



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Planning Policy Committee – 19th March 2012

North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, Four Towns Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans Update

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to :

- Provide an update on progress with the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy and Four Towns Plan. In addition, updates are provided on progress with Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans;
- Request that Members convene a new Four Towns Plan Working Party, ready for receipt of background papers for discussion.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 Four Towns Plan Evidence Base Projects

Appendix 2 Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At Planning Policy Committee on 12 December 2011, Members requested that progress on the Four Towns Plan be reported at subsequent Committees. Most of this report is therefore provided for Members' information only. However, in addition officers are also requesting the convening of a new Four Towns Plan Working Party.
- 1.2 This report also provides updates about officers' input to the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) review and progress with Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans. Finally, brief updates are also provided about new Community Plan work.

2.0 Update

- 2.1 Appendix 1 sets out updates on some of the main areas of evidence gathering work for the Four Towns Plan. It should be noted that is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Members will note that progress is being made in a number of areas and in particular in terms of cross-cutting evidence based work being carried out with the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) and with respect to East Northamptonshire Council's (ENC) own Strategic Flood Risk Assessment work.
- 2.2 In addition to this work update, Members are also advised that two planners commenced work during February in the two temporary planning policy posts: a Senior Planning Policy Officer and a Planning Policy Officer (posts were approved as part of the Four Towns Plan - Resource Plan by Policy and Resources Committee on 29 September 2011 for a temporary period until the end of March 2014).

2.3 Core Strategy

To date, Planning Policy Officers from ENC have been involved in working on and preparing initial background papers for the CSS, with officers from the JPU and other North Northamptonshire Local Authorities. This has included, for example preparing

the settlement hierarchy background paper. Officers have also been working alongside other North Northamptonshire planners to investigate the potential content and policy wording for the new Core Strategy (CS). Officers will continue to work with the other planners on the CS preparation over the coming months, with an expected preliminary consultation taking place this Summer, following approval by the Joint Planning Committee.

2.4 Four Towns Plan (FTP) (Appendix 1)

Work continues on the background research/evidence gathering for the FTP. The FTP is intrinsically linked to the timescales and content of the CS, which will provide its lead. Consultants are continuing to make good progress with the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which is expected to be completed this Spring. A series of background papers are being prepared for the FTP and Officers would like to bring these to a future Four Towns Plan Working Party for discussion. These include topics such as:

- Housing site selection
- Town centre boundaries
- Existing employment areas
- Detailed village service study
- Settlement boundaries – Preferred approach

Work is well advanced on all of these and it is important that a new Working Party is convened to ensure Member input in respect of these key evidence base projects

2.5 Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans (Appendix 2)

Officers continue to work with the 2 Neighbourhood Plan frontrunners of Raunds and Oundle: Officers are due to undertake a site visit (14 March 2012) of “Raunds issues” with the Town Council, in order to consider options for the best way forward with their proposals for the centre of Raunds; Oundle continue to progress work on a Design Statement and a Town Plan.

2.6 The draft Irthlingborough Master Plan will be agreed with Irthlingborough Town Council and relevant ENC ward councillors for consultation in April. Work will also commence shortly on recruiting the consultants for the Thrapston Master Plan and traffic management element of the Higham Ferrers Community Plan now that funding has been agreed.

2.6 In addition, to date officers have received general queries about Neighbourhood Planning and what these entail from various towns and villages, including Stanwick, Rushden and King’s Cliffe. Planning Policy staff will be assisting with Neighbourhood Plans while Community Partnership staff are leading on the support of the initial Parish/Community/Master Plans which take a holistic look at the particular communities needs and aspirations. Only some of these will require a ‘development planning’ solution via a Neighbourhood Plan.

2.7 Officers are currently working with other planners in North Northamptonshire to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit i.e. what it is, what Local Authorities can offer and useful links. Officers have also provided training on Neighbourhood Plans and Localism for Town and Parish Councils and ENC Members. Masterplan work is ongoing and details are provided in Appendix 2, as are details about Community Plans just for information. The Community Plans have involved the community having initial meetings with a Planning Policy and a Community Development Officer, followed up by the Community Development Officer providing the main support role for these.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 This report is presented primarily for information purposes only, however Officers are also seeking the convening of a new Four Towns Plan Working Party. Work on

gathering evidence for the Four Towns Plan is continuing and is intrinsically linked to evidence gathering work for the review of the Core Strategy, which ENC officers are also working on. The appointment of the two temporary officers will increase the level of input and speed of development of the Four Towns Plan.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The lack of a Local Development Plan Document for the south of the District could lead to more planning appeals, with associated potential costs for the Council.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 Delays to the preparation of the Four Towns Plan will result in the south of the District not having an up-to-date, robust detailed, planning policy framework to defend against any unwanted development. However, the Adopted North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy does provide a strategic policy framework for this area.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications at present, as all current work and appointments are within existing budget.

