

1 Introduction

2 Aspiring & Skilled

Aspiring and Skilled

2.1 The vision for the borough should seek to:

2.2 · Raise aspirations

2.3 · Raise educational performance

2.4 · Reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training

2.5 · Increase participation in learning and skills development

2.6 · Develop and support initiatives to 'Grow our Own' skills and opportunities

Where are we now?

2.7 We have already carried out consultation for our initial Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper and the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper during 2005/6. The results of this consultation identified recognition of the LDF's role in providing adequate and appropriate sites for further and higher education, and training facilities. The West Norfolk Partnership published a State of the Borough Report and held a series of workshops to identify the main priorities across the borough.

2.8 King's Lynn has to become an attractive, vibrant and prosperous town where people choose to live, work, visit and invest. The town must provide opportunities for economic diversification, and attract new inward investment. King's Lynn must provide opportunities for economic diversification, including newer under-represented knowledge-based sectors, and help to put the town 'on the map' by offering the right sort of business facilities and infrastructure to create new opportunities. You told us the town must increase access to services and opportunities for education and training.

2.9 In Downham Market you told us that there was a need to ensure there was a suitable supply of land and premises to meet the diverse needs of businesses. In Hunstanton your priorities were to create opportunities for new investment in the town and to secure sustainable quality year round employment. Both towns identified a need to improve access to services, including the provision of good educational facilities.

2.10 In Rural Areas your aims were to provide for local community services and facilities. Retaining rural employment where appropriate, and encourage new sustainable growth.

2.11 The issue of skills and aspirations was not addressed in the previous Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper. However consultation carried out by the West Norfolk Partnership highlighted this as one of the major issues for the borough. Educational attainment levels have improved in the Borough but the numbers of young people staying in full time education after 16, though increasing, are still below the national average. The number of people who are working and are qualified to NVQ level 4 is also lower than the regional and national average and there are significant numbers who have no qualifications at all. There are fewer employees in higher level roles (manager, professional and associated professional and technical occupations) and fewer in administrative roles in the borough in comparison to the region and the country as a whole. Also earnings in the borough are considerably lower than elsewhere in the region and the country.

2.12 Consultants have also now completed our Employment Land Review Study which takes stock of the existing situation, creates a picture of future requirements and identifies a new portfolio of employment sites. This enables us to look more closely at what land we will need to provide for up to 2021, and the most appropriate way of delivering sites.

2.13 The Economic Development chapter of the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy⁰ (RSS) has been reviewed in response to Panel recommendations. Policy E1 provides the indicative targets for job growth from 2001 to 2021. For King's Lynn & West Norfolk this target is set at 5,000 jobs, and the RSS states that the LDF should provide an enabling context to achieve these targets. Proposed policy E2 refers to the provision of employment land. LDFs should ensure an adequate range of sites and premises are identified and allocated / safeguarded to meet the full range of requirements needed to meet the indicative target in E1. This also refers to the need to provide appropriately for identified needs for skills-training and education.

Current Issues

2.14 Our plan for an 'educated West Norfolk' aims to create a place that recognises the fundamental role of skills and learning in breaking down social and economic barriers. By fostering a culture of learning, it aims to raise aspirations and opportunities for local residents, whilst meeting the needs of business, so that West Norfolk and its communities can fulfil their potential.

2.15 The vision for King's Lynn as a university town is a recurrent and underpinning theme. The future development of the College of West Anglia site alongside the proposed new Anglia Ruskin University campus provides an important opportunity for developing this role. It also provides a catalyst for promoting wider skills development across West Norfolk, including lifelong learning, 'up-skilling' amongst older generations and improving local workforce skills.

(The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England, December 2006)

2.16 In addition to promoting skills and qualifications, the University will provide economic benefits by attracting and retaining people with skills and qualifications, crucially, allowing the local community to fulfil its potential in these areas. It will help in raising aspirations and provide opportunities to meet these higher expectations. The plan therefore builds on the University as a driver for other elements of the vision, such as shaping the economy and promoting learning.

2.17 This part of our vision has links to other developments such as the planned Academy for King's Lynn and the implementation of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme, which is being rolled-out in West Norfolk ahead of the rest of the county.

2.18 The Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework places skills at the centre of West Norfolk's vision, tackling the borough's educational underperformance and need for improved skills. The plan is driven by the end goal of removing the ceilings imposed by the local low levels of skills.

Theme Objectives

2.19 · Support the development and retention of higher skilled, better paid employment

2.20 · Support investment in provision of and facilities for education and training and information, advice and guidance

2.21 · Support provision of affordable and quality housing to attract and retain working people to/in West Norfolk.

2.22 · Support provision of appropriate transport services to enable local people to access training and employment opportunities within the travel to work area.

Relocation of the College of West Anglia

2.23 Option 1: The College of West Anglia relocates to the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area. This would enable the college to move into modern purpose built premises where excellent facilities for vocational training can be provided. Through potential links with Anglia Ruskin University this could also enable access to a wider range of higher education, as well as further education. The Council would be in support of the relocation to enhance education and training opportunities across the borough.

2.24 Option 2: The College of West Anglia remains at its existing site and continues to seek to establish links with Anglia Ruskin University. The Council would seek to support the college and enable a redevelopment/renewal program to enhance and develop existing facilities at this site.

2.25 Option 3: The College of West Anglia relocates to an alternative site within the borough. The Council will support the principle of the relocation of the College and work with the College to identify appropriate sites. This is subject to the fact that the move will have a beneficial impact on the town, it will not detract from the vision and aims for Kings Lynn; the move will assist in the regeneration of the town; and the move will be to a sustainable location.

Development of school facilities

2.26 Option 1: The Council will seek to support primary and secondary schools to improve facilities for the provision of a good range of vocational and academic education, and to enable the schools to establish links into their communities extending their role and function. This could include the need to consider for example, family centres creating space for family learning and extended school services. In the event that improvements or an expansion cannot be carried out on the existing school site we would seek to work with Norfolk County Council to consider alternative sites rather than constrain the development of the school.

2.27 Option 2: The Council would enforce strict planning controls on all schools within the borough to restrict new building and development, and oppose any school relocation. This will ensure the school remains in a sustainable location but will limit the facilities and services it can provide to the pupils and wider community.

Attract and support skilled employers

2.28 The borough is made up of a wide range of employers, however many employ low skilled labour. It is our aspiration to make a step change in the range of jobs available to people in West Norfolk. However the skills base remains patchy with areas of educational underperformance, skills gaps and shortages. We need to stimulate demand for skills and a learning culture from both employers and employees. We need to develop skills that better meet business needs and develop higher level skills to support the knowledge economy.

2.29 Option 1: The Council, in partnership with service providers, will secure more skilled employment within the borough. Employers should be willing to invest in and develop their workforce. We will seek to attract new skilled and knowledge based employment to the borough, and support the expansion and development of existing businesses and services enabling successful companies to expand existing operations.

2.30 Option 2: The Council will endeavour to provide a range of appropriate sites, buildings and good transport infrastructure for incoming businesses, and improve the quality of existing facilities, services and housing to make Kings Lynn & West Norfolk an attractive place to live and work.

2.31 Option 3: We recognise the need to retain quality local employment particularly where the company offer skilled training opportunities. This could include, for example, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where the Council would endeavour to retain the hospital against moves to redistribute this facility outside of the borough.

2.32 Option 4: The Council would not actively seek to attract new skilled employers to the borough but support and seek to retain the current range of businesses, simply responding where possible to market changes.

Supply of employment land

2.33 The LDF must provide a portfolio of employment land which will meet our needs to 2021. The expansion and diversification of the West Norfolk economy can only be assured if there is a sufficient long term provision of a diverse range of employment related buildings and sites in the quantity and quality which reflect both a mix of employment uses and the types and sizes of operation.

2.34 The recognised need for higher skilled/higher paid employment opportunities can not solely be delivered through the LDF but the LDF can help by ensuring the provision of appropriate land and premises and the appropriate infrastructure, facilities, housing, etc that makes the area an attractive one to invest in.

2.35 The Employment Land Review recognised that there had been little evidence of inward investment to the borough, and that while our existing supply of employment land is sufficient in quantity terms, the quality of the land restricted the choice and availability. Many of our existing employment sites are constrained and this has affected our ability to attract new investment into the borough, in particular to Kings Lynn.

