



Planning Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held at The Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall, Northampton on Tuesday 28 June 2022 at 6.00 pm.

Present Councillor Rebecca Breese (Chair)

Councillor Adam Brown
Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Kevin Parker
Councillor Ann Addison

Apologies for
Absence: Councillor Matt Golby
 Councillor Phil Bignell
 Councillor Cathrine Russell

Officers: Richard Wood (Interim Head of Planning Policy and Climate Change)
 Alan Munn (Planning Policy and Conservation Manager)
 Paul Everard (Planning Policy and Heritage Manager)
 Colin Staves (Principal Spatial Planner)
 Anna Wilson (Heritage Policy Assistant)
 Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

24. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bignell, Golby, and Russell. Councillor Addison attended as a substitute for Councillor Bignell.

25. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest advised by Members.

26. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2022 and 26th April 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

27. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Colin Walker, Interim Assistant Director of Planning and Development Control, to the meeting.

The Chair announced that there 2 requests to address the Committee:

- John Harris - Item 5
- Brenda Stewart - Item 11

The legal advisor for the meeting, Surinder Atkhar, was in attendance via MS Teams.

28. Cottesbrooke Conservation Area

The Heritage Policy Assistant presented the report which sought approval for the adoption of the conservation area boundary, the adoption of the Cottesbrooke Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as a supplementary planning document, the inclusion of buildings and sites on the Local List, and initial proposals for an Article 4(1) Direction, which would be subject to a separate consultation at a later date. The report and appendices detailed how the statutory consultation was undertaken, the results of the consultation and the proposed resulting actions.

John Harris, Chair of Cottesbrooke Parish Meeting, addressed the Committee and stated that the parish meeting felt that its representations had been largely disregarded, particularly with regards to the proposed boundary extension to include areas of woodland. He noted that clause 73 of Historic England's Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management document stated that Conservation Area designation is not generally an appropriate means of protecting the wider landscape, and felt that Cottesbrooke was subject to unnecessary micromanagement compared to other villages in the area.

In response to questions, the Committee were advised that areas may be included in a Conservation Area if they were deemed as having a positive visual impact; this was the case for area BA3. Area BA4 consisted of several spinneys dating back to the Tithe Map (1839) and also of archaeological interest, containing the remains of a lodge within the woodland. BA5 was an area of woodland that was also in existence at the time of the Tithe Map and was considered archaeologically significant. The Committee heard that at the time of making the conservation area in 2000, a decision was made to include only the registered park and garden boundary in the Conservation Area. There was currently a woodland management plan in place for area BA3; if this was subject to change upon expiry, the area's addition to the Conservation Area would give more weight to its protection. In planning policy terms, the area was considered open countryside and so standard policy protections in respect of open countryside would apply. BA3's inclusion in the Conservation Area would add a level of control over the trees; it would not prevent them from ever being felled but anyone wanting to carry out work on them or fell them would have to go through the Council's application process. It would also give the Council the opportunity to consider Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) or provide some other element of control.

Members commented that the area was managed well currently by outside bodies and that the inclusion of additional woodland within the proposed extension of the Conservation Area was unnecessary.

With advice from the Local Strategy Manager, it was proposed that the recommendations within the report be agreed with the exclusion of areas BA3, BA4 and BA5 contained in the Conservation Area boundary at Appendix C of the report.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed that the conservation area boundary as set out in Appendix C of the report, amended to exclude areas BA3, BA4 and BA5 as identified in Figure 4 of the consultation draft be designated and supersede the designation that was made in 2000.
- b) Agreed that the proposed changes to the Cottesbrooke Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan in response to representations, as set out in Appendices A and B of the report be approved, amended to exclude areas BA3, BA4 and BA5 as identified in Figure 4 of the consultation draft and consequential changes to the text in the Appraisal and Management Plan and the schedule of responses and actions. The precise wording of these changes to be agreed with the Portfolio holder for Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs.
- c) Agreed that further minor editorial changes be made to the Cottesbrooke Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan including to reflect that the document be in its final adopted form.
- d) Agreed that the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, as amended in a) and b) for Cottesbrooke be adopted as a supplementary planning document.
- e) Agreed the Local List entries for Cottesbrooke set out in Appendix D of the report.
- f) Agreed that an Article 4(1) for Cottesbrooke in accordance with the proposals in the conservation area appraisal and management plan be made subject to consultation (Appendix E of the report).

29. **Canons Ashby Conservation Area**

The Heritage Policy Assistant presented the report which sought approval for the adoption of the conservation area boundary as set out in Appendix B of the report, the adoption of the Canons Ashby Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan as a supplementary planning document (SPD), the inclusion of 5 buildings on the Local List, and initial proposals for an Article 4(1) Direction, which would be subject to a separate consultation later. The report and appendices also detailed of how the statutory consultation was undertaken, and the results of the consultation.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed that the conservation area boundary as set out in Appendix B of the report be designated and supersede the designation that was made in 1997.
- b) Agreed that delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to make further minor editorial changes to the Canons Ashby Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan to address any factual or typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form.
- c) Agreed that the conservation area appraisal and management plan for Canons Ashby be adopted as a supplementary planning document.

