

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 20 September 2010

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: - David Brackenbury (Chairman)

David Bateman

Tony Boto

Michael Finch

Roger Glithero JP

Eloise Lucille

Andy Mercer

Roger Powell

Phillip Stearn

Pam Whiting

152. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2010 were approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following addition to the declarations of interest:

Eloise Lucille All planning policy matters Ward Councillor for Raunds regarding Raunds

153. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Steven North and John Richardson sent apologies.

154. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Personal Interests

Members declared personal interests in the items below as indicated. They remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting when the respective item was considered.

Member	Item	Nature of Interest
David Brackenbury	All planning policy matters regarding Thrapston	Lives in Thrapston
Dudley Hughes	All planning policy matters regarding Raunds	Lives in Raunds and his wife is also a District Councillor
Eloise Lucille	All planning policy matters regarding Raunds	Owns property in Stanwick
Andy Mercer	All planning policy matters regarding Rushden	Resident of Rushden, District Councillor, County Councillor, Rushden Town Councillor
Roger Powell	All planning policy matters regarding Rushden	Lives in Rushden

155. FUNDING FOR SPECIALISTS: FOUR TOWNS PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MASTERPLANS

Further to minute 52 (14 June 2010) the Committee considered a report which sought Member agreement to release funding for specialists to undertake work in support of the preparation of the Four Towns Plan.

It was reported that specialists would need to be engaged for two areas of evidence gathering work:

1. Strategic flood risk assessment, including surface water management plan and water cycle strategy, which it was estimated would cost from £8,000 to £10,000; and
2. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment, which it was estimated would cost from £6,000 to £8,000.

Members noted that both pieces of work would be funded from the existing budget.

The report also sought Member support for match funding to be sought for proposed Masterplans for Irthlingborough and Oundle. However, it was reported that the related proposals had been withdrawn as the funding bid had been unsuccessful. Members commented that given the past and proposed level of development in Oundle and Raunds the Council should find money to do one or both of these Masterplans. It was also noted that Oundle had started the master planning process and was about to consult with residents. Funding would shortly be needed for specialists to carry out detailed work.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the engagement of technical specialists be agreed and funded from the existing budget.
- (2) That the Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the funding that would have been matched to the NNDC bid up to a maximum of £50,000 for the development of one or both of the proposed Masterplans for Irthlingborough and Oundle.

156. BIODIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION

A consultation draft of a Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, prepared by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, was submitted to the Committee for comment. It was highlighted that due to the proposed consultation timescale and lack of subsequent committee meeting during the consultation period, this document was being presented to this Committee prior to it being approved for formal consultation by the Joint Planning Committee (JPC).

The draft document explained how biodiversity should be incorporated into the planning process to ensure that the requirements of legislation and policy were met. It was designed to be used by both applicants and those considering applications. It offered a standardised approach to be followed for all applications and was intended to be used in conjunction with expert ecological assessments, as applicable to each specific case. The document included a clear flow chart of procedures, a biodiversity checklist, a survey calendar and information on the validation process and good practice. If adopted it would provide more detailed guidance for applicants and would also assist Development Control Officers in the determination of applications where biodiversity issues arose.

During discussion the Committee commented on the wording of parts of the document and raised the following issues:

- The glossary of biodiversity needed rewording to cover quality as well as the spectrum of diversity.
- There was no mention of using developed infrastructure which was of value to wildlife, such as bats using lofts.
- What would be the implications of change on microclimates, for example the removal of trees reducing shelter?
- The value of wildlife corridors and the importance of protecting them where they exist needed to be included.
- A survey calendar needed to be included for arthropods (insects) as well as other flora and fauna.
- How would the Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) link to this document? The reference to the HRA needed expanding and the document could require updating at a later date to reflect HRA information once the work had been carried out.

The Chairman urged all Members to take part in the consultation and to encourage other individuals and groups to respond before the proposed consultation deadline of 12 November 2010.

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Planning Services respond to the consultation with the comments made at the meeting and forward any additional comments Members may wish to make before or during the consultation period.

Chairman