2.36 Option 1: We need to review our current employment sites and look at new areas of land to provide for a wide range of employment requirements. By ensuring we have good range of sites available, with the necessary infrastructure in place; we can seek to attract higher level employers. Sites will be concentrated on Kings Lynn and to a lesser extent the towns of Downham Market and Hunstanton. It is also important to consider sites in rural settlements to provide local employment and again add to the range of sites available.

2.37 Option 2: The Council will actively bring forward the Hardwick Industrial Estate Extension site for employment development. This site was allocated in the adopted Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan but has not come forward for development. The site was identified in the Employment Land Review Study as 'critical to future supply'.

2.38 Option 3: Less emphasis is placed on the importance to provide a quality portfolio of employment sites, and priority is given to alternative land uses such as housing. This will limit the availability of sites in attractive, appropriate, sustainable locations. It will also limit our ability to attract new investment to the borough.

Accessibility

2.39 The lack of rural transport provision has a significant impact on people's ability to access both education and training, and employment opportunities. This is particularly a problem for young people trying to move around the borough, and has a real effect on the

aspirations of residents within our borough. By improving accessibility through enhanced public transport services, and by considering alternative schemes such as car share, this would open up many more opportunities.

2.40 The options for rural transport provision are considered within the Accessible and Connected Theme.

Housing provision

2.41 If we are seeking to attract new employers to the borough we also need to ensure we can offer affordable housing and aspirational high quality housing throughout the borough. It is recognised that the inadequate high quality housing offer in Kings Lynn is discouraging people from moving into the town. This needs to be addressed before we can expect to attract high quality skilled employers here. There is also an issue of a lack of affordable housing within many of our rural areas which also restricts choice for people moving into the borough

2.42 The options for housing type and availability are considered within the Cohesive and Equitable Theme.

3 Competitive & Enterprising

Regenerating King's Lynn as a Key Centre for Development and Change

3.1 The vision should aspire to:

1. Develop King's Lynn as an urban area of regional significance, accommodating at least 7,000 of the 12,000 new houses allocated to the Borough by the Regional Spatial Strategy increasing the population of the urban area to 50,000
2. Deliver economic growth focused on King's Lynn's role as a sub regional service centre and key employment sectors of advanced engineering, tourism, value added food activities and developing entrepreneurship
3. Regenerate King's Lynn as a town of regional significance
4. Increase levels of investment into West Norfolk

Where are we now?

3.2 This is not the first consultation exercise and you have previously told us that King's Lynn town centre should take more housing, although it needs to be sensitively provided and not be allowed to add to traffic problems. Getting the transport right in the future will be crucial. This includes issues of parking, congestion and public transport which all have a significant effect on local people; not only on convenience but also quality of life, including feelings of safety and perceptions of how attractive places are.

3.3 Better use should be made of the waterfront and historic environment to encourage people to visit all areas of the town centre. The Walks and Tuesday Market Place are seen as particularly important open spaces although the town centre and other facilities are viewed as 'standard' rather than special. There is insufficient provision in the town for younger people, particularly the teenage groups. There should be economic diversification to jobs, in the service and knowledge based sectors, that brings more 'added value', although the transition will not be easy. Economic niches and opportunities should be explored.

3.4 Hunstanton should be a quality visitor destination, attracting new investment in the town to secure year-round employment while retaining and enhancing the unique characteristics of its Victorian heritage. This tourist emphasis needs to be 'in harmony' with the residents of the town but nevertheless there should be a pro-active approach to enhancing existing facilities, actively identifying potential sites for redevelopment and projects.

3.5 You want Downham Market to be a vibrant and viable market town providing sustainable employment opportunities a variety of community facilities, notably good educational and health infrastructure that can cope with changing trends. The town centre should be a thriving, prosperous destination that offers more than shopping. Environmental quality is a key consideration, by making the most of the town's natural environment such as the river frontage, providing development which is sympathetic to the local character utilising the historic heritage of the town, and retaining open space and 'greening' the townscape.

3.6 Transport within and outside the town is an important consideration both to make the town safer for pedestrians and also to promote a regular, reliable, cheap and integrated sustainable transport system.

3.7 In the rural settlements you also want housing which is affordable for young people, more employment and economic opportunities for rural communities and continuing protection of the countryside for its own sake.

What has changed?

3.8 Central government has proposed some changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy:

3.9 Policy KL1 - King's Lynn is to be a Key Centre for Development and Change with the following requirements:

- to make further provision for housing, employment and other growth to achieve urban renaissance and raise the town population to 50,000.
- enhance the quality of the urban environment
- make effective use of previously developed land
- provide for an improved range of services in the town
- support the regeneration of communities
- provide improved transport choices both within the urban area and between the town and its hinterland

3.10 Policy SS5 - King's Lynn and West Norfolk is to be a **Priority Area for Regeneration**

3.11 Policy E1 - sets a target for **5,000 new jobs** within the Borough between the period 2001-2021

3.12 Policy H1 - sets a target of **12,000 new homes** within the Borough between the period 2001-2021; discussions to extend this to 14,400 dwellings over the period 2001-2026 are currently underway

3.13 Regeneration of King's Lynn through the Urban Renaissance Strategy is embedded within the Council's corporate priorities. Development of the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area, to provide a mix of projects including housing – the Millennium Village – employment and new educational facilities, is underway. Efforts continue to secure regeneration of the waterfront and deliver the marina – a major leisure and tourist facility – further housing and other leisure based uses to complement the visitor attraction of the town centre.

3.14 The early success of this work has encouraged the Council to resubmit a Growth Point bid to secure additional funding towards the provision of essential infrastructure to meet these demanding targets.

3.15 Redevelopment of New Conduit Street and Broad Street, the Vancouver Quarter, is essentially complete. The Council has commissioned a Town Centres Study (for King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton) which forms the basis for future consideration. Notably, this study identifies a potential need for a further 20,000m² of floorspace for comparison shopping within King's Lynn centre by 2016 and a further study is being commissioned to advise how to take this matter forward.

3.16 Various housing opportunities identified within the Urban Capacity Study have not been brought forward for development. The Council is currently reviewing that study with a more sophisticated exercise – the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – which will investigate the suitability, achievability and deliverability of potential sites. A development constraint that has achieved more prominence in recent months is the issue of flood risk and this is particularly relevant to King's Lynn. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment had been carried in 2005 but government requirements have extended the scope and a review is currently being undertaken.

3.17 In Hunstanton, the Council is currently leading a partnership of organisations addressing the needs of the sea front and town centre areas endeavouring to both enhance their appearance and secure a more robust economy to supplement the tourist industry throughout the year.

3.18 Downham Market has seen significant population growth in recent years which has not been accompanied with the full provision of appropriate services. Continuous expansion in this way is unlikely to result in the sustainable, vibrant and viable community sought.

3.19 The requirements to resist development of greenfield sites (previously undeveloped land) has led to increasing pressures to allow market housing on former employment sites.

Focusing the provision of at least 7,000 new dwellings in and around the town

3.20 The future development of King's Lynn is undeniably constrained. The River Great Ouse lies to the west of the town centre but the associated flood risk has a considerably wider area of influence extending across both the western part of the town and West Lynn. This area of risk continues north into Wootton Marshes, and south along the River Nar valley; it also extends eastward along the Gaywood River and to the south east along Middleton Stop Drain. The town is also bounded by significant roads - A47T trunk road to the south, A149 eastern bypass and Edward Benefer Way / Grimston Road to the north with South Wootton and part of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty beyond.

3.21 The Regional Spatial Strategy sets a target of building at least 7,000 new homes within King's Lynn. How can these be accommodated? Clearly there is a paramount presumption against siting new homes on greenfield (previously undeveloped) land that is subject to flood risk. However economic confidence in the regeneration of King's Lynn will not evolve if all new housing is directed to greenfield land beyond the flood risk i.e. outside of the existing town.

3.22 Fortunately King's Lynn is a town already in the process of renewal, a town where previously developed land (brownfield sites) is being, and will continue to be, made available for new housing at higher densities. Within the town, areas of brownfield currently subject to flood risk will continue to be brought forward for housing e.g. Boal Quay and the former "Muckworks". Some may think on first consideration these should perhaps be excluded from redevelopment because of the risk of flooding but it must be acknowledged that these sites will continue to share the existing and ongoing protection afforded by current flood defences; defences for the town cannot be abandoned. Furthermore, various means of mitigation can be designed into new schemes to support those defences.

