



Strategic Planning Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee held at Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester on Monday 12 December 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present Councillor Phil Bignell (Chair)
 Councillor Ann Addison (Vice-Chair)
 Councillor Jonathan Harris
 Councillor Rosie Herring
 Councillor Stephen Hibbert
 Councillor David James
 Councillor Charles Manners
 Councillor Ken Pritchard
 Councillor Bob Purser
 Councillor Jake Roberts

Substitute
Members: Councillor Kevin Parker

Also
Present:

Apologies Councillor James Hill
for Councillor Cathrine Russell
Absence: Councillor John Shephard

Officers Suzanne Clear, Majors Team Leader
 Diana Davies, Democratic Services Officer
 Rebecca Grant, Major Projects Officer, Planning Department Daventry
 Shaun Robson, Development Manager
 James Rodger, Development Management Manager
 Adam Walker, Principal Planning Officer

93. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

94. **Minutes**

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee of 14 November 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

95. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair introduced and welcomed the Development Manager and made the following announcements:

1. Members of the public were permitted to film, broadcast, and report on the meeting, subject to the efficient running of the meeting not being affected.
2. Members of the public were requested not to call out during the Committee's discussions on any item.
3. There were no planned fire drills so in the event of an alarm sounding, evacuation instructions would be given by officers.
4. That it be requested that any devices be switched off or onto silent mode.

96. **WNN/2021/0466 Land North of Bedford Road**

Principal Planning Officer outlined the application and provided a presentation which included plans and photographs from various vantage points of the proposed site.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Principal Planning Officer advised that the outline application indicated the principle of development of up to 24,000 sqm and the detail and layout of the units would be seen at the reserved matter stage. Clarification was provided regarding the percentages of class types of the units that were proposed. Whilst the site had previously been considered a, potential site for an employment allocation in the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2, it had not been taken forward for ecological reasons, - including the potential impact on the adjacent Special Protection Area and the proximity to Great Houghton and its designated heritage assets. The applicant had made adjustments to the application, in the consultation period, to mitigate any potential impact. Natural England had provided a no objection response.

The development site was considered to join the existing employment area. Whilst the site had not been allocated as land for employment use in the Local Plan it did not preclude it being considered as a 'windfall site'.

The National Highways and the Local Highway Authority had considered the transport assessment and had raised no objections.

The Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA) provided the latest information, built on best available data and provided officers and members guidance when making their decisions.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Development Manager advised that the Conservation Area Officer's comments that the application would cause 'less than substantial harm' had triggered the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) test, which the officers had applied.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Planning Solicitor considered that the risk of an appeal being upheld against the West Northants Council's emerging Local Plan was unlikely.

Councillor Bignell invited Councillor Larratt, Ward Member for Nene Valley to address the Committee, in objection to the application. He brought Members' attention to the comprehensive representation submitted on behalf of Great Houghton Parish Council in objection to the application and outlined the salient points of the representation.

Jon Kirby, the agent, addressed the Committee in support of the application. The application was a result of 18 months of consultation with planning officers and had evolved to address any initial concerns. The application would provide employment space in line with the Councils Employment Land Needs Assessment. It was considered that the consultees had raised no substantial objections.

Members considered the report and committee updates and the representations made by the speakers and discussed the allocation of employment space in line with the Council's Local Plan's and the emerging Local Plan Part 2 Policies, the application of the HENA, the Joint Core Strategy and the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan. Members raised concerns regarding the impact of the application on the ecology, the heritage site, highways, and the designated Special Protection Area, the Site of Special Scientific Interest and the amenity of the village.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Principal Planning Officer further advised that employment allocations were identified in the Local Plan Part 2 and provision was made to consider other sites to meet the need, for B2 and B8 units. The Councils own evidence indicated that there was a need for the employment sites and the HENA had been applied, with reasonable adjustments to reflect the social and economic changes since inception.

As the NPPF had been triggered by the Conservation Area Officers response it had then become a planning judgement. Officers considered that the benefits of the site would outweigh any harm.

The use of the term green field in the report had referred to undeveloped land not a designation of a 'Green Field' site.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Development Manager further advised that neither the National Highways Authority, or the Local Highways Authority had raised objections to the application. The 1997 Local Plan designated the site as Greenspace, although the relevant policy in the plan had not been saved. It was also not designated as such in the emerging Local Plan Part 2. Contrary to Policy E9 of the Northampton Local Plan 1997 and Policy S11 of the West Northants Joint Core Strategy.

Cllr James proposed the application be approved. The proposition, having no seconder, failed.

Councillor Pritchard proposed, that the application be refused because, it was outside the boundary of the allocated employment site of Brackmills, as it adversely affected the amenity of Great Houghton, as it was not an allocated site within the Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This was seconded by Councillor Purser and

on being put to the meeting was declared carried with 11 votes in favour and 1 against.

Resolved:

That the application be refused for the following reasons:

1. The site is a Greenfield site that lies outside of the established industrial area. The site's location and the scale of employment land proposed are such that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the local landscape character through the erosion of the openness that currently exists between the Principal Urban Area of Northampton and the villages of Great Houghton and Little Houghton. The proposed development would represent a substantial encroachment into a visually exposed landscape and the resultant harm to the character and visual amenity of the area could not be mitigated to an acceptable degree. The application is therefore contrary to Saved Policies E9 and E20 of the Northampton Local Plan 1997, Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policy GHNDP1 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 2 of the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed development would result in the loss of open land that contributes towards the semi-rural setting of the villages of Great Houghton and Little Houghton. The loss of this open land combined with the scale of the proposed development and the proximity of the site to these villages would harm the setting of the Great Houghton and Little Houghton Conservation Areas and listed buildings contained therein. This harm would not be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal. The application is therefore contrary to Policy E26 of the Northampton Local Plan 1997, Policies BN5 and S11 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, Policies GHNDP1, GHNDP2 and GHNDP6 of the Great Houghton Neighbourhood Plan, Policy 31 of the emerging Northampton Local Plan Part 2, Policies HE1, H5 and H6 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

97. **WNS/2022/1954/MAR Northampton West Sustainable Urban Extension Sandy Lane Harpole**

The Major Projects Officer outlined the application and provided a presentation which included maps and photographs from various vantage points of the proposed site.

In response to Member's enquiries, the Major Projects Officer advised that a number of gardens, smaller than the minimum of 9 metres, had been agreed at Committee for the previous reserved matters application. The application before Members only related to updated house types to ensure the development was in accordance with the revised Design Code. There was no requirement for bungalows on the site.

Members considered the report and presentation.

Councillor Parker proposed the application be approved, the proposition was seconded by Councillor James and on being put to the meeting was declared carried unanimously

Resolved:

That the Head of Planning Delivery for Planning and Environment be given delegated powers to grant permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.

98. **Urgent Business**

There were not items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3.37 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____