



Planning Policy Committee – 22 October 2012

Planning Policy Work Programme

Purpose of report

This report is presented to the Planning Policy Committee for Members' consideration and to seek agreement on a revised work programme for the Planning Policy Team.

Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Draft Task List

Appendix 2: Draft Work Programme (Local Development Scheme)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 19 September 2011, the Planning Policy Committee approved a timetable for the preparation of the Four Towns Plan (Local Development Scheme). Over the last year, work on the Four Towns Plan has progressed with the collation of the technical evidence base. At the same time officers have worked with the Joint Planning Unit and other officers across North Northamptonshire towards the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy review, which will form the principal element of the Development Plan for the District. Work on the Core Strategy will provide a strategic policy framework and feed into the evidence base for the preparation of the Four Towns Plan.
- 1.2 It is now timely to re-visit the Four Towns Plan timetable and review it in the light of changes in legislation, progress with the Core Strategy Review and the aspirations of Members.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 has been prepared to illustrate to Members an outline of some of the key tasks that the Planning Policy and Conservation Team are already working on and will be engaged in over the coming months in order that the Four Towns Plan can be progressed. Appendix 1 also highlights some of the other areas of work the team are engaged in; this is not an exhaustive list, but is provided for Members information. Members will note that there are several areas of work that are listed elsewhere on the agenda of this committee that are not listed in Appendix 1 and these are all being progressed by the Policy and Conservation team in addition to ongoing work relating to planning applications.

2.0 Work Programme (Local Development Scheme)

- 2.1 An up to date Work Programme for the Four Towns Plan will define the key milestones which need to be met in order to progress the Plan and also provides a clear indication to the public about what we intend to do and when. Appendix 2: contains two possible programmes for the formulation of the Four Towns Plan. Timetable 1 has previously been circulated to Members and sets out the timetable for progressing the Four Towns Plan based on national best practice. Timetable 2 sets out an alternative timetable, which demonstrates the fastest time in which a plan could be prepared. This would bring forward the adoption date by approximately 5 months from Timetable 1. Officers believe that Timetable 2 is achievable subject to certain considerations set out later in this report.

2.2 Based upon guidance from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and the current JCS review programme, the proposed key milestones are as follows for the Four Towns Plan with respect to **Timetable 2** are:

- **November – December 2012** – “Scoping” of DPD (Regulation 18 Consultation); i.e. views sought as to what the Four Towns Plan should contain
- **March 2013** – “Preferred options” agreed
- **June - July 2013** – Pre-Submission Consultation
- **November 2013** – Submission to Secretary of State
- **January 2014** – Pre-Hearing Meeting
- **February 2014** – Examination Hearings
- **July 2014** – Adoption

2.3 It is important to note that emerging development plan documents such as the Four Towns Plan have increasing levels of “weight” within the planning process as they get closer to adoption. Based on the timetable proposed in this document, the Council could reasonably place significant weight on the Four Towns Plan from November 2013 when it is submitted to the Secretary of State. At such a stage it would be reasonable to expect that the document would be the primary consideration in the determination of planning applications.

3.0 Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy

3.1 As Members have requested, officers have been investigating with neighbouring authorities the potential for joint working on a landscape character assessment, which could potentially progress towards a supplementary planning document if desired. The responses to this have been that Corby, Kettering and Bedford are not interested in pursuing this work with us, however Wellingborough might be – they advise that this would depend on the anticipated outcome for the work (whether it would cover more than just wind energy) and what resources would be needed, in terms of finance and officer input. Given the specific focus of the work that we are proposing (i.e. relating solely to Wind Energy development) it seems unlikely that Wellingborough are likely to be involved.

3.2 On this basis it is proposed that officers are now authorised to formally procure the appropriate Landscape Capacity evidence that could inform a Wind Energy SPD. It is estimated that this evidence work could be completed by April 2013 at which point Members can decide whether to progress to an SPD. This study will cost approximately £20-30,000. At this stage, the cost of this work can be met from existing Planning Policy budgets however it is likely that this will mean a longer term budget shortfall in other areas and may therefore require Members to agree additional budgets at a later date. An update report on the budget position relating to the Four Towns Plan will be brought to a later committee.

4.0 Issues for Discussion

4.1 Members should note both Appendix 1 and 2 are provided to assist a discussion on the work programme for the Planning Policy and Conservation Team and to allow Members to make a decision on the work programme. Other factors that Members should consider are as follows:

- The key milestone for Core Strategy progression is the formal publication of the Submission Core Strategy. This is currently targeted for April 2013 and will be required in order that a Preferred Options Four Towns Plan can be produced. Delay in the Core Strategy timetable could cause delay in the Four Towns Plan timetable.
- The neighbourhood plans and masterplans that are being progressed for the Four

Towns Area will form key pieces of evidence for the Four Towns Plan. Officers will provide every assistance to the Town Councils to ensure this evidence is complete in a timely manner. Delays at this level may also cause delay to the Four Towns Plan timetable.

