

# **CORE STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## What is the Preferred Options Paper?

The purpose of the 'Preferred Options' stage is for the Council to seek the views of the community and stakeholders on the proposals it is recommending for the LDF Core Strategy. The aim is to encourage public involvement before decisions are made about the content of the final document which will be submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2007.

The Preferred Options Paper for the future development of the Borough is divided into four main themes. The first is the issues, needs, resources and constraints facing the Borough. The second element is the spatial vision, the objectives and strategies for the Borough. This includes strategies for each town and for the rural area. The document then outlines preferred policy options for the Borough, including development control policies. **This is where we need your comments and views.** Finally the key diagram is included, along with the scope and structure of the submission document, information on the Regional Spatial Strategy and links to other strategies.

A Sustainability Appraisal of the preferred options is available as a separate document.

## Your comments on this document

We welcome your comments on this document, and particularly on the preferred options put forward. You must put comments in writing and send them by post, fax or email so that we receive them no later than 12 noon on 20 November 2006.

We shall consider all comments received and, where we can, make changes to the document as a result. There is also the opportunity for objectors to make their views known at an Examination run by an independent Inspector. Once the Inspector issues his binding report we will be able to publish the document in its final form, towards June 2008.

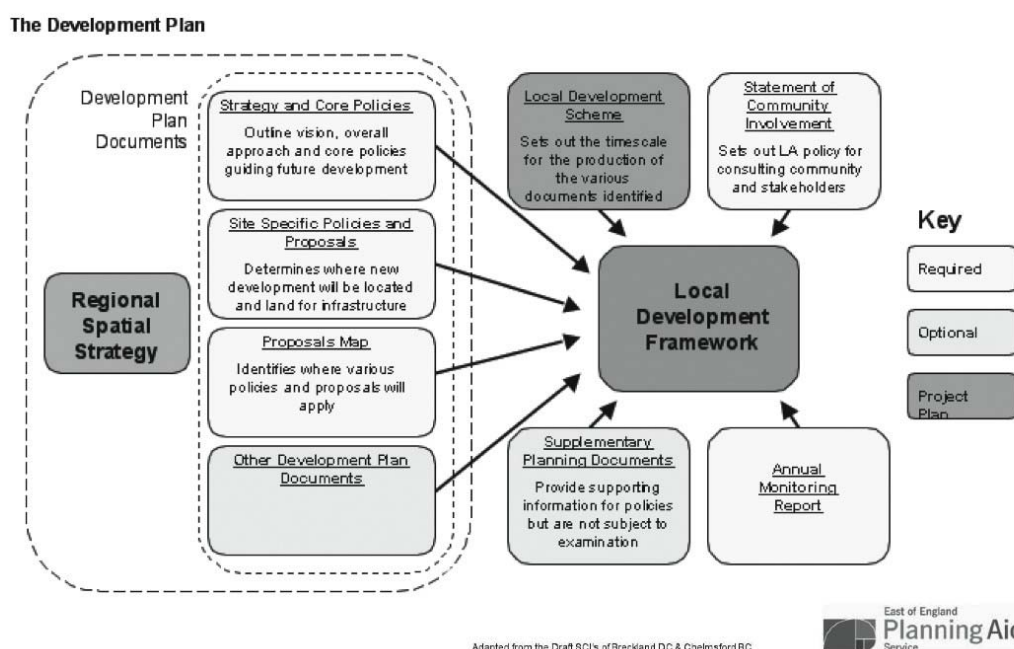
## The Local Development Framework

The Borough Council is replacing the Local Plan with a new type of plan, known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will guide the use of land and new development throughout the Borough to 2021. It is being prepared under new Government legislation for development plans (the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). The LDF will replace the Local Plan which was adopted in November 1998. The new LDF system is

described in more detail in a separate document entitled 'The Local Development Scheme' which can be viewed on the Council's website.

# The Core Strategy Development Document

## The Local Development Framework (LDF) “Folder”



Whereas the Local Plan was a single document, the LDF will be made up of a number of separate Local Development Documents (**the Core Strategy Development Plan Document is the LDF’s key document**). It will set out the spatial vision, objectives, policies and a monitoring and implementation framework for King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. It is guided by sustainable development principles and linked to the sustainable communities agenda. It provides the framework for the broad location of new housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development and for policies which will regulate the development and use of land in West Norfolk.

The core strategy will also set out:

- The Framework’s role in delivering the long-term vision for the area, complementing the Council’s Community Strategy;
- Clear objectives for the development and improvement of the physical environment;
- A strategy for delivering these objectives.

The Core Strategy includes the following key areas:

- **Strategic development policies;**
- **Visions for King’s Lynn, Downham Market, Hunstanton and the rural areas;**
- **Development control policies which will apply across West Norfolk.**

The Core Strategy has to be in conformity with the East of England Regional Plan. This is summarised in Schedule 1. The Draft Plan was subject to an Examination in Public between November 2005 and March 2006. The panel's report was published in June 2006. Proposed changes are likely to be published in November 2006. The Core Strategy also has to take account of the Council's Community Strategy and many other local, County and Regional Strategies. The strategy context is set out in Schedule 2.

People may respond to the options proposed and bring forward alternative proposals, providing they meet the development plan document's objectives and are compatible with its spatial vision and spatial objectives. A formal sustainability appraisal report accompanies this preferred options document. Comments can be made on that report in the context of any representations submitted on the preferred options document.

## **Community Consultation**

Stakeholder and community involvement is a key requirement of the new planning system. Details of how the community and stakeholders have been involved in the preparation of this Local Development Document are contained in a separate document - the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This can be viewed on the Council's website.

Significant consultation work was carried out between December 2000 and March 2001. This included publicity and a series of events, including parish level workshops. The issues identified at that time are still largely relevant today and the results of that consultation were built on. In July 2005 the Council carried out widespread consultation with statutory bodies, local organisations and groups and individual citizens on the issues which the initial LDF should address and the opportunities for dealing with them. It published an 'Issues and Options Report' to stimulate discussion and debate. The comments have been considered and taken into account in this next stage of preparing this document - 'Preferred Options'.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Document identified 3 spatial options. These options explored different ways of locating and accommodating future development. These were:

- **Option 1: Concentrated Strategy.** A concentrated development strategy, where King's Lynn would be developed as a sub-regional centre.
- **Option 2: Town Growth Strategy.** King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton would be areas for major growth.
- **Option 3: Geographic Spread.** Development would be more evenly distributed across the Borough.

There was a clear preference in the public consultation for Option 1.

## **2 ISSUES, NEEDS, RESOURCES & CONSTRAINTS**

### **The West Norfolk Context**

The Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is about 100 miles north of London and stretches from the north Norfolk coast, along the eastern side of The Wash, through the Marshland, Fens and Brecks to the borders of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.

The Borough covers an area of some 550 square miles (142,880 hectares). It is the sixth largest district council by area in England.

The main centre is King's Lynn, though the Borough also includes the market town of Downham Market and the coastal resort of Hunstanton. The Borough also has over 100 rural villages of varying sizes.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk's main transport routes include the A47 trunk road; three principal roads (A10, A17 and A134); a direct, electrified rail service to London and Cambridge; an extensive system of inland navigable waterways; and sea links to northern and eastern Europe. King's Lynn lies some forty miles from other regional centres in Cambridge, Norwich and Peterborough.

The European context is emphasised by the inclusion of the A47 trunk road, the London-King's Lynn railway, and the port of King's Lynn in the Trans European Network. Major investments in transport infrastructure have changed (and are changing) the Borough's relative geographical position and the free-standing nature of the town of King's Lynn enables it to retain a regional function within the emerging East of England Plan.

King's Lynn is the base for a wide range of national and international companies; an important shopping, tourism, commercial and educational centre; a regional centre for sports and recreation; and, reflecting its historic built heritage, the home of nationally respected music and arts festivals.

The main attractions of the area are the surrounding coast and countryside as well as its historic character. Inappropriate development would damage these qualities.

## **ISSUES AND NEEDS**

### **Sustainable Development**

The concept of sustainable development was defined in 1987 by the World Commission on the Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) as:

*“...development which meets the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and aspirations.”*

The key issues for addressing sustainability in the Local Development Framework are:

- To mitigate against and adapt to climate change, realising the need to conserve non-renewable resources and through energy efficiency.
- To achieve a sustainable relationship between jobs, homes and services at the local level. This requires a sequential approach to the location of development which focuses development within existing urban centres on previously developed sites and buildings and where there is good public transport accessibility. The LDF should optimise the use for development of vacant urban land and reclaim and develop derelict or contaminated land. The next stage in the sequential approach is to develop extensions to existing urban areas, and finally other locations where there is good accessibility to public transport, or where proposed development can contribute to improving public transport access;
- To conserve the Borough’s environment, quality of life, local character, biodiversity, agricultural, recreational and natural resource value.

There are certain principles that need to be taken into account in achieving and pursuing Sustainable Development:

- Decisions should be based upon the most up to date scientific information and research;
- Where there is uncertainty and potentially serious risks exist to the environment, the **‘precautionary principle’** and approach to action to alleviate any risks may be necessary;
- Environmental impacts must be considered, particularly where resources are non-renewable or effects may be irreversible;
- Any cost implications of any actions which are adverse to either the environment, economy or well being of the Borough’s population will be directed to the people responsible by establishing the **‘polluter pays principle’**.

Overall, sustainable development does not mean the preservation of the environment at all costs; nor does it mean that development must always have priority because of its importance for wealth and job creation.

## **Renewable Energy**

The threats of climate change and rising sea levels coupled with a growing population means that sustainable ways of living need to be sought and

encouraged through the planning system in order to protect our valuable and fragile environment.

Renewable energy is energy obtained from sources that are essentially inexhaustible, unlike, for example, the fossil fuels, of which there is a finite supply.

More can be done to address the issue of renewable energy in West Norfolk. Appropriate measures should be integrated into new developments but not at the expense of the visual quality of the landscape.

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.

## **Population and Housing**

In mid 2004, the population of King's Lynn & West Norfolk was estimated to be 139,100 (Source: West Norfolk Knowledge) with an average increase of 0.9% per annum, a growth rate which is expected to continue. This population increase brings with it pressures and challenges on the resources of the Borough to provide the necessary infrastructure to support the growing population.

The 1991 Census of Population indicated that there were 57,500 dwellings in the Borough. By 2001 this had increased to approximately 60,000 and further development is planned in the coming years to house the rising population. The major urban area is King's Lynn with approximately 16,000 dwellings. The remainder of the population is located in the towns of Hunstanton and Downham Market and the rural areas.

In line with national trends, West Norfolk's population is ageing and this is set to continue. The working age population will decrease as people born between 1945 and 1970 retire and are replaced by smaller numbers of people born since the mid 1970's.

Panel changes recommended to the East of England Plan state that King's Lynn and West Norfolk must provide for a net increase of **12,000** dwellings from 2001-2021. This equates to an annual house-building rate of 600 dwellings per annum.

In line with Government guidance for housing as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3), Llewellyn Davies Yeang, in association with Atisreal, were commissioned to produce a study to estimate the potential for providing new homes in the towns and the key service centres of King's Lynn and West Norfolk over the period 2001 to 2021.



A key thrust of current planning policy is that in meeting housing requirements, priority must be given to the re-use of previously developed land. The Government has set a national target: 60% of all new housing should be provided on previously developed-land and through conversions of existing buildings. The study primarily focused on the availability of previously developed land.

The study estimated that the potential to build on previously developed land within the towns and the key service centres amounted to approximately **10,210** dwellings, with 4,820 units available in King's Lynn. This means that a minimum requirement of **1,800** dwellings **may** need to be allocated on greenfield sites (undeveloped land) to meet the housing requirement to 2021. The amount of housing land available will be monitored and updated. Land will be allocated for development in the most sustainable locations, making use of brownfield sites (previously developed land). Greenfield sites will only be allocated where there are insufficient brownfield sites or potential brownfield sites are located in a significantly less sustainable location.

### **Affordable Housing**

There is a significant and quantifiable lack of affordable housing within West Norfolk. New development may well help reduce the need but the scale of the problem is significant as demand outstrips supply. The provision of affordable housing in the Borough needs to be addressed. The LDF should aim to deliver an increased number of affordable houses across West Norfolk, but the affordable housing should be provided in a way that does not unbalance the socio-economic make-up of localities and communities.

Due to the good transport links to London and Cambridge, people from those areas are choosing to live in West Norfolk, where the house prices are significantly lower, and commute to work. This has led to local people being unable to afford to buy houses in the area. There are also concentrations of second and holiday homes in parts of West Norfolk, which limits the scope for some groups such as first time buyers, young families and single professionals to purchase houses in the Borough. House prices in areas where prices are driven beyond the reach of local people due to second homes are very high and many of the young people who want to remain in the area are unable to afford property. People retiring and buying homes in villages are also reflected in the age structure of the population. All of these issues impact on the communities of the villages affected.

The 2002 Housing Needs Study showed that some parishes (Emneth and Sandringham) had up to 11% of all households living in unsuitable housing. This compared with South Wootton where only 5% of all its households were living in unsuitable housing. Of all the households living in unsuitable housing, 31% were living in King's Lynn.

A wider choice and a better mix in size, type and location of housing is required to meet the range of needs of the local population. New development

which is well designed should be promoted to retain and enhance the character of the Borough and create high-quality living environments.

## **Economic Regeneration**

In 2001 total employment in the Borough comprised 58,000 jobs; tourism supports 19% of jobs (8% supported by staying visits, 11% by day trips).

Unemployment in King's Lynn & West Norfolk is low: about 2%, similar to the regional rate but lower than the national rate.

West Norfolk is over-represented in low growth sectors; 24% of jobs are in declining sectors (traditional manufacturing and land-based activities), often with low wages, compared to regional wage levels.

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 low and there are significant numbers who have no qualifications at all. Support is needed to ensure more engagement and higher attainment in learning is reached, focusing on the Borough's schools, colleges and adult education facilities.

Like sustainable development, economic regeneration issues tend to cut across several aspects of the Local Development Framework. The following issues have been identified and these accord with the various overarching economic strategies:

- Need to recognise that the economy will grow from its strengths and not to set non-achievable goals. The strengths are in manufacturing – West Norfolk does not have the requirements for significant office based employment, and knowledge based/hi tech businesses, but needs to develop them.
- Lack of employment land – a borough wide issue but particularly acute in King's Lynn and Hunstanton. A long term provision of sites is needed which will meet the requirements of business.
- Need to be able to provide a diverse range of employment related buildings which need to reflect both a mix of employment uses and the types and size of operation.
- Need for high quality business park type environments which have lower densities, higher landscape content and contain ancillary facilities and services. The location of such sites and types of uses permitted will be critical if this priority is to be met.
- Need to accommodate employment in rural areas recognising that not all employment should be or can be accommodated in the towns; and that existing rurally located businesses need to be able to accommodate growth. The precedent being to facilitate and accommodate this growth rather than seek to relocate to the towns.
- Need to accommodate employment uses in King's Lynn town centre other than just small scale office and retail, particularly uses in the

leisure and cultural sectors. This will be critical to the aspiration for King's Lynn to become a quality visitor destination.

- Need to promote and make provision for alternatives to the car for personal use within the urban areas. However the policies need to recognise that the car may be the only realistic mode of transport for people in the rural areas so provision needs to be made in the towns to accommodate these – Park and Ride and strategically sited car parks.
- Road transport is the preferred mode for business and for many currently the only realistic mode. A shift to alternative modes will be longer term and may require significant infrastructural provision – rail freight yards, port facilities, rolling stock, etc which needs to be recognised in any policy provision.
- Need for higher skilled/higher paid employment opportunities – this will not be delivered directly by a spatial plan but the LDF can help by ensuring provision of appropriate land and premises and the appropriate infrastructure, facilities, housing, etc that makes the area an attractive one to invest in.
- Improvement to and enhancement of the public realm – public spaces, quality of the buildings and street environment, public art.
- Housing – amounts of housing in particular encouraging housing in town centres through new build and conversion; broad range of types and size of housing where not all allocations are at higher densities; affordable and key worker housing in towns but also rural areas (particularly affordable housing).
- Retention of facilities in villages is key to both the sustainability and vitality of rural communities but also as part of the tourist/visitor product.
- Education and community facilities – provision of the education campus as part of the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area but also the need to ensure that the number and location of 'community facilities' are appropriate for the scale of development.
- King's Lynn – to function as a regional centre and main employment centre the provision of land and facilities needs to match the ambitions to grow the economy.
- Downham Market – to complete its regeneration and strengthen the role of its town centre.
- Hunstanton – need to find ways of protecting its role as a primary seaside destination but also to be able to strengthen its economic viability.

## **Transport**

There are substantial rural areas in West Norfolk which are isolated or some distance from local amenities and services and are therefore reliant on cars. The Norfolk Local Transport Plan identifies 11 geographical areas of concern for accessibility. Three of these areas include parts of the Borough. Due to the dispersed nature of settlements, there is difficulty in providing viable bus services in some places.

Poor public transport infrastructure is likely to constrain new development in significant areas of the Borough. High car ownership and lack of alternative, reliable, viable transport solutions (including freight) have caused congestion problems notably in and around King's Lynn, as well as the coastal routes during busy seasonal periods. Historic environments will constrain the ability to accommodate transport solutions such as new roads and car parks.

There is a need to improve public transport, create and improve cycle paths and control speed limits. For many residents the car is an essential means of travel. Adequate provision needs to be made in the towns for convenient car parking.

Car dependence should be reduced, wherever possible, by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenities, and by planning for mixed use. Day to day facilities should be located in local centres so that they are accessible by walking and cycling. Footpaths and roads need to be maintained, avoiding over-urbanisation of rural routes. More sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight should be promoted.

The needs of disabled people must be taken into account in the implementation of traffic management schemes, and in the design of individual developments. Solutions on how best to reduce crime and the fear of crime and to seek, by the design and layout of developments and areas, to secure community and road safety are required.

### **Sports, Recreation and Open Space**

Llewellyn Davies Yeang produced a Borough wide assessment on sport, recreation and open space issues. This study is both recent (published April 2006) and wide ranging including consultation both with Parish Councils and selected groups of young people, and an assessment of recent MORI research polls.

The overall perceptions expressed by residents were:

- People across the Borough appear reasonably happy with the current levels of provision
- Sports and leisure have a relatively low priority, especially when compared to other issues e.g. crime, education, etc.
- A significant amount of the population do not use the facilities available
- Access to facilities is difficult from rural areas (for much of the Borough)
- Children's play space is insufficient and often poorly maintained

There is a significant shortage of children's play space within the Borough overall. If this shortfall were to be redressed a further 106 ha of play area would need to be provided on small sites at a local level – over 1,000 Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play, or more than 10,000 Local Areas of Play. Clearly, such a proposition would introduce insurmountable problems including the identification of appropriate sites, acquisition and construction

costs, on-going maintenance costs and the inability of many small villages and hamlets to support such provision. However small scale improvements can be made by the Council and developers as opportunities arise.

There were no significant issues identified with other general open space, allotments, churchyards, cemeteries, nature reserves, outdoor and indoor sports/recreation facilities, or community town or village halls.

## **Protecting the Natural and Built Environment**

A healthy environment is a key factor in achieving a high quality of life. Therefore protection and enhancement of the Borough's landscape features, wildlife habitats, historic heritage, built form, and open space is a major concern. Many of the Borough's villages have a distinctive character, which needs to be protected from poor quality development.

As a result of **flood risk, coastal erosion and climate change** in some places land will be lost to the sea. The risk of droughts could be higher and rates of evaporation could increase over most of the UK (due to higher air temperatures). People may demand more water as a result, putting pressure on water resources. The risk of flooding might also increase. The planning system should avoid increases in the number of homes at risk of river or tidal flood hazards and protect historic environments and lowland ecosystems from inundation.

The Norfolk coastline is primarily composed of glacial deposits overlying chalk bedrock and is susceptible to erosion and flooding due to enhanced wave action from the North Sea. A history of storm surges along the east coast, coupled with increasing sea levels has created a coastline both dynamic and volatile to change.

West Norfolk has over 40km of coastline, most of which is low-lying. This coastline is a honey-pot for tourist activity, attracted by the naturalness and beauty of the area as a heritage coastline and for its conservation interests.

The present management of the coastline is established in the North Norfolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) (Sediment Sub cell 3A Snettisham Scalp to Sheringham). The current approach is to 'Hold the Existing Line' which basically means to retain the status quo, through either annual recycling and importing of beach material or continuous maintenance and reconstruction of existing defences. Predictions of future sea level rise and the pressures to adapt to climate change mean retention of this existing line is likely to be unsustainable in the long term. In some cases 'retreating the existing line' is already a stated medium-long term option. The SMP is pending a review in Winter 2006/07.

Government has recognised the need to develop a more strategic and integrated approach to managing coastal flooding and erosion risk management. 'Making Space for Water' is a 20 year Government strategy

that seeks to implement a more holistic approach to managing coastal erosion and flood risk, to reduce the threat to people and their property, and to deliver the greatest environmental, social and economic benefits in achieving the wider objectives of sustainable development.

**Pressure on the landscape** to accommodate new development is a constraint. A Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out in relation to wind turbine development. There are issues of capacity of the landscape to accommodate proposed levels of development, however further and more detailed landscape assessment is required. A further study into the detailed classification of landscape character in West Norfolk is ongoing and the result of this will inform the policy approach in the LDF.

**Biodiversity** influences all aspects of the quality of our lives, including the economy. From it we obtain fuel, medicine, cosmetics and construction materials. Shorelines, floodplains and wetlands help alleviate the effects of storms and floods and act as natural filters for pollutants, improving water quality. Biodiversity also provides and enhances the places where we live, providing exercise, recreation and relaxation. Therefore it is vital that biodiversity is protected and enhanced from an international through to local level. In 2001 Biodiversity workshops were held across the Borough, with the aim of promoting biodiversity and ways to sustain it.

In West Norfolk the towns, villages, countryside and coast of the area contain a wealth of habitats. Their importance is reflected in the fact that the Borough contains parts of the North Norfolk Coast, the East Anglian Plains, Fenland and the Brecks, all areas identified by English Nature as nationally important ecological areas. These habitats include salt marsh and coastal margins; estuaries; woodland; rivers; commons; brecks and heathland. Some of these are chosen for their merit by the Biodiversity Partnership for Norfolk, which aims to protect and manage these special habitats.

Over 300 local wildlife sites have been identified. These contain a richness, diversity and rarity of flora and fauna, making a valuable contribution to the wildlife heritage of the Borough. Many of these sites have been identified as County Wildlife Sites in the Norfolk Habitats Survey. Again some of the flora and fauna identified for their rarity and fragility are protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, the Countryside Rights of Way Act (of 2000) and by other organisations including English Nature, the Wildlife Trusts and the Biodiversity Partnerships.

In addition to the priority species and habitats the diverse landscape of West Norfolk also supports a large number of species and habitats which are not protected by law or any organisations but are distinctive in their own right. This wider biodiversity resource is of great importance and should be conserved.

There are continuing pressures on biodiversity including:

- Development and road building;

- Insufficient water for wetlands (balanced with the needs of the Internal Drainage Boards);
- Decline in water quality;
- Lack of appropriate management;
- Agricultural intensification.

This pressure has left the remaining habitats and species increasingly fragmented and isolated in the wider landscape.

