planning Policy Team fully engaged in the process and responding to Inspectors Additional Matters Issues and Questions (AMIQs) and progressing work in relation to Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show People.
- Thanks to those who have joined in with the process so far.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Update:**

- Old Hunstanton Made.
- Grimston at Examination.
- Appointed Examiner for North Wootton.
- Details available to view via the BCKLWN website: [Neighbourhood plans | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/Neighbourhood-plans).

#### **4. Update on Development Control**

HWH updated members on staffing; Finlay McKenzie has joined us as a Graduate Planner in the South Team. We have advertised the post for Principal Planning Officer for the south team as well as two graduate planners.

HWH informed the group that she will not longer be giving updates on the Chief Planners Newsletter as Agents were asked to sign up to receive them at the previous Agents meeting in September 2023.

LPA's are under pressure to speed up and improve on the quality of the Service we provide. Going forward it is proposed that LPA's will only be allowed to ask for an EOT once with no EOT's allowed on Householder applications. As a result, the LPA will have to make decisions, based on the information submitted with the application.

JM asked how is the local authority going to deal with detailed applications without going over time. HWH responded that Agents will need to use the Pre-Application Service more, but are likely only to get Planning Advice, as other statutory consultees now run their own Pre-App service a charge a fee.

JT asked how are NCC Highways conditions going to be dealt with going forward and are we speaking to NCC regarding Discharge of Conditions – HWH said that Agents should not apply to have highways conditions discharged until the S38 Agreement has been finalised.

Some discussion followed regarding consultees responding within timescales allowed, to avoid applications going over time. LO is doing some stats on responses and will report back at the next meeting.

JT asked what the main reason was for invalidating planning applications. RR responded that it is frustrating as it is normally CIL (which has been in for about 7 years) contaminated land assessments and FRA Matrix. Small things, like the scale bar or paper size being incorrect are also frustrating.

JT stated that one local authority priorities validating applications from those Agents who have the least Invalid Applications, who are at the top of their league table. LO suggested that we could use league tables and publish them.

HM asked for a list of conditions to be distributed, as they are only informed of the Pre-Commencement ones. JT suggested that a description of each condition would be useful.

HWH informed the group of an Appeal Decision where we were criticised by Pins for using "alterations" as this involved internal alterations, for which planning permission was not required. A way forward would be to put a fuller description in the DAS.

5. Update on Planning Support

The Group were informed at the last meeting that Amy Davies is now the team leader for the Validation Team, as of September 2023.

Sandra has now moved to the Planning Policy team and her replacement starts at the end of March.

LO stated that Invalid Applications will remain invalid for 21 days and then be returned. The Council may also hold some of the fee back, for the work carried out on the invalid application.

LO asked Agents to carefully check the application reference number on the application form, when discharging conditions. Often there has been a variation application and we have been checking with the Agent which permission they want to discharge conditions from. This will NOT happen going forward, and which ever application number is on the form, will be the discharge of conditions application.

PG asked whether BNG for non-majors is on receipt or validation of the application. BNG will be applicable for qualifying applications **received** on and after 2 April 2024.

JM asked if invalid applications could be sent back after 28 days rather than 21.

RR suggested that keeping some of the fee back, when returning invalid applications isn't always possible, as some Agents don't pay the fee until the application is valid. JM suggested that the application is not looked at until the fee is paid.

6. General Advice – Ben Hornigold

Unfortunately, the LPA do not have the resources to answer detailed questions from Agents, we no longer have a duty planner service.

7. Election of New Chair for Informal Group

Helen Morris volunteered to be Chair going forward, this was agreed by Members of the group.

8. AOB

Dates for the next groups;

Formal Agents Meeting; 12 or 19 June 2024

Informal Agents Group: 11 or 18 September 2024

Formal Agents Meeting: 27 November 2024

Meeting closed at 11:38