

LINGWOOD & BURLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public meeting,

held at the Lingwood Village Hall Main Hall, Station Road, Lingwood,
on Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 7.15pm.

Present were – Chair David Robinson, Ian Chapman, Cheryl Grace, Mike Ingram, Paul Jones, Richard Morton, Roz Simpson, Ian White and Sonya Dickinson – Clerk.

Norfolk County Councillor Lana Hemsall and District Councillor Clare Ryman-Tubb.

Also present were 3 members of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) team; Adam Banham – lead on this work. Mike Burrell – manager on the GNLP and Graham Nelson – project sponsor. PC Godden and PC Chambers. There were over 300 members of the public in attendance.

Welcome and Apologies for absence: Apologies were received from Vice Chair Brenda Jones and Sophia Walker.

David - Welcome everyone.

Public consultations on the local plan are an opportunity for everyone to have their say, but this should be done in polite and respectful language. Residents are reminded that equalities legislation defines Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers as ethnic groups, meaning that they are legally protected against race discrimination.

The public consultation on the local plan is running until 13th March and all comments must be made in writing, preferably through the website www.gnlp.org.uk. All comments made will be passed on to the independent Inspectors as part of the local plan examination process and therefore cannot be anonymous. You may either submit a representation under your own name or write to your district councillor (Cllr Clare Ryman Tubb) who may submit a representation on your behalf.

Officers from the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) team are attending the parish council meeting this evening to advise on to how to reply, to help if anyone is having difficulties, and to answer general questions so residents can make better informed comments when they respond to the consultation online or by paper form. Therefore, the discussion raised here this evening is for information only and does not count as a response to the consultation, as residents must reply themselves in writing.

Comments should focus on genuine planning matters. These include issues like, but are not limited to, overlooking/loss of privacy, loss of light or overshadowing, parking, highway safety, traffic, noise, effect on listed building and conservation area, layout and density of building, design, appearance and materials, government policy, and nature conservation.

Adam from the GNLP Team – We've been working on the the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for some years. Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council. The plan was submitted in 2021 but the Government inspectors said there needed to be extra work done to allocate land for Gypsy and Traveller sites. The GNLP team put a call out for sites and put them up for consultation, 31st January 2023 – 13th March 2023. A decision will be made in June about which sites will go forward and onto the plan. Government inspectors will look at the work done and there will be further consultation in the Autumn. The Plan will be adopted @ March 2024.

There are 10 favoured sites including this one, GNLP5014 North Burlingham Site. (The map of the proposed site was projected onto the wall).

When you make your comments, do so in writing and not at this meeting. Things to look at are planning concerns; material conditions/considerations, loss of privacy, high noise and not property values, loss of view etc.

Questions (Q) and statements (S) from the public and answers (A) from the GNLP Team:

Q. So you have been working on this for a couple of years? Why has it taken this long and why is this the first we've heard about it?

A. The plan as a whole was 2 years ago but the inspectors highlighted the need for Gypsy and Traveller sites. There was lots of work to get sites to put forward for the consultation.

Q. Our household only heard about it from social media.

A. We consulted as widely as we can, we can't send a letter to every home.

Q. Why not?

A. There would be over 200,000 letters for the whole plan.

S. When sending Council tax bills out you could have put a letter in.

A. We are consulting, lots of people do know about it, social media is good, we sent a letter to Parish Councils, and it's good that people are here and talking about it.

Q. SC1 Norwich Planning framework, P47 – You will engage using various means, letters etc. Can you tell us how have you undertaken any of those engagement processes?

A. Engaged on the Plan for 4 years, not on this proposal.

Q. Who feels they have been given enough notice to respond to this consultation?

No-one, we have only just found out about it.

A. The sites went to cabinet in December 2022 and it was in the paper. This consultation and information was in the Public domain 30th December for the 30th Jan – 13th March Consultation.

Q. What do you class as a consultation? How have you consulted? Has the consultation begun today?

A. The information has been out there for the consultation since before the consultation on 30th Jan.

S. You are asking us to chase information you should be notifying us of.

Q. Why can't it go on the empty park and ride site? It has all of the services required already.

A. It depends if the landowner is willing to provide it as a site.

Q. Don't Norfolk County Council own that site?

A. Norfolk County Council don't want to use that land. Other sites will come forward and we do welcome other sites.

Q. Are you telling us that Park and Ride is not Norfolk County Council land?

A. I'm not saying that, but they don't want to use that land.

Q. The room is filled with human emotions, we need truth and honesty? Is that site a done deal?

A. No it isn't, we do want to hear what people say, that's why there is a consultation to hear people's ideas.

Q. 10 sites preferred, what is it about this site that makes it preferred?

A. We have to have a willing landowner to put the land forward. This is Norfolk County Council land, so publicly owned land. The 2nd stage we look at the land to see if there are any constraints on the initial assessment to stop it. 3rd stage is the consultation = it is not a done deal. The land is available, an initial assessment done and if chosen, it would then go forward to planning.