3.23 Not all of the new housing proposed for the town can be accommodated on brownfield sites, and indeed the Council cannot be absolutely confident that all appropriate sites will be made available for redevelopment as infrastructure permits. Fortunately there are also undeveloped sites, and sites with a large component of open land, that could be made available both within the existing development boundaries and immediately adjacent to them (see the Growth Point Programme of Development 2007). Some of these sites within the town may also be at risk to flooding but, as with the brownfield sites, they are also protected by the wider defences of the town. The issues here are twofold:

- not to compound existing problems by extending the town into areas currently at risk of flooding. and
- to secure a timely balance in the release of sites for development. Early release will divert resources from the more complex brownfield sites and delay regeneration though redevelopment; late release could impede the required growth of the town.

3.24 Because of the compact nature of the town it is likely that at some future date it will become necessary to expand significantly beyond the confines previously outlined. Such an expansion would need to be on accessible land clear of both flood risk and important environmental quality. Suitable land may be found south east of the town between the A10 and A47T corridors (see Growth Point Programme of Development) however, major investment in improving the A47T would be required beforehand. Were such development to be promoted it would also be necessary to ensure that new housing is provided in a balanced manner with appropriate access to all necessary community facilities, employment opportunities and public transport.

Option:

3.25 The Regional Spatial Strategy requires the town's population to increase to at least 50,000 which is likely to require an additional 7,000 new homes to be built in King's Lynn as part of an on-going programme to secure the regeneration of the urban area, build continuing confidence in the town and attract inward investment to the Borough as a whole. Current studies (e.g. the Growth Point Programme and ongoing Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) suggest there is capacity for a greater number of new homes to be provided within and adjacent the town. More housing implies greater local housing choice and enhanced potential for improved accessibility to the town centre and employment areas, and encourages further investment in local services for existing and new residents alike. However, more housing also exacerbates the current difficulties experienced in bringing brownfield land forward and improving existing services and traffic problems while also encouraging further development of greenfield sites.

Option CE1a

3.26 **Should future housing provision in and around King's Lynn be limited to the minimum required to satisfy the Regional Spatial Strategy?**

Option CE1b

3.27 **Should future housing provision in and around King's Lynn be optimised beyond the minimum required to satisfy the Regional Spatial Strategy to take further advantage of local investment opportunities in infrastructure and services?**

3.28 Presently, priority is given to the redevelopment of brownfield sites protected by existing flood defences where the development proposed includes appropriate means to alleviate risk, introduce improvements or other suitable means of mitigation. Greenfield sites within and adjacent the urban area may be released following sequential testing to contribute to and achieve this target where inadequacies in the required infrastructure significantly hinder the provision of housing on brownfield sites and where the development of these sites do not adversely affect the regeneration of the community.

3.29 However, the development of these brownfield sites are not without difficulties. The Urban Capacity Study 2005 highlighted major contributions from the Millennium Village (Nar Ouse Regeneration Area), the Waterfront Regeneration Project (Boal Quay), the Town Centre and a number of sites presently in use but which may come forward for redevelopment.

Option:

3.30 The Nar Ouse Regeneration Area has capacity for almost 900 houses although fewer than 200 have been approved (June 2007 figures). There are ongoing infrastructure difficulties in resolving a "cap" limiting development to 450 houses in advance of significant highway/transportation improvements. Norfolk County Council and the Borough Council are cooperating in the King's Lynn Area Land Use and Transportation Strategy which will help formulate necessary works of improvement. This study should report in April 2008. Although the nature of improvements cannot be anticipated at present there will quite likely be a requirement for significant investment. What priority should be given to these future works?

Option CE2a

3.31 A high priority should be given to resolving the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area capping to enable new housing to be provided at the earliest date.

Option CE2b

3.32 The Nar Ouse Regeneration Area capping should receive a low priority even though this may result in earlier release of greenfield sites for alternative housing provision

Option:

3.33 The Waterfront Regeneration Project is already a corporate priority aspiring to improve Boal Quay and the open land to the south as a vibrant mixed use development bringing leisure, tourism, employment and housing closer to the town centre. Although firm proposals are not yet in place there have been suggestions that the new housing capacity on this site could exceed 850 units. On first inspection this could be seen as a welcome addition to the target of 7,000 new dwellings within and around King's Lynn. However, while undoubtedly a major consideration within the overall economics of the project, thought must also be given to the nature of residential units anticipated. Indications are that these are likely to be apartments.

3.34 The Borough Council has commissioned a study jointly with North Norfolk and Breckland District Councils to consider future housing requirements. This is the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and it informs the three authorities not only on the overall provision of affordable housing but also the demand by nature and quantities of future house types and sizes in both affordable and market led developments. The following table sets out the proportion of accommodation by type identified by housing need surveys within the study - the Balanced Housing Market:

Tenure	1Bed Flat	2Bed Flat	2Bed House	3Bed House	4Bed House	Total
Owneroccupied	2.4	3.2	16.1	23.4	10.8	55.8
Private rented	7.2	2.9	5.0	8.1	1.2	24.4
Intermediate	0.0	0.3	1.6	0.2	0.0	2.2
Social rented	4.0	2.8	6.3	3.9	0.6	17.6
Total	13.6	9.2	29.1	35.6	12.6	100.0

Accommodation Required

3.35 This table suggests that the potential demand for apartments, or flats, is somewhat less than a quarter of the overall demand. What will be the impact of a potentially large development of apartments on the edge of the town centre?

Option CE3a

3.36 The housing mix eventually proposed within the Waterfront Regeneration Project should avoid a preponderance of apartments and reflect the overall mix sought by respondents to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Option CE3b

3.37 To ensure the success and vitality of a mixed use development the Waterfront Regeneration Project may need to respond to external housing pressures and provide levels of housing which do not accord with present perceptions of a Balanced Housing Market. An exception policy may be required to permit such an eventuality and discount the level of provision from the new housing target set to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Improving the visitor experience to the town centre

3.38 King's Lynn town centre has recently undergone a significant period of change with the redevelopment of much of the 1970's shopping frontages to Broad Street and New Conduit Street. During the later stages of this work the Council commissioned a study on the perceived viability and vitality of the town centres in King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton. The study made a number of recommendations.

3.39 There is capacity to extend both the quality and quantity of the retail offer within the town. A further 20,000m² of comparison shopping floorspace is likely to be required by 2016 and failure to promote this will leave the town centre open to continued challenge from out of town schemes. In response to this, the Council is commissioning a further study to assess the development opportunities potentially available in the area surrounding the bus-station (between Old Sunway, Railway Road, Blackfriars Street and Baxter's Plain/St. Dominic's Square). This study will also investigate methods of improving access between the railway-station and bus-station; it should report back in the summer when the findings will then be made available.

3.40 Traffic management within the town is becoming an increasingly important issue. As previously mentioned Norfolk County Council and the Borough Council are collaborating in the King's Lynn Area Land Use and Transportation Strategy which will address issues including road congestion and associated air quality, town centre access and parking, and improvements to public transport, cycleways and footpaths. Surveys have been undertaken and the study is due to report back in April this year.

Option:

3.41 The Waterfront Regeneration Project will introduce significant opportunities for leisure and tourism which must be integrated into the overall strategy for the town centre as a visitor attraction and consequently the access links between both areas must be strengthened. A site which will have significant impact upon these future links is the temporary car park in Church Street, what should happen to this? Although the KLATS study is addressing in the issue of town centre parking from a transportation point of view there are broader issues involved here because of the prominent location within the conservation area and the site's proximity to St Margaret's Church and other listed buildings.

Option CE 4a

3.42 **The Church Street car park be retained as a surface car parking facility but the physical appearance of the site should be improved to reflect the importance of its location both within a conservation area and between two significant centres of potential visitor attraction**

Option CE4b

3.43 The Church Street car park be retained as a parking facility but redeveloped with appropriately designed frontages to both Church Street and Stonegate Street to enhance the appearance of the conservation area and settings to listed buildings and improve the accessibility between the town centre and Boal Quay

Option CE4c

3.44 Retention of the Church Street car park is unlikely to optimise future improvements to this important area situated within a conservation area and between two significant centres of potential visitor attraction and the site should be redeveloped as a mixed use scheme focusing on the setting of the conservation area and nearby listed buildings and supporting the access linkages between Boal Quay and the town centre.

Option:

3.45 The Town Centres Study also recommended that more should be done to promote leisure uses, culture and the arts and put in place the means to reinvigorate the visual image and presentation of the town's heritage. Studies have begun on improving the visual image including the potential contribution that Tuesday Market Place can make to the visitor's experience, leisure and tourism within the town. It has been suggested that this work should also be mirrored in Saturday Market Place both as a focal point to strengthen the north-south axis of shopping along High Street and as a fulcrum to improve accessibility between the town centre and Boal Quay. What priority, if any, should be given works enhancing the appearance and contribution of Saturday Market Place?

Option CE5a

3.46 Both Tuesday Market Place and Saturday Market Place are seen as important contributors to the presentation of the town's heritage and should be considered as unique features which can jointly strengthen the visitor attraction to High Street and the shopping centre as a whole.

Option CE5b

3.47 The improvement of Saturday market Place should be considered as an integral part of the link between the town centre and Boal Quay and provision made to secure these improvements as part of the Waterfront Regeneration Project.

Supporting regeneration beyond King's Lynn

3.48 Although regional policy seeks to direct resources at the regeneration of King's Lynn it would be inappropriate not to address regeneration issues elsewhere in the Borough. Option CE1 seeks views on the suitability of King's Lynn to accommodate a larger population, and

consequently more housing, than required to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy; the potential impact of that decision upon the wider area is addressed elsewhere as part of the settlement hierarchy.

Option:

3.49 Downham Market has seen considerable expansion in recent years and the consensus of opinion suggests the community now needs a period of stability before experiencing further growth. Nevertheless, this view is tempered by concern that this recent growth has not been accompanied by adequate provision of appropriate services - education, shopping and employment. Should Downham Market continue to expand in this manner? Can further residential expansion act as a catalyst and stimulate provision within the service industry? If so, will the scale of development required overwhelm the nature, character and perceptions of the town or distract the delivery of resources in support of the Regional Spatial strategy?

3.50 There is an area of under-used land lying between the railway and relief channel south of the A1122. Can that land be utilised to promote mixed use development such as river-side leisure and tourism attractions which will promote and accommodate further service provision?

Option CE6a

3.51 To support the continuing regeneration of the town Downham Market will accept further housing expansion subject to concurrent delivery of improvements in education, local shopping and employment opportunities.

Option CE6b

3.52 There shall be no significant housing expansion in Downham Market within the current plan period

Option CE6c

3.53 South of Hythe Bridge, land to the east of the relief channel shall be promoted as a mixed use development site to provide a river-side leisure and tourist facility with additional provision for other employment opportunities and community facilities

3.54 The Borough Council has commissioned a Built Environment Plan to guide regeneration for Hunstanton's Southern Seafront and Town Centre.

3.55 Over recent months, this study has been reviewing a number of key areas and aspects in the functioning of Hunstanton as a seaside resort. The final Plan will provide a detailed framework for the enhancement of the built environment, the promotion of development opportunities in the area and the attraction of new investment, all of which are important to the future prosperity of the town. The study should be completed in May 2008.

3.56 To flourish and survive existing local services and employment sites within rural villages and settlements must be nurtured, supported and safeguarded. These smaller facilities offer an important contribution to the sustainability and diversity of the rural economy. But clearly there are balances to be met. New employment sites and new business and community facilities need to be provided within the rural areas but they must be sensibly located near to their workforce or customers. Similarly they should not be distanced from their suppliers of raw materials if these need to be transported frequently in bulk. Haulage costs continue to increase and it would be foolhardy to establish new businesses in relatively isolated locations for them to prove uneconomic in future years.

3.57 Because of the increasing pressures to safeguard greenfield sites and favour redevelopment of brownfield land many businesses have been lost to recent residential development. In some circumstances this has brought tangible benefits to the community such as the redevelopment of obsolete sites, or the removal of noise or traffic nuisances etc. Unfortunately, these lost businesses are often unable to relocate within the community and consequently local employment or a local service is lost to the community. Such businesses and services need to be safeguarded if the villages are to continue in a sustainable manner, if villages are not to decline to dormitory communities where everyone must travel to secure their most basic daily needs.

Option CE7

3.58 The economic and social needs of rural villages will be safeguarded to ensure a sustainable future for each settlement, its infrastructure and on-going services and residents needs by encouraging, where appropriate, the establishment of new businesses and services in a sustainable manner and as far as possible, the retention of existing employment and service sites.

4 Accessible & Connected

4.1 An Accessible & Connected Area

4.2 The aim of an 'Accessible and Connected' area is supported by objectives which seek to:

1. Encourage the provision and use of large-scale wireless internet availability across the whole of West Norfolk.
2. Reduce avoidable journeys.
3. Improve Road Safety.

4.3 Where are we now?

4.4 In previous consultations you told us that getting transport right in the future in King's Lynn will be crucial. This includes the linked issues of parking, congestion and public transport provision. Traffic and transport have a significant effect on local people; not only on convenience but also quality of life, including feelings of safety and perceptions of how attractive places are.

4.5 In Downham Market you said that transport both within and outside the town was important in making the town safer for pedestrians and to promoting a regular, reliable, cheap and integrated sustainable transport system with good educational and health infrastructure that can cope with changing trends.

4.6 Generally you felt that there was a need to recognise that the private car will continue to be the only option for many of our residents, especially outside the King's Lynn urban area. There was support for the dualling of the A47 Trunk Road.

4.7 You felt that there should be specific mention of encouraging internet (broadband provision and cable services).

4.8 What has changed since the consultation?

4.9 The Second Norfolk Local Transport Plan (LTP2) for 2006 - 2011 was submitted by Norfolk County Council to Government in 2006. LTP2 describes the County Council's transport strategy for the period 2006 to 2021, including an implementation programme for the period 2006 to 2011. Area strategies cover King's Lynn, market towns in rural areas and the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4.10 Work is underway on the King's Lynn Area Land Use and Transport Strategy (KLATS) which will set out the way in which transport issues are to be tackled in the King's Lynn area over the next 15 years. All types of travel within the King's Lynn area are being investigated, seeking ways to improve and enhance the area's current situation. The study commenced in April 2007 and is expected to last until May 2008. The KLATS is being developed to help guide investment in King's Lynn over the next 15 years. The strategy will look at all forms of transport to ensure that King's Lynn develops a transport system that promotes travel choice ranging from the private car to cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users.

4.11 KLATS will take into account views from all communities including private businesses and the general public. However, the study will not solely focus on transport; land use planning will be incorporated and therefore such aspects as congestion and access to amenities including shops, schools, local doctors, etc. will be looked at.

4.12 The strategy is being based on the following areas of work:

4.13 • An audit of the current King's Lynn land use and transportation situation.

4.14 • A consultation with representatives from the general public, local authorities, service providers and commercial companies.

4.15 • Surveys to understand the behaviour and requirements of vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users.

4.16 • Construction of a traffic model to understand impacts of growth.

4.17 • Production of policies to form the bulk of the transport strategy.

4.18 • Production of the transport strategy accompanied with an action plan to enable these policies to be acted upon.

4.19 Growth is projected for King's Lynn over the next decade and beyond. This strategy is therefore planning investment in the town's infrastructure and public services to accommodate this growth in a sustainable manner. The production of a KLATS aims to address issues such as congestion, public transport, walking and cycling whilst ensuring that any growth will not have a detrimental effect on the current network.

4.20 The strategy will aim to provide easy access for people to and within the town, meeting individual needs and maintaining the economic health of King's Lynn. It will seek to make sure that journeys made into the town are sustainable, minimising any adverse impact on people's health and enjoyment of the town. The strategy will seek to encourage people to get into the town centre without using cars, this is by either improving facilities for walking, cycling and public transport or investigating the use of other initiatives such as Park & Ride.

4.21 Air Quality in certain parts of King's Lynn is poor due to vehicle exhaust emissions. This has led to an Air Quality Management Area being declared on Railway Road which has now been extended to the whole town centre one way system and London Road. Measurements are currently being taken to decide if this area needs to be extended further.

4.22 The Borough Council is required to produce a plan to improve the air quality in the affected areas. The KLATS must complement the air quality management plan to ensure that improvements are made. This will involve looking at a wide range of initiatives to ensure that air quality is managed in an efficient and sustainable way. Measures such as reducing town centre traffic, providing better bus services, possibly a Park & Ride scheme, encouraging walking and cycling can help to alleviate the problem.

4.23 Proposed changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy published in December 2006 name King's Lynn as a Regional Transport Node. This means that there will be a priority to "facilitate movement between major centres within the region". Particular measures will include improved access by sustainable local transport to mainline railway stations, support for investment to improve rail services to key centres and other priorities identified in the East Of England Regional Assembly's Planning Assessment for the Railway and Route Utilisation Strategies. Also promised is support for high quality inter urban bus and coach services, particularly on east west links and in other situations where rail is not available.

4.24 Current Issues

4.25 Current issues are to:

1. Seek improvements to strategic and other major transport routes (road and rail) and public transport to improve the efficiency and safety of travel, and also reduce the reliance on the private motor car for travel, between regional centres.
2. Promote King's Lynn's role as a Regional Transport Node and road, rail and bus interchange by working with service providers to raise standards in services, facilities and infrastructure and to promote integrated operations wherever possible.
3. Regulate new development avoiding locations which will result in excessive or unnecessary travel and will not promote improvements to the public transport system between villages and towns.
4. Address traffic management and transportation issues, including associated issues of air quality, within the towns themselves.
5. Respond to evolving government legislation and guidance to ensure that new development incorporates provision for appropriate community infrastructure, either on or off site as may be necessary, to support or supplement existing services and facilities enjoyed by the local community.
6. Investigate measures to secure the future of the port as an irreplaceable asset to the economy of the town and sub-region.

4.26 The KLATS will produce options for dealing with these issues drawing on the results of consultation carried out in November 2007 and using the model which has been developed for the project.

5 Cohesive & Equitable

Cohesive and Equitable

5.1 The LDF and Sustainable Community Strategy should aim to create and sustain fair, tolerant and cohesive neighbourhoods with a strong local culture and sense of community. In particular:

- Address social issues aimed at achieving safer and stronger communities targeted at the parts of the borough with higher levels of deprivation.
- Reduce anti social behaviour, fear of crime and build respect within communities
- Reduce incidences of teenage pregnancy
- Reduce the number of deaths from coronary heart disease
- Support older people to live safe, independent and fulfilling lives
- Improve mental health
- Provide equal access to services for all
- Continue to build a cohesive and integrated society

Where are we now?

5.2 We have already carried out consultation for our initial Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper and the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper during 2005/6. The results of this consultation identified recognition of the LDF's role in tackling community cohesion issues. The West Norfolk Partnership published a State of the Borough Report and held a series of workshops to identify the main priorities across the borough.

5.3 In King's Lynn you identified a need for a responsive approach to the changing population, and a need for increased access to services and opportunities.

5.4 Downham Market and Hunstanton identified similar issues including the need for affordable housing and an improvement in access to infrastructure such as healthcare and education. In Hunstanton you requested improved provision of facilities for young people, while in Downham Market you recognised the importance of creating mixed and balanced communities.

5.5 Rural areas are in significant need of affordable housing, and where second homes are an issue you told us you would seek to reduce the number of these. Importantly rural areas said that the LDF should recognise characteristics of the villages and the differing needs within the wider rural areas of the borough. Importantly you sought the retention of, and enhancement of local services and facilities, and hope we would seek to provide for local community services and facilities in key locations to increase social provision and improve health and community pride and effective, viable centres. There was also support for sustainable rural transport provision.

5.6 The issue was also raised about the need to reduce crime and the fear of crime in areas where the community has been identified as feeling uncared for and unsafe.

5.7 The Council has produced a Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the borough. This identifies the wide range of housing needs we have across West Norfolk. This is broken down into housing types, sizes and looks at predictions for need up to 2021 across the borough.

5.8 We are due to publish a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which will identify flood constraints across the borough. This will help to inform where we should be locating housing across the borough, and the most appropriate areas for other land uses.

5.9 A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is also due and this will enable us to identify brownfield sites for housing, guiding us to potential sites within our towns and villages for residential development.

5.10 Central government has proposed some changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy:

5.11 Policy KL1 - King's Lynn is to be a Key Centre for Development and Change with the following requirements:

- 5.12** * to make further provision for housing, employment and other growth to achieve urban renaissance and raise the town population to 50,000.
- 5.13** * enhance the quality of the urban environment
- 5.14** * make effective use of previously developed land
- 5.15** * provide for an improved range of services in the town
- 5.16** * support the regeneration of communities
- 5.17** * provide improved transport choices both within the urban area and between the town and its hinterland.
- 5.18** Policy SS5 - King's Lynn and West Norfolk is to be a Priority Area for Regeneration
- 5.19** Policy E1- sets a target for 5,000 new jobs within the Borough between the period 2001-2021
- 5.20** Policy H1 - sets a target of 12,000 new homes within the Borough between the period 2001-2021; discussions to extend this to 14,400 dwellings over the period 2001-2026 are currently underway

Current Issues

- 5.21** West Norfolk's population has an average age of 42 years and this makes our district one of the oldest in the country, putting it in the top 10% of local authorities. There is an expanding population and an element of this growth is due to in-migration. We also have a low average household size (2.32) which is well below the national average.
- 5.22** There is a low proportion of ethnic minorities in the borough, but this is not uncommon in Norfolk. However the area has seen an increase in migrant workers, some as a short term transient population but also a proportion of which have settled in the borough with their families. It is difficult to grasp the extent of these groups; however it is important we recognise their increasing role within our communities.
- 5.23** The deprivation score for the borough is somewhat worse than is typical for England, and within this there are extremes of both prosperous and deprived communities. While the borough's local services are good, our local amenities are extremely poor despite the influence of tourism towards the coast. The borough is also very poorly connected in terms of transport infrastructure, our connectivity score is far below that of England and the region.
- 5.24** The borough also faces issues around the aspirations and skills amongst residents within the borough. This has the effect of keeping earnings low and also contributes to our difficulty in attracting new investment into West Norfolk. We are also performing poorly on business and enterprise indicators so we must consider how we can attract new employers.

This is discussed in detail within the Aspiring and Skilled theme, however we need to bear in mind how we can make the borough more attractive in terms of housing offer, quality education and services, leisure and amenity etc to make West Norfolk a place people want to come to live and work.

5.25 West Norfolk faces significant challenges brought about as a result of inward migration including pressures on services, maximising skills of migrant workers, promoting tolerance and celebrating commonalities. By managing and responding to local diversity and changing demographic profile, West Norfolk will be better placed to retain community vibrancy at a neighbourhood level and thus provide another asset to the local vision. The aim is to retain and maximise important local attributes, such as our healthy population, low crime levels and cultural heritage.

5.26 Whilst differences within the area should be celebrated, so too should those things that different places, cultures and people have in common. Providing affordable housing, adapting to and addressing the current and future demographic balance, and better provision for the changing variety of needs within the area (from youth facilities to translation services) will be important in building an inclusive community.

5.27 This theme is based on the principle that partners should take a co-ordinated approach to implement measures that will help to 'turn the corner', reversing the current trend that sees the gap between those experiencing the best and worst conditions in West Norfolk growing wider.

Housing

5.28 The Council will investigate and agree the proportion of housing, the types and sizes, and the appropriate locations for housing development in discussion with the Borough Council's Strategic Housing department, Registered Social Landlords, the building industry and working alongside the West Norfolk Partnership bodies. We will also use the Housing Needs Study and identified local need to inform our decision making.

5.29 Should the Council seek to influence the type and size of houses to be built?

5.30 Should this approach differ depending on whether this is the development is a housing estate, or a smaller site of 5 houses or less?

5.31 Should this approach apply throughout the borough or only in certain areas?

5.32 If you do not agree with this approach how can we ensure we deliver the right mix of housing to meet local needs?

5.33 The increase in migrant workers in the area has an impact on housing needs, but also on the provision of local services and community facilities.

