



Planning Policy Committee – 10 December 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 and Core Strategy Evidence Base Projects

Appendix 2 Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans

Appendix 3 Five Year Housing Land Supply: Member update

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At Planning Policy Committee on 12 December 2011, Members requested that progress on the Four Towns Plan and other relevant policy documents be reported at subsequent Committees. 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 and Four Towns Plan (Appendix 1)

Work is progressing on the Core Strategy and Four Towns Plan. At the time of writing, the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) were still to consider the responses from the initial consultation on the emerging Core Strategy (JPC on 29th November).

2.3 Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and Community Plans (Appendix 2)

Officers continue to work with the two Neighbourhood Plan frontrunners of Raunds and Oundle, and other community led plans as specified in the appendix. Members shall note that Plans that have been finalised e.g. Raunds Masterplan have now been removed from this table. Also, work on the Rushden Transport Study has been included in the table, for information. This work will be forming part of the County Council's Transport Strategy and unlike the rest of the projects in the table, is not community-led. Members shall also note that there is a separate committee report for the Raunds Neighbourhood Area application.

2.4 General comment

Since the last committee meeting, work is ongoing on various aspects of the Four Towns Plan. In addition, further work has taken place on the 5 year housing land supply, in the light of a number of recent planning appeal decisions across the

country. An update on that is provided at Appendix 3. Other projects that the Team have been working upon include, for example preparing a bid for funding and also a draft tender brief for transport consultants to prepare a transport study for Rushden; preparing a tender brief for the landscape capacity assessment of the District; and checking and commenting upon the final draft transport study for Higham Ferrers etc. Members shall note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but is provided just to give a flavour of some of the work in progress.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The appendices highlight progress on some of the key areas for members' information.

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 North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted June 2008) does provide a strategic policy framework for this area, and a small number of "saved" policies from the 1996 District Local Plan still remain in force.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 None. The preparation of a comprehensive Local Plan for the District is a statutory obligation and staff are specifically employed to undertake this function.

8.0 Corporate Outcomes

8.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Good quality of life: Regeneration and Economic Development, Sustainable Development, High quality built environment
- Strong strategic partnerships

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 Members note current progress.
(Reason – to provide an update on progress for Members' information)

Legal	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2011				
	Other considerations:		None		
Background Papers: Minutes of Planning Policy Committee, 12 December 2011					
Person Originating Report:		Karen Britton – Planning Policy and Conservation Manager Extn: 2142 kbritton@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk			
Date: 20/11/12					
CFO		MO		CX	

Environmental Projects											
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Stage A - Scoping	ENC/ with statutory consultees	Not specified	Prepare September/ October 2012, followed by statutory consultation	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside "Regulation 18" 4TP consultation and put on website						
	Stage B - Developing options and assessing effects	ENC with mentoring		January/ February 2013	Consultation on initial SA report alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation						
	Stage C - Preparation of SA Report – inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD	ENC with mentoring		February 2013 - May 2013							
	Stage D - Consultation on the SA Report	ENC		June/ July 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	ENC with mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring	September/ October 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 and to be put on website						
	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)	October/ November 2012							Awaiting publication of Natural England guidance - date unknown.
	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 Scott Wilson	maximum £15,000 estimated	July 2012- completion of Level 2 SFRA -amended date to end November 2012	Publication of Level 2 SFRA						Draft report was received on time, Officers carried out checks, but Environment Agency have requested some changes be made to the report, prior to publication - now anticipated by end November.
Sequential Test/ Exception Test (Flood Risk)	Need to provide sufficient justification if sites in Flood Zones 2/3 or having other identified flood risk are proposed to be taken forward as site allocations in the Four Towns Plan	ENC	Not specified	January - February 2013	Four Towns Plan Sequential Test/ Exceptions Test paper, providing rationale for Four Towns Plan site selection re flood risk						EA requirement, if sites assessed through Level 2 SFRA are to be considered as Four Towns Plan allocations
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	ENC but with external mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring	January 2013 - Completion	Completed report						Progress dependent upon final completion of GI Delivery Plan (GIDP) (JPU lead) - estimated completion for GIDP by end of year, dependent on Nature Improvement Area (NIA) officer.
Open Space Study (2006 PMP study update)	Open Space SPD - Completion of final document	ENC	Not specified	Planning Policy Committee approved November 2011, subject to the changes being made	Final SPD						Completed
	Complete final Open Space Study update report for publication/ submission alongside Four Towns Plan	ENC	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	July/ August 2012 - amended date to end Dec.2012	Publication of completed report						Awaiting final confirmation/work from Ann Bond/ RFT - work ongoing and revised deadline to end December 2012

