

District Councillors Report

November 2024

For: Litcham, Great Dunham, Little Dunham, Beeston with Bittering, Lexham and Fransham (Rougham, Kempstone and Newton by Castle Acre)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Consultation on the proposed changes to the NPPF ended on September 24th. I understand that there were over 10,000 responses and that a government statement (or publication of an amended NPPF) will be made by the end of the year.

Local Plan: Breckland have paused work on the revision of the Local Plan. The decision was taken by Cabinet at the end of September and will prevent any nugatory effort in proceeding with the current housing numbers when the new mandatory housing numbers will almost certainly be implemented before the new year. A great deal of the work carried out by our planning team will remain valid when the Local Plan revision is restarted. However, there is an expectation that a new “call for sites” will be required to find land to accommodate the proposed annual housing requirement of 917 dwelling per annum.

5 Year Supply of Housing Land: The current Local Plan is 5 years old at the end of November. The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) allows the 5 year supply of housing land to be challenged when a plan is over 5 years old. Breckland may be able to defend their position but when the new NPPF is published and the new mandatory housing numbers are implemented the Local Plan becomes almost irrelevant. Rather than plan led development Breckland (and most planning authorities) will be subjected to planning by appeal.

Nutrient Neutrality (NN): Breckland Council is working in partnership with 4 other planning authorities (Broadland, South Norfolk, North Norfolk and Norwich City) on identifying and promoting schemes that produce NN credits that can be purchased by developers. The Norfolk Nutrient Mitigation Fund (NNMF) received nearly £10m from the previous government; revenue to be used as grants to assess the feasibility of proposed schemes and capital to be used as loans to allow projects to proceed. The new government have committed a further £9+m for the work to continue. The capital loans are expected to be repaid and the money reused on further schemes. Norfolk

Environmental Credits (NEC) is a non profit organisation set up by the same planning authorities to broker NN credits. The Norfolk dual initiative of NNMF and NEC are at the forefront of national nutrient mitigation. Your district councillor is a member of the NNM.

Car Park Charging: Consultation on the proposed charging regime for the 31 Breckland owned car parks opened on the 4th November. The proposals include free parking for periods (to be determined) in each town, extended free periods on market days, long stay parking, resident parking and worker permit schemes and a flat rate for Sundays. Remember this proposal is necessary to recover some of the £450k that the car parks cost to run every year. Please read the proposals carefully. PS: it cost me £2.30 to park for an hour in Kings Lyn last Sunday.

Mark Kiddle-Morris.

5th November, 2024.