



Planning Policy Committee - 14 June 2010

Four Towns Plan - Evidence Gathering Update

Summary

This report provides a progress report on the evaluation of the current evidence base for the development of the Four Towns Plan Development Plan Document (DPD).

Attachment(s)

Annex 1: Evidence base current status.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At the joint Raunds and Three Towns Working Party meeting on 10 December 2009, an initial report was received which set out the likely requirements for the evidence needed as part of the work on preparing the Four Towns Plan. It was agreed that a further report would be presented to the Planning Policy Committee to:

- Update the information on whether there are further in house resources that can be used rather than consultants to gather evidence and give some estimates for costs
- Provide an analysis of required policies for the Four Towns Plan (essential and optional).

2.0 Background

2.1 Bearing in mind the potential costs associated with the evidence gathering programme presented to Working Party on 10 December 2009, Members requested that Officers review the need for all the evidence and whether there was scope for some of the work to be undertaken in house. There was also some discussion about the range of policies to be included in the new Preferred Options report.

3.0 Discussion

3.1 An initial analysis of the policies that will be required for the Four Towns Plan was discussed at the Raunds Working Party at its meeting on 21 January 2010 and the Three Towns Working Party on 2 March 2010. The following list of issues that will need to be addressed in the Preferred Options document was agreed:

- Overall vision for the long term strategy of the area
- Settlement hierarchy
- Settlement boundaries,(towns and villages)-criteria
- Employment and housing requirements
- Approach to housing density and mix
- Affordable housing-types, targets and thresholds
- Rural housing exception sites-criteria
- Environmental policies on biodiversity, flood risk and historic heritage
- Gypsy and traveller needs
- Residential car parking
- town centre boundaries/primary shopping frontages (towns and villages where appropriate) – criteria
- Green infrastructure and other open space, recreation and sport
- Other infrastructure requirements
- Tourism
- Development principles for the market towns and villages
- Rural buildings, farm diversification

- Wind farms.
- 3.2 In discussing the matters of employment and housing allocations the Raunds Working Party considered that the following evidence needs to be updated for formulating the policies important to Raunds:
- Strategic flood risk and surface water management
 - Affordable housing
 - Transport Assessment
- 3.3 Annex 1 to this report sets out the evidence base as so far assessed and highlights the areas where further work is needed which is considered critical to the development of policy. This annex also shows those pieces of evidence where:
- It can be undertaken in-house without any additional resource
 - It can be undertaken in-house but with some mentoring of staff from outside sources
 - It must be undertaken by external consultants due to the technical specialism and modelling requirements.
- 3.4 Where the evidence can be gathered using in-house resources but with some mentoring, we will take that approach. This is where there is a member of staff with relevant qualifications but no experience of the evidence gathering methodology and who has not undertaken such a complex exercise before. A member of staff has been identified to lead the project for the evidence gathering and ensure that it is robust and can withstand scrutiny. It is suggested that there is a (limited) availability of external support from an expert in the field to help guide the staff member. The particular areas are:
- Sustainability appraisal
 - Landscape character assessment.

In these cases the amount of support through a mentor should be relatively limited in costs and is likely to be about £5,000. This cost can be met through the existing revenue budget for the Four Towns Plan for 2010/11.

- 3.5 There are several areas of work that require specialist technical expertise and modelling capability which is outside the in-house capacity. The areas of essential evidence which will require external consultants to undertake the work include:
- Strategic flood risk assessment
 - Surface water management plan
 - Housing needs survey (if affordable housing policies are to be refined)
 - Habitats regulations assessment
 - Retail assessment locality issues
 - Mitigation testing for transport strategy for options for development possible funding through the County Council.

The potential costs of this work are estimated in the attached annex but will not be known until specifications are written and the market tested. It is therefore suggested that the next stage of the work, writing the specifications, is agreed so that potential costs can be ascertained before any commitments are considered through a report back to this Committee.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Planning Policy Committee :
- Agrees the list of policy areas for the Four Towns Plan as set out in paragraph 3.1 of this report;
 - Authorise officers to develop specifications for the areas of evidence that require external support set out in paragraph 3.5;
 - Agrees to the use of mentors for the studies set out in paragraph 3.4;
 - Notes that a report will be presented to a future meeting of the Committee with

further detailed costs for consideration.

Implications:					
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy					
Good Quality of Life	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good Reputation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Good Value for Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	High Quality Service Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Community Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of our Customers and Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:					
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval <input type="checkbox"/>					
Financial	There are no financial implications at this stage				<input type="checkbox"/>
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph 3.1 to 3.5				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There is provision within existing budget 3.4				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may have potential for income generation				<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - residual risk score -				<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff	There are no additional staffing implications				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: North Northamptonshire Local development Scheme North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2008					
Person Originating Report: Karen Britton: Planning Policy and Conservation Manager					
Date: 28 May 2010					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 21)

Annex 1 to Report to Planning Policy Committee 15th April 2010

Project management of 4 Towns Plan.

