

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Date: 27 July 2009

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: - David Brackenbury (Chairman)

Tony Boto
Lisa Costello
Roger Glithero JP
Dudley Hughes JP
Sean Lever

Eloise Lucille
Steven North
Phillip Stearn
Pam Whiting

PART A ITEMS

107. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2009 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

108. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Michael Finch, Andy Mercer, John Richardson and Robin Underwood sent their apologies.

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

110. RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN (RNOTP) - REPRESENTATIONS

Further to Minute 447 (14 April 2009), it was reported that the Inspector's Report, which would be binding on the Council, concluded that the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) had been found to be sound, provided that changes specified in the Report were made.

Members noted that the Inspector had deleted the policies on wind farms (Policy 16) and Parish Plans (Policy 17), made changes to the policy on housing mix (Policy 11) and the affordable housing text and policies (Policies 19 and 20), and revised the Oundle housing and development strategy together with the supporting infrastructure policy (Policy OUN1).

The Chairman commended the work of the officers in bringing the RNOTP to this stage and read from a letter which praised the work of the Council's officers during the examinations process.

During the subsequent debate, the following points, questions and suggestions were made by Members

- The changes made by the external Inspector did not reflect local opinion and negated the work of Members on the original draft
- Considerable changes had been made since the public consultation so it could not be said that the opinions of the communities involved were still reflected
- The binding Inspector's Report took away the Council's decision-making autonomy
- Members should stand up for their constituents
- There was a lack of existing infrastructure in Oundle and in view of the perceived weakness of the redrafted policy OUN1 Members felt that this gave insufficient strength for this to be rectified.
- The plan potentially restricts development in villages
- Adopting the RNOTP would set a precedent for the Four Towns Plan and why put the work in if local views would not be respected
- The legislation might change should there be a change of government at the next general election
- The Council would not have sufficient control over development through the revised RNOTP, therefore decisions might as well be made without a plan being in place, particularly as any decisions that went to appeal would be decided by the Inspectorate in any event
- The likelihood that pre-application work would reduce the number of refusals and enable the Council to work with developers to move developments forward in a mutually agreeable way
- The way forward might possibly be of a plan for the entire district instead of the RNOTP and Four Towns Plans.

In light of the issues raised by Members, the Committee was advised that

- A large percentage of the RNOTP remained unchanged by the Inspector from that previously agreed by the Planning Policy Committee
- The RNOTP Policy OUN1 would require developers to demonstrate that the appropriate infrastructure existed or would exist in Oundle otherwise permission could be refused and supported at appeal through the policy framework
- Developers would still need to comply with the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy
- If the RNOTP was not adopted the Council would
 - be without a plan for the required five year supply of housing
 - have no policy framework through which to control development
 - find it difficult to defend appeals against refused applications and may well incur significant cost awards against the Council for unreasonable behaviour
 - have no policy basis on which to refuse applications for non-allocated sites where their delivery would contribute to the requirement for a 5 year housing land supply
- The RNOTP could be adopted in the interim for Development Control use whilst a new district-wide plan was developed, which could include revisions to policies for the north of the district as part of this process
- There would be a considerable resource implication should Members wish to move towards a district-wide plan

- There could be no guarantee future Inspectors would not take the same approach in terms of policy wording to a district-wide plan
- Any future plan would need to comply with national planning policies and guidance.

A **Recorded Vote** was requested on a motion to **not adopt the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan** the result of which was: -

FOR THE MOTION: Councillors Tony Boto, Lisa Costello, Roger Glithero, Dudley Hughes, Sean Lever, Eloise Lucille, Steven North, Phillip Stearn and Pam Whiting (9)

AGAINST THE MOTION: David Brackenbury (1)

The Motion was declared **CARRIED** and it was

RESOLVED:

That the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan be not adopted.

(Note – The meeting was adjourned for fifteen minutes before the vote was taken).

111. FOUR TOWNS AREA PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Having regard to the decision taken on the previous item, it was

RESOLVED:

That decisions on the preparation of the Four Towns Area Plan and any future area plans be deferred until the next meeting.

112. NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PLACE AND MOVEMENT GUIDE

The Committee received a report on the Northamptonshire Place and Movement (PaM) Guide which replaced the County Council's Design Guide for Residential Roads. The overall aim of the guide was to put well-designed residential streets at the heart of sustainable communities. Members were advised that the PaM should be the principal guidance used by Development Control Officers and Committee Members in considering detailed design proposals in respect of accessibility, highways and parking and that it would form a material consideration in determining planning applications.

Chairman