



WNDC Board Report

Report by Director of Planning Services

Paper Reference: 2011-02-08-01

Agenda Item: 8

14 March 2011

Subject: Planning Services Overview

Advice: That the Board:

1. **Note** the planning performance and workload information.
2. **Note** the position regarding the return of planning applications back to the relevant Local Planning Authorities as part of the transitional arrangements.

Summary:

- Overall performance is considered acceptable having regard to the available resources and quantum and nature of the workload. The outcome of phase 1 of the transitional arrangements will result in certain types of planning application being returned to the relevant local planning authorities.

1. Review of Outstanding Projects

Avon/Nunn Mills and Ransome Road

- 1.1 In a planning context this development site is subject to two outline planning applications. One, although very old, is on the records and given the changed circumstances is likely to now come forward as a new outline application, which relates to the Avon Nunn Mills site to the south of Bedford Road and north of the railway line in Northampton. The proposal is likely to be a mixed use development incorporating residential, commercial, community facilities, primary school, local leisure and retail centre with access arrangements from Bedford Road and New Southbridge Road. The second application relates to Land off Ransome Road, Northampton and the applicant is the Homes and Community Agency but additionally Network Rail. The proposal is for residential development, community facilities, access improvements and retention of operational railway line.
- 1.2 There are a number of matters that need addressing and resolving over and above purely planning considerations. These include land ownership, delivery of a Compulsory Purchase Order for the land required for the link road from the Ransome Road site to the Avon/Nunn Mills site and the completion of the master-planning of the area (Strategic Development Framework
- 1.3 The Ransome Road application was reported to the Northampton UDA Planning Committee on the 14th September 2010 where the Committee resolved to be minded to grant outline planning permission. Negotiations continue with a view to resolving the outstanding matters. The S106 agreement is being drafted and due to be ready for completion early 2011.

Dallington Grange

- 1.4 Dallington Heath is a longstanding potential growth location within Northampton. The site has been identified in the development plan for housing development for over 30 years. An outline planning application for development comprising up to 3,500 dwellings, a local centre of up to 4.15 hectares, an employment area up to 10 hectares, two primary schools, secondary school and re-use and redevelopment of Grange Farm

for café/restaurant/public house or hotel and creation of habitat, open space and landscaped areas.

- 1.5 This application was submitted in January 2007. The impetus to progress the application by the developer reduced significantly off when the economic downturn commenced but there are now meetings being held again and willingness to progress matters. But until NBC are clear about the land ownership, issues can be progressed further until the Summer months.

Upton Lodge and Upton Park

- 1.6 The Sandy Lane Relief Road, completed in October 2009, has opened up the Upton Lodge area for development, including plans for over 2000 new homes and significant commercial development.
- 1.7 The outline plans application for residential development up to 1784 dwellings, community and education facilities including a new primary school, employment, park and ride facility and part of a country park at Upton Lodge has already been approved by Committee, resolving to grant outline consent subject to certain highway matters being resolved and a S106 being entered into. (November 2008)
- 1.8 This has been due to the difficulties in finding a way forward to resolving the strategic road concerns in conjunction with the local road network. This now has a basis via an "Access Management Strategy" to move forward with specific obligations in S106 legal agreement to deliver key infrastructure. This approach is supported by the HA and NCC. The S106 could be completed in early 2011. The departure process is now being progressed given sufficient progress with strategic highway matters and SNC moving forward Norwood Farm adjacent application.
- 1.9 Upton Park is a proposal for circa. 1000 dwellings by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to the south of the Upton Lodge scheme. There is no planning application currently with the Corporation for this development despite the HCA indicating it would be submitted by the middle of last year. The HCA have indicated that they are now looking to submit it before summer 2011.

Towcester Urban Extension

- 1.10 The current outline planning application is for mixed-use neighbourhood comprising 3000 dwellings, employment land, a local centre, a neighbourhood centre, mixed use area to accommodate Class C1 Hotel with conference and leisure facilities, new primary and secondary schools, and the provision of a new southern by-pass to Towcester connecting the A5 via a new junction. This represents a major urban extension on the south side of Towcester.
- 1.11 The current economic climate and the time being taken to resolve the viability position which has progressed significantly over recent months, has led to more serious work on future engagement and a project time table looking towards December/January 2012 for a Committee date. But there are significant strategic highway matters to be resolved, which are ongoing.

