

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held in the Hub, Mareham Road, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6PH on Thursday, 23rd March, 2023 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor Tom Ashton (Chairman)
Councillor Sid Dennis (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Helen Matthews, Carleen Dickinson, Will Grover, Steve McMillan and Daniel McNally.

Councillor Alex Hall attended the Meeting as a Substitute..

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Milson	- Planning Policy and Research Manager
Elaine Speed	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Susan Care	- Democratic Services Officer

32. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

It was noted that, in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice had been given that Councillor Alex Hall had been appointed to the Committee in place of Councillor Thomas Kemp for this Meeting only.

33. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY):

At this point in the Meeting, Members were invited to declare any relevant interests. None were received.

34. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

35. ACTIONS:

The following Action was noted as in hand:

- Gypsy/Traveller Needs Assessment

The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised Members that the report was at the final draft stage, with no significant changes at this point and would be available for the next meeting of the Planning Policy Committee.

36. EAST LINDSEY RETAIL STUDY 2021:

The Chairman noted that the document being discussed under this agenda item was not the titled 'East Lindsey Local Plan Settlement Pattern' as

published, but the final East Lindsey Retail Study 2021 report. Members agreed they would note and support the report rather than approve it.

In response to this, the Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised that as that this was a piece of supporting evidence for the Local Plan rather than a policy document in itself, he was happy for the Retail Study to be noted by Committee.

The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager updated Members on the retail study work carried out on behalf of the District by the consultants Nexus. He advised of the need for updated data to ensure policies were based on the most recent evidence. The purpose of the studies was to look at the health of the retail economy, particularly focused on town centres at a particular point in time.

Issues covered included shopping trends, 'leakage' outside the district and the impact of lockdowns during the Covid pandemic. The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager drew Members' attention to SP14 in the Local Plan as the most relevant policy in relation to 'edge of' and 'out of centre' retail schemes and the need to determine whether there were more appropriate options and sites within town centres, as the ideal would be to keep as much footfall as possible within the town centres.

The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised that policy recommendations were made based on the trends and needs across the district. Members were also shown within the report the figures regarding the availability of floorspace up to 2036. He noted that a key recommendation of the report was to use a tailored figure for the district as a whole, with variation between the towns, with maximum floorspace for new shopping developments being significantly lower than the national average. He also highlighted the need for flexible and responsive developments within town centres to try and improve footfall. He drew Members' attention to the flexible changes of use provided for in the Permitted Development Regulations, including the opportunity, if there were concerns about these developments, to use an Article 4 Direction, but highlighted that strong evidence would be required in order to do this.

Members were invited to put their comments and questions forward.

- A Member raised the issue of square meter limits for retail outlets and how these were calculated. The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised how a 'trigger point' was arrived at for determining whether an impact assessment was required, but that if located in the town centre, this impact assessment would not have to be carried out. The Member reflected his concern that this overlooked existing supermarkets within town centres and whether this meant that they may be given an advantage. The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised that the health assessments would take into account any future developments, as well as any required sequential testing. The Chairman noted that this gave an extra layer of protection to town centres.

- A Member queried whether the qualitative issues were considered fully by the studies – the importance of the 'look and feel' of town centres and whether this was captured adequately. The Planning Policy and Research Service Manager advised that qualitative analysis was included and that the health checks were very detailed. He noted the information available in the Appendices to the report and that this issue would be addressed in future monitoring. He also noted the importance of Levelling Up funding and the importance of qualitative analysis, which would be picked up during future monitoring.

In response to this the Planning Policy and Research Service Manager reiterated that the report recommended a regime of monitoring, with regular health checks for the town centres.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Policy and Research Service Manager for the report and noted that this report would go forward to be used as part of the evidence base for the review of the Local Plan.

Following which it was,

RESOLVED:

That Members note and support the East Lindsey Retail Study 2021, and associated documents in the appendices to this report for publication and use.

37. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

The date and time of the next meeting will be confirmed at the AGM to be held on 24th May 2023.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions, time and commitment on the Committee during the last term of office.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm.