



WNDC Board Report

Report by Director of Planning Services

Paper Reference: 2010-06-07-01

Agenda Item: 7

21st September 2010

Subject: Planning Services Overview

Advice: That the Board:

1. **Note** current planning performance
2. **Note** the planning update and review of the major applications/proposals.
3. **Note** the planning decisions in Appendix A

Summary:

- Performance is considered satisfactory.
- There 63 applications on hand at the end of August 2010.
- Note the progress on major applications/proposals.

1. Planning Performance

- 1.1 Current performance as set out in the table below is considered acceptable when viewed against the previous quarter's figures with improvements in relation to the performance of the determination of 'minor' and 'other' applications. Performance in relation to 'major' applications is slightly down with only one application of this type having been determined. 13 applications were determined in July and 8 in August with the number on hand at the end of August standing at 63.
- 1.2 Board should note the Corporation's recent restructure which has resulted in reduced staff numbers having to deal with the same workload pre-structure. This workload is currently on the increase. This extends to not only dealing with planning applications but to submissions to discharge planning conditions, undertaking screening/scoping opinions for proposed developments and engaging with pre-applications proposals. This situation will be monitored closely.

Current	2009 -2010				2010 - 2011				National PI
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2* June & July only	Q3	Q4	*Figures not submitted to DCLG
Major (Within 13 to 16 Weeks)	29% (2)	31% (2)	35% (4)	34% (3)	50% (5)	46% (1)			60%
Minor (Within 8 Weeks)	84% (16)	87% (18)	89% (21)	88% (10)	86% (19)	90% (19)			65%
Others (Within 8 Weeks)	88% (7)	92% (4)	74% (3)	75% (4)	75% (3)	80% (1)			80%

1.3 A number of notable applications have been approved:

- Full planning permission issued for mixed use development comprising retirement village, A1(retail), A2(financial and professional) and B1(office) development at the former St Edmunds Hosptial site, Wellingborough Road, Northampton. This represents the successful conclusion of a longstanding application to deliver a significant regeneration scheme of a key brownfield site at the western end of the Wellingborough Road which contains a number of listed buildings which are to be retained and converted.
- Full planning permission was issued for the construction of a new food store (Aldi) and two commercial (B2 general industrial) units at the CWG site. Old Greens Norton Road, Towcester.
- Full planning permission for the construction of a facilities building housing toilets, showers, laundry and office accommodation at Becketts Park Marina, Bedford Road, Northampton. This scheme complements the development of the Becketts Park Marina providing the facilities to serve the future boat occupants.
- Full planning permission for the junction improvement at London Road, Northampton. This scheme which has now additionally secured funding from government is key to the delivery of the redevelopment of the Ransome Road area of Northampton.

2 Planning Update

2.1 Upton Lodge (06/1654OUTWNS)

- 1700 dwellings approx and community facilities
- Revised traffic assessment work and a revised travel plan have been submitted.
- There have been positive meetings with the Highways Agency (HA) which should enable the application to be resolved but not in Q2.
- SNC have taken a positive committee resolution in August on the adjacent site Norwood Farm
- A meeting with the applicant (HCA), the HA, SNC and Redrow to work through a 'Demand Management Strategic Road Strategy' that will service the A45/M1

and the growth applications will be held shortly. It is also anticipated that WNDC and SNC will be able to agree a set of heads of terms which will allow the S106 to move forward.

2.2 Daventry Appeals

- As previously reported the owners of the Monksmoor site have continued the process of disposing of their site. The site is now officially being marketed through a two stage process, the first requiring a completed Pre-qualification Questionnaire to be returned by the 30th September 2010. Selected parties will then be invited to submit detailed proposals to acquire an interest in the site. Submissions from invited parties to the second stage are due on the 5th November 2010. It is anticipated that the process to complete the disposal of the site will be completed by early 2011. It is then anticipated that pre-reserved matter discussions will start in detail in Spring 2011.

2.3 Towcester Urban Extension (07/0374/OUTWNN)

- Outline residential planning application for up to 3,000 dwellings. The commercial floorspace proposed is 79,010m² (mix of employment uses and retail). Affordable housing offer of 35%.
- Work is on-going to resolve highways issues, as a departure from a standard application will be necessary.
- A programme of meetings has been established running up to the end of the year with both the developer and local authorities. These are currently considering issues in relation to the Masterplan, delivery and strategic highway network. A draft report has now been prepared to provide an early assessment of general viability.
- An all-parties meeting was held on the 1st July 2010 with the applicant, Highways Agency, West Northants Joint Planning Unit, Northampton County Council and WNDC to discuss highway issues (South Northamptonshire Council were invited but were unable to attend). This set a wider programme for a strategic A43 corridor study, to be undertaken in tandem with the Alternative Scheme Assessment being completed for the Towcester Urban Extension (TUE). These have differing timescale and resources requirements, it

is unclear whether the Highways Agency will come to a view on the TUE in advance of completion of the strategic highway corridor study.

- There is growing concern over a revised analysis of educational needs. Meetings are in place to seek to resolve this issue.

