

Issues and Options Paper – Core Strategy

Local Development Framework

King's Lynn & West Norfolk



**your views, your vision...
help us to plan your future.**

Issues and Options Paper

King's Lynn and West Norfolk

Introduction

The issues and options for the future development of the borough are described in pages 1-4. Pages 5-12 describe the context of this paper. A Sustainability Appraisal of the issues and options is available as a separate document.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk

The Borough of King's Lynn & 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) and the population in mid-2003 was 137,900. The main centre is King's Lynn, though the borough also includes the towns of Downham Market and Hunstanton and more than 100 rural villages.

The existing Local Plan

The King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan was adopted in November 1998 and forms part of the Development Plan for the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The Development Plan also includes the Norfolk Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan and Waste Local Plan. The existing Local Plan extends to 2006 and came into operation in 1993. It was based on the Norfolk Structure Plan operative at that time.

The Local Plan's strategic statement sets out its guiding principles which are reflected in policies to:

- conserve important habitats and encourage habitat creation;
- conserve natural resources;
- foster the local economy by enabling retail, employment, tourism and the diversification of agriculture and the rural economy;
- provide for community needs in housing, health and leisure; and
- promote sustainability.

The Local Plan's geographic strategy focuses major development (that is employment, leisure and housing) on King's Lynn; provides for limited expansion at Downham Market; and restrains growth at Hunstanton. It concentrates retail development in King's Lynn, with some provision in Downham Market and Hunstanton. Employment provision is made at King's Lynn and Downham Market. The Local Plan also sets out the borough's housing provision from 1993 to 2006 (9,810 homes through previously planned developments and new sites).

You can buy the full Local Plan from the Planning Department or view it on our website www.west-norfolk.gov.uk. A summary version is also available.



The New Local Development Framework

In 2004, the Local Plan system was abolished by law (though the existing Local Plan remains valid until September 2007), being replaced by the new system of Local Development Frameworks. The Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises several documents and saved policies (local and strategic). These deal with different issues or geographical areas. When taken as a whole the LDF's objective is to set out the Council's policies on the development and use of land in the borough. Background material and supporting evidence, which are not part of the LDF, will underpin policies.

Issues and options:

