



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Planning Policy Committee – 13 February 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

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. 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.

2.0 Update

2.1 Core Strategy and Four Towns Plan (Appendix 1)

Work continues to progress on the Core Strategy and Four Towns Plan. From previous reports and discussions, members will be aware of the intrinsic links between these plans. The initial consultation on the emerging Core Strategy has closed and the comments have been reviewed by the Joint Planning Unit and respective local authority officers. The Joint Planning Committee is due to consider a number of reports on 31 January, including feedback from the consultation. Members are advised to refer to the committee papers, which can be viewed at <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/news/newsdetail.asp?id=35>.

- 2.2 The consultation upon the emerging Core Strategy, alongside discussions with a Senior Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) identified a range of themes and topics where further work is necessary in order to take the Core Strategy forward. Key areas, all of which affect the District of East Northamptonshire, include:

- a) Considering whether the draft vision should promote North Northamptonshire as a “Growth Area”;
- b) Revisiting the role of Rushden within the Settlement Hierarchy (Policy 10);
- c) Reviewing the justification for the Deenethorpe Airfield policy proposals (Policies 10, 14);
- d) Reviewing housing requirements to ensure that they can be justified based on “objectively assessed need” in Northamptonshire (Policies 28, 29);
- e) Assessing strategic development sites and preparing policy guidance for

- f) 'new' sites to be included in the JCS (Policies 23 and 29);
- f) Finalising the retail strategy (Policy 12);
- g) Reconsidering the implications of identifying "Principal Villages" whether it is necessary to include rural housing targets in the JCS to provide strategic guidance for site specific/ neighbourhood plans (Policies 10 and 29);
- h) Developing affordable housing targets and thresholds taking account of objectively assessed needs and viability issues (Policy 30);
- i) Identifying the sectoral split of employment targets and any implications for the identification of strategic sites/ site development principles (Policies 22, 23);
- j) Developing proposals in relation to "Allowable Solutions" (Policy 8);
- k) Review of detailed policy wording and the preparation of supporting text and figures

2.3 Specifically, the relevant Joint Planning Committee paper (their committee agenda Item 4) considers, in detail:

- The role of Rushden – whether Rushden should be identified as a Growth Town and whether Rushden/ Higham Ferrers should be treated as one area?
- The justification for the Deenethorpe Airfield Policy (Policy 14)

2.4 Documents arising through the Core Strategy review process also provide a valuable evidence base, in addition to bespoke documents and studies prepared in support of the Four Towns Plan.

2.5 **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 Higham Ferrers have also now submitted an application for a Neighbourhood Area, in order to commence work on a Neighbourhood Plan (see separate Committee Report). The Government have announced funding changes for Neighbourhood Plans: £5,000 is available from DCLG to ENC when a Neighbourhood Area is designated; £5,000 at submission for publicity and examination; and £20,000 following successful examination. The 2 DCLG Frontrunner grants of £20,000 each respectively for Oundle and Raunds, which was being held by ENC to cover the Examinations and Referendums is now to be made available to those Town Councils to undertake preparatory work on their NPs.

2.6 **Other update information**

Since the last committee (10/12/12), interviews have taken place for the landscape sensitivity study of the District and the company Land Use Consultants have been appointed and have commenced work. We have also received the Transport Study for Higham Ferrers from consultants, which is being checked by officers and we have successfully submitted a bid for £10,000 from NNDC to help fund the Transport Study for Rushden.

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

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: 30/01/13					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

	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 (December 2012)							Level 2 SFRA report to be published on website, January 2013
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	by end 2013	Completed report							Progress dependent upon final completion of GI Delivery Plan (GIDP) (JPU lead) - estimated completion for GIDP by end of 2013, 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	June/July 2013	Publication of completed report						Further work required, with focus upon Buildings of Local Architectural and Historic Interest outside Conservation Areas (CA Appraisals have already assessed/ identified BLAHIs within Conservation Areas)
GI Delivery Plan	Complete Plan	JPU/ENC	Not specified	tba	Publication of completed plan						Completion of project dependent upon NIA Officer.
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	tba	Publication of completed report						Completion of project dependent upon publication of updated SHLAA (now anticipated March 2013 - note changes to SHLAA timetable below)
	Stage 2 - PPS3 paragraph 54 assessment - update to November 2010 draft study needed	In house	Not specified	tba	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	tba	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	Jan-13	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 March 2013