2.4 Towcester - Moat Lane

- A mixed use regeneration project being promoted by South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) in partnership with WNDC and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). The aim is to integrate the Moat Lane area into the town centre with refurbishment of existing buildings, the construction of new buildings including a new civic centre for Towcester and offices for SNC, restoration of Bury Mount and the provision of a high quality public realm throughout. The mix of development will include retail space, cafes, community facilities and offices and up to 41 residential units.
- An outline application was submitted in June 2010, public consultation took place in July-August 2010 and the application is scheduled to be considered at the Towcester UDA Planning Committee on the 15th September 2010. This is compliant with one of the key objectives for this project as set in the Business Plan.
- Discussions will continue to take place between officers, SNC and stakeholders in relation to outstanding matter including highway impact, air quality and the impact of the development on heritage assets. Meetings are in place with English Heritage to resolve their specific concerns on views towards and from Bury Mount and the mass of the new development in proximity to Bury Mount.

2.5 Ransome Road (06/0016/OUTWNN)

- 800 dwellings.
- The planning application has now been updated and submitted to WNDC. Reconsultation has been undertaken with residents and key stakeholders. There has been a very limited response from the public with only three letters received to date.

- Responses have now been received from all key consultees, with the exception of Northampton Borough Council. It is not clear when NBC intend to take the application to committee.
- A number of key issues have arisen that will require further attention in order to move the scheme forward. Additional survey work is being undertaken in terms of ecology and protected species, and additional technical work is required to address specific noise and air quality issues. The Highways Agency and NCC have not objected to the principle of development and accept that the impact upon the road network will be acceptable, subject to a satisfactory Travel Plan being secured through the Section 106 agreement.
- The key issues have been discussed with the HCA who have prepared a programme to move things forward in order to allow the application to go before WND's September Northampton UDA planning committee.
- The ability of the HCA to carry out further survey work has been affected by funding restrictions within their organisation. Therefore a number of pieces of technical work are yet to be completed.
- Discussions are also on-going with the HCA regarding the viability of the site. These discussions will be key to moving forward with the scheme. Due to the significant cost in assembling the site and likely remediation costs associated with this former landfill site, there are issues in terms of viability and the ability to make significant financial contributions. This work is moving forward and more detailed discussions will be held with the HCA in the coming month. Clearly the important balance will be between providing a scheme which is acceptable in planning terms but which is also a viable proposition.

2.6 Dallington Grange

- 3,500 dwellings and mix use commercial and retail.
- Discussions are on-going with the applicants who have stated a commitment to implementation of the scheme. A meeting was held on 18th March with the applicant, Althorp Estate (one of two major landowners) and NBC Planning. Following this meeting the applicant has undertaken further work examining key infrastructure requirements and the financial viability of the site.

- Following a further meeting held on the 13th July a financial viability appraisal has been submitted for review by officers.
- Officers continue to discuss the key planning issues with regard to a revised application to move the application forward but the land ownership issue remains a key one to be resolved.

2.7 Avon/Nunn Mills (06/0014)

- Key discussions in relation to the Avon Nunn Mills site have recently centred around the landowner issues relating to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and the strategic land use principles in terms of WNDC's Strategic Development Framework (SDF).
- Planning officers have set out the detailed work that will need to be undertaken to develop a new planning application and the list of documents that will need to accompany the application. Planning meetings need to be arranged for the submission of planning applications in relation to the sites and to agree the suite of documents that will need to be prepared to support any application. No programme for submission has been agreed at the time of writing.

2.8 Retail Projects

- Applicants with submitted retail schemes have been encouraged to update their Retail Impact Assessments in line with PPS4.
- The Sainsbury's, Northampton and Nene Valley Retail Park, Northampton applications have time extensions.
- Revisions have been submitted for the Sainsbury's Application which includes an extended net sales area of 3559 sq m – a reduction of 1628 sq m from the original submission. No firm timetable has been set to achieve a committee date. AECOM on behalf of WNDC have considered these changes and have advised the proposed floorspace would be unacceptable. Sainsbury's are currently considering further revising the application.
- Nene Valley Retail Park Northampton - WNDC have responded to the applicant's revised retail statement (through AECOM). The applicant's have stated that they wish to respond but no comments have been received as yet.

In the absence of further comments WNDC officers will take the matter forward to Committee for determination.

- The Aldi, Towcester development has been granted consent and the decision issued. The proposed Aldi store in Northampton was considered at the Northampton UDA Planning Committee on 13th July 2010 where the application was deferred to enable a site visit by the Committee to be undertaken at the next meeting on the 14th September 2010.
- A new planning application has been submitted for an extension to the existing Tesco store at Mereway, Northampton. It is proposed to increase the store by a net lettable floorspace of 2720sqm. WNDC retail consultants AECOM are due to report back in September, a timetable then can be set out for when the application may go to Committee.
- Pre-application discussions are on-going with a number of other operators.

3. Appendices

Appendix - Appendix A: Planning Decisions Issued 26/6/10 to 10.9.10