



Planning Policy Committee – 18 June 2012

Planning Policy 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
- Update on community progress on Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1 Four Towns Plan Evidence Base Projects

Appendix 2 Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans

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. That work is intrinsically linked to progress on the Core Strategy. The report provides an update on these and some of the other areas of work that the Planning Policy and Conservation Team are involved in.

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 it is not meant to be an exhaustive list. Members will note that particular focus is on the cross-cutting evidence based work being carried out with the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU).

2.2 Core Strategy

Members are reminded that East Northamptonshire Council, along with all other Local Authorities within North Northamptonshire, are partners of the Joint Planning Unit. All of these partners, including Planning Policy Officers from ENC, are involved in working on and preparing initial background papers for the Core Strategy. This has included, for example preparing the settlement hierarchy background paper. In order to push forward the CS process, the JPU recently requested further assistance from partner authorities. To this end, East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) have agreed to second a senior planning policy officer to the JPU for 3 days per week initially up until the end of the first week of July. This is to help prepare the draft policies and supporting information ready for the 3 July Joint Planning Committee. After the 3 July Committee, it is expected that the Core Strategy will commence a period of consultation. The secondment will be reviewed again at that stage, but whilst the consultation is in progress, it is expected that the officer will return full time to ENC. It should be noted that the JPU are paying ENC for the secondment. It is proposed that this funding is combined with the remainder of the Design Officer's funding (who will be returning to work in October on reduced hours) to secure consultants to cover short-term work/projects required to help progress work on the Four Towns Plan.

2.3 **Four Towns Plan (FTP) (Appendix 1)**

The FTP is intrinsically linked to the timescales and content of the CS, which provides its lead. A large proportion of the evidence base which will be used for the CS will also be used for the FTP. The primary focus for officers is therefore work on the CS. In addition, officers continue to work on progressing the FTP, for example a series of background papers are being prepared, which officers will bring to a future FTP 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

It is anticipated that some of these papers will be discussed following the July Planning Policy Committee (during the Working Party session).

Consultants are also continuing to make good progress with the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

2.4 **Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans (Appendix 2)**

Raunds. Following a guided tour of sites within Raunds town centre, officers provided advice on how the various issues could be taken forward, including suggesting appointing a planning volunteer from Planning Aid to assist them with this work.

Oundle meanwhile continue to progress work with their Design Statement and Town Plan and have arranged a Design Statement progress meeting with officers in June. In addition there is a proposal for a Town Team to lead on the rejuvenation and marketing of the retail experience in the town (also linking to the Portas Review) which will also link to the Neighbourhood Plan

Irthlingborough. The draft Irthlingborough Masterplan consultation is expected to commence in June. This has been delayed slightly to enable it to consider inclusion of a brief for a key development site .

Higham Ferrers. Consultants, WYG have just been appointed to carry out a Higham Ferrers Transport Study (the Planning Policy and Conservation Team are project managing the Study for Higham Ferrers Town Council).

The tender for consultants to carry out a Thrapston Masterplan will be advertised in June. (This will be co-ordinated by East Northamptonshire Council's Community Partnerships Team).

2.5 In addition to work on Neighbourhood Plans and Masterplans, officers have received queries about Neighbourhood Planning from a few town and parish councils, including Stanwick, Rushden and King's Cliffe.

2.6 A Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit is also currently in preparation (being prepared in partnership with all other local authorities within North Northamptonshire), and a Parish Planning Toolkit is also being prepared (just for East Northamptonshire).

2.7 Members of the team are also involved in the initial meetings and queries regarding Community Plans.

3.0 **Conclusion**

3.1 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 currently prioritising. As highlighted in this report, much is going on and

this just highlights some areas of work. Paragraph 2.2 identifies the aim to re-deploy resources to use for short-term consultant assistance/projects, in order to progress with 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 an up-to-date plan would potentially result in 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 existing Adopted North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy does provide a strategic policy framework for this area.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 None

8.0 Corporate Outcomes

8.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Regeneration and Economic Development
- Sustainable Development
- High quality built environment
- Strong strategic partnerships

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 That Members note the current progress and support the redeployment of existing funding as proposed. *Reason – to provide an update on progress and continue to make good progress with 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, 12 December 2011				
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Date: 29 May 2012				
CFO		MO		CX

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

**Member Briefing
Appendix 1**

**Four Towns Plan
evidence base projects**

Evidence Gathering	Work Streams/ Projects	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs	% work completed					Reasons for delays (if applicable)
						20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
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	May/ June 2012 - work finalised	JPU settlement hierarchy study to accompany draft Core Strategy Review						Draft reports completed. Final confirmation/ sign off from JPU awaited.
	Settlement hierarchy study (Four Towns Plan area)	In house	Not specified	Work prepared in draft, awaiting checking	ENC settlement hierarchy study paper						Draft report completed. Final confirmation/ sign off from JPU awaited.
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	Consider paper at PPC/ Working Party, July	ENC settlement boundaries option paper						Draft report completed. Needs updating to reflect recent changes, e.g. NPPF adoption.
	Settlement boundary criteria	JPU/ Constituent LPAs	Not specified	JPU work finalised	JPU settlement boundary criteria paper to accompany pre-submission Core Strategy Review						JPU-led project
	Review individual settlement boundaries (if necessary) - Dependent on outcome of Settlement boundary Options review	In house	Not specified	July 2012 - Further ENC work to be completed	Boundaries paper agreed/ finalised through Working Party/ PPC (if deemed necessary)						Unlikely to be required. Wholly dependent upon Working Party/ PPC approval of settlement boundaries option paper
Environmental Projects											

