

Planning Policy

Following the examination into the Northampton Part 2 plan in November 2021, the Inspectors have sent a note to the Council setting out their initial findings. A Council response to the note has been sent to the inspectors. We now await further correspondence from them. Some modifications are being made to the plan in accordance with the Inspectors request and we are looking to adopt the plan later this year.

Approximately 2,000 comments were made on the consultation on the Strategic Plan options. These are being analysed, and a report on the key issues arising from the consultation will be reported to Planning Policy Committee. The number of consultation responses exceeds expectations and the need to log and consider these responses has required extra resource to be applied and resulted in a delay in proceeding to the next phase of plan development by some weeks.

Consultation is currently underway on the Conservation Area appraisal for Canons Ashby.

A Mitigation Strategy for the Gravel Pits Special Protection Area was adopted at Policy Committee in March. This requires financial contributions from developers to provide measures to protect internationally important birds, such as wardening, fencing and information boards.

Following a decision at Policy Committee in March the Neighbourhood plan for Great Houghton will proceed to a referendum on 5th May.

We have also commissioned the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance to assist with the determination of employment sites in the South Northants area providing more clarity to the policies included in the Local Plan.

Development Management and Enforcement

Planning application and Enforcement caseloads continue to be very high, and we are taking steps to recruit to vacant posts and also bringing in agency staff to reduce the backlog of work. We are at the early stages of transformation of the service looking at structures and ways of working so that it feels and functions as one team rather than three separate ones. We are going through the approval process of delivering a single planning software system across the West which will greatly help the work of the team to share resources and work pressures across the west.

At the same time as going through transformation we are reviewing our processes and practices to have a consistent and streamlined approach. We have also been updating the web pages with the aim to have the same planning information for all three former areas on the WNC website rather than different information on the legacy websites. These now include information on Planning Committee; Planning Enforcement; how to view and comment on applications; whether planning permission is needed.