GI Delivery Plan	Complete Plan	JPU/ENC	Not specified	June 2012 - amended date to end Dec.2012	Publication of completed plan						Completion of project dependent upon NIA Officer. New postholder now in place - new estimated deadline of end December 2012
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	August/ September 2012 - amended date to end Dec.2012	Publication of completed report						Completion of project dependent upon publication of updated SHLAA (now anticipated end Dec.2012 -note changes to SHLAA timetable below)
	Stage 2 - PPS3 paragraph 54 assessment - update to November 2010 draft study needed	In house	Not specified	August/ September 2012- amended date to end Dec.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	August/ September 2012 - amended date to end Dec.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	July/ August 2012- amended date to end Dec.2012	Publication of completed SHLAA update. Consider publication of comprehensive database of sites (GIS).						JPU project - completed document necessary to progress ENC site selection work. Work on SHLAA still ongoing/not yet completed - now expected to be completed by end Dec. 2012
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 published 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	AECOM (ENC)	£2,500 - £3,000 estimate	November 2012 - March 2013	Publication of updated AECOM assessment						Further work only needed if it is deemed necessary to set out more detailed local standards than draft Core Strategy review Policy 30 re housing mix/ tenure
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	ENC	Not specified	August/ September 2012- new deadline of end Dec.2012	Completion of existing employment areas review						Note - work ongoing new deadline of end Dec.2012
	Stage 2 - Employment site assessment - completion of study document	ENC	Not specified	October - December 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)	ENC	Not specified	October/ November 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)	ENC	Not specified	October/ November 2012	Publication of methodology paper						Update/ review alongside retail surveys. Subject to completion intend to take to December Working Party for consideration
	Retail surveys (twice yearly)	ENC	Not specified	September/ October 2012	Publication of latest retail surveys in Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) (JPU)						Retail Survey is finalised . Note: JPU prepare Joint AMR
	Town centre boundary studies	ENC	Not specified	November/ December 2012	Publication of boundary assessment paper(s) for 4TP						Progress once methodology/ approach finalised
Retail Requirements update	Update study	Roger Tym and Partners (JPU)	Not specified	April-June 2012	Publication of update						
Assessment of Retail Strategy	Carry out assessment	GVA (JPU)	Not specified	April-June 2012	Publication of results						

Transport Projects											
Transport modelling of strategic sites and broad locations	Undertake modelling	NCC/WSP (JPU)	Not specified	July/ August 2012 - amended date to end Dec.2012	Updates to initial draft results required, to take account of recent commitments (e.g. Raunds)						JPU-led project. Updated transport modelling work anticipated July/ August 2012 - Note: work on this is ongoing - expected new timeline of end Dec.2012

**Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans and
Appendix 2 Community Plans**

	Work completed
	Work to be done
	Milestones not met (further explanation provided in right hand column)

Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners	Work Streams/ Projects	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs	% work completed					Reasons for delays (if applicable)
						20%	40%	60%	80%	100%	
Raunds	The Raunds Masterplan has been completed and discussion on next steps are taking place. RTC taking a holistic approach and creating a Community/Parish Plan which may incorporate a Neighbourhood Plan or other planning mechanisms to address specific growth/planning aspects.	Raunds Town Council supported by ENC Community Development.	£20,000 Government Grant to ENC can be supplemented by up to £30,000 from DCLG under new burdens regimen - £5,000 is available when a neighbourhood plan area is designated and £25 after a successful examination. These should cover the examination and referendum costs plus some of the officer input.	Planning Policy and Conservation Team have prepared a timeline to assist the Town Council in understanding how a Neighbourhood Plan could be potentially progressed through the initial stages. Further meetings held with Town Council in October/November. The Town Council have now submitted an application for Neighbourhood Area designation (see separate committee report). Consultation on a Community Plan is also anticipated this year (Nov/ December).	Publication of final documents for: Neighbourhood Plan or similar, Leisure and Recreation Strategy and Branding/Heritage/ Tourism Development						Completion of 2011 Masterplan represents initial stages in wider NP process. Raunds is currently considering which projects to prioritise/how to go forward.
Oundle 2020	Work is progressing on a Town Plan and Design Statement, potentially leading into a Neighbourhood Plan	Oundle Town Council	See above	September meeting with OTC established basis for Neighbourhood Plan with request for designation of parish area. Planning Policy and Conservtaion Team have prepared a timeline to assist the Town Council in understanding how a Neighbourhood Plan could be potentially progressed through initial stages. The Town Council wish to employ consultants to help them take forward this work and the Planning Policy and Conservation Team have therefore prepared a draft consultants brief for them.	Publication of final documents						

