

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL



COUNCIL

Monday, 27 March 2006

YOU ARE SUMMONED TO ATTEND A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE HELD AT THE GUILDHALL NORTHAMPTON ON MONDAY, THE TWENTY SEVENTH DAY OF MARCH, 2006 AT SIX THIRTY O’CLOCK IN THE EVENING WHEN THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS IS PROPOSED TO BE TRANSACTED:-

1. MINUTES.

To approve the minutes of the proceedings of the Meetings of the Council held on 27th February and 9th March 2006.

2. APOLOGIES.

3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.

5. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULE 5.2.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) The following motion to be moved by Councillor Woods and seconded by Councillor Taylor:-

That procedural rule 3.4 be suspended to enable the following motion to be discussed and a vote to be taken

“This Council notes that with reference to the Urgent Motion to Council on 27th February a resolution was passed allowing three representatives to attend a meeting of Delapre Ward Councillors, the Portfolio Holder, NBC officers and three community representatives.

This Council further notes that the first meeting of the Delapre Park Consultation Group held on 7th March was attended by a delegation of seven representatives and was unable to proceed.

This Council resolves to increase the number of representatives to attend Delapre Park Consultation Group from three to seven to enable the meeting to proceed.”

(B) The following motion to be moved by Councillor Glynane and duly seconded:-

That procedural rule 3.4 be suspended to enable the following motion to be discussed and a vote to be taken

“This Council notes and encourages the aspiration of the Northampton Arts Collective to establish an Arts Centre within Northampton town centre believing that such a facility would have positive regeneration benefits and would add significantly to the cultural standing and diversity of the town.

This Council further notes that the Northampton Arts Collective have been negotiating for the temporary use of the Market Hall (the Fish Market) for this purpose and have received encouragement and indications of support from various bodies locally, regionally and nationally for this exciting project.

Appreciating the legal and financial constraints this Council requests the Cabinet to facilitate the establishment of an Arts Centre on a temporary basis in the Market Hall from July 2006 for a period of not less than twelve months.

7. NORTHAMPTON DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ADOPTION

(copy herewith)

8. RECONFIGURING PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

9. STATUTE AUTHORISATIONS

(copy herewith)

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT ON PLANNING

(copy herewith)

11. PROGRESS ON RECOVERY PLAN

Report of the Leader on behalf of the Improvement Board

12. POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS - REPORT OF SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

13. REPORT OF REMUNERATION PANEL

14. NOMINATIONS TO WNDC PLANNING COMMITTEE

**15. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE
CONSIDERED.**

The Guildhall
Northampton
16th March 2006

M.McLean Chief Executive



Council
27th March 2006

Item No

Report of Directorate:
People, Performance and Regeneration

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**Northampton Development
Framework -
Statement of Community
Involvement
Adoption**

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of the binding recommendations of the Inspector who considered the soundness of the Statement of Community Involvement and for Council to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement as amended by those recommendations, as recommended by the Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

1. That Council adopts the Statement of Community Involvement as recommended by the Cabinet.

Summary and Links to Corporate Plan

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Borough Council's policy for involving the community, both in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and development control decisions. The programme for the preparation of the SCI is set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Consultation was undertaken on the Pre-Submission Draft SCI in February-April 2005 and an amended version, the Submission Draft SCI, was prepared. The Submission Draft SCI was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in June 2005 and was subject to further consultation in June-August 2005. The Submission Draft SCI was then subject to independent examination in December 2005-January 2006. The binding Inspector's Report has been received and the required amendments made to the SCI. Members are requested to adopt the final version of the Statement of Community Involvement as amended, as recommended by the Cabinet.

The Council's Corporate Plan recognises the need for citizen focused services. In identifying the town as an area of major growth, it states "Northampton Borough Council will play a strong and influential role in this renewal agenda, making sure that our citizens' views are represented and the best outcomes delivered for the future of the town."

1. Background

- 1.1. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Borough Council's policy for involving the community, both in the preparation of Local Development Documents and in development control decisions. The programme for the preparation of the SCI is set out in the Local Development Scheme.
- 1.2. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 set out the procedures that must be undertaken as part of the process of adopting the Statement of Community Involvement. The process has four key stages:
 - 1) Pre-Submission
 - 2) Submission
 - 3) Examination
 - 4) Adoption
- 1.3. A draft version of the SCI was the subject of consultation during April-June 2004. A total of 80 representations were received to that consultation. An amended version of the SCI (the Pre-Submission SCI) was subsequently prepared which took account of the results of the consultation exercise on the draft SCI and new Government guidance. A total of 136 representations were received to the Pre-Submission SCI. Following that consultation, further amendments were made, and a revised version (the Submission Draft SCI) was published for consultation in June-August 2005.
- 1.4. Twenty-five representations were received to the Submission Draft SCI, from seven organisations and individuals. Of these representations, twenty two were objections and three were supportive.
- 1.5. Under the new planning system the Council is required to prepare a Pre-Submission Consultation Statement and a Representations Statement. Together these statements explain the nature of consultation undertaken as part of the SCI process, summarise the main issues raised in the representations and include a response to the main issues raised, offering, where necessary, possible changes to the SCI that would improve the document. The Portfolio Holder for the Economy and Infrastructure agreed these changes on 11 October 2005.

2. Examination

- 2.1 As required by the new planning system, an Inspector was appointed by the Secretary of State to assess the soundness of the SCI. The assessment undertaken by the Inspector covers nine of tests of soundness. These are not an assessment of objections per se, although in undertaking the tests the Inspector analyses all the representations received on the SCI and considers the content of the Pre-Submission Consultation Statement and the Representations Statement. The tests of soundness the Inspector uses are set out in Appendix A to the Inspector's Report. The Inspector then prepares a report on the 'soundness' of the SCI. Under the new planning system the recommendations contained in this report are binding on the Council.
- 2.1. In the case of Northampton's SCI no-one requested the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Inspector so a written representations examination was held in December 2005 - January 2006. Further possible changes in response to matters raised by the Inspector and the Government Office for the East Midlands in the course of the Examination were agreed by the Portfolio Holder for the Economy and

Infrastructure on 7 January 2006. The Inspector's Report into the soundness of the SCI was received on 12 January 2006 (Appendix 1 of this report). The Inspector found the SCI to be sound subject to amendments in accordance with the recommendations set out in his report. For ease of reference these amendments are set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

3. Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.1. The amendments to the SCI required by the Inspector have been made and the final version of the SCI is attached to this report as Appendix 3. Council is requested to adopt this final version of the SCI, as recommended by the Cabinet.
- 3.2. Following this Council meeting the adopted SCI will be placed on the Council's website along with the Adoption Statement and the Inspector's Report. These documents will also be available at the Council's offices and at all libraries in Northampton. Everyone who requested to be notified of the publication of the Inspector's Report and/ or the adoption of the SCI will be notified. Notice will also be given in the Chronicle and Echo newspaper of the adoption and the times and places where the relevant documents can be inspected. The SCI is subject to a 3 months period when it can be challenged on a point of law.
- 3.3. The Borough Council will monitor the success of the community involvement techniques outlined in the SCI and use the results to review methods to be used in the future. After consultation exercises, the Council will seek feedback from participants about the process and the ways in which they could be involved in the future. In addition, an analysis will be undertaken of those who responded to the consultation to see whether there are any patterns or obvious gaps. This may help to pinpoint any groups that were not reached by the methods used.
- 3.4. In the light of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation's (WNDC) proposed development control powers it will also be necessary to seek the final adoption of the SCI by WNDC and to work with WNDC to monitor the SCI's effectiveness.
- 3.5. This monitoring will inform the need for a formal review of the SCI in the future.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The undertaking of community involvement will have financial implications. The existing budget for the local plan/ local development framework contains resources to aid the proposed relevant publicity and consultation on local planning documents.

5. Social Impacts

- 5.1. The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Council's policy with regard to community engagement both in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and in development control decisions. The Statement seeks to involve 'hard-to-reach' groups and to ensure that equalities issues are taken into account in providing access to information and different methods of consultation.
- 5.2. The measures included in the Statement of Community Involvement will assist the local planning authority to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

6. Consultees (Internal & External)

- 6.1. All SCI consultees are listed in the Pre-Submission Consultation Statement and the Representations Statement. WNDC will be informed of the adoption of the SCI.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1. Creating Local Development Frameworks (ODPM, November 2003)
PPS12: Local Development Frameworks (ODPM, September 2004)
Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (HMSO, September 2004)
Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives (ODPM, 2004)
Draft Statement of Community Involvement (April 2004)
Pre-Submission Statement of Community Involvement (February 2005)
Submission Statement of Community involvement (June 2005)
Pre-Submission Consultation Statement (November 2005)
Representations Statement (November 2005)
Inspector's Report - Statement of Community Involvement (January 2006)

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This document can also be made available on request in alternative formats such as Braille, large type or audiocassette. We can also arrange to provide versions in other languages.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act came into force in September 2004. The previous system of Local Plans has been replaced by a new Local Development Framework (LDF) process, consisting of a suite of Local Development Documents (LDDs). A key objective of the new planning system is to encourage more meaningful community involvement.
- 1.2 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a document which sets out the local planning authority's policy for involving the community, both in the preparation and revision of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and in significant development control decisions. A glossary of technical terms is included at Appendix A.
- 1.3 The Borough Council will tailor its community involvement to local circumstances, building upon existing networks and good practice. For example, the 'enquiry by design' approach adopted in the development of proposals for Upton can be applied to the preparation of both site-specific LDDs and planning applications. The Council has prepared corporate 'consultation guidance', and is currently working towards the preparation of a Community Involvement Strategy. When involving the community in the planning process, account will be taken of any corporate guidance and/or strategies adopted by the Borough Council.
- 1.4 Northamptonshire County Council are the minerals and waste planning authority. They will prepare a separate Statement of Community Involvement for the preparation of documents, and in development control decisions, relating to minerals and waste development.

Purpose and Benefits of Community Engagement

- 1.5 Community engagement represents a continuum of processes in which the general public and other interested parties are invited to contribute to particular proposals or policy changes. Within the constraints of the UK planning system, there are three categories of engagement (see table overleaf). The methods employed to engage the public will vary upon the objective of the engagement process.

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE
<p>Objective To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives or solutions.</p>	<p>Objective To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions.</p>	<p>Objective To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public and private concerns are consistently understood and considered.</p>

- 1.6 Benefits of community engagement:
- Resolve potential conflicts between parties up-front;
 - Introduce local skills, knowledge, experience and resources;
 - Feelings of local ownership;
 - Avoid frustration of ‘decide-announce-defend’;
 - Introduce stakeholder skills, knowledge, experience and resources;
 - Greater understanding of community and stakeholder needs and aspirations.

2. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Introduction

- 2.1 Local planning authorities should involve the community at an early stage in the preparation of LDDs. This is essential to achieve local ownership and legitimacy for the policies that will shape the future distribution of uses and development in an authority’s area. Techniques should be tailored to engage the appropriate parts of the community at the stages when their involvement is relevant and of value. A key objective of the LDF process is to work towards achieving consensus, through continuous community involvement and resolving conflicts.
- 2.2 For community involvement to be effective, there will need to be a clear understanding of the purpose of the exercise and the limits to what can be achieved within the legislative and budgetary framework set by Government.

Continuous Community Involvement

- 2.3 Specific consultation methods (see appendix C) will be used to obtain feedback at different stages in the LDF process, relating to specific types of LDD (see appendix D). The actual methods used and the community groups consulted will be tailored to reflect the community being consulted, and will vary with the LDD being produced and the type of subject or issue being consulted upon. There will also be a process of continuous involvement which will:

- inform and update the community and other bodies with regard to the LDF process;
 - maintain a dialogue with stakeholders and participants in the LDF process; and
 - promote the fact that comments and proposals are welcome at any time.
- 2.4 The 'community' is likely to be made up of many different groups, some of which are 'communities of place', and others which are 'communities of interest.' Communities of place will focus on the places where they live and work, whilst communities of interest will focus on specific issues and topics.
- 2.5 The Borough Council will use existing networks (e.g. forums, meetings) and contacts, wherever possible, to informally involve the community and stakeholders at an early stage. Where appropriate, an ongoing dialogue will be maintained, in order to inform the preparation of LDDs and to resolve any potential conflicts.

Area Partnerships

- 2.6 The Council has set up a number of Area Partnerships which are made up of ward councillors, plus other interested parties such as county or parish councillors, the Police etc. The Area Partnerships which meet about 5 times a year, have a consultative role and provide an opportunity for local people to discuss issues and future plans for the area. Northampton Borough is split into 8 Area Partnerships: 1. Northampton Central (Abington, Castle, St Crispins wards); 2. Northampton East (Billing, Ecton Brook, Lumbertubs & Thorplands wards); 3. (Kingsthorpe, St Davids, Boughton Green wards); 4. (Delapre, St James & Spencer wards); 5. (Eastfield, Headlands & Weston wards); 6. (East Hunsbury, Nene Valley & West Hunsbury wards); 7. (Kingsley & Parklands wards); 8. (New Dustin & Old Duston wards). These will be used as a key mechanism to engage local communities. Area partnerships have a key role in supporting neighbourhoods in developing their own action plans for neighbourhood renewal. The development and implementation of these action plans will provide a valuable avenue for community involvement in the LDF process. Further information on the Area Partnerships can be obtained from the Council's Meeting Services Section, or through the 'modern.gov' section of the Council's website.

