

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE** held in the Council Offices, Priory Road, Spalding, on Friday, 5 April 2013 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

P Bedford (Chairman)
H R Johnson (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock
R Gambba-Jones

R Leggott
M Brookes

Planning Manager (Breckland and South Holland District Councils), Head of Planning and Strategy (Boston Borough Council), Joint Policy Unit Manager, Deputy Manager of Joint Policy Unit, Senior Planning Policy Officer, Planning Policy Officer and Member Services Officer (South Holland District Council), Forward Planning Officer (Boston Borough Council), Principal Planning Officer (Lincolnshire County Council) and Legal Representative (Legal Services Lincolnshire).

In Attendance: Councillors F Biggadike, R M Rudkin.

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors C J T H Brewis, C Brotherton, G K Dark, F Pickett, E Poll and M Wright.

12. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2013 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. **SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN: STRATEGY AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED OPTIONS VERSION**

Consideration was given to the report of the South East Lincolnshire Joint Policy Unit Manager which sought approval from the Committee of the Preferred Options version of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan Strategy and Policies Development Plan Document, for the purpose of public consultation.

The following issues were raised:

Section 2 (Spatial Portrait)

- 2.3 – Members questioned whether the first sentence, which stated that the main watercourses were tidal, was correct. It was agreed that the sentence should be amended slightly, replacing 'are tidal' to 'have tidal influences'.
- General concern was expressed about the need to be careful about the wording of the Portrait in order that it sets the correct 'tone'.
- 2.6 – Reference to passenger transport to locations outside the Plan area being mainly by rail was not accurate as there was a significant role played by bus transport. It was agreed that this paragraph would be revised to reflect this situation.

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Section 6 (Housing)

- Table 6.5 (Service villages) – Why was Fosdyke not included in this list as the local parish council wanted some growth? Officers referred back to the Spatial Strategy discussed at the last meeting and advised that concern at its non-inclusion could be addressed through questions as part of the public consultation.
- Table 6.5 (Service villages) – Why was Algakirk proposed when Fosdyke was not? Officers commented that some smaller villages had been included as there was less risk of coastal flooding.
- It was noted that Butterwick was missing from Table 6.5.
- Table 6.11 (Service villages) – Why was Deeping St Nicholas still included in the table? Officers indicated that its inclusion had been previously agreed by Members but again advised that the issue of inclusion or otherwise could be addressed as part of the public consultation process.
- With regard to the emphasis being placed on Spalding to deliver the Spalding Western Relief Road, concern was expressed about the reliance being placed on housing growth in Spalding to fund the proposed Spalding Western Relief Road (SWRR) and that the Planning Inspectorate might decide that we would be unable to deliver the road. Officers commented that final costings were not yet known and that the preparation of the preferred route of the SWRR was still a work in progress. The SWRR was viewed as a critical piece of infrastructure to support Spalding's growth.
- Members recognised that the increased downtime of level crossings resulting from the upgrade of the Joint Line posed a risk for Spalding and also an issue for the emergency services. However, there was no guarantee that the SWRR would be delivered, and it was a high risk strategy to rely upon it. Officers commented that they recognised an element of risk in securing adequate funding for the SWRR but were working closely with Lincolnshire County Council in seeking to develop a sound proposal.
- Officers indicated that their preference for accommodating housing development in the proposed Service Villages was Option A in Boston Borough (6.17.5) and Option A in South Holland District (6.44.4). The committee agreed with the officers' preference in both cases.
- In respect of the approach to providing accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, Officers advised that South Holland District was still significantly short of meeting its identified need for permanent sites. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires the maintenance of a 5-year supply of specific deliverable sites to assist in meeting local needs and, in its absence, South Holland District Council could be faced with planning applications for permanent sites.

