

Local Plan Committee

Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 7.00pm
in the Council Chamber, The Cube, Corby

Councillors present: Councillors Dady, Heggs, Elliston, Kettle and Bromhall

27. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

28. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interest they might have in the business to be discussed and/or indicate whether these were prejudicial or non-prejudicial, the nature of the interest and whether they intend to participate in the relevant agenda item. Councillor Pengelly declared a personal prejudicial interest in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document report.

29. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2014, copies of which had been circulated to Members, be agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Pengelly left the meeting during discussion of the first item.

30. Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

A report was presented to Committee providing details of the content of the Draft Developer Contributions SDP and requesting approval for the document to be subject to public consultation.

A brief outline of infrastructure detailed in the SPD was outlined in the report including:

- Affordable Housing – Contributions towards affordable housing would not be collected in the CIL but would be provided in accordance with Policy 15 of the adopted Core Spatial Strategy at a target of 30% on sites of more than 15 dwellings.
- Highways, Access & Transport – CIL would fund wider cumulative impacts arising from incremental growth including new infrastructure and improvement projects such as new roads and road improvements, highway capacity improvements and public transport improvements.
- Education – CIL would provide funding towards projects related to secondary school provision including extensions or provision of new facilities but with the exception of the new secondary school at West Corby urban extension as current evidence suggested the proposed number of dwellings would generate a need for a new secondary school within the scheme. This school would be provided through S106 Agreement.
- Green Infrastructure (including open space, Sport & Recreation) – CIL would be used to fund strategic green infrastructure projects. This included improvements to sports facilities and maintenance and upgrading of play areas and open spaces across the borough in addition to borough wide initiatives.
- Training – contributions towards training would be collected through S106 on major development over 1000m² of floor space or over 10 dwellings. S106 obligations would also be sought to provide higher education training for high skilled jobs such as engineering in order to address the skills gap in Corby.

Subject to Members approval the SPD would be subject to six weeks public consultation alongside the Draft CIL Charging Schedule. At the time of the Examination in to the CIL the

Council should have had at least a draft SPD published which covered if and what other Planning Obligations might be sought in addition to the CIL Charges.

Members expressed disappointment in the way the Apprenticeships were being dealt with; these were nowhere near the standard that would have been expected in the past. It was not clear who would take responsibility for dispersal of the CIL monies and who took the strategic decisions.

Officers said that they were aware of the concerns Members had and one function of the Economic Development Officer was to engage with companies and work with training providers, it was hoped that vocational training would be provided which would in turn lead to jobs. There was a lot of work to be done and Members needed to be clear what was needed so that officers could put a strategy in place.

Members asked when the biodiversity activities took place during development, was there a timeline so that things were phased in. Officers explained that these were on a case by case basis and written into the S106 Agreement. The Council could not be protected from every eventuality and so when issues change they have to be considered, we had to be sure that the best deal possibly was obtained.

RESOLVED that:-

Members approve the draft SPD in Appendix A for the purposes of public consultation

31. North Northamptonshire Authorities Monitoring Report

This report was a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

A joint AMR had been produced for the four North Northamptonshire partner authorities (Corby, Kettering, East Northants & Wellingborough), covering the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

The report highlighted the work being done in the preparation of the new planning documents and monitored the performance of the core spatial strategy against a range of indicators consistent with previous years reports.

The AMR indicated that the timetable would need to be reviewed to take into account the planning inquiry for Rushden Lakes and the monitoring report noted that there were no detailed proposals for the preparation of additional planning documents in Corby.

Economy & Town Centres – During 2012/13 it was reported that Corby experienced an increase in office floorspace but lost a significant amount in industrial, storage and warehousing floorspace. This was largely due to the Tesco Supermarket on a designated employment site, demolition of units and change of use of two employment sites.

There was still 195 hectares of available employment land reported during 2012/13, other local Councils had significantly less. The large supply of land provided developers with a choice of land at different locations encouraging new business to locate within the Borough.

There had been a net loss in floorspace for town centre uses largely as a result of change of use to a nightclub, in contrast a significant increase in floorspace for town centre uses outside the town centre was reported.

The monitoring showed that Corby had delivered the highest number of additional dwellings in North Northamptonshire for the second year running. Since April 2010 Corby had delivered 40% of the total housing supply for North Northamptonshire at 1,550 dwellings. Corby had also the second highest number of affordable homes comprising 24% of the total of new homes provided.

Environmental Quality – The report showed that for the second year running no planning permissions were granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flood risk or water quality ground in Corby.

A net gain in biodiversity habitat had been reported in 2012/13, this was an improvement on the previous period. Consistent with previous years no land was lost in Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites as a result of development.

It was concluded that the Joint AMR for North Northamptonshire covered a range of issues and that performance varied across these. It was clear that the national recessionary climate had impacted on the level of development, particularly economic development, but the AMR demonstrated that the housing market in the borough was showing considerable resilience.

Members discussed issues from the report with regard to the Environmental Agency (EA) and that at no time had officers gone against the EA advice when planning permission given. The process put the onus on the developer and in future developers would have to pay for information but Councils would get information as statutory consultees. Members were concerned that the EA were downsizing, would there still be the staff to carry out the jobs.

Members thanked the officers for their hard work, they said there was a lot to be proud of in Corby.

RESOLVED that:-

Members note Corby's progress as reported through the North Northamptonshire Authorities Monitoring Report for 2012/13.

32. Housing Land Supply

The officer's report informed Members of amendments to the North Northamptonshire Interim Housing Statement following a recent public consultation and update the Councils five year land supply position against the newly identified requirements.

Feedback to the consultation identified a number of specific issues that would have a bearing on the housing land supply position in Corby.

Concern had been expressed that the housing land supply included land that did not have the benefit of planning permission. The National Policy Framework indicated that for sites to be included in the five year supply they must be deliverable. Sites without permission are not prohibited and where there is clear evidence they can be built in five years they have been accepted at several inquiries.

The housing land supply for Corby included a number of sites without planning permission, all sites included were specific projects where there were no obvious constraints to overcome and active discussion was under way regarding development. Over 96% of sites with planning permission (sites of five or more dwellings) were already under construction, therefore the non-implementation allowance had not been applied, those currently not under construction had had the 10% non-implementation allowance applied in accordance with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

A windfall allowance was included in the housing land supply calculations in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. It was suggested that windfalls were discounted by excluding them entirely from the first two years of the five year supply calculation.

Corby had consistently delivered high levels of housing development as illustrated by the population growth between 2002 and 2011 census which for Corby was double the national average. Corby continued to be a pro-active authority in relation to development. Positive measures had been implemented to increase the supply of deliverable housing land, including working with ATLAS, introduction to the deferred developer contributions and operating a flexible approach to the renegotiation of S106 agreements.

The five year housing land supply would be subject to review following 1 April 2014 as soon as the annual monitoring of sites was complete.

Should the Council, as the local planning authority be unable to fulfil the five year requirement it would be extremely vulnerable to losing appeals on residential planning applications, this could mean housing being built where the Council and local community consider unsuitable.

Authority existed for example to the effect that in the absence of a five year housing land supply there would no longer be a presumption against development in the countryside.

Although nationally significant designations such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest would continue to be protected.

A review of the housing land supply showed that the Borough presently had a 5.26 year housing land supply. This up-to-date position would inform policy making, consideration of planning applications and Council decision making.

RESOLVED that:-

The Interim Housing Statement be adopted as a material consideration to be taken into account in the calculation of housing land requirements.

Members note the Council currently has 5.26 years of housing land supply against the Interim Housing Statement.

33. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm.