

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 19 February 2018

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: David Brackenbury (Chairman)
Tony Boto (Vice-Chairman)
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Wendy Brackenbury Gill Mercer
Sylvia Hobbs Sarah Peacock
Marian Hollomon Pam Whiting

394. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Carter, Sylvia Hughes, Steven North and Jake Vowles.

395. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

396. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

397. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

398. TRESHAM GARDEN VILLAGE UPDATE

The Head of the Joint Planning Unit gave a presentation on the progress of the Tresham Garden Village project. It was noted that consultation on the draft Masterplan would take place between 5 March and 16 April.

399. EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE TREE STRATEGY

The Senior Tree and Landscape Officer presented a report which sought approval of the draft East Northamptonshire Tree Strategy and for it to be published for consultation.

The Tree Management Guidance and Policies document would assist in providing guidance for the effective and responsible management of trees within the district. This would include trees both in the public and private realm, which were protected through a conservation area designation or otherwise. The Strategy set out a clear process for the consideration of matters relating to trees and would help to provide clarity in outlining the Council's policy approach to tree planting, maintenance and removal. It also set out responsibilities and legal requirements in relation to various activities.

It was proposed to consult on the document for a period of six weeks, including town and parish councils, neighbouring authorities and private sector consultants. Once the document had been adopted, it would be available widely across the district.

During debate on the item, Members very much welcomed the document. In response to a question about whether the document would cover incidents of notices being attached to trees, officers confirmed that it was not included in the document at the current time but they could look at including it. It was also confirmed that the care of existing trees was now considered as part of the validation process for planning applications. A summary of the two British Standards relating to tree reports and works on construction sites would also be included in the document. Officers also confirmed that they were now pushing for a greater mix of indigenous tree species on developments and they had a list of which trees were suitable for the various soil types and shade areas in the district.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the East Northamptonshire District Wide Tree Management – Guidance and Policies document for consultation; and
- (ii) That any minor amendments be made by the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Policy Committee.

(Reason: To provide a positive management tool to protect and enhance the trees within the district.)

400. EMERGING LOCAL PLANS – ENAGEMENT WITH NEIGHBOURING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager presented a report which introduced the Local Plans for Huntingdonshire, Peterborough and Bedford and highlighted any significant implications of those Local Plans for East Northamptonshire.

For both the Huntingdonshire and Peterborough Local Plans, officers had responded to the consultations stating that we had no objections to the Plans.

The proposed Bedford Local Plan spatial strategy had potentially significant implications for East Northamptonshire. Between April and June 2017, Bedford Borough had consulted on the draft Local Plan spatial strategy. The Plan proposed four potential sites for one or more new settlements within the Borough, three of which would be accessed via the A6 corridor. The sites were:

- Lee Farm Sharnbrook (Colworth Garden Village) – A6 corridor,
- Thurleigh Airfield – A6 corridor;
- Land at Twinwoods – A6 corridor and
- Wyboston Garden Village – A1 corridor, near to St Neots.

The previous officer response to the draft spatial strategy in June 2017, had noted that any of the three potential sites along the A6 corridor could have implications for the district. Bedford Borough had now proposed that the Sharnbrook site (Colworth Garden Village) was the preferred site, to include 4,500 dwellings (2,500 by 2035) and associated infrastructure.

Officers had reviewed the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2035 – Draft Submission Plan, which had raised a number of issues. An objection was raised in respect of the adequacy of the traffic modelling undertaken to support the delivery of the proposed new settlement identified as Colworth Garden Village. It was advised that the decision to promote the development of Colworth Garden Village could give rise to potentially significant impacts within East Northamptonshire, particularly in relation to the A6 running through the southern part of the district.

In respect of the transport modelling undertaken to date, this Council was concerned that there were apparent inadequacies in the approach taken, which are summarised as follows:

- The model on which the published outputs were based did not extend into Northamptonshire and therefore did not accurately reflect trips north on the A6
- The implications of not factoring in this work were exaggerated by the future delivery of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension to the east of Rushden (which included 2,500 new homes and employment provision) which in turn could affect trips south along the A6
- Trip levels indicated in the modelling appeared low, especially in the p.m. period
- The modelling work did not appear to have included the trips generated by the additional 7.25 ha employment provision at Colworth Garden Village
- Northamptonshire County Council had raised concerns over the potential impact of these issues and had, through the Duty to Co-operate meetings, agreed to examine assumptions further.

