

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 12 December 2011

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: - David Brackenbury (Chairman)

David Bateman
Tony Boto
Mike Finch
Sylvia Hobbs

Marian Hollomon
David Jenney
David Read
Pam Whiting

302. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2011 were approved and signed by the chairman.

303. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Pauline Bradberry, Philip Hardcastle, Bob Nightingale and Steven North sent their apologies.

304. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND QUESTIONS

There were no declarations of interest and no questions.

305. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: DETAILED PROPOSALS & DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR REFORM CONSULTATION

The committee considered a report from the Planning Policy and Conservation Manager on the government's consultation on the reform of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (CIL) and associated regulations. The Localism Act 2011 set out proposals to reform the CIL and views were now being sought on the detailed implementation of the proposals.

CIL had been introduced on 6 April 2010 and allowed local authorities to levy a charge on the owners or developers of land so they contributed to the costs of providing the necessary infrastructure to support the development. CIL was not a statutory requirement but from April 2014 the number of section 106 contributions that can be 'pooled' for a common infrastructure project would be limited to five, and this would severely restrict the ability to raise funds for infrastructure required as a result of cumulative development.

Members noted that the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit was leading the work on a CIL framework to enable individual planning authorities within North Northamptonshire to then make an informed judgement on whether or not to proceed with CIL.

The consultation sought views on the following proposals:

- implement neighbourhood funds (Chapter 1)
- allow receipts to be used to provide affordable housing (Chapter 2)
- provide transitional provisions to allow fair operation of the levy in Mayoral Development Corporation areas (Chapter 3)
- require charging authorities to report more openly and regularly on receipts and expenditure to improve transparency and understanding of the contribution that developers are making and how those funds are used (Chapter 4)
- add new Development Orders to the list of developments that may be liable to a charge (Chapter 4).

The committee asked a number of questions and made a number of points during the discussion and the officers commented. The points raised included –

- The mechanism for allocating CIL between parishes and the District
- The need for a council policy on CIL if the regulations do not specify the proportions to be allocated to parishes and the District
- The need for parishes to have a proper evidence based list of requirements
- This council's officers will work with parishes and a training session had already been held to raise awareness of CIL and related issues
- The desirability of retaining flexibility in the responses to the consultation – there were differing views in North Northamptonshire
- Concerns that CIL should not fund affordable housing – this was seen as the government's responsibility.

RESOLVED:

That the consultation response presented by the officers be approved, subject to the answers to questions 9, 10 and 12 relating to affordable housing being “No” and to Question 11 “No comment”, and that, should the officers consider that supporting comments should be made on Questions 9, 10 and 12, the Head of Planning Services be authorised to formulate such comments with the concurrence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the committee.

(Reason – to improve infrastructure provision and mechanisms for achieving this)

306. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING REGULATIONS CONSULTATION

Following the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 on 15 November 2011, the government sought views on Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. Specifically it asked for comments on its proposals for governing the process for –

- establishing neighbourhood areas and forums,
- the requirements of Community Right to Build organisations
- the preparation of neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders and Community Right to Build Orders.

The proposals set out the minimum level of requirements to ensure a nationally consistent approach to the first and third bullet points above. Some provisions (requirements to ensure compatibility with EU obligations, and referendums) were not covered in the consultation.

A proposed response to the consultation was submitted. Members asked that the following additional points and changes be made as part of the response:-

- Amend part (iv) of (a) to confine the viewpoint to Rural
- Ensure that the comments box under Question 1(a) relating to the need for both statements and plans be reflected elsewhere in the document
- Question 4 – other comments on the proposals – add the following:
 - Regulation 11: clarification on what happens next
 - Regulation 16 (a): to read “a plan **and** statement”
 - Regulation 34 (1): clarification needed – if a parish council cannot determine an application relating to land it owns, who will do this?
 - Need for clarification on the appeals process if parish councils turn proposals down and liability for costs.

RESOLVED:

That the consultation response presented by the officers be approved, subject to the additions/changes in the bullet points above.

(Reason – to enhance opportunities for community involvement in the planning process)

307. MASTERPLANS AND FOUR TOWNS PLAN - PROGRESS

The Executive Director reported on progress towards the preparation of Masterplans for the following towns:-

- Higham Ferrers - The Town Council would draw up the Masterplan itself as the Town Clerk had some expertise. The Town Council would be looking at the funding required to support the work and the first meeting would be held on 13 December. It was hoped that a report would be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee in January or February 2013.
- Irthlingborough - The Town Council had received a first draft from consultants and officers' comments had been received. The second draft would be looked at shortly.
- Thrapston - The Town Council was considering its position and may decide to undertake the work itself. A working party had been set up.
- Oundle - The Town Council would be producing a draft document for consideration in the New Year.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager reported on the progress on the Four Towns Plan. The current focus was on evidence gathering and other work in relation to the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy review. Evidence gathering was also taking place for the Four Towns Plan and the Consultants would be starting on the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

It was agreed that an item on progress on the Four Towns Plan would be added to all future agendas.

308. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT FOR 2010/11

The committee received extracts from the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in terms of housing land trajectories and the new 5 year housing supply situation. The AMR was required, by the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004), to be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31 December each year. Although the requirement would cease next year, the AMR would still be prepared as it provided a useful planning tool and provided details about the council's housing performance, which would remain a public reporting requirement.

The 5 year supply figures were as follows:-

ENC Supply 2012 – 17	3,045
Housing Requirement	2,840
No. of Years Housing Supply 2012 - 17	5.36

Members expressed concerns about some of the figures in the tables presented, especially in relation to housing density, and the officers undertook to review these tables before any figures are submitted by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit to the Secretary of State and to circulate, to the committee, the revised tables.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(Reason: To inform members about the AMR for 2010/11 and in particular the associated housing supply issues).

Chairman