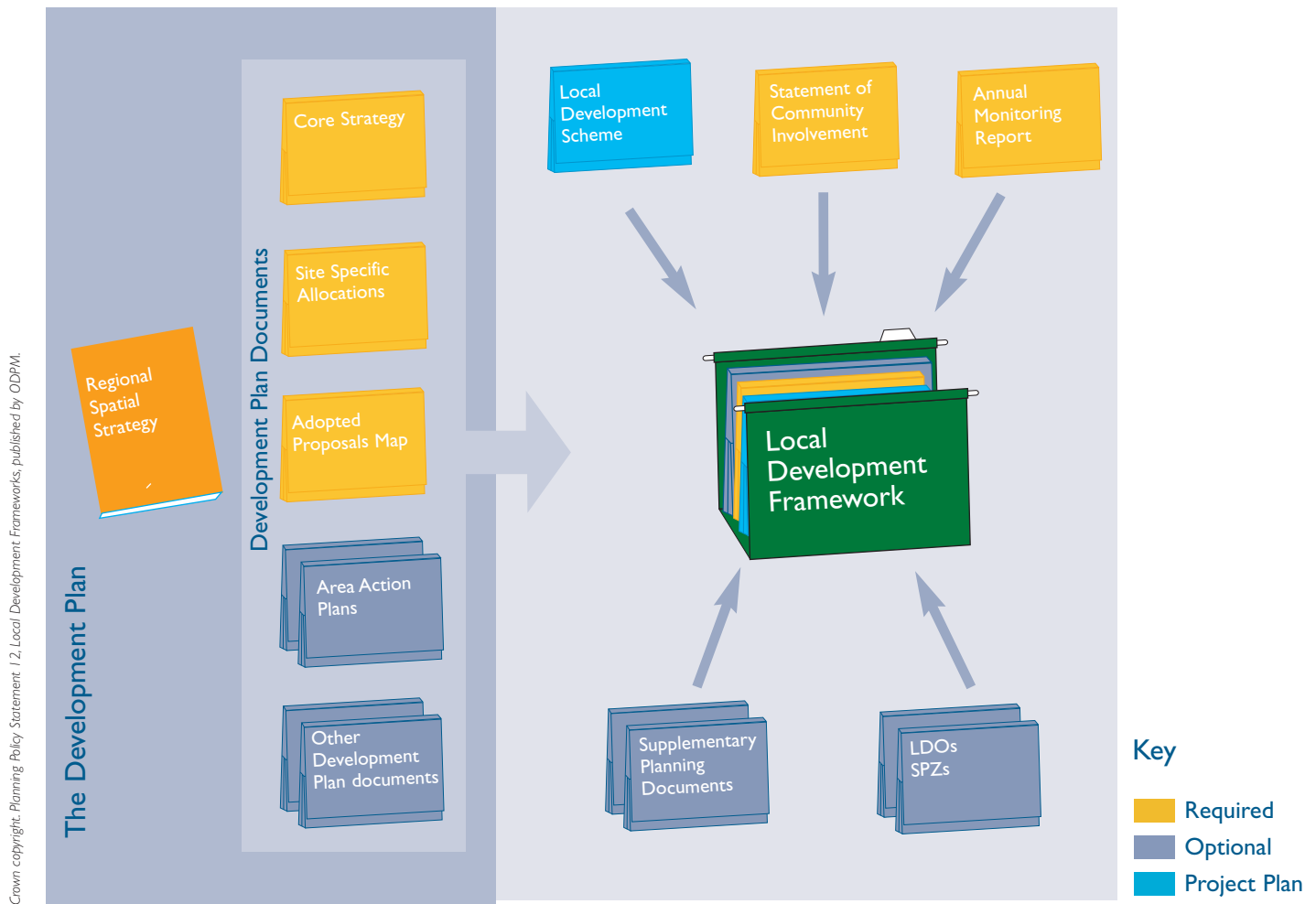


Figure 1: The Local Development Framework

As illustrated above the LDF comprises a portfolio of documents:

Local Development Scheme: sets out the project plan.

Statement of Community Involvement: sets out the standards that authorities will achieve on 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.

Annual Monitoring Report: part of the LDF, the Annual Monitoring Report will assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which we are

successfully implementing the policies in our development plan documents.

Core Strategy: sets out the long-term vision for the local planning authority's area, and the objectives and strategic policies to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy has the status of a development plan document.

Site Specific Allocations: these are allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development to be contained in development plan documents. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

Adopted Proposals Map: the Adopted Proposals Map illustrates on a base map (reproduced from, or based on, a map to a registered scale) all the

policies in Development Plan Documents, together with any saved policies. We must revise it as we adopt each new Development Plan Document, and it should always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area. Our proposals for changes to the Adopted Proposals Map accompany Development Plan Documents we submit to the Secretary of State.

Area Action Plans: these are used to provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation. Area Action Plans have the status of Development Plan Documents.

Supplementary Planning Documents: these provide extra information about policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Local Development Order (LDO): this allows local planning authorities to introduce local permitted development rights.

Simplified Planning Zones (SPZ): these grant planning permission for the types of development specified, subject to any conditions or limitations attached.

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

This issues paper mainly seeks views on the **Core Strategy**. This strategy sets the overall vision for the borough's development and contains strategic development policies that will help to achieve this vision. For example there may be policies that state the level and type of development within villages and the major towns in the borough. However, the strategy does not allocate individual sites for development. This will happen in the document called **Site Specific Allocations**. We shall produce another issues paper to deal with this subject. However, it is appropriate for people to comment at this stage on the general geographical area where development should take place; in other words, in which towns and villages or areas.