- d) Agreed the Local List entries for Canons Ashby set out in Appendix C of the report.
- e) Agreed that an Article 4(1) for Canons Ashby in accordance with the proposals in the conservation area appraisal and management plan be made subject to consultation (Appendix D of the report).

30. **Northampton Housing Action Plan**

The Planning Policy and Heritage Manager presented the report which sought approval of the contents of the Northampton Housing Action Plan and its publication on the Council's website in line with Government requirements. It was reported that on 14th January 2022, the Government published its latest results for the housing delivery test for the three years ending April 2021. Northampton was required to deliver 2029 dwellings over the three-year period, but managed to deliver only 1826 dwellings, 90% of the required number. Consequently, the Council was required to publish a Housing Action Plan for Northampton which would demonstrate what actions to take to ensure that housing delivery would meet the 95% target required by the Government. The report provided explanations as to why housing delivery was below 95% and suggested actions which included an outline of the opportunities presented by the creation of West Northamptonshire Council to replace the previous sovereign councils, opportunities in terms of shared resources, the appointment of new recruits and the potential to consider planning performance agreements form part of the actions to help improve housing delivery rates in Northampton. Also highlighted was the role that the Regeneration team played in delivering housing as part of the wider regeneration schemes.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that in regard to market conditions, development had been popular in rural areas in recent years and so Northampton had seemed less attractive to developers than smaller towns and villages in the Daventry and South Northamptonshire areas. It was also noted that building costs had increased significantly in recent years and viability levels had been reduced in urban and brownfield sites. The Developers' Forum was useful for gathering intelligence in terms of planning blockages and viability and was open to all developers. The Interim Director for Planning and Development Control was keen for the Planning Department to use data and data sets to further understand the performance of the housing market, to help the Council work with developers to ensure that the market functioned in a positive, rather than a reactive way. It was suggested that monitoring of sites of 50 or more units should take place on a quarterly basis, rather than bi-annually as recommended in the report. Increased vacancies and legacy issues were a factor in the housing delivery target not being met and work was underway to move forwards in terms of structure and internal process efficiency. It was noted that staff vacancies were a national issue and not specific to West Northamptonshire. It was explained that housing requirements within the 3 existing Local Plans were set out in West Northamptonshire Joint Strategy, which was live until 2029.

RESOLVED:

1. The Planning Policy Committee approved the Housing Action Plan for publication on the Council's website, in line with Government requirements,

subject to paragraphs 6.9 and 7.2 and Table 6 being amended to state that monitoring of sites of 50 or more units will be undertaken four times a year.

31. Kilsby Review Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Senior Planning Policy Officer presented the report which sought the Committee's consideration of the recommendations of the independent Examiner, including recommended policy changes, following the examination of the Kilsby Review Neighbourhood Development Plan (Kilsby Review NDP).

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Noted and welcomed the progress in making the Kilsby Review NDP by the Kilsby community.
- b) Accepted the Examiner's recommended modifications in respect of the Kilsby Review NDP.
- c) Approved the proposed decision statement to "make" the Kilsby Review NDP set out in Appendix 1 of the report, subject to recommendation b) and any necessary factual alterations.
- d) Agreed that on being "made", the Kilsby Review NDP will replace the Kilsby NDP which was made in 2016.
- e) Agreed that delegated authority be given to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to make further minor editorial changes to the Kilsby Review NDP to address any factual and typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form.

32. North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan

The Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy presented the report which sought Members' consideration to a response to the consultation on the 'Scope and Issues' for the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that communications would go out to communities once the consultations were live. A full plan would follow the consultation which would detail how much of a housing "buffer" NNC would have to provide to count for additional and existing sites in the pipeline.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed the suggested response to the consultation from North Northamptonshire Council as set out in paragraph 5.8 of the report.

33. Community Infrastructure Levy - Discretionary Relief for Social Housing

The Interim Head of Planning Policy and Climate Change presented the report which sought approval to amend the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regimes in place

across West Northamptonshire to provide for discretionary Social Housing Relief in respect of Discounted Market Sale housing.

Members voiced their support for the scheme and thanked officers for their work.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed that the Community Infrastructure Levy regimes in place for West Northamptonshire be amended to include Discretionary Social Housing Relief for Discounted Market Sale housing.

34. **South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 - Employment Allocations Supplementary Planning Document**

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager presented the report which sought to seek Members' approval of the contents of the draft Employment Allocations Supplementary Planning Document and their agreement to undertake public consultation on the SPD. A 4th recommendation was proposed in respect of the language used regarding the definition of larger units in the document, specifically paragraph 3.20 and the last sentence of page 38 of the report.