- 5.34** Do you think the provision of housing for migrant workers is an important issue to be considered in the LDF?
- 5.35** What are the housing needs of migrant workers?
- 5.36** Should we distinguish between the short term housing needs of many migrant workers and the needs of all residents in West Norfolk?
- 5.37** If so, how do we provide housing for these groups? Do we need to consider policies in the LDF to encourage and control multiple occupancy accommodation?
- 5.38** A key issue for West Norfolk is the need to secure inward investment for the borough. One of the obstacles to attracting new employers is thought to be our lack of high quality housing offer in King's Lynn.
- 5.39** Is there a shortage of high quality housing in King's Lynn? Does it affect the attraction of new employers?
- 5.40** If there is a need, how should we provide high quality housing to attract managerial/professional employees to the borough?
- 5.41** Should we identify particular sites or areas for high quality housing? Where could these be?
- 5.42** Should we also consider policies to protect our existing areas of high quality housing, to prevent the subdivision of both the dwelling and/or garden?
- 5.43** Should this housing be focussed on King's Lynn? And what sort of housing would attract people to live and work in the borough?
- 5.44** The borough has a significant retired population, partly as a result of in-migration to West Norfolk. This raises issues for both housing provision and the access and availability of local services and facilities.
- 5.45** How can we plan for the needs of retired people in the borough?
- 5.46** Should we allocate a specific area for retirement homes? Or should we ensure a mix of housing types, including bungalows or warden controlled housing within larger housing sites?
- 5.47** If we make specific provision for retirement homes where should this be? It is important to bear in mind the implications on residents for accessing limited service provision, particularly in rural areas. One example is to restrict the development of retirement homes along the coast where social services and healthcare is stretched.

5.48 One idea to help meet differing housing needs across the borough is to provide lifetime homes. Lifetime homes consist of a building structure which can be adapted internally to respond to life changes, as household size and requirements evolve. There is no government requirement to provide lifetime homes but given our need to respond flexibly to housing need and our sustainability principles should we consider developing this type of housing? How could these be provided? If so, where should lifetime homes be located?

Local services and amenities

5.49 The Government requires us to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural. Do you think the Council should:

5.50 Locate new housing in towns where there is already an existing range of services and facilities to provide for the additional residents. The Council would aim to work with service providers to extend their services to include the new homes. The new development could improve local educational facilities, or provide additional open space and leisure facilities as a result of developer contributions.

5.51 Or promote housing growth in the towns but also in sustainable settlements in rural areas to support existing rural services. Developer contributions and an increase in residents may assist in retaining rural services and enhancing the existing community.

5.52 Please refer to the Attractive and Sustainable themed discussion paper, particularly with regard to housing development in the towns and rural areas.

5.53 Do you agree that the Council should support our service providers, the provision of community facilities, and leisure and amenities across the borough? Where sites are required for new service provision or relocation the Council will seek to identify alternative sustainable locations, where possible within the existing community. We recognise the importance of neighbourhood facilities.

5.54 The Council will endeavour to retain the Queen Elizabeth Hospital within the borough. The hospital is a crucial service provider and we will liaise with the hospital on a future renewal program.

5.55 Is this the right approach? Could the Council do anymore to assist local services and amenities?

6 Attractive & Sustainable

An Attractive and Sustainable Area

6.1 The vision should aspire to:

1. Protect sensitive areas from the impact of development which could cause adverse harm.

2. Mitigate for the effects of pollution, flood risk, erosion and climate change.
3. Promote renewable installations and projects.
4. Protect, enhance and create areas of green space for improving wildlife and habitats, contributing to Biodiversity Action Plan targets and providing educational and recreational resources throughout the Borough by developing a Green Infrastructure Plan.
5. Protect our natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

Where are we now?

6.2 Protection of the Borough's designated sites is paramount to securing the future of our habitats and species. This came across very strongly in the public consultations.

6.3 Further creation of sites for biodiversity will not only fulfil the requirements of the Natural Environment and Rural Community Act and Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, but will also create a healthy environment linking sites together and providing opportunities for bringing wildlife and recreation into new developments.

6.4 A Green Infrastructure Master Plan will be essential to deliver on the ground biodiversity projects to mitigate for the increased growth of development in the Borough and the effect this will have on our biodiversity.

6.5 Protecting our rural areas, countryside and the unique character of the towns and villages from the effects of development and increases of traffic, tourism and pollution will be a major challenge. Therefore finding ways to not only protect and enhance our existing sites but also creating new sites for biodiversity to thrive and are accessible to the public is crucial. The Borough's Landscape Character Assessment will help to guide how development can best be sited in the landscape.

6.6 Climate change will be our biggest challenge and if we are to mitigate for the effects this will have on the Borough then measures need to be put in place to safeguard our natural and built environment now.

6.7 The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Norfolk coast is valued not only for its wildlife and landscape but also as an important visitor destination and settlement for local people. This area will inevitably be affected by the rise in sea levels and therefore the Norfolk Coast needs to be protected as far as is possible from the effects of erosion. Future development will need to be located away from high risk areas. How we as a Borough deal with the issue of coastal erosion will be addressed in the new Shoreline Management Plan.

6.8 Flood risk is also a major issue and development will need to be sited away from high risk areas. The updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will show areas of high risk in the Borough for fluvial and tidal flooding.

6.9 Ways of conserving energy, natural resources and reducing emissions will also need to be explored. This should not however be at the expense of the environment and should not adversely impact sensitive sites. To tackle such a strategic issue, close partnership working with other Local Authorities in the County and Region is needed.

6.10 Sustainable development should be at the forefront of design, both in terms of access to services reducing the need to travel by car and reducing harmful emissions and also the incorporation of energy efficiency technologies within new and existing developments.

6.11 Meeting BREEM standards and setting a zero waste and zero carbon standard and the inclusion of on site renewable generation will ensure that we are working towards achieving the Governments carbon reduction targets.

What has changed?

6.12 Central government has proposed some changes to the Regional Spatial Strategy:

6.13 Policy KL1 - King's Lynn is to be a **Key Centre for Development and Change** with the following requirements:

- to make further provision for housing, employment and other growth to achieve urban renaissance and raise the town population to 50,000.
- enhance the quality of the urban environment
- make effective use of previously developed land
- provide for an improved range of services in the town
- support the regeneration of communities
- provide improved transport choices both within the urban area and between the town and its hinterland

6.14 Policy SS5 - King's Lynn and West Norfolk is to be a **Priority Area for Regeneration**

6.15 Policy H1 - sets a target of **12,000 new homes** within the Borough between the period 2001-2021; discussions to extend this to 14,400 dwellings over the period 2001-2026 are currently underway

6.16 Regeneration of King's Lynn through the Urban Renaissance Strategy is embedded within the Council's corporate priorities. The early success of this work has encouraged the Council to resubmit a Growth Point bid to secure additional funding towards the provision of essential infrastructure to meet these demanding targets.

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- The Council has submitted a Growth Point bid which will secure additional funding for the provision of infrastructure. If the Borough achieves this status then a Green

Infrastructure Study will be carried out. This study will identify sites of nature conservation in the Borough which, if protected from development would provide important areas for biodiversity and for public amenity. This will help to safeguard our more sensitive designated sites from taking visitor pressure away by providing new sites less sensitive to impact. The study will also act as a lever to enable bids for international funding pots thereby bringing more opportunities for large scale on the ground projects which will make a significant improvement to the Boroughs environment.

- Alongside the Green Infrastructure Study will sit a Water Cycle Study which will look at the ways the Borough uses its water supply and how efficiency can be achieved.
- A supplementary guide for Planning and Climate Change which accompanies PPS 1 was released in December 2007. This in conjunction with PPS22 on Renewable Energy places further responsibility on Local Authorities to promote renewable energy installations and to achieve higher standards in sustainable design.
- A new Borough wide Landscape Character Assessment was published in March 2007. This will help planners, developers and the general public in understanding the unique landscape of the Borough and to ensure that development is sympathetic to the environment in which it sits. From this study a group consisting of all the Local Authorities in the County are looking to create consistent terminology with all Landscape Character Assessments for Norfolk to ensure that there are standard Landscape Character Types and Descriptive Units. Guidance will also be produced addressing the pressures our local landscape is facing.
- The Norfolk Wildlife Trust has completed an econet mapping project which maps opportunities for habitat creation in the Borough. This will sit alongside the Landscape Character Assessment and the Green Infrastructure Plan. Again this will promote the delivery of on the ground projects targeting areas which could be enhanced for biodiversity.
- As the policies will be updated from the previous Preferred Options paper and facing the changes of possible Growth Point Status, the Habitat Regulations Assessment (formally the Appropriate Assessment) will be updated to ensure that significant effects on our international sites are identified and mitigated for.
- The Borough Council working in conjunction with the other Local Authorities in the County and Natural England are working to produce a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document to replace the existing guidance. This will help inform planners and developers on how to incorporate biodiversity into developments in their areas.
- In partnership with all of the other Local Authorities in the County a Climate Change Task Force has been formed which will look at compiling a Climate Change Strategy for the County. This will bring greater public awareness and understanding to the issue of

climate change and help to ascertain what we need to be doing collectively to address the issue of climate change.