How does the LDF differ from the Local Plan?

The LDF is a spatial planning document. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land-use planning. It integrates policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes that influence the character of places and how they can function. This may mean including policies in the LDF that may not be wholly deliverable through land-use planning and that we may need to implement by other means.



What timescale are we working towards for replacing the Local Plan with the LDF?

The Local Development Scheme (project plan) was approved in April 2005. It is available on our web site at www.west-norfolk.gov.uk or in printed form. This sets out the production plan of all the documents the Council will be producing as part of the LDF, in the next three years. The first stage of the process is to consult the public, developers, stakeholders and other interested parties on the development of the Core Strategy. An issues paper to inform the possible review of the Local Plan was produced and distributed in September 2001. The responses to that paper have helped to inform this issues and options paper.

Issues and options:

Table 1 Timescale for the production of the LDF

Document title	Date for pre-submission consultation	Dates for public participation on preferred options	Date for submission to Secretary of State	Proposed date for adoption
Statement of Community Involvement	April-August 2005	September-October 2005	December 2005	April 2006
Core Strategy	June-October 2005	November 2005-January 2006	November 2006	January 2008
Site Specific Allocations & Policies	June-October 2006	November 2006-January 2007	December 2007	January 2009
Adopted Proposals Map	Updated as documents are adopted			January 2008/09

This Issues and Options Paper is the first stage in the process and is accompanied by several consultation events. Our aim is to consult people on their vision for the borough and to listen to their views *at an early stage*, thereby producing better policies and avoiding the need for formal objections to the plan. Some consultation events have already taken place to help us prepare this paper, and various studies and other events are planned during the summer. Once we have assessed the responses, we shall produce a Preferred Options Paper that will outline the specific policy direction of the Core Strategy. This will again be accompanied by consultation events, which will be advertised.

What studies have we done so far?

The Council has done various background studies to help us produce the LDF. These are:

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- Urban Renaissance Strategy for King's Lynn
- Housing Needs Study
- Biodiversity Study

- Air quality assessments
- Strategy for Playing Pitches & Other Outdoor Facilities in King's Lynn and West Norfolk
- Landscape Character Areas
- Urban Capacity Study (assesses the amount of previously developed land in the borough).

Studies due to be done include:

- Retail and Leisure Study
- Employment Study.

There are also various existing plans and strategies that provide useful information on spatial development. These include:

- Norfolk Coast (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan – produced March 2004, plan period 2004-2009
- King's Lynn Town Centre Strategy – produced 1998, requires reviewing and updating
- Shoreline Management Plans.

We undertake other studies when needed.

What issues has the Council been told are important so far?

We analysed the results from the village workshops and the Local Plan issues paper and have learned that the following things are important to you for the future:

Community

- Keep local identity
- Promote our history
- Encourage community centres
- Village plans
- Scouts, Brownies and other clubs.

Community safety

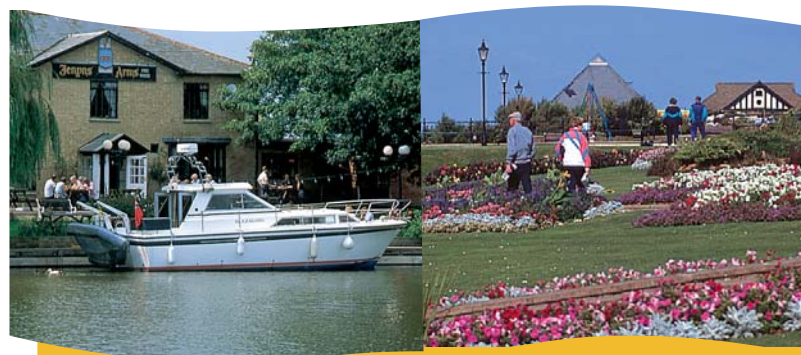
- Better policing
- Crime prevention
- Reduce fear of crime
- Enforce parking restrictions
- Traffic calming
- Street lighting
- More use of CCTV.