Increased pressure for development could result in the **erosion of the quality and distinctiveness of the built environment.**

The Borough has 42 Conservation Areas, 1,900 Listed Buildings, 110 Ancient Monuments and 5 Historic Parks and Gardens. The historic environment comprises all past traces of human existence. It includes evidence of past environments, archaeological sites, historic buildings and the historic aspects of the wider landscape. These assets are unique and, once damaged or destroyed, cannot recover or be recreated. They are of value as repositories of evidence of human activity over millennia; for their contribution to landscape character, sense of place and community identity; and as economic assets which underpin leisure and tourism.

The Borough has a strong vernacular history shaped by its landscape but there is a strong local perception that the majority of new development is indistinguishable and lacks a true sense of place. The quality and distinctiveness of the built environment needs to be maintained through the LDF.

## **RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS**

### **Land, Air and Water**

The Borough has some of the best and most versatile agricultural land; this is demonstrated by the fact that it is mostly Grades 1 and 2 in the Agricultural Land Classification. This land needs to be protected. Some land has been subject to contamination from pollution and waste disposal and therefore the recovery of contaminated land needs to be encouraged through the LDF. There are also many important geological sites in the Borough, some of which are designated sites. These also need to be protected from development.

The Council's Updating and Screening Assessment of August 2003 concluded that the Air Quality Strategy objectives were likely to be met, by the required dates, for the following pollutants Carbon Monoxide, Benzene, 1, 3 – Butadiene, Lead, and Sulphur Dioxide. The Air Quality Strategy objectives were unlikely to be met, by the required dates, for the following pollutants:

Nitrogen Dioxide, PM<sub>10</sub>. Air quality management issues in the Borough will need to be addressed in the LDF to ensure that air pollution is controlled.

The General Quality Assessment (GQA) scheme was introduced by the Environment Agency to examine stretches of freshwater in terms of their chemical, biological, nutrient and aesthetic qualities. In the East of England:

90% of our rivers were of good or fair chemical quality;

99% of our rivers were of good or fair biological quality;

62% of our rivers have high concentrations of nitrate;

83% of our rivers have high concentrations of phosphate;

About 70% of rivers are good or fair aesthetically.

The extensive Relief and 'Cut off' Channels running from Denver to King's Lynn and Denver to Hockwold were designed to prevent the River Great Ouse from flooding as a result of surcharges of water from the rivers flowing into it from the east i.e. the Little Ouse and the Wissey. This also facilitates the transfer of water to Essex. There are concerns about the risk of siltation of our major waterways. The threat of depletion of underground water reserves is becoming an increasing problem. Large areas of the Borough rely on underground water that is already over-extracted. Water resources need to be carefully managed on behalf of West Norfolk residents in a cost effective and sensible way.

Studies predict a further 20-40 per cent decline in recharge to the UK's aquifers over the next 20 years. At the same time demand for water for crop irrigation in the UK is likely to rise by a third (International Association of Hydro geologists, 2005). This has wider implications for water supply in connection with housing, agriculture, horticulture and industry. The LDF process will need to address issues of potential water shortages in the future, maintaining adequate water supply and quality, and encouraging water conservation.

The Borough's coastal nature brings the requirement to seek Bathing Water Quality status from the Environment Agency. There are currently three sampling points at Heacham, Hunstanton Main Beach and Hunstanton Beach. The quality of the bathing waters within the Borough complies with mandatory standards and is of acceptable quality.

## **Waste**

As the costs of landfill increase, the demand for recycling grows. All of the household waste centres around the Borough have become recycling centres, where waste can be separated into recyclable elements prior to disposal.



Much recycling is now conducted at the household level, with recycling collections being made from individual households, as well as promoting composting as a means of reducing waste to landfill. Figures for the period 2004/05 show that the total amount of domestic waste generated reached 28,026 tonnes, with a recycling rate of 27% amounting to 7,567 tonnes being recycled with 20,459 tonnes going to landfill. It is essential that the amount of waste going to landfill is reduced. Through the LDF, policies focussing on the use of sustainable construction methods and the recycling of materials during construction will help reduce the level of waste from development.

### **Agricultural Practices**

The dominance of arable farming in the East of England creates specific challenges with regard to water resources and land quality that need to be dealt with carefully whilst ensuring that both the environment and the production of food for the country is protected. The changing climate will affect what farmers can grow. In the short term farmers could use the longer growing season to expand their range of crops. But they could struggle to find enough water to help traditional crop varieties survive in the changed climate. Eventually they may be forced to grow different crops that are suited to a warmer, drier growing season, or a wetter, milder winter season. Livestock farmers will also be affected. Climate change will affect the UK's plants and animals. A warmer climate may alter where certain habitats can exist and could create conditions where non-native species can thrive at the expense of UK species.

The Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) lies to the south and south east of the Borough and many of the farms in the Borough encapsulate designated landscapes. This brings its own constraints to farmers.

### **3 SPATIAL VISION**

This spatial vision describes the proposed future development of the Borough until 2021. It goes beyond what can be achieved purely through the planning process, describing overall objectives which can be realised through a variety of delivery means. However the vision is founded on realistic, achievable goals developed through public consultation.

The towns, villages and rural areas all have different needs and aspirations. The key theme of the spatial vision is to recognise local distinctiveness. This means defining what makes places special and working with the local community to meet their aspirations for the future development of the Borough. Improvements in the quality of life and wealth of the residents are important but it is also important to protect what we have.

The Borough has to accommodate growth, the Panel Report following the Examination in Public (EIP) into the draft Regional Plan recommends 12,000 houses to be built within the Borough up to 2021. However, this growth can be channelled to where it is needed and sustainable. Following public consultation, the development of King's Lynn as a regional centre is a significant objective. The town needs to improve in terms of its vitality and viability. An urban renaissance of the town is needed. There are large areas of land within the town which could be developed for housing. This will lead to an increase in the population which will provide the critical mass to generate better facilities. However this needs to be carefully planned so as to lead to positive improvements in the town's environment. The Urban Development Strategy for King's Lynn provides a delivery framework. This shows a coordinated plan of investment in infrastructure which can enable large areas of the town to be regenerated. Urban extensions may also be required. However it is important to ensure that development is designed to a high standard in order for the town to become a more desirable place to live and work and act as an important tourist destination.

Downham Market is a significant market town and service centre in the south of the Borough. This function needs to be strengthened, with improvements in the range and quality of shops, an increase in employment opportunities and improvements in infrastructure. Environmental quality will be a key consideration. In recent years Downham Market has seen significant residential urban extensions; this should be avoided in the future where possible.

Hunstanton is the third largest town in the Borough and acts as an important tourist destination as well as a service centre. This dual role needs to be strengthened. It needs to develop as a quality tourist destination. Inward investment is needed to help create year round employment but development should respect the characteristics of the locality. Affordable housing may be allocated on the periphery of the town, in order to tie its allocation to local Hunstanton people.

The rural areas have many different communities with differing needs. However there are common themes. Changes in agriculture mean that the rural economy needs to be bolstered. Village services need to be sustained and improved where possible. Affordable housing should be provided for local people and all development should respect the local characteristics of the area. In the key service centres, which are usually the larger villages, more development can take place. However, in the smaller villages there will be a policy of restraint on development, to protect their character and also the surrounding environment, except where it is needed to sustain the local community.

Conservation of the natural and built environment is a key theme of this plan. One of the most significant assets the Borough has is its environment. The protection of the countryside, the promotion of sustainable energy sources, recycling, sustainable development and taking account of the potential effects of climate change are all key themes. The north coast area is a popular tourist destination and it is vital to balance this source of income with the needs of the environment. The wealth of historic buildings and buildings of architectural value within the Borough need to be utilised to their full potential, protecting their integrity, but also promoting this rich heritage.

Of equal significance to the above, is community well-being. Developing strong and cohesive local communities is essential for the future of West Norfolk. It is vital that communities feel safe and have access to proper services and community facilities. Creating environments which allow community events to take place and people to socialise is at the centre of future planning. Proper access to high quality education and health facilities and the development of healthy communities are fundamental.

## 4 SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

The Spatial Objectives of the LDF are to:

- 1. Maintain, protect and enhance the special qualities of the Borough that contribute towards our distinctiveness and quality of life, especially our coast, countryside, landscape, habitats, historical and architectural heritage.**

The Borough has an impressive and varied landscape ranging from the soft coastline to the flat fenlands with their wide open skies, to the gently rolling upland, to the scenic beauty of the heaths and woodlands and the undulating parkland scenery of the Sandringham Sands belt. This countryside is criss-crossed by rivers which vary from slow moving fenland watercourses to lively spring fed chalk streams running through well defined valleys. Much of the open countryside is not only of high scenic value but also acts as a haven for wildlife and flora. The Borough is also famous for its rich built environment heritage, with many of the towns and villages containing buildings of historical significance and national importance.

The LDF can help to achieve this by:

- Restricting development in the most sensitive areas to that which is necessary to sustain local communities and improve their quality of life.
  - Giving preference to development within or adjacent to key service centres, which have good services and facilities.
  - Protecting and improving local biodiversity, directing development away from the most sensitive areas and establishing 'green' corridors.
  - Protecting the environment by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air.
  - Enhanced preservation, interpretation and access to our heritage.
- 2. Enable new development that respects the distinctiveness of our area while maximising the potential of our towns.**

The towns and villages within West Norfolk all have distinctive characteristics, needs and aspirations of their own and it is important to recognise this. King's Lynn has potential for significant growth in its economy, housing and its choice of services. Similarly, Downham Market and Hunstanton have potential for growth in terms of their economies and services but much less in terms of housing. The villages within West Norfolk need to be sustained and community services improved. It is important to produce policies which recognise that different places have different needs.

The LDF can help to achieve this by:

- Recognising what makes places special and distinct.
- Ensuring development that is complementary in size, scale, density, and design to local characteristics and community needs.
- Ensuring a high quality of design in development.
- Protecting and enhancing what is special and ensuring that new development is sympathetic to these special qualities.
- Aiming to plan spatial development to reduce the need to travel and meeting local needs locally.
- Discouraging second-home ownership in areas where this is a problem.

**3. Provide adequate and appropriate opportunities for housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and tourism activities and create a thriving and sustainable economy that generates wealth.**

The LDF needs to ensure that there is a steady supply of land to facilitate new housing, services and economic development. This needs to be allocated appropriately making the best use of land. The type of development must take account of the needs of the local population. The development of a strong local economy with good quality jobs is a priority.

The LDF can help to achieve opportunities for housing by:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of housing sites, with a mix of size and types of housing.
- Providing a supply of affordable housing in our towns and villages.
- Allocating most new housing to previously developed land and buildings.
- Providing adequate sites for travellers.
- Fostering a sense of community.

The LDF can help to achieve opportunities for jobs and create a thriving economy by:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of employment sites.
- Encouraging a wide range of jobs and training opportunities benefiting a skilled and adaptable workforce.
- Encouraging a strong business community with positive links to local communities.
- Ensuring economically viable and attractive town centres, including our market towns.

The LDF can help to achieve opportunities for leisure and tourism by:

- Providing additional open space, parks and sports facilities where needed.

- Promoting opportunities to access cultural and arts activities that build on the area's strong cultural links and encompass the aims of the Borough's Local Cultural Strategy.
- Assisting accessibility to opportunities for everyone through transport measures and through providing facilities for people with disabilities.
- Recognising what attracts tourists to West Norfolk, protecting and enhancing these attractions, while taking account of the needs of local people and climate change.

**4. Develop King's Lynn as a regional centre – a major centre for housing, commercial, employment and leisure activities serving West Norfolk and surrounding areas.**

King's Lynn is the largest town in West Norfolk and is a regional centre. However in recent years the town has under performed in terms of the services it offers the surrounding area as well as the level and the quality of the development built within it. The town needs to continue the process of revitalisation by a coordinated development strategy.

The LDF can help to achieve this by:

- Incorporating the aims and objectives of the Urban Renaissance Strategy for King's Lynn
- Creating a lively, well-designed, efficient, well-balanced urban centre
- Concentrating the majority of housing development in the Borough within and around the periphery of King's Lynn.
- Creating an environment for its economic prosperity
- Improving transport and easing congestion.
- Reducing the need and desire to travel by car.

**5. Promote sustainable development, using sustainable construction methods, making more use of previously developed land and using land more efficiently in locations with good services.**

Sustainable development is generally defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. The LDF will achieve this through:

- Ensuring the use of energy efficient design, materials and layouts for new development.
- Encouraging water efficiency in design and minimising water demand.
- Encouraging the recovery of contaminated land and re-use of previously developed land before greenfield sites.

- Promoting the use of renewable energy sources. Allowing wind-turbine development in areas where it has a minimal impact on the landscape.
- Seeking to reduce dependence on cars with facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling and encouraging the use of public transport.
- Minimising waste production and promoting recycling.
- Directing development away from areas of flood risk except where these sites are of strategic importance and can be defended to the appropriate standard.
- Actively seeking to limit and adapt to climate change.

## **6. Help to develop sustainable and cohesive local communities.**

Community well-being is at the heart of this document. It is important that people enjoy living in West Norfolk and want to contribute to their local communities.

The LDF can help to facilitate this by:

- Helping to provide a good range of local services and community facilities.
- Providing facilities which aim to improve the health of residents.
- Helping to facilitate the development of high quality local schools and further education institutions with opportunities for life long learning.
- Helping to create safer environments through the design and layout of new developments.
- Making our towns, villages, facilities and services more accessible by a range of means of transport in addition to the car.
- Recognising the particular needs of residents in the rural areas of the Borough.

## **5 SPATIAL STRATEGIES**

### **SPS1: SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR KING'S LYNN**

#### **King's Lynn: A Renaissance Strategy**

King's Lynn is the largest town in West Norfolk and acts as a significant service centre. In recent years the town has under performed in terms of its potential for services, the economy, housing and a tourism destination. While it has most of the raw materials to achieve greater success, it has not made the most of them.

However this is an exciting time for King's Lynn; The Nar-Ouse Millennium community is starting to take shape. The Walks are being restored to their former glory, with other parks and public spaces to be improved. Plans for a marina, which will help transform how people think about King's Lynn, are emerging. Key sites that are derelict or under utilised are coming forward for development that will benefit the town as a whole, as well as those living in surrounding villages. Government planners have delivered a vote of confidence in the town: the draft Regional Spatial Strategy identified King's Lynn as a sub-regional centre and set out plans for continued growth, with a total of 11,000 homes to be built in the Borough by 2021. The Panel Report recommends changing the designation of King's Lynn to Key Centre for Development and Change (KCDC) with 12,000 houses to be built borough wide. These are just the changes that are already underway, or about to get under way, but the potential is far greater.

#### **You told us**

Following a series of stakeholder and public consultation events a number of important issues were discussed. Overall, King's Lynn is regarded as a 'safe' place and one that is quite attractive. Getting the transport right in the future will be crucial. This encompasses 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 our feelings of safety and our perceptions of how attractive places are.

King's Lynn needs to make better use of its waterfront and historic environment and encourage people to visit all areas of the town centre. The Walks and Tuesday Market Place are particularly important open spaces. The town centre and other facilities are viewed as 'standard' rather than special. The appearance of some places and the behaviour in public places of a minority of people create places that feel uncared-for and not valued and therefore less safe. 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. This economic element will have a strong impact on how land is used. The town centre should take more housing, although it needs to be sensitively provided and not be allowed to add to traffic problems. Excellence in design should be expected from all development, of both buildings and spaces between them.

### **So where now for King's Lynn**

King's Lynn needs to develop its role as a regional centre serving West Norfolk and the adjoining areas. It has to become **an attractive, vibrant and prosperous town, where people choose to live, work, visit and invest.**

### **So how do we achieve this?**

The principles, or sustainable development objectives, are based upon a mix of national and international best practice and a thorough analysis of the issues facing the town. They form the basis for the urban renaissance of King's Lynn:

#### **Built Environment**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Provide opportunities for a lively waterfront;
- Be complementary and be well linked to the historic parts of the town centre;
- Introduce more housing to the town centre where appropriate (including high quality executive and senior executive housing);
- Create destinations for visitors to the town;
- Impress through its quality of design and construction;
- Be founded upon high quality public space;
- Provide a rich mix of town centre uses;
- Diversify the town's offer in terms of shopping, culture, leisure, housing and services;
- Balance the need for accessibility by motor vehicles with the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and a high quality walking environment;
- Fulfil the needs and aspirations of local people of all ages;
- Provide for the needs of villages which are located close to King's Lynn (i.e. North Wootton and South Wootton) by strengthening their rural character, respecting their scale, identity and distinctiveness and treating them in the same way as other rural parishes.

#### **Transport and Movement**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Organise parking more effectively to make better use of space;
- Reconfigure movement patterns and user behaviour to lessen congestion;
- Promote opportunities for people to choose public transport, including the railway, where practical;

- Establish a safe and attractive network of routes for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Promote the use and development of the railway, including further expansion of the King's Lynn railway station car park;
- Minimise the impact of traffic.

### **Economy**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Provide opportunities for economic diversification, including newer under-represented knowledge-based sectors;
- Promote sustainable tourism;
- Create the kind of environment that will attract inward investment;
- Help to put the town 'on the map' by offering the right sort of business facilities and infrastructure;
- Strengthen the town's identity.

### **Social provision**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Respond to the changing needs of the existing and growing population;
- Increase access to services and opportunities for education, training, health, work and leisure to retain its young talent;
- Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime particularly in areas where the community has been identified as feeling uncared for and unsafe;
- Be supported by local communities.

### **Viability**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Be commercially viable;
- Be in line with market perceptions, but also help to change them by raising the quality property market profile of King's Lynn;
- Provide opportunities for retail, leisure and employment and other uses;
- Have a clear plan for its delivery through the Local Development Framework and the Urban Development Strategy for King's Lynn.

### **Sustainability**

Development, regeneration and the operational aspects of King's Lynn must:

- Minimise waste and encourage recycling;
- Re-use previously developed land where possible;
- Integrate green spaces into development, and limit the effects of development on neighbouring habitats;
- Acknowledge the risks of climate change;
- Direct development away from areas at flood risk or where development is needed, provide a minimum standard of flood defence;
- Increasing the quantity and quality of public open space, particularly in areas of the town where there is a shortfall.

The Urban Development Strategy for King's Lynn (2006) produced by Llewellyn Davies Yeang provided much of the background information for this spatial strategy for King's Lynn. That document also provides a process for achieving the above objectives.

## **SPS2: SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR DOWNHAM MARKET**

### **Downham Market Today: Redefining its Identity**

Downham Market is the second largest town within the Borough and any future development within the town must recognise its role as a service centre serving the surrounding rural area.

Its prime characteristic is that of a market town scale, reflected in its overall compact structure. However in recent years the town has undergone a dramatic programme of residential development. Subsequently the town has suffered for a number of years from under investment and is in need of a strategic approach to improve its visual amenity and to complete the regeneration of the economy and town as a centre for living and working, ensuring that its role as a significant market town within the locality, and status within the Borough is respected.

Downham Market has long excelled its characteristics of a compact market town to one of a server of the surrounding rural hinterland and Borough. Located alongside major transport corridors both by road and rail to regional centres such as Cambridge has brought its impetus for growth to the area in terms of a youthful, commuting and elderly range of residents. The rail link to Cambridge should be fully utilised and given the opportunity for future expansion for the important role this provides for commuters and visitors.

The state of the local environment affects and reflects the well-being of the people who live there. Whether it is the quality of the town centre, or the street where people live, it is important that they improve the quality of life and they are safe and attractive places.

### **You Told Us**

Following a series of consultation events in the town, you told us that you wanted a vibrant and viable market town with a varied town centre which is thriving and prosperous, which not only provides a desired shopping destination, but provides sustainable employment opportunities for all. Environmental quality is a key consideration, by making the most of the town's natural environment such as the potential waterfront development, whilst providing development which is sympathetic to the local character utilising the historic heritage of the town, retaining open space and 'greening' the townscape.

Transport both within and outside the town was considered important in making both a town safer for pedestrians and to promote regular, reliable, cheap and integrated sustainable transport system with good educational and health infrastructure that can cope with changing trends.

## **So where now for Downham Market?**

The failure of services to keep pace with the rapid residential growth of recent years requires something of a step change in the way we plan, design, move about and use Downham Market if we are serious about Downham Market becoming **an attractive, vibrant and prosperous town, where people choose to live, work and visit, making the most of its natural and historic environment.**

## **So how do we achieve this?**

This spatial strategy is addressed through a variety of objectives:

### **Regeneration**

- Regenerating Downham Market as a centre for living and working, re-enforcing its role as a significant market town within the locality;
- Ensuring there is suitable supply of land and premises to meet the diverse needs of businesses;
- Ensuring there is suitable supply of housing to meet the needs of residents, but to concentrate this growth in a sustainable manner which prevents further large scale extensions to the boundaries of the town;

### **Sustainability**

- Taking account of climate change and its long term effects on the locality;
- Encouraging the location of new dwellings and businesses in sustainable locations;
- Living in a sustainable way, this will mean re-using land, encouraging sustainable construction methods, re-cycling waste and encouraging the use of sustainable transport to include potential future expansion of the railway link and railway car park;
- Protecting areas of important wildlife and landscape quality;
- Acknowledging the possible effects of climate change and flood risk;

### **Improving Choice**

- Improving the range and quality of shops in Downham Market;
- Providing a choice of different types of housing;
- Improving access to recreational facilities;
- Providing good educational facilities.

### **Improving Image**

- Encouraging innovation in design and layout which respects the character of the surrounding built and natural environment, but which also help to create local distinctiveness;
- Protecting and enhancing the historic built environment;
- 'Greening' the town by improving landscaping to create a sense of place and space;
- Promote 'Green' tourism.

**Support and Enhance Social Provision**

- Securing the provision of affordable housing;
- Creating mixed and balanced communities;
- Improving access to education and health – locating facilities in central, accessible locations.

## **SPS3: SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR HUNSTANTON**

Hunstanton has a dual function. The town is a seaside resort, but also acts as a service centre for year-round residents and the surrounding rural areas.

The seasonal nature of visitors to the town creates diverse seasons with variations in population and demands on local services, but tourism makes a vital contribution to the local economy. It is important that the dual functions of the town are respected. The town also has a significant retired population, which is reflected in the age structure of the resident population.

### **You told us**

Following consultation with local stakeholders in the town, residents and young people it was felt Hunstanton should be a quality visitor destination, attracting new investment in the town while retaining and enhancing the unique characteristics of our environment.

The role as a tourist destination needs to be strengthened and we should support a pro-active approach to enhancing existing facilities, actively identifying potential sites for redevelopment and projects in the town. This tourist emphasis needs to be 'in harmony' with the residents of the town. While we would seek to enhance tourist facilities/ attractions, it is also important to aim to secure quality year-round employment in the town.

In terms of the quality of the environment there are valuable areas of the town and this character should be protected and improved, reflecting and enhancing its Victorian heritage.

### **So where now for Hunstanton?**

**We will seek to encourage a sustainable and vibrant community in Hunstanton, reinforcing the role of the town as a quality tourist destination while protecting and enhancing its unique character.**

### **So how do we achieve this?**

The spatial strategy can be addressed through a range of objectives:

#### ***The Environment***

- Ensure a controlled and clear approach to development in the town;
- Reinforce and improve the Victorian heritage of Hunstanton through conservation and innovative design;
- Retain and enhance open spaces;
- Protect and maintain the unique natural environment.

### ***Accessibility***

- Promote sustainable modes of transport, namely an efficient public transport system within Hunstanton and connecting to the wider Borough;
- Reintroduce the rail link from King's Lynn to Hunstanton
- Improve the cycle and pedestrian network within the town.
- Support improved access to the town by encouraging improvements to the A149, south of Hunstanton.