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	Feb-13	Completion of existing employment areas review						Note - work ongoing - new deadline February 2013
	Stage 2 - Employment site assessment - completion of study document	ENC	Not specified	Mar-13	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	tba	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	Feb-13	Publication of methodology paper						Update/ review alongside retail surveys. Subject to completion intend to take to February 2013 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	tba	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	Feb-13	Updates to initial draft results required, to take account of recent commitments (e.g. Raunds)						JPU-led project. Updated transport modelling work ongoing - expected new timeline February 2013

<p>Oundle Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>Work is progressing on a Town Plan and Design Statement with elements progressing into a Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<p>Oundle Town Council (PP&C)</p>	<p>£20,000 DCLG Grant to ENC for Frontrunner - this is now available to Oundle TC to prepare their NP. £5,000 is available from DCLG to ENC when Neighbourhood Area designated; £5,000 at submission for publicity and examination; and £20,000 following successful examination.</p>	<p>Application for Neighbourhood Area designation submitted. Planning Policy and Conservation have also assisted OTC by preparing a draft consultants brief for Oundle TC to employ consultants to complete the N'hood Plan</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan</p>						<p>1st stage of Neighbourhood Planning underway</p>

Raunds Neighbourhood Plan	RTC taking a holistic approach - Work has commenced on preparing a Community/Parish Plan and Neighbourhood Plan or other planning mechanisms to address specific growth/planning aspects.	RTC supported by ENC P&C, CP Teams	As above	Consultations now being carried out on application for Neighbourhood Area designation. Consultation on the community plan etc. will follow on from this, however it will use this initial process to gather ideas and the Project Steering Group will continue with this work.	Anticipate - Publication of final documents for: Neighbourhood Plan or similar; Leisure and Recreation Strategy and Branding/Heritage/ Tourism Development						1st stage of Neighbourhood Planning underway
Rushden	Please note that Rushden Town Council have agreed not to proceed at this stage with a Neighbourhood Plan but to include any planning related matters in the Four Towns Plan										
MASTERPLANS AND COMMUNITY PLANS											

TOWNS											
Higham Ferrers Masterplan/ Community Plan	Consultation stage/ workshops completed. Analysis of questionnaire responses completed and issues to be addressed by Neighbourhood Plan are being identified. Other issues will be covered by separate Town (Action) Plan.	Higham Ferrers Town Council (PP&C, CP)	see N'hood Plan above	Consultants WYG expected to complete Transport Study January 2013	Publication of Town Plan expected Summer 2013						
Irthlingborough Masterplan	Consultation stage/ workshops undertaken Summer 2011. Meetings held with Town Council Sept-Dec 2012 to approve draft document for public consultation.	Arup	£50,000 already agreed by ENC	Publication of consultation draft document expected Feb. 2013	Final Masterplan document expected to be agreed spring 2013						
Thrapston Masterplan	Consultation and research undertaken over summer 2012 has been used to produce baseline document and inform draft Masterplan	(CP)	Maximum of £50,000 agreed by Council	Draft MasterPlan for consultation to be agreed Jan 2013	Publication of final document expected spring 2013						

OTHER PARISHES											
Chelveston	Parish Council considering preparation of a community plan/ potential neighbourhood plan	Chelveston Parish Council (PP&C, CP)		Questionnaire prepared by Parish Council	timelines unknown at this stage						
King's Cliffe	Progress on hold as Parish Council consider next steps	(CP)	To be identified. Potential for Member Empowerment Fund allocation or support from Comm Dev Budget	Steering group has been set up with 9 residents and 2 members of the Parish Council (25/01/13).	Further meeting scheduled (08/02/13) to proceed with the progress of creating the Plan						
Pilton, Stoke Doyle and Wadenhoe	Attended Parish Council meeting in November 2012 to discuss Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans	(PP&C)		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.	(PP&C, CP)	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

