PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 17 December 2019
Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston
Time: 7.00pm
Present: Councillors: David Brackenbury (Chairman)
Tony Boto (Vice-Chairman)
Steven North (Leader of the Council)
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)
Sylvia Hobbs
Sylvia Hughes
Roger Powell
Richard Lewis
Jake Vowles
Dorothy Maxwell

. PUBLIC SPEAKERS

The Chairman welcomed Anne Dicks, the newly appointed Planning Policy Officer, to her first meeting of the Committee.

. PUBLIC SPEAKERS

At the invitation of the Chairman, a number of speakers addressed the meeting in respect of the following items:

Agenda item 6 (Additional Housing Site Assessments Local Plan Part 2)
Agenda item 7 (Local Plan Update and Progression)

. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Carter and Sarah Peacock.

. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

. RESUBMISSION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2019

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager resubmitted the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2019 for the Committee to reconsider as it had been brought to his attention that two of the resolutions of that meeting (minute numbers 143 and 145 refer) had been incorrectly recorded due to a clerical error. Two minor grammatical changes were sought, in order that the resolutions could not be read ambiguously and so provide an accurate reflection of the decisions made.
RESOLVED:

That the resubmitted minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Nature of Interest</th>
<th>DPI</th>
<th>Other Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jake Vowles</td>
<td>Local Plan Update and Progression</td>
<td>Ward Member for Oundle</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

. QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3.

. ADDITIONAL HOUSING SITE ASSESSMENTS LOCAL PLAN PART 2

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which set out the Council’s position in relation to meeting its future housing requirements and which proposed a preferred solution.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) set out the minimal housing requirements for the District of 8,400 new homes from 2011-2031. The distribution of those homes was mainly allocated to the designated Growth Town of Rushden and the Market Towns of Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Raunds, Thrapston and Oundle. Whilst housing completion rates were roughly in line with the housing requirements, completions at Rushden and Irthlingborough were showing a significant undersupply. Additional work had been undertaken to ensure the implications were fully understood.

The latest housing land supply data, as at 1 April 2019, identified an increase in the potential housing shortfalls for both Rushden and Irthlingborough, as follows:

- Rushden – 256 dwellings
- Irthlingborough – 323 dwellings

Whilst the deficits at Rushden and Irthlingborough were offset by higher levels of completion elsewhere in the District, the overall position raised concern and a quantum of around 350-450 houses was proposed. The assessment of potential site options had identified a shortlist of five potential delivery locations:

- Land to the north of the A6, Irthlingborough
- Land to the north and east of Crow Hill, Irthlingborough
- Land to the east of Higham Ferrers
- Land to the south east of Rushden
- Land to the west of Rushden Lakes

Detailed site assessments had been undertaken and the location to the west of Rushden Lakes was considered to provide the most sustainable and deliverable option for addressing the potential shortfall in housing delivery in the short/medium term and if developed this proposal could deliver around 400 houses.
During debate on the item, Members welcomed the identification of potential additional sites. Whilst the land west of Rushden Lakes was identified, one Member questioned whether the site was acceptable due to existing issues with the road network in the area. Questions were also raised about not progressing the identified sites in Irthlingborough as previous proposals to the north of the A6 Bypass had been approved. It was acknowledged that Irthlingborough could benefit from development but this was likely to happen through a review of the JCS.

Officers were commended on their work in identifying the potential additional sites.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) That the findings of the additional housing site assessment work, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be endorsed.

(ii) That a focussed public consultation on the Local Plan in early 2020, to provide the opportunity for representations to be submitted in respect of the proposal to include a draft allocation for the development of land to the west of Rushden Lakes, be approved.

(Reason: To ensure a robust approach to future housing delivery and to allow the Plan to meet legislative requirements.)

**LOCAL PLAN UPDATE AND PROGRESSION**

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which provided an update of the issues impacting on the progression of the Local Plan and to consider a way forward.

At the Committee's last meeting, a revised timetable for the delivery of the Local Plan was agreed. A number of issues were currently being progressed, or were subject to consideration, and would need to be resolved to enable the Local Plan to be taken forward in line with the revised timetable. The issues could be summarised as follows:

- The need to address the outstanding representations and proposed housing allocations for Oundle
- The need to consider the potential shortfall in meeting the District’s overall housing requirements within the Plan period
- The need to consult on any significant changes to the Local Plan, if required, in advance of submitting the Plan for examination.