It may be possible to address these concerns by updating the model, including undertaking additional data collection. However, without this information the outcomes and potential mitigation measures remained unclear. Therefore, until this position was resolved, this Council raised an objection.

In addition, the following issues were also raised as concerns:

- Colworth had only been chosen as the preferred location for the Garden Village at the Pre-Submission stage;
- The Colworth Garden Village proposal (Policy 27) should also be supported by more robust evidence in relation to, green infrastructure and local connectivity, in particular opportunities existed to link into green infrastructure planned for Rushden East (such as the Greenway) and the potential for cross boundary public transport provision (including links between Rushden East, Rushden Lakes and the future Parkway rail station which formed part of the Colworth Garden Village proposal)
- Clarification was necessary, regarding the status of the Garden Village within the Spatial strategy (settlement hierarchy) and town centres hierarchy;
- Clarification was necessary regarding current progress and the status of the proposed Colworth/Sharnbrook Parkway Station as a specific strategic transport infrastructure project supporting the delivery of the Colworth Garden Village Proposal.

During debate on the item, Members fully supported the objection to the Bedford Local Plan due to the impact on the district, particularly the impact on the A6. It was noted that the proposed railway station could be attractive to residents in the district as it was being proposed as part of the scheme to move the end of the Thameslink to the Wellingborough/Corby area. It was also noted that there could be effects on the Rushden East development, as a key aim of that project was to reduce the speeds on the A6. It was acknowledged that there could be implications and benefits to the district of the Bedford Local Plan, but the key issue was that no meaningful modelling of the traffic implications outside of the border had yet taken place.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the officer response regarding the Proposed Submission Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 20136 be noted;
- (ii) That the officer response regarding the Proposed Submission Peterborough Local Plan be noted; and
- (iii) To raise an objection to the pre-submission draft Bedford Local Plan 2035, in respect of the adequacy of transport modelling undertaken to date in support of the promotion of the new settlement proposal at Colworth Garden Village.

(Reason: To allow Members to consider the wider Local Plan context beyond the district, and to agree the Council's formal response to the pre-submission draft Bedford Local Plan 2035.)

401. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING – UPDATE REPORT

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented a report which informed the Committee as to the current status of the submitted Neighbourhood Plans for Rushden and Glapthorn. It also provided information as to those Neighbourhood Plans that were anticipated to be published for consultation in 2018.

In late 2017, the Rushden and Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plans had been submitted to the Council for independent examination.

The Regulation 16 consultation on the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan had taken place from 3 November to 18 December 2017. 17 representations had been received, including one which argued that one of the policies sought to stop developments that consisted predominantly of flats. Two residents had also submitted representations, one objecting to the proposed Shirley Road development, but also seeking to strengthen the design policies to protect street trees. Another argued that the consultation itself was too narrow, and should be broadened to allow for further changes to the contents of the Plan.

The independent examination of the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan commenced in mid-January 2018 and it was anticipated that the Examiner would finalise and publish his report by Spring 2018, which should enable taking the Neighbourhood Plan to referendum in May.

In December 2017, Glapthorn Parish Council formally submitted the Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plan to the Council for examination. Alongside the draft Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council had also submitted a suite of other documents, in accordance with Regulation 15. These included the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement (incorporating Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening opinions). Officers had

reviewed the set of submission documents and had now written to the Parish Council to confirm that it was satisfied that the submission draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan and associated documentation fulfilled all of the relevant statutory requirements.

The Regulation 16 consultation was currently underway and the closing date for representations was 26 February 2018. An Examiner had been appointed for the Neighbourhood Plan and he would commence his examination around the beginning of March 2018.

In response to questions from Members, officers confirmed that the £20,000 provided by the Government for each Neighbourhood Plan should cover both the costs of the examination and the referendum. It was also confirmed that it was expected that the examinations would be written and not hearings.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the current stage in preparation of the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan and the summary of Regulation 16 consultation representations be noted;
- (ii) the current stage in preparation of the Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031 be noted; and
- (iii) the progress of those Neighbourhood Plans that are anticipated to come forward during 2018 be noted.

(Reason: To support the forthcoming Rushden and Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plan through examination.)

402. PLANNING POLICY AND CONSERVATION UPDATE

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager presented a report which provided an update on key areas of work being undertaken by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team and provided updates on:

- Local plan making
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Historic Conservation
- Tresham Garden Village
- Rushden East SUE
- Working Groups
- SPA Mitigation Strategy SPD

RESOLVED

That the current progress to date within the Planning Policy and Conservation Team be noted.

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

Chairman