

Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel

At 9:30am on Monday 21 February 2022

Held as a Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Members

Councillor David Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Valerie Anslow

Councillor Barbara Jenney

Councillor Steven North

Councillor Mark Dearing

Councillor David Jenney

Councillor Kevin Thurland

Officers

Rob Harbour – Assistant Director for Growth & Regeneration

Simon Richardson – Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager

Bernice Turner – Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans)

Simon James – Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery)

Sue Bateman – Senior Planning Officer

Terry Begley – Principal Local Plans Officer

Richard Palmer – Planning Delivery Manager

Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor Mike Tebbutt – Assistant Executive Member

51. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

There were no apologies for non-attendance.

52. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillors	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Mark Dearing	Item 4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation	Was a property investor but did not have any Houses in Multiple Occupation.		Yes

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

54. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Panel considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans), which presented the evidence gathered to date in relation to officers' investigation into the possible use of Article 4 Directions for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in North Northamptonshire and highlighted the next steps in the process. The report was marked as agenda item 4 on the agenda.

Further to the Panel's meeting in July 2021, significant progress had been made in gathering evidence relating to the location of HMOs in Northamptonshire. A cross-department working group had also been established to guide the investigation into the use of Article 4 Directions and other measures to control the effects of HMOs.

Based on current estimates there were 1,114 known HMOs in North Northamptonshire, with higher concentrations in the urban areas. It was suggested that detailed stage 2 investigations be undertaken for the following wards:

- Clover Hill (Kettering)
- Corby West (Corby)
- Croyland and Swanspool (Wellingborough)
- Finedon (Wellingborough)
- Kingswood (Corby)
- Northall (Kettering)

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. Members thanked officers, including colleagues from all service areas involved, for a very good paper. It was very helpful to see the spread of HMOs across North Northamptonshire, especially that the concentration of HMOs was in the main towns. It would be helpful to have the figures broken down into the different types of HMOs, including nursing home accommodation, student accommodation, nurse's accommodation to give an indication of where the problems were.
- ii. It was clarified that the information provided related to any dwelling recorded as an HMO, including some blocks of flats. It was noted that there were both planning and housing definitions of what an HMO was and it would be helpful to identify which definition we were working to.
- iii. Officers clarified that the number of complaints recorded in the report were not just for HMOs and were all of the complaints made in that ward. Most complaints were likely to be made by neighbours.
- iv. As to why people lived in HMOs, this would be examined in more detail when developing the ward profiles. The main reasons were likely to be house prices and market demand, but evidence was needed. If Article 4 Directions were to be considered, then a detailed evidence base would be needed. This work would also inform the place shaping agenda going forward.
- v. There will be a demand for HMOs for a long time, but this did need to be properly managed. A long-term strategy for social housing was needed as it was the price of housing which was driving HMOs. The onus was on landlords to ensure that there were certain standards in place, and these should be monitored to ensure that they are meeting their licence requirements. It was confirmed that there was mandatory licensing for

HMOs of five or more residents. Less than five did not require a mandatory licence.

- vi. There were a number of pros and cons in having an Article 4 Direction in place as they were required to be for the smallest geographical area possible.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the progress made with the investigation and the evidence gathered to date.
- (ii) To endorse the approach for the investigation considering a wider range of measures than only Article 4 Directions.

55. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN SCOPE AND ISSUES

The Panel considered a report of the Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery), which presented the draft Scope and Issues consultation document and the approach to consultation. The report was marked as agenda item 5 on the agenda.

The Scope and Issues consultation document recognised that the scope of the Strategic Plan would focus on strategic matters which would, as a minimum, meet the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, to have a plan that addressed the strategic priorities for the area. The Scope and Issues consultation was the first stage in preparing the new Strategic Plan. Further amendments to the Scope and Issues document prior to consultation, would be prepared with the agreement of the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. That the former Joint Planning Committee had discussed the possibility of a new settlement and it was questioned whether this should be included as a potential spatial option within the spatial strategy for the distribution of development section. It was confirmed by officers that new settlements had been flagged up as a potential option in the document.
- ii. We needed to consider whether town centres were still relevant to people today and what were the future of both town centres and out of town areas. The huge change in town centres was recognised and officers advised that the Council was about to commission a retail study update to provide evidence for a town centre strategy.

Councillor Valerie Anslow left the meeting at 10.35am.

- iii. Concerns were raised about the relationship NNC had with the OxCam Arc and the need to highlight the advantages North Northamptonshire could bring to the Arc. Officers confirmed that they were mindful of the Arc and the current uncertainty regarding it and had tried to link into its opportunities and the consultation document had been pitched within that context.
- iv. We needed to consider our proximity to other areas, such as Cambridge and Peterborough. Cambridge was becoming very expensive and businesses were now moving out. We needed to be able to attract those 2nd/3rd tier research development companies. The need for higher quality employment

was a key aspiration. The recently commissioned Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA) would be critical to the Strategic Plan.

- v. It was accepted that we were strategically well placed to accept the demand for logistics. However, the cumulative impact of logistics was now starting to develop, including on the highways network, and we needed to consider how to mitigate this. It was advised that SEMLEP would be commissioning a strategic study on logistic demand and our HENA needed to link into that work. Areas that are dependent on a single industry have experienced economic decline and this was a mistake that we must avoid. We needed to be in a position where we were not solely dependent on logistics and employment mix was vital.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the draft Scope and Issues consultation document and the approach to consultation.
- (ii) That any further comments on the draft document be forwarded to the Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery) by the end of Friday 25 February 2022.

56. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan for February to May 2022 was noted.

Members stated that an update on the Sustainable Urban Extensions would be helpful.

57. CLOSE OF MEETING

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

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

Chair

Date