8.0 Corporate Outcomes

8.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Regeneration and Economic Development
- Sustainable Development
- High quality built environment

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 That Members note the current progress and also agree to the convening of a new Four Towns Plan Working Party (*Reason – to provide an update on progress for the Core Strategy, Four Towns Plan, and also Neighbourhood Plan and Masterplans, and also to seek a steer on key issues via Member input through a Working Party for the Four Towns Plan*)

Legal	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2011			
	Other considerations: None			
Background Papers: Minutes of Planning Policy Committee 19 September 2011 and 12 December 2011; Minutes of Policy and Resources Committee 29 September 2011				
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Date: 5 March 2012				
CFO		MO		CX

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

Appendix 1: Four Towns Plan evidence base projects					
Evidence Gathering	Work Streams	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
Spatial Strategy					
Settlement Hierarchy	Rural settlement study currently being undertaken by North Northamptonshire JPU. Need for further work dependent upon final output from emerging JPU work.	JPU/ ENC/ Action for Market Towns	Not specified	March/ April 2012 - work finalised	JPU settlement hierarchy study to accompany draft Core Strategy Review
	<i>Settlement hierarchy study (Four Towns Plan area)</i>	<i>In house</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>Work prepared in draft, awaiting checking</i>	<i>ENC settlement hierarchy study paper</i>
Settlement boundaries	Options review - need for boundaries or criteria - initial report drafted; to be considered through relevant Planning Policy Working Parties	In house/ JPU	Not specified	March 2012 - Options review paper to Working Party/ PPC (as necessary)	ENC settlement boundaries option paper
	Settlement boundary criteria	JPU/ Constituent LPAs	Not specified	Work prepared in draft, awaiting checking March/ April 2012 - JPU work finalised	JPU settlement boundary criteria paper to accompany pre-submission Core Strategy Review
	<i>Review individual settlement boundaries (if necessary) - Dependent on outcome of Settlement boundary Options review</i>	<i>In house</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>May/ June 2012 - Further ENC work to be completed</i>	<i>Boundaries paper agreed/ finalised through Working Party</i>
Environmental Projects					
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Stage A - Scoping	In house/ with statutory consultees	Not specified	May/June 2012	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside "Regulation 25" Four Towns Plan consultation
	Stage B - Developing options and assessing effects	In house but with mentoring		September/ October 2012	Consultation on initial SA report alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation
	Stage C - Preparation of SA Report – inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD	In house but with mentoring		October 2012 - March 2013	
	Stage D - Consultation on the SA Report	In house		March/ April 2013	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside pre-submission Four Towns Plan consultation
	Stage E - Commencement of monitoring process for significant effects of DPD/ submission of final SA report	In house but with mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring	June/ July 2013	Submission of final SA report to Secretary of State

Habitats Regulations Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment (HRA/ AA)	Stage 1 - Screening (from Four Towns Plan scoping)	Enfusion (Appointed February 2011 to undertake HRA/ AA work alongside Four Towns Plan preparation)	Stage 1 completed by Enfusion (July 2011)		Plans and Programmes/ Site Characterisation work completed
	Stage 2 - Initial evidence gathering (surveys) - Natural England guidance awaited	Enfusion/ Natural England	£5,000 estimate- Stages 2/3 (see total below cost estimate total)	Summer 2012	
	Stage 2 - Scoping and further evidence gathering (through consultation process)	Enfusion/ Natural England		September/ October 2012	Consultation on HRA/ AA Scoping Paper alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation
	Stage 3 - Assessment of impacts (HRA/ AA, to inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD)	Enfusion/ Natural England		October 2012 - March 2013	
	Submission of final HRA/ AA Report	Enfusion/ Natural England	£8,500 (Stage 1-3 total) (Estimated)	February/ March 2013	Final HRA/ AA Report completed
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	Level 1 - Completed August 2011; Final approval/ sign off by Environment Agency still awaited	URS Scott Wilson	Level 1 SFRA already completed	Autumn 2011 - EA signed off	Publication of updated Level 1 SFRA
	Level 2 - Detailed site assessment/ modelling work of potential development sites in Rushden and Irthlingborough	URS Scott Wilson	maximum £15,000 estimated	January 2012 (formal project start up)	Publication of draft Level 2 SFRA - spring 2012
				Summer 2012 - Completion of Level 2 SFRA	Final Level 2 SFRA (Rushden and Irthlingborough)
Flood Risk Management Strategy Update	Update Strategy	URS Scott Wilson/JPU	Not specified	April - June 2012	Publish updated Strategy
Landscape Character Assessment - update and locality issues	Review current evidence and prepare scoping study, undertake study	In house but with mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring	September 2012 - Completion	Completed report
Open Space Study (2006 PMP study update)	Open Space SPD - Completion of final document	In house	Not specified	Planning Policy Committee approved changes to be made subject to consultation responses November 2011	Final draft SPD (March 2012)
	Complete final Open Space Study update report for publication/ submission alongside Four Towns Plan	In house	Not specified	June/ July 2013	Final Open Space Study update report