Brenda Stewart, on behalf of Save Towcester Now, addressed the Committee and stated that she supported development of SMEs but concerns regarding traffic and visual impacts had not been addressed. She requested that medium units be capped at 5,000 square metres and that all references to large units be removed from the document. Ms Stewart raised concern around the cumulative impact of developments on local highway systems.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager advised that the SPD spoke to "small" and "medium" units, so naturally "large" sat above medium. The SPD referenced large units using more cautious language (i.e., "in exceptional circumstances"). He further advised that wording could be included in reference to the cumulative impact on transport and noted that consideration of cumulative impacts on transport was a requirement in the National Planning Practice Guidance. He further noted that the Cosgrove and Old Stratford development was greater in scale than 5,000 square metres and the document used that in assessment of its parameters.

Members commented that some of the wording was weak; on page 62 where it stated, "Where possible contribute to the area's wider green network, including habitat corridors and linkages." It was felt that the wording should be stronger. It was also felt that the SPD should be aiming for net-zero rather than "pushing for" as it currently stated. Regarding modal shift, it was advised that there were policies within the Joint Core Strategy and the Part 2 Local Plan would include transport policies. The inclusion of Junction 15 of the M1 in the contextual consideration for the Old Stratford Gateway could be explored with consultants but it was noted that it was similar to Junction 15A in terms of scale. Consultation was scheduled to begin at the end of the week commencing 4th July 2022.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed the content of the draft South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 – Employment Allocations Supplementary Planning Document, subject to changes being made to paragraph 3.2 to include a fuller extract from the local plan; paragraph 3.20 and the last sentence of page 38 to refer to exceptional circumstances for the consideration of larger units; and the inclusion of a new section following paragraph 1.27 to refer to cumulative impacts. The precise wording of these changes to be agreed with the Portfolio holder for Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs.
- b) Agreed that the Council should undertake a six-week public consultation on the document.
- c) Delegated authority to the Interim Head of Planning and Climate Change Policy to undertake minor editorial changes to the draft SPD including those in respect of paragraphs 1.14-1.22 and the details of the public consultation.

35. Updated West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme

The Planning Policy & Heritage Manager presented the report which sought approval for an updated Local Development Scheme which set out a timetable for local plan preparation.

Members discussed the report.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy the Committee:

- a) Approved the updated West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme (Appendix A of the report) which is to be brought into effect upon the expiry of the call-in period for Planning Policy Committee decisions.
- b) Delegated to the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs, authority to make minor editorial and presentational changes to the Local Development Scheme in its final published form.

36. Northampton Local Plan Part 2: Proposed Modifications Consultation

The Planning Policy and Heritage Manager presented the report which sought approval on the contents of the Proposed Modifications to the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 comprising the Main Modifications, Additional Modifications and changes to the Policies Map as shown in Appendices A, B and C of the report, and their release for public consultation.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that in relation to minimum space standards, evidence-based work was undertaken that looked at 100 residential dwelling planning applications and the Inspector view was that many dwellings fell

below nationally described space standards, so it could not be justified in West Northamptonshire. It was explained that the nationally described standards could only be applied if they could be justified at a local level. Policy 3 had been absorbed by Policy 2, and Policy 5 made reference to sustainability. It was explained that the allocation for a railway line between Northampton and Market Harborough still existed on the site and was included in Policy 34 due to possible investigation for use in a future plan review. It was explained that it was not a good time to look to introduce further evidence in respect of minimum space standards as the entire Local Plan process could be set back several stages.

The Committee resolved to write a letter to the Inspector and express their dissatisfaction at the omission of adoption of nationally described space standards and the impact it would have on local residents.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Approved the Proposed Main Modifications to the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 for consultation
- b) Approved the Proposed Additional Modifications to the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 for consultation subject to the inclusion of a further additional modification deleting reference from paragraph 13.7 to 'potential transport links to the north via the route of the former Northampton to Market Harborough Railway'
- c) Approved the Proposed Changes to the Policy Map for consultation
- d) Delegated to the Assistant Director: Growth, Climate and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs, authority to make minor editorial and presentational changes to the consultation documents in their final published form

37. West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation

The Principal Spatial Planner presented the report which sought the Committee's consideration of the responses received to the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan: Spatial Options Consultation

Paper, the time period covered by the Strategic Plan in the light of the consultation responses and changing circumstances, and the next steps in the preparation of the Strategic Plan. It was noted that there were a number of incomplete responses to the options consultation; the number of complete responses was 1739, and 244 responses received to the call for sites.

In response to questions, the Committee heard that the process for assessing new sites was the same as the original process. A number of submissions were not new sites but providing new information on sites that had already been assessed. The change to 2041 did have an implication of reducing the overall quantity of homes that the plan would be providing for. An update/addendum to the housing and economic needs assessment would be required in the future to ascertain the implications for the revised plan period.

Members discussed the report and commented that there had been significant public feedback and it was hoped that this would be taken on board at the next stage.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Noted the responses received to the spatial options consultation as summarised in appendix 1 of the report and confirmed that they should be fully considered in the preparation of the draft plan for public consultation.
- b) Confirmed that the end date of the plan-period to be covered by the WNSP be reduced from 2050 to 2041
- c) Agreed the next steps in the preparation of the WNSP as set out in paras 5.15 and 5.16 of the report.

38. **Urgent Business**

39. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The meeting closed at 8.04 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____