At the Committee’s meeting on 29 July 2019, Members resolved to defer the endorsement of the proposed housing site allocations for Oundle and officer responses to the relevant Local Plan representations until the outcome of the examination of the Oundle Neighbourhood Plan (ONP) was known. The Examiner’s interim report had now been published and raised fundamental issues regarding the legality of the ONP, with a conclusion that the Plan could not progress in its current state. He advised that the options were withdrawal of the Plan or that it be put back to Regulation 14 for further consultation, with clear evidence provided to justify the approach to its housing site selection.

The outcome of the examination was likely to delay the production of the ONP by a considerable length of time. This delay would impact on the ability to deliver the Local Plan in advance of the potential unitary status in 2021 and the Committee was now asked to
reconsider its position in respect of putting the Local Plan on hold in advance of the outcome of the ONP.

Two major planning applications for Oundle had also now been submitted to Planning Management Committee and whilst both applications had been deferred, their determination would be required well in advance of any potential ONP being made.

During debate on the item, Members recognised that the Council had decided to develop a District-wide Local Plan Part 2 which would give the whole District protection and it was necessary to progress the Local Plan in accordance with the agreed timetable. There had now been a clear steer from the Examiner on the ONP which meant that the timings would no longer work to allow the Local Plan Part 2 to be adopted in advance of the move to unitary status. It also needed to be remembered that with proposed Shadow Authority elections in May, a period of Purdah would be in place when no consultation would be able to be taken.

Councillor Vowles, as an Oundle Ward Member, advised that during the public consultation residents were strongly opposed to two of the sites in the Local Plan, whilst the ONP had the support of the whole town. A proposal for the Planning Policy Team and Oundle Town Council to work together to identify sites was proposed, but not supported by the Committee, as it was difficult to see how this would be able to take the Local Plan forward in line with the timetable. It was suggested, though not supported, that the ONP sites could deliver more houses and bring sites through quicker. A larger number of people were opposed to two of the three Local Plan sites. If the Planning Management Committee ultimately decided to refuse the two planning applications then ENC would not meet its Local Plan requirements.

Given the policy position, as advised in the reports, officers had recommended that the reports be approved. Additional work was currently being undertaken on mitigating technical constraints raised in respect of the two planning applications.

It was acknowledged that a lot of work had been put into the ONP but ENC’s concerns had reflected those of the Examiner. These highlighted fundamental concerns regarding the evidence base and consultation, which indicated that the ONP had failed to meet basic conditions and would therefore be considered unlawful. It was requested that the Oundle representations and draft site allocations be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

Councillor North moved the recommendations in the report and Councillor Vowles moved an amendment to recommendation 2 that “Agree that officers work with Oundle Town Council to prepare a report to consider the outstanding Local Plan representations and draft housing allocations for Oundle early in the New Year.”, as there was no seconder to the amendment, the amendment fell. The substantive motion was then put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Local Plan is no longer on hold so that it may progress in line with the Local Plan timetable.

(ii) That officers prepare a report to consider the outstanding Local Plan representations and draft housing allocations for Oundle early in the New Year.

(Reason: To allow the progression of the Local Plan in line with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme).
**SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 8**

At 8.58pm, it was proposed that Council Procedure Rule 8 (Duration of Meeting) be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda. On being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED:

That Council Procedure Rule 8 be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda.

**ANNUAL POSITION STATEMENT – CALCULATIONG A FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY FOR THE DISTRICT FOR THE 2019 AUTHORITIES MONITORING REPORT**

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented a report which updated Members on East Northamptonshire Council's current five year housing land supply situation as at 1 April 2019.

The five year housing land supply had been calculated on the basis of the following assumptions:

- The adopted JCS (Policy 28 Table 4) provided the basis for calculating the five year housing land supply;
- The total deliverable supply equated to 2,660 dwellings; basic supply 2,537 dwellings plus 123 dwellings windfall allowance;
- The assessment of delivery rates during the 2011-19 monitoring period had identified an excess of 134 dwellings against the JCS requirement for the same period. Application of the Sedgefield approach would entail a five year land supply requirement of 2,100 dwellings (i.e. 420 dwellings per year) for the 2019-24 monitoring period; with 401 dwellings per year thereafter and
- Given that housing completions currently exceeded the JCS requirement for the monitoring period (2011-19), the NPPF required that a 5% buffer should be applied in calculating the five year land supply. Therefore, the five year land supply requirement would equate to 2,205 dwellings (inclusive of the 5% buffer).

