



Raunds Area Working Party

Minutes of a meeting held on Tuesday 23 February 2010 at 7.00 pm, Members' Room, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors:

Tony Boto (**Chairman**)
Albert Campbell
Michael Finch

Glenvil Greenwood Smith
Dudley Hughes JP
Eloise Lucille

Officers:

Trevor Watson (TGW)
Elizabeth Wilson (EW)
Peter Cooper (PC)

Head of Planning Services
Interim Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
Democratic Services (Minutes)

Action

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 RESOLVED:

That, subject to all reference to Raunds Town Council being removed from Minute 3.6, the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 January 2010 be received and approved.

PC

2.0 APOLOGIES

2.1 Councillor David Brackenbury sent his apologies.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 No interests were declared.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING PARTY

4.1 The Chairman proposed that Councillors Lisa Costello and Sylvia Hughes be appointed to the Working Party and it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Councillors Lisa Costello and Sylvia Hughes be appointed to the Raunds Area Working Party.

KO

4.2 Councillor Lucille asked for the validity of this resolution to be referred to the Monitoring Officer and under Rule 16.6 of the Council's Procedure Rules, Councillors Michael Finch and Eloise Lucille requested that their vote against the above motion be recorded.

5.0 UPDATE ON SITE SELECTION EVIDENCE

5.1 Further to Minute 3 (21 January 2010), the Working Party received an update on site selection evidence and issues raised at the previous meeting, in particular, on Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) and how this could affect future development in Raunds.

Action

- 5.2 Raunds had been designated for a SUE under the Core Spatial Strategy. The main issue for the Working Party was that a single SUE adjacent to Raunds would concentrate all future housing and employment development for Raunds in one area. It was considered that this could have serious implications for the town and that one concentrated SUE would cause social and physical imbalance for the town. It was also considered that the town was not large enough to have one SUE and Members would prefer a number of smaller SUEs in different areas around the town to ensure a more balanced approach and make development more sustainable. At the last meeting on 21 January, EW was asked to discuss the possibility of this approach with the Joint Planning Unit (JPU).
- 5.3 EW reported that she had consulted the JPU about this issue and they had informally indicated that, so long as the principles of SUEs were adhered to and the development strategy contributed to the future vitality and sustainability of Raunds, they might consider this as an acceptable development strategy.
- 5.4 The issue of developer contributions towards infrastructure was also discussed. It was considered important that any development strategy of smaller SUEs should be robust enough with sufficient development to obtain adequate developer contributions towards the provision of infrastructure for the town. If the SUEs were too small or dispersed, it could decrease the “critical mass” for infrastructure provision and lead to or ‘open up’ development in other areas around or within Raunds.
- 5.5 It was suggested that the infrastructure issue for Raunds should be discussed at the next Working Party meeting and it was **agreed** that EW would prepare a skeleton of a draft Raunds Infrastructure Plan for consideration at that meeting.
- 5.6 EW reported for information that the Council had received £50,000 from the national Rural Masterplan Fund. This money would go towards the production of a masterplan for Raunds. Members thanked EW for her work in obtaining this funding.

EW

6.0 FOUR TOWNS PLAN – DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

(a) Affordable Housing Policies

- 6.1 A report was submitted identifying the main issues on the formation of affordable housing policies for the Four Towns Plan.
- 6.2 Members briefly discussed the report and considered that the issue of part ownership should be included within any affordable housing policies. It was **agreed** that further evidence gathering for housing need was required for this issue and that EW would discuss the matter with Cat Hartley, the Housing Strategy Manager, and report back to the next meeting.
- 6.3 A chart showing the market and affordable housing balance by Ward for the District was also considered.

EW

(b) Town Centre Boundaries

- 6.4 Members considered a draft methodology for determining the town centre boundaries for the main settlements within the Four Towns Plan area.

