



Planning Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held at on Tuesday 25 April 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Matt Golby (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Kevin Parker

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Wendy Randall
Councillor Cathrine Russell

Officers:

Stephanie Gibrat (Assistant Director – Planning and Development)
Richard Wood (Interim Head of Planning Policy)
Colin Staves (Principal Spatial Planner)
Theresa Boyd (Planning Solicitor)
Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

60. **Declarations of Interest**

None advised.

61. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th February 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

62. **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's announcements on this occasion.

63. **Updated West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme**

The Principal Spatial Planner presented the report which sought the Committee's approval for an updated Local Development Scheme which sets out a timetable for local plan preparation. The West Northamptonshire LDS was updated in November

2022. Members were now asked to consider a proposed change to the title and scope of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) which would necessitate a further update to the LDS.

Members discussed the report, and the following points were raised:

- There was an assurance from officers that the best evidence possible would be provided to justify policies.
- The PAS (Planning Advisory Service) was providing support to the Council in respect of project planning and evidence gathering.
- The Local Plans for the predecessor authorities would fall away upon the adoption of the West Northamptonshire Local Plan.
- Minerals and waste was part of the shared service with North Northamptonshire Council; the minerals and waste team was based in North Northamptonshire and WNC had a contractual arrangement for the service.
- The aim to consult on the draft plan in October 2023 was ambitious, but officers were keen to progress the plan and considered it achievable.
- Progress on the local plan was reported to the Transformation Board and regular progress updates would be provided at Cabient. It was suggested that regular updates also be brought to the Planning Policy Committee.
- The new Local Plan plan would have to take a view as to how the 5-year land supply should be calculated, this was currently a work in progress.
- Delaying the Local Plan came with risks; The PAS advised that local authorities seen to publicly delay their local plans put themselves at risk of speculative applications.
- This was a good opportunity to ensure that the plan was aligned to the Council's corporate objectives and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- It was suggested that more should be done to communicate and engage with residents at the consultation stage.
- Draft allocations would be included in the Regulation 18 consultation; the Council had scope to make significant changes from the draft plan at that time. Additional sites could be considered at that stage.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy 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: Planning, 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.

64. **Response to Government consultations on proposed changes to the Planning System**

The Interim Head of Planning Policy presented the report which sought Members' consideration of suggested responses to the current Government consultations on

increases in planning fees and improving capacity, capability and performance in local planning authorities, and permitted development rights: supporting temporary recreational campsites, renewable energy and film-making consultation. It was advised that further to the report, suggested responses had been provided to 2 additional questions relating to planning performance agreements and annual indexation of planning fees.

The Committee discussed the report, and the following points were raised:

- The Government recognised that fees need to go up due to the shortfall in applications received by local authorities and the cost of running the planning service and wanted to improve performance off the back of increased fees. There would be various performance measures that local authorities would have to report on.
- Some Members felt that the 25% fee increase for minor applications seemed very high.
- Some Members felt that the responses relating to permitted development rights in conservation areas regarding domestic solar panel installation should be changed to affirmative responses which would support the move to clean, green energy.
- It was not considered the best use of planners' time to be taking a view on whether there were sufficient showers on a campsite.
- It was suggested that fees be reduced or waived for applications relating specifically to sustainable improvement

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed the suggested response to the consultations on proposed changes to the planning system as set out in Appendices A and B of the report subject to the following changes:

In appendix A;

a note be added that applications for domestic solar energy installations should not be subject to a charge, a response be added to Question 5 to express support for Planning Performance Agreements and a response be added to question 6 to express support for annual indexation of planning fees.

In appendix B:

responses be amended to express support for the permitted development rights changes where they relate to solar panels on roofs.

65. Urgent Business

None advised.

The meeting closed at 7.04 pm

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Chair: _____

Date: _____