



Planning Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held at The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Matt Golby (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown
Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Jonathan Harris
Councillor Jamie Lane
Councillor Bob Purser

Substitute Members:

Councillor Kevin Parker

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Phil Bignell
Councillor Cathrine Russell

Officers:

Richard Wood (Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services)
Alan Munn (Planning Policy Team Leader)
Theresa Boyd (Planning Solicitor)
Ed Bostock (Democratic Services Officer)

102. **Declarations of Interest**

None advised.

103. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

104. **Chair's Announcements**

None advised.

105. **West Northamptonshire Local Plan - Approval to consult on a draft plan**

Graham Ferrie addressed the Committee on behalf of Tiffield Parish Council. He asked that the Plan repair some of the damage that the South Northamptonshire Local Plan part 2 had done to Towcester and its surrounding areas. The Plan needed

to include some tangible actions to help the village. Mr Ferrie believed that the Council had squandered some of its land; there was no shortage of minimum wage employment in the area, and he noted that economic benefits did not accrue in West Northamptonshire since employers in the AL1 and AL3 sites were offshore companies. He suggested that developments such as those in Silverstone would generate more robust growth.

The Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services and the Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report which sought approval to consult on the Regulation 18 Version of the West Northamptonshire Local Plan (WNLDP).

Members discussed the report and the following points were raised:

- A slippage contingency of 1,000 units had been built into the draft Plan; development activity was low at the time that previous plans were developed but there were more active sites now and there was more certainty around delivery.
- Concern was raised regarding affordable housing targets; the report indicated that there was a need of 1,800 affordable units per annum (83% of all need) to meet targets. It was hoped that if during consultation officers would look at other mechanisms to deliver more affordable housing.
- The South Northamptonshire Employment Sites Allocations Development Brief SPD was adopted in October 2022 and written into policy. A criteria of each AL site carried over into the draft Plan required demonstration of compliance with the SPD. Some text could be added before Policy T5 to bring potential applicants' attention to the SPD.
- There were examples of other local authorities that had gone further, for example around energy use in new-build homes. The NPPF was clear about the need to move towards lower energy consumption, so the Council had the opportunity to push harder for it in the Plan. A recent case at West Oxford District Council was noted where the council had their net zero requirements pushed back by the Inspector and the High Court overruled the decision. Officers confirmed that they were happy to look at amending the policy for the Regulation 18 consultation.
- Officers were in the process of finalising the procurement of a new study in relation to HMOs which would be undertaken in the coming months; it would feed into the consultation taking place at the end of the year.
- It was noted that the "usual suspects" attended most of the Local Plan briefings and member workshops. Councillors had a role to play in communicating progress on the Plan to constituents, partners and stakeholders.
- An Adopted Statement of Community Involvement and communications plan set out levels of public engagement; this would entail 8 weeks of public consultation, social media adverts, Youth Forum sessions, roadshows across the district, including Moulton, Wootton, Daventry, and Brackley, and further member engagement, including attending parish forums and other similar engagements.
- There would be the opportunity for an experienced examiner from the Planning Inspectorate to independently review the draft Plan at the right time.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Policy Committee:

- a) Recommended to Full Council that the draft West Northamptonshire Local Plan (Appendix A of the report) be issued for public consultation in accordance with the requirements set out in the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, with amendments to Policy PL1 and supporting text to more fully explain how proposals for all residential development are to include an energy statement demonstrating how they will contribute to net zero carbon development, and additional explanatory text relating to the employment sites in the former south area to explain how the Supplementary Planning Document will be applied in decision making.
- b) Recommended to Full Council that a call for sites to include sites to meet the needs identified in the West Northamptonshire Council Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (2022-2037) be undertaken as part of the public consultation.
- c) Recommended to Full Council that it delegates to the Head of Planning Policy and Specialist Services authority to make minor editorial and presentational changes to the draft Local Plan and the policies map prior to the consultation commencing.

106. **Urgent Business**

None advised.

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____