

# PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

**Date:** 22 October 2012

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

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Present:** Councillors: - Tony Boto (Vice Chairman)

Michael Finch  
Glenn Harwood MBE  
Sylvia Hobbs  
Sylvia Hughes  
David Jenney

Gill Mercer  
Bob Nightingale  
David Read  
Pam Whiting

## **237. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2012 were approved and signed by the vice chairman.

## **238. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors David Brackenbury and Steven North sent their apologies.

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

There were no declarations of interest and no questions.

## **240. TREES AND LANDSCAPES SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (CONSULTATION DRAFT)**

The Conservation Officer attended to present a report which sought member approval for commencement of a consultation on the Trees and Landscapes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Consultation Draft).

Members were advised that the SPD had been jointly prepared alongside the Borough Council of Wellingborough and was split into two key parts. The first section concerned landscape design issues encompassing site selection, detailed planting designs as well as landscape maintenance and aftercare. The second section focused on trees and development, providing an overview of the latest British Standard for trees and construction that would be the key document used by ENC in assessing development impact on trees.

Members noted the aims of the SPD were to provide consistent advice on trees and landscapes across the two districts and to assist applicants in the production of documents requiring submission as part of planning applications. It was hoped that this would lead to an improvement in the quality of applications where trees were on or adjacent to the site concerned.

The committee asked for clarification regarding the ability of a Local Authority to partially grant and partially refuse consent on applications relating to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). A further question was asked relating to dead and dangerous trees which were noted as still being exempt from applications, however it was noted that dying trees were no longer exempt. Members requested the addition of a "no dig" scenario.

Members noted that all scales of development were covered under the proposed SPD, and although designed primarily for residential purposes, it would carry equal weight if applied to industrial applications.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the consultation draft Trees and Landscapes SPD, subject to the inclusion of comments received from members' at the meeting.

*(Reason – to assist in providing advice in relation to tree and landscape matters that arise as part of the planning process, and to help create more attractive and sustainable development, with associated benefits, throughout the district. )*

**241. PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY CHARGING SCHEDULE**

The Planning Policy Officer presented the committee with a report which introduced the Preliminary Draft Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and sought approval for it to be issued for a six-week public consultation, to commence in Winter 2012.

Members were advised that CIL was a new charge on developments that came into force with the intention of funding a range of infrastructure that would be needed as a result of any development. The CIL would run alongside existing Section 106 agreements.

The committee were told that in order to charge a levy, Local Authorities must provide a charging schedule that set charge rates for the area using an evidence base. In the case of ENC the evidence base would comprise the adopted Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP). Members were advised that upon adoption, the Four Towns Plan would also have a bearing on CIL.

Members noted that in setting charges it would be necessary to balance the desirability of funding infrastructure from the levy with the potential effect on the economic viability of development across the area. It was further noted that consultants had been employed to conduct viability work in order to assist the development of the charging schedule.

The committee questioned whether the CIL rate suggested by consultants BNP Paribas would cover the costs of the infrastructure involved and felt that further discussion and information was required on this topic. Members were advised that the methodology involved in the calculations had been successfully used by other local authorities that had already adopted a CIL. Members agreed that the consultation process should commence but that a working group of officers and members should be set up to consider CIL in more detail prior to the formulation of the draft charging schedule.

Members also queried how the rates, charged per square metre, had been arrived at. The committee were advised that a figure of £50-£150 per square metre would be affordable for most developers and that as the areas of the district had different markets it would be beneficial to set rates based on the viability across these areas. Members requested that the

areas of measurement for proposed developments be clarified as being gross internal space as they felt this would make a significant difference to any calculations.

Members received officer assurance that everything would be done to ensure ENC received the highest level of contribution possible from developers towards the cost of infrastructure.

The committee were advised that a review period for the CIL Charging Schedule would be between three to five years, with officers monitoring the rate of development. However, it was noted that a review could take place at any time should members consider it warranted as no timescales had been written into the regulations. Members also heard that if the viability of development schemes were to improve, increased S106 contributions could be secured.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approved the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation, but wished to highlight that with the information provided to them they were unsure as to whether CIL charging rates would fully cover the costs of the required infrastructure.

**242. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE CORE SPATIAL STRATEGY, FOUR TOWNS PLAN, NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS AND MASTERPLANS UPDATE**

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager provided a report which sought to provide members with a report on progress with the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, Four Towns Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans.

Members discussed the following items which were experiencing delays, clarifying the reasons behind the delays and whether they would impact on the Core Spatial Strategy or Four Towns Plan:-

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)
- Local Listing - Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest
- Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Housing site selection work

Members were advised that none of the delayed work would have a significant impact on either the CSS of the Four Towns Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the current progress.

**243. FOUR TOWNS PLAN WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were presented with a report by the Planning Policy and Conservation Manager which sought agreement from members of a revised work programme for the Planning Policy team.

A brief summary of the work undertaken since the Four Town Plan preparation timetable was agreed in September 2011 was provided to members. It was seen as timely to revisit the timetable at this point given recent changes in legislation and progress with the Core

Strategy Review, and it was felt by members that the timetable provided as an appendix to the officer report was achievable subject to certain issues.

A request to approve the procurement of a Landscape Capacity Assessment for Wind Energy was also put forward, with members noting that the evidence gathered by such an assessment could inform a Wind Energy SPD in future. Members were advised that there would be a considerable financial outlay (£20,000-£30,000) if the study was approved, although there was room within existing Planning Policy budgets to cover this. However, it was noted that should any other issues arise in the financial year there may be further budget implications.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Committee approved the revised timetable for progression of the Four Towns Plan;
- (2) That the Committee approve the procurement of an Assessment of Landscape Capacity for Wind Energy Developments;
- 3) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

**Chairman**