### ***The Economy***

- Promote sustainable quality year round employment in the town;
- Create a viable and vibrant high street with a quality retail offer all year round;
- Promote and encourage year round leisure and retail facilities attractive to residents and visitors;
- Create opportunities for new investment in the town.

### ***Our Community***

- Promote affordable housing (shared ownership and rental schemes);
- Work towards better communication between all stakeholders in the town;
- Support improvements to infrastructure, such as healthcare for example;
- Support the provision of facilities for young people.



## **SPS4: SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE RURAL AREAS**

The Borough of King's Lynn & West Norfolk has a large rural area with over 100 villages within its boundaries, each with its own distinctive character, needs and aspirations. The isolated rural nature of the Borough raises issues of accessibility to essential services and facilities.

The Borough has an impressive and varied landscape, which ranges from the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to the Brecks, and includes large areas of fenland (see Map Page 53). Amongst this unique setting are found numerous international, national and local site protection and environmental designations. The Borough also has some of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the country.

The Borough has a typical rural economy that is based around agriculture and food related production which is also influenced by tourism. The economy is constantly evolving, influenced by changes in the agricultural sector. This brings an increasing need for rural diversification in many of our rural areas, both to retain traditional industry and employment, but also to recognise the need to allow the rural economy to diversify into other sectors.

Rural living is a desirable way of life and the demand for this puts increasing pressure on both housing development and service provision. Housing demand in these areas means that the provision of affordable housing becomes more of a priority. Some village locations are more sustainable than others and therefore may have some scope for further small-scale development. These have been identified as key service centres.

### **You told us**

Following a series of consultation papers and workshops you told us that you wanted protection of the countryside for its own sake, provision of housing which is affordable for young people, and provision of employment and opportunities for rural communities. Maintaining the character and quality of the existing rural environment with limited small-scale development, which reflects this character was also felt to be important.

### **So where now for the rural areas?**

**With outstanding natural beauty, a visibly unique natural and built heritage with special wildlife areas, the Borough should seek to preserve this quality environment. The Borough should promote strong and distinctive village and coastal communities. This will secure an improvement in the quality of life in the rural area of the Borough by maintaining and promoting thriving, balanced, viable, inclusive, and sustainable rural communities with access to services, whilst securing the protection and enhancement of its environmental resources.**

## **So how do we achieve this?**

This spatial strategy is addressed through a variety of objectives:

### **Housing**

- Promote affordable housing for allocation to people living in the rural settlement in sustainable locations where there is a recognised need; without compromising the distinctive character of the environment.
- Provide some limited new market housing where it is needed, focussed around key service centres.
- Introduce policies which discourage second home ownership in areas where this is a problem.

### **Employment**

- Retain existing rural employment and encourage new sustainable growth to the rural economy, which is appropriate in scale to their location, whilst protecting the environment.

### **Sustainability**

- Support the development of sustainable transport in rural areas.
- Promote the use and development of the railway, including the expansion of Watlington Station car park.
- Encourage the development of technically-efficient renewable energy sources wherever they have prospects of being economically viable, and environmentally and socially acceptable.

### **Environmental Enhancement**

- Protection of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- Protection and enhancement of the natural, historic and built environment.
- Protect the diversity of wildlife and distinctive landscape character including the coast from conflicting development proposals.
- Respect the zonal approach of the AONB Management Plan.
- Protect the rural and coastal environment as a visitor destination and support green tourism initiatives, which can be shown to be sustainable with a low environmental impact.
- Recognise the unique characteristics of individual villages and the needs of different rural areas.

### **Improving Choice**

- Promote the retention of, and enhancement of local services and facilities.
- 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 all through high quality design which respects the local environment.

These are overall objectives to reflect the distinctiveness of the Borough's rural areas. Consultation told us that we no longer could have a *'one size fits*

*all'* approach to rural area policies, but to differentiate between groups of rural settlements with similar characteristics.

## 6 ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainability is becoming increasingly important in our future planning in securing the Government's agenda for Sustainable Communities. The importance of achieving sustainable development through our plan making ensures that our actions today, in terms of promoting future development, do not compromise our environmental, economic or social resources for the future.

### Tackling Climate Change

The impacts of climate change are a present and increasing threat to the normal operation of our society. It will be essential for new developments and changes in land use to incorporate adaptations in response to these impacts.

#### 1. Preferred Policy Option: Tackling Climate Change

Policies in the plan will:

- Promote the highest standards of resource and energy efficiency in new development so as to reduce carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions arising from construction and use.
- Encourage land-use patterns that seek to reduce the need to travel by car.
- Promote small and large scale renewable energy projects.
- Encourage adaptation to the harmful impacts of climate change, such as accelerated flooding and coastal erosion.
- Encourage all development, either new build or conversion, with a floor-space of 500m<sup>2</sup> or more, or one or more residential unit, to incorporate on-site renewable energy equipment to generate 10% of the energy demand by renewables.
- Encourage all new development, whether new build or conversion, to demonstrate that it does not add any net carbon dioxide emissions over the life-cycle of its operation. Developers may adopt a range of technological approaches to achieve this objective, including:
  - A zero waste, zero carbon standard for any large scale housing development;
  - A minimum of EcoHomes 'Good' or equivalent recognised Standard for any housing development of one unit or more;
  - A minimum of BREEAM 'Good' for any commercial development.
  - The development of on-site renewable energy generation capacity.
  - It will be for the developer to decide which approach is the most appropriate to deliver a zero net carbon standard in their specific proposal.
  - The applicant must demonstrate, through a development appraisal, if the adoption of such an approach results in an undue burden on the viability of the scheme.
  - In addition, there will be a presumption against any development which results in a significant net increase in carbon dioxide emissions.

#### Explanation

There are several indications that the climate in the UK is already changing, so action needs to be right down to the local level. The Borough Council needs to assess its area's vulnerability to climate change so it can plan appropriate mitigation strategies and try to minimise future emissions of greenhouse gases by appropriate planning policies for future development.

In order to assist in the achievement of carbon reduction targets, policies will include and encourage measures to achieve low carbon developments, and wherever possible, zero carbon development.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance and no alternative options were considered.

## **Renewable Energy**

National planning policy encourages the provision of renewable energy schemes unless the environmental impacts of allowing the proposal would outweigh the wider social, economic and environmental benefits derived from it. The need at the local level is to introduce both small and large scale renewable energy developments. These should not only contribute to the locality, but should also provide a challenging target to achieve sustainable construction methods. This will reduce dependency on the generation of non-renewable energy sources and to cut carbon dioxide emissions within the wider overarching principle of sustainable development.

### **2. Preferred Policy Option: Renewable Energy Development**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for renewable energy development will be permitted provided they do not cause severely adverse effects to conflict with landscape character, nature conservation or local amenity interests, which cannot be mitigated.
- Renewable energy developments (such as wind, biomass, solar systems) will be supported in principle (either individually or cumulatively) provided they are encouraged to locate where the scale, siting or cumulative effect of the proposal does not adversely affect the environmental, social and economic benefits.
- Technically efficient renewable energy schemes will be encouraged.
- Approved structures should be removed when redundant.

## **Explanation**

In developing renewable energy sources it is necessary to balance the national framework for renewable energy with the importance of environmental protection.

Whilst there needs to be encouragement of renewable energy generation, this should contribute to the energy needs without unacceptably damaging acknowledged environmental or ecological interests. A landscape character assessment has been undertaken and will inform policy.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance and no alternative options were considered.

### **3. Preferred Policy Option: Energy and Water Efficiency**

- Through sustainable construction methods, new development should provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from on-site renewable technology by 2010, rising to 15% by 2015 and 20% by 2021.
- Proposals for new development should seek to maximize the potential for energy efficiency by achieving an energy efficiency level by good design and construction which is the equivalent to at least a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions (in excess of that required by Building Regulations) and by seeking to become carbon neutral developments. Energy efficiency should be achieved through design, construction, layout, orientation, and internal design, the materials used in construction, insulation, and heat recovery (combined heat and power).
- Water efficiency devices will be required within all new developments.

#### **Explanation**

The Government's energy policy aims to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050. A target to generate 10% of UK electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 and 20% by 2020 is set out in the Energy White Paper. In West Norfolk the threshold for operating this policy needs to be set at one or more dwelling unit and for non-residential development a scheme of 500 square metres or 0.5 hectares. Water efficiency is also paramount given the finite water resources available.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance and no alternative options were considered although it is intended to apply this approach at a lower threshold than that contained in the draft Regional Plan (the Panel Report recommends deleting these detailed requirements).

**Location of Development**

The development and use of land, which is of a scale and nature appropriate to a particular settlement or location and which contributes to making the settlement more sustainable, will be supported.

Most new development should take place within the urban areas, with major developments located in the largest settlement of King's Lynn. In other urban areas including Downham Market and Hunstanton the scale of development should reflect the settlement's size and function.

In key service centres limited development may take place to increase sustainability by enhancing the level of services, facilities and jobs provided, or to meet the needs of the settlement and its immediate area.

In settlements identified as villages or hamlets only small scale development which supports rural diversification, creates community facilities, meets identified local needs or maintains the viability of existing services should take place. Development should be confined within the existing boundaries of the settlement, except where rural exception site policies are being used to provide affordable housing for that settlement's residents.

#### **4. Preferred Policy Option: Location of Development**

Suitable locations for development will be assessed by:

- Adopting a 'sequential approach' to meeting development needs, giving highest priority to land and buildings within urban areas and key service centres. Where needs cannot be met in this way, consideration should then be given to sites which extend these settlements and are accessible by good quality public transport and finally, if necessary, to sites around nodes in good quality public transport corridors;
- In each of the locations in sequence, giving first priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings before the use of suitable greenfield land is considered;
- Giving priority to sites which are accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and by rail and water for uses generating large freight movements;
- Avoiding sites which have an adverse impact on the Borough's environmental assets and resources.

#### **Explanation**

The Spatial Vision for the Borough is to concentrate major development within the towns and thereafter limited development in key service centres.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance and no alternative options were considered.

#### **Establishing Key Service Centres**

The Plan will seek to accommodate new development within the rural areas which is sympathetic to the local character and of an appropriate scale and nature to accommodate local employment and local housing need. This will also seek to assist the viability and sustainability of agriculture and other rural economic activities, the diversification of the rural economy, the provision of housing for local needs, and to support the sustainability of local services. Key service centres are large villages or groups of villages with a good level of services which serve the wider adjoining hinterland. Villages which have very limited or non-existent local services are dependent upon these key service centres and main urban areas for their everyday needs.



## 5. Preferred Policy Option: Establishing Key Service Centres

The designation of villages as key service centres will be based on them having all of the following:

- a primary school within the settlement and a secondary school within the settlement or accessible by public transport;
- a doctor's surgery;
- a good range of retail and service provision capable of meeting day-to-day needs, in particular for convenience shopping;
- local employment opportunities;
- frequent public transport links for work and leisure.

Within the Borough, using the criteria above, the following suggest themselves as possible key service centres: Dersingham; Emneth, Upwell, Outwell – combined grouping; Heacham; Methwold, Stoke Ferry – combined grouping.

### Explanation

Decisions about the growth of key service centres do not simply take account of settlement size and levels of service. Growth needs to respect the local character and be concentrated and directed to locations where it will have the greatest benefits for rural sustainability. The reason for defining key service centres is that many villages have very limited or non-existent local services. Therefore these settlements become dependent upon key service centres and market towns/main urban areas for everyday needs. **The villages mentioned above are only indicative.**

### Rejected Options:

There are no alternatives if selection is in accordance with the criteria listed above.

## 7 HOUSING

### Housing Distribution

#### 6. Preferred Policy Option: Housing Distribution

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Land will be allocated for housing on brownfield sites in:
  - King's Lynn and Downham Market.
  - Urban extensions will then be considered on the edge of King's Lynn and Downham Market. Priority will be given to urban extensions on the edge of King's Lynn in order for it to develop as a regional centre.
- The priority will be to allocate brownfield sites.
- Exceptionally land may be allocated in or adjacent to settlements with a defined settlement boundary in the Local Development Framework to sustain the local community or to meet regeneration needs.
- Affordable housing sites will be allocated on the basis of local need, taking into account sustainability criteria, in or adjacent to any defined settlement boundary.

## **Explanation**

The above policy will mean that land will be allocated for housing on brownfield sites in King's Lynn and Downham Market. These are centres with significant transport links, a range of facilities, services and good access to jobs, schools, and shopping. King's Lynn will be developed as a regional centre and will be the major focus for housing development, mainly in the town centre but with a limited amount of greenfield land being allocated. Downham Market will also receive housing allocations on brownfield sites within the settlement boundary, with greenfield sites only being allocated where necessary. However, settlements other than King's Lynn and Downham Market, are unlikely to receive housing allocations unless absolutely necessary to sustain them, for example affordable housing for local people. Settlements without defined boundaries will not receive a housing allocation. This policy only deals with the formal allocation of housing sites. Many sites will still be developed within the towns and villages as and when opportunities arise, subject to policy. However it is important to formally allocate land for housing to secure a minimum five year housing supply.

### **Rejected Options:**

(1) Allocate land for housing on brownfield sites in the larger villages. This option could allow for the development of land for housing in sustainable locations. However, the level of development would have a significant impact on the character of these villages, while contributing only a small amount to the overall housing supply.

(2) Allocate land on brownfield sites in Hunstanton. The amount of housing land available on brownfield sites in Hunstanton is quite limited. Formal allocations of land for housing would have a very limited impact on housing supply and could possibly detract from its role as a tourist destination.

(3) Town growth strategy: This would involve a more even distribution of the housing allocation between King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market. This would certainly mean that significant amounts of greenfield land would have to be used and would not re-use the land available in King's Lynn. The level of housing development proposed for Hunstanton could change its character as a tourism destination and Downham Market would undergo further major expansion. The potential role of King's Lynn as a regional centre would be undermined and there may not be enough development proposed in King's Lynn to provide the necessary services and facilities that would help regenerate West Norfolk as a whole.

## Affordable Housing

### Introduction

The shortage of affordable housing is a serious issue throughout West Norfolk. A household is generally not eligible for a mortgage if it has a gross household income less than one third its mortgage requirement and a household is unable to afford private rented housing if renting privately would take up more than 30% of its net household income. Overall household incomes in West Norfolk have not kept pace with the cost of housing. The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Housing Needs Survey (July 2002) estimated that 5,242 households (8.5% of all households) were living in unsuitable housing and estimated an annual shortfall of 466 affordable dwellings, which need to be provided. The Housing Needs Survey also considered the scope for reducing housing need with housing negotiated under the relevant Government guidance. It stated that 'analysis suggests that low-cost market housing cannot meet any housing need'. Social rented and intermediate housing is the only provision which can realistically meet the need for affordable housing. A Housing Market Assessment is being undertaken and this will inform the production of future policies.

### 7. Preferred Policy Option: Affordable Housing

Policies in the plan will:

Define affordable housing as non-market housing, provided to those whose needs are not met by the market through renting or purchase of property at a cost which they can afford.

- State the types of housing which are affordable as:
- Social rented housing. Rents are controlled by the Housing Corporation and kept at an affordable level.
- Intermediate housing. Housing provided at prices or rents above those of social-rental but below market prices or rents. This includes shared equity housing and intermediate rents (i.e. rents above social-rented level but below market rents). Rents charged for intermediate housing should not exceed 30% of the net median household income in West Norfolk. In the case of shared equity schemes, the total cost of the shared equity scheme to the householder should not exceed 30% of the gross median household income in West Norfolk. Low-cost market housing is not regarded as intermediate housing.
- Key workers will qualify for intermediate housing based on their occupation.

- State that the latest housing needs survey carried out by the Borough Council or Parish Council will be used to determine the type of affordable housing which needs to be provided.
- Ensure that there is a mix of affordable housing, including flats and large family houses to cater for the differing needs of the community.
- Ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by the initial and successive occupiers (see explanation below).
- Require a high standard of design which is at least the equivalent of market housing being constructed. The incorporation of energy efficient materials and features will be required within the development.

While planning policy will try to ensure that affordable housing remains affordable, properties owned by Registered Social Landlords are subject to the 'right-to-buy' legislation. This allows the occupiers of affordable property to acquire the whole property in certain circumstances.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG3 and no alternative options were considered.

## **8. Preferred Policy Option: Affordable Housing**

Policies in the plan will:

- Negotiate 30% built affordable housing units on sites capable of accommodating 15 or more dwellings (or residential sites of 0.5 hectare or more) in King's Lynn and Downham Market.
- In all other settlements negotiate 30% built affordable housing units on sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings (or residential sites of 0.33 hectare or more)
- Permissions will be regulated by condition or legal agreement to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by the initial and successive occupiers
- Ensure that affordable housing is 'pepper-potted' throughout the development site.

### **Explanation**

Panel Report changes recommended to the East of England Plan state that affordable housing must constitute at least 35% of housing supply in the Region overall. Higher or lower targets may be set in Local Development Documents (LDDs) based on local assessments. The Housing Needs Survey (July 2002) stated that a proportional target of 40% could be justified given the level of need. However, development is being directed through policy to re-use brownfield land which inevitably has higher costs associated with the development. A large proportion of development is also being directed to King's Lynn. In order to accommodate this development, a higher house building rate will be required in King's Lynn than has historically been the case. To provide the number of dwellings required, supply the number of affordable units, protect our towns and villages from inappropriate development as well as meeting the regeneration aspirations within the Borough, a 30% affordable housing requirement is appropriate. The consultation paper on the new Government Planning Policy Statement 3 suggests a minimum size threshold of 15 dwellings when affordable housing must be provided as part of the development. This is an appropriate figure in the main towns in the Borough which would encourage house building but also supply affordable housing. As there is a general policy of constraint on

house building in rural areas, a threshold of 15 dwellings when affordable housing needs to be provided by the developer would rarely be used and thus the supply of affordable housing in rural areas would not be as high as it could be. The threshold has therefore been lowered to 10 or more units to increase this supply, while maintaining a policy of constraint on development in rural areas.

In most circumstances, in order to provide an appropriate mix of tenure there will be a requirement for 70% of the affordable housing to be social rented and 30% shared equity. To achieve 'pepper-potting' where practicable affordable housing should be in groups of not more than 4 houses together. To complement other policies the Council will ensure that the policy produces built units.

#### **Rejected Options:**

1. Seek the provision of 40% affordable units on appropriate sites. This may be achieved but could significantly lower the house building rate within the Borough. The interest in investing and developing in King's Lynn has been steadily increasing. If directed towards the major towns and key service centres, this can positively contribute to regenerating these areas and meeting the aspirations of the local population in terms of housing and services. The emphasis on using brownfield land is an added cost to the developer. In order to maintain the regeneration programme within the Borough in a sustainable manner, a 40% housing quota would be unjustified at this stage, but may be used in the future should this be necessary. Lower thresholds when affordable housing is to be supplied as part of the development have been used to partly compensate for a lower percentage requirement.

2. Standardise thresholds at 15 dwellings (or 0.5 hectare) or more when affordable housing is to be provided. This figure is appropriate to urban areas where regeneration is a priority and substantial house building takes place. However in the rural areas, policy constrains development and as such the number of sites which are developed in excess of 15 dwellings is limited. Therefore a lower threshold is appropriate.

3. Lower thresholds in the rural area to 3 dwellings. This would increase the supply of affordable housing significantly. However, this policy may be too onerous and could have a significant impact on the overall supply of housing in rural areas.

#### **Rural Exception Sites**

The Government advises that support will be given for planning policies which allow the construction of low cost rural housing to meet local needs on small sites both within and on the edge of villages which would not normally be released for general housing. Government advice identifies such “rural exceptions” policies as valid planning considerations.



## 9. Preferred Policy Option: Rural Exception Sites

Policies in the plan will state:

- Permission may be granted on land which would not otherwise be appropriate for residential development for affordable housing which meets a genuine local need.
- Local need will be defined by reference to the following criteria:
  1. Existing residents who have lived in the village for more than 12 months needing separate or alternative accommodation.
  2. Past residents of the village who lived in the village for minimum period of 5 years and who moved away within the last 3 years because no suitable accommodation was available.
  3. People who need to live in the village due to their permanent employment or offer of permanent employment.
  4. People who are not resident in the village that need to live near family members currently residing in the village.
  5. Existing residents of adjoining villages.
  6. Existing residents who have lived in the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk for a period of 5 years or more.
- Permissions will be regulated by condition or legal agreement to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by the initial and successive occupiers. Legal agreements will ensure that all those in housing need in criteria 1 are housed, then successively those meeting criteria 2,3,4,5 and 6.
- Sites should be in or adjacent to villages with defined boundaries as shown in the Local Development Framework and should not exceed 15 units.
- Development should not unacceptably impair planning interests of acknowledged importance.
- The village should contain a basic level of services.

## Explanation

Need will be established through a housing market assessment undertaken by the Borough Council or local survey undertaken by a housing enabler on behalf of the Parish Council. The maximum area within which need is considered “local” is the single civil parish where the development is proposed and the adjoining parishes. Generally, to maintain balanced communities, housing developments should not exceed 15 dwellings in any one place.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG3 and no alternative options were considered.

## **New Housing in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

### **Introduction**

The Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of local and national importance. It is vital to protect this area of countryside for future generations to enjoy.

#### **10. Preferred Policy Option: New Housing in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

In parishes, or individual villages or settlements within the West Norfolk AONB, where the percentage of second homes (including holiday homes run as businesses) exceeds 25% of the total housing stock new housing will be limited to people who have a local need.

- Local need is defined by reference to the following criteria:
  1. People who have been permanently resident in the AONB for at least five years and who can prove they need new accommodation or
  2. People who do not live in the AONB but have a current and longstanding link to the local community including a previous period of residence of over 5 years or
  3. People with an essential need arising from age or infirmity to move to a village to be near close relatives who have been permanently resident within the AONB for at least the previous 5 years or
  4. People who have an essential need to live close to their work in the parish or adjacent parishes within the AONB.
- All applicants will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that the needs of the identified proposed occupants are genuine, that the proposal represents the most practical and sustainable solution to meet the need identified and why the existing housing stock cannot meet their needs.
- Affordable housing resulting from and complying with Preferred Options 7, 8 and 9 will be allowed.
- Permissions will be regulated by a condition on the planning permission or a legal agreement attached to the planning permission to ensure that the properties continue to meet local need.

# Map showing Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



## Explanation

This preferred approach is based on policies currently being applied in the North York Moors National Park. It aims to protect the AONB from incremental development and intensification and sustain village communities. Over recent years the pressure for development within the AONB has been intense. This has resulted in the villages becoming increasingly over developed, with many important spaces which add to the amenity of the locality being lost. The Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan states the additional impacts of housing development on the AONB as being:

- The reduction in water resources and adverse effects on natural features dependant on these
- The need to increase capacity of sewerage and sewage treatment systems and the possible consequent effects on water quality
- The need to improve transport infrastructure and the negative effects on the environment associated with additional traffic
- The increase in light pollution
- The tranquillity of the area being affected.

The average house price within the AONB in 2004 was £224,229, however 40% of households in the AONB have an annual income of under £20,000. Therefore to protect the AONB from unnecessary development and to keep this natural resource of national importance intact, a policy of allowing housing which meets local need is considered necessary. The number of second homes within the AONB in West Norfolk will be surveyed each year and be stated in the Annual Monitoring Report. This will be the statistical basis for the implementation of the above policy.