Local Listings - Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest	Comprehensive list of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest prepared	Ann Bond/ Rockingham Forest Trust	Study partially completed/ further work ongoing funded through external grant	June/ July 2013	Publication of completed report
GI Delivery Plan	Complete Plan	JPU/ENC	Not specified	April - June 2012	Publication of completed plan
Social/ Housing projects					
Housing site selection work	Stage 1 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) site discounting: initial draft methodology/ study prepared May 2010 - update needed to reflect recent changes/ imminent SHLAA update	In house	Not specified	Spring 2012	Publication of completed report
	Stage 2 - PPS3 paragraph 54 assessment - update to November 2010 draft study needed	In house	Not specified	Spring 2012	Publication of completed report
	Stage 3 - Site by site assessment (sites not discounted at stages 1/2) - update to 2010 draft assessment/ study needed	In house	Not specified	Spring 2012	Publication of completed report
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	Review of 2009 Roger Tym & Partners Study, including comprehensive updating of database and reconciliation of site specific details	JPU	Not specified	Spring 2012	Publication of completed SHLAA update. Consider publication of comprehensive database of sites (GIS).
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Stage 1 - Inception Meeting/ survey audit	North Northamptonshire Housing Coordinator and JPU (Housing Vision)	£10,000 (estimate)	January/ February 2012	Data/ information review
	Stage 2 - Detailed modelling: household projections, current housing market, affordable housing requirements			February/ March 2012	Publication of completed report
Affordable Housing Assessment (Economic Viability)	Draft viability assessment completed August 2010	AECOM	Draft assessment completed		
	Refresh AECOM assessment, taking account of site specific viability assessments prepared to accompany planning applications	In house/ AECOM	£2,500 - £3,000 estimate	November 2012 - March 2013	Publication of updated AECOM assessment
Economic and Retail Projects					
Employment Land Review (update of 2006 Atkins study)	Stage 1 - Existing employment areas site by site review - database update/ current business survey	In house	Not specified	Spring 2012	Completion of existing employment areas review
	Stage 2 - Employment site assessment - completion of study document	In house	Not specified	Summer 2012	Publication of completed report

Appendix 2 : Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans

	Work Streams	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners					
Raunds	The Raunds Masterplan has been completed and discussion on next steps are taking place	Raunds Town Council	£20,000 Government Grant to ENC	A Meeting took place in Jan. 2012 to discuss progress and agree outcomes. A site visit of "Raunds issues" will be taking place shortly to assist the Town Council in deciding what they wish to do next/how to take things forward	Publication of final document (s)
Oundle 2020	Work is progressing on a Parish Plan and Town Design Statement	Oundle Town Council	£20,000 Government Grant to ENC	PP: prepare draft TDS: Jan. 2012 meeting took place with the new "Authoring Group" to discuss initial draft work - this will be followed by ongoing receipt of draft work for officer checking; approval of draft TDS for public consultation	Publication of final documents

Towns					
Rushden Town Centre Regeneration Strategy	Regeneration Strategy document completed June 2010	Princes Foundation	Already completed	2 meetings have been attended (Nov. 2011 and March 2012) with the Rushden Design Working Group to advise on Neighbourhood Plans and Planning policy documents	
Raunds Masterplan	Masterplan document completed March 2011	AECOM	Already completed		
Irthlingborough Masterplan	Consultation stage/ workshops undertaken Summer 2011. Publication of draft document anticipated Spring 2012. Publication of Final Masterplan May 2012	Arup	£50,000 already agreed	Meeting to be held middle March with Town Council and ward Members. Public consultation on draft Masterplan expected to start April	Publication of final document(s) expected Summer 2012
Higham Ferrers Masterplan	Stage 1 - Project Plan Completed and Funding secured	ENC Report to P&R February 2012	Maximum of £50,000 agreed in principle by Council. £18.5k allocated by Council 29/2.	Town Council have started consultation and evidence gathering. Consultants for traffic management study expected to be appointed May 2012	Publication of final document(s) expected Summer 2013
Thrapston Masterplan	Preliminary meeting held with TTC. Project Planning and Approach expected summer 2012		Maximum of £50,000 agreed in principle by Council	Brief for appointment of consultants is being prepared with appointment to be confirmed May 2012	Publication of final document expected spring 2013

Other Parishes					
Stanwick	Supporting the Parish Council sub-group to refresh the Parish Plan.	Community Development Officer	Parish Council meeting costs of refreshing the plan. Local ward member is supporting the project with their Member Empowerment Fund allocation	Aiming to get consultation complete by June/July 12. Plan in place by September 12	Publication of Parish Plan
Kings Cliffe	Initial meeting with reps from Parish Council. Attending Parish Annual Meeting on 12 April 12 to discuss Community Plan development project	Community Development Officer	To be identified. Potential for Member Empowerment Fund allocation or support from Comm Dev Budget	To be determined	Project Plan in place for producing the Community Plan