

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

1st September 2020

(Meeting held virtually)

Present:-

Councillor Michael Tebbutt (Chair)
Councillors C Brown, Davies, Groome, Mitchell, Talbot
and O'Hara

20.PP.08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Linda Adams, John Currall and Ian Jelley. It was noted that Councillor Mitchell was acting as a substitute for Councillor Adams and Councillor Talbot as a substitute for Councillor Currall.

20.PP.09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ruth Groome declared an interest in Item 6 as a member of Burton Latimer Town Council and an employee of Northamptonshire County Council Libraries Service.

Councillors Margaret Talbot and Cedwien Brown declared an interest in item 6 as members of Rothwell Town Council.

20.PP.10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held on 21st May 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20.PP.11 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20.PP.12 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

A report was submitted which sought members approval to agree an update to the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS); and to recommend that the Scheme be submitted to Full Council for adoption.

It was heard that the LDS was to be adopted ahead of the commencement of Examination hearings on the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (SSP2), which was submitted for Examination on 28th May 2020, with hearings expected to be held in early October 2020. The remaining programme for producing this document was noted as follows:

- Examination – October 2020
- Proposed Modification consultation – November/December 2020
- Receipt of Inspector's Report – January 2021
- Adoption – March 2021

Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy

Members heard that the Council had published a revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in March 2019, and was working towards a series of initiatives to deliver against the identified need. One of the options was to include the identification and allocation of sites through a standalone local plan document. Gypsy and traveller housing provision sat alongside the Council's responsibility to meet the housing requirements of the settled community. Progressing a policy to identify and allocate sufficient land or provide other solutions to meet identified need in a timely manner was important in meeting this requirement, and was expected to form a part of the Inspector's considerations through the Examination into the SSP2.

Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan (AAP)

The Council provided no clear timetable for the progression of the historic policy document in the previous LDS, its Submission to the Secretary of State having been put on hold. Since then clear progress had been made with applications at Desborough and Rothwell, both having been granted outline planning permission. In both cases the sites had made progress towards delivery, and in the case of Rothwell, developers were now on-site installing infrastructure and constructing the first properties. The commitment through the previous LDS was to retain this AAP and review the necessity for it with commencement of the urban extensions or with Submission of the SSP2. It was proposed to revoke this AAP given the advanced position of both schemes and the SSP2.

Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

It was heard that with changes in shopping patterns, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and pressures brought on Kettering town centre by the Rushden Lakes out of town shopping facility, the Council intended to review the planning policies contained within the Kettering Town Centre

AAP. The LDS also included additional plan-making documents, such as the Policies Map.

Once the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan Examination is complete, it was proposed to accelerate work on the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy, and shortly after commence a review of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan. This would mean that more resources can be directed towards preparing both Development Plan Documents as a matter of urgency.

It was then heard that following any comments and subsequent amendments agreed by the Committee, the document would be amended and forwarded to Full Council for adoption, with the recommendation that Full Council resolve that the Local Development Scheme is to have effect from 23rd September 2020.

Councillor Jim Hakewill addressed the meeting, stating that the revised LDS had failed to look after the settled and traveller community and that the neighbourhood plans had not been brought forward sufficiently.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED that:-

Members agreed the draft Local Development Scheme as discussed at paragraph 2.6 to 2.14 of the officers report be recommended to Full Council that the revised LDS be adopted.

20.PP.13 GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITE ALLOCATION POLICY UPDATE

A report was submitted which provided Members with an update on the progress being made with the Gypsy and Travellers Site Allocation Policy.

It was noted that at a previous meeting of the Planning Policy Committee on 10th September 2019 (Minute 19.PP.12 refers) Members noted the content of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and that officers sought to progress a series of Proposed Actions Going Forward. The report highlighted that specialist consultants in this field have a greater depth of skills and knowledge of working with the gypsy and traveller community. It was confirmed to members that The Council had appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS), authors of the North Northamptonshire GTAA to undertake a Pitch Delivery Assessment on the Council's behalf.

It was heard that ORS would work to identify potential delivery models where need cannot be met on existing sites. This included identifying potential locations for the identified need to be met across the wider

North Northamptonshire area, in line with changes in Council boundary with the new North Northamptonshire Unitary Council. This could include through the allocation of new sites or extension/ intensification of existing sites. In addition, upon request ORS was to ensure it engages with those Parish Councils closely related to gypsy and traveller sites.

The timescales for the ORS Site Deliverability Assessment report should be completed in good time for progress to be made towards developing a strategy on pitch delivery, and consulting with stakeholders and the public in January 2021.

Councillor Jim Hakewill addressed the meeting, and raised several questions in relation to the appointment of ORS and questioned what would happen should there be a conflict in the allocation of sites. Cllr Hakewill also stated that all parish councils should be consulted as part of the process and not just those closely related to gypsy and traveller sites.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED that:-

Members noted the contents of the officers report with regards to progress made in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy.