Action

- 6.5 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4 set out the Government's policy for town centres and town centre uses. When preparing development plans, Local Planning Authorities should:
- identify primary shopping areas and town centre boundaries within which the Development Plan should locate other town centre uses
 - define other areas within town centres but outside the primary shopping frontage to encourage specific uses
 - ensure town centre uses would benefit from the centre's accessibility by not draw town centre boundaries too widely.

6.6 A draft map showing the proposed town centre boundary and primary shopping frontage for Raunds was submitted for Members' consideration.

6.7 EW stated that whilst the determination of the extent of the primary shopping frontages would be undertaken using the methodology attached to the report, if Members wanted a policy related to controlling the uses within the frontage then this should be a criteria based approach.

6.8 Members were asked to submit any views on the proposed methodology and boundaries to EW and the draft would be updated for further consideration. A possible future site visit to Raunds to assess the proposed boundaries was also discussed.

EW

7.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.1 It was **agreed** that the next meeting would be held on 8 April 2010 starting at 7.00pm in the Members' Room.

PC



Raunds Area Working Party

Minutes of a meeting held on Thursday 8 April 2010 at 7.00 pm, Members' Room, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors:

Tony Boto (**Chairman**)
David Brackenbury
Glenvil Greenwood Smith

Dudley Hughes JP
Eloise Lucille

Officers:

Sharn Matthews (SM)	Executive Director
Trevor Watson (TGW)	Head of Planning Services
Elizabeth Wilson (EW)	Interim Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
Peter Cooper (PC)	Democratic Services (Minutes)

Action

1.0 MINUTES

- 1.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 23 February 2010 were received and approved. **PC**

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 Councillors Albert Campbell and Michael Finch sent their apologies.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Councillors Tony Boto, Eloise Lucille, Glenvil Greenwood Smith and Dudley Hughes JP declared personal interests because they owned properties in Raunds or Stanwick. They remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting on all the agenda items.
- 3.2 Councillor David Brackenbury gave a view that the Raunds Area Working Party relied on the experience and expertise of Members who lived in the Raunds area and he suggested that these Members should not have to declare interests for any properties they owned in Raunds, unless any matter being considered by the Working Party directly affected the area where their property was located.

- 3.3 The Working Party noted Councillor Brackenbury's comments.

4.0 FOUR TOWNS PLAN – DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)

(a) Policy Position Update

- 4.1 An update on policies being developed for the Four Towns Plan DPD was submitted for consideration and approval.
- 4.2 Members welcomed the document as a useful indicator of progress being made with policies for the Plan. It was noted that the document would be updated after every meeting of the Raunds and Three Towns Working Parties

to take account of any comments or amendments made by Members.

4.3 Some of the main policy issues affecting Raunds were discussed and Members made the following points:

- Raunds Master Plan - EW mentioned that work on the Brief would start in mid May and the consultation process would take place by the end of June/early July. There would then be further consultation on the outcome (of the consultation) which could continue until the autumn
- Employment Requirements Criteria – clarification on the types of jobs and employment opportunities required for Raunds should be made. Stanwick should have its town centre employment area protected.
- Housing Requirements Criteria – Members were concerned with the numbers of new dwellings proposed for Raunds and that the town's infrastructure would be unable to cope
- Housing Site Assessment – future housing should be dispersed around various sites in Raunds
- Affordable Housing – affordable housing should be for people living in Raunds and the percentage of affordable housing should be looked at based on evidence e.g. the housing waiting list
- Treatment of Windfall Sites – this policy was important for Stanwick and the other surrounding villages adjacent to Raunds.

4.4 It was **agreed** that a fourth column showing relevant and achievable policies having regard to both national advice and previous plan progression experience should be added to the updated document.

EW

RESOLVED:

EW

That, subject to the comments made by Members being incorporated into the document, the submitted policy update be noted and approved.

(b) Infrastructure Planning

4.5 Members considered a report on infrastructure planning that was being undertaken for the Four Towns Plan DPD to enable the Local Development Framework to create and deliver sustainable communities.

