

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE,
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, KING'S HOUSE, THETFORD,
ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY 2009,
STARTING AT 7 P.M.

Present:

Councillor R G Kybird, Chairman
The Mayor, Councillor J A Harding (left during item 341/08)

Councillors:

G P Balaam	T J Lamb
R F Brame	D G Mortimer
Mrs M P Chapman-Allen	A Paines
S H Chapman-Allen	P J Pearson
T J Jermy	Mrs P A Spencer

In attendance: Mr D Napier (for item 341/08)

337/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Committee Chairman, Councillor R G Kybird, declared a personal interest as a local builder in any items on the agenda relating to Local Development Framework matters.

338/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs T I Paines, Mrs P P Quadling, M G Spencer and S N H Wright.

339/08 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings of the Committee, all duly received by Council (*following italicised references to the respective Council minutes refer*) be confirmed as true records and signed/initialled by the Chairman:

- (a) 3rd December 2008 (*minute 315/08a refers*).
- (b) 17th December 2008 (*minute 315/08b refers*)
- (c) 21st January 2009 (*minute 315/08c refers*)

Note: Items 341/08 and 342/08 were dealt with at this point in the meeting but, in order to respect the agenda numbering sequence, are minuted after the next item.

340/08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED that the following Observations be forwarded to the planning authority (Breckland Council):

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| a) | <u>Plan No. 0040</u> | Full Application |
| | <u>Description</u> | Application by Mr J Fisher for garage loft conversion to form playroom over at 24 The Meadows |
| | <u>Observation</u> | No objection, subject to an explicit and binding condition being set, limiting use to a playroom and not, for example, permitting use as sleeping quarters. |
| b) | <u>Plan No. 0052</u> | Advertisement |
| | <u>Description</u> | Application by Ames Ford for erection of various signs (free standing and fascia) at 2 Fison Way |
| | <u>Observation</u> | No objection |

341/08 MOVING THETFORD FORWARD: ISSUES

Mr David Napier, Chairman of the Moving Thetford Officer Group, was in attendance for a discussion, although he acknowledged at one point in said discussion that he had not been mandated by said Group to attend and/or present any views on the Group's behalf.

He was highly concerned about the potential impact of what he described as 'the November bombshell', namely, the identified need first given wider publicity back then to protect, in particular, the stone curlew through the introduction of an extensive buffer zone to the south and east of the existing settlement boundary. He foresaw such a measure hampering not only the ability to introduce specific improvements in local education provision but also restricting the scope for regeneration in general. An imbalance would result, in his view, if urban extensions were to be confined to areas north of the existing town. He wanted to share this concern of his with the Committee.

The Committee Chairman, Councillor R G Kybird explained to Mr Napier that, under the next agenda item, he would himself be presenting a draft response on the stone curlew issue, which the Committee would be in a position to adopt, if so minded. This was as agreed at the Committee's last meeting (*under minute 301/08*).

Some members of the Committee fully shared Mr Napier's concern, others were not of the view that this was an appropriate intervention by him at this point in the LDF process. Those subscribing to the latter view made the following two points:

- The protection measure supported by both the RSPB and Natural England was but a recommendation, which - in due course - would be scrutinised by an appointed Inspector. It could not be said at this point that Breckland Council as the planning authority had a fixed, unyielding position.

- The 'independent study' in question had been commissioned from experts in their field and was advocating a particular course of action in conformity with existing guidelines and directives. In managing the consultation process, Breckland Council could not ignore that conclusion, which was not the same as saying that it would prove to be beyond challenge.

It became clear that no-one in attendance was against stone curlew protection measures per se: what was an issue for the majority present was the extent of the proposed buffer zone. Mr Napier was of the opinion that Thetford Town Council must know the town better than Breckland Council and that a reduction in the buffer zone could be supported without detriment to the stone curlew.

At this point in the meeting, it was agreed to address the next agenda item.

Mr Napier was thanked for his attendance.

342/08

BRECKLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT INCORPORATING PROPOSALS MAP
Publication of Proposed Submission Document

Committee Chairman, Councillor R G Kybird, read out a prepared statement, addressing specifically proposed Policy CP 10 (*section 3.3.1 Natural Environment referred*).

This was questioning the accuracy of some of the data and assumptions drawn in the commissioned, specialist report, referred to above under the previous agenda item.

There was clearly no unanimous view shared by those present as to whether this statement should be endorsed by the Committee and submitted as a Town Council opinion. Consequently, a recorded vote was called for, resulting in the following resolution:

RESOLVED that, ahead of the comment deadline of 16th February 2009, the Committee Chairman's statement - addressing proposed Policy CP10 and annexed hereto - be submitted to the planning authority as representing the majority view of Thetford Town Council's Planning Committee.

Those voting for the Resolution

1. Councillor G P Balaam
2. Councillor R F W Brame
3. Councillor T J Jermy
4. Councillor D G Mortimer
5. Councillor A Paines
6. Councillor P J Pearson
7. Councillor Mrs P A Spencer

Those voting against the Resolution

1. Councillor Mrs M P Chapman-Allen
2. Councillor S H Chapman-Allen
3. Councillor T J Lamb

Did not vote

1. Councillor R G Kybird

343/08

REVIEW OF THE EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN TO 2031

RESOLVED that no comments be passed on the review document.

344/08

THETFORD TOWN COUNCIL'S PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

RESOLVED that no further comment be passed on the document.

Chairman