

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20 December 2012 at Daventry

PRESENT: Councillor Tim Hadland (Chair); Councillor Kay Driver (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Jim Bass, Stephen Clarke, Robin Digby, Deanna Eddon, Penny
Flavell, Chris Over and John Townsend

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Rebecca Breese (Councillor John Townsend substituting), Joy Capstick, Mike Hallam, Ken Melling (Councillor Deanna Eddon substituting) and David Mackintosh and County Councillors Andrew Grant and Joan Kirkbride.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 13 September 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hadland declared a personal interest in item 6, "West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy- Approval to Submit For Examination" in so far as the discussion might relate to land in Brackley that he had been advising a former client on.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IF ANY)

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, in respect of item 6 and on behalf of Wootton and East Hunsbury Parish Council, Collingtree Parish Council and Hunsbury and Collingtree Residents Alliance, with the agreement of the Chair circulated a paper in respect of Policy N5- Northampton South SUE/5 and noted that Collingtree and Wootton and East Hunsbury parishes had been granted front runner status with regards to developing a Neighbourhood Plan. He stated that there was an acceptance of the need for development but they believed with the help of partners, that they had arrived at a better proposal that met the concerns of flooding and traffic congestion. He referred to the map appended to his circulated paper and noted the area to the south east, coloured orange, that was suggested to be developed in keeping with Collingtree and to the area to the north west, coloured purple, that would be developed in keeping with East Hunsbury. The area in the middle would be open space and there would be no road link between the two developed areas.

The Chair noted that there would be no discussion of this by the Joint Committee but that this proposal would be submitted to the Inspector overseeing the following Public Examination relating to the Joint Core Strategy along with all the other representations that had been received.

Mr Peter Hawkins, in respect of item 6 and on behalf of the Great Houghton Action Group, commented that he welcomed the recognition of the omission of a reference to the representation made by them with regards to paragraph 10.4 of the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report. However, he further stated that he did not believe that Appendix 2 of the report adequately reflected the issues they had raised: paragraph 10.4 of the Joint Core Strategy did not recognise specifically the

Nene Ridge nor its landscape sensitivity despite reference to it in the Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study. Mr Hawkins believed that the response to the Hardingstone SUE was disingenuous as paragraph 12.48 of the JCS used the Northampton Landscape and Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study that referred to most of the site as having medium level sensitivity and also to the high overall sensitivity of the total site together with the rest of Nene Ridge: there did not appear to be any adequate requirement in any JCS policy to recognise the importance of landscape sensitivity on the Nene Ridge or anywhere else when developing or considering proposals. Mr Hawkins also stated that the Action Group still had concerns that Great Houghton would lose its rural village status and queried whether it was intentional that villages within the Northampton Borough Boundary be removed from the village hierarchy. The residents and friends of Great Houghton would continue to fight to retain their rural status: Mr Hawkins also stated that the Action Group did not believe that the issues they had raised about Great Houghton's rural village status and the importance of landscape had been adequately or legally dealt with.

7. A PROGRESS REVIEW OF LOCAL PLANS ACROSS WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The Head of the JPU submitted a report that provided an update on the progress being made on the preparation of Local Plans across West Northamptonshire.

Councillor Kay Driver reported that regarding the Daventry District Settlements and Countryside Local Plan, Daventry District Council had set up a working group that had already met with some Parish Councils. In their case only a further 350 houses needed to be allocated and parishes that had similar issues were being encouraged to work together.

Councillor Stephen Clarke commented that regarding the South Northamptonshire Settlements and Development Management Local Plan, South Northamptonshire Council had held two workshops with Parish Councils and others had been planned.

Councillor Tim Hadland reported that regarding the Northampton Related Development Area Local Plan, Northampton Borough Council had set up a working party that would start meeting early in the new year.

Councillor Jim Bass asked how much had been done in respect of a waste development plan for Billing Treatment Works. The Head of the JPU noted that this was a matter that Northamptonshire County Council was taking a lead on and that in the absence of officer representation from NCC at the meeting would refer the query to them.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the progress on the preparation of the locality based Local Plans for which the governance arrangements are set out in the approved West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme, June 2012 be noted.
 2. That the advanced stage in the preparation that the Northampton Central Area Action Plan had reached and its likely imminent adoption be noted and welcomed.
 3. That the West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme, June 2012 (LDS), be reviewed, as necessary, ahead of submission of the Local Plans it includes for their public examination in order to ensure that the LDS reflects the up to date key milestone dates for the preparation of all Local Plans contained within it.

4. That the governance of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Local Plan set out in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme be noted and that the progress on the partial review of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework Local Plan as described in the report be noted.

6. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY- APPROVAL TO SUBMIT FOR EXAMINATION

The Chair noted that the production of a Joint Core Strategy (JCS) had reached an important milestone; work on it had first commenced in 2005 and that the partner authorities had worked tirelessly to bring it forward as quickly as possible bearing in mind compliance with the legal framework. The headlines were that the housing numbers would be reduced as compared with the RSS (Regional Spatial Strategy) but employment figures had been kept at a high level.

Councillors Kay Driver and Stephen Clarke commented that they were pleased that this point had now been reached in the process. It was important that the Joint Core Strategy was adopted for each of the partner Councils to be able to better manage development in their areas.

The Head of the JPU:

- submitted a report that considered the general conformity and consistency between the Regional Strategy for the East Midlands and the Joint Core Strategy;
- provided an Addendum to the Summary of the Main Issues Raised by the Representations to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy and the Joint Planning Unit's Response to the Representations;
- provided a summary of the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy representations stage;
- provided a quantitative analysis of the representations received to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy;
- provided a factually based summary of the main issues raised by the representations to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy;
- confirmed what action, if any, needed to be taken on the representations received to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy;
- sought approval to submit the Joint Core Strategy and its supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Examination ; and
- sought agreement to the process that will operate across the partnership should minor modifications to the Joint Core Strategy arise or be suggested during the Public Examination process.

The Head of the JPU noted that it was an important step for the Joint Core Strategy to be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination. It was likely that the public examination would take place during the Spring or Summer of 2013. He emphasised paragraph 1.1 of the report and highlighted the evaluation planning assessment that had been undertaken and associated planning judgement based conclusion that the JCS was in general conformity with the RSS: there was a risk because of the reduction in housing numbers but challenges to it were part of the process and the JPU were geared up to be able to react to them. Importantly, the JCS had to be achievable and deliverable.

The Head of the JPU noted that the JCS at the point of submission had to be in general conformity with the RSS as it still existed, but if the RSS was subsequently rescinded during examination the JCS would need to be consistent with the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework). The planning judgement based conclusion was that the JCS would meet the objectively assessed housing needs and other requirements of the NPPF and therefore was consistent with it. The RSS housing figures had been partly based on West Northamptonshire being a growth area. The JCS housing figures recognised the need for some growth and at a level that was achievable in the current economic climate. In short, the JCS was considered to be both in general conformity with the RSS and consistent with the NPPF.

In answer to a question, the Head of the JPU commented that whilst submission of the JCS would not stop speculative applications from developers absolutely, the fact that it had been submitted would give the JCS as a whole more weight, and those policies within it that had not been challenged would have even greater weight. Therefore, it would be more difficult for a speculative application to succeed.

The Head of the JPU made reference to other sections of the report as follows:

- he noted that paragraph 5.1 and the Appendix provided the response to the comments raised by Peter Hawkins on behalf of the Great Houghton Action Group. It was considered that adequate protection was given to the Nene Ridge bearing in mind that the JCS was a strategic plan. The existing skylines policy in the existing Northampton Borough Local Plan would remain in place until the JCS was adopted.
- He highlighted Section 6 and clarified that minor updates meant correcting any factual errors, typos etc.
- He highlighted Section 7 and commented that the majority of representations had come from the development industry: summarised the main representations in the context of significant and minor changes proposed to the Pre-submission JCS that were detailed in Appendix 4. It had been concluded that no new issues had been raised by the representations and therefore no further action was required in submitting the JCS to the Secretary of State.
- He noted in Section 8 that all documents would be submitted to the Secretary of State on 31 December 2012 and elaborated on the next stages set out in the Section.

The Chair thanked both Officers and Members for their agreement to a joint approach and to the goodwill on all sides that had allowed this to happen. Councillor John Townsend observed that the relatively few queries members had was due to the longstanding practice of involving them and keeping them informed throughout the process which had greatly reduced the likelihood of outstanding matters.

Councillor Kay Driver proposed and Councillor Stephen Clarke seconded "That the recommendations set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report be approved."

- RESOLVED:**
1. That it be confirmed that, following the completion of the evaluation assessment that had led to a planning judgement based conclusion, the Joint Core Strategy was in general conformity with and was consistent with the East Midlands Regional Strategy (Assessment attached as Appendix 1 to the report);
 2. That the Addendum to the Summary of the Main Issues Raised by the Representations to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy and the Joint Planning Unit's Response to the Representations

(Attached as Appendix 2 to the report) be noted;

3. That the summary of the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy representations stage (Regulations 19 and 20) including the requirements of the Regulations and how these have been met (Attached as part of Appendix 3 to the report) be noted;
4. That the quantitative analysis of the representations received to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy (Attached as part of Appendix 3 to the report) be noted;
5. That the factually based summary of the main issues raised by the representations to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy (Attached as Appendix 4 to the report) be noted;
6. That no further action be taken in response to the representations received to the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy;
7. That approval be given to the submission of the Joint Core Strategy and its supporting documents to the Secretary of State for Examination as the Strategy was considered to be in general conformity with and consistent with the Regional Strategy and in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and
8. That post Submission, should modifications of a minor nature arise during the Public Examination, the Head of the Joint Planning Unit be delegated authority to raise them with relevant partner Council Director(s) for them to raise with relevant senior Councillors in the Partnership: following consultation with the Chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, the response would then be fed back by the Head of the Joint Planning Unit into the Public Examination.

The meeting concluded at 19.20 hours