4.6 The four main aims of an Infrastructure Plan were to:

- identify the existing infrastructure in the towns and assess whether there was spare/over capacity
- identify existing shortfalls in capacity irrespective of further growth
- identify the infrastructure needed to support future developments
- help infrastructure providers identify requirements and plan provision.

4.7 The first draft of the Position Statement for Raunds was submitted for consideration; this included an initial assessment of any current or likely deficiencies over the Plan period. Members noted that there were a number of infrastructure types that had to be assessed against the relevant standard.

4.8 A similar Position Statement would be prepared for each of the four towns in the DPD area and a strategic position on infrastructure issues covering the four towns would also be prepared. Once this had been completed, infrastructure delivery by providers would be identified and matched to cover any shortfall.

4.9 The Working Party welcomed the document and requested that the issues of provision of broadband and number of school spaces be investigated further.

- 4.10 Members requested that a copy of the draft Infrastructure Plan for Raunds be circulated by email to the Working Party and they were asked to submit any further comments they might have on the draft document to EW.

(c) Transport Assessment Note

- 4.11 The Working Party received a draft Transport Assessment Note prepared by the County Council on the current transport position for East Northamptonshire, as part of the infrastructure work being undertaken for the Four Towns Plan DPD.
- 4.12 Once options for growth had been considered and agreed then these would be tested by the County Council using the Northamptonshire traffic model.
- 4.13 Any comments made by Members would then be discussed with the County Council before the draft document was finalised.
- 4.14 Members noted that some of the assumptions made in the document about vehicle movements and travel to work trips made in Raunds and the south of the district were based on findings in the 2001 Census.
- 4.15 The Working Party agreed that the Chowns Mill roundabout was the major highway problem to be resolved and the situation would only get worse. It was also acknowledged that whilst the A45 and A14 had brought growth to the district, they had also brought extra traffic and congestion, especially at peak travel to work times.

5.0 REVIEW OF HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL ALLOCATIONS

- 5.1 Councillor Greenwood Smith proposed three areas that would be the Working Party's preferred sites for future development around Raunds:
- (a) Land to the south of the former RPC site for a mix of retail, industry and housing;
 - (b) Land to the south of Meadow Lane for housing with industry situated to the north of the site adjacent to the existing industrial site at Warth Park; and
 - (c) Land adjacent to Brick Kiln Road, with the west of the site allocated for industrial use and the east for housing (a possible 285 dwellings) and community use.
- 5.2 He emphasised that the three separate sites would be preferable than one large site allocated for the Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) proposed for Raunds in the Core Spatial Strategy.
- 5.3 Councillor Boto suggested that the RPC site could be a possible mini SUE with mainly housing and industry. It had the advantage of being near to the town centre. He also suggested that the site could be linked to include land to the south of Manor School.
- 5.4 TW stated that it was important that any proposed sites for Raunds would have to be backed up by evidence before they could be considered for inclusion in a refreshed Preferred Options document. EW proposed that the same site assessment process used for the RNOT Plan could also be used to assess potential sites in Raunds. In this way the advantages and disadvantages of

Action

each site could be properly assessed and withstand scrutiny at the Examination stage. Members noted that any work on the site assessments could be undertaken using in house resources.

It was **agreed** that work on a draft Site Assessment for Raunds be proceeded with and that a progress report on this document be made to the next meeting of this Working Party.

EW

6.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6.1 It was **agreed** that the next meeting be held on a date to be arranged in consultation with the Chairman.

PC



Three Towns Working Party

Minutes of a meeting held on 2 March 2010 at 7.00 pm, Members' Room, East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors:

David Brackenbury	Roger Powell
Michael Finch	Anna Sauntson
Sean Lever	Robin Underwood
Andy Mercer	Pam Whiting
Steven North	

Officers:

Trevor Watson (TGW)	Head of Planning Services
Elizabeth Wilson (EW)	Interim Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
Cat Hartley (CH)	Housing Strategy Manager
Peter Cooper (PC)	Democratic Services (Minutes)

Action

1.0 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

1.1 RESOLVED:

That Councillor Steven North be appointed Chairman of the Working Party for 2009/10.

