

**Economic Issues, Climate Change & the Environment, Tuesday 24th
May 2018**

| Attendees - BAPTC | Attendees - Babergh |
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| John Foster (Sproughton), JF, Helen Davies (Sproughton), HD, Chris Tuppen (Advancing Sustainability), CT, Simon Pearce (Woolverstone), SP, Andrew Kerrison (Burstall), AK | Tom Barker – Assistant Director – Planning for Growth |

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEETING

1. Economic Issues

- 1.1 What is the evidence base with reference to effectiveness of existing policy?
- 1.2 What is the research basis for suitability of sites ('what the developers want')
- 1.3 How will the requirement for 'right place' be embodied in wider planning policy e.g. with reference to transport infrastructure in rural areas? BDC already has objectives to "encourage the development of employment sites and other business growth, of the right type, in the right place and encourage investment in skills and innovation in order to increase productivity" JLP p 66. How is this evaluated at present and how successful has this policy been? Where is the underlying data on this?

2. Climate Change & the Environment

- 2.1 What information do you currently hold on flood zones, flood management plans, wildlife corridors, location of protected species and is it up to date? Is this feeding into the JLP?
- 2.2 Plans do you have to manage the local rivers and are you working with the community organisations on this such as the River Gipping Trust?
- 2.3 Where are the current wildlife corridors and how are they impacted by major upcoming developments? What actions are you taking to mitigate this risk?
What endangered species exist in Suffolk and how are you tracking them and ensuring they are not impacted by development?
- 2.4 What sanctions are applied if developments breach planning conditions relating to the environment & wildlife?
- 2.5 There is an initiative underway to plant up roadside verges and roundabouts with plants/flowers suitable for pollinating insects (see charity 'Plantlife') given that 75% of pollinating insects have disappeared in the last 25yrs?
- 2.6 What are you doing to increase energy efficiency standards in new builds e.g. insulation, grey water, solar panels AND in existing buildings re retrofitting of energy & resource savings measures? Will you be asking that developers exceed energy efficiency standards in Building regulations up to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes?
- 2.7 How, as a council are you encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, reduction in household waste, reduction in the use of cars running on fossils fuels and encouragement of alternatives such as cycling/walking to work or use of electric cars?
- 2.8 Will you be in-line with the governments Clean Growth Strategy published on 12 October 2017?
- 2.9 What is going into the JLP in relation to the above?

NOTES FROM THE MEETING: ECONOMICS, CLIMATE CHANGE

1. Economics Issues

- a. BDC informed the group that the Economic Plan and Economic Strategy documents were effectively one and the same. The 'Open for Business Strategy' was mentioned – this is intended to support economic growth across Babergh & Mid Suffolk with a requirement to be flexible towards the needs and scale of different business sectors with the aim of delivering economic growth.
- b. Babergh felt that this is all in the New Anglia Strategic Economic Plan and the LEP Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Strategy (August 2017) - a series of consultation events relating to these plans concluded shortly before this meeting. However, none of the consultation events were in Babergh and the plans seem to hinge on giving developers whatever they want - e.g. Konings cider plant (impacting Stoke by Nayland) which was mentioned.
- c. Agriculture and food production are one of the biggest chunks of the local economy and Babergh has been working on this. *[Note: BDC supports the economy across the district].* BAPTC commented that if farming is so important why has Babergh been so cavalier in allowing development on the best agricultural land? *TB replied that he did not consider that Babergh had been cavalier.*

2. Climate Change & the Environment

- a) BDC is now putting more information on their website regarding flood zones and other information e.g. listed buildings, rights of way that is viewable by the public. A new plan for water management is to be drafted. This part of the strategic plan is to be reviewed.
- b) BDC have done some work with Ipswich Borough Council to ensure that wildlife corridors join up. BAPTC commented that the Gipping valley leading from the waterfront through Ipswich towards Sproughton, Bramford & Claydon should be protected as it provides an uninterrupted corridor through to open countryside as well as valuable green space for the public. However the high level of development planned in the JLP jeopardises this corridor.
- c) BDC stated that an updated water management plan was being drafted and that BDC were working with Ipswich Borough Council with respect to the River Gipping and were aware of the River Action Group¹. BAPTC asked why BDC were not working with them or the River Gipping Trust to formulate a plan. Would this plan join up with the Orwell Estuary strategy.
- d) BAPTC queried why there were no in-house ecologists at Babergh or SCC, BDC said this was effectively outsourced and provided by Essex Place Services.
- e) BAPTC also queried if there was sufficient protection for trees and protected species? BDC stated that if protected species cannot be moved then there is a black and white case for leaving them in situ. BAPTC felt that developers tended to ignore the presence of protected species. Also in the case of protected trees, fines may not be heavy enough (£2500 and £5000) to deter developers from removing them. BDC acknowledged that there were difficulties in obtaining convictions in these circumstances as conclusive evidence was hard to get.
- f) Natural England is consulted by developers on how to mitigate the impact of large developments on the environment and should be holding developers to account. BAPTC questioned how effective that was.

¹ The River Action Group are a voluntary organisation that endeavour to look after the Ipswich part of the Gipping

- g) BAPTC asked what BDC were doing to encourage the building of energy efficient sustainable homes in the district. BDC replied that developers have to meet a minimum standard but it is hard to persuade developers to go above and beyond the minimum requirement as that incurs extra cost for them (which hits their profit margin). BAPTC also pointed out that other green initiatives such as new footpaths/pavements/cycle tracks were alluded to in developer plans but not always seem to come to fruition as developers seem to have a habit of trying to move goalposts post granting of planning permission e.g. trying to wriggle out of planning conditions. BDC pointed out that as they had not met their housing targets their powers were limited. *[Note: TB recalls this conversation differently. TB pointed out that the Council has to be reasonable in all its actions. Sometimes developers are able to show they can do something different without necessarily causing any harm. And if necessary obligations aren't met the Council does take enforcement action.]*
- h) BDC commented that with buildings under their control they would do their best to ensure that buildings were adequately insulated, with energy efficient heating. It was suggested Babergh/Mid Suffolk should be proactive, to be exemplars for the 210 new homes they plan to build (ideally to passiv house standards). It was also suggested BDC create a design guide (e.g. Essex Design Guide) and/or mandate additional sustainability requirements.
- i) BAPTC also commented that it would be nice if BDC could think about asking developers to include more sustainable features in housing developments e.g. electric charging points for electric cars.
- j) JF asked if BDC were aware of the Natural Capital Committee's 'Advice to Government on the 25 year Environment Plan' (Sept 2017) and its potential impact. BDC were not. (The Natural Capital Committee is an independent body set up in 2012, initially for a three-year period, to report to the UK Government and advise on how to value nature and to ensure England's 'natural wealth' is managed efficiently and sustainably)

SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW-UP

None

CURRENT STATUS (NOV'18)

No further discussions held to date with BDC.