Q. The relationship between the site and the A47 dualling. We were told by the Parish Council that there is some delay already and it is already delayed by 2 years, it might not go ahead for 5 years.

A. At the moment there is a hearing about the A47 legal challenge. It can't happen until the road is built. This is a long term plan to 2038, it's not a planning application, that would happen later.

Q. All of these people will wonder for over 5 years about if it is going ahead.

A. It's a 2038 plan. A planning application would have to go through before the site is built.

S. A47 has been with the Government a long time.

David – We should have the result after the legal challenge in May.

Q. There is a road safety aspect. Even though it's said to be a secure site, gates would need to be opened to allow cars in and out and dogs or children could run out onto the road. If children wanted to go into Lingwood, they would have to walk on dangerous roads with bends. These roads are extremely dangerous.

A. These are valid points. Highways engineers have been consulted and yes they have said there are no pavements and it is next to the A47. People discouraged to go towards the A47.

Q. What makes it a favoured site? No services and there is nothing there, the Horsford site has services and a lot of things near to it.

A. Two points, a willing landowner (NCC), and we have to look at the number of pitches needed. It's going to cost the taxpayer to put it all in and nothing will be seen back.

S. The information the consultant has been using is 10 years out of date. They've got the name of the local Doctor wrong and the School is in the wrong location.

A. Put this information onto the response.

Q. Out of the proposed sites, how many are needed or will go ahead?

A. We need 30-50 pitches across the Greater Norwich area. A day room consists of a kitchen, living and bathroom and space next to the day room will provide space for 1 or 2 caravans. Families are different sizes.

Q. So 15 pitches is 30 caravans. So, does that mean North Burlingham will be the only one needed to accommodate?

A. 30- 50 pitches are needed.

Q. the site is 2.48 Ha but the area used is 1 Ha leaving 1.48 Ha does this mean it will be potentially expanded in future?

A. Broad location for up to 1 Ha for the site will accommodate up to 15 pitches = 30 caravans.

Q. What study did you do to determine what pitches were needed by the Gypsy and Traveller community?

A. The Government told us to do a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment – We appointed Triple R Co. to assess the need.

Q. The Government's own leaflet says that local planning assesses the need, so, it is not dictated by Government.

A. We are aware of that guidance, and we appointed a consultant. Search Triple R on the GNLP Website.

Q. So that will tell us how they assessed the need?

S. I am next door to the site, and you never informed us and you have given us 6 days to make comments. When the road was being proposed and consulted on we were informed well in advance. This is why people are angry, we feel we haven't been informed enough and given time to respond.

Q. Can the deadline for responses be extended?

A. The consultation ran from 30/1/2023 to 13/3/2023 so there has been enough time.

Q Why do you think 6 days if enough time to respond to something of this scale?

A. It started on 30th January.

S. It's 1 day for us as we've only just heard about it.

A. It was in the EDP in December 2022.

Q. So we have to do searches regularly for possible buildings etc. in our area just to make sure we know? It popped up on Facebook last week. Do you think 6 days is acceptable?

A. It wasn't 6 days.

David – This can't be resolved as it has already happened, let's move on.

Q. Traveller families are larger than other families. GP surgeries and Schools, we struggle here as it is.

A. We will look into all of it.

Q. Sewage and drainage are not connected and when the road is built that site will be natural drainage, when it rains hard it floods and we struggle to get out of the village now. The sewer pipes in Lingwood and Acle aren't big enough.

A. None of the technical work has been done, that would be done later if this site gets to the planning stage. This is just a site that has been put forward for consideration.

Q. Housing for travellers, what about all of our children that want to stay around here but can't afford houses, what's being done for them?

A. The plan is not just about Gypsy and Travellers but for development including low cost homes.

Q. You have said you are aware of Government Gypsy and Travellers policies. 24 points, Due diligence. It goes against 8 of your own policies on your website. There are only 4 or 5 houses around there and 15 pitches, potentially 30 homes will far outweigh the current properties. It should not put extra pressure on local services. Acle has had a massive influx of houses, already putting pressure on local services.

Also can you clarify if that land is Green belt?

A. No not around Norwich, defined around certain cities by Government but not around Norwich.

Q. Is it green field land, not brown?

A. Greenfield.

Q. Is there a need for the sites? Two sites have closed down, 1 in Thetford and 1 at Harford Bridge. What is the occupancy rate of pitches in the area? Are you confident in the research carried out? The Harford site still has 9 pitches.