Forums

- 2.7 There are a number of established Forums covering the following groups: disabled people; lesbian, gay and bisexual people; pensioners; race equality; transport users; women; and youth. These will be used as a key mechanism to engage 'hard to reach' groups. Further information can be

obtained from the Council's Meeting Services Section or through the 'modern.gov' section of the Council's website.

Citizens' Panel

- 2.8 The Borough Council currently has a People's Panel, which is used primarily for large-scale consultation exercises and the recruitment of ad hoc focus groups. It is proposed to refresh the current panel as a Citizens' Panel during the first half of 2005. The Citizens' Panel, and any focus groups, recruited from within the panel will be used, where appropriate, to engage with the community.

Access to information

- 2.9 Information relating to the LDF process will be made widely available through a variety of methods:
- Wherever possible, information will be made available both in paper and electronic formats, including on the Council's website;
 - Copies of all documents will be made available to view at local libraries, local authority offices and other buildings accessible to the public, as appropriate, such as shopping centres, supermarkets, community centres, schools, colleges, leisure centres and faith buildings;
 - All information will be available upon request in Braille, large print, translations or in audio format;
 - The planning policy email address ldf@northampton.gov.uk will offer a single point of contact;
 - Newsletter/leaflets, letters and emails raising awareness and providing updates on progress;
 - Using existing networks and contacts to disseminate information;
 - Anyone who makes a comment will be included on an electronic database and will automatically be kept informed at subsequent stages of the process.
- 2.10 The measures outlined above will assist the local planning authority to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Resolving conflicts

- 2.11 The Government has indicated that it wishes LDDs to be developed with the community to achieve a strong measure of consensus. In this way it is hoped to reduce the length and adversarial nature of Public Examinations. Resolving conflicts can be achieved through:
- engagement – process of dialogue;
 - negotiation – process of exchanging information, bargaining and compromise between parties involved;

- planning authority-led mediation (process of intervention into dispute by impartial third party) between other parties; and
- mediation by a neutral third party when the planning authority is a party to the dispute.

The Borough Council will employ appropriate methods to work towards achieving a consensus.

- 2.12 It is recognised that consensus may not always be possible. Where this cannot be achieved, the community should at least feel that the process has been legitimate, and that it has been delivered in a fair and transparent manner.

Links with Northampton Community Strategy

- 2.13 The Government identifies LDFs as one of the key mechanisms for delivering Community Strategy objectives. Many of the elements of the Community Strategy will have spatial aspects that can be addressed using the land use planning system.
- 2.14 The Northampton Community Strategy (March 2000) was prepared by the Northampton LSP. One of the themes of the Community Strategy is 'Engaging with Communities', and the opportunity exists to closely integrate the work of the Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. The LSP has a number of 'Panels' which develop the themes of the Community Strategy: Community Safety, Environment, Education, Health, Homes and Social Well-being, Economic, Leisure & Culture. These Panels will act as detailed focus/reference groups for different aspects of the LDDs. Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) groups provide regular points of access with a range of key stakeholders and will be involved in each stage of document preparation.
- 2.15 A full review of the Community Strategy is programmed for 2005. The results of that review will be fed into the LDF process. The Team Leader (Policy and Conservation), who is chair of the Environment Panel and a member of the LSP Working Group, is well placed to ensure that the LDF and Community Strategy are linked.
- 2.16 There is also a Northamptonshire Community Strategy. This is intended to inform and support Community Strategies prepared by LSPs for individual Boroughs and Districts. Account will also need to be taken of the Community Strategies of Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils, with regard to the long-term growth of Northampton.

Northamptonshire Compact

2.17 Developing relationships is fundamental to partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. Local compacts set out what the voluntary sector, local authorities and other local bodies can expect from each other. The Northamptonshire Compact, launched in December 2002, has been signed up to by the Borough Council. The Compact includes an undertaking for public bodies to provide mechanisms for the voluntary and community sectors to influence their objectives and the plans that emerge out of them.

Target Groups

2.18 If involvement is to be effective, then those groups that make up the community need to be identified. It is considered that the key target groups are:

- General public
 - Hard to reach groups
- Councillors
 - Ward members
- Businesses
- Parish Councils
- Developers/agents/landowners/Registered Social Landlords
- Providers of community infrastructure
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - Other community groups
- Central, regional & local government
 - Other Northampton Borough Council Departments
 - MKSM Growth Implementation Group
- West Northamptonshire Urban Development Corporation
- Statutory bodies and groups
- Interest groups
- Resident associations/ community groups
- Voluntary sector

2.19 A database of community bodies and stakeholders is being established to include the above groups, as well as other interested bodies and individuals. The database will be continuously updated as new groups, organisations and individuals are identified with an interest in the future planning of the Borough. Each entrant on the database will be asked in writing, either by e-mail or letter, annually to confirm their details are correct and that they wish to continue to be consulted on LDF matters. Development within the Borough can have impacts on neighbouring settlements, and therefore the Council will positively engage with these communities as well.

- 2.20 It is important to tailor consultation arrangements to the needs of the particular target group. In particular, methods should be devised to involve so-called 'hard to reach' groups, such as the elderly, the young, disabled, ethnic minorities, and residents of deprived areas. These groups have tended to be excluded from traditional consultation exercises, and more innovative approaches need to be explored in order to engage them.
- 2.21 Minimum standards for community involvement are set out by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Certain bodies must be consulted if the LPA considers that body will be affected by what is proposed to be covered in a LDD (see appendices B and B1). Other general consultation bodies may be consulted as appropriate.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.22 Local planning authorities are required to undertake Sustainability Appraisals of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The Sustainability Appraisal will incorporate the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.
- 2.23 Local planning authorities should involve the public in the Sustainability Appraisal preparation process. In particular, the Council will use the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Environment Panel as both a sounding board and steering group for the Sustainability Appraisal process.

Development Plan Document Production

- 2.24 Appendix F sets out the process for preparing Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Early community engagement will be followed by the publication of a Draft Preferred Options and Proposals document. The results of this 'pre-submission involvement' will be taken into account when the Council submits its Draft DPD to the Secretary of State. There will be a six-week period in which representations can be made, and then the DPD will be the subject of independent examination by a Planning Inspector. The purpose of the examination is to consider the 'soundness' of the DPD.

Pre-Submission Involvement

- 2.25 Early community engagement will involve consultation bodies in identifying and considering the issues and options that a DPD will need to address prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State. Decisions on which of the consultation bodies listed at Appendix B of the SCI are to be consulted at this stage will depend on the extent to which the DPD subject matter affects them or is relevant to them. There are a variety of ways in which this consultation can take place including through the publication

and circulation of a formal Issues and Options document containing questions, informal round-table workshops, and exhibitions. This will lead to the preparation of a preferred options document.

- 2.26 For the Preferred Options stage, the Regulations require the Council to publish their proposals and seek comments over a 6-week period. The pre-submission proposals document, the proposals matters and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times will be placed on the Council's website and will be made available for inspection at the Council's offices and local libraries. Notice will be given in the local newspaper of where and when the relevant material can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, the closing date for representations and where to send any representations. Copies of the draft DPD, the relevant supporting documents and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD.

Post-Submission Involvement

- 2.27 Following the pre-submission stage a 'submission' DPD will be produced and submitted to the Secretary of State. The submission document will include:
- the DPD;
 - a statement of matters;
 - a sustainability appraisal;
 - the SCI (if adopted); and
 - a pre-submission consultation statement. This document details how the Council have complied with the statement of community involvement or the minimum requirements of the Regulations at pre-submission stage. It will state who was consulted at pre-submission stage, how they were consulted, a summary of the issues raised and how the issues have been addressed.
- 2.28 A notice will be published in the local newspaper and formal comments will be invited for a period of six weeks. Copies of the DPD, the Sustainability Appraisal, Pre-Submission Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of DPD matters and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD. All those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1, which the Council considers will be affected by the DPD, will be notified of the places and times that the documents can be inspected. All documents will also be available to inspect on the website. Notice will also be given to all persons who asked to be notified of the submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State.

- 2.29 If representations are received for alternative site allocations or change to a boundary of a site these will be advertised and will be subject to a further six-week consultation period. As soon as possible after the consultation period the following information will be published on the Council's website: the representation/s, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s are available for inspection. As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will send to the DPD bodies the following information: the address of the site to which the representation/s relate, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s is available for inspection. As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will advertise in the local press: the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, and a statement of when and where the representation is available for inspection. The Secretary of State and relevant DPD bodies will be sent a statement of the number of representations made, copies of the representations, a summary of the main issues in those representations or a statement that no such representations have been made. Proposals for alternative site allocations brought to the attention of the Council at the pre-submission stage will need to be brought forward again at the submission stage in order to qualify as non-allocated alternative sites and to be included in the submission process.
- 2.30 Copies of all representations will be made available at the Council's main office and where appropriate at other places where pre-submission and submission documents are available for inspection. Where possible a list of representations received will also be available to view on the Council website. A summary of general and site allocation representations will be produced detailing number of representations made, a summary of the main issues or a statement that no such representations have been made, and this will be sent to the Secretary of State.
- 2.31 Once the DPD has been submitted to the Secretary of State an Inspector will consider the conformity of the DPD preparation process with the Council's SCI or (in the absence of an adopted SCI) the Local Development Regulations. The Planning Inspector will also determine the timescale for participation at an independent examination.
- 2.32 Following the Independent Examination, the Planning Inspector will prepare a report advising on any changes to the DPD, which are considered appropriate. The Inspector's report will be binding on the Council who will amend the DPD on the basis of the report. A six week period for legal challenge exists at this stage, after which the DPD can be

adopted and formally incorporated into the LDF. In accordance with the Local Development Regulations, as soon as reasonably practicable after adoption:

- the adopted DPD, the adoption statement and the sustainability report, will be made available for inspection during normal office hours at the places where pre-submission documents were made available;
- the adoption statement will be published in the local newspaper advertising the adoption statement and the places and times where the DPD can be inspected;
- the adoption statement will be sent to any person requesting notification of adoption of the DPD;
- the DPD and adoption statement will be sent to the Secretary of State; and
- the adoption statement will be published on the Council's website.

Core Strategy

- 2.33 The Core Strategy DPD will set out the Council's vision for the development of Northampton. The Council is preparing a Joint Core Strategy with Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils for the Northampton Implementation Area, which covers the Borough and neighbouring parts of the adjoining districts.
- 2.34 Initial community engagement will take place through consultation on an Issues and Options Report and the holding of a stakeholder event.
- 2.35 The vision for the Core Strategy should be developed in partnership with the community as a whole, using the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The Northampton Community Strategy has been developed following an extensive period of consultation. This included a stakeholder day, householder, voluntary group and business questionnaires, and consultation with the Borough Council's Peoples Panel and Community Forums. Future revisions to the Core Strategy's vision will take reviews of the Community Strategy into account. The Core Strategy will also take account of the Community Strategies prepared by the Daventry and South Northamptonshire LSPs.
- 2.36 Further community involvement will take place through the publication of a Draft Preferred Options and Proposals Document.

Development Control Policies

- 2.37 Development control policies should be developed through informal discussion with interest groups, statutory bodies, and government bodies (both local, regional and central). Consultation should also take place with the main users of the policies, i.e. developers and agents.

Site Specific Allocations

- 2.38 Housing sites will form a major component of the site-specific allocations. Consultation has been undertaken on the Urban Housing Capacity Study. However, the Study is essentially a technical document, which assesses the potential capacity for additional housing within the built-up area of the town. It does not make policy decisions regarding the relative merits of sites or consider sites outside the existing built-up area. Ongoing engagement will take place with developers and landowners who wish to promote sites for inclusion in the LDF. The Options and Proposals stage will provide the opportunity for the community and stakeholders to debate the suitability of potential allocations.

Area Action Plans

- 2.39 These LDDs will involve the greatest level of detail and provide the opportunity for greater community involvement and input. Involvement should be targeted at landowners, statutory bodies and the local community. Participatory techniques, such as Enquiry by Design, may be appropriate.