The report set out the current five year land supply calculation and assumed a delivery housing land supply of 2,660 dwellings, compared to a five year land supply requirement of 2,205 dwellings. Therefore, the current five year land supply calculated provided 6.03 years housing land supply. The Committee also noted the list of sites included in the latest Housing Site Schedule. During the 2018-19 monitoring year, 473 dwellings had been delivered.

As the Council moved towards joining with the other North Northamptonshire councils, it was important to understand the wider North Northamptonshire context for the five year housing land supply. The 2018 Authorities Monitoring Report had identified a five year housing land supply for the monitoring period 2019-24 for North Northamptonshire of:
RESOLVED:

(i) That the five year housing land supply calculations against the submitted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (Policy 28/Table 4): 6.03 years, applying the “Sedgefield approach” with a 5% buffer be noted.

(ii) That the schedule of sites and phasing assumptions used in the calculation of the five year housing land supply figure – the Council’s “Annual Position Statement” – for inclusion in the 2019 Authorities Monitoring Report be endorsed.

(iii) That the application of a 5% buffer in calculating the five year land supply requirement, in accordance with national policy requirements (NPPF paragraph 73) be acknowledged.

(iv) That the updated North Northamptonshire Joint Annual Monitoring Report be reported to the Committee when it is available.

(Reason: To provide a robust housing land supply position on which to base planning decisions.)

. “MAKING” (ADOPTION) OF THE WARMINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE TIMESCALE UP TO 2031

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented a report which requested that the Committee “make” (adopt) the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan for the timescale up to 2031 and to accept which policies from the Council’s Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) are superseded by ones in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan set out a distinctive local vision for Warmington in 2031. This sought to ensure Warmington would retain its character as a rural parish and a thriving village with an historic core set in open countryside and made the following points:

- The diverse open spaces that were essential to the character of the village would be preserved and maintained.
- Organic growth through small scale housing developments would be welcomed where they met an evidenced local need and were of a design that preserved and enhanced the existing natural and built environment in a sustainable manner.
- Economic development that made use of existing underused commercial sites within the parish would be encouraged where it improved the surrounding environment and offered sustainable local employment.
- Improvements to local infrastructure and community facilities would be encouraged and supported where they improved sustainability, improved renewable energy production and use, and reduced dependence on fossil fuels.
- By 2031 facilities would be more closely matched to the community needs; residents would be able to walk, cycle and drive safely on properly maintained paths, tracks and roads both locally and to neighbouring villages and towns and visitors would be attracted to ‘Destination Warmington’.

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Housing Land Supply</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>5.3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northamptonshire</td>
<td>6.28 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>6.98 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>7.47 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northamptonshire (mean housing land supply)</td>
<td>6.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Plan made provision for the development of housing for Warmington to 2031 through a combination of an allocated site, infill development within the defined settlement boundary and, providing various criteria were met, housing adjacent to or outside the settlement boundary. Other site specific policies included ones relating to design, preventing inappropriate tandem and backland development, local green spaces, other local spaces, landscape character, traffic management and transport improvements, sustainable transport, support for business, sustainable recreational and tourism activities and developer contributions.

A referendum on the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan was held on 24 October 2019, where the outcome was:

- 354 “Yes” votes, to “make” the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan out of 384 votes issued – 92% in favour
- Turnout was 48% of those on the electoral roll.

The assessment of RNOTP Policies 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 23, 24 and WAR 1 had identified the following changes that needed to be made to the adopted development plan, for the Parish of Warmington that should accompany the making of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Neighbourhood Plan Policy W12 was considered suitable to replace Policy 15 of the RNOTP.
- RNOTP Policy WAR 1 was replaced by Neighbourhood Plan Policies W2 and W12.

RESOLVED:

(i) To adopt “make” the Warmington Neighbourhood Development Plan for the period up to 2031, as part of the statutory development plan for East Northamptonshire, in accordance with the relevant provisions in the 2011 Localism Act and 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

(ii) That the replacement of Policies 15 and WAR1 of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan by Neighbourhood Plan Policies W2 and W12 be approved.

(Reason: To update the adopted development plan for the Parish of Warmington in view of the passage of the Neighbourhood Plan at referendum).

ADDITIONAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That an additional meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 20 January 2020 at 7pm.

CHAIRMAN’S THANKS

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for all their work during the past year and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Chairman