A. We have looked at occupancy rates of pitches in the area and are confident there is a need in the area. Thetford is not included in our area.

S. Postwick Park and Ride – If there's a need for 30 pitches, one site that fits more than that and would allow for growth, already tarmacked, has lights and sanitation and is safe. You have a perfect solution, without spending lots of money and the Travellers will have security in having the opportunity for growth in the future.

A. Put the suggestion in the response form.

Q. Estimate sq ft for the site?

A. Altogether 300 sq metre per pitch. Up to 1 Ha of land for 15 pitches.

Q. When in lock down I went to Postwick to the testing site and there's loads of room. Safer area with all of the amenities.

A. That's a proposal that has already been mentioned by someone, put it onto the response.

Q. You said South Norfolk Council doesn't want them there?

A. We talked to Norfolk County Council and they weren't able to make the land available. (it is rented).

Q. Affordable housing, Government allocating money but have also released a specific amount of £10 million for Gypsy and Traveller sites, how much are Norfolk County Council being paid?

A. I don't recognise those figures. The 1st way is if a Gypsy and Traveller family buy and build the site themselves, the 2nd way a site comes forward, this is the same way as social houses where they will pay rent.

Q. The Government have asked Norfolk County Council to look into sites? How much are the Government paying them?

A. Government Guidance says Local authorities have to allocate enough for Social housing and Gypsy and Traveller sites.

A. Norwich City Council owns the largest Gypsy and Traveller site, Mile Cross. They drew down some money from the Government grant fund to extend it and sold the land for a long lease for a nominal fee of £1, it is not lucrative for the Council. They need to provide where there is a need.

Q. Why do we need more sites?

A. The population round here is growing. This is the most disadvantaged group in our Society.

Q. Norfolk County Council is being disingenuous as not wanting to use the Park and Ride site, which they don't own, but using actual farmland, that they do own. The nearest sewer connection point is not the White house but is in Acle, Beighton and School Road, Lingwood. You need sewers, who is going to pay that cost?

A. As part of the initial work we contacted Anglian water and they had no concerns. We could have septic tanks.

Q. If you don't put sewers in, the amount of land you would need to distribute the waste and drainage for a septic tank is huge, especially as the ground is clay. That corner gets waterlogged, and it will go across the A47.

Q. They have had a lot of meetings i.e. for 15 minute cities around the country where people haven't been allowed to voice their opinion or been listened to. Not allowed to voice an opinion like fly tipping etc. or concerns about our rural area but only allowed to answer the pre agreed questions for this.

S. Farmers are concerned.

S. We are not discriminating, the facts are out there to back it up.

S. Not racism or prejudice against them, it's the data and statistics.

S. I was not being racist, I work with some of the Gypsy and Traveller Community, and they are not all the same. I am offended that I was not allowed to put my comments.

A. Public sector equality – House price issue cannot be taken into consideration. House prices can go down for a variety of reasons. Planning policy is not there to protect house prices. English Romany Gypsies, and Irish Travellers are protected. If any of your comments are saying that any group is prone to certain illegal activity etc., you wouldn't make the same comments about other ethnic minorities would you?

Q. The GNLP website was down for the 1st fortnight. NCC Lana Hemsall was going to let you know and ask for an extension.

A. We checked and it was working.

Q. Was this convenient?

A. It is a 6 week consultation, we want to hear from people.

Q. Expansion of Mile Cross, Ranworth and Brooke Street sites. Both are successful sites and have plenty of land around them for possible expansion. If there is a possibility of expansion as opposed

to £9million to re-acquire a site, why are you not looking at expansions of the sites where there is land available?

A. We are looking at expansion of sites where the land is available. Stratton, Carlton Rode are up for expansion.

Q. The green space near the Park and Ride at Costessey, could you expand that site? Roundwell and Brookes Green have local greenspace and they work so why not expand and improve them?

A. The remit, no land was put forward next to the Brookes Green site.

Q. Can you compulsory purchase the land? Brookes Green originally was gifted to the Council for the Gypsy Community, there are 9 pitches there, could be amenable to selling some land? The one here is 15 with no green space around it and the A47, two attenuation ponds exactly in that area. Drawings from 3 years ago are being used by you.

A. Awaiting a response from National Highways ref the suitability.

Q. Third party consultants – is there anyone from them here tonight?

A. The overall lead figure was from them i.e. how many pitches are needed, but the sites are from the GNLP team, so representatives of the sites are here.

