

**INFORMAL AGENTS MEETING
28 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Present: John Maxey (Chair)
Tim Slater
Daniel Wallge
Shaun Gayton
Hannah Wood-Handy (DC)
Lee Osler (Officer Manager)
Michael Burton (Policy)
Amanda Driver (CIL)
Ruth Redding (Technical Support)

Apologies: Shanna Jackson
Ben Hornigold
David Taylor

1. John Maxey opened the meeting and made introductions to a new member of the Informal Group, Tim Slater.

Minutes of Previous Meeting (January 2022)

Information requested about NCC Highways and NN will be deferred until the next Formal Agents Meeting.

John Maxey and the CIL Officer agreed that the CIL Presentation to Agents should be an online event, rather than 'in person'

John Maxey asked if anyone wanted to take over as Chair of the Informal Agents Meeting. The consensus in the room was that members are happy for John Maxey to continue as Chair.

Agents not attending two or more Informal Meetings, will be contacted in future by the Chair, to ensure that they wish to remain on the group. If they prefer not to, we can ask other Agents if they would like to join.

2. CIL

Please see attached Notes.

- 3&6 Development Control Update

PPG Updates on Flood Risk Coastal Change – updated August 2022

Planning Practice Update: Planning for Health (on NCC's Website)

Digital Reforms

Major Infrastructure Applications are to be speeded up

Staff Update in DC

We have recruited an additional Enforcement Officer and have advertised a Enforcement Support Officer and a Arboricultural Assistant and Biodiversity Officer.

We still have Capita Agency staff in place, but are advertising for PPO (North Team), Senior and graduate Planner currently.

Recruitment campaign is being reviewed in order to recruit and retain staff.

Conservation Officer, Steven King, is leaving the Authority.

JM asked for a updated list of Officer names and contact numbers

EMAIL OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS TO AGENTS (RR / HWH)

Lack of Communication (6 on the Agenda)

HWH informed the group that volumes are still high with officers having a current case load of 50-60 applications.

HWH has asked officers to communicate with Agents, but stated that she is happy for Agents to contact her with any problems with communication with particular officers. JM asked if Officers are still home working and HWH stated that they are working in the office and at home currently. LO confirmed that the Authority has lifted restrictions the number of staff allowed in the Offices. Some Agents expressed concern at being able to contact Planners. HWH stated that the office is covered to 5pm each day, but to contact her if they are having specific issues with contact.

4. General Update (LO)

Rebecca from Technical Support has been seconded to deal with Planning Applications, until next year. We have recruited Luke Swales on a temporary contract to cover this post.

Technical Support have a new (additional) member of staff, Amy Davies. We have advertised for a Team Leader also.

We are recruiting a Performance/System Officer to help monitor and manage case loads.

We are still experiencing back logs with the registration and validation of planning and other applications. (RR) asked if Agents could help us, help you by submitting CIL Forms and FRA Matrix Forms as we are still having to request these from local Agents. (JM) suggested that Agents use the Checklists (available on the website) to submit with their application.

Habitat Fee has been replaced by GIRAMS and the payment is now £185.93, our website will be updated with new Guidance and Fees as soon as possible. (SA) mentioned that we are currently obtaining legal advice as to whether GIRAMS is payable on Prior Notification applications.

(5)(10) Planning Policy Update (MB)

Local Plan:

- 29th March 2022 – Local Plan review 2016-2036 submitted to Secretary of State
- April 2022 – Inspector(s) appointed for Local Plan Examination in Public (EiP)

- June/ July 2022 – First two tranches of Inspector’s Initial Questions responded to – issues raised included the spatial strategy/ settlement hierarchy and Wisbech Fringe
- Wisbech Fringe – Need to consider implications of Fenland Local Plan proposal to delete allocation – likely necessary for BCKLWN to follow suit, as development of the part of the site within the Borough alone could not be achieved sustainability
- Other specific Local Plan matters raised during Forum – No changes to policies LP28/ LP31 re affordable housing requirements
- Next stages – Main Inspector’s Questions awaited; hearings anticipated to take place December 2022/ January 2023.

Neighbourhood Plans:

- Old Hunstanton and Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plans are going to post-submission (Regulation 16) consultation, from 30th September (6 weeks) – details available through [Neighbourhood Planning web page](#):
- Several other Neighbourhood Plans are coming through (at earlier stages of preparation); e.g. Ringstead, Downham Market, Grimston etc

(8) Party Wall

HWH stated that this is dealt with under separate legislation and Planning Officers will not know if the act applies – don’t want too many notes on decisions (agreed by Chair).

(9) NN (PG)

Asked how this is being dealt with. HWH informed the group that there is a Norfolk Agreed Strategy which needs to be resolved. HWH went on to say there are only a limited number of applications affected by NN and these are being discussed with Natural England.

(11) AOB

(JM – Chair) Where items are proposed to be added to an informal or formal panel meeting, to lead to meaningful discussion, it is necessary to give adequate information to other attendees. This is equally true of questions to the Council as other matters of concern.

To enable this it is suggested that proposed agenda items should be accompanied by sufficient written information, to be circulated with the agenda, to ascertain the issue, any suggested solution and any background information. This might typically be a summary between a paragraph and a single page document, with online hyperlinks to background information / legislation/ guidance.

It will be expected that the proposer will attend the meeting or will have arranged for someone attending (who can be a substitute from their organisation in the case of Informal Panel meetings) to present the topic to the meeting for consideration, and take part in the discussion.

If no information is forwarded or there is no one presenting the item, the items is unlikely to be able to be fully considered by the panel.

The Chair and Council representatives welcome suggestions for technical matters for presentation / discussion at Formal meetings from the membership, but in that case

need these to have with them suggested presenters for the topic to assist in arranging these to be added to agendas.

Dates of Next Meetings

Formal: 2pm on 7 December 2022

Informal: 2pm on 8 March 2023

Formal: 2pm on 7 June 2023