- The Council is in the process of preparing an Environmental Statement which will then lead on into an Environmental Strategy for the Council.
- The Brecks Partnership have recently submitted a bid to the Leader Project (for land based industries and sustainable projects). If this bid is successful then around £6,000 PA will be injected into the Rural Economy of the Brecks, of which 5% lies in the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. This offers opportunities for project work in that part of the Borough.

Current Issues

Increased Growth

6.17 There are a number of locational options that may be considered as the starting point in future housing provision:

6.18 Broad spread of housing provision across the Borough in both developed and rural areas

6.19 Pros:

- "Windfall" benefit for some individuals and/or developers
- May provide early release of land in certain areas
- May improve choice in certain areas

6.20 Cons:

- Major issues concerning sustainability contrary to national policy:
 - Fails to protect the open countryside for the benefit of all, encourages urban sprawl and piecemeal loss of "greenfield" land and natural resources
 - Conflict with other, wider policies protecting flood risk, diversity, heritage and wildlife etc., leading to uncertainty and confusion for landowners, developers and neighbours alike
 - Inadequate public transport and travel distances to work and services beyond comfortable walking and/or cycling increases dependency upon travel by private car with consequent increase in traffic movements, congestion, pollution and demand on fossil fuels
- Diverts investment away from the Regional Spatial Strategy's aspirations for King's Lynn as a:
 - Key Centre for Change and Development, and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration

- Similarly, does not support the Council's Urban Development Strategy
- Some villages may be "swamped" with pressure for new housing adversely affecting the adequacy of existing services and any potential for improvement
- Difficult to phase and ensure provision of adequate services, infrastructure and affordable housing in areas of identified local need

6.21 All development constrained within the existing towns of King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton

6.22 Pros:

- Protects the open countryside by restraining "greenfield" development
- Optimises re-use of previously developed land
- Enables better integration with existing and proposed services, facilities and places of employment etc.
- Potential to integrate with and improve public transport, footpaths and cycleways

6.23 Cons:

- Insufficient capacity to meet overall need while also taking into account restrictions of flood risk, and competing land-use needs of local services and local economy etc.
- Diverts investment away from the Regional Spatial Strategy's aspirations for King's Lynn as a:
 - Key Centre for Change and Development, and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration
- Takes no account of affordable housing provision for identified local need
- Takes no account of existing services and facilities within villages
- Residents of Hunstanton and the villages continue to rely on increasing levels of commuting to workplaces etc. and servicing of local facilities by road traffic with associated increases in traffic movements, congestion, pollution and demand upon fossil fuels

6.24 Concentrate development in King's Lynn and Downham Market with lesser housing provision in Hunstanton and larger villages.

6.25 Pros:

- Protects the open countryside by restraining "greenfield" development
- Optimises re-use of previously developed land

- Enables better integration with existing and proposed services, facilities and places of employment etc.
- Potential to integrate with and improve public transport, footpaths and cycleways
- Acknowledges contribution made by existing local services and facilities

6.26 Cons:

- Unlikely to provide sufficient capacity to meet overall need while also taking into account restrictions of flood risk, and competing land-use needs of local services and local economy etc. without conflicting with sustainability issues
- Diverts investment away from the Regional Spatial Strategy's aspirations for King's Lynn as a:
 - Key Centre for Change and Development, and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration
- Affordable housing provision for identified local need could be provided in the larger villages but there are issues of retention of stock and the village location may not meet the identified demand
- Residents of Hunstanton and the villages continue to rely on increasing levels of commuting to workplaces etc. and servicing of local facilities by road traffic with associated increases in traffic movements, congestion, pollution and demand upon fossil fuels
- Some villages may be "swamped" with pressure for new housing adversely affecting the adequacy of existing services and any potential for improvement

6.27 Concentrate development in and around both King's Lynn and Downham Market

6.28 Pros:

- Could generally support the Regional Spatial Strategy aspirations of King's Lynn as a
 - "Key Centre for Change and Development", and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration
- Supports the Council's Urban Development Strategy
- Encourages re-use of previously developed land
- Helps to protect the open countryside while providing for managed release of "greenfield" land
- Can enable better integration with existing services, facilities and places of employment etc.
- Potential to integrate with and improve public transport, footpaths and cycleways

6.29 Cons:

- Downham Market has seen considerable expansion in recent years with some improvement to local services and facilities but these improvements are unlikely to be sufficient to support further expansion. Further expansion may swamp the level of service provision in the town.
- Extensive development in Downham Market will divert investment away from the Regional Spatial Strategy's aspirations for King's Lynn as a:
 - Key Centre for Change and Development, and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration
- Takes no account of affordable housing provision for identified local need
- Takes no account of existing services and facilities within villages
- Residents of Hunstanton and the villages continue to rely on increasing levels of commuting to workplaces etc. and servicing of local facilities by road traffic with associated increases in traffic movements, congestion, pollution and demand upon fossil fuels

6.30 Concentrate development in and around King's Lynn with lesser housing provision in Downham Market. In villages having a basic level of local services and facilities:

- **encourage re-use of brownfield sites while safeguarding local services, facilities and employment sites, and**
- **where the population is less than 3,000 support in principle a rural exception policy enabling provision of affordable housing in response to identified local need outside but near to the development boundary.**

6.31 Pros:

- Supports the Regional Spatial Strategy aspirations of King's Lynn as a
 - "Key Centre for Change and Development", and as a
 - Priority Area for Regeneration
- Supports the Council's Urban Development Strategy
- Encourages re-use of previously developed land
- Enables Downham Market to consolidate while developing local services
- Helps to protect the open countryside while providing for managed release of "greenfield" land
- Can enable better integration with existing services, facilities and places of employment etc.
- Potential to integrate with and improve public transport, footpaths and cycleways
- Acknowledges the contribution made by local services and facilities in villages and seeks to protect employment sites from loss to further housing
- Accommodates affordable housing where there is identified local need

6.32 Cons:

- Some managed loss of “greenfield” land particularly around King’s Lynn
- Not all “brownfield” sites in King’s Lynn may be immediately available leading to earlier release of some “greenfield” land and diverting early investment from re-generation of the town
- An increased population concentrated in King’s Lynn may require additional open land for sport and recreation outside of the town
- Efforts to safeguard existing employment sites in villages cannot guarantee economic security

6.33 N.B. Previously Fenland DC has discouraged consideration of further housing development to the south east of Wisbech as that conflicted with it's own strategy to guide new housing west of the town. However, there are now indications that strategy is experiencing difficulties managing the flood risk and discussion between the two Authorities may need to recommence

6.34 The locational options identify a number, if not all of the problems associated with unrestrained housing development within the villages. These range from one extreme of housing built in areas where there is no reasonable access to local services, community facilities or public transport; at the other extreme existing services and indeed the very character that makes villages attractive can be seriously affected by an inappropriate influx of new housing. The need is to balance demand against the future sustainability of local services, community facilities and employment opportunities.

6.35 National policies are in place to ensure new housing development incorporates a proportion of “affordable housing” usually housing for rent managed by Housing Associations; this policy applies to village development as well as development in towns. The initial burden of providing affordable housing rests with the developer and costs may be prohibitive on smaller schemes. There may be instances of identified local need where it is appropriate to support the provision of affordable housing on sites that would not otherwise be acceptable for market housing.

6.36 **In the open countryside and in villages and hamlets lacking reasonable access to local services, community facilities or public transport, new housing should not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances e.g. replacement of an existing dwelling, or where there is a key critical need associated with existing employment, or to maintain a historically or visually important building in productive occupation where there is no viable alternative option.**

6.37 Pros:

- Allows replacement of existing dwellings
- Provides for key workers

- Enables conversion of important buildings where there is no viable alternative economic use
- Encourages continued productive use of sites without exacerbating existing problems associated with absence of reasonable access to local services, community facilities or public transport

6.38 Cons:

- Does not improve the availability of local services, community facilities or public transport

6.39 In villages benefiting with local services, community facilities and public transport, housing provision on previously developed land will be considered where it can be established that the scale and nature of the housing proposed will not prejudice the future sustainability of local services and community facilities, and the proposal does not remove previously productive employment sites without first demonstrating the absence of a market demand

6.40 Pros:

- Allows continuing renewal of housing stock within villages best suited to accommodate new housing and housing at higher densities
- Seeks to protect local employment sites
- Protects greenfield sites adjoining the developed areas

6.41 Cons:

- Does not improve the availability of local services, community facilities or public transport
- Does not guarantee the retention of local employment opportunities

6.42 In villages of less than 3,000 population but benefiting with local services, community facilities and public transport, consideration will be given in instances of identified local need to the provision of affordable housing on small greenfield sites immediately adjoining or very close to developed areas

6.43 Pros:

- Allows for the provision of affordable housing in areas which would otherwise be unable to serve local need

6.44 Cons:

- Housing is excluded from “right-to-buy” provisions
- Occupation must be limited to local residents or those who have an existing family or employment connection

Impact of growth on natural resources

6.45 The expected level of growth in the Borough is such that there will be huge impacts on our landscape and wildlife.

6.46 Sensitive habitats and species could be at risk from becoming isolated in the wider landscape and in time species which do not have a healthy ecosystem will decline and eventually be lost.

