



Planning Policy Committee 27th November 2017

Planning Policy and Conservation Update

Purpose of Update

The purpose of this report is for information only, to update the committee on work on the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and some other key areas of work being undertaken by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team.

1.0 Background

1.1 This report provides an update into key areas of work for which the Planning Policy and Conservation Team has involvement. It is a standing committee item, summarising key elements of the Team's current workload.

2.0 Local Plan Making

2.1 The Regulation 18 consultation for the Local Plan Part 2 (site specific policies) took place at the start of the year, between 27th January and 13th March 2017 inclusive. Regulation 18 is the first formal stage in preparing the Local Plan and this was accompanied/ followed by a series of Member workshops:

- Workshops 1 and 2, providing an overview of the Local Plan Part 2 and Regulation 18 feedback, accompanied the Regulation 18 consultation
- Workshop 3, 12th May 2017 – Housing policies
- Workshop 4, 4th August 2017 – Employment: jobs, employment land and regeneration
- Workshop 5, 4th October 2017 – Town centres: boundaries, regeneration and retailing
- Workshop 6, 18th October 2017 - Infrastructure: utilities, physical infrastructure and green infrastructure

2.2 The series of topic-based workshops has now ended. The comments, thoughts and ideas of participants for each have now been collated and will make an important contribution to developing policies and proposals for the Local Plan Part 2 as this is moved forward during 2017/18.

2.3 A second phase of workshops/ consultation events is now being proposed. These will be location specific, focusing on particular issues affecting a locality; e.g. site specific regeneration proposals. It is proposed that seven of these ½ day events will take place over the coming weeks:

- One for each of the six towns;
- A further rural areas workshop.

2.4 Officers will continue to work towards developing draft policies and supporting text. This work is being informed throughout by feedback from the Regulation 18 consultation and Member workshops.

3.0 Neighbourhood Planning

3.1 The content of individual Neighbourhood Plans will have implications for the Local Plan Part 2. Neighbourhood Plans which have already come forward contain a range of locally distinctive Parish-level policies that would otherwise be covered by the Local Plan Part 2. The Local Plan Part 2 must take account of any emerging and “made” (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan policies.

3.2 To date, three Neighbourhood Plans are “made” (adopted) by East Northamptonshire Council; Chelveston cum Caldecott, Higham Ferrers and Stanwick. Progress in respect of other Neighbourhood Plans can be summarised as follows:

- Raunds Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum held on 16th November 2017; due to be “made” by Planning Policy Committee (see separate Agenda Item 7).
- Rushden Neighbourhood Plan – Submitted 26th October 2017; Regulation 16 consultation now underway, due to finish on 18th December 2017.
- Regulation 14 consultations for Brigstock, Glapthorn and King’s Cliffe Neighbourhood Plans have now finished, with submission of these Plans anticipated in 2018.
- Designation of Warmington Neighbourhood Area confirmed 8th August 2017.

3.3 Further information about these and other emerging Neighbourhood Plans is available through the Neighbourhood Planning web page (<http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>). Details about individual Neighbourhood Plans are also available through the websites for individual Town or Parish Councils.

4.0 Historic conservation

4.1 The Parish Council has requested an Article 4 direction for the Brigstock conservation area. This proposed designation is the subject of a separate report (Agenda Item 5).

5.0 Tresham Garden Village (formerly known as Deenethorpe Garden Village)

5.1 Work on the preparation of a draft Masterplan and delivery framework is ongoing. A report will be presented to the next meeting of the Planning Policy Committee.

6.0 Rushden East SUE

6.1 Various work-streams relating to providing the necessary technical evidence that supports the drafting of a masterplan and eventual planning application are ongoing. A draft Masterplan is currently being written up.

6.2 Most recently, the Rushden East Visioning report was agreed by the Full Council on 17th July 2017.

7.0 Working Groups

7.1 Various Member working groups have been/ are being set up, to develop policy at the detailed level. In most cases these will support the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents, to inform the implementation of adopted Local Plan policies. The following working groups are of particular relevance to Planning Policy and Conservation:

- Developer contributions working group – The first meeting of the working group took place on 31 August. The initial focus of the work will relate to revising the Developer Contributions SPD. Central Government announcement regarding the future of CIL expected as part of the Autumn Statement in November, building on the current Housing White Paper proposals.

- Next meeting to take place early December.
- Housing Policy Working Party – To develop detailed policy guidance for implementing the Local Plan housing mix and tenure policy (North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 Policy 30).

8.0 SPA Mitigation Strategy SPD

8.1 A mitigation strategy was adopted in November 2016, to meet the Habitat Regulations, due to the designation of the Upper Nene Gravel pits as a Special protection Area.