Supplementary Planning Document Production

- 2.40 Appendix G sets out the process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Draft SPDs will be subject to a six week consultation period. A process of early and continuous community involvement will lead to the preparation of the draft SPD. The draft SPD will be accompanied by:
- A statement of SPD matters;
 - A sustainability appraisal;
 - A consultation statement. This document will set out the names of any persons consulted in connection with the preparation of the document, how persons were consulted, a summary of issues raised and how the issues have been addressed. This statement of consultation will be publicly available at local libraries, local authority offices and other buildings accessible to the public, as appropriate; and
 - Any relevant supporting documentation.
- 2.41 A notice will be published in the local newspaper and formal comments on the draft SPD will be invited for a period of six weeks. The draft SPD will be available for inspection at the Council's offices and other appropriate places as listed in Paragraph 2.9 of this SCI. All those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI which the Council considers will be affected by the SPD will be sent the SPD, the Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of SPD matters, the Statement of main issues and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times. All documents will also be available to inspect on the Council's website. Representations received

will be considered and a statement produced setting out a summary of the main issues raised and how these issues will be addressed.

- 2.42 Once the Borough Council has considered representations on the draft SPD and made any changes as a result, it will adopt the document. The adopted SPD will be made available for inspection at those places where the draft SPD was available i.e. the Council's office and other appropriate places, and on the Council's website together with the statement summarising the main issues raised in the representations and how they were addressed in the SPD which it is intended to adopt and an adoption statement. The adoption statement will also be sent to all persons who asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD.
- 2.43 SPDs will take one of two forms, either site specific (e.g. conservation appraisals, development briefs), or topic-based (e.g. design guidance, parking standards). The type of consultation and the groups to be consulted will vary accordingly (see Appendix C).

Resources and Management of the Process

- 2.44 The majority of the work involved in undertaking community involvement will be the responsibility of the Planning Policy and Conservation Team. The Health and Community Involvement Division (area partnerships), and the Community Leadership Division (Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership) will also have a role to play. Local authority resources are scarce and must therefore be optimised. This applies as much to operating the planning process as it does to other areas of local authority work. There is therefore a limit to the engagement that can be undertaken. However, the budget for the LDF held by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team contains resources to undertake community involvement related to the LDF. These resources will primarily cover the following:
- staff time;
 - print and design work;
 - administration and distribution;
 - general publicity;
 - statutory publicity;
 - web page creation;
 - holding specific consultation events;
 - analysing responses;
 - and reporting back to the respondents and the wider community.
- Given the potential scale of consultation, it may be necessary or beneficial to use consultants for certain elements of this work.
- 2.45 In order to optimise scarce resources, reduce demands on consultation bodies and inform the wider agenda, opportunities will be taken to undertake joint consultation events with partners such as other Councils in West Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire County Council and West

Northamptonshire Development Corporation, and other departments of Northampton Borough Council for similar documents or issues.

Cabinet

- 2.46 The results of community involvement and key decisions relating to the LDF process will be taken by the Council's Cabinet. The Cabinet takes executive decisions and provides political leadership for the implementation of the Council's corporate strategy, other policies and budget. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council together with 5 other Councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Council. Each member of the Cabinet, including the Leader, has a portfolio of responsibilities. One of these portfolios is Economy and Infrastructure, which includes planning policy. The Cabinet meets 6 times a year. Cabinet meeting papers are available on the Council's website or at the Council's offices.

Planning Advisory Panel

- 2.47 The Borough Council has established a Planning Advisory Panel. The Panel has no decision-making powers, reporting directly to the Council's Cabinet. The role of the Panel is to ensure dialogue between the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council in the light of the future transfer of development control responsibilities to the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and to enable the three organisations to jointly assist in the development of local planning documents. The Panel will meet periodically as and when different stages of LDD preparation are reached. The Panel includes the Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Economy and Infrastructure, a representative of the Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a representative of the Borough Council's Planning Committee, a representative of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and a representative of Northamptonshire County Council.

Town Centre Commission and Town Centre Commission Steering Group

- 2.48 The Borough Council has established the Town Centre Commission to oversee the production of the Central Area Action Plan Local Development Document. The Commission is time-limited. The Commission consists of up to 150 people drawn from a wide range of organisations and bodies as well as individuals. A Town Centre Commission Steering Group has also been established with responsibility for commissioning, planning and actioning research, and compiling the Action Plan on behalf of the Commission. The Steering Group has 15 members including representatives of the Borough Council, the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northamptonshire County Council,

Northampton Local Strategic Partnership and a range of other stakeholders.

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation's Regeneration Framework

- 2.49 West Northamptonshire Development Corporation is developing a Regeneration Framework that will set out how the regeneration of West Northamptonshire will be achieved. The Regeneration Framework is being developed in two stages. The first stage is a Prospectus which sets the scene for regeneration and growth activities over the next ten years and beyond. The second stage is the preparation of a Growth Delivery Plan. This will set out what needs to be done, who does it, how it will be done and how much it will cost. The nature of community involvement in the development of the Regeneration Framework is a matter for the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation but the Borough Council encourages the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to follow the principles of community involvement set out in this Statement of Community Involvement. The Planning Advisory Panel provides a mechanism for discussing the content and preparation processes of both the Local Development Framework and the Regeneration Framework.

Standards for acknowledging and reporting back on representations

- 2.50 All representations, received by fax, letter or email, will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. All representations should include a contact postal address and telephone number, where possible. All representations will be publicly available at those places where the pre-submission or draft documents were made available, and where possible on the Council's website.
- 2.51 Representations received will be reported to the Council's Executive. Respondents will be informed of the result of the Executive meeting. A summary of all submissions received, the Council's response and resulting changes will be publicly available at those places where the pre-submission or draft documents were made available, and where possible on the Council's website.
- 2.52 As required by the Local Development Regulations the Secretary of State will be sent the following:
- a statement of the number of representations made;
 - copies of all the representations; and
 - a summary of the main issues raised in those representations, or a statement that no such representations have been made.

3. CONSULTATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is required to set out the Council's policy for consulting the community on planning applications. It also encourages developers to undertake pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant applications. The Council will not be able to refuse to accept a valid application because it disagrees with the way in which a developer has consulted the community, but failure by the developer to consult could lead to objections being made which could be material to the determination. The aim of the process should be to encourage discussion before a formal application is made and therefore to avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage.
- 3.2 The Borough Council will not be responsible for determining all planning applications within the Borough. The County Council are responsible for determining certain categories of planning applications, including waste and minerals developments, and operational developments on land in their ownership. An Urban Development Corporation (UDC) has been established for West Northamptonshire. The UDC will have powers to determine significant applications within specific strategic locations. The exact details of the thresholds defining significant applications and the strategic locations are still to be agreed.