Towns										
Rushden Transport Study	Transport Study	tbc	tbc	Funding options are being explored for a transport study to include A6 and changing town centre circulation. A tender brief for transport consultants is also currently being prepared by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team	Publication of final transport study					
Irthlingborough Masterplan	Consultation stage/ workshops undertaken Summer 2011. Publication of draft document anticipated June 2012. Publication of Final Masterplan Summer 2012	Arup	£50,000 already agreed	Meeting with ITC 23/10 to present draft Masterplan. Further meeting to address any changes to draft plan with ITC - 09/11. Public consultation Dec/Jan	Publication of final document(s) expected early 2013					
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, WYG appointed for transport study element (May 2012). Expect to complete transport study by end 2012. A questionnaire and analysis has taken place for the wider community/ masterplan.	Publication of Masterplan expected Summer 2013					Local/ Town Council led project. Approval of funding represents first stage. Draft transport study completed and checked by Town Council and ENC officers. Consultants are now finalising study document.
Thrapston Masterplan	Preliminary meeting held with TTC. Project Planning and Approach expected Summer 2012	District and Community Project Co-ordinator	Maximum of £50,000 agreed by Council	Consultation and research undertaken over summer 12 has been used to produce baseline document which is now available on website. Newsletter and questionnaires circulated. Consultation event was held 27/10/12. In the process of analysing the results	Publication of final document expected spring 2013					
Other Parishes										
Chelveston	Supporting the Parish Council to prepare a community plan/neighbourhood plan.	Planning Policy and Conservation Team/ Community Development		Meeting held with Parish Council reps to discuss Neighbourhood Plans, 4TP etc. Draft questionnaire prepared by CPC for ENC checking.	timelines unknown at this stage					

King's Cliffe	Initial meeting with reps from Parish Council. Attended Parish Annual Meeting on 12 April 2012 to discuss Community Plan development project. Progress on hold as Parish Council consider next steps discussions in Septemebr 2012 with Cllr Atkinson to arrange meeting to move project forward.	Community Development	To be identified. Potential for Member Empowerment Fund allocation or support from Comm Dev Budget	Meeting with interested Cllrs and communy members to form Steering Group. Attending Christmas event - 02/12/12 to gather interest and more members to the Steering Group	Project Plan in place by January '13 for producing the Community Plan by October '13						Project dependent on the formation of Steering Group
Pilton, Stoke Doyle and Wadenhoe	Attended Parish Council meeting in November 2012 to discuss Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans	Planning Policy and Conservation Team		Parish Council now considering whether to prepare a Village Design Statement. Initial indication is that they do not wish to progress a NP							
Stanwick	Supporting the Parish Council sub-group to refresh the Parish Plan.	Community Development	Parish Council meeting costs of refreshing the plan. Local ward member is supporting the project with their Member Empowerment Fund allocation	Consultation complete September 2012. Plan in place by February 2013	Refreshed Plan by February 2013						Parish Council led project. Approval of funding represents first stage.
Woodford	intial meeting with Parish Council August 12. Parish council still considering way forward. Separately met with community based Group who are interetsed in developing community aspect of activities October 12 and advised group to ensure work is collaborative with Parish Council.	Community Development Officer	To be identified. Potential for Member Empowerment Fund allocation or support from Comm Dev Budget	Next step is formation of Community Plan Steering Group. Community Group known as Jubilee Committee interested to support but not take on 'whole' Community Plan. No further interest from the Parish Council at the minute	Project Plan in place by January '13 for producing the Community Plan by October '13						Project dependent on Parish Council agreeing to progress Community planning process.

Appendix 3

Five Year Housing Land Supply: Member update.

Members will recall that at the meeting of 17 September 2012, Officers presented an update report on the five year housing land supply position for East Northamptonshire.

Since preparing this report, a number of appeal decisions have come to light where the methodology behind the calculation of a five year land supply has been the subject of much scrutiny.

In reviewing the Inspectors' findings, it has become apparent that a post NPPF 'preferred approach' to the calculation of a five year housing land supply is emerging; this differs slightly to that previously used in the North Northamptonshire area. As a consequence, much discussion has taken place between Officers across North Northamptonshire concerning the best approach to adopt.

Officers now recommend that minor revisions be applied to the previously used methodology in order to bring our approach in line with that being advocated by Inspectors. This would arguably result in a more robust, and therefore defensible, five year housing land supply position for the Council.

In applying the revised methodology, East Northamptonshire Council is able to demonstrate a 5.34 year supply of deliverable housing. This is considered to be more than acceptable given that the requirement using the revised approach is 5 years.