### **Rejected Options:**

1. To have no restriction on second home ownership. This will mean that in many settlements, where second home ownership has become a problem, they will gradually become less sustainable, in terms of services, the environment and community cohesion.
2. Impose a higher threshold. In response to community consultation undertaken, many people commented on the problem of second homes within their settlement with second home ownership below the threshold of 25%.
3. Impose a lower threshold. It is important that this policy is only used as a last resort, when any further development of second homes would cause damage to the infrastructure, the environment and social well being of the settlement.

## Second Home Ownership

### Introduction

Second home ownership has become an important local issue within the Borough. While it is important to provide facilities for tourists and local people alike, it is also important to protect the unique characteristics of our rural area for everyone to enjoy.

#### 11. Preferred Policy Option: Second Home Ownership

Policies in the plan will state that:

- In settlements, outside the AONB, other than the towns of King's Lynn and Downham Market, where 30% or more of the houses are second homes or holiday homes, new housing development will only be permitted where the development will provide accommodation for people who have a local need.
- Local need will be defined by reference to the following criteria:
  1. People who have been permanently resident in the Parish or Town for at least five years and who can prove they need new accommodation or
  2. People who do not live in the Parish or Town but have a current and longstanding link to the local community including a previous period of residence of over 5 years or
  3. People with an essential need arising from age or infirmity to move to a village to be near close relatives who have been permanently resident within the Parish or Town for at least the previous 5 years or
  4. People who have an essential need to live close to their work in the Parish, Town or adjacent parishes.
- All applicants will need to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Borough Council that the needs of the identified proposed occupants are genuine and that the proposal represents the most practical and sustainable solution to meet the need identified.
- Affordable housing resulting from and complying with Preferred Options 7, 8 and 9 will be allowed.
- Permissions will be regulated by a condition on the planning permission or a legal agreement attached to the planning permission to ensure that the properties continue to meet local need.
- Settlements are those towns or villages with defined boundaries in the Local Development Framework.

## Explanation

The number of second and holiday homes is becoming an increasingly important issue in some parts of the Borough. As much as 40% of the stock is second (or holiday) homes in some settlements. This has a significant effect on the sustainability of those settlements and therefore their long term future. It is important to protect these settlements and maintain communities. Additional housing is needed, but only where it will contribute to sustaining the settlement. The number of second homes in settlements with defined boundaries, outside the AONB in West Norfolk, will be surveyed each year and be stated in the Annual Monitoring Report. This will be the statistical basis for the implementation of the above policy.

### Rejected Options:

1. To have no restriction on second home ownership. This will mean that in many settlements, where second home ownership has become a problem, they will gradually become less sustainable, both in terms of services and community cohesion.
2. Impose a higher threshold. In response to community consultation undertaken, many people commented on the problem of second homes within their settlement with second home ownership well below the threshold of 30%.
3. Impose a lower threshold. It is important that this policy is only used as a last resort, when any further development of second homes would cause damage to the infrastructure and social well being of the settlement.

## Dwelling Types

### 12. Preferred Policy Option: Dwelling Types

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

Housing schemes should provide a mix of dwelling types in terms of size, type and tenure.

## Explanation

The above policy enables an appropriate mix of dwelling types to be provided and provides a flexible approach to assessing current housing needs. The latest Housing Market Assessment (currently underway) will be the basis for assessing the above.

**Rejected Options:**

1. No policy. Frequently developers build too much of one housing type resulting in an in-balance in the supply of housing to meet differing needs. As a result, people have to purchase larger properties when smaller dwellings would meet their needs. This is not sustainable and does not produce cohesive and balanced communities.
2. State a precise mix of housing types. This would provide the necessary dwelling mix required and provide certainty to developers. This option will be reviewed when the latest Housing Market Assessment is produced in December 2006. However, as the Housing Market Assessment is constantly monitored and updated, on balance, the mix of dwelling types would be better undertaken through negotiation at the time of the planning application.

**Residential Mobile Homes****13. Preferred Policy Option: Residential Mobile Homes**

Policies in the plan will indicate that applications for residential mobile homes (park homes) will be treated as if they were for permanent housing and will therefore be subject to the same policies and criteria.

**Explanation**

Mobile homes provide low cost accommodation for small households. Planning conditions and the site licence system provide effective ways of controlling both the impact of sites on the surrounding areas and conditions on sites themselves. However, this type of housing requires all the social and physical services of conventional dwellings. There is a need therefore to ensure that applications for new mobile home sites or residential caravans are treated as if they were for permanent dwellings although they may be appropriate on land otherwise unsuitable for buildings.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG3 and no alternative options were considered.



## **New Dwellings in the Countryside**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The construction of new dwellings in the countryside to meet the housing needs of workers in agriculture and related land-based occupations requires special justification; it is important to avoid sporadic development in the countryside, and often it will be possible for such workers to live in a nearby town or village.

This policy approach sets out the criteria to be employed where a new dwelling in the countryside is claimed as being necessary. The requirements for clear evidence of need and an appropriate size of dwelling are there to prevent possible abuse of the policy, and comply with national guidance in Planning Policy Statement 7.

#### **14. Preferred Policy Option: New Dwellings in the Countryside**

Policies in the plan will indicate that in general no new dwellings will be permitted in the countryside, as designated on the Proposals Map.

In the exceptional circumstance where a new dwelling is allowed, policy will set out the criteria that will be used to assess such proposals, including the requirements that:

- provision on-site (or in the immediate vicinity) is necessary for the operation of the rural enterprise.
- no suitable accommodation exists (or could be made available) in established buildings on the site or in the immediate vicinity
- the proposal does not involve replacing a dwelling disposed of recently as general market housing
- the dwelling is no larger than that required to meet the operational needs of the business
- the siting and landscaping of the new dwelling ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised
- A temporary dwelling may be permitted where these circumstances apply, but the activity has been established recently and needs time to demonstrate that it is financially sound.

## **EXPLANATION**

Permission may be granted in exceptional circumstances for accommodation for full-time workers in agriculture, horticulture and forestry, where it has been proven that there is an essential need for a dwelling to support the business. In such cases it has to be proven that it is essential for the proper functioning of the farm or forestry enterprise that people live at or very close to their work e.g. for security or feeding of livestock.

Such development should only be permitted on the basis of a need in rural activity. Therefore the property should remain within that essential need and where the permission is subject to occupancy restrictions this condition should not be removed. This condition should retain the property for meeting the essential need upon which the permission was justified.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government Guidance contained in PPG3 and PPS7 and therefore no alternative options were considered.

## **Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions**

Agricultural occupancy conditions are imposed when a dwelling is given planning permission because it has been proven that it is essential and necessary to the running or operation of an existing agricultural business and for that reason can be permitted in the open countryside.

However problems arise when the purpose for the construction of the dwelling means it is no longer required and the dwelling could potentially be sold off for market housing where the occupants often have no connection to the rural need the property was originally granted for. Requests for the removal of such conditions should be assessed against the fact that the permission was granted originally as an exception to meet an essential rural need.

### **15. Preferred Policy Option: Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Permission will not be granted for the removal of agricultural occupancy conditions where there is evidence of a continuing requirement for such accommodation to meet the farming needs of the locality in which the dwelling is situated, including the provision of accommodation for people retired from full time farming.

- In the event of the following criteria being satisfied, planning permission will be granted for the removal of an agricultural occupancy condition provided:
  - (i) The dwelling was first occupied in accordance with the terms of the planning permission granted more than 5 years previously; and
  - ii) The Council is satisfied that the agricultural need to justify granting of planning permission for the dwelling in the first place is no longer applicable.
- In deciding paragraph (ii) above the Council shall have regard to:
  - (a) Whether the dwelling had been offered for sale for not less than 12 months at a price considered by the Council's Property Services to be reasonable to reflect the existence of the condition. The applicant can provide evidence from a qualified Chartered Surveyor which will be taken into account in determining whether the property has been marketed at a reasonable price; and
  - (b) Whether any reasonable offer (bearing in mind the above) has been made for the property.
- Details of all offers made, together with copies of the sales particulars (which should show the existence of the condition) must be submitted with the application.
- In normal circumstances the applicant would also be expected to show personal occupation of the dwelling for a period of 5 years prior to the application.

If the above criteria are fulfilled and the agricultural occupancy condition is successfully removed and the dwelling reverts to a residential dwelling with unrestricted occupancy, only small scale extensions would ever be permitted to the dwelling to minimise the adverse impact this development may have given its location within the countryside.

### **Explanation**

No alternative options were considered, as it remains important to recognise the existing justification for the exceptional circumstances which gave rise to these dwellings in the countryside. Wherever possible, the retention of the agricultural occupancy conditions attached to such dwellings should remain where the need exists. If the conditions are removed, any further development associated with the dwelling should be carefully controlled to minimise the adverse impact of the dwelling on the character and/or appearance of the countryside.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG3 and PPS7 and therefore no alternative options were considered.

## Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside for Housing

### 16. Preferred Policy Option: Re-use of Buildings in the Countryside for Housing

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals to re-use existing buildings in the countryside will only be allowed where:

- A business use would either not be viable, or would generate a significantly greater number of vehicular movements in a location remote from existing settlements.
- It would not necessitate the substantial reconstruction of the building concerned.
- The buildings are of historic or visual interest which adds to the amenity of the countryside.
- The proposal employs landscape and boundary treatments that minimise the impact of domestic use upon the building's setting.
- The proposal takes account of the fact that any residential development permitted will have permitted development rights withdrawn to allow the Council to have control over any further extensions or expansions of the building(s).
- Sufficient amenity space is provided.

### Explanation

King's Lynn and West Norfolk, given the rural nature and activity of the area, contains large numbers of buildings in the open countryside associated with agriculture and related industries. Changing farming and commercial practices have made some of these buildings redundant. While there is considerable demand for converting the more attractive structures into housing, in general a re-use for business purposes is preferable. Residential conversions can cause more harm to the character of historic structures, conflict with the objective of limiting residential development in the countryside and utilise premises that might otherwise provide local employment opportunities.

Nevertheless, there are limited circumstances in which converting a building in the countryside for business purposes is not possible, or is undesirable due to the volume of traffic that might be generated. This policy approach sets out appropriate criteria for judging proposals in those limited circumstances where a residential re-use may be acceptable.

Applicants will be required to demonstrate that re-use or redevelopment for business purposes is not viable or would generate significantly more vehicle movements than a residential use. Where a building is in a ruinous condition, or only its site remains, rebuilding for residential purposes will not be permitted (as this would be tantamount to constructing a new house in the open countryside).

Proposals that provide garden or amenity land for the re-use of buildings in the countryside will not be permitted where the garden or amenity land impairs the setting of the building or is likely to give rise to an unacceptable form of domestication. In those instances where the provision of garden or amenity land is acceptable careful consideration of the use of boundary walls and fences will be required. Permitted development rights will be withdrawn to control the construction of incidental buildings and the formation of hard paving.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG3 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Alteration or Replacement of Existing Dwellings in the Countryside**

### **17. Preferred Policy Option: Alteration or Replacement of Existing Dwellings in the Countryside**

Policies in the plan will indicate that proposals to alter, extend or replace an existing dwelling in the countryside should:

- Not result in a significant increase in the height, footprint or massing of the existing dwelling;
- Not entail development where only the site of a previous dwelling remains;
- Replacement dwellings should reflect their surroundings.

#### **Explanation**

The purpose of this policy is to help conserve the character of the countryside; limits need to be placed upon the extent to which existing dwellings may be enlarged. Otherwise, the ability to create much larger properties on existing plots could increase the intrusiveness of built development in countryside locations. For the same reason, new dwellings will be resisted where a previous residential use has in effect been abandoned, such that only the site of the previous dwelling remains.

#### **Rejected Options:**

There could be a case for stipulating a percentage increase in the size of the property e.g. 25% on the original footprint of the dwelling. This has the advantage of providing precise guidance to the applicant; however the negative aspects are that it may be too prescriptive.

## **Provision for Gypsies and Travellers**

### **Introduction**

Historically there have been problems in trying to meet the needs of gypsies and travellers both in terms of providing suitable sites and their integration into the surrounding villages and communities. However there is a continuing need to find additional sites for gypsies and travellers.

## **18. Preferred Policy Option: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers**

Policies in the plan will:

Indicate that development in the countryside to meet the accommodation needs of gypsies or travelling show people may be allowed, where a local need for the scale and nature of development proposed is demonstrated.

- Not allow more than one site near a particular village.

Set out the criteria that will be used to assess such proposals, including the requirements that:

- i) the intended occupants pursue (or have pursued) a travelling lifestyle for a significant portion of the year, for the purpose of making their living.
- ii) adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport.
- iii) the site is served (or can be served) by adequate water and sewerage connections
- iv) there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operators of adjoining land uses.
- v) the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised, and the development can be assimilated into its surroundings.

Ensure appropriate provision for gypsies and travellers identifying specific sites for gypsies and travellers in the Site Specific Development Plan Documents (DPDs).. However, if specific sites cannot be located the suitability of sites will be tested against a criteria based policy which would include the need to be sensitive to adjacent land uses, including the viability of business and communities' quality of life, as well as the need for adequate infrastructure facilities and proximity to public transport. The number of units should not be disproportionate to the size of the nearest village and in any case should not be more than 15.

### **Explanation**

The approach reflects the need to sustain suitable and appropriate sites for the gypsy and travelling communities across the Borough.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in Circular 1/06 and no alternative options were considered.



## **8 ECONOMIC REGENERATION**

The Regional Spatial Strategy Panel Report encourages King's Lynn to develop as a Key Centre for Development and Change to provide local access to services, reducing the need to travel to larger centres such as Norwich, Peterborough or Cambridge. The Council must continue to plan for growth and will seek to foster the local economy by promoting sustainable economic development including retail, employment, long-stay tourism, recreation, leisure and cultural services in accessible locations within the Borough.

### **Location of Economic Development, Retail and Tourism**

#### **Introduction**

In locating economic development, a balance must be sought between providing local services and facilities that offer convenience and reduce the need for residents to travel, otherwise consumers will become over-reliant upon the larger towns/cities outside the Borough. Failure to plan for growth can only stifle the local economy. Lost investment in the local economy will result in stagnation within local services and possible reduction of choice, increased difficulty in accessibility and reduced employment opportunity.

## **19. Preferred Policy Option: Location of Economic Development, Retail and Tourism**

Policies in the plan will indicate that::

Accessibility to services will be improved by focusing appropriate development within **King's Lynn, Downham Market** and **Hunstanton** town centres where a choice of means of transport can be maintained or improved in attractive and safe environments. Preference shall be given in particular to locations where services are accessible on foot and by bicycle.

Elsewhere within the urban areas, local centres may provide for small scale convenience shopping. Proposals for retail development exceeding 500 sq.m. trading floorspace and assembly users and other similar uses attracting large numbers of people outside the existing town and Gaywood district centre will be assessed with particular regard for evidence of:

- i) their impact on the development plan strategy;
- ii) whether the applicant adopted a sequential approach to site selection and the availability of alternative site
- iii) the impact, including cumulative impact with other recent or permitted development, on the vitality and viability of existing centres;
- iv) their accessibility by a choice of means of transport including pedestrians and cyclists;
- v) their effect on overall travel and car use;
- vi) any significant environmental impacts.

### **Explanation**

New and improved businesses, services and facilities must be appropriately located in locations which are sustainable, offer ease of accessibility by a choice of transport not simply for the convenience of reduced journey times, but also to minimise the need for separate journeys and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Location ultimately influences consumer choice beyond the realm of comparison goods; poor location effectively limits accessibility to the range of services otherwise available.

**Rejected Options:**

Unplanned growth of economic development, retail and tourism facilities in locations, which are unsustainable, not easily accessible to consumers leading to a stifling economy.

## **Growth of Towns and Gaywood District Centre**

### **Introduction**

The Council will identify a capacity for growth in the range of shopping, leisure and associated local services within the towns and the Gaywood district centre. This capacity will be defined with regard to:

- identified deficiencies in the range and mix of services, open space and scope for community and civic activity;
- availability of appropriate sites;
- accessibility by means other than the private car, particularly access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- regeneration and environmental improvement;
- employment skills;
- safety and social provision;
- ensuring high quality design in the public realm;
- the need to protect the historic town centres and character of settlements.

Current Local Plan policies advocate a trading floorspace limitation of 500 sq.m. This figure is subject to further investigation.

### **20. Preferred Policy Option: Growth of Towns and Gaywood District Centre**

- New capacity for retail, leisure and services shall be accommodated on brownfield sites in locations that can be realistically developed within the time frame of the over-riding plan without adversely affecting the character of the landscape or built environment, or the amenities of those who live or work in or near those areas.
- All new development proposed within these locations is expected to fully integrate within sustainable transportation strategies including, in particular, appropriate pedestrian and cyclist movement to and from the existing centres.

### **Explanation**

The over-arching intentions of this approach are to strengthen King's Lynn's future role as a regional shopping centre and also to improve the accessibility

and integration of edge of centre development. Most retail development will continue to be concentrated in the King's Lynn Retail Zone and, subject to appropriate sequential testing, the present Mixed Use Zones.

In both Downham Market and Hunstanton there will be continued provision for shopping and associated uses within the Town Centre Zones to support their continued role in providing a range of facilities and services for their rural catchment areas.

Proposals for general industry, and storage and distribution unsuited to town centre locations shall generally be restricted to the existing employment areas to optimise the choice of means of transport available, enable improvements to transportation strategies and minimise the need for extensive travel between settlements.

As far as possible, sequential testing will ensure new sites outside of these areas are well related to the centres to maintain the choice of means of travel and avoid the disaggregation and dispersal of services available. In the villages and rural areas, the needs of the local communities will be supported with appropriate small-scale businesses where these will reinforce community facilities and services or tourism, and there is ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel. However, this development should not result in the loss of productive agricultural land and should avoid the loss of undeveloped land unless there are overriding reasons to develop in these areas.

**Rejected Options:**

Continued expansion of out of town retail centres without careful sequential testing is disregarded as being contrary to current Government guidance (PPS6).

## **Employment Sites and Premises**

### **Introduction**

The Core Strategy policy approach seeks to develop employment opportunities with a particular focus on existing industrial and commercial land in the three main settlements of King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton. Where proposals relate to the redevelopment of existing industrial and commercial land outside these settlements and the Borough's villages, the Council will have regard to national policies relating to the protection of the countryside.

The strategy is based on the need to sustain and enhance the Borough's economic performance. The provision of appropriate, well-located additional employment floorspace is essential to ensuring the Borough's future economic well being. We are committed to ensuring that, where appropriate, local businesses have the opportunity to expand or relocate within the Borough.

## **21. Preferred Policy Option: Employment Sites and Premises**

A range of locations, types and sizes of employment premises and sites will be provided to meet the needs of the economy, particularly having regard to the needs of specific sectors of the business community within the period 2006-2021. This includes:

- Existing commitments in the form of sites with planning permission or completed since 2006.
- New allocations for employment land where recommended in the Employment Land Review.
- Development for business, industry or warehousing on existing sites, including extensions, redevelopment or intensification of use.
- Development as part of the regeneration and redevelopment package of sites identified in the Urban Development Strategy.
- The use of agricultural or other rural buildings within the objectives of the rural areas strategy.

The Preferred Option is to locate new employment development in the three main towns in order to address the balance between jobs and housing, in locations that have good access by public transport, walking and cycling, and primarily on previously developed land. Undeveloped land should only be developed where there is an overriding reason for its development, taking all sustainability factors into account.

### **Explanation**

The expansion of the West Norfolk economy can only be assured if there is sufficient quantity and quality of industrial/warehousing/office land and sites available to meet needs. The allocation of new employment sites to meet clearly identifiable requirements over the plan period is an important part of this. The preferred option is considered to be the most sustainable option that will meet the objectives.

### **Rejected Options:**

This is in line with guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 – Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms. There are no alternative options.

## **Location of Office Development**

### **Introduction**

Office buildings tend to be used more intensively than other types of business premises. It is important to locate office developments where there is

relatively good access by public transport, to reduce the need to travel by private car.

## **22. Preferred Policy Option: Location of Office Development**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals for large-scale office development (of at least 500 sq. m. floorspace or 0.5 hectare in area) on unallocated land should be limited to sites within the settlement boundaries of towns, and situated in town centres where there is capacity and where this is in keeping with the character and function of the centre.
- Where large-scale office developments cannot be accommodated within the town centres, it should be demonstrated that no sequentially preferable site is suitable or available (starting with edge of centre sites and locations with good access to high quality public transport, then out-of-centre locations).
- Proposals for minor office developments (of less than 500 sq. m. floorspace, or 0.5 hectare in area) will be allowed within the settlement boundaries where this is appropriate to the scale, function and character of the settlement.

### **Explanation**

National guidance suggests that such proposals are most appropriately located in town centres wherever possible. As well as being accessible locations this can help to support the vitality and viability of other town centre uses such as shops and restaurants. Where a suitable town centre location is not available, the policy approach would steer proposals to the next most accessible location.

The requirement to follow a sequential approach does not apply to small office schemes as it is recognised that modest employment-generating uses can help to provide jobs in rural areas, and does not generate the same number of trips. Nonetheless it will be important to ensure that any increase in traffic generated does not have an adverse impact upon the rural road network. It is therefore proposed that small-scale office development may be appropriate within the defined settlement boundaries of key service centres and other villages. Live-work units will be also encouraged especially in the villages.

**Rejected Options:**

The option of having no differentiation between larger and smaller scale sites is rejected. This option would allow large-scale development in rural areas, which is likely to face limitations on infrastructure and would be out of scale and character with the locality. While the Council recognises the need for rural employment opportunities, it would be unsustainable to locate large-scale development in such locations.

**Location of industrial and warehouse development****Introduction**

Industrial and warehouse developments are less well suited to town centre locations, due to the generation of heavy vehicle movements. However planning guidance emphasises the importance of focusing large-scale employment development in sustainable locations.

### **23. Preferred Policy Option: Location of industrial and warehouse Development**

Policies in the Plan will indicate that:

Proposals for large scale industrial or warehouse developments (of at least 500 sq m floorspace or 0.5 hectare in area) should be limited to:

- i) sites within the defined limits of the towns and key service centres;
- ii) sites within established industrial estates, distribution and business parks;
- iii) situations where an existing firm requires additional space in order to expand providing that:
  - a) the proposal does not harm the character and the appearance of the building or the locality
  - b) the proposal is in scale with the location, particularly in relation to the amount and nature of traffic generated; or
  - c) where it involves the conversion or redevelopment of suitable existing buildings in the countryside.

Proposals for minor industrial or warehouse developments (of less than 500 sq m floorspace or 0.5 hectare in area) will be allowed in the same locations, and an additionally:

- i) on sites within the defined boundaries of key service centres and other villages; or
- ii) as part of appropriate farm diversification schemes provided for elsewhere in the plan.

#### **Explanation**

Focusing such development within the towns and key service centres and on previously developed sites will prevent inappropriate development in the countryside.

As with office developments a more flexible approach is appropriate for small industrial and warehouse schemes, which can provide jobs in rural areas and boost the rural economy. The proposed approach also reflects Government support for existing businesses in the countryside and for the business re-use or re-development of appropriate rural buildings. However it will be important to ensure that even small schemes will not have an adverse effect on the local character, environment or the rural road network.



### **Rejected Options:**

The option of having no differentiation between larger and smaller scale sites is rejected. This option would allow large-scale development in rural areas, which is likely to face limitations on infrastructure and would be out of scale and character with the locality. While the Council recognises the need for rural employment opportunities, it would be unsustainable to locate large-scale development in such locations.

## **Redevelopment of office, industrial and warehouse sites**

### **Introduction**

It is essential to ensure that adequate provision of employment land and buildings are made, ensuring an appropriate selection of employment sites to provide a sufficient choice to meet foreseeable needs.