Publicity required by law

- 3.3 The Council is required by law to give publicity to all planning applications. The following table sets out the required publicity for various categories of applications:

Type of Development	Publicity required
Development where the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement	Notice in local newspaper and site notice
Departure from the Development Plan	
Development affecting a public right of way	
Major development*	Notice in local newspaper and either site notice or neighbour notification
Other development	Site notice or neighbour notification
Development affecting the setting of a listed building	Notice in local newspaper and either site notice or neighbour notification

Development affecting the character or appearance of a conservation area	Notice in local newspaper and either site notice or neighbour notification
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*Major development is defined as:

- a) For residential development, 10 or more dwellings, or if the number of dwellings is not known where the site area is 0.5 hectares or more;
- b) For other uses, where the floorspace is 1000 square metres or more, or the site area is 1 hectare or more.

3.4 Applications for listed building consent and conservation area consent are also subject to mandatory publicity by notice in a local newspaper and a site notice.

3.5 Developers are required to publicise applications in the following situations;

- a) Where an environmental statement is submitted after the application;
- b) Where a developer may apply in advance for a determination as to whether the Council's prior approval is required for certain details of the development. *At the present time this includes certain types of development for agriculture, forestry and for the demolition of dwellings.*

In case (b), the Council requires that a site notice is posted. In both cases, developers have to complete a certificate to confirm that appropriate publicity has been carried out.

3.6 To notify neighbours for all applications the Council must either put up a site notice or notify adjoining owners/occupiers. The Council has decided that neighbour notification letters are the best means of publicising applications. It is the most effective method where small numbers of residents are likely to be affected by a development and it enables those who are unable to see a notice, such as the housebound, to express their views. As all applications must be given publicity, the adjoining owners/occupiers will not always be local residents. Adjoining factory owners, schools and so on may also need to be notified at the same time.

3.7 In addition, parish councils, residents associations and local community groups are notified on individual applications in their areas. Parish Councils outside of the area in which the application is located may also be notified if, in the opinion of the case officer, the development is likely to have a wider impact. The period of notice for these groups will be the same as for neighbour notification.

Procedures

Period of Notice

- 3.8 It is a statutory requirement that the following periods of notice be given:

Method of Publicity	Period of Notice
Notice in a local newspaper	21 days from date of publication (statutory requirement is 14 days)
Site notice	21 days beginning with the date that the notice was first displayed
Neighbour notification	21 days beginning with the day on which the notification was delivered

How to reply to notifications

- 3.9 Planning applications are available for inspection at the Northampton Borough Council offices at Cliftonville and the Guildhall. The offices are open between 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. from Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 am to 4.30 p.m. on Fridays. All new applications, including accompanying Community Involvement Submissions, will be available to view online on the Council's website (www.northampton.gov.uk). The Council is working towards providing online access to all applications submitted prior to 2005.
- 3.10 As the parish council clerk is sent a copy of every application in their parish, local viewing may be possible by arrangement.
- 3.11 The Council operates a 'duty rota' system, whereby an officer from the Development Control section will be available to offer advice or answer questions. The officer dealing with the case may not always be available without prior appointment.
- 3.12 As a general rule planning applications are approved unless there are sound planning reasons for refusal. However, permission can be granted subject to conditions to make the development more acceptable.
- 3.13 Any comments that are made in response to a planning application will be placed on the application file. The file is available for public inspection and the applicant will be able to see what comments have been made.
- 3.14 Comments on a planning application should be made in writing or by e-mail within the timescale indicated. Respondents will be encouraged to submit comments by e-mail where they have this facility. All representations (whether for or against the development) will be taken into account when the decision is taken. Anonymous letters will not however

- be considered. All letters that comment on applications will be acknowledged.
- 3.15 Some development is “permitted” by the government under the General Permitted Development Order. A Council cannot control this type of development, no matter how strong or valid a neighbour’s objection may be to it. Examples of “permitted development” include some extensions to dwellings and the erection of boundary walls and fences below certain heights.

How the decision is taken

- 3.16 A decision whether or not to grant planning permission can be taken either by the Planning Committee, or by the Head of Planning, Transportation and Regeneration under delegated powers given by the Committee.
- 3.17 The Planning Committee meets every four weeks on Wednesday evenings, starting at 6.00 p.m. The Councillors have a written report on each application that is being considered, which includes details of how many letters have been received, and a précis of the main points they raise. Should a letter be received after the written report has been prepared, the main points will be summarised within a late addendum.
- 3.18 To increase opportunities for public involvement in the planning process the Council allows the Committee to be addressed by members of the public - a maximum of two people in favour of the application, two against, together with the relevant ward councillor(s) and a representative of the Parish Council.

After the decision

- 3.19 Everyone who has written to the Council about a planning application will be informed of the decision as soon as possible – normally within a week. The applicant/agent will receive a decision notice dealing conditions and reasons for approval or reasons for refusal. Everyone else who has written to the Council will be informed of the decision only. A copy of the decision notice is kept on file and is available to view at the Council’s offices.
- 3.20 An applicant does have a right of appeal to the Secretary of State against either a refusal of planning permission or against conditions. An appeal by the applicant must be lodged within 3 months of the decision. If there is an appeal we will write to you to inform you, and you will then have the chance to make further representations to the Inspector who is handling the appeal. We will also inform all individuals/organisations that wrote in on the original application that an appeal has been submitted.

Community Involvement Exercises

- 3.21 The Council considers that developers have a key role to play in engaging with local communities and helping them to understand what is proposed, listening to concerns and engaging in dialogue to seek to resolve these. Carrying out a Community Involvement Exercise is not a mandatory requirement when submitting a planning application, but the Council sincerely believes that genuine engagement with the surrounding community before the submission of a formal application can be beneficial for all those involved. Developers should contact the Council before commencing a Community Involvement Exercise to agree the scope of the exercise and the methods that will be employed. Appendix E includes a list of possible methods of community involvement.
- 3.22 Community involvement is the process of:
- a) explaining proposals to residents, workers and users of the area around the site of the proposed development;
 - b) requesting the views of people in the community;
 - c) considering those views;
 - d) where appropriate, amending the proposals to take the views of the community into account.
- 3.23 The Council considers that a genuine Community Involvement Exercise can:
- a) provide an ideal opportunity for an explanation of proposals before minds are up on the basis of possibly inaccurate information;
 - b) potentially save time in obtaining a decision on a planning application;
 - c) produce more certainty about the outcome;
 - d) increase transparency;
 - e) create a more acceptable development;
 - f) avoid appeals and call-in procedures.
- 3.24 A large range of proposals could benefit from Community Involvement. These are set out below along with the thresholds beyond which a Community Involvement Exercise should be completed.