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Stage A - Scoping	In house/ with statutory consultees	Not specified	September/ October 2012	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside "Regulation 25" Four Towns Plan consultation						Wholly dependent upon publication of Pre-Submission draft Core Strategy review (July 2012), which will define scope of Four Towns Plan
	Stage B - Developing options and assessing effects	In house but with mentoring		January/ February 2013	Consultation on initial SA report alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation						Ditto
	Stage C - Preparation of SA Report – inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD	In house but with mentoring		February 2013 - May 2013							Ditto
	Stage D - Consultation on the SA Report	In house		June/ July 2013	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside pre- submission Four Towns Plan consultation						Ditto
	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	September/ October 2013	Submission of final SA report to Secretary of State						Ditto
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)	Autumn 2012							Wholly dependent upon publication of Pre-Submission draft Core Strategy review (July 2012), which will define scope of Four Towns Plan. Also publication of NE guidance awaited.
	Stage 2 - Scoping and further evidence gathering (through consultation process)	Enfusion/ Natural England		January/ February 2013	Consultation on HRA/ AA Scoping Paper alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation						Ditto
	Stage 3 - Assessment of impacts (HRA/ AA, to inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD)	Enfusion/ Natural England		February 2013 - May 2013							Ditto

	Submission of final HRA/ AA Report	Enfusion/ Natural England	£8,500 (Stage 1-3 total) (Estimated)	June/ July 2013	Final HRA/ AA Report completed							Ditto
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	maximum £15,000 estimated	January 2012 (formal project start up)	Publication of draft Level 2 SFRA - July/ late summer 2012							Some delays likely, as bespoke modelling work necessary re Finedon Road stream, Irthlingborough
		URS		Summer 2012 - Completion of Level 2 SFRA	Final Level 2 SFRA (Rushden and Irthlingborough)							Ditto
Flood Risk Management Strategy Update	Update Strategy	URS/ JPU	Not specified	April - June 2012	Updated Strategy now complete							
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	January 2013 - Completion	Completed report							Progress dependent upon final completion of GI Delivery Plan
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 SPD							Awaiting final check before putting on website
	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 (RFT)	Study partially completed/ further work ongoing funded through external grant	June/ July 2012	Publication of completed report							Awaiting final confirmation from Ann Bond/ RFT

GI Delivery Plan	Complete Plan	JPU/ENC	Not specified	Jun-12	Publication of completed plan						Completion of project dependent upon appointment of NIA Natural Development Officer by Wildlife Trust
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	Summer/ autumn 2012	Publication of completed report						Completion of project dependent upon publication of updated SHLAA (anticipated summer 2012)
	Stage 2 - PPS3 paragraph 54 assessment - update to November 2010 draft study needed	In house	Not specified	Summer/ autumn 2012	Publication of completed report						Ditto
	Stage 3 - Site by site assessment (sites not discounted at stages 1/2) - update to 2010 draft assessment/ study needed	In house	Not specified	Summer/ autumn 2012	Publication of completed report						Ditto
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	Jun-12	Publication of completed SHLAA update. Consider publication of comprehensive database of sites (GIS).						JPU project - completed document necessary to progress ENC site selection work
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			May/ June 2012	Publication of completed report/ modelling complete						Final draft expected by end of June 2012
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							Progression dependent upon completion of SHMA
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	Summer 2012	Completion of existing employment areas review							Data gathering process - likely to entail site visiting/ checking (summer 2012)
	Stage 2 - Employment site assessment - completion of study document	In house	Not specified	Autumn 2012	Publication of completed report							Progress once Stage 1 ELR update finalised
Employment site selection work	Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment (SELA) sites - assessment of smaller potential employment sites below Core Strategy Review threshold (5ha)	In house	Not specified	Autumn 2012	Publication of completed report (possibly combined with Employment site assessment)							Wholly dependent upon completion of Employment Land Review update
Retail frontage/ town centre boundary assessment	Town centre boundary methodology - Initial draft paper presented to Working Parties (Spring 2010)	In house	Not specified	Autumn 2012	Publication of methodology paper							Update/ review alongside retail surveys
	Retail surveys (twice yearly)	In house	Not specified	Spring 2012	Publication of latest retail surveys in Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)							
	Town centre boundary studies	In house	Not specified	August/ September 2012	Publication of boundary assessment paper(s) for Four Towns							Progress once methodology/ approach finalised
Retail Requirements update	Update study	Roger Tym and Partners	Not specified	April-June 2012	Publication of update							
Assessment of Retail Strategy	Carry out assessment	GVA	Not specified	April-June 2012	Publication of results							
Transport Projects												

**Neighbourhood
Plans,
Masterplans and
Community
Plans**

Appendix 2:

	Work Streams/ Projects	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs	% work completed					Reasons for delays (if applicable)
						20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
Raunds Neighbourhood Plan	The Raunds Neighbourhood Plan will build on the outputs of the Raunds Masterplan. Discussion on next steps are taking place	Raunds Town Council	£20,000 Government Grant to ENC	A site visit of "Raunds issues" has taken place and advice given on how they can potentially address these	Publication of final document (s)						Completion of 2011 Masterplan represents initial stages in wider NP process. Raunds is currently considering which projects to prioritise.

Oundle 2020	Work is progressing on a Town Plan and Town Design Statement	Oundle Town Council	£20,000 Government Grant to ENC	TP: prepare draft TDS: Jan. 2012 meeting took place with the new "Authoring Group" to discuss initial draft work. Meeting now set up for June to consider further 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							Oundle 2020 is a well established local project. Much info/ data gathering etc has already taken place
Rushden Neighbourhood Plan		Rushden Town Council	To be confirmed. No ENC budget identified	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								Completion of 2010 Regeneration Masterplan represents initial stages in wider NP process. Rushden is well placed to progress with more formal NP.

