

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Communities EAP

At 10.00am on Wednesday 19th July 2023

Held in the Lahnstein Room, Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering

Present:

Members

Councillor David Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Jennie Bone Councillor Anne Lee

Councillor Mark Dearing

Officers

Julia Baish – Development Team Leader

Sue Bateman – Senior Planning Officer

Terry Begley – Principal Planner

Richard Palmer – Planning Policy Manager

Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also Present

Councillor Michael Tebbutt – Assistant Executive Member

17. Apologies for Non-Attendance

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Robin Carter, Ken Harrington and Steven North.

18. Members' Declarations of Interest

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

The following declaration of interest was made:

Councillors	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Jennie Bone	Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension Supplementary Planning Document	Is Chair of the Planning Committee (South) which will consider any planning applications in relation to the SUE.		Yes

19. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

20. North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which presented a revised North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Council was required to prepare and publish an LDS which provided a timetable for the preparation of documents that made up the area's Development Plan. These included the North Northamptonshire Local Plan, Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and the remaining stages of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2.

The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill set out reforms to the local plan-making system, where the Government intends that Plans would be produced more quickly and the content of Plans would be simplified. Subject to parliamentary approval, it was anticipated that the plan-making reforms would be implemented from late 2024.

During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- i. It was acknowledged that North Northamptonshire had a good record in plan making thanks to the former Joint Planning Unit.
- ii. The LDS was ambitious but was it achievable as the resources within the team may come under pressure in the future. In response, officers advised that previously the Joint Planning Unit had been able to focus solely on plan development, but now it was more challenging as there was also other work to be dealt with.
- iii. Should the included risk assessment include external risks such as climate change and flooding? The Chair advised that he was a member of the Anglian Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and he had raised issues of surface water flooding at those meetings.
- iv. The cumulative impact of development and the need for a balanced economy was important. The proposed development of the Kettering Energy Park was proposing a large amount of B8 on the site. We needed to consider how to deal with those type of applications.
- v. With regards to Community Infrastructure Levy and Planning Obligations, it was advised that we were still waiting for the government's response to the consultation. Members stated that S106 was the best option but that could only be levied on bigger development and we would miss out on additional monies on smaller developments.
- vi. In response to a question as to whether we should be encouraging those parish and town councils who did not have a neighbourhood plan to develop them, officers advised that a lot of proactive support was given to them. It was acknowledged that some substantial areas of the district were not covered by a neighbourhood plan and needed to be guided through policies set out in the Local Plan Part 2s.

RESOLVED:

That the draft North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme be advanced to the Executive meeting for consideration.

21. Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan: Scope and Options

The Principal Planner presented a report which summarised the responses received to the Scope and Options consultation undertaken as part of the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

Public consultation had been undertaken between 5 April and 31 May 2023 on the Scope and Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. The consultation was the first formal stage in the plan making process and nearly 100 individual responses had been received. A wide range of views had been received that supported the continued preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and emphasised the need to continue to strengthen the supporting evidence base and to engage with the gypsy and traveller community, as well as with neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders.

During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- i. Officers were thanked for their work in getting to this stage.
- ii. Enforcement was very important and removing illegal encampments was a priority. Some members did not agree with extending existing sites and believed that options in other areas needed to be considered. The provision of stopping sites would support enforcement.

RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the 'Scope and Options Consultation Summary Report' as a document which will be used to inform the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan.

22. Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension Supplementary Planning Document

The Planning Policy Manager presented a report which presented the content of a proposed Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for delivering the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) and sought agreement to publishing the SPD for public consultation.

The SUE recognised the role of the designated growth town status for Rushden in seeking to bring forward around 2,500 new homes, employment provision, and supporting infrastructure, including new schools, community facilities and green space, including a new town park. The development proposal formed part of the portfolio of the Garden Communities, supported by the Government, which aspired to deliver high quality built design and open space which sought to embody clear development principles for place making.

Policy guidance to ensure the SUE meets delivery expectations was required through JCS Policy 33 and East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2, draft Policy EN33. A Masterplan Framework Document (MFD) had previously been

approved through the former East Northamptonshire Council's Planning Policy Committee and incorporated into the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2.

At the hearing sessions of the Local Plan examination, the Inspector concluded that the level of detail contained within the MFD would be more appropriately provided through a stand-alone document, and that the key delivery principles set out in the MFD should be incorporated into the Local Plan. Policy EN33 of the Local Plan has been revised to reflect those considerations and had been consulted upon as part of the Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan, to assure that the overall objectives for delivering the SUE were made clear. To ensure that the more detailed aspects of the SUE were made available to inform future planning applications, the MFD had been re-worked as an SPD to amplify Policy EN33 of the Local Plan and Policy 33 of the JCS.

During discussion, the following key points were noted:

- i. It was noted that there were still some outstanding issues including A6 connectivity and employment land.
- ii. The draft SPD would strengthen the Council's position in determining future planning application for the SUE. The undertaking of an SPD (or similar document) is set out in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2.
- iii. The inclusion of green corridors and buffers was welcomed but were there any guarantees that they would remain. In response, officers advised that the SUE would have lots of green space in line with standards set out in policy documents, but also additional green space to offset impacts on the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area.
- iv. The involvement of local councillors and officers with highways would be important. This would be a major development which needed to be delivered correctly. Officers advised that there was an intention to hold a workshop for members before the SUE application went to the Planning Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the contents of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document and that any comments or observations raised be taken into consideration by a delegated decision making process, made through the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy (Interim), to progress the document to public consultation.
- (ii) To note the proposed revised wording of Policy EN33 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2.

23. Future List of EAP Items

An updated list of future items would be brought to the next meeting. Members suggested the following items for possible inclusion:

- Retail Strategy
- Flooding – both river and surface water.

24. Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked Members, officers and the public for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.00pm.

Chair

Date