20.PP.14 **PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE, PLAYING PITCH PROVISION AND SPORTS FACILITIES FOR KETTERING BOROUGH**

A report was submitted which informed members regarding the publication of Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment (2020) (KKP) Open Space Standards Paper (2020) (KKP), Playing Pitch Audit and Needs Assessment (2019) (KKP) and Playing Pitch Strategy (2020) (KKP) and Sports Facilities Audit and Needs Assessment (2020) (KKP) and Sports Facilities Strategy (2020) (KKP)

It was heard that the publications formed part of the evidence base for plan-making. In addition the documents would support decision making and service development by other service areas within the Council (e.g. Community Services; Environmental Care) as they provided a strategic and action planned approach to the enhancement of existing and creation of new open space, pitch and sporting provision, including changing room and ancillary support facilities.

It was heard that Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) established that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity was

important for health and well-being. It stated that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified.

Councillor Jim Hakewill attended the meeting and addressed the committee. He enquired whether members were consulted as part of the development of the studies. The meeting was informed that Parish Council's were consulted and an on-line public consultation was run for a minimum of 6 weeks inviting comments from all who reside, work and visit the Borough. The consultation strategy was considered robust and that through the process Members had every opportunity to engage. Cllr Hakewill also stated that Wicksteed Park should be included within the research due to Kettering's unique position in having the park.

Following debate is was:

RESOLVED that members noted the contents of the report and noted the publication of the:
Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment (2020) (KKP)
and Open Space Standards Paper (2020) (KKP)
Playing Pitch Audit and Needs Assessment (2019) (KKP)
and Playing Pitch Strategy (2020) (KKP)
Sports Facilities Audit and Needs Assessment (2020)
(KKP) and Sports Facilities Strategy (2020) (KKP)

20.PP.15 ENGLAND'S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND – DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Members received a report which sought to make them aware of the England's Economic Heartland – Draft Transport Strategy consultation and to agree comments to be fed into a response to be agreed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee.

It was heard that the consultation on England's Economic Heartland Draft Transport Strategy ran until 6th October 2020. The Draft Strategy proposed a step-change in the approach to transport in the region. The extent of the region was large, including Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to the north and east; and Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire to the south and west. It also included the counties, town and cities between, such as Milton Keynes and Bedford.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU) had arranged a briefing for Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and Shadow Authority Members for 8th September. This was to provide the opportunity to explore at greater depth the proposals being put forward,

and the role North Northamptonshire can play to support the ambitious step-change. The JPDU had also agreed with England's Economic Heartland an extension for its response, to follow a meeting of the JPC scheduled for 28th October. Given the strategic nature and scale of the Draft Strategy, it was proposed that Kettering Borough Council feed into a more comprehensive response to be submitted to the extended timetable agreed by the JPDU.

Members heard that the ambition was for the Strategy to be bold, and use the Heartland's strength in science and technology innovation to deliver new solutions which improved connectivity and achieve net environmental gain. The Strategy was shaped by four overarching principles, these were:

- Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways.

Councillor Jim Hakewill and John Padwick attended the meeting and raised points in relation to Kettering Borough Council's Climate Emergency zero carbon emissions target of 2030 which was in contradiction to the 2050 target set out in the strategy.

Officers reported that the points raised in relation to the zero carbon emissions targets were to be raised at the meeting of the Joint Planning Committee.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED that members noted the contents of the report and the consultation on England's Economic Heartland – Draft Transport Strategy and that points raised by members be fed into a joint North Northamptonshire response; and

That input into a response be delegated to members of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and the Shadow Authority members.

20.PP.16 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE – WHITE PAPER CONSULTATION

A report was received which sought to inform members of the consultation on the *Planning for the future* White Paper, and to seek Members initial feedback on the proposals. Members were also asked to delegate the preparation of the Council's response on the consultation to the Interim Head of Development Services in consultation with the Chair of Planning Policy Committee.

It was heard that the Planning for the future White Paper was published on 6 August 2020 for a 12-week consultation. The White Paper proposed significant reforms of the planning system through which the Government sought to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it was needed. It was noted that subject to the outcomes of this consultation, the Government would seek to bring forward legislation and policy changes to implement the reform.

Members noted that alongside the White Paper the Government had also published a Changes to the current planning system consultation. The consultation on this document ran for 8 weeks, the closing date was 1st October 2020. This consultation set out the Government's proposals for measures to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. The four main proposals were:

- Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need
- Securing of First Homes through developer contributions in the short term until the transition to a new system
- Supporting small and medium-sized builders by temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing
- Extending the current Permission in Principle for major development

Councillor Jim Hakewill, Dez Dell and John Padwick attended the meeting and addressed the committee expressing that these are major matters that the need committee's considered response following debate, Town and Parish Councils should be encouraged to comment. Also, the current Climate Emergency needed to be central to Kettering Borough Councils response and emphasised that planning applications need proper and appropriate consultation periods that involves the local community.

Members raised concerns regarding proposals for alterations to the planning process stating that any response needs to have member input to ensure local communities are protected.

Following debate it was proposed by Councillor Talbot and seconded by Councillor O'Hara that the officers recommendation be amended to allow Members to meet to debate and agree a considered response based upon a first draft prepared by officers.

RESOLVED that members noted the contents of the report; and

That officers prepare a draft response to the White Paper Consultation for consideration at a future meeting of this committee.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.24 pm)

Signed
Chair

AI