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- Members commented that the last bullet point in the preferred policy approach on page 183 of the agenda stated that 'the site, if for permanent residential use, is not situated in a ROY zone'; and enquired as to how the public could be convinced that significant amounts of new housing could be considered in a ROY zone, but not accommodation for travellers?. Officers stated that the reason for not wanting to permit sites for travellers within a ROY zone was that caravans were considered to be highly vulnerable structures. Discussion noted that it was necessary to differentiate between accommodation that was considered to be a semi-permanent structure (i.e. if on wheels and mobile) and bricks and mortar. It was recognised that the definition of a traveller site had been broadened to include structures that were more substantial than caravans and the public needed to be advised of the differences. It was agreed that travellers' accommodation that was defined as a permanent structure should be treated the same as other permanent structures and, therefore, it could be located within a ROY zone. In conclusion, it was agreed to revise the last bullet point of the preferred policy approach on Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accordingly.
- Appendix 12 - Assessment of Broad Locations for Growth at Boston and Spalding): Officers highlighted one reasonable option detailed on page 315 of the agenda (B8, Wyberton West Road/Chain Bridge Road/Swineshead Road) and shown on the Boston Town diagram on page 303 of the agenda.
- Regarding options for Boston, it was agreed that the reference to the Boston Distributor Road within Appendix 12 should be removed as it no longer formed one of the criteria for informing the identification of a broad location for housing in the town and was already mentioned in the Transport chapter.
- Approach to the size, type and density of additional housing (Page 174 of the agenda): Members were unhappy with Option A: 'To produce a policy approach that seeks to deliver the size and type of additional housing in accordance with up-to-date evidence and with guidance on a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare'. A number of issues were raised: this approach should not be applied across the whole Plan area as it was not applicable in all cases; the option as a blanket approach was unacceptable as it could encourage poor quality developments and poor parking standards; and density should be assessed on a site by site basis. Officers advised that there were several reasons for proposing the guidance figure of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) and explained these to members. Members commented that stating the particular figure of 30 within the final document would mean that the approach was prescriptive rather than being used as guidance. Stating this particular figure would result in it being used as a matter of course. Rather than being prescriptive, it should be possible for discussions to take place with developers on a site-by-site basis. The quality of build should be the primary consideration on each site. The message should be not to build as many properties on a site as possible; rather to make more efficient use of land for development. Following the discussion, it was agreed that Option B was the preferred option, but that the wording of the preferred policy approach should be reconsidered and agreed through the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

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Section 8 (Environment)

- Members questioned when a steer on the design/standard of housing required in the Plan area would be made available for potential developments. Officers commented that, currently, there was no definitive design guidance available to inform development in South East Lincolnshire other than the Lincolnshire Design Guide. Members were informed that the 'design of new development' was the subject of a preferred policy approach considered on page 236 of the agenda. Members commented that guidance needed to be more specific and that reference to a local design guide was required in the document.

Approach to the Provision of Affordable Housing (page 331 of the agenda)

- There was discussion on the preferred option in this area. The first paragraph of the preferred policy approach on the provision for affordable housing (on page 335 of the agenda) stated: 'In residential schemes of three or more dwellings, the South East Lincolnshire Authorities will seek to secure 20% of dwellings as affordable housing, the nature of which will have regard to the most up-to-date assessment of housing need'. Officers noted that this target was lower than those in the current Boston Borough Council and South Holland Local Plans and, therefore, enquired as to whether the target correct. There was disagreement between members of Boston Borough Council (BBC) and South Holland District Council (SHDC) on this point. SHDC members felt that there was no justification for reducing the current target of requiring one third of dwellings on market schemes to be provided as affordable housing. BBC members disagreed on this point and felt that the officers' suggestion was more attainable and encouraged better design. They also agreed with Option B regarding 'exception sites'. It was felt overall that there were two different housing areas being represented and that a middle ground should be found. Officers commented that each Authority had a 30% or a 1/3 policy and that the suggested option moved significantly away from this situation. For SHDC, affordable housing was a high priority. The public consultation exercise could establish whether there was still support for the current SHDC affordable housing target. It was agreed that South East Lincolnshire should adopt a split approach to this issue (i.e. 1/3 provision for the South Holland District area and 1/5 provision for the Boston Borough area) and that, prior to going out to consultation, the wording should be changed to reflect this situation and agreed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Approach to Housing Land supply over the Plan Period (page 342 of the agenda)

- Officers commented that with regard to this item, predicted housing trajectories tended to underperform and, therefore, a phased approach to housing delivery (covering four, 5-year periods) was proposed instead. For example, proposed delivery in South Holland District over the 5-year period 2011-2016 would be 1300 dwellings, compared with the average five-year figure of 2,350 based on the proposed 470 dwellings per annum over the full plan period.

