



Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Examination

Opening Statement

6 DECEMBER 2022

1. Good morning everyone. My name is Stuart Ashworth, and I am the Assistant Director for Environment & Planning at the BCKLWN.

2. If I can start with some housekeeping issues
 - We are not undertaking any fire alarm drills so if the alarm sounds, please vacate the building through the fire exits and assemble in the car park by the play area.
 - The toilets are located on the left of the entrance corridor as you entered the building
 - Teas/coffee and water are also available in the entrance corridor. There will be a number of breaks during the day the time of which will be set by the Inspectors. Please help yourself to drinks but can I ask that you leave and enter the room quietly in order not to disturb the discussions.

3. I would like to welcome to King's Lynn and West Norfolk the Inspectors, Mrs Baker and Mr Hayden, as well as all of the organisations and individuals who will be attending the hearing sessions over the next two months.

4. The Council is very grateful to the Inspectors for the notes and letters they have provided to date, and the time they have taken to review the many documents in the Examination library. The Council is also thankful to the Programme Officer for all her hard work in organising the administration of the examination.

5. The Examination in Public will assess the soundness of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan and if the Plan is found to be sound and is adopted by the Council, in line with any modifications considered necessary by the Inspectors, it will replace the current Core Strategy and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies documents.

6. I would like to take time to introduce you to the Officers of the Planning Policy Team who will represent the Council at the Hearings. They are:
 - Claire May (MSc, MRTPI), Planning Policy Manager
 - Michael Burton (BA (Hons), MSc, MRTPI), Principal Planning Officer
 - Frances Summers (MRTPI), Senior Planning Officer

They will be supported by specialist colleagues from within the council and partner organisations, as well as external consultants, for some of the sessions. Details of attendees have been provided to the programme officer.

7. The plan put forward will enable the successful delivery of sustainable development, providing for new homes and planning for an expanding economy, whilst protecting and enhancing the Borough's outstanding natural and historic environment. We believe the plan has struck the right balance between meeting those needs and protecting the environment, as well as recognising the other specific constraints that exist in the Borough.
8. The plan's strategy has been formulated after a significant amount of consultation and engagement with the public, community groups, particularly parish councils, and our external partners, and I would like to thank everyone for their input into this plan. I would also like to thank the councillors that make up the Local Plan Task Group, who have met regularly to shape the direction of the plan.
9. The Inspectors' role is to examine whether the plan is 'sound' and if it meets the legal and procedural requirements. The 'tests of soundness' are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework – in short they are that the Plan should be :
 - **'Positively prepared'** - based on a strategy that seeks to meet development and infrastructure requirements
 - **'Justified'** - an appropriate strategy, when considered against reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence
 - **'Effective'** - deliverable over the Plan period and based on effective joint working on cross boundary strategic issues; and
 - **'Consistent with national policy'** – that is in accordance with the national Planning Policy Framework & other statements of national planning policy
10. The Council considers that all four tests of soundness are met by the Plan. The Council has set out a series of Suggested Main Modifications, which it would like to make to the Plan which reflect consideration of responses to the Inspectors' Initial Questions and Matters, Issues and Questions. The Council is willing to consider any further changes recommended by the Inspectors as the Examination progresses and formally asks the Inspectors to recommend any changes to the Plan considered necessary to make it sound.