Q. 1 ha is @ 3 acres, is that being a little naïve to think they'll only get 30 caravans there?

A. Not naïve we've looked at sites in the area. The rule of 300 sq metres, some smaller, some larger, we tend to have a day room.

Q. The rest of the land, area 2.48 Ha only 1 Ha needed, what's to stop them from spreading into that?

A. Broadland District Planning application would decide on whether they could expand. It's not a Parish Council power.

Q. Clarify number of pitches. What is 10 preferred sites?

A. 10 sites consulting on is 62 pitches. Another reasonable site at Kettringham has @ 10 pitches, we are leaving the door open for other sites to come forward.

Q. You need nearly all of the 10 preferred sites?

A There are 62 pitches on the 10 sites, we need 50.

S. Therefore, the one at North Buringham is really important to you as without it you will be short. I don't think you are making that really clear.

S. I just have a point to make, you didn't think the village would come out, you have tried to fob us off and shut us down. You should have come prepared with hard facts and answers and not just try to shut us down. You thought it was job done.

Q. You didn't answer the question.

A. The process is the answer, as officers would collate and send to elected Councillors of 3 districts

Q. What percentage chance have we got? 50/50?

A. I can't give an answer.

Q. You're sitting on the fence?

A There will be different people making the decisions.

A. Make the best case/representation you can and submit it. In June, each Council will make the decision. There will be different people making the decision.

Q. How many are making the decision? Who are they? Men and women?

Norfolk County Councillor Lana Hemsall – All have had leaflets, especially in Lingwood, Acle and Beighton. We have District Council elections, I have made it very clear to my Council, I do not support it, James does not support it, Grant (Marshes ward) does not support it. People who are standing to represent you are against it.

I worked with the Parish Council today to get the GNLP to come and speak and so you could ask any questions. I know it's new, but there is help available.

If you are having difficulty responding to the consultation, get in touch with District Councillor Clare Ryman-Tubb for Lingwood, myself for Acle and Grant for Marshes ward, we will help you. If you can't get in touch by computer, you can phone us, our details are on the Broadland District Council website, it's there so my residents can contact me.

Q. Can we also make representations to the Local MP?

A. You can but the people at District level are where the planning dept is. I am Burlingham Ward County Councillor, I will take the suggestions back about the Park and ride.

District level for planning. The final decision lands with the planning inspectors.

Q. When can we see them?

A. Public examination meeting, locally, you will be able to attend, you will be informed.

Final decision is with the planning inspectors so they will take notice of written responses to the consultation, so make comments, that carries weight.

David - Paper copies of the response forms are available at the front here.

Clerk - They have been available at the Village Hall, the Spar, the Egg Shed and Pages of Strumpshaw since 3rd February.

We have run over time, I know some of you haven't asked your question, if you have a new point, I will take a few more questions.

Q. At what point is a risk assessment done? For such a busy road, to what level is that done?

A. Norfolk County Highways – Will be consulted on Highways issues at the planning application stage.

Q. Any reason why employed consultants didn't provide you with potential costs? 180 people living there, cost of sewerage etc. no one seems to have been looking at that.

A. Detail about what you're talking about are issues that will come up with design work.

Q. No reason why you couldn't have put a cost up.

Q. Am I correct that the only responses are on Legality and soundness – People going through a complicated document. I waded through it. Is that fair to expect people to know what to put?

A. we don't expect people to know how to put legal and soundness jargon, just respond.

To pick up a point on legal and soundness, when the planners go through the plan they are going through the soundness.

If you think it's dangerous – say it

If access is bad – say it.

If services are bad – say it.

Q. Fear and concern here tonight. You've had consultation with all different agencies. We are a Country Community – Police here from the Acle Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Has there been a consultation with Norfolk Police? A Proactive Policing plan for these communities?

A. I don't know the answer to that.

Q. Has there been or going to be a consultation for the Gypsy and Traveller Community? Are they happy to be living under a flyover with all of that traffic around them?

A. Norfolk County Council has reached out to the Gypsy and Traveller community via Gypsy and Traveller Services to encourage them to respond to this consultation.

S. We do not want to live near major busy roads.

Q. Have you done an Environmental impact assessment on the land for the next 5 years?

A. Yes

Q. Why would you consider when there is no public transport there and it's next to a busy road?

A. We are not traffic engineers and will consult with NCC Highways engineers. If it can't be safe, it won't go forward. If you think it won't be acceptable, stress these points on the consultation.

Q. ? (Question not heard, due to talking).

A. There is a mismatch in information.

Q. I don't want to know where you live, but if it was near your house would you do anything? You don't live here so you don't care.

A. I would respond to the consultation.

David – Please put your responses in writing.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.15