Moat Lane Towcester

- 1.12 The regeneration of Moat Lane will help invigorate Towcester town centre. The outline planning application for the regeneration of Moat Lane/Northampton Road area including new build and change of use for shop, café, drinking, workshop uses, offices, council buildings, hotel, dwellings, new public realm and decked car park is a key milestone in the delivery of the scheme.
- 1.13 The application was submitted in June 2010, consultation was undertaken in July/August and it was then determined by Committee in September.
- 1.14 The progression of the application was dealt with as a high priority to ensure that the S106 agreement was signed before the public inquiry into the Compulsory Purchase Order, which took place on the 18th January 2011. The S106 signed on the 14th January 2011 and the outline planning permission issued on the 17th January 2011.
- 1.15 Following the appointment of a development partner, it is expected that SNC will submit detailed reserved matters in the latter part of 2011, with work expected to commence on site in 2012. Close work with SNC is on going and progressing well.

2. Overall Planning Workload/Performance

- 2.1 The planning service deals with a number of submissions which require formal consideration and determination. Planning applications only form part of the picture albeit the most public. Other submissions relate to the discharge of planning conditions, consultations on planning applications from Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire District Council, amendments to approved schemes, requests for screening and scoping opinions under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and engaging in pre-application discussions.
- 2.2 Table 1 below shows the number of items received this financial year to date requiring formal determination with the exception of pre application enquiries and Table 2 shows the actual number of formal determinations. To give an indication of the nature of the applications determined Appendix A contains the details of those that have been determined since the 1st January 2011.

Table 1: All Received 01/04/2010 - 31/01/2011

	Planning Applications	Discharge of Conditions	Non Material Amendments	Other Authority Consultations	Pre Application Advice	Screening / Scoping Opinion	Total
April	10	24	2	1	5		42
May	11	16		1	10		38
June	14	31	3	1	6		55
July	11	29	5		7	1	53
August	14	16	4		9	1	44
September	16	57	1		12		86
October	12	17	2	1	3		35
November	15	21	1		4	1	43
December	10	7	2		3		22
January	8	19	2		7		36
Total	121	237	23	4	66	3	454

Table 2 : All Determined 01/04/2010 - 31/10/2010

	Planning Applications	Discharge of Conditions	Non Material Amendments	Other Authority Consultations	Screening / Scoping Opinion	Total
April	11	5	1			17
May	14	6		1		21
June	13	12	1			26
July	13	15	4		1	33
August	11	25	6		1	43
September	12	15	1	1		29
October	10	35	2			47
November	9	34	4			47
December	14	4	2			20
January	15	31	2			48
Total	122	182	23	2	2	331

- 2.3 In terms of planning performance against national indicators Table 3 and the accompanying graphs detail very good performance in relation to the determination of 'minor' and 'other' applications with the national targets being 65% and 80% respectively. Whilst performance has slightly dipped since the last report to Board in December it still remains well above 80%.
- 2.4 Performance in relation to 'major' applications whilst not exceeding the national target of 60% is considered acceptable having regard to the complex nature of the type of 'major' applications the Corporation deal with.
- 2.5 The Board need to note this is the last time performance will be reported in relation to 'minor' and 'other' development as the determination of this type of application will be returned to the relevant Local Planning Authorities (LPA's) to determine after the 1st April 2011. This is the date upon which the amended West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (Planning Functions) Order 2006 comes into effect. The revised order has been laid in Parliament, which enacts a number of changes to the development powers. This includes raising the threshold for residential planning applications determined by WNDC from 50 units to 200 units. The changes apply across the whole of the operation areas. This represents the Phase 1 return of planning powers to the LPA's following the outcome of the quinquennial review of the

Corporation. The return of the remaining powers is yet to be timetabled by Government. There are extensive on going discussions with our partners and with CLG as to how to keep the situation moving forward.

2.6 The Corporation commenced its planning function on the 6th April 2006. Up to mid February 2011 it has received 876 applications: 823 in Northampton UDA, 32 in Daventry UDA and 12 in Towcester UDA. On the 1st April 2011 a total of 715 application files will be returned: 694 to Northampton (665 determined and 29 extant), 11 to Daventry (all determined), 3 to Towcester (1 determined and 2 extant) and 7 to Northants County Council (all determined). The Corporation will be retaining 132 determined and 26 extant applications. The new order is set out in Appendix B.

Table 3 Performance Summary

BVPI Summary	2009-2010				2010-2011				National PI
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Major (Within 13 to 16 Weeks)	29% (2)	31% (2)	35% (4)	34% (3)	50% (5)	40% (1)	43% (3)		60%
Minor (Within 8 Weeks)	84% (16)	87% (18)	89% (21)	88% (10)	86% (19)	91% (23)	88% (11)		65%
Others (Within 8 Weeks)	88% (7)	92% (4)	74% (3)	75% (4)	75% (3)	91% (7)	91% (11)		80%