Type of Proposal	Threshold
<u>Industrial and commercial development</u> New build and change of use in or adjacent to residential areas	1500 square metres or above
<u>Residential development</u>	100 dwellings or sites of 3 hectares or above

<u>Major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines or overhead power lines</u>	All proposals
<u>New educational or institutional buildings</u>	All proposals for new sites Extensions of 1000 square metres or above

NB. Not all applications will be determined by the Borough Council. The County Council and the Urban Development Corporation will have responsibility for certain types of applications (see paragraph 3.2 of SCI).

- 3.25 The Council considers that there are three stages to completing a Community Involvement Exercise:
- 1) Carry out a Community Involvement Appraisal to determine the nature and extent of the Exercise
 - 2) Carry out the Community Involvement Exercise
 - 3) Complete a Community Involvement Submission to record the Community Involvement Exercise and the outcome.

4. PLANNING AID

- 4.1 East Midlands Planning Aid (contact details below) is a voluntary service linked to the RTPi offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups. Planning Aid enables local communities, particularly those with limited resources, to participate effectively in planning matters. The current remit of Planning Aid involves advising community groups in negotiations with the local planning authority, and, if necessary, representing the groups at Examination. As part of the expansion of Planning Aid promoted by the Government, a proactive community planning service is being developed within the East Midlands. This will target 'hard to reach' groups and might include training on aspects of the planning system ('capacity building'), and assisting communities to develop their own strategies for shaping their areas. The Borough Council will work with East Midlands Planning Aid to explore ways in which they can assist in facilitating community engagement.

EAST MIDLANDS PLANNING AID

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East Midlands Planning Aid Service
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Nottingham
NG1 2NA
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emco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

5. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.1 The Borough Council will monitor the success of community involvement techniques and use the results to review methods to be used in the future. After consultation exercises, the Council will seek feedback from participants about the process and the ways in which they could be involved in the future. In addition, an analysis will be undertaken of those who responded to the consultation to see whether there are any patterns or obvious gaps. This may help to pinpoint any groups that were not reached by the methods used.

6. PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 set out the procedures that must be undertaken as part of the process of adopting the SCI. The first stage in the process is the 'Pre-submission Draft' stage.
- 6.2 The local planning authority is required to publish a notice and invite representations within a six-week period on the "Pre-Submission Draft SCI". Certain specified bodies, including the Regional Assembly, adjoining authorities, parish councils, County Council and the Highways Agency, must be consulted. A copy of the draft SCI, and other related information, is to be published on the Council's website and made available for public inspection at Council offices and other appropriate locations (e.g. libraries).
- 6.3 A revised version (the "Submission SCI") will be submitted to the Secretary of State. There will be a six-week period in which representations can be made. The SCI will be the subject of independent examination by a Planning Inspector. The purpose of the examination is to consider the 'soundness' of the SCI. Further details of the examination process are contained in Planning Policy Statement 12 'Local Development Frameworks'. This can be viewed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website (www.odpm.gov.uk).

7. USEFUL WEBSITES

Guidance on the planning system in general at the [UK Planning Portal](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk):
www.planningportal.gov.uk

National planning policy, including Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), at the [Office of the Deputy Prime Minister](http://www.odpm.gov.uk): www.odpm.gov.uk

Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands to 2021 at the [East Midlands Regional Assembly](http://www.emra.gov.uk) and the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-regional Strategy, at the East Midlands Regional Assembly: www.emra.gov.uk

Guidance on regional planning matters, at the Government Office for the East Midlands: www.go-em.gov.uk

Information on the planning system and on Planning Aid at the Royal Town Planning Institute: www.rtpi.org.uk

Information on rural issues: www.countryside.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Area Action Plan (AAP) Provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) Assesses the implementation of the LDS and extent to which the policies in LDDs are being achieved.

Community Strategy The Local Government Act 2000 requires local authorities to prepare a Community Strategy. It sets out the broad vision for the future of the local authority's area and proposals for delivering that vision.

Core Strategy Sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area and the strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.

Development Control Policies A suite of criteria-based policies which are required to ensure that all development within the area meets the vision and strategy set out in the core strategy.

Development Plan Document (DPD) Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination. There will be a right for those making representations seeking change to be heard at an independent examination.

Engagement Entering into a deliberative process of dialogue with others, actively seeking and listening to their views and exchanging ideas, information and opinions. Unlike 'mediation' or 'negotiation' engagement can occur without there being a dispute to resolve.

Enquiry by Design This process helps reach agreement between groups that would normally hold differing aspirations by bringing them together and focusing on the sustainability and quality of the urban environment itself. All concerns - technical, political, environmental and social - are tested and challenged by the design itself, so that the design leads the process and doesn't follow it.

Local Development Framework (LDF) Comprises a portfolio of local development documents which will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

Local Development Document (LDD) A document that forms part of the Local Development Framework. Can either be a Development Plan Document or a Supplementary Planning Document.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) Sets out the programme for the preparation of the local development documents. Must be submitted to Secretary of State for approval within six months of the commencement date of the Act regardless of where they are in terms of their current development plan

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Non-statutory, non-executive body bringing together representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors. The LSP is responsible for preparing the Community Strategy.

Mediation Intervention into a dispute by an acceptable impartial neutral person whose role it is to assist the parties in dispute to reach their own mutually acceptable settlement. It is essentially a voluntary procedure, its proceedings are confidential to the participants; any settlement however can be made public with the agreement of all parties.

Negotiation Process of reaching consensus by exchanging information, bargaining and compromise that goes on between two or more parties with some shared interests and conflicting interests. Negotiation is likely to be part of the process of mediation, but can also happen outside of any formal mediation and without the assistance of a neutral person.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) The Government department with responsibility for planning and local government.

Public participation - Public participation is a process led by the planning authority. The planners try to anticipate the needs of the public and to synthesise them into a plan that meets the needs of everyone, while also conforming to national policy. It involves a series of formal stages beginning with exploration of issues and ending with a plan. The flow of information is mainly from the planners to the public, who are given opportunities to comment.

Planning Aid Voluntary provision by planners of free and independent professional advice on planning to individuals or groups unable to afford to pay for the full costs of such advice. Planning Aid includes the provision of training so that its clients can be empowered through better understanding of how the planning system works and the development of skills that enable them to present their own case more effectively.

Proposals Map Illustrates the policies and proposals in the development plan documents and any saved policies that are included in the local development framework.