### **24. Preferred Policy Option: Redevelopment of office, industrial and warehouse sites**

Industrial and employment land which has a sustainable location will be safeguarded vigorously and development proposals should not entail the loss of established industrial estates, distribution and business parks, or of other sites used (or last used) for such purposes, unless it can be demonstrated that:

- Continued use of the site for B1, B2 or B8 purposes is no longer feasible, taking into account the site's characteristics and existing/potential market demand; or
- Use of the site for B1, B2 or B8 purposes gives rise to unacceptable environmental or traffic problems; or
- An alternative use or mix of uses offers greater potential benefits to the community in meeting local business and employment needs.

Redevelopment of employment sites in town centres will include an appropriate mixture of uses.

The only restriction on their reuse will be for uses that cause traffic, noise or other environmental effects that may cause adverse impact on neighbouring uses. Consideration should be given to redevelopment sites outside employment allocations and Built Environment boundaries; where the nature of the use needs to be located outside of towns and villages.

The Council will review employment land allocations through its Annual Monitoring Report and will allocate surplus or unsuitably located employment land for alternative purposes where appropriate.

### **Explanation**

Where established employment locations come under development pressure, this pressure can pose a threat to existing employment uses. The preferred option is considered to give a reasonable level of protection for sites for employment use but will not be too restrictive so that vacant land and buildings become derelict or previously developed land is not re-used.

The preferred approach is considered to offer the best outcome in terms of achieving a balance between recycling well-located previously developed land, protecting the amenity of surrounding areas and meeting the employment needs of the Borough.

### **Rejected Options:**

An alternative option would not include the restrictions on the redevelopment of employment sites for other uses, which could result in the loss of quality employment sites. This is contrary to PPG4 and regional and borough-wide strategies. This approach would have a significantly detrimental effect on the economy of the Borough and the region. There is not considered to be an alternative option for consideration in terms of the location of uses that cause traffic, noise or other environmental effects.

## **Promoting Tourism**

### **Introduction**

Tourism makes a significant contribution to the economic vitality of the area and it can be difficult to separate this from retail and other similar activities. Tourist attractions can exist side by side with specialist shopping and individual attractions may even incorporate shopping facilities. Many uses happily co-exist in town centres without any adverse effect; other tourist activities can introduce tensions between the seasonal demands of trade and the year round provision of routine services to those who live and work permanently in the area. Similarly, the specific demands of tourism may threaten the wider enjoyment of the countryside particularly in sensitive areas such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The historic towns of King's Lynn and Downham Market have particular interest as tourist facilities containing both a wealth of historic fabric, and, in the case of King's Lynn, a riverside frontage. These aspects of King's Lynn are highly regarded in the Urban Development Strategy.

Hunstanton also benefits from a historic centre, the legacy of Victorian development following on from the railway in the heyday of English seaside resorts.

Elsewhere within the Borough, there is a diversity of attractions that encourage, or can encourage, further tourist provision to bolster the local economy. These include the caravan parks along the east coast of The Wash; the villages and marshes of the Heritage Coast to the north and the chalk land of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; isolated and remote farms, mills and historic houses scattered throughout the rural areas.

### **25. Preferred Policy Option: Promoting Tourism**

- The Council will promote the historic parts of King's Lynn, particularly those that front onto the river, and Downham Market as tourist attractions and will encourage tourist related development that does not detract from the vitality or viability of the town centres, or the historic character of the localities or the amenities of those who live or work there.
- The Council will promote the role of Hunstanton as a holiday resort and seek to secure new and improved facilities to regenerate the vitality of the town without detracting from its viability or historic character. Regeneration of the sea-front areas may be required to contribute to or otherwise encourage improvements to public transport, walking and cycling to provide integrated and sustainable links within the town and to other coastal villages and settlements.
- The Council will promote Fens tourism and support appropriate development which is in keeping with the amenity of the area and complies with all other relevant policies in the Local Development Framework.
- The Council will promote the alternative use of agricultural buildings and the creation of small businesses within the rural areas in ways that improve the tourism infrastructure where this can be achieved without impairing a sustainable economy or adversely affecting the viability of existing retail services within villages, or adversely affecting the landscape, built environment, or nature conservation.

### **Explanation**

Many of the tourist attractions exist because of their historic relationship to the land but their attractiveness can now threaten the broader consensus to protect and conserve the natural and historic features of importance within the landscape. Balances need to be struck if the excesses of unsustainable tourism are not to erode the values of acknowledged importance.

#### **Rejected Options:**

To allow tourism development and attractions across the Borough in locations that are unsustainable which adversely affects sensitive sites and does not deliver the objectives of sustainable tourism.

## **Caravans, Cabins and Camping Sites**

### **Introduction**

Holiday and touring caravan parks are an important part of the self-catering holiday sector within the Borough. Whilst this needs to be actively encouraged to support both tourism and economic development throughout the Borough, caravans and other holiday related development are also very intrusive on the landscape. This is particularly the case along the coast, where the popularity of the area and the cumulative impact of caravan and holiday related development is compromising the environmental quality of the area and the special character and condition of the heritage coastline for which a large number of tourists are attracted to the area each year. The Coastal Zone as currently defined on the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan proposals map is an area of land which is particularly sensitive to development and which is important to protect because of its environmental amenity. The approximate area of the Coastal Zone is shown on the Key Diagram on Page 123. This area will be reviewed as part of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.

### **26. Preferred Policy Option: Caravans, Cabins and Camping Sites**

Policies in the plan will seek to address the following:

- Given the existing provision and in the interests of protecting landscape quality, holiday site operators will be encouraged to improve the quality of their sites or relocate away from the most sensitive areas. Permission may be granted for the upgrading, sub-division or relocation of holiday caravans, cabins and camping sites in environmentally sensitive areas of the Borough where this would lead to beneficial visual, ecological or environmental improvements.

#### **Within the Coastal Zone and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**

- New or extended sites for static holiday caravans, touring caravans, holiday cabins and camping will not be permitted in the Coastal Zone as

shown on the Proposals Map or the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**Outside the Coastal Zone and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**

- Away from the Coastal Zone shown on the Proposals Map and the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, new or extended touring caravans, holiday cabins and camping sites which do not impair acknowledged planning interests, particularly landscape character and nature conservation will be permitted.
- Holiday cabins will only be permitted in locations which are appropriate for holiday use and fulfill the requirements of sustainable development. Any cabins permitted will be constructed with materials which are appropriate to the character of the location without providing any adverse visual, landscape or environmental impacts.

**Explanation**

The preferred options are in the interests of safeguarding suitable accommodation for the self-catering element of the tourist industry within the Borough, whilst ensuring this does not compromise the environmental quality of the area.

**Rejected Options:**

Alternative options that have been considered are to allow holiday related development in all parts of the Borough. Firstly it may not be essential to provide this type of accommodation in all areas of the Borough. Therefore given the vulnerability and sensitivity of both the Coastal Zone and the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is essential that any development permitted in these locations respects the special character of this distinctive area. To allow unrestricted holiday related development in this area would cause severe landscape and environmental impacts, which in the long term could adversely compromise the attraction of the area to visitors.

Secondly to limit caravan, cabin and camping site development to holiday use only will prevent applicants securing what in principle could amount to a dwelling in the countryside, which would be contrary to national, regional and local level policy in respect to new development in the countryside.

**Key Service Centres**

The Borough experiences particular problems arising from its physical size and dispersed population within the rural areas. Clearly, it will be inappropriate for residents to be required to travel to town centres for all of their needs and some local service is necessary.

To address this issue the Council has identified key service centres serving the broader rural areas, to maintain an appropriate level of convenient retail services and facilities for those residing outside of the towns. Whilst establishing key service centres has already been identified as a preferred option earlier in this paper within 'Achieving Sustainable Development' it is important to make reference to the settlements which have been identified as key service centres within this section:

- Dersingham
- Emneth/Upwell/Outwell (combined)
- Heacham
- Methwold/Stoke Ferry (combined)

We cannot continue to permit new businesses that have no necessary ties to rural locations and so depend upon excessive travel for their service and customer needs.

Diversification of agriculture and creation of small businesses within the rural areas in ways that improve accessibility to retail, services or local employment is encouraged where this can be achieved without impairing a sustainable economy or adversely affecting the landscape, built environment, and nature conservation.

## **Safeguarding Rural Services - Retention of Village Facilities**

### **Introduction**

The loss of the last remaining shop, public house or other key facility in a village or neighbourhood can have a serious impact upon access to services (particularly for those without the use of a car), as well as increasing the need to travel and harming the overall vitality of the local community.

### **27. Preferred Policy Option: Safeguarding Rural Services**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Development proposals should not result in an unacceptable reduction in the availability of key services and facilities in a settlement, unless it can be demonstrated that:
  - i) there is no reasonable prospect of the established use being retained or resurrected; and
  - ii) there is little evidence of public support for the retention of the facility.
- When considering whether an unacceptable reduction would occur,

consideration will be given to:

- i) Whether the facility is the last of its type within the settlement; and
- ii) Whether the loss of the facility would have a detrimental impact upon the overall vitality and viability of the rural centre.
- iii) For the purpose of this policy, key services and facilities include local shops, post offices, public houses, petrol filling stations, public halls and health care facilities.

### **Explanation**

In key service centres proposals that would result in a significant loss of facilities (even though this may not involve the last shop or service of a particular type) could also have a serious impact. The services of a business consultant will be used to assess the financial and other business information submitted in relation to this policy.

### **Rejected Options:**

This option is in line with PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, and there are no alternative options.

## **Farm Diversification**

### **Introduction**

Changes in farming practice, the decline of agriculture and changes to the European Common Agricultural Policy continue to have a major impact on the rural economy.

There is a need to facilitate the diversification of farm-based operations in order to support agricultural businesses and sustain the rural economy. Farm diversification can entail various types of enterprise, such as food processing, farm shops, tourist accommodation, small scale specialist retail, creating workshops for letting to local firms and providing recreation facilities. It is important to ensure that diversification schemes bring long-term and genuine benefits to individual farm operations and the wider rural area, and do not undermine village centres.

### **28. Preferred Policy Option: Farm Diversification**

Policies in the plan will indicate that developments forming part of farm diversification schemes should:

- Make an ongoing contribution to sustaining the farm business as a whole;
- Not involve built development on undeveloped sites unless:
  - i) the re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings on the holding for the intended use is not feasible, or an opportunity exists to demolish an existing structure and re-build in a more appropriate location; and
  - ii) the siting and landscaping ensure that any impact upon the character and appearance of the countryside is minimised, and the development can be assimilated into its surroundings.
- Not involve residential development unless it complies with all other policies in the plan.

Diversification of agriculture and creation of small businesses within the rural areas in ways that improve accessibility to retail, services or local employment is encouraged where this can be achieved without impairing a sustainable economy or adversely affecting the landscape, built environment and nature conservation.

### **Explanation**

Diversification will in most cases involve changing the use of land and/or re-using (or redeveloping) existing buildings. Development on new sites will be discouraged unless it is the only feasible option, or enables the clearance and replacement of a badly sited structure. The policy approach outlined above sets out necessary criteria to ensure that any building on undeveloped sites is small in scale and carried out in the most environmentally sensitive manner.

### **Rejected Options:**

1. Any building on undeveloped land in association with farm diversification schemes could be restricted from alternative uses in order to protect the countryside from further development. However, this would restrict the ability of farm businesses to diversify, which in itself could harm the character of the countryside (as healthy farm businesses are necessary if farmers are to be able to maintain their holdings).

2. A more flexible approach to the siting and/or scale of new development could be employed (for example, by removing the presumption that existing buildings should be re-used where possible, or by increasing the maximum size of buildings allowed). However, this would increase the likelihood that new buildings would be erected in preference to re-using existing structures, thereby increasing the amount of built development in the countryside. If a retail use were involved (such as a farm shop), allowing a greater scale of



development would in addition be likely to attract a greater volume of car-borne trips, contrary to Government guidance.

## **Re-use and redevelopment of rural buildings for employment**

### **Introduction**

The Borough contains large numbers of old farm buildings and other structures that are of historic or visual interest and make an important contribution to the character of the area. Many buildings in the countryside used for farming and other activities can be re-employed for a variety of purposes and the Council is keen to resist the loss of important employment sites in rural areas.

### **29. Preferred Policy Option: Re-use and redevelopment of rural buildings for employment**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals to re-use existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes (including tourist accommodation and retailing) should conserve the character of any buildings of historic or visual interest.
- Proposals to redevelop existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes (including tourist accommodation and retailing) should:
  - i) be limited to situations where the existing building is substantially intact;
  - ii) not involve a significant increase in the scale of built development;
  - iii) not result in the loss of a building of historic or visual interest;
  - iv) not result in an unacceptable increase in traffic movements to local residents.

### **Explanation**

The re-use and redevelopment of redundant farm buildings will be focussed primarily for further rural employment and appropriate business use and marketed for that purpose, prior to consideration of residential use. In villages, smaller settlements and rural areas priority will be given to the re-use of existing buildings for employment and community uses before residential.

It is however important to ensure that any proposal is appropriate both for the building itself and for the area in which it lies; any schemes for their re-use should ensure that these qualities are conserved, whether the building is listed or not.

Many proposals for the conversion of modern farm buildings are also received. In such cases particular regard will be had to other policies in the plan concerning the impact of development on its surroundings, including the scale and nature of traffic generated. These considerations apply to all proposals, but are particularly relevant to the re-use of modern buildings in the countryside, as most are large and of utilitarian appearance.

The redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside may also be permitted and this can range from partial reconstruction to their complete replacement. Given the need to protect the character of the countryside, additional safeguards are needed to ensure that this does not result in an increased scale of development or the loss of buildings that should be retained. Nor will redevelopment be permitted where a building is in a poor state of repair or only its site remains, as this would mean allowing building in locations where the previous structure has, in effect, disappeared (or is in the process of doing so).

**Rejected Options:**

There are no alternative options. The re-use or redevelopment of existing buildings in the countryside for business purposes is encouraged by national guidance (PPS7), subject to appropriate criteria being included. The criteria suggested above are appropriate given the need to avoid adverse impacts upon buildings of historic or visual importance, or upon the wider character of the rural areas.

## 9 TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL

### Improving Transport Services and Travel

#### Introduction

The panel report following the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) seeks to further develop King's Lynn as a Key Centre for Development and Change providing local access for services reducing the need to travel to larger centres such as Norwich, Peterborough or Cambridge. Transport provision needs to support the regeneration and sustainable growth of King's Lynn. King's Lynn is a Regional Transport Node with provision for enhanced public transport to, from and within the town. Transport links into the smaller towns in the Borough between those towns and the Regional Transport Node are critical. The draft RSS identified the King's Lynn Parkway Railway Station as a key element of strategic transport infrastructure.

The Borough Council has worked with the County Council to produce a Transport Strategy as part of the Urban Renaissance Strategy. This is now reflected in the 2006 - 2011 Local Transport Plan for Norfolk's King's Lynn area's Transport Strategy. Other parts of the Borough are covered by the Market Towns or the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty strategies.

While the demand for travel continues to grow policies need to reduce the impact of transport on climate change and the wider environment. Reducing congestion and improving road safety also have to form part of the overall approach. Transport infrastructure is a key element to underpin new development.

#### **30. Preferred Policy Option: Improving Transport Services and Travel**

The Borough Council will work with the County Council to develop a safe and good transport system that increases the service available to residents of the Borough; that recognises the particular needs of rural residents; that assists accessibility to services for all residents that do not have the use of a private car; and that encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport, while recognising the essential role of the private car.

#### Explanation

A safe and good transport system should minimise the risk of accidents while enabling people to carry out their journeys efficiently. Rural residents have particular transport issues which in sparsely populated areas are difficult to resolve. Car travel is often the only option in these rural areas. The private car is an essential mode of travel in many parts of the Borough where there is no viable alternative.

Market towns and larger villages perform key roles as service centres for their surrounding areas. It is important to improve their function as centres for transport interchange; to improve accessibility to, within and between them; and to manage the impact of traffic on them.

**Rejected Options:**

This policy is in line with Government guidance in PPG13; with the Regional Transport Strategy; and the Local Transport Plan for Norfolk 2006-2011. No alternative options were considered.

**Improving Accessibility**

**31. Preferred Policy Option: Improving Accessibility**

**Policies in the plan will indicate that:**

- The Council will seek to improve accessibility to services within the town centres of King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton where an attractive choice of means of transport can be provided, particularly public transport, walking and cycling.
- New development proposed within these centres should be located to minimise the need to travel and to reduce reliance on the private car.
- Some villages or groups of villages will act as key service centres. Services will include local transport interchange, where appropriate.
- In villages the Council will not permit development that will generate significant additional vehicular traffic.

**Explanation**

Local transport interchanges should offer the opportunity to transfer between modes in the key centres. This might include, for example, secure cycle parking at key bus stops.

**Rejected Options:**

This policy is in line with Government guidance in PPG13; with the Regional Transport Strategy; and the Local Transport Plan for Norfolk 2006-2011. No alternative options were considered.

## **Safeguarding Transport Routes**

Existing plans protect former railway track beds and routes for possible future public transport or walking and cycling routes. It is important to continue this protection where it is still appropriate. The precise routes to be protected will be reviewed and included in the Site Specific document. To reduce congestion and improve safety a network of routes need to be protected from the opening-up of new accesses that would reduce their ability to act as free-flowing corridors of movement.

### **32. Preferred Policy Option: Safeguarding Transport Routes**

The Council will continue to safeguard potential transport routes and corridors of movement.

## **Travel Plans and Parking Standards**

Travel Plans and the use of parking standards can help to reduce the impact of new development on the transport system, promoting sustainable transport choices and reducing reliance on cars for work and other journeys. Existing employers should also be encouraged to adopt them.

Parking standards for cars and bicycles will be developed jointly with the County Council. The parking standards for private cars will be a maximum; for cycles they will represent a minimum. In accordance with the principles of PPG13 to reduce the reliance on the private car we will seek to reduce car parking to the minimum necessary without threatening the viability or operation of new development. Reductions in parking provision should be encouraged in areas with good access to jobs and services. The adjustment to be applied will follow a site-specific assessment of accessibility that in the case of larger sites will form part of a transport assessment.

Car parking provision seeks to strike a balance between providing sufficient spaces for a development to cater for its parking demand on site and not over providing and encouraging unnecessary car trips. Where car parking is restrained it can lead to parking on the adjacent highway. This can also lead to blocking of footways and cycling routes. The impacts of on street parking will very much depend on the function and nature of that route. We will seek to protect key transport routes from on street parking that can lead to congestion and delay.

### **33. Preferred Policy Option: Travel Plans and Parking Standards**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- The Council will require transport assessments and Travel Plans which emphasise sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on private cars to accompany applications for new developments which are likely to have significant transport implications.
- The Borough Council will work with the County Council to develop parking standards for new developments. Sufficient on site parking will be provided to avoid on street parking problems where developments are adjacent to principal, primary and main distributor routes and key bus routes.

#### **Explanation**

Significant transport implications would normally be expected to arise from major development (the building of 100 or more houses or the creation of more than 1,000 sq. m. of new commercial, industrial or retail floorspace).

#### **Rejected Options:**

This policy is in line with Government guidance in PPG13; with the Regional Transport Strategy; and the Local Transport Plan for Norfolk 2006-2011. No alternative options were considered.

## 10 SPORTS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

### General Open Space Standards

#### 34. Preferred Policy Option: General Open Space Standards

The Council will seek to maintain an overall provision of general open space of 15 ha/1000 people, of which 1.7 ha/1000 people will be suitable for outdoor playing fields.

In support of this strategy the Council will not permit the loss of existing sports, recreation or open space facilities by redevelopment unless appropriate alternative provision is made with a similar or improved level of accessibility or a detailed assessment clearly demonstrates there is no longer any need for the provision of the facility within its catchment area.

#### Explanation

It is important that the Borough maintains sufficient open space which is both accessible and of a satisfactory standard. The provision of open space in the Borough should reflect national requirements.

Access to public open space should be enhanced throughout the Borough. Where development cannot avoid open space, the LDF must put into place measures to secure replacement open space of a better standard and in an equally accessible location.

#### Rejected Option

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and no alternative options were considered.

### General Open Space Standards

#### 35. Preferred Policy Option: Open Space Standards for New Development

The Council will seek to require general open space provision as part of future housing development. General open space provision can comprise:

- Parks, gardens and amenity greenspace
- Outdoor sports fields
- Children's play space

The ratio of general open space provision should be 2.5 ha/1000 people.

Within housing schemes of more than 15 dwellings, the open space provision is expected to be provided within the development unless a significant public benefit can be demonstrated to exist by provision of a joint facility or improvement of an existing facility nearby. For schemes comprising 5 to 15 dwellings, the developer may elect to make a financial contribution to the Council for the provision of, or improvement of, alternative open space facilities. Schemes comprising fewer than five dwellings will be exempt from these requirements.

The rate of financial contribution required will be reviewed from time to time but generally follow the formula:

$$\text{Area} \times \text{average housing land price} + \text{maintenance.}$$

### **Explanation**

As new development locates on previously developed land rather than greenfield sites some 90% of future housing is likely to be provided on sites accommodating less than 50 dwellings.

It is important to ensure new development acts as a catalyst to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space provision. Developers should therefore be given the opportunity to make alternative financial contributions to improve local provision in the first instance or, where immediate provision is adequate, be aggregated with other contributions to make improved provision elsewhere. The type of open space required e.g. playing fields, equipped play areas will be based on the latest sports, recreation and open space report undertaken by the Borough Council.

### **Rejected Option:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and no alternative options were considered.



# 11 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

## Water, Air and Soil Resources

### Introduction

Unpolluted natural resources are fundamental in sustaining a healthy environment and providing a high quality of life. The impacts we have on water, soil and air in our homes and gardens, in commerce, industry and in agriculture, have a direct aspect on the environment. Therefore the protection and conservation of these resources is needed to safeguard the long term future of the environment.

### 36. Preferred Policy Option: Water, Air and Soil Resources

Policies in the plan will indicate:

- Support for proposals to protect and sustainably use soil resources and restore degraded land and soil to beneficial after uses which enhance and are in keeping with the natural environment.
- Support for proposals to ensure the sustainable use of localised water resources and protection of our rivers, lakes, canals, streams, wetlands, reservoirs, ground water resources and flood areas, such as Welney.
- Encouragement and support for infrastructure for cleaner transport fuels and to reverse the growth of motor traffic.
- That proposals for new development should not exacerbate air pollution in existing and potential air quality management areas.
- That hedges will be protected and new planting to help to reduce soil erosion will be encouraged within development proposals. The planting of trees in urban developments will be encouraged in order to combat the heat island effect.

### Explanation

As the Borough has such high quality agricultural land, it is important that it is protected and degraded areas restored. The after-use of these restored areas should contribute to the character and ecology of the landscape.

The Borough's water resources are utilised for many purposes, proposals which affect this resource need to ensure that they do not damage, pollute or jeopardise their benefit for future generations.

Development which adversely affects air quality in the Borough should not be permitted as this does not maintain a healthy and sustainable environment,

and can affect human health. This will seek to increase air quality both within the air quality management areas and across the Borough as a whole.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS1, PPS7, and PPS23 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Flood Risk**

### **Introduction**

There are large areas of the Borough which are at risk of flooding. With the effects of climate change, this risk is predicted to increase over time. Therefore it is important to locate development in areas of the lowest risk to people and property.