8.2 The Council has since its adoption successfully secured contributions from planning applications, as well as permitted development, which total £13,741. An action plan has been drawn up by the Wildlife Trust and Natural England, in partnership with the relevant Local Planning Authorities to provide a direction for project funding.

8.3 The initial projects for this Council are as follows:

- Mitigation – Titchmarsh reserve fencing
- Monitoring- survey work and co-ordination
- Mitigation – Thrapston lake hedge planting

9.0 Planning for the right homes in the right places: Government consultation proposals

9.1 The Government is seeking views on a number of changes to planning policy and legislation. The closing date for responses was 9th November. A response has therefore been delegated to the Head of Service and Council Leader in order to ensure a reply in advance of the deadline.

9.2 For information the summary of proposals is attached to this report as Appendix A.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 Members are asked to note the current progress to date within the Planning Policy and Conservation team.

(Reason – to keep Members informed as to current progress with plan making)

Legal	Power: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)				
	Other considerations: National Planning Policy Framework				
Background Papers: None					
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Date: 16/11/2017					
CFO		MO		CX	

Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation key proposals

The Government has published a consultation that proposes reforms to the planning system by increasing housing supply and local authority capacity to manage growth. Proposals include:

- a) a standard method for calculating housing need;
- b) how neighbourhood planning groups can have greater certainty on the level of housing need to plan for;
- c) a statement of common ground to improve how local authorities work together to meet housing needs across boundaries;
- d) making use of viability assessments simpler, quicker and more transparent; and
- e) increased planning application fees in areas where local planning authorities are delivering the homes their communities need.

On 14 September 2017 the Government published a consultation entitled "*Planning for the right homes in the right places*". This consultation sets out a number of proposals to reform the planning system aimed at increasing the supply of new homes as well as increasing local authority capacity to manage growth. Details of these changes are summarised below:

Proposed approach to calculating the local housing need

The Government's proposed approach to a standardised methodology uses the latest household projections as the demographic baseline; this should be the annual average household growth over a 10-year period.

It is proposed that an adjustment is made to take account of market signals, where appropriate, based on affordability (the latest information on workplace-based median house price to median earnings ratio). A calculation is proposed, which determines a level of uplift, which seeks to ensure more homes are delivered in locations where affordability is worst.

However, the level of increase can be capped according to the status of the local plan in the authority area, whereby the increase is limited to 40% above the local plan (for recently adopted plans) or 40% above whichever is the higher of the household projections of the figure in the local plan.

In implementing the approach:

- a) local planning authorities should be able to rely on the local housing need evidence used to justify their local housing need for a period of two years from the date on which they submit their plan;

b) It is proposed that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) be amended so that having a robust method for assessing local housing need is part of the tests that plans are assessed against; and

c) The Housing White Paper also proposed that after 31 March 2018, the new method for calculating the local housing need would apply as a baseline for assessing five-year housing land supply. This is to incentivise getting up-to-date plans in place. It is implied that the Revised Framework would introduce this requirement, which may follow the date previously suggested, but would take immediate effect and there would be some discretion for local planning authorities with ambitious proposals for new homes.

In terms of transitional arrangements for implementing the proposed approach the Government proposes the following:

a) no plan that has not yet reached publication stage, or a plan adopted more than five years ago, should use the new standardised methodology, unless the plan will be submitted for examination on or before 31 March 2018 or before the revised NPPF is published (whichever is later);

b) where a plan has been published, but not yet submitted, if the plan will be submitted for examination on or before 31 March 2018 or before the revised NPPF is published (whichever is later), the local planning authority should continue with the current plan preparation, or otherwise use the new standardised method;

c) where a plan is at examination stage the local planning authority should progress with the examination using the current approach; and

d) where a plan has been adopted in the last five years, the local planning authority should use the new standardised method when next reviewing or updating the plan.

Additional proposals

In addition to proposing a standard methodology for determining the level of housing provision, it is proposed that:

a) the NPPF will be updated to require local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Common Ground to support more effective joint working where planning issues need to be addressed by more than one authority.

It is proposed that the tests of soundness are amended to require such agreements that inform strategy and provide evidence of effective cross boundary working;

b) plan makers should disaggregate the total housing need against different types of housing (including those for older people and disabled people, families with children, affordable housing etc), although no method is suggested;

c) regarding viability in plan-making, local planning authorities should set out the types and thresholds for affordable housing contributions required; infrastructure needed to deliver the plan; and expectations for how these will be funded and contributions developers will be expected to make.

For decision-taking, where policy requirements have been tested for their viability, the issue should not usually need to be tested again at the planning application stage; and

d) Further increases on planning application fees could be imposed