PC

2.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 No interests were declared.

3.0 FOUR TOWNS PLAN - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

(a) Three Towns Issues

3.1 Further to Minute 4 (Joint Working Party) 10 December 2009, Members received a report on planning policies to be considered for the three towns (Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough) and surrounding area, as part of the Four Towns Development Plan Document (DPD).

3.2 Members noted the policy issues covering all four towns (including Raunds) in the Four Towns Plan area to be discussed at future meetings of the Joint Working Party, and that consideration would be given to a wind farm policy as part of the Four Towns Plan.

3.3 Some policy areas specific to the three towns were proposed for discussion and it was **agreed** that the following issues be considered at future meetings of this Working Party:

EW

- Local distinctiveness for each of the towns in a pen portrait
- Vision for the long term strategy of a "successful" Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough area
- Settlement boundaries - consideration of detailed boundaries

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- Site assessment - housing and employment requirements for Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough
- Housing density and mix for the area - possible differentiated policy for each settlement
- Specific affordable housing sites/rural exception sites in the area
- Town centre/retail frontage-specific boundary issues
- Specific development principles for the Three Towns and surrounding villages
- Chelveston airfield.

3.4 Councillor Mercer considered that the following three issues were important and it was **agreed** that these should be included in the Working Party's deliberations: **EW**

- The treatment of windfall sites in housing requirement figures and the need to avoid densification in urban areas through using housing infill sites especially in Rushden and Irthlingborough
- Whether the existing utilities infrastructure in Rushden and Irthlingborough was adequate to deal with future development needs
- Transportation links, especially public transport in the three towns.

3.5 It was **agreed** that the following issues should also be considered by the Working Party: **EW**

- Existing Town Boundaries – review these to allow for potential development to the east of the A6 Rushden and Higham Bypass
- Residential Parking Standards – whether these should be linked to the availability of public transport and whether there was enough evidence to depart from Government guidance of 1.5 car parking spaces per property and base the standard on the size of the property
- Settlement Hierarchy – should there be a different approach taken on defining the boundaries of the three towns (compared to the RNOT Plan) but this would have to be justified.

3.6 It was **agreed** that the following issues be added to the draft Four Towns Development Plan Document (DPD) for future discussion: **EW**

- Section 5 – a Wind Farm Policy should be added
- Section 6 – Affordable Housing – both housing and planning policies needed to be developed to address the concerns of the Working Party to ensure that there was a spread of type, size and mix of affordable/intermediate housing
- Section 7 – wildlife corridors should be added to green infrastructure and further work should be done on deliverability and consideration of existing tourist assets under the tourism policy. The possible provision of a cycleway/walkway link using the disused railway line running alongside the Rushden Greenway should be investigated
- Section 8 – targets for housing site allocations in Higham Ferrers could be achieved without further major site allocations
- Section 9 – it was considered that the 1003 outstanding target under the housing site allocations in Irthlingborough would be unsustainable because the required infrastructure was not in place. Lack of Section 106 money for education could also prevent further development in Irthlingborough. EW said that the 1003 target figure was part of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and suggested this issue could be considered as part of the CSS Review
- Section 11 – future development of Rushden must not be constrained by the major roads around the town and consideration should be given to allowing development to the east of the A6 Bypass. Land should be

Action

potentially brought forward for development including a possible site for a new Rushden cemetery

- Section 12 – a policy for the future development of Chelveston Airfield was required and it was important that the Council took a lead on this.

3.7 The Working Party requested that the following issues should also be considered: **EW**

- The possibility of Crow Hill becoming a separate settlement from Irthlingborough. EW said that a small consultation exercise on this matter could take place with Crow Hill residents in June 2010, in liaison with Irthlingborough Town Council if considered appropriate
- Car parking issues in Higham Ferrers High Street to be investigated
- Possible increase in retail development in the High Street and the issue of numbers of affordable housing proposed at Irthlingborough.