### **37. Preferred Policy Option: Flood Risk**

Policies in the plan will indicate that development should:

- avoid areas at flood risk.
- In areas where development is proposed which are subject to flooding, apply the **sequential test**. This means that the applicant will need to demonstrate that there are no alternative sites available in areas where there is a lower probability of flooding that would be acceptable for the type of development proposed.
- If after applying the sequential test, there are no alternative sites, the applicant will need to show through the **exception test** that:
  - the location of the development has wider sustainability gains which outweigh the disadvantages of being located in a flood risk area.
  - the development will help sustain the local community in terms of its economic and social benefits.
  - a flood risk assessment shows the risk is acceptable and can be managed.
  - the development incorporates flood mitigation measures.
  - the development will not increase the risk to properties elsewhere.

### **Explanation**

Where development is proposed in areas at flood risk, developers should investigate alternative sites which may also be suitable but less likely to flood. This has benefits both for the developer in terms of lower development costs

and the ability to sell the property and the potential occupiers through lower insurance premiums and more importantly not being subject to the devastating destruction of flooding.

In sustainable locations such as the towns of King's Lynn, Hunstanton and Downham Market as well as the key service centres identified, regeneration and development of previously developed sites is essential. However, where development is necessary to sustain the local community and to avoid economic and social blight, it will be essential to show through a flood risk assessment, that the development provides a satisfactory level of flood protection.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG25 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Water Quality and Drainage Systems**

### **Introduction**

The groundwater resources in the aquifers of the Anglian Region are an essential source for public supply, industry and agriculture as well as sustaining base flows in the rivers.

### **38. Preferred Policy Option: Sewage and Drainage Systems**

Policies in the plan will indicate that development should:

- Protect potable water resources, the quality and flows of aquifers and surface and coastal waters from waste water discharge or the disturbance of contaminated land.
- Promote the use of sustainable drainage systems (SUDS).
- Prioritise the use of sustainable drainage systems over watercourses, with surface water drainage into sewers being the least favourable option.
- Only be permitted where main foul sewers and sewerage treatment works are of an adequate capacity and design or will be provided in time to serve the development. If connection to main sewer is not possible or feasible then a package treatment plant will be considered. Septic tanks will only be considered as a last resort and then only where they will not lead to significant environmental, amenity or public health problems.

### **Explanation**

The groundwater resources in the aquifers of the Anglian Region are an essential source for public supply, industry and agriculture as well as sustaining base flows in the rivers. The clean up of contaminated groundwater

is difficult, expensive and sometimes impossible. It is therefore better to prevent or reduce the risk of groundwater contamination, than deal with its consequences. Similarly, abstraction and dewatering can affect quantities available and engineering works can obstruct groundwater flow within an aquifer. The area of high chalk upland to the east of King's Lynn is an important local source of ground water public supply. Boreholes and other sources provide local water supplies and it is essential that their gathering grounds are protected from pollution and that demand is not allowed to exceed supply.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in draft PPS 25 and DETR Circular 03/99 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Noise/Dust/Dirt/Odour/Vibration**

### **Introduction**

Noise, dust, dirt and odour and vibration have become an inherit consequence of our day to day activities and lifestyles. To improve the quality of life for all in the Borough it is important that development is not permitted which contributes to or exacerbates the existing situation.

### **39. Preferred Policy Option: Noise/Dust/Dirt/Odour**

Policies in the plan will indicate that:

- Proposals in locations where noise generation would adversely affect the reasonable occupation of noise-sensitive development or environmentally /ecologically sensitive areas will not be permitted.
- Proposals will not be permitted where the development is likely to produce emissions of smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, smell, vibration and light pollution which are seriously detrimental to the amenity and environment of the area.
- In localities in or adjacent to internationally or nationally designated sites proposals which generate noise, dust, dirt and odour that will adversely affect the integrity of the site will not be permitted.
- Measures to reduce emissions of noise, dust, dirt and odour will be encouraged.

### **Explanation**

Many developments and land use practices may be subject to the generation of noise, dust, dirt, odour and vibration which may cause annoyance or detriment to the area.

#### **Rejected Options:**

1. To allow development in locations where noise, dust, dirt, odour and vibration is inevitable, but to provide appropriate mitigation measures to alleviate any adverse impacts associated with the proposal.
2. 'Do-nothing' – having no consideration for noise, dust, dirt, odour and vibration in permitting development proposals.

## **Waste/Recycling**

### **Introduction**

To move towards a sustainable society which conserves resources for future generations and creates a healthy environment with minimal waste and landfill sites, the way in which materials are disposed of needs to be addressed. Waste therefore needs to be seen as a resource in the Borough and efforts made to allow everyone access to reducing and recycling their waste.

### **40. Preferred Policy Option: Waste/Recycling**

The Preferred Option clearly reflects (i) the waste hierarchy and (ii) the proximity principle to:

- Ensure adequate provision of recycling bins and facilities for recycling.
- Provide guidance for sustainable waste management in all forms of new development.
- Make proposals to support local community recycling projects.
- Protect areas of designated landscape and nature conservation value from adverse environmental effects from the handling, processing, transport and disposal of waste.
- Incorporate waste recycling facilities in new and existing developments.

### **Explanation**

The Council has little input to the allocation and functioning of waste disposal centres and recycling facilities as it is not a Waste Disposal Authority.

However it is important that recycling and efforts to reduce the Borough's waste are encouraged, including the recycling of trade waste and using waste

for land reclamation. Sensitive areas need to be protected from the adverse effects of processing the Borough's waste, from handling through to disposal.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS23 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Pollution**

### **Introduction**

It is important that the Borough reduces its pollution. This can lead to economic growth and employment, creating a healthier environment which can be enjoyed and preserved for future generations and helps to conserve our valuable natural resources.

### **41. Preferred Policy Option: Pollution**

Policies in the plan will contain:

- Proposals to reclaim and restore derelict and contaminated land in the Borough, particularly where it would enable suitable development to make effective use of brownfield sites and produce healthier living and environmental conditions.
- Proposals to minimise increases in pollution by locating generation plants as close a proximity as possible to sources of fuel.
- Proposals to limit pollution in the first instance. However in the unfortunate event pollution occurs, limit and reduce the adverse impact of pollution on local amenity, landscape and wildlife and control development in proximity to potential sources of pollution.
- Proposals not to permit pollution arising from development, increased motor traffic or as a result of intensive farming which would have a negative impact on wildlife close to international and other designated sites.
- Proposals not to permit development that affects the quality and flows of water sources, both ground water and surface waters, by waste water discharge or disturbing contaminated land. However, the plan will encourage the restoration of contaminated land where possible, and not use this as an excuse for not doing so.

- Proposals to localise patterns of living, working and access to services, facilities, recreation and shops to reduce the need to use the car.

## **Explanation**

With the demand for extra housing it is important that the Borough's greenfield sites are protected from unnecessary development. Therefore if previously developed land which has been subject to contamination can be restored, this reduces the pressure on greenfield sites. This will also help to improve the quality of life and the environment by removing risks to human health and preventing contamination spreading further.

It is also important to decrease reliance on the car by creating and enhancing more sustainable communities and encouraging public transport, at the same time recognising the differentiation between urban and rural areas in requiring the car.

## **Rejected Options:**

1. Leave contaminated land and continue to focus development on greenfield sites. This option has been rejected as Government policy gives strong protection to greenfield sites and areas of countryside. These sites should be retained for their own sake and therefore requires brownfield (often contaminated) sites to be fully utilised. Leaving contaminated sites and directing further development to greenfield sites could have a significant impact upon the visual, ecological and aesthetic aspects of the countryside.

2. Pay no regard to locating generation plants within close proximity to the fuel source. This option has been rejected as having no regard to the proximity of the fuel to the location of the generation plant and would mean that unnecessary transport would take place which would be unsustainable and uneconomic in terms of the viability of this form of energy generation.

## **Geology and Land Stability**

### **Introduction**

The Borough has high quality agricultural land and many sites which are designated for their geological interest. Land instability is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Natural resources tend to be resilient to climate variations. They can eventually recover from disturbances, such as drought, floods and even from human-induced impacts, such as overgrazing. When land is degraded, however, this resilience is greatly weakened and soils can become waterlogged or eroded. This has both physical and socio-economic consequences. As the Borough has such a strong association with

agriculture and provides some of the best exposures of the Anglian till, chalk formations and experiences the 'running silt' in the Fens, it is imperative that every effort is made to reduce the threat of land instability.

#### **42. Preferred Policy Option: Geology and Land Stability**

Policies in the plan will state:

- Development on land where there are issues of land instability will require a stability report.
- A presumption against built development in areas of coastal landslides or rapid coastal erosion.
- Proposals for stabilisation works will require an environmental assessment.
- Proposals to recommend land reclamation or other remedial action to enable beneficial use of unstable land to reduce pressures on the Borough's greenfield sites.
- Support for the maintenance, enhancement and restoration of significant geological sites.
- Seek to protect international (i.e. the Borough's North Coast including Hunstanton Cliffs), national (i.e. Bawsey SSSI) and local (i.e. Blackborough Pit) designated areas of geological importance.
- Promote the incorporation of geological features into the design of development.
- Development which seeks to conserve or enhance land stability and geological interests should be permitted. Development which harms geology or land stability and which cannot be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm should provide for adequate mitigation measures. If an alternative site cannot be found or mitigated against then compensation should be sought. If harm cannot be prevented, mitigated against or compensated for then planning permission should be refused.

#### **Explanation**

In some cases it might be sufficient that actual or potential instability can reasonably be overcome. In other cases, more detailed guidance might be appropriate. A stability report describing and analysing the issues relevant to ground instability and indicating how they would be overcome may be needed. The stability report should demonstrate an adequate appreciation of



ground and groundwater conditions and any other relevant factors influencing stability.

Stabilisation works may, by their size and location, require an environmental assessment. This will identify the condition of the land and any negative impacts stabilisation works would have on the ecology.

Physical constraints of an area of unstable land should be identified and prospective landowners and developers informed. Land reclamation or other remedial action may be recommended to enable beneficial use of unstable land.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS9, PPG14 and Government Circular 06/05, and no alternative options were considered.

## 12 COASTAL PLANNING

### Introduction

The Norfolk coastline is primarily composed of Quaternary deposits derived from the Anglian glaciations approximately 500,000 years ago, underlain by chalk bedrock. The nature of these glacial deposits creates a coastline susceptible to erosion and flooding due to enhanced wave action from the North Sea. A history of storm surges along the east coast, coupled with increasing sea levels has created a coastline both dynamic and volatile to change.

In West Norfolk we have an area of over 40km of coastline, most of which is low-lying, a lot of which is naturally defended. This coastline is a honey-pot for tourist activity, attracted by the naturalness and beauty of the area as a heritage coastline and for its conservation interests.

The current management of most of the Borough's coastline comes under the policies of Sediment Sub cell 3A of the North Norfolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). The current approach is to 'Hold the Existing Line' which basically means to retain the status quo, through either annual recycling and importing of beach material or continuous maintenance and reconstruction of existing defences. With the predictions of sea level rise and the pressures to adapt to climate change, to retain the existing line in the long term is likely to be unsustainable. The SMP already recognises 'retreating the existing line' to be a medium to long term option in some locations. The first SMP for this area was published in 1996, and it is pending a review in Winter 2006/07.

In order to address the challenges and pressures we will face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as adapting to climate change, development pressures, rising sea levels, exacerbated coastal flooding and erosion, Government has recognised the need to develop a more strategic and integrated approach to managing coastal flooding and erosion risks management in England. 'Making Space for Water' is a 20 year Government strategy which seeks to implement a more holistic approach to managing coastal erosion and flood risk, to reduce the threat to people and their property, and to deliver the greatest environmental, social and economic benefits in achieving the wider objectives of sustainable development.

With this in mind, the Local Development Framework needs to address these issues and, with the production of the new SMP, Coastal Habitat Management Plans (CHAMPs), Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan, Wash Estuary and Special Area of Conservation Management Plans, determine the appropriate management response to this dynamic coastline.

### **43. Preferred Policy Option: Coastal Management**

Improve the existing mechanisms of coastal management and move towards a process of integrated coastal zone management which deals with the physical constraints of a dynamic coastline, integrates and acknowledges social, recreational, economic, physical and environmental issues by:

- Defining the coastal zone for planning purposes.
- Where possible, changing the approach to management of the West Norfolk coastline by moving away from heavily engineered defences to a more sustainable approach of managed retreat and 'naturally functioning coastlines'.
- Adopting the precautionary principle approach to land affected or likely to be affected by coastal erosion or land instability, which will be mapped. Proposals for new development within this zone will not be permitted where erosion is likely to occur and/or jeopardise the development or the amenity of occupants during the lifetime of the development.
- Only permitting proposals for minor works (which do not increase habitable accommodation e.g. bedrooms) to existing buildings where the proposals pay regard to the risks of erosion and flooding.
- Not permitting proposals for development, which increase the frequency or rate of coastal flooding and/or erosion.
- Not permitting proposals for development, which do not require a coastal location, within the coastal zone, and seeking opportunities for development further inland.
- Permitting proposals which enhance or regenerate parts of the developed coast, providing they do not impair any acknowledged physical constraints/risks (flooding, erosion or land instability) as well as nature conservation, landscape or archaeological interests.
- Positively considering any proposal, which brings environmental, social and economic benefits providing it does not impair any physical constraints/risks (flooding, erosion, nature conservation, landscape, townscape, historic and archaeological environment) and does not increase the threat from coastal flooding and erosion to people's lives and property.
- Planning for the impacts of climate change and mitigating for potential losses of habitats, undeveloped land, productive agricultural holdings and historic features on the coast. Coastal planning and development should not compromise the options for adaptation in the future.

- Identifying existing development (including transport infrastructure and access) that could be vulnerable to future changes in the coast, and planning for mitigation and relocation where needed.
- Considering the impact of off-shore turbines within the remit of coastal planning. Whilst this is outside the controls of the planning system, and is dealt with under other legislation, the impact of infrastructure coming onshore from such developments needs consideration. This includes the impacts such development could have on weakening defence lines if these need to be breached to allow infrastructure to come ashore.
- Opening up access to open spaces along the coastline where this is viable and sustainable.

### **Explanation**

With the dynamic nature of the West Norfolk coastline a step change is needed in its management. However it is recognised that the wider social and economic considerations as well as the environmental ones need to be effectively managed when taking a new management approach.

The purpose of this policy response is to begin to address and adapt to climate change balancing against this pressures for development in coastal locations. Such an approach will seek to improve and enhance the coast in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, regenerate rundown parts of the developed coast, and assist in restoring stretches of despoiled coastline. This will still ensure that community and economic needs are addressed but in a way that is sustained against physical constraints and safeguarding the environment in the long term.

### **Rejected Options:**

Holding the existing line – is a genuine alternative option which is considered, however the certainty of this option remains in doubt until the second round of Shoreline Management Plans emerge. Funding for defences to safeguard the existing line is down to the DEFRA priority scoring system and therefore until funding to hold the line in the long term is established, consideration of this option as a realistic one, should be rejected.

## 13 COUNTRYSIDE & LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

### Countryside Protection and Development in the Countryside

#### 44. Preferred Policy Option: Countryside Protection & Development in Countryside

Policies in the plan will indicate:

That the area outside the defined settlement and defined as countryside on the Proposals Map shall be an area of development restraint which will be protected for its own sake. Development will be permitted in the countryside where it supports the rural economy or communities, and helps to conserve the countryside and where it is:

- Necessary for the purposes of agriculture, farm diversification, forestry, recreation, tourism and other enterprises with an essential requirement to locate in the countryside, or
- For facilities, which are essential, to meet the needs of local communities which cannot be accommodated satisfactorily within built up areas, or
- For new uses in existing rural buildings consistent with the building's scale, massing, character and location, or
- For the extraction of minerals or the disposal of waste.

Any agricultural building built in the countryside once redundant from the permitted use shall be demolished and the site reinstated to its previous use as countryside. The building shall not be converted to any alternative uses.

#### Explanation

It is Government policy that development in the countryside should be strictly controlled, in order to conserve its character and natural resources. This policy approach summarises the limited circumstances in which development outside settlements will be allowed.

#### Rejected Options:

The only other option considered would be to allow unrestricted development within the countryside. This approach could not be supported by national or regional policy; as such an approach would cause severe impacts on the visual amenity of the countryside.

## Protected Areas of Landscape Quality

### Introduction

The Borough benefits from a diverse and complex landscape, from the flat panoramic views of the Fens, the tranquil coastal marshes, through to the straight blocks of coniferous and mixed plantations of the wooded slopes and the regular network of geometric arable fields. Interspersed are historic towns and villages, ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens and designated sites of important landscape and wildlife quality, such as the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

It is important that the Borough protects the environment from development likely to have adverse effects on the landscape's visual amenity and environmental value.

The quality of our landscape needs to be protected and enhanced to promote tourism and provide income and jobs in the Borough, as well as maintaining a healthy environment for the population to live and work in.

Where development cannot be avoided then mitigation measures or enhancement of the landscape should be implemented.

### **45. Preferred Policy Option: Protecting and Enhancing the Landscape**

Policies in the plan will:

- Protect the distinctive character or appearance of the landscape.
- Protect and enhance landscape features such as trees, woodlands, orchards, hedgerows, heath lands, lakes, ponds, streams, commons, fen reclamation banks and salterns.
- Seek to protect parks and gardens valued for their historic characteristics from development which would have an adverse affect on their integrity.
- Promote good standards of building design and landscaping which contribute to the visual amenities of the landscape and respect nature conservation interests, and restore and create new habitats in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan priorities.
- Encourage an increase in woodland cover and planting of native trees in small and large scale development which respects and enhances local landscape character.
- Promote and encourage the expansion of agri-environment schemes to increase the landscape, historic and wildlife value of farmland.

- Ensure that development in rural areas is carefully planned to avoid adverse impacts in the countryside.

### **Explanation**

As well as the need to protect the landscape it is important that the landscape is also enhanced so that a healthy environment is maintained. Development can sit comfortably in the landscape provided that it is sensitive to the surroundings and sustainable.

### **Rejected Options:**

- 1) Do nothing – This would lead to inappropriate development and have serious environmental consequences.
- 2) To allow development in locations where there would be a detrimental affect on the landscape and its features, providing adequate mitigation is imposed to alleviate effects. This would spoil the unique features of Norfolk which adds to the quality of life.

## 14 BIODIVERSITY

### Enhancing, Protecting and Creating Areas of Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

#### Introduction

Biodiversity is short for biological diversity. It refers to the variety of life on earth (plants, animals, micro – organisms).

It is vital that the Borough recognises its biodiversity and nature conservation areas as a valuable resource which adds to a better, more healthy and sustainable standard of living. Therefore enhancing and creating opportunities for biodiversity across the whole Borough is as important as protecting areas already recognised for their biodiversity benefits.

#### **46. Preferred Policy Option: Enhancing, Protecting, Creating Areas of Biodiversity and Nature Conservation**

Policies in the plan will seek to undertake the following:

- Conserve, protect and enhance the Borough's biodiversity, encourage habitat creation and restore lost or damaged environmental features where possible in designated and non designated sites of biodiversity importance.
- Plan strategically when looking at environmental issues especially when issues cross authority boundaries and recognise the contributions that areas and features of biodiversity make individually and in combination. In doing so, opportunities to strengthen connections to create a network of biodiversity interest.
- Proposals to plant new woodlands or well treed areas should protect the biodiversity and character of existing woodlands and areas of nature conservation and archaeological significance. Encourage broadleaved native planting which benefits the natural, historic and built landscape.
- Seek to improve the wildlife and diversity of the Borough by enhancing and protecting the quality and extent of natural habitat, geological and geomorphological sites, the physical processes they depend on and the species they support.
- Agricultural land in the Borough will be protected from impacts which would adversely affect its biodiversity and visual qualities. Mitigation will be sought where there is no alternative solution, for example where agricultural practices would necessitate the need for some disturbance.



- Proposals to enhance and create biodiversity in green spaces and among developments to create areas which contribute to a healthy environment and to people's sense of well being will be supported. The creation of new spaces should be encouraged.
- Encourage planting schemes (where these would not have adverse effects on habitats), particularly in urban environments to improve the character of the townscape, and conserve and enhance the ecological value of roadside verges. These should be well maintained to bring long term benefits.

### **Explanation**

It is important that biodiversity is treated at a strategic level as species and habitats do not respect local authority boundaries. This way biodiversity issues can be dealt with more effectively.

Planting programmes can add to or damage the biodiversity of the area. Some areas such as heathland need large open spaces to establish so planting would have a negative effect. Planting can be beneficial in reducing flood risk.

In areas which are to be planted, native species are more beneficial to biodiversity and add character to the local area by creating a more 'natural' landscape.

Geological and geomorphological sites can be harder to monitor as their processes occur underground in the soil, rocks and cliffs.

These sites are important traces of our past and influence the biodiversity which they support. Climate change, flooding, pollution and development can all affect these important sites, therefore close monitoring and management of these sites is needed to remove or decrease adverse effects.

The protection and enhancement of biodiversity can bring a wide range of benefits. Apart from safeguarding and maintaining natural functioning ecosystems, it can also contribute to landscape character, public amenity, health and well-being and provide attractive environments for tourism and other businesses.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS9 and no alternative options were considered.

## Special Sites

### Introduction

Some areas are designated for their nature conservation and biodiversity value. The highest designation being internationally recognised sites; Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites.

Nationally designated sites fall into Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Proposed Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves. Locally designated sites such as County Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves also receive some protection although limited in comparison to internationally and nationally designated sites.

There are also local areas which do not fall under any type of designation. These areas may have rare or important species present, are unique habitats or may be valued by local communities beyond their intrinsic biodiversity interest. These sites are still significant in their own right and also need to be protected.

### 47. Preferred Policy Option: Special Sites

- Sites of nature conservation value of international and national significance should be protected from development which would, either directly or indirectly, harm their reasons for designation.
- Local sites of nature conservation interest and geological importance will be protected and enhanced and permission for development will be refused where the damage would outweigh the development benefits, and cannot be mitigated or compensated for.
- Where it is appropriate and it will not adversely affect the integrity of sites of nature conservation interest, access should be created, enhanced and maintained.

### Explanation

International and national sites are protected under PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, and by law under the Habitats Directive and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These sites are our most important areas of biodiversity and will be afforded protection from development proposals.

Sites which are not designated but are important areas for biodiversity will need to be monitored by the authority and protected from development proposals that could damage their interest.

Improving access to such sites, providing measures are put in place to avoid adverse impacts, has the potential to increase the amount of open space and contact with nature available to residents. Additionally, allowing people to visit these sites has the potential to increase tourism in the Borough.

#### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS9 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Habitats and Species**

### **Introduction**

Like designated sites there are rare or valued habitats and species which are recognised by law and/or the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership as being particularly vulnerable to change. These habitats and species will need to be protected from any negative impacts. As well as these acknowledged habitats and species there are a number of local habitats and species in the Borough which are not recognised by law but which are still valued by local communities and add to the nature conservation interest of the area. These need to be protected and enhanced to promote a healthy environment.

#### **48. Preferred Policy Option: Habitats and Species**

- Ancient woodlands will be protected from development which would cause adverse effects. Areas of ancient woodland will be identified that do not have statutory protection. Aged or 'veteran' trees found outside ancient woodland are valuable for biodiversity and in providing a sense of place and their loss or damage should be avoided.
- Ecological networks such as river corridors, hedgerows, ponds, and woodland will be protected to maintain a healthy functioning ecosystem and avoid fragmentation. Seek to avoid or repair and protect networks from fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats. Strengthen and integrate networks within developments.
- Conserve and protect natural habitat and species types that have been identified in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 section 74 list, BAP listed species and habitats, brownfield and greenfield sites and important local nature conservation sites, and identify opportunities to enhance and add to them and minimise any adverse effects.
- The Borough's orchards will be protected from development and proposals which would destroy or adversely affect this threatened habitat. Seek to conserve old orchards through management and enhancement programmes to prolong their lifespan and biodiversity value.

