



Planning Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held at The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday 26 June 2023 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Rebecca Breese (Chair)
Councillor Matt Golby (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown
Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Bob Purser
Councillor Cathrine Russell

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Jamie Lane

Officers:

Richard Wood (Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services)
Paul Everard (Planning Policy and Heritage Manager)
Chris Stopford (Head of Private Sector Housing)
Amanda Jacobs (Principal Planning Policy Officer)
Rebecca Martin (CIL Officer)
Theresa Boyd (Planning Solicitor)
Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

72. **Declarations of Interest**

None advised.

73. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

74. **Chair's Announcements**

There were no Chair's Announcements on this occasion.

75. **Nether Heyford Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan**

The Principal Planning Policy Officer presented the report which sought consideration of the recommendations of the Independent Examiner, following examination of the Nether Heyford Neighbourhood Development Plan (NHNDP), and to seek approval to put the plan to referendum. Following the submission of the NHNDP to West

Northamptonshire Council in December 2022, the plan was published for formal Regulation 16 consultation which ran from 13 December 2022 to 7 February 2023. 12 responses to the consultation were received. A key issue raised was the proposal to allocate land of Bugbrooke Road for education and community uses with some limited housing. West Northamptonshire Assets raised an objection to the proposal due to insufficient evidence of an educational need and a lack of discussion with the Parish Council. West Northamptonshire Infrastructure raised similar concerns. Subsequently, the Independent Examiner recommended that policy H2 parts A and B be removed from the plan. They also proposed that policy BE6 be removed from the plan. Other minor changes and conditions were included in Appendix A of the report, and it was recommended that the NHNDP go to referendum on 7th September 2023.

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- Nether Heyford Parish Council were commended on their work towards bringing the NHNDP to fruition.
- The most recently adopted local plans always took precedence over previously adopted plans.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Noted and welcomed the significant progress in making the NHNDP by Nether Heyford Parish Council.
- b) Accepted the Examiner's recommended modifications in respect of the NHNDP.
- c) Accepted the Examiner's recommendation that the NHNDP, as modified in accordance with recommendation (b) above, should proceed to a referendum of voters within Nether Heyford Parish.
- d) Approved the proposed decision statement set out in Appendix 1 of the report, subject to recommendations (b) and (c) above and any necessary factual alterations.
- 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 NHNDP to address any factual and typographical errors and to reflect the fact that the document will be in its intended final form.
- f) Agreed that the costs of the referendum be met from the existing budget for neighbourhood planning.

76. Response to Government consultation on the Infrastructure Levy

The CIL Officer presented the report to the Committee which asked members to consider suggested responses to the current Government consultations on technical aspects of the design of the Infrastructure Levy. It was noted that the consultation response had already been submitted, however a revised response could be submitted following discussion at the meeting.

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- Viability was limited within schemes; there was never enough money to do everything that the Council would like to do.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Agreed the suggested response to the consultations on proposed changes to the existing developer contributions system.

77. Government consultation on the introduction of a use class for short term lets and associated permitted development rights

The Planning Policy and Heritage Manager presented the report which sought the Committee's endorsement of the provision response to the Government's consultation on the introduction of a use class for short-term lets and associated permitted development rights. The suggested response was attached at Appendix A in which officers indicated support for the idea of a new use class C5 and agreed with the proposals for permitted development rights.

The Head of Private Sector Housing added that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched a similar consultation at the same time, relating to a proposed registration scheme for short-term lets in England. The suggested responses were attached at Appendix B of the report and officers were in agreement with the proposals.

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- Regarding potential issues with the new use class, it was explained that until there was evidence to show that it was an issue, it was not considered necessary to prevent the change of use from taking place.
- It was noted that there was some evidence that AirBNB properties were being used to circumvent HMO regulations.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Endorsed the provisional consultation responses sent by the officers to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

78. HMO Member Working Group

The Head of Private Sector Housing presented the report which provided a summary of the work of the HMO Working Group and made recommendations for the implementation of an Action Plan for officers to progress. The Planning Policy Committee resolved to establish the Working Group at its meeting on 16 December 2021 to carry out an investigation into the rules and best practice relating to HMOs, their impact on the local community, and to make recommendations for the future operation of the rules concerning HMOs. The Working Group heard from local residents representing Northampton HMO Action Group and Ward Councillors in seeking to understand the perceived community impact of HMOs, along with representatives from the Northampton Student Landlord Network. A summary of the

current HMO position across West Northamptonshire was contained within the report, and after hearing from local residents and community groups regarding their consideration of the impact of HMOs on their communities, the issues included:

- The increasing prevalence of unlicensed HMOs in their communities
- HMO licensing issues, including general management of properties, litter and waste generated by licensed HMOs, and a perception of a low level of enforcement activity by the Council
- Planning issues, including an increasing prevalence of properties without the necessary planning consent, and a perception of a low level of enforcement by the Council
- Concerns that when applying the 10% in a 50m radius SPD that not all HMOs were being identified, and particularly that suspected HMOs should be included in the assessment
- General issues regarding parking in those streets that have a high density of HMOs given the number of vehicles associated with the properties
- General issues of crime and antisocial behaviour associated with HMO style properties
- Loss of family homes due to the increasing number of properties being bought and converted to HMO style properties

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- Members of the Working Group were thanked for their contributions.
- There was clear demand for HMOs as evidenced by their prevalence and the effects must be considered if the supply was removed.
- The university would not deliver 100% housing for its students; there must be a private supply of housing for them.
- The intense challenges around HMOs were noted; members would like to see an update on any progress in the future.
- There was concern around “incremental increased” in existing HMOs and around unlicensed HMOs.
- The evidence base that informed the current Local Plan HMO policies was undertaken by Loughborough University and was now 5 years old; this work would be updated.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Endorsed the work of the Member Working Group in progressing their recommendation of 16th December 2021
- b) Provided additional comments, and recommended to Cabinet the approval of the Action Plan, for implementation by Officers of the Council as identified on the Action Plan, subject to separate business cases as identified in the Action Plan
- c) Thanked the Members of the working group for their activities, and stood down the HMO Member working group.

None advised.

The meeting closed at 6.54 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____