

# PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

**Date:** 19 September 2011

**Venue:** East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors: - David Brackenbury (Chairman)

Tony Boto  
Pauline Bradberry  
Michael Finch  
Philip Hardcastle  
Sylvia Hobbs  
Marian Hollomon

David Jenney  
Bob Nightingale  
Steven North  
David Read  
Pam Whiting

## **156. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Prior to the start of business, the Chairman referred to his absence at the last meeting which had prevented him from making an announcement at that meeting. He now welcomed the new members of the committee.

## **157. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2011 were approved, subject to the addition of the name of Councillor Marian Hollomon to minute 117 (Apologies for Absence). The minutes were signed by the chairman.

## **158. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors David Bateman and Glenvil Greenwood-Smith sent their apologies.

## **159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND QUESTIONS**

There were no declarations of interest and no questions.

## **160. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION**

The committee considered a proposed response to a consultation document on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which aimed to replace the current Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes and consolidate guidance into a single, short document.

The officers had a number of concerns which required further clarification or information. These concerns were outlined in the report and it was felt that the document needed to address them, in order to provide a clear and understandable planning policy framework for all users. This would avoid the potential for misinterpretation and conflict in the future. A further comment was submitted from the Development Control Team – seeking clarity on

paragraph 113 of the document referring to the essential need for rural workers to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.

Members discussed the NPPF at some length and agreed with the officers that the document had to have greater clarity and the terms used had to be clearly defined to avoid confusion. Comments made included –

- Paragraphs 10 and 19 - Support these principles, in particular mixed-use developments
- Paragraphs 20 – 26 and 49 – 52 - Need for clear understanding of what is meant by “Neighbourhood Plans” and “Local Plans” to avoid any misunderstanding
- Paragraph 23 – Reference to “strategic priorities” being set out by local authorities – confused message as these would be determined at Core Spatial Strategy level currently, therefore as per the above point, this requires clarification
- Paragraph 29 – Reference to business needs but not enough emphasis on employment growth
- Paragraph 53 – Uneasiness that development was still being “led from the top”
- Paragraphs 73 and 75 – Apparent conflict between the two paragraphs
- Paragraph 109 (housing) – Interpretation of “the additional 20%” – needs clarifying
- Paragraph 127 – Reference to education should be strengthened (possibly by including education in the definition of “sustainability”)

The committee felt that any other comments submitted by members after the meeting could be considered for inclusion in the council’s response to the consultation.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Planning Services be authorised, in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman of the committee, to finalise the council’s response to the consultation on the NPPF based on the officers’ concerns submitted, the comments made by Members at the meeting and any other comments received before the submission is finalised, and that a copy of the final response be circulated to all members of the committee.

*(Reason – to ensure that a robust national planning policy framework is put into place and implemented)*

#### **161. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT**

Members received a progress report on the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The main points were:-

- A Joint Planning Committee member workshop had taken place on 27 July to consider the emerging work in developing the preferred options for the Joint Core Strategy, with key areas of debate relating to retail hierarchy, housing targets, new settlement at Deenethorpe and job numbers. A number of suggestions/indications had been made by the Joint Planning Unit (JPU), as detailed below
- Retail hierarchy – a Preferred Option would require Corby and Kettering to accommodate a higher proportion of new comparison retail space than Wellingborough and Rushden by 2031
- Housing targets – a Preferred Option would maintain high housing targets for Corby between 2011 and 2031, but in the light of the emerging National Planning Policy

Framework, there were concerns that other districts may be required to accommodate any shortfall against Corby's aspirational housing target

- New settlement at Deenethorpe – a new village may be an appropriate departure from the current spatial strategy; further work was necessary on deliverability of Deenethorpe and the potential implications on existing settlements
- Job numbers – a Preferred Option would aim for at least one new job for each worker, with the majority focused in Corby, Kettering and the rural north of East Northamptonshire; the targets had been challenged in the context of strong economic performance within east Northamptonshire and the enormous potential for job creation at locations such as Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit.

The report gave the latest revised timetable to adoption of the Core Strategy, and identified the key issues to be fully considered when developing the Preferred Options.

Members made a number of comments and asked questions, relating to the proposal for Deenethorpe; the strong desire for people to stay "local"; avoiding misconceptions about job numbers; and the development of broadband in the north of the District.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the progress on the Core Strategy be noted.

*(Reason – to ensure that a local planning policy framework is put into place and implemented)*

#### **162. DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT UPDATE & REVISED FOUR TOWNS PLAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Committee was informed of progress in the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) in relation to Rural North Thrapston and Oundle Plan (RNOTP), Four Towns Plan and Core Spatial Strategy Review, and was asked to approve the revised Four Towns Plan Local Development Scheme (LDS) and funding for a specific element of evidence base preparation.

The following issues were covered in the report:-

- The final stages in the completion of the RNOTP following its adoption on 18 July. If interested parties wished to challenge this DPD, they had to make an application to the High Court, and any application had to be made by 17 September. (Officers highlighted at the meeting that no challenges had been received). Officers were working towards publication of the final version of the RNOTP and accompanying proposals map which should be ready by early October; the final version would be made available to members.
- The progress by the JPU on the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) review. The preferred approach to the review would be considered by the JPC on 8 October, with consultation in mid October/November and formal consultation on the pre-submission JCS, probably early in 2012 (see minute 161 ante)
- A draft revised timetable for the Four Towns LDS, with key milestones from January/February 2012, through to adoption in May 2014. A number of themes/topic areas of a non-strategic nature had been identified (settlement boundaries; smaller allocations; town centre boundaries/primary shopping areas (or frontages); non-statutory environment designations such as local wildlife sites and listed buildings; local green infrastructure proposals; local landscape designations; residential

character areas; gypsy and traveller sites) and these issues would require policy designations or site allocations in the Four Towns Plan

- Progress with evidence base preparation for the Four Towns Plan. Most of the documents would be prepared “in house” or would be sufficiently covered by evidence gathering/survey projects for the JCS, but some would require the appointment of consultants.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) document was included within the evidence base preparation. A Level 1 SFRA had been completed in August 2011 and within the Four Towns Plan area, six potential sites in Rushden and Irthlingborough had been identified requiring a more detailed assessment through a Level 2 SFRA. The cost was anticipated to be no more than £15,000.

It was noted that the Policy and Resources Committee on 29 September 2011 would consider an initial resource plan for the Four Towns Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

That the updated LDS project programme for the Four Towns Plan and funding up to £15,000 for the Level 2 SFRA work be approved.

*(Reasons: to provide an up to date timetable of work, in accordance with current planning requirements; to ensure that the evidence base for the Four Towns Plan is robust; and to enable progress on the Four Towns Plan evidence base to proceed as fast as possible.)*

**Chairman**