

Borough Council must review their strategic goals

After the disappointing decision regarding the Parkway development last week, King's Lynn Civic Society call on all Borough Councillors to question whether they have any clear vision of what they want King's Lynn to look like in coming decades and whether they really feel they are still working in the best interests of residents.

It cannot be right that the Council finds itself as landowner, developer and planning authority giving itself consent for a scheme, partly on unallocated land, and at the expense of a large area of green infrastructure within the town, when thousands of residents have registered their objections. It seems completely implausible that a private developer would have been granted this consent.

The Civic Society are not against house building. We do have a growing population in the UK. However, Councillors should be reminded that Office of National Statistics for 2019 show that UK growth is presently very low – only 0.5%!

It has largely been a political decision to adopt 'growth point status' and expand King's Lynn. We are not necessarily against that either. But steadily increasing the population and the density of residential areas must be balanced with the appropriate delivery of amenities, infrastructure, employment and all the other elements that provide for quality of life.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2011, we have continually urged the Council to deliver clear strategic documents outlining sustainable proposals for transport, green space provision, and amenities. They have not materialised.

Traffic congestion continues to get worse in the town. We still know of no cumulative impact assessment to identify how traffic growth can be addressed. Proposals for pedestrian, cycling and public transport provision seem late, inadequate, underfunded and under supported.

Whilst we keep losing our public green spaces, trees and other informal landscape features, we are still unaware of any strategic plan to replace them. The Parkway schemes flies in the face of the BCKLWN Tree Strategy goal to increase tree cover across the town. How can Councillors be taken seriously if they honestly believe that building 379 houses on 17 acres of scrub woodland will result in 'much better conditions for flora and fauna'!

At Parkway, it would be possible to build perhaps 180–200 houses at the western end of the site and still improve and expand public open space in the locality as well as enhancing pedestrian / cycle / public transport access for the town. We have consistently suggested this. We are increasingly concerned about the apparent lack of detailed scrutiny and review by Councillors for proposals in the town. There seems to be little or no process, or perhaps will, to accommodate community views.

'Are we going to be the group of Councillors that rips the lungs out of King's Lynn?' was a question one of the dissenting Councillors asked about the Parkway development. Now it seems that will be the case. We hope it is not too late to ask for this planning decision to be reconsidered and that Councillors put the wishes of residents before loyalty to any particular political group. There are very challenging times ahead and Councillors should be working for the interests of the residents of King's Lynn and not against them.

Yours sincerely

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