6.47 If we are to see an increase in population, development and traffic then sensitive areas such as our designated sites, the Wash and the AONB will need to be protected, and opportunities for linking areas of green spaces within development should be sought.

6.48 The planning system already protects internationally and nationally designated sites of nature conservation. These sites being Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's), Special Protected Areas (SPA's), Sites of Special Scientific Interest, (SSSI's) and National Nature Reserves (NNR's). The Borough's Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulation Assessment will ensure that issues will be identified which may have an effect on these sites and where possible avoided completely or mitigated for.

6.49 Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act also places responsibility on Local Authorities to protect designated and local areas of nature conservation.

6.50 However it is our local sites and County Wildlife Sites (CWS) which will suffer the immediate consequences of increased development. A Green Infrastructure Plan will ensure that more local sites can be created, enhanced and protected.

6.51 Brownfield land in the Borough is most at risk from development, however some brownfield sites are more diverse in terms of their biodiversity than agricultural greenfield space which in some cases have no biodiversity value. However the Borough does have some of the best agricultural land in the Country and protection of this resource is crucial especially in light of changes in the agricultural sector. There is a chance that if the Borough develops a sizable amount of brownfield land then when this runs at a premium some greenfield land may be lost to development.

6.52 Growth Point Status may bring with it very favourable opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement both within development areas and in the wider countryside. Developers should be encouraged to see the need for attractive green space which is not simply large areas of grass but could be areas created for biodiversity value such as wetland areas, heaths and woodlands. These could be secured through Section 106 Agreements and managed by local communities, farmers the land owners or organisations such as Natural England and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust could take an active role.

6.53 By creating a healthy ecological network we will not only safeguard our more fragile species and habitats from disturbance but also provide more areas for quiet recreation, benefiting local people and visitors to the area.

Option ENV 1

6.54 As many of our designated sites and much of the tourism industry is based around the unique natural quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, blanket protection will be applied to the AONB. No further development will take place here to ensure that the levels of growth in the Borough do not impact on the quality of the designation. Only in very exceptional circumstances where there is a real public need and benefit should development take place and this will need to include an assessment and methods of mitigation.

Option ENV 2

6.55 An area of accessible green space close to the town will be protected from development and enhanced to offset for the loss of small natural areas lost to development. This area will provide opportunities for quiet recreation, education and help to meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets. This area will be a flagship project in the Green Infrastructure study and will receive funding from international funding bodies. The future management of such a site will be dependant on a variety of organisations taking an interest including the Borough, private landowners, and organisations such as the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Internal Drainage Board, Environment Agency and the County Council.

Option ENV 3

6.56 Creation of several small scale accessible green spaces will be protected from development and enhanced to offset for the loss of small natural areas lost to development. These areas will provide opportunities for quiet recreation, education and help to meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets. The future management of such a site will be dependant on a variety of organisations taking an interest including the Borough, private landowners, and organisations such as the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Natural England, the Internal Drainage Board, Environment Agency and the County Council.

Option ENV 4

6.57 All new development will have land set aside for green space or ecological networks. Developer funded open space provision can help to offset for the loss of local areas of biodiversity. This will be secured through Section 106 agreements and will be the responsibility of the developer to ensure management of the sites is maintained in the long term.

Option ENV 5

6.58 Developers will be encouraged under PPS9 and the NERC act to safeguard and enhance areas for biodiversity within new development, however no specific areas in the Borough will be safeguarded from development in the Local Development Framework.

Flood Risk, Coastal Erosion and Climate Change

6.59 It is a certainty that the climate is changing and to adapt to this there will need to be changes made in the way in which some areas are managed, where development can be better sited and how we can protect more vulnerable areas and species.

6.60 Land will be lost to the sea due to increased storm surges, sea levels and more extreme weather conditions. The risk of flooding and droughts will increase and sensitive species and habitats will be disturbed by the changes in temperature and more intensive visitor pressure on designated areas such as the North Norfolk Coast as the climate becomes warmer.

6.61 As Hunstanton Cliffs are important in terms of their geology, biodiversity and as a striking landmark to Norfolk it is vital that they are monitored as part of the Shoreline Management Plan.

6.62 The pressures facing the agricultural industry in the Borough in light of the changes to the climate will cause serious issues to local farmers and landowners. Norfolk land has been drained for hundreds of years and this has resulted in more effective land management and reduced risk of fluvial flooding. Working together with the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board will be paramount in addressing flood risk.

6.63 The Norfolk landscape will change as certain species will not be able to withstand the wetter winters, warmer summers and extreme floods and droughts. Therefore new species could emerge in time and will need protection in some circumstances and removal possibly in others.

6.64 Localised flooding events will be more frequent and extreme and this will impact on the local communities, particularly if the community is in a more remote location and there is limited infrastructure and access, in particular the settlement of Welney. In areas where localised flooding prohibits residents from travelling into and out of the settlement then further development could be restricted.

6.65 There are opportunities however if we can adapt to the changes. A warmer climate will bring more tourists and money into the Borough. Farmers can diversify into other crops which will give the industry more choices. The emerging Shoreline Management Plans

(SMP's) will give Local Authorities the opportunity to address and plan for long term issues associated with climate change. Also new habitats will be created where the Environment Agency will have to compensate for any loss due to changes in coastal management.

Option ENV 6

6.66 Through the Shoreline Management Plan aim to move towards areas of 'naturally functioning coastline'. This will impact on some homeowners and on our designated sites therefore compensatory measures will need to be put in place.

Option ENV 7

6.67 Through the Shoreline Management Plan move towards short to medium term flood defence including 'holding the existing line'. As the extent to which the coast line will be affected is not known, measures can be taken to adapt until there is a clearer picture of what needs to be done. Consideration when siting development in high risk areas of flooding will be needed to ensure that properties will not be affected by changes in the longer term.

Option ENV 8

6.68 Through the Shoreline Management Plan move towards long term flood defence measures. This would include protection of areas needed for compensatory habitat and no development in areas of high fluvial and tidal flood risk. In exceptional circumstances where development is proposed in areas prone to flooding, the sequential test will need to be applied.

Growth of Renewables Industry

6.69 Government targets to generate 20% of our electricity by renewable sources by 2020 as well as changes in the agricultural market have led to an increase in renewable applications.

6.70 Mixed opinions on the efficiency and siting of renewable installations, as well as possible impacts on wildlife and visual intrusion means that a clear and consistent approach needs to be formulated to ensure fair and reasoned determinations of applications.

6.71 The Department of Trade and Industry determine any application over the 50MW threshold, anything under is determined by the local planning authority.

6.72 Renewable energy developments should be supported in principle providing the scale, siting or cumulative effect does not adversely affect the environmental, social and economic benefits.

6.73 Where medium to large scale wind farms are permitted, post condition monitoring should be put in place to ensure that serious adverse effects are recorded and rectified. By doing this where permission has been granted any detrimental effects can be recorded and referred to for future applications. This is soon to be standard practice driven by Natural England.

6.74 A study has been completed into the landscape impacts of wind farm developments and this will help to inform decision makers on how best to incorporate renewable energy facilities in the future.

Option ENV 9

6.75 All new developments in the Borough should provide at least 20% of predicted energy requirements from on site renewable energy. Also developers should demonstrate that there are no added net carbon dioxide emissions over the life cycle of the developments operation and that BREEM standards are met.

Option ENV 10

6.76 Developers will be encouraged to provide renewable energy or efficiency devices in new developments, however specific targets will not be imposed on developers.

7 Collaboration & Leadership