- Plan for the effects of climate change by identifying those habitats and species that are most at risk and adopt appropriate mitigation and relocation strategies where appropriate.
- Sand and clay pits are a haven for biodiversity in the Borough and therefore will be protected from any effects which would damage these unique habitats and the species which depend upon them.

## **Explanation**

In addition to protecting habitats and species for their intrinsic value, these assets also have benefits for the wellbeing and health of residents and visitors to the Borough. The protection and enhancement of characteristic habitats and species has the potential to improve the appearance of the Borough, leading to indirect positive effects on the local economy.

There are few ancient woodlands and veteran trees in the Borough. Veteran trees can be hard to locate and due to their rarity and fragility, difficult to conserve. Protected species such as bats and owls favour these habitats and therefore it is important to save these natural features.

The Tree Warden Scheme can assist in locating relicts of ancient woodland and veteran trees and help to bring this to the Council's attention so that Tree Preservation Orders can be made and the trees/woodland monitored.

Networks of habitats can include natural corridors such as rivers, streams and hedgerows. There are also patches of habitats such as ponds, groups of trees, orchards and areas of grassland. These enable species to move around and colonise other areas, thus decreasing genetic inbreeding and establishing healthy species. When these networks are destroyed then species become isolated in the wider landscape and gradually decrease, therefore networks need to be conserved and strengthened where damage has occurred in order for species to flourish.

Protected species and habitats will need to be monitored effectively in designated areas and on the Borough's brownfield and greenfield sites where, although not designated, they could house species of important nature conservation interest. Therefore development will need to take into account the biodiversity of the location.

The Borough's orchards are decreasing rapidly. These are valuable habitats which support a varied and wide population of species and provide an important link to other habitats.

As there is such a great loss of this characteristic habitat to Norfolk, further loss has to be avoided through protection from development and agricultural intensification.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government Guidance contained in PPS9 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and therefore no alternative options were considered.

## **Development and Biodiversity**

### **Introduction**

Important areas of biodiversity and nature conservation need to be protected from development, for example new housing developments can cause an increase of dog walkers which can have negative effects on sites where there are ground nesting birds. However biodiversity should not be seen as a negative burden on the developer. Sometimes biodiversity features can be incorporated into developments and add an interesting feature, or mitigation can be put in place where there are no alternatives.

It should be recognised that biodiversity can be incorporated into our surroundings and add to a better standard of living and therefore biodiversity features should be encouraged where possible in developments, for example with the inclusion of bat boxes or creating habitats such as ponds.

### **49. Preferred Policy Option: Development and Biodiversity**

Policies in the plan will:

- Consider the nature and location of proposed development and how this would affect biodiversity i.e. light, noise and pollution. Ensure minimal damage to biodiversity and protect international, national and local sites of nature conservation importance and enhance where possible.
- Where development would result in significant harm to nature conservation interests the applicant will need to locate on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm. Where there is no such alternative, then mitigation measures need to be put in place. Where proposals would result in significant harm to biodiversity and geological interests which cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated against, appropriate compensation measures should be sought. If that significant harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- Development occurring on land within or outside a designated site that would have an adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) will not be permitted.

- Encourage the incorporation of biodiversity features in or alongside development, whether or not the development is expected to have adverse impacts on biodiversity.
- Permit and encourage proposals where the principal objective is to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Where possible, encourage the creation of new habitats as part of development proposals.

### **Explanation**

Developers need to consider how their development may affect the biodiversity of the area. Disturbance through construction, added transport pressure, water abstraction and increased run-off can all impact on the local environment.

Environmental Impact Assessments can aid in highlighting and mitigating such effects. The Biodiversity SPG can also help to steer development towards decreasing the loss of biodiversity.

Noise, light and pollution arising from development can harm designated sites even if the development is some distance away, depending on the nature of the development and the species or habitat concerned, as some species/habitats are more susceptible to change than others. Therefore proposals for development need to take into account adjacent designated sites and decide on the level of impact and make decisions based on this.

Mitigation measures can include the creation of new habitats, transferring species to another suitable habitat or restoring the area to its present state. It should be noted that mitigation is a last resort as it takes many years for a species and habitat to return to its natural value, and in some cases it will not be possible at all.

The Council will support proposals to conserve and enhance biodiversity by providing advice, working with the Biodiversity Partnership for Norfolk and gaining support and advice from organisations such as English Nature, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Countryside Agency, and providing grants in some cases.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS9 and no alternative options were considered.

# 15 CONSERVATION OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## Introduction

The strong, local identity of West Norfolk owes much to the rich quality of its architecture and the special character of its towns and villages. Conservation policies seek to protect this valuable asset, to ensure appropriate uses for the historic building stock, to enhance the built environment and to encourage regeneration.

### 50. Preferred Policy Option – Conservation of the Built Environment

- The Council will seek to preserve the fabric of its listed buildings by:
  - Ensuring that applications to change uses or alter buildings of special architectural or historic interest are considered so that no damage is caused to historic fabric and materials and the character and setting is protected.
  - Where buildings are vacant and the original use has ceased, seeking alternative uses.
- New development in Conservation Areas will be required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. The demolition of buildings which contribute to the character or appearance will not be permitted. Development adjoining Conservation Areas will be controlled to protect the setting and views in or out.
- There will be a presumption against the demolition of historic buildings of local interest where new development is proposed.
- High quality of design will be encouraged which respects and is sympathetic to its location in terms of scale, form, design and materials, without stifling experiment, originality or initiative.
- The Council will encourage the use of local building materials and also the salvage and re-use of existing material where possible.

## Explanation

Listed buildings are a relatively small proportion of the building stock. Their importance is recognised by their listed status and their fabric, form, appearance and setting needs to be protected.

The listed building protection project will be completed with the intention of providing owners with 'log books' explaining the special qualities of their property and giving appropriate advice. Advice will be provided to owners and occupiers to ensure appropriate repair and maintenance of listed buildings. The information gathered as part of the listed building protection project will be used to inform the Buildings at Risk register and will be updated annually. The list will also include scheduled monuments (including ruined churches) as

appropriate. Action will be taken to ensure the proper preservation of buildings on that list.

Grants can be used to ensure the survival of architectural features or the use of particular crafts and skills to properly repair historic buildings. Where unauthorised works have taken place, the Council will take appropriate action to remedy the situation and where buildings have been allowed to fall into serious disrepair, will consider emergency works and/or compulsory purchase. Repairs notice action will be taken where necessary.

The survival of historic buildings often depends on ensuring their continued use. The use for which the building was established is the most appropriate, but where that is no longer possible, alternatives which do not damage the fabric, historic interest, form or setting will be considered. A residential use should not be the first option. Other less-damaging uses may be more appropriate.

There are a number of buildings in West Norfolk which though not of sufficient interest to warrant listing, nevertheless have particular qualities of appearance or local historical connection to merit some protection. We will continue preparing a 'local list' to help identify those buildings which make such a positive contribution to the Borough's character.

The mix of buildings of different ages, their traditional form and use of local materials make up the character of individual towns and villages. This special quality is protected by means of designating Conservation Areas. It is important to ensure that development within conservation areas does not harm the very character that designation seeks to protect.

Traditional buildings within the Borough have made use of local building materials of brick, flint, carstone and chalk. Pantiles (red, black and grey 'smuts') and clay peg tiles (pintiles) are used on roofs with some straw or reed thatch. Where local building materials are used, they should respect local tradition and style. Carstone, for example, when used should match the existing colour, style and coursing – golden Snettisham carstone will not match the darker Downham Market carstone and ironstone conglomerate. Similarly, chalk blocks (clunch) are usually coursed and chalk lump crudely coursed, but rarely random and certainly not laid in a crazy paving random pattern. Galetting, the placing of small pieces of stone, flint or clinker, between mortar joints, is a tradition within the Borough and a feature of some conservation areas.

The salvage of existing material ensures the recycling of resources and it is particularly important where the material is now difficult to source. Red chalk (Hunstanton red rock) and silver carr (Sandringham sandstone) are examples.

Enhancement and management schemes will be prepared for conservation areas. These schemes may include improvements to the public realm – street furniture, paving – or grant schemes for private owners to encourage improvements, particularly where partnership funding can be secured. Such



schemes help protect the character of conservation areas; they can also help to revitalise an area, particularly as part of a regeneration programme.

Guidance will be provided to help residents and developers. The style of windows and doors is important in protecting the character of conservation areas. Replacement windows can have a damaging effect on the character of some areas and the Council will consider extending existing Article 4 directions to prevent further damage.

Design guidance will be prepared to ensure good standards of design of shopfronts. Control over shopfront design is required to improve the quality of the environment and to protect and improve the character of shopping areas. Particular concerns include the excessive use of plastics and illumination, which 'cheapen' the appearance, the use of over-large fascia signs and the use of corporate design having little regard to local character.

**Rejected Options:**

The approach is in line with Government guidance in PPG15 and no alternatives were considered.

## **16 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This element of the Preferred Options Report sets out preferred options and seeks to provide solutions to issues, which are important to this Borough.

### **Advertisements and Areas of Special Control**

#### **Introduction**

All outdoor advertisements will affect the appearance of a building or locality where they are displayed. The main purpose of the advertisement control system is to ensure that the display of outdoor advertising makes a positive contribution to the appearance and enhancement of the local environment.

The advertisement control system covers a very wide range of advertisements and signs including:

- Posters and notices
- Placards and boards
- Fascia signs and projecting signs
- Pole sign and canopy signs
- Models and devices
- Advance signs and directional signs
- Estate agents' boards
- Captive balloon advertising
- Flag advertisements
- Price markers and price displays
- Traffic signs
- Town and village name-signs

Most outdoor advertisements are subject to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 as amended in 1994 and 1999. Under these regulations some advertisements are excluded whilst others qualify for 'deemed consent' provided that they conform to certain conditions. They must:

- Be kept clean and tidy
- Be kept in a safe condition
- Have the permission of the owner of the site on which they are displayed (this includes the Highway Authority if the sign is to be placed on highway land)
- Not obscure, or hinder the interpretation of, official road, rail, waterway or aircraft signs, or otherwise make hazardous the use of these types of transport
- Be removed carefully where so required by the planning authority.

Additional controls may apply to the display of advertisements on listed buildings and on the site of a scheduled Ancient Monument. In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Conservation Areas stricter controls may apply to the display of advertisements that do not normally require the express consent of the Local Planning Authority.

An Area of Special Control covers the whole of the rural area except for Downham Market, Heacham, Hunstanton and part of the beach areas. Stricter advertisement controls apply in this area. There is a lower maximum height limit, and a smaller maximum size of letters or characters, on all advertisements displayed with 'deemed consent'. Some classes of advertisement, in particular general poster hoardings, may not be displayed at all. The area currently designated, as an Area of Special Control will be reviewed as part of the Site Specific Allocations & Policies Development Plan Document.

### **51. Preferred Policy Option: Advertisements and Areas of Special Control**

When considering applications for the consent to display an advertisement policies in the plan will seek to:

- Have regard to the impact of the proposal upon the amenity of the area and public safety. Planning permission will be granted provided that the proposal is:
  - 1) sympathetic in size, appearance, design and position to the building or site on which it is displayed and any illumination does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
  - 2) not unduly prominent;
  - 3) not detracting from the character of the surrounding area;
  - 4) not adversely affecting the highway or public safety.
- Within the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments, the Borough Council will require all advertisements to be of a high standard of design with no illumination and where appropriate, may restrict certain categories of deemed advertisement consents by use of the relevant directions.

### **Explanation**

The purpose is to ensure that outdoor advertisements are sufficiently controlled to minimise any adverse impact these could have upon the immediate and surrounding area, paying particular regard to maintaining the

character of our historic heritage in particular the Borough's conservation areas, listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPG19 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Public Amenity**

### **Introduction**

The Government advises that in determining planning applications account should be taken of the interests of third parties by determining whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings, which ought to be protected in the public interest. Good neighbourliness is amongst the yardsticks against which development proposals can be measured.

### **52. Preferred Policy Option: Public Amenity**

Policies in the plan will seek to:

- Promote good standards of building design and landscaping
- Respect for visual and residential amenities
- Maintain safe road and secure environmental conditions
- Maintain secure social conditions.

### **Explanation**

Policies in the plan should ensure that new development contributes to and where possible enhances the amenity of the locality. Development should incorporate proper landscaping and protect areas of importance in terms of nature conservation and biodiversity. Developments should be secure and help improve the safety within the locality. Proper highway considerations always need to be taken into account.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS1 and no alternative options were considered.

# Design

## Introduction

The environment of the Borough is of a high, and in many cases, exceptional, quality. Consequently developers should aim for a high quality of design and landscaping in all new developments. A well-designed scheme, which respects the local environment, can do much to make new developments acceptable to the local community. It is recognised that the achievement of good design rests primarily with developers, their architects and agents, but it may be helpful for all concerned to work with a clear framework of design principles appropriate to the area, derived from an appreciation of its established character.

### 53. Preferred Policy Option: Design

Policies in the plan will:

- Promote high quality architecture, which improves the visual appearance of the locality and recognises what makes places special and distinct.
- Ensure the scale of development takes account of local factors.
- Create buildings and places of interest, with the use of appropriate layouts, form, pallet of materials and design.
- Ensure the scale and mass of new-build will have regard to the characteristics of existing built form(s).
- Avoid overlooking where possible and allow adequate sunlight into development.
- Promote good connections between existing places and proposed development and within the proposed development. There should be logic to the development, which allows people to access locations by a variety of transport means and which takes into account the needs of people with disabilities.
- Promote layouts which encourage walking and cycling.
- Promote designs which encourage the development of communities.
- Provide a mix of uses where possible and acceptable to improve the vitality of places.
- Incorporate green corridors, which aid biodiversity.
- Require the incorporation of public art in large-scale development.
- Minimise light pollution.
- In King's Lynn, take into account the aims and objectives of the Urban Development Strategy.
- Incorporate Secure by Design standards.

### Explanation

Design is an important aspect of sustainable development. Creating buildings and places that are functional but also visually attractive makes them desirable locations to live and maintain. Taking account of a variety of issues

at an early stage in the design process, which are important to the quality of life for people, can significantly improve the development. Design needs to be of a standard that will stand the test of time, helping to create safe communities. Village design statements may become supplementary planning documents (SPD) in relation to this policy.

**Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance contained in PPS1 and no alternative options were considered.

## **Securing Planning Obligations**

### **Introduction**

Planning obligations or "Section 106 agreements" are enforceable terms negotiated between local planning authorities and developers, usually in the context of planning applications, and seek to make development acceptable. Developers can also offer obligations as unilateral undertakings.

Obligations might be used to prescribe the nature of a development; or to mitigate a development's impact or to secure a contribution from a developer to compensate for loss or damage created by a development. The outcome of all three of these uses of planning obligations should be that the proposed development concerned is made to accord with published local, regional or national planning policies. Consequently, a planning obligation must be:

- relevant to planning;
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the proposed development;
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development; and
- reasonable in all other respects.

## **54. Preferred Policy Option: Securing Planning Obligations**

- In determining applications the Council may seek planning obligations to secure appropriate benefits reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development. These may seek to secure the following:

### **1) Community Facilities**

Proposals likely to give rise to requirements for buildings and facilities normally provided by public authorities, including schools.

### **2) Affordable Housing**

Any permission granted for affordable housing or residential development comprising an element of affordable housing shall be regulated by a planning obligation to ensure the provision of affordable housing within the development and also ensure the benefits of affordable housing will be enjoyed by the initial and successive occupiers.

### **3) Public Infrastructure**

The Council may seek planning obligations to ensure that development is provided with appropriately timed utilities and services.

### **4) Public Open Space**

This provision will be regulated by planning obligations. Where any financial contribution falls short of the overall cost of provision the contribution may be held by the Council to pool with other contributions to achieve eventual provision. Where the Council or other public body are to operate and/or maintain facilities provided, a maintenance payment may also be required. Any facilities remaining within the control of the developer may be subject to an obligation setting out terms such as public access and maintenance regimes.

## **Explanation**

Development plan policies are crucial in justifying the seeking of any planning obligations since they set out the matters, which, after consultation with potential developers, the public and other bodies, are agreed to be essential in order for development to proceed. What is sought must also be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects. Planning obligations should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure or to secure contributions to wider planning objectives beyond those necessary to allow consent to be given for a particular development.

## **Rejected Options:**

The above policy is in line with Government guidance and no alternative options were considered.

## **Telecommunications**

### **Introduction**

Modern telecommunications are an essential and beneficial element in the life of the local community and in the national economy. New communications technology has spread rapidly to meet the growing demand for better communications at work and at home, in business, in public services and in support of electronic commerce. Fast, reliable and cost-effective communications can attract business to an area and help firms remain competitive, thus contributing to the achievement of other policy goals, including increased employment opportunities. Good communications can enrich life at home and offer new choices in education and entertainment, in shopping and banking. Modern telecommunications can benefit the environment through reducing the need to travel, and hence reducing vehicle emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants.

The aim of telecommunications policy is therefore to ensure that people have more choice as to who provides their telecommunications service, a wider range of services from which to choose, and equitable access to the latest technologies as they become available.

At the local level, this technology manifests itself most publicly in requirements for “mobile phone” type masts. Although larger masts may require specific planning permission, many benefit from “permitted development” rights where planning applications are not required; nevertheless, the Borough Council may intervene in certain circumstances. Accordingly, the Council expects new development to be sited and designed to minimise visual and environmental impacts.

### **55. Preferred Policy Option: Telecommunications**

Policies in the plan will ensure:

- Development providing or associated with telecommunications infrastructure is, subject to technical and operational considerations, and is sited and designed to minimise any visual or environmental impact particularly in or near to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other locations of nature conservation or landscape value. This may require the sharing of existing facilities or erection of antennae on existing buildings or other structures.
- Where the Council receives Prior Notification of proposed telecommunications infrastructure and the siting or design does adversely impact upon the visual amenity or environmental qualities of an area the Council may require prior approval of the detailed siting or appearance of the development and so ensure the impact is minimised.
- Where the Council is not satisfied that proposals achieve minimal impact upon the visual amenity or environmental quality of the area and that there



remains a reasonable possibility of utilising alternative designs or relocating to alternative sites without prejudicing technical and operational considerations the Council may refuse to permit the development.

- Where prior approval has not been required and it subsequently appears to the Council that the implemented siting or design has not minimised the visual or environmental impact and alternative siting or appearance is available the Council may intervene to secure improvements that minimise such impact.

### **Explanation**

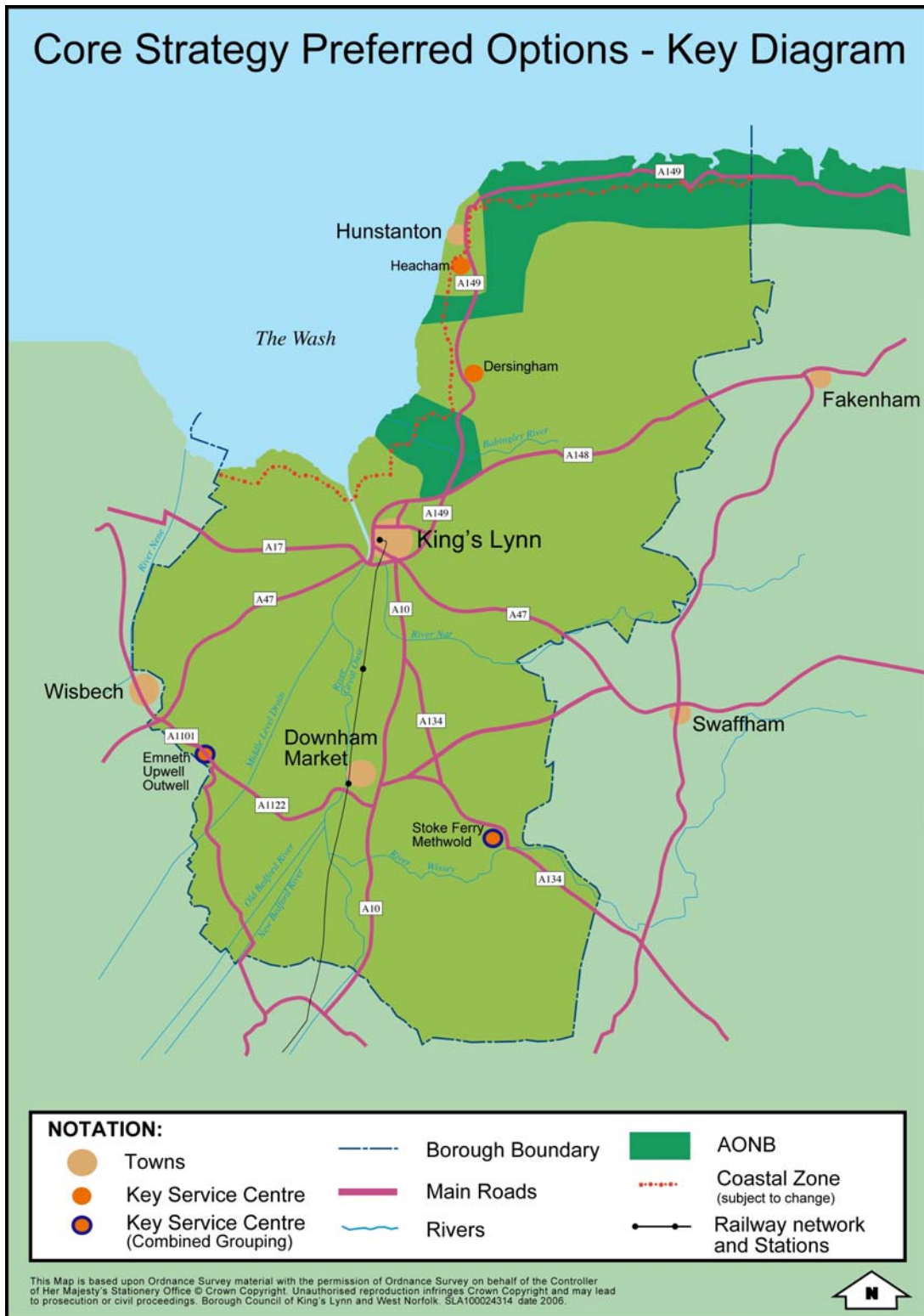
Health considerations and public concern can, in principle, be material considerations in determining applications for planning permission and prior approval. However, present Government guidance (Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications) stresses the planning system is not the place for determining health safeguards. All new mobile phone base stations are expected to meet guidelines established by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and all applicants should include with their applications, a statement that confirms this. In addition, the applicants should also provide a statement for each site indicating its location, the height of the antenna, the frequency and modulation characteristics, and details of power output. Where a mobile phone base station is added to an existing mast or site, the operator should confirm that the cumulative exposure will not exceed the ICNIRP guidelines.

### **Rejected Options:**

The above approach is in line with Government guidance in PPG8 and no alternative options were considered.

