



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 30th September 2014

DIRECTORATE: Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning

DIRECTOR: Steven Boyes

REPORT TITLE: Houses in Multiple Occupation Interim
Planning Policy Statement

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Planning Committee note the contents of this report and progression of the Interim Planning Policy Statement (IPPS), and its implications for the determination of future planning applications for houses in multiple occupation (HiMOs).

2 PURPOSE OF THE INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT (IPPS)

- 2.1 The aim of the IPPS is to amplify both existing policy contained in the saved policies of the Northampton Local Plan as well as emerging policy contained in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS). The document is termed interim in light of the fact that the JCS is not an adopted document, and should future policy change, then the IPPS will need to take this into account. The IPPS, upon adoption, would become a material consideration for the Planning Committee, officers and others to take into account in determining future planning applications as relevant. The document is currently subject to public consultation which ends on the 2nd October 2014. Planning Committee members were notified of this consultation prior to its commencement.
- 2.2 The IPPS informs landlords and property owners about the development management process involved in submitting a planning application for HiMOs, including cases where Permitted Development Rights have been removed by Article 4 Directions. It also outlines the range of criteria which the Council will consider to ensure that the proposal will not adversely impact on the character and amenity of the area and that adequate facilities (like kitchens, bathrooms and toilets), and health and safety measures (like fire safety), are incorporated. The principles will also apply to those premises where planning permission is not required by virtue of the General Permitted

Development Rights (change of use from dwellinghouse to a HiMOs for between 3 and 6 unrelated people). .

- 2.3 The document, when adopted, will complement the additional licensing powers introduced by the Council in spring this year, affecting the town centre and the wards where there is a high level of student accommodation anticipated. HiMO licensing is intended to control the standards and management of HiMOs. Further information can be obtained by accessing the following link:

http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200077/private_housing

3 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- 3.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. On the 6th May 2014, Planning Committee was presented with a report which identified that whilst the Northampton Local Plan is the starting point for the determination of planning applications, due to its date of adoption, which predates the National Planning Framework, the weight that can be attributed to the Plan's saved policies is significantly diminished. This is compounded by the advanced stage of preparation of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the subsequent weight that can be attached to the accompanying policies.
- 3.2 Planning Committee on the 10th June was informed by a report that identified on a policy by policy basis the weight that could be attached to the saved Northampton Local Plan policies. This included saved Policy H30 (Multiple Occupation within a single dwelling), which carries limited weight as it does not reflect up-to-date evidence of housing need. The policy may not therefore be compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). However, it has a role to play in influencing the contents of the Interim Planning Policy Statement on HiMOs.
- 3.3 In addition, the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) has now been examined and the Planning Inspector's report is imminent. Policy H6 (Managing the Housing Stock) of the WNJCS was formulated, based on robust and up-to-date evidence base and was the subject of public consultation. This policy received minimal representations, none of which are likely to have a significant bearing on the strategy of the WNJCS. This policy therefore carries significant weight and has also been used to inform and influence the Interim Planning Policy Statement on HiMO (IPPS).

4 THE INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT ON HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

- 4.1 The NPPF seeks to deliver a wide range of homes, to include variations in size, types and tenures (para 50). The principles

contained in the IPPS will contribute towards the delivery of this requirement.

- 4.2 Northampton's town centre is continuing to grow and regenerate as part of the Northampton Alive programme, and the University of Northampton is set to relocate to the Central Area. These factors will see a boost in the local economy; culminating in housing, commercial and educational growth. Key to this will be an increase in demand for rented accommodation, particularly from students who will be looking to live within the vicinity of the new University campus, and those unable to gain access to the new student accommodation at St John's. Also, there will be an increase in the population levels (as evident in the WNJCS), which brings with it a related increase in demand for rented accommodation, as not everyone will be in a position to afford a home or have a desire to settle long term in Northampton.
- 4.3 It is essential that this demand is met, not only to ensure that the student and population needs are met but also to secure adequate labour supply needed to support growth. However, it is equally important that the character of the area where an application has been submitted is not adversely affected, and the amenity of the adjoining residents not jeopardised.
- 4.4 The principles contained in this IPPS aim to secure a balance between meeting demand and protecting the character and amenity of an area. It contains 4 principles aimed at managing the growth of HiMOs and securing standards which will ensure that those living in HiMOs will have adequate facilities and health and safety measures incorporated. These principles include the application of a 15% HiMO threshold over a 50 metre buffer zone, which is considered to set an acceptable level for meeting demand without compromising the character of the area.
- 4.5 This document has been released for an 8 week public consultation exercise between the 7th August and the 2nd October. Amongst those consulted are local landlords and Housing Associations. The outcome of the consultation exercise, and any revisions to the IPPS, will be reported to Cabinet on the 12th November 2014. The consultation documents can be viewed by accessing the following link:

http://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200205/planning_for_the_future/1739/
- 4.6 A Community Impact Assessment was also prepared to ascertain how these principles will impact on residents.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The IPPS has been produced in accordance with the relevant planning regulations contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended 2012). When adopted, it will become a significant material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This is capable of influencing a positive outcome at planning appeals.

- 5.2 It should be noted that although the principles should be adhered to by all landlords and property owners, these are only capable of being monitored where an application for change of use is required to be submitted. As a change of use from a dwellinghouse to HiMOs for 3 – 6 persons does not usually require planning permission it is therefore difficult to manage and monitor their growth.

6 LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 The issues associated with meeting the demand for rented accommodation is relevant in part at least to the majority of the Corporate Plan (refresh) priorities. However, three key priorities in relation to this report are Priority 2: Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhood, Priority 5: Better Homes for the Future – Helping You to Have a Home and Priority 7: Promoting Health and Wellbeing.