

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel

At 9.30 am on Thursday 9th December, 2021

Held in the Council Chamber, Swanspool House, Doddington Road, Wellingborough

Present:

Members

Councillor David Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Mark Dearing

Councillor Barbara Jenney

Councillor David Jenney

Councillor Steven North

Councillor Kevin Thurland

Officers

George Candler – Executive Director of Place and Economy

Rob Harbour – Assistant Director for Growth & Regeneration

Simon Richardson – Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager

Simon James – Policy Manager

Sue Bateman – Senior Planning Officer

Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor Mike Tebbutt – Assistant Executive Member

36 Apologies for non-attendance

An apology for non-attendance was received from Councillor Valerie Anslow.

37 Members' Declarations of Interests

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were made.

38 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

39 Draft Planning Policy Work Programme - Verbal Report

The Panel considered a verbal report of the Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager, which provided details on the draft planning policy work programme. The update was marked as agenda item 4 on the agenda.

The update provided members with an awareness of the projects which were within the Planning Policy team and included former sovereign authority projects, NNC projects and other areas of work. Whilst not exhaustive, the list included the following key projects:

- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Tresham Garden Village
- Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE)
- Kettering Energy Park Masterplan
- Kettering General Hospital Local Development Order
- Kettering High Street Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)
- Kettering Station Quarter Masterplan
- Kettering Infrastructure and Walking Plan
- River Ise Strategic Plan
- Policy development and other policy projects

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. The review of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA required 12 months of monitoring which could cause issues with the Rushden SUE development coming forward. It was noted that Natural England had a number of issues with the SPA and all parties were seeking to create a long-term resolution.
- ii. Tresham Garden Village was currently an opportunity site in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and we may want to give consideration to making it an allocation going forward. There needed to be an acceptance from all parties that the density would need to be increased to make the development viable. Officers confirmed that further viability work was currently being undertaken.
- iii. Members questioned what impact Northampton's expansion would have on North Northamptonshire, particularly for Ecton and Great Doddington. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan Spatial Options was currently out for consultation and officers confirmed that there was not anything in that Plan which caused concern. Development of land around these settlements had been advocated as an issue for consideration by NNC in its Strategic Plan, West Northamptonshire Council were not looking for NNC to meet any housing shortfall.
- iv. Members questioned when there was significant building on our neighbouring borders, were there any mutual arrangements around support for infrastructure. Officers confirmed that there was a duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities and this should bring out any impact on infrastructure. This was a formal process to identify those issues and come to agreement through a statement of common ground.

RESOLVED to note the verbal update.

40 North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme

The Panel considered a report of the Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager, which provided details of the draft North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme prior to its consideration by the Executive and Full Council. The report was marked agenda item 5 on the agenda.

The Council was required to prepare and publish a Local Development Scheme (LDS), which was a project plan that provided a timetable for the preparation of documents that make up the area's Development Plan. The North Northamptonshire Development Plan was made up of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, some saved policies from old Local Plans, other area-based Local Plan policy documents, Part 2 Local Plans, the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Update and various Made Neighbourhood Plans.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. Clarity was needed on where we were with the Minerals and Waste Plan and more detail was needed in the LDS for such an important Plan. Discussions were currently being had as to whether to maintain a Plan for the whole of the County or two separate plans for the North and West. This needed to be resolved as soon as possible and it was also supported that firmer timelines were needed including making a decision on whether to have one or two Plans.
- ii. It was confirmed that the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations Policy would go up to 2031 but we would look to retain the Policy in the JCS up to 2041. There was a need to find sites and bringing the date forward would make that more difficult to deal with.

RESOLVED:

That subject to a further update at the next meeting, the Panel recommend that the Draft Local Development Scheme be advanced to the Executive for consideration.

Reason for recommendation: To provide Member input into the timetable for the programme of plans identified in the Local Development Scheme; and to ensure the Council meets its obligation to publish an up-to-date LDS, to meet its requirement as a local planning authority.

41 Scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan

The Panel considered a report of the Policy Manager, which provided details of the draft scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (NNSP) that had been previously endorsed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and recommended to North Northamptonshire Council for inclusion in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme. The report was marked agenda item 6 on the agenda.

The scope of the Strategic Plan would focus on those strategic matters which would meet the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework to have a Plan that addressed the strategic priorities for the area. The Plan would help to deliver the priorities set out in other Council plans and strategies and would respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The Strategic Plan would take forward the priorities for the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan and provide the spatial dimension to it.

The Chairman thanked the former members of the Joint Planning Committee and the Joint Planning Unit for all of their work getting to this point.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. Clarification was sought as to whether the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) had yet been commissioned. It was also important that aspiration was included and that we did not continue with what had gone on before. Officers confirmed that the specification for the Assessment had been set out and it was now going through the procurement process and that it would look at need and aspiration.
- ii. In relation to the OxCam Arc it was important that North Northamptonshire saw high quality development, and that that was not solely directed towards the more southern towns and cities in the Arc. Clarification was sought as to whether the work of the Arc would impede the development of our Strategic Plan. It was advised that following the change in Secretary of State there would now be a Local Enterprise Partnership review and SEMLEP was not sure of its future as there appeared now to be an emphasis on local governance. As such, NNC would focus on its area and preparing the Strategic Plan, cognisant of plans developing around the Arc.
- iii. The call for sites would be an important part of the plan process. The Strategic Plan would look to strengthen the approach to place making and place shaping. The housing and employment mix would be a key element of the work informed by the call for sites along with the HENA. The spatial strategy would be influenced by the evidence base and would set out the balance between housing and employment.

RESOLVED that the content of the draft scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan be noted.

Reason for recommendation: To ensure that the Council owns and shapes the Strategic Plan from the start.

42 **Executive Forward Plan**

The Executive Forward Plan for November 2021 to February 2022 was noted.

43 **Close of Meeting**

The Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chair

Date