# 17. KEY DIAGRAM

## Core Strategy Preferred Options - Key Diagram



## 18 SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The submitted Core Strategy will have the following scope and structure:

1. Issues, needs, natural resources and constraints facing the area.
2. Summary of regional spatial strategy requirements.
3. Relationship to other development plan documents or saved policies. Impact of other regional/local initiatives and strategies e.g. regional and local housing strategy, economic strategies, community strategy, local neighbourhood renewal strategy.
4. Spatial vision and spatial objectives.
  - Overall Vision/Objectives
  - Spatial Strategy for King's Lynn
  - Spatial Strategy for Downham Market
  - Spatial Strategy for Hunstanton
  - Spatial Strategy for the Rural Areas
5. Summary of proposed strategy, including options for the type, mix and location of development. Policy themes will include:
  - Achieving Sustainable Development;
  - Housing;
  - Economic Regeneration;
  - Transport and Travel;
  - Sports, Recreation & Open Space;
  - Countryside and Landscape Protection;
  - Environmental Protection;
  - Coastal Planning;
  - Biodiversity;
  - Conservation of the Built Environment;
  - General Considerations.
6. Key diagram showing how developments relate to one another
7. Details of specific consultation arrangements, in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement or Regulations if former is not in place.
8. Information on how to respond.
9. Response form.

# **SCHEDULE 1: SUMMARY OF REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS**

## **What is the East of England Plan (EEP)?<sup>1</sup>**

The East of England Plan is the document that sets out the strategy to guide planning and development in the East of England to the year 2021.

The Plan encompasses economic development, housing, the environment, transport, waste management, culture, sport and recreation, mineral extraction and more. Its geographical spread covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Suffolk, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

## **Key features of the draft East of England Plan**

Key proposals included:

- planning for up to 421,500 new jobs across the East of England up to 2021, to meet future economic growth needs and in particular to meet the regeneration needs of less prosperous areas.
- provision of 478,000 new homes by 2021 (nearly 60,000 have already been built since 2001 and, of the balance, more than half already have planning permission or are allocated in existing development plans).
- a major increase – more than doubling – in the supply of social rented, key worker, and other forms of affordable housing, to address housing shortages in the region (someone earning £25,000 a year can afford to buy a property in only 7 out of the region's 48 districts).
- ensuring that at least 60% of all new development takes place on previously developed ('brownfield') land.
- proposals for more sustainable forms of transport, seeking to reduce the rate of growth in car and lorry traffic and promoting public transport, walking and cycling.
- proposals for environmental and social measures, such as more energy/water efficient development, investment in education, skills training and health services, and cultural and recreation development.

The draft Plan rejected:

- a second runway at Stansted Airport.
- the need for a further 18,000 homes requested by the Government.

The Plan warned that significant additional investment would be needed in the region's social, environmental and physical infrastructure if it was to achieve its desired outcomes.

## **Why is the East of England Plan important?**

The Plan has a key role in contributing to the sustainable development of the region. It sets out policies which address the particular regional and sub-regional circumstances of the East of England. These policies provide a development framework for the next 15 to 20 years that will influence the nature of places and how they function, and inform other strategies and plans.

A major feature of the Plan is that it identifies the significant investment that will be needed in social, environmental and physical infrastructure if it is to achieve its desired results. That investment will come from a variety of sources, including central and local government, and private developer funding.

### **How will the Plan affect me?**

The Plan sets out proposals which have a bearing on where we work and live and how we move about the region, the provision of health and education services, sports, recreation and cultural facilities. It also makes proposals for improving access to skills and training, addressing problems of social exclusion and the need for regeneration, crime reduction and the impact of climate change.

### **Who has produced the East of England Plan?**

It has been produced by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), a voluntary regional chamber comprising 102 members drawn from every local authority in the region plus community stakeholders.

EERA was given the task of producing the Plan because it is the statutory regional planning body under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Within the Assembly, production of the Plan has been led by the Regional Planning Panel.

### **How many more jobs will there be in the region?**

The draft Plan provided for 421,500 new jobs in the East of England between 2001 and 2021.

To put this into context, it is estimated that employment in the region grew by 221,000 in the decade between 1991 and 2001 i.e. at a slightly higher rate than the one now proposed.

The Plan aims to support and develop the regional economy and to ensure it continues making a significant contribution to national, regional and local prosperity. It also aims to ensure that less prosperous areas can catch up.

The Plan sets out a range of policies to help make this happen and, in particular, it looks to local authorities to ensure that their local development plans help deliver the job targets.

## **How many more people will there be in the region?**

Nearly five and a half million people live in the East of England (mid-2003). It is estimated that a further 648,000 people will live in the region by 2021. Nearly 60% of household growth will come from the existing population and the remainder will result from more people moving into the region than out.

## **How many more houses will there be?**

The draft Plan provided for 478,000 new dwellings in the region between 2001 and 2021.

This took account of the need to:

- increase the amount of affordable housing to meet the needs of:
  - key workers, particularly those in the lower paid public and private sectors i.e. people working in health and education services, bus and train drivers and other transport workers, shop workers and clerical staff;
  - people who are homeless, sharing overcrowded houses and flats or who are unable to leave their parental home to live independently;
- ensure there are sufficient homes to meet the long term needs of the region's increasing workforce;
- cater for more people living in the region as a consequence of natural growth of the existing population and in-migration to the region;
- acknowledge that there will continue to be many people who will live in the region but commute to London for work;
- meet the needs of a society in which people are living in smaller households. This is mainly due to an ageing population living in smaller households as children leave home, but also due to an increased tendency for more younger and middle-aged adults to live in single adult households (with or without children).

Nearly 60,000 have already been built since 2001 and, of the balance, more than half already have planning permission or are allocated in existing development plans.

## **What land will be used to build on?**

The Plan aims to ensure that at least 60% of all new development in the region is provided on previously-used ('brownfield') land or by re-using existing buildings. Not only will this help minimise the amount of greenfield

land used for development, it will provide an opportunity to maintain and improve the quality of life in urban areas.

## **Implications of the Draft Plan for King's Lynn & West Norfolk**

The Plan identified a Sub Region based around King's Lynn as the Sub Regional Centre. King's Lynn was identified as a key centre, a regional retail centre and a regional (transport) interchange centre. King's Lynn & West Norfolk was a Priority Area for Regeneration. The Plan required us to provide for 11,000 houses (550 annually) in King's Lynn & West Norfolk between 2001 and 2021.

## **Implications of the Panel Report Recommendations for King's Lynn & West Norfolk**

The Draft Plan was subject to public consultation between December 2004 and March 2005. An Examination in Public was held between November 2005 and March 2006 by an independent panel appointed by the Secretary of State. The panel's report was published on 22 June 2006. The Government will consider the Panel's report before publishing proposed changes to the Plan for a twelve-week period of consultation. The proposed changes are likely to be published in November 2006.

At present the Report has no formal status and is not open to comment. The Plan should be adopted next Spring (2007). The Panel recommendations have implications for the Preferred Options report. The most significant is in recommending an increase of 1,000 to the **housing provision** for the Borough to 12,000 houses (2001 to 2021). It is felt that this can be accommodated in King's Lynn in line with the Core Strategy, utilising urban capacity and some urban extensions. Another significant change is in replacing the King's Lynn Sub Region with a designation of **Key Centre for Development and Change**. The policy refers to a 50,000 population target. Again this remains in line with the thrust of the Core Strategy.

The Panel Report now names King's Lynn as a **Regional Transport Node**. This designation would replace the Regional Interchange Centre status from the draft Plan. The Panel felt that changing the name would more clearly convey the purpose.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk is still a **Priority Area for Regeneration** in Policy SS5 as an area with weak economic performance and high deprivation. This is subject to a Panel request for further editing to improve clarity because it is not always clear whether it is the whole district or just a town within it which is being identified. There was also seen to be a lack of clarity on the nature and policy implications of the 'priority' accorded to these locations.

The panel recommend a **job growth** target of 5,000 jobs for the Borough.

King's Lynn is named as a **major town centre** under the policy for towns and cities of regional strategic importance for retail and other town centre purposes. The draft plan used the term 'regional centre' to describe King's Lynn and other places now termed major towns.

An **affordable housing** target of 35% is recommended to be achieved in the Region overall. The Panel recognised the need for flexibility for higher or lower targets to be included in LDDs to reflect local assessments.

The detailed requirements for **energy efficiency in buildings** in Policy ENV.8 are dropped in favour of a more strategic approach to the topic and the inclusion of appropriate policies in LDDs.

A new policy to promote **water efficiency** is suggested with a target of 25% efficiency savings in new development and 8% in existing development over 2006 levels.



## **SCHEDULE 2: RELATIONSHIP WITH DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS, SAVED POLICIES & OTHER STRATEGIES**

The King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan was adopted in November 1998 and covers the period to the end of 2006. The impact of the new Planning Act (2004) was to automatically "save" all its policies until September 2007. A number of policies from the Norfolk Structure Plan 1999 are also saved. These are listed in the Local Development Scheme and in the draft Regional Spatial Strategy. Over the coming years, Local Development Plan Documents will be produced to replace the saved Local Plan policies and proposals. As each new Development Plan Document is adopted, the policies, proposals and supporting text in the Local Plan it replaces will be withdrawn.

The Core Strategy is the key document to which other Development Plan Documents will be linked and be in conformity with.

### **Impact of Other Regional/Local Initiatives and Strategies e.g. regional and local housing strategy, economic strategies, community strategy, local neighbourhood renewal strategy**

The Core Strategy has to relate to and deliver other key regional and local strategies.

### **Regional Strategies**

Some of the key regional strategies which will influence the Local Development Framework are summarised below. As there are at least 19 regional strategies this section picks out those thought to have the most significance for the LDF.

#### **Regional Economic Strategy**

A shared vision: the regional economic strategy for the East of England represents the latest revision of the regional economic strategy for the region, which was originally produced in 1999 and revised in 2001. This document takes into account, policy initiatives, data and research that post-date the production of the 2001 strategy.

The regional economic strategy sets the long-term vision for the sustainable economic development of the East of England.

This strategy should be considered alongside the regional spatial strategy for the East of England which covers the period up to 2021. The regional economic strategy is formally reviewed every three years but it is also a live

document that is subject to an ongoing and transparent process of monitoring and review.

The regional economic strategy is one of a suite of regional strategies. Production of these strategies is overseen or is the responsibility of a number of different regional organisations. The regional economic strategy informs, emphasises, seeks coherence between and builds upon the economic development aspects of these regional strategies.

The regional spatial strategy sets the spatial development framework for the region. Other strategies, for example the environment strategy and the social strategy, emphasise different aspects of sustainable development. EERA has also led on the production of an integrated regional strategy for the East of England which, building on the sustainable development framework, will provide an overarching context for the other regional strategies.

**The vision for the region is...**

**'...a leading economy, founded on our world-class knowledge base and the creativity and enterprise of our people, in order to improve the quality of life of all who live and work here.'**

For the King's Lynn Sub Region the RES shows the following areas for development:

- Improve the provision of locally-based higher education and support training programmes in association with local business
- Support the regeneration and renaissance of King's Lynn and reinforce its role as a key service centre, through the redevelopment of brownfield land, a high quality mixed use urban environment and the provision of employment land and business premises
- Support local communities to develop solutions and address their own needs particularly in relation to improving employment access for disadvantaged communities.
- Promote closer economic links to the Cambridge, Peterborough and Norwich sub-regions to maintain and attract complementary businesses
- Improve transport connections to the rest of the region and the East Midlands by both road and rail.

**Regional Housing Strategy 2005 – 2010**

The Regional Housing Strategy for the East of England sets out the strategic direction for the delivery of housing in the East of England - helping to meet the challenges of growth and regeneration in the Region, and more specifically to inform the recommendations for public investment in affordable housing.

The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) is based on a ***vision of the Region where everyone can live in a decent home which meets their needs, at a price they can afford and in locations that are sustainable.***

### **Integrated Regional Strategy**

The Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) is an EERA led strategic initiative, **the vision for which is: ‘to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in the East of England’**. The White Paper, “Your Region, Your Choice”, May 2002, presented an early opportunity for the development of the IRS, which outlines the Government’s commitment to greater regional integration. The White Paper encouraged public bodies, operating in the region, to develop a ‘joined up’ approach and to identify and drive forward the main priorities for the region. The completed IRS seeks to do just that. It was developed through a two stage process:

- a review and analysis of regional strategies, ranging from the East of England Plan to the Regional Cultural Strategy; and
- the identification and reconciliation of the main priorities incorporated in these regional strategies.

The purposes of the IRS are:

- To provide a joined up statement of regional priorities.
- To flag any areas where the regional strategies may conflict.
- To suggest processes through which tensions between regional strategies might be mitigated and resolved.
- To provide an overarching context for the development of regional strategies in the future, building on the current Regional Sustainable Development Framework.
- To provide a clear statement to central government of the East of England’s regional priorities.

The IRS tackles the critical issues facing the region, for example housing, transport, health, skills and economy. It combines a strong strategic vision for the region with the necessary co-ordination framework for all other strategies, regional partnership bodies and delivery mechanisms.

### **Sustainable Development Framework**

The East of England Sustainable Development Framework sets out a vision for sustainable development in the region, and identifies its contribution to sustainable development at the national level.

The Sustainable Development Framework was produced in October 2001 by EERA and the Sustainable Development Round Table. The Framework is a high level document, aiming to influence the development of regional policy, rather than setting out a plan for action. It has played a central part in the development of the Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England.

## **Cultural Strategy**

A draft Cultural Strategy has been produced by Living East. The Cultural Strategy embraces performing arts, media, museums and archives, libraries and literature, sport, built heritage, archaeology, landscapes and countryside recreation, parks and play activities and tourism. Rather than determining cultural policies or individual projects, the role of the strategy will be to highlight the value of cultural activity and its importance to the quality of life in the East of England.

## **Regional Social Strategy**

The Regional Social Strategy sets out the vision, objectives and means for achieving a fair and inclusive society in the East of England. It identifies regional priorities, policies and actions to support local activity and provides a framework for tackling social exclusion in the region.

## **Towns and Cities Strategy (Urban Renaissance)**

EEDA's Urban Renaissance Strategy built on the recommendations of the Government's Urban White Paper and the Urban Task Force report. An initial consultation phase led to the creation of the Towns and Cities Strategy and Action Plan and a Good Practice Guide.

Actions from the Action Plan are being developed. These include:

- Regional Centre of Excellence for Regeneration and Renaissance (RCE)
- Regional Design Action Manager
- Local Strategies
- Enabling Sustainable Development
- Design Quality Criteria

## **County Strategies**

### **Local Transport Plan for Norfolk 2006 – 2011**

This document, Norfolk's second Local Transport Plan, covers the five year period from April 2006 to March 2011 but with a longer term strategy up to 2021. **The Vision is that "Norfolk is a well-connected place in which to live and do business and to visit, and is known as a national leader in making the transport system safer and reducing the impact transport has on climate change and the wider environment.** The Plan contains a number of thematic strategies together with area strategies for King's Lynn and, in the rural areas, for the Norfolk Market Towns and the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### **Norfolk Ambition: The Community Strategy for Norfolk 2003 to 2023**

The County's Community Strategy sets out a vision for the next 20 years.

## The Vision

**To improve the quality of life for all of the people of Norfolk.**

This means in 2023 Norfolk will be recognised as a county:

- where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve a good quality of life
- where people enjoy healthy lifestyles and have equitable access to high standards of health and social care
- where people in communities feel safe
- with excellent educational attainment and opportunities for learning at all stages throughout life
- where individuals from all backgrounds can play an active part in community life
- where the high quality environment is respected and enhanced for everyone's enjoyment and is matched by a strong reputation for renewable energies
- which is renowned for its culture, creativity and spirituality
- with a distinctive economy characterised by innovative and dynamic businesses
- where the physical and virtual communications infrastructure meets the needs of a forward-looking county

## Local Strategies

**Golden Past...Brighter Future  
The Vision for King's Lynn 2000 - 2023**

### The Vision

The Vision for King's Lynn is that:

**King's Lynn will be an attractive, vibrant and prosperous town, where people will choose to live, work, and visit.**

The Vision will be delivered through:

**King's Lynn being the primary retail, leisure and cultural centre serving the populations of west Norfolk, north Cambridgeshire and south Lincolnshire**

with the associated growth in population, income and wealth, and in the range and quality of facilities.

**King's Lynn being a strong economic centre where there is a diverse employment base built on the town's strengths in engineering, food and food related activities, and tourism** with the emphasis on the more technically advanced, higher value added activities providing higher quality, better paid and sustainable jobs.

Local people, the local business community and the public sector agencies, working in partnership, will concentrate on the agreed priorities through a series of short and longer term actions.

### **Shaping the Future – A Strategy for Economic Regeneration in the Borough of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk March 2003**

This was prepared by the West Norfolk Economic Forum. It sets out the priorities and indicative actions needed to achieve the goal contained in the Local Strategic Partnership’s Community Plan of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk being “A prosperous place to live with a diverse and growing economy”.

A key element of the Strategy is the focus on King’s Lynn as the main economic driver and employment centre of the Borough. The success of King’s Lynn, supported by the regeneration of the market towns, will have the greatest impact on securing the future prosperity of the Borough.

Shaping the Future – West Norfolk provides the West Norfolk element of the Norfolk Shaping the Future Economic Development Strategy. Shaping the Future recognizes the need to implement the strategy at the local level. This concentration on activity at the local level will not only strengthen the local economies, but will also lead to an overall improvement to the prosperity of the County. Shaping the Future in turn links with the East of England Development Agency’s Regional Development Strategy.

### **West Norfolk Partnership Strategic Framework 2005**

In 2002 the West Norfolk Partnership developed and published the first West Norfolk Community Strategy - 'Working Together. Making a Difference.'

The West Norfolk Strategy provided a long term view of how local quality of life in West Norfolk could be improved. It set out the 'stepping stone' goals to help move us towards this future.

The board has reviewed its strategy by working with key partnerships. The revised West Norfolk Community Strategy was published in April 2005, together with six 'daughter strategies' - one for each of the six Standing Partnerships.

The priorities of this document are expressed in the local area agreement under the headings:

- 1 Healthier communities and older people
- 2 Economic development and enterprise
- 3 Children and young people
- 4 Safe and stronger communities

## **Corporate Strategy: Transforming and Regenerating West Norfolk 2003-2007 (Updated October 2004, Revised April 2006)**

The Council's Corporate Strategy has been reviewed. The 2006 version still has a Vision of "Transforming and Regenerating West Norfolk". However the new Strategy starts by more explicitly setting out our **values** (the way we want the Council to be seen by our customers, staff and partners). These comprise:

- Providing value for money
- Customer-focused
- Ready for Business
- High quality services
- Making West Norfolk the place to live, work, visit and invest

It then sets out how this will be done e.g. work together, make continuous improvements and the **corporate priorities** for the next year e.g. regenerate King's Lynn; tackle issues that are important to local people (e.g. anti-social behaviour, affordable housing, skills in the local economy); look after the environment; develop leisure, tourism and heritage. It also identifies the need for each Service Area to set out in an annual service plan how they contribute to these values and corporate priorities, together with their own operational service priorities.

## Glossary

**BAP Listed Species and Habitats:** The Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was developed in 1999 to translate national objectives, set by Government in response to commitments made at the 1992 Rio 'Earth' Summit, into local action. It contains clear targets and actions that specify what needs to be done, by whom, and by when, to conserve Norfolk's most endangered animals, plants and habitats.

**BREEAM:** BRE's Environmental Assessment Method (**BREEAM**) is used to assess the environmental performance of both new and existing commercial buildings.

**Brownfield (previously developed land):** land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Community Strategy:** local authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare these, with the aim of improving the social, environmental and economic well being of their areas. Through the Community Strategy, authorities are expected to co-ordinate the actions of local public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Responsibility for producing Community Strategies may be passed to Local Strategic Partnerships, which include local authority representatives.

**Core Strategy:** states the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, the spatial objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

**County Wildlife Sites:** are identified as sites of wildlife importance which, together with statutory sites, should be treated as the critical natural capital of an area.

**EcoHomes:** balances environmental performance with the need for a high quality of life and a safe and healthy internal environment.

**Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA):** is a type of designation for an [agricultural](#) area which needs special protection because of its [landscape](#), [wildlife](#) or historical value. In 2005 the scheme was superseded by [Environmental Stewardship](#).

**Green Tourism:** is a term used to describe best environmental practice within the tourism sector. It covers issues such as business efficiency, environmental management, waste, transport, as well as topics like social responsibility and biodiversity.

**Greenfield:** land which has no previous development or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings and uses.

**Housing Market Assessment:** aims to develop an understanding of the balance between housing demand and supply across the Borough and hence allow for a more informed judgement.

**Intermediate Housing:** Housing provided at prices or rents above those of social-rental but below market prices or rents.



**Issues and Options:** produced during the early production stage of the Development Plan Document process.

**Key Centre for Development and Change:** in which King's Lynn will make further provision for housing, employment and other growth in the town in order to further the aims of achieving an urban renaissance and raising the town's population to 50,000. The intention will be to:

- enhance the quality of the urban environment;
- make better use of previously-developed land;
- provide for an improved range of services in the town;
- support the regeneration of communities; and
- provide improved transport choices both within King's Lynn and between the town and the areas looking to it.

**Key Diagram:** authorities may use a key diagram to illustrate broad locations of future development.

**Key Service Centres:** are large villages or groups of villages with a good level of services which serve the wider adjoining hinterland.

**Local Development Document:** the collective term in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

**Local Development Framework:** the name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area.

**Local Nature Reserves:** are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

**Local Transport Plan:** A 5-year strategy prepared by the County Council for the development of local, integrated transport, supported by a programme of transport improvements.

**National Nature Reserves:** are places where wildlife comes first. They were established to protect the most important areas of wildlife habitat and geological formations in Britain.

**Polluter Pays Principle:** Any cost implications of any actions which are adverse to either the environment, economy or well being of the Borough's population will be directed to the people responsible.

**Precautionary Principle:** where there is uncertainty and potentially serious risks exist to the environment, this principle seeks to implement action to alleviate any risks that may be necessary.

**Ramsar Sites:** are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Ramsar Sites are international designations.

**Regional Spatial Strategy:** sets out the region's policies in relation to the development and use of land and forms part of the development plan for local planning authorities.

**Regional Transport Node:** a key interchange point for transport modes within the Regional Transport Network.

**Sites of Special Scientific Interest:** are areas of land of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features. Sites of Special Scientific Interest are National designations under the care of English Nature.

**Social rented housing:** rents are controlled by the Housing Corporation and kept at an affordable level.

**Special Areas of Conservation (SACs):** are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. They provide increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats and are a vital part of global efforts to conserve the world's biodiversity. Special Areas of Conservation are International designations.

**Special Protection Areas (SPAs):** are strictly protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC), also known as the Birds Directive, which came into force in April 1979. Special Protection Areas are International designations.

**Statement of Community Involvement:** sets out the standards which authorities will achieve with regard to involving local communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents and development control decisions. The Statement of Community Involvement is not a Development Plan Document but is subject to independent examination.

**Sustainability Appraisal:** tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives (i.e. social, environmental and economic factors) and required in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act to be undertaken for all local development documents.

**Sustainable Development:** development which meets the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and aspirations.

**Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems:** Drainage systems can be developed in line with the ideals of sustainable development, by balancing the different issues that should be influencing the design. Surface water drainage methods that take account of quantity, quality and amenity issues are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). These systems are more sustainable than conventional drainage methods because they:

- Manage runoff flow rates, reducing the impact of urbanisation on flooding
- Protect or enhance water quality
- Are sympathetic to the environmental setting and the needs of the local community
- Provide a habitat for wildlife in urban watercourses
- Encourage natural groundwater recharge (where appropriate).

**Urban Development Strategy:** this sits amongst a family of documents which together form a policy for the urban renaissance of King's Lynn.