Public consultation A process through which the public is informed about proposals fashioned by a planning authority or developer and invited to submit comments on them.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) A generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment' of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Policy guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in development plan documents. They will not form part of the development plan or be subject to independent examination. (Formally known as Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG)

Sustainability Appraisal An Appraisal to ensure that all policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents (DPD) reflect sustainable development objectives. This will be carried out at the same time as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Site specific allocations and policies Allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

APPENDIX B – CONSULTATION AS SPECIFIED BY PLANNING REGULATIONS

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 state that certain bodies must be consulted if the LPA considers that body will be affected by what is proposed to be covered in a LDD. In Northampton Borough, these bodies will comprise:

East Midlands Regional Assembly; East Midlands Development Agency;

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

Northamptonshire County Council; South Northamptonshire Council; Borough Council of Wellingborough; Daventry District Council; Parish Councils in Northampton Borough; all Parish Councils that adjoin Northampton Borough Council;

Environment Agency; Countryside Agency; English Nature;

Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)

Strategic Rail Authority; Strategic Health Authority; Highways Agency;

Owners or controllers of electronic communication apparatus in the area or to whom the Electronic Communication Code applies

Relevant electricity and gas companies

Relevant sewerage and water undertakers

The Borough Council must also consult, as they consider appropriate:

Voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area

Bodies representing the interests of:

- *Different racial, ethnic or national groups in the area;*
- *Different religious groups in the area;*
- *Disabled persons in the area;*
- *Persons carrying on business in the area.*

APPENDIX B1 – CONSULTATION ADVISED BY PPS12

PPS12 'Local Development Frameworks' states that local planning authorities should also consider the need to consult, where appropriate the following agencies and organisations in the preparation of local development documents:

Age Concern

Airport operators

British Chemical Distributors and Traders Association

British Geological Survey

British Waterways, canal owners and navigation authorities

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

Chambers of Commerce, Local CBI and local branches of Institute of Directors

Church Commissioners

Civil Aviation Authority

Coal Authority

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Commission for New Towns and English Partnerships

Commission for Racial Equality

Crown Estate Office

Defence Estates

Department of Constitutional Affairs

Department for Work and Pensions

Diocesan Board of Finance

Disability Rights Commission

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Electricity, Gas and Telecommunications Undertakers, the National Grid Company, and High Pressure Fuel Pipeline Operators

Environmental groups at national, regional and local level, including:

- i. Council for the Protection of Rural England;
- ii. Friends of the Earth;
- iii. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and Wildlife Trusts

Equal Opportunities Commission

Fire and Rescue Services

Forestry Commission

Freight Transport Association

Government Office for the East Midlands, representing:

- i. Department for Education and Skills;
- ii. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- iii. Department for Transport;
- iv. Department for Health;
- v. Department for Trade and Industry;
- vi. Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- vii. Home Office;
- viii. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Gypsy Council

Health and Safety Executive

Help the Aged

Housing Corporation

Learning and Skills Councils

Local Agenda 21 including:

- i. Civic Societies;
- ii. Community Groups;
- iii. Local Transport Authorities;
- iv. Local Transport Operators; and
- v. Local Race Equality Councils and other local equality groups

National Playing Fields Association

Network Rail

Office of Government Commerce

Police Architectural Liaison Officers/ Crime Prevention Design Advisors

Post Office Property Holdings

Rail Companies and the Rail Freight Group

Regional Development Agencies

Regional Housing Boards

Regional Sports Boards

Road Haulage Association

Sport England

The House Builders Federation

Traveller Law Reform Coalition

Water Companies

Women's National Commission

The following agencies and organisations are not referred to in PPS12 but the Borough Council will also consider the need to consult them, where appropriate, in the preparation of local development documents:

Northampton Primary Care Trust

Theatres Trust

APPENDIX C – CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT METHODS

These techniques will need to be tailored to engage appropriate members of the community.

Area Partnerships

Make presentation and/or hold meeting at Area Partnerships.

Distribution of Draft Documents

Distribution to key identified groups and organisations.

Existing networks

There are a range of existing meetings and forums, which can be tapped into, including LSP Panels, Parish Councils/Community Forums. There are a number of Forums covering particular sections of the community (e.g. disabled, pensioners) which can be used to engage 'hard to reach' groups.

Focus Groups

Made up of local people to discuss planning issues, focus groups need not be representative of the general population, perhaps involving a particular citizen group only. LSP Environment Panel could be used as a detailed focus/reference group. In addition, focus groups could be recruited from the Council's Citizens Panel.

Full media briefing

Press releases, newspaper articles and advertisements and briefings for local radio/TV and Northampton Chronicle.

Internet

All information relating to the LDF process will be made available on the Council's website (www.northampton.gov.uk). The website can also be used as an interactive medium to invite email responses from members of the public.

Meetings

A traditional method of informing the public usually with a platform of councillors and/or officers and based on an open invitation to members of the public to attend.

Newsletter

To ensure that the whole community is informed at key stages of LDD preparation, we will distribute in paper form newsletters that will explain the LDF process and set out progress in the preparation of LDDs.

Articles will be placed in 'Northampton Now!' the Council's newsletter for local residents. Concordia, intranet and Core Brief will be used for internal Borough Council consultation.

Neighbourhood Action Plans

Neighbourhood Action Plans are developed by neighbourhoods, supported by Area Partnerships, for neighbourhood renewal. They will cover six themes: tackling worklessness; improving health; reducing crime, creating safer neighbourhoods; raising educational achievement; improving housing quality; and improving the physical environment. The development and implementation of neighbourhood action plans will provide a valuable avenue for community involvement in the LDF process.

Parish Plans

Parish Plans are an initiative of the Countryside Agency. They are prepared by parish councils and are a statement of how the community sees itself developing over the next few years.

Public exhibitions

Public exhibition of proposals at appropriate locations, with officers on hand at to answer questions.

Quality of Life Assessment

Quality of Life Assessment is a tool for maximising environmental, economic and social benefits as part of any land-use planning or management decision. Promoted by the Countryside Agency, English Heritage, English Nature, and the Environment Agency, it reflects the Government's integrated approach to sustainable development.

Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements are an initiative of the Countryside Agency. They are produced by communities to identify local character and set out design guidance to help guide new development.

Workshops/seminars

Key stakeholder workshop to discuss key issues of Core Strategy or single issue LDDs (e.g. phasing, affordable housing, flood risk).

'Enquiry by Design' type workshops to consider detailed site-specific proposals.

APPENDIX D – CONSULTATION METHOD MATRIX

TARGET GROUPS

	Core Strategy DPD/ Development Control DPD	Site-specific allocations/ policies DPD	Action Area Plan DPD	Topic DPD	Site-specific SPD
General Public	Website Media Public