Evidence Gathering	Officer	Work Streams	Use of Consultants	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	MB	original SFRA done in 2005-needs updating to comply with PPS 25 and for Examination	modelling required by consultants	£25K estimate		Dec-10 SFRA refreshed to PPS25 standard
	MB	write specification for update/refresh-with EA				
Water cycle strategy-locality issues	MB	review NN study for any locality issues potentially no further work needed	In house review as first stage	none		Sep-10 understanding of whether further work required
Surface Water Management Plan	MB	Include phase 1 scoping work in the SFRA bid Discuss NCC role in SWMP as NCC are designated authority Seek quotations	modelling required	£10K estimate		Dec-11 phase 1 completed
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and 5 year trajectory	JY	completed for 2008/09- maintain annual update SHLAA update residential land availability schedule	In house only in house only	none	Dec 2010	AMR published each Dec
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)-update		Undertaken in 2007-update 2012 only	none needed at present	none	none	none
Housing Needs Survey for each urban area	CH	Only required if more detailed policy requested by Committee yes if further study needed		£20K	by Sept 2010	study completed
Affordable Housing Economic Viability Study	CH	Done on site by site basis as part of applications	checking of viability statements	existing budget	as required	viability checked
Strategic Employment Land Assessment(SELA)	MB	Study now completed as part of NNJPU funding site assessments now required for identified sites	N/A in house	none none	by Sept 2010	assessment completed
Employment Land Review	MB/JY	Atkins study 2005 now updated by SELA site assessment required	in house only		By Sept 2010	assessment completed
Employment Site Assessment	MB	As part of site selection work	In house only	none	by Sept 2010	assessment completed

Evidence Gathering	Officer	Work Streams	Use of Consultants	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
Transport Assessment	NCC EW/MB	NCC to provide initial position statement on known issues ENC to refresh comments on 2008 draft strategy ENC to propose 2 or 3 options for development NCC to test options through modelling NCC to update strategy document ENC and NCC to discuss public transport strategy	NCC	options testing costs unknown	Feb-10 May-10 Jun-10 Jul-10 Jul-10 Mar-10	report to committee
Brownfield Land Action Plan	MB	EMDA/NEL study	In house only	none	Jul-10	report completed
Character of Place in the Built Environment	HB/DR	Analysis of history of place/character	in house only	none	Jul-10	report completed
Landscape Character Assessment-update and locality issues	TD/DR	review current evidence and prepare scoping study, undertake study	In house but with mentoring limited costs	£5K	Oct-10	report completed
Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appropriate)	MB	brief required for technical aspects of work	consultants required	£10K	By Sept 2010	assessment completed
Open Space Strategy (PMP study update)	DR	Prepare project management papers set up project board undertake site survey work analysis of survey work develop strategy	in house only	none	Jan-10 Mar-10 Apr-10 May-10 Jun-10	strategy completed and agreed by PPC
Market towns Regeneration Strategy	EW	Rushden Raunds Irthlingborough	Princes Foundation HCA consultant ?????	EMDA grant HCA grant £50K	end April 2010 Jun-10	report completed work undertaken
Infrastructure Plan	EW	draft up the skeleton of plan discuss with relevant infrastructure providers	In house only	none	Apr-10	presented to WPs
Retail Assessment Study-locality issues	JY/MB	comment on NN retail study and identify further work needed specification for further work on locality issues seek quotations	some market expertise required	£10K	Sep-10	completed

Retail Frontage Assessment	JY/MB	Paper on criteria to be presented to PPC annual retail frontage survey Retail frontage assessment and boundary designation	In house only In house only	none none		May-10 completed Jul-10 completed
Evidence Gathering	Officer	Work Streams	Use of Consultants	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
Biodiversity Action Plan	JY	Wildlife Trust study done in 2009	in house only	none		completed
Sustainable Energy Strategy- locality issues	MB	review the NN energy strategy study consider need for further locality work	In house only	none		May-10 completed
Local Listing	LM	field work completed in 2008	in house only	none		Jun-10 completed
lorry HGV parking	??	North Northamptonshire study completed site assessment required.	in house only	none		Sep-10 completed
Green Infrastructure Plan	EW	strategy prepared by RNRP in October 2009	in house only	none		
Strategic Sports Facilities Framework –locality issues		Study completed by JPU	in house only	none		
Strategic Cultural Strategy- locality issues		Study completed by JPU	in house only	none		
Sustainability Assessment of Preferred Options report	MBJY	review current position with Atkins write scoping note on work required	Mentoring	£10K		Aug-10 completed
Gypsy and traveller site		Study of needs completed. Site assessment needs undertaking	in house only	none		Aug-10 completed
Projects						
Introduction and area portrait	EWKB	review as part of place assessment and visioning		none		Sep-10 approved by WPs
vision and outcomes	EWKB	review in light of visioning and master planning work		none		Sep-10 approved by WPs
Settlement boundaries	MB MB HB	review approach-need for boundaries or criteria report to Planning Policy Committee review individual settlement boundaries if necessary	In house only in house only in house only	none		Jun-10 Approach agreed by PPC Jul-10 Boundaries agreed by WP
Town Centre Boundaries assessment	MB	paper on methodology done in draft submit for consideration to PPC	In house only	none		Apr-10 Agreed by PPC

Site Selection for housing and employment	MB	use SELA with updated employment land availability use SHLAA and residential land availability need SFRA and transport assessment	in house only	none	Sep-11 site in Preferred Options doc
	MB	Prepare sustainability appraisal of sites using methodology established through RNOT plan			Sep-10 agreed by PPC
Project	Officer	Work Streams	Use of Consultants	Potential Costs	Milestones Outputs
Settlement Hierarchy	MB	Hierarchy agreed through the RNOT Plan-carry forward Working parties to review position and agree	in house only	none	May-10 Hierarchy agreed by PPC
Gypsy and traveller requirements	CH	review position on evidence	in house only	none	Sep-10 agreed by PPC
PAS self Assessment toolkit	MB/EW	Item for project team agenda for monthly update enables preparatoin for examination	in house only	none	Jun-11 self assessment completed
Interactive proposals map	MB/DR		in house only	none	Jun-11 proposals maps completed
Community Involvement					
Statement of community involvement	JPU	Refresh the statement develop a community consultation strategy	In house only	none	Jun-10 agreed by PPC Jun-10 agreed by PPC

Notes

WPs refers to the Raunds and 3 Towns Working parties

PPC refers to the Planning Policy Committee