3.8 Members noted that a skeleton draft Infrastructure Plan for the three towns would be brought to a future meeting for this Working Party to discuss. **EW**

(b) Affordable Housing Policies

3.9 A report was submitted identifying the main issues on the formation of affordable housing policies for the Four Towns Plan. There was a discussion about what was meant by affordable housing (social rented and intermediate) and the problems of concentration of this housing in particular areas.

3.10 The Working Party considered the main issue to be the concentration and volume of affordable housing and that this type of housing should be spread around a number of sites in the four towns and not be concentrated on a few sites. More affordable housing should be built in villages in the rural settlements as well as the towns. Developers should also be encouraged to produce more imaginative designs for affordable housing.

3.11 CH confirmed that, as required by CSS Policy 15, the Four Towns Plan would aim for 40% of affordable housing on major housing development sites. Under Section 106 agreements, developers were being encouraged to build no more than 20 to 30 affordable dwellings on each site.

3.12 Councillor Powell considered that too much affordable housing was being built in Rushden and Irthlingborough and questioned the number of units under the Housing Market Assessment. Too many flats had been built in these towns which were now standing empty. CH stated that the focus of the affordable housing policies was on sustainability and there must be evidence produced to challenge developers' proposals.

3.13 The issue of ensuring a good mix of age groups allocated to social housing was also discussed. CH confirmed that the Council's Choice Based Lettings Policy had been successful in controlling this matter by achieving a more sustainable occupancy/age mix.

3.14 Councillor Mercer proposed that any policies on affordable housing should differentiate between social and intermediate housing. EW mentioned that some aspects of the differentiation (into social and intermediate housing) could be dealt with by planning policies and some by housing policies. The DPD could not deal with all of these issues. EW was requested to report back on this matter. Councillor Mercer also raised the potential for future strategic housing issues to be considered by the Planning Policy Committee rather than **EW**

the Policy and Resources Committee.

(c) Town Centre Boundaries

- 3.15 Members considered a draft methodology for determining the town centre boundaries for the main settlements within the Four Towns Plan area.
- 3.16 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4 set out the Government's policy for town centres and town centre uses. When preparing development plans, Local Planning Authorities should:
- identify primary shopping areas and town centre boundaries within which the Development Plan should locate other town centre uses
 - define other areas within town centres but outside the primary shopping frontage to encourage specific uses
 - ensure town centre uses would benefit from the centre's accessibility by not draw town centre boundaries too widely.
- 3.17 Draft maps showing the proposed town centre boundary and primary shopping frontages for Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough were submitted for Members consideration.
- 3.18 Councillor Mercer questioned the need to treat this as a priority and was concerned about using up scarce resources and proposed that work on defining town centre boundaries should be deferred. He also referenced the amount of work undertaken in producing the village boundaries under the RNOT Plan, especially the time taken to determine them and the subsequent problems since the Examination Hearings in 2008.
- 3.19 EW emphasised that under PPS 4 there was a requirement for all Local Authorities to undertake this work. She assured Members that work on the proposed town boundaries could be undertaken fairly quickly.
- 3.20 It was proposed that Officers would contact Members for their views on the proposed methodology and boundaries and the draft would be updated for further consideration. Possible future site visits to the towns to assess the proposed boundaries were also discussed. However, the Working Party considered that the work should be deferred for now, subject to the further views of the Raunds Area Working party on this issue being considered either by a future joint working party meeting or through the Planning Policy Committee.

EW

4.0 Date Of Next Meeting

- 4.1 It was **agreed** that the date of the next meeting would be decided in consultation with the Chairman, and that Members of the Working Party would then be informed. This view was taken having regard to the need to ensure that the work of the individual working parties was appropriately focused and the need for further joint meetings to deal with the main aspects of policy development.

PC