General planning

- Have clear planning guidelines
- Restrict changes of use
- Restrict development
- No major development in some villages
- Economic development
- More employment opportunities especially in villages and towns
- Encourage traditional employment
- Widen the economic base
- Promote home working
- Provide opportunities for small business workshops
- Encourage information technology businesses
- Help village shops and post offices to survive
- King's Lynn town centre redevelopment should be a priority.

Environment

- Encourage renewable energy such as the Swaffham wind turbine
- Locally distinctive design
- Remove or put underground overhead wires and cables in villages
- General maintenance of our environment
- Street cleaning
- More trees
- Covers for street lights
- Care, preservation and restoration of the environment
- Recycling



- Protection of spaces and common land
- Improve sea defences
- Develop waterfronts
- Design of telecommunication masts; mast sharing.

Facilities

- Maintain community facilities such as schools, post offices, social clubs, shops, youth clubs, village halls, banks
- Improve services such as medical facilities, local health centres, and collection of medicines
- Facilities for disabled people
- Gas supply – more needed
- Sports and recreation facilities such as playing fields, open spaces and children's play areas
- Facilities for teenagers
- Internet cafes.

Issues and options:

Housing

- More affordable housing
- Housing for young people and elderly
- Starter homes
- Too many people retiring from work and buying homes in villages, creating an imbalance in the population
- Control development in some areas and enable some growth in other areas
- Redevelop existing sites before building new
- Maintain village identities
- Too many second homes.

Tourism

- Increase tourism industry
- Develop the Downham Market Relief Channel and make more use of the water front.

Transport

- Traffic calming
- Bus services including supermarket buses
- Dial-a-ride
- Public transport
- Cycle paths
- Car parking
- Control speed limits
- Maintain roads and footpaths but avoid over-urbanisation of rural routes
- Safe footpaths and cycleways

Not all of these can be assisted or achieved in the LDF, but they may link to other work by the Borough or County Council or other organisations.

Emerging vision for the new plan

These are the new plan's main points:

- 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, historic and architectural heritage.
- Enable new development that respects the distinctiveness of our area while maximising the potential of our towns.
- Make our towns, villages, facilities and services more accessible by a range of means of transport other than the car.
- Provide adequate and appropriate opportunities for housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and tourism activities and to create a thriving and sustainable economy.
- Develop King's Lynn as a sub-regional centre – a major centre for housing, commercial, employment and leisure activities serving West Norfolk.
- Promote sustainable development, using sustainable construction methods, making more use of previously developed land and using land more efficiently in locations with good services.

Q. Do you support this vision?

Q. Have we missed anything?

What does the vision mean for the LDF?

Using our knowledge of local concerns and other key planning issues in national and regional guidance, the following issues are emerging as important in shaping the overall strategy of the new plan.

West Norfolk's local identity and distinctiveness is important

Through the LDF we should try to develop policies that:

- recognise that places have both differences and similarities;
- recognise what makes places special and distinct;
- protect and enhance what is special and ensure that new development is sympathetic to these special qualities;
- encourage good design and seek to improve the attractiveness of places.

Housing provision should be appropriate to what people in West Norfolk need and can afford

Through the LDF we should try to develop policies that:

- ensure an adequate supply of housing;
- encourage a mix of size and types of housing;
- provide a supply of affordable housing in our towns and villages;
- allocate most new housing to previously developed land and buildings;
- discourage second-home owners in areas where this is a problem;
- provide adequate sites for travellers;
- foster a sense of community and avoid social exclusion.

Crime and nuisance concern the people of West Norfolk

Through the LDF we should try to:

- consider ways of meeting these problems through the design and layout of new building developments to help create safer environments.

There is a Community Safety Strategy for West Norfolk.