- It is estimated that April 2013 will be a key date for Members to review the overall work programme as we should have greater clarity on issues relating to the Core Strategy, Four Towns Plan evidence and Landscape Capacity evidence.

4.2 Based on previous Planning Policy Committee meetings and Working Parties, Officers are obviously aware of other issues that Members have concerns about and these will be investigated during the preparation of the Four Towns Plan, for example density/design issues. As previously discussed at Planning Policy Working Party, these issues may be best covered through the Four Towns Plan or through more localised documents and officers will continue to work with Town and Parish Councils to ensure these issues are addressed.

4.3 There may be other new issues that Members wish to raise for consideration either in respect of the Four Towns Plan work or other areas, such as potential new Supplementary Planning Documents. Officers would welcome discussion now about these to help inform the development and completion of the Local Development Scheme.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 This report and appendices is presented for Member's consideration and discussion. The report seeks to highlight the range of work currently being undertaken by the Planning Policy Team and also seeks to recommend a revised timetable for progression of the Four Towns Plan. This report also seeks to ensure that Members are aware of the risks to successful implementation of this timetable.

6.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

6.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Development Plan for their area.

8.0 Risk Management

8.1 Work on the Four Towns Plan is intrinsically linked to work on the Core Strategy. Any slippage on the Core Strategy may delay progress on the Four Towns Plan. Other projects and work that comes forward, for example further neighbourhood plan proposals from the community, could also potentially delay the Team's focus on the Four Towns Plan.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 There is currently sufficient budget this financial year to make progress on the Four Towns Plan, as much of the immediate work will be undertaken in-house. Should the Landscape Character Assessment/Capacity Assessment be progressed then there will be no spare budget left this financial year, should other work/projects be required to come forward as part of the Four Towns Plan preparation.

10.0 Corporate Outcomes

- 10.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:
- Improvements for the community: Sustainable
 - Effective processes: effective partnership working, strong community

leadership

11.0 Recommendation

11.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- Approve the revised timetable for progression of the Four Towns Plan
- Approve the procurement of an Assessment of Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments
- Note the other contents of the report

(Reason – in order to provide a revised work programme for the Planning Policy Team)

Legal	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 767)				
	Other considerations: None				
Background Papers: None					
Person Originating Report:	Karen Britton – Planning Policy and Conservation Manager kbritton@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk				
Date: 12 October 2012					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

Appendix 1: Four Towns Plan and Core Strategy - Key Tasks

2012

2013

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
4 Towns Plan:															
Regulation 18 Consultation															
Sustainability Appraisal(SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)															
Habitats Regulations Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment (HRA/AA)															
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)															
Affordable Housing Assessment (Economic Viability) - refresh AECOM 2010 work															
Employment Land Review (update 2006 Atkins Study)															
Employment Site Selection work - Northamptonshire (SELA)-assess sites below 5ha															
Retail Frontage/Town Centre Boundary Assessment															
Retail Surveys															
Settlement Hierarchy															
Local Listings															
Procedural matters e.g. setting up ICT and Administrative systems															
Core Strategy:															
Input to Core Strategy and respond to consultations															
Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan															
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)															
SHLAA Site Discounting															
Transport Modelling															
Planning Policy Committee/Working Parties, as necessary	22-Oct	19-Nov	10-Dec	21-Jan	13-Feb	18-Mar	15-Apr								
Other work being carried out:															
Trees and Landscapes Supplementary Planning Document															
Community Infrastructure Levy															
Northamptonshire Transportation Plan - East Northamptonshire Project															
Neighbourhood Plan Front Runners:															
Prepare Provisional Draft Timetable for Oundle and Raunds Neighbourhood Plans to assist them on potential process															
Prepare draft Consultants' Brief for Oundle Town Council to assist them with their Masterplan/Neighbourhood Plan work															

KEY:	
Carrying out Work	
Committee	
Working Party	
Consultation	
Examination	
Adoption	

Item 8 - Appx 2 - 4 Towns Plan Timetables

Appendix 2
Local Development Scheme

North Northamptonshire	2011												2012												2013												2014											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Core Strategy Review	*												*																																			

East Northamptonshire	2011												2012												2013												2014											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
4 Towns Plan (Timetable 1)																					*																											
4 Towns Plan (Timetable 2)																					*																											

Development Plan Documents

- Frontloading - Informal/ preliminary discussions and evidence gathering
- * Council consideration/ approval of document(s) - Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and ENC Planning Policy Committee (respectively)
- Formal/ statutory public consultation
- Preferred Options agreed
- Submission to Secretary of State
- Pre Hearings Meeting
- Examination Hearing Sessions
- Receipt of Inspectors Report
- Adoption of DPD