



Report of Councillor Rebecca Breese Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs

23rd September 2021

Planning Policy

Progress has been made on the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. A paper on possible options to accommodate strategic housing and employment growth was presented to Cabinet on 14th September. Preparations are now underway for consultation and engagement on that paper, due to start in October.

There will be an all member briefing on the proposed Spatial Strategy Consultation imminently.

Cabinet also considered papers on proposals to designate a new conservation area at Spratton and update the conservation area designation in Hellidon (both in Daventry area), following consultation earlier in the year. Cabinet also considered proposals to make some immediate Article 4 directions in the villages of Flore, Weedon, Everdon, Little Everdon, Staverton, Kilsby, Pitsford and Welford.

Three neighbourhood plans are currently being examined, Clipston and Overstone in Daventry area and Hackleton in South area. Consultation has started on the submission version of Great Houghton neighbourhood plan in Northampton.

The Policy team is continuing preparations for the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 examination in Public, with Hearings most likely scheduled for the autumn. It has been agreed that the Hearings will be held physically but preparations will also be made for virtual Hearings should that prove necessary.

Development Management & Enforcement

Planning application and Enforcement caseloads continue to be very high, and we are taking steps to recruit to vacant posts to reduce the backlog of work. We continue to look at new ways to improve our processes, efficiency and responsiveness. Over the coming months we will see improvements and service developments that acknowledge some of the challenges we have faced in providing the service we would like to offer.

A harmonised Enforcement Policy for the three Local Plan Areas has been drafted and will be coming to Cabinet in October. This will provide a clear framework for response times, investigation and actions for possible planning breaches. There will be a central portal on the WNC website for the public and members to report suspected breaches of planning law.

The administration of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy money continues to be a challenge, and it is intended that this can be addressed by the ongoing review of the Council's Constitution and in developing a more focused and responsive process.

**Councillor Rebecca Breese
Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment & Rural Affairs**