West Norfolk's local facilities and services are important in helping meet the needs of local people

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- find out what facilities and services exist;
- seek to help core village services through planning;
- encourage and assist appropriate new facilities, services and jobs;
- plan for sufficient infrastructure (roads etc) for development;
- seek to ensure that necessary infrastructure is provided.



Develop a safe and good transport system

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- reduce the need to travel;
- encompass the policies and proposals of Norfolk's Local Transport Plan and other transport strategies;
- recognise the special needs of residents in the rural areas of the borough.

Issues and options:

Enable the development of a prosperous and diverse local economy

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- provide land for commercial development in the right location;
- facilitate investment;
- provide clear planning guidelines;
- promote West Norfolk as a place to locate high-quality business enterprises that are compatible with the locality.

Developing a good telecommunications system is an essential part of the future for West Norfolk

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- seek linkages to information and communications technology, including broadband;
- limit the effects of telecommunication masts.

West Norfolk's opportunities for tourism, sport, recreation and culture are important to our well-being and local economy

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- assist accessibility to opportunities for everyone through transport measures and through providing facilities for people with disabilities;
- encompass the aims of the borough's Local Cultural Strategy.

Improve the health and well-being of local residents

Through the LDF we should try to:

- encourage cycling and walking;
- provide additional open space, parks and sports and recreational facilities.

West Norfolk's countryside should be protected for its own sake while enabling rural diversification

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- protect and enhance our landscapes;
- reflect the aims of the Biodiversity Action Plan to encourage biodiversity;
- enable appropriate businesses to develop;
- reflect the character of the rural areas;
- encourage a high quality of design in new development;
- emphasise the importance of protecting the statutory designated sites such as the Wash and our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

King's Lynn should be the focus for major new development

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- define the urban area of King's Lynn;
- make best use of previously developed land and buildings;
- identify appropriate locations for different types of development;
- underpin the town centre's vitality and viability;
- promote the development of the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area;
- develop an Urban Renaissance Strategy for King's Lynn.

New development in Downham Market and Hunstanton should be appropriate to their roles and functions

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- understand the towns' roles and functions;
- point out opportunities for new development, making best use of previously developed land and buildings;
- ensure that development is accompanied by the appropriate infrastructure.

The local identity of West Norfolk's villages should be recognised

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- understand the differences of character, for example the size, form and function, of villages;
- encourage the location of individual or small-scale development on previously developed land and buildings in villages;
- encourage environmental improvements;
- identify Village Service Centres. These are villages that have significant services and/or can accommodate growth.

West Norfolk has many low-lying areas that may be at risk from sea and river flooding

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- direct development away from areas of flood risk except where these sites are of strategic importance and can be defended to the appropriate standard;
- protect and enhance flood defences.

Demand for energy is increasing – energy-efficiency measures will help to limit this increase, and renewable energy will be an important source to meet the demand

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- reduce the need to travel, where possible, as a national response to global warming;
- encourage the use of energy-efficient design, materials and layouts for new development as appropriate;
- encourage the use of renewable energy sources;
- allow wind-turbine development in areas where it has a minimum impact on the landscape.

Make efficient use of water and other natural resources

Through the LDF we should develop policies that:

- encourage water conservation;
- encourage the recovery of contaminated land;
- address air quality management issues;
- seek to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- promote recycling.



Q. Do you agree that the LDF should do all the things we have proposed here?

Q. Are there other issues that we should consider as part of the new plan's overall strategy?

Development options

For the future development of the borough and particularly housing allocations, there are three basic directions that could be taken. The following give various options. These are meant to give a basic idea of the development strategies that could be implemented.

Option 1: Concentrated strategy

- A concentrated development strategy, where King's Lynn would be developed as a sub-regional centre.