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- Members questioned how top-ups to housing land supply would be sought. Officers responded that broad locations for housing growth were being identified in the current document and that further sites would be identified through the Site Allocations DPD. The release of this land for housing development would be managed to ensure a constant 6-year supply of deliverable sites..
- It was agreed to amend the third bullet point of the preferred policy approach by inserting the wording 'a commitment to' before 'the completion....'.

Section 10 (Transport)

Key Issues were highlighted at section 10.3. Section 10.4.3 (implementation of a Boston Distributor Road) and 10.4.4 (setting of local parking standards) were also highlighted. It was stated within 10.4.3 that the Boston Distributor Road in its entirety remains an aspiration. With regard to parking standards (last bullet point in the preferred policy approach to sustainable transport and accessibility), members stated that parking standards were a problem and an issue on all new developments. If not addressed now, problems would be created for the future. Officers responded that this bullet point recognised the issue and that the preparation of new parking standards to support it could be undertaken after public consultation. Members stated that the main concern was with residential parking. It was agreed that a new set of car parking standards should form an appendix to the 'Submission' version of the Strategy and Policies DPD.

[RESOLVED:

That the combined preferred options and sustainability report be approved for public consultation, subject to the agreed amendments.] – *inserted by the South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 2 August 2013.*

14. CONSULTATION STRATEGY FOR THE PREFERRED OPTIONS STAGE OF THE STRATEGY AND POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (PART OF THE SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN)

Consideration was given to the report of the South East Lincolnshire Joint Policy Unit Manager, which sought approval for the Preferred Options Consultation Strategy. The following comments were made:

- Abbreviations contained within the document should be explained in a glossary.
- Officers should be congratulated on reducing the size of the document.
- The front cover of the document needed to be more interesting to encourage people to read it.
- Officers advised that as part of the consultation, there would be permanent exhibitions in Boston and Spalding, with notification being given of when officers would be available to assist members of the public.

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15. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN (IDP) BASELINE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the South East Lincolnshire Joint Policy Unit Manager which informed members of the Infrastructure Deliver Plan Baseline Report. The following issues were raised:

- Members noted that it was important that the content was correct – factual inaccuracies had to be addressed to provide a document in which the public could have confidence. Particular comments included:
 - Appendix A: Para 2.1: In the second line, it was agreed to replace the word ‘promote’ with ‘support’.
 - Appendix A: Para 2.8: In the second sentence, the use of the word ‘poor’ in relation to public transport was considered too loose.
 - Appendix A: Para 3.5: In the past, the use of temporary buildings to accommodate extra capacity had been allowed. It should be made clear that this should not be encouraged in the future.
- Members noted the difficulty in appreciating the concept of an IDP in the absence of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). It was difficult to understand how you can plan to have an IDP, which by its nature ‘is bigger than a development’, unless you know how you can acquire the funds required to deliver the infrastructure. For example, there was concern that renewable energy was considered to be a major player in delivering the IDP. How can you deliver such infrastructure if you don’t know if the funds are available to do so.
- Para 2.5: Members questioned whether Western Power was the provider; and also voiced disappointment that discussions with it were not more advanced. This needed to be pursued. The officer responded that the reference to the provider was incorrect and would be amended and that he was in touch with them regarding progress.
- Appendix 1 (IDP Action Plan): Members questioned why the emphasis was on the capacities of treatment works at Boston and Spalding and there being no reference to such facilities in other settlements.
- Appendix 1 (IDP Action Plan): Members noted that the list of infrastructure considerations was very long and queried how new housing developments could be adequately supported by appropriate infrastructure given the cost of such provision, particularly in smaller settlements.

16. PROPOSED FUTURE MEETING DATES

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in late July. A report on the public consultation would be considered at this meeting.

(The meeting ended at 1.30 pm)

(End of minutes)