King's Lynn would be the focus for housing development, mainly in the town centre but with a limited amount on greenfield land (greenfield land is land not previously developed). A significant regeneration strategy would be adopted in King's Lynn with an emphasis on reducing traffic congestion. This would involve significant public and private investment. Downham Market and Hunstanton would also receive housing allocations appropriate to their size. Leisure, retail and employment development would be promoted in all three centres in ways that are appropriate to their function. Support for the tourism economy would be particularly promoted in Hunstanton, but there would also be support for diversifying the economy. Housing development is allowed in the villages only where this is necessary such as affordable housing, but commercial activities which provide local services and local employment are encouraged.

Comment

Option 1 is the most sustainable option¹. It is in line with national Government policy, the Regional Spatial Strategy and our Corporate Policy. It directs housing development to brownfield land (brownfield land means previously developed land) in the major service centre in the borough. It aims to regenerate King's Lynn and provide for the expansion of Downham Market and Hunstanton.

¹ Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

It recognises the local distinctiveness of each of the towns and seeks to restrict development in the villages which could change their character. However, it allows for limited development in the villages which may be required to sustain local services and provide affordable housing.

Option 2: Town growth strategy

- King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton would be areas for major growth.

There would be significant allocations of land for housing in Downham Market and Hunstanton, both re-using land but also allowing building on greenfield sites. There would need to be a large amount of investment from the public and private sectors. Hunstanton would be promoted as a tourism destination and an area for other business opportunities, thereby diversifying the economy. Downham Market's retail and employment sectors would need to grow significantly. Housing development would be allowed in the villages only where this is necessary, such as for affordable housing, but commercial activities that provide local services and local employment would be encouraged.

Comment

Option 2 is not favoured by the Council. Option 2 is the second most sustainable option. It allows for significant development in all three major towns in the borough. This would certainly mean that significant amounts of greenfield land would have to be used and would not re-use 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 sub-regional centre would be undermined and there may not be enough development proposed in King's Lynn to provide the necessary attractions that would help regenerate West Norfolk as a whole.

Option 3: Geographic spread

- **Development would be more evenly distributed across the Borough.**

King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton would receive housing allocations but less than in options 1 and 2. Villages that could accommodate growth would be identified and these would receive housing allocations. This would help and encourage the local economy in these areas and support existing shops and local services, but there may be a need for allocations of greenfield land in villages to cope with this expansion. King's Lynn would remain a significant town in the locality but would not grow substantially and the services it provides would not change, especially in the retail and entertainment sectors. Downham Market and Hunstanton would grow slightly. To cope with the increased growth in the villages, there would need to be expansion of existing services there or increased commuting to King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton.

Comment

Option 3 is not favoured by the Council. This is the least sustainable option. It would result in substantial development in rural locations, which may not have the required services and employment opportunities, resulting in an increasing need to travel. It may require use of greenfield land and would fail to re-use substantial amounts of available land in the towns. This level of development would change the character of the villages and would hinder the development of King's Lynn as a major service centre.

What does the Council do next?

This updated Issues and Options Paper will generate views and opinion about the borough's future development. This, along with other technical studies and consultation events, will give us enough information to produce a Preferred Options Paper. The Preferred Options Paper will state the Council's preferred overall strategy for the future development of the borough in more detail. Again, we shall put this out to general consultation and everyone will have the opportunity to comment. This will be accompanied by public consultation events. Once we have considered the comments from



this stage, we will publish a Core Strategy. Objections to the Core Strategy at this stage will be heard by a Government Inspector at an examination. After the inspector's binding report, we can adopt the Core Strategy.

Q. Which option do you think is the best?

Q. Are there any other options?

Issues and options:

So what do you need to do now?

It is important for us to know your views on future development in the borough. A reply sheet is attached. Please comment on the questions asked and any other matter that you think is important. Alternatively comments can be e-mailed to ldf@west-norfolk.gov.uk

The plan's progress and next consultation stage can be followed on www.west-norfolk.gov.uk

However if you would like to be sent a letter updating you on progress, then please let us know on the reply sheet.





Issues and Options Paper – Core Strategy

Local Development Framework

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Planning Services

June 2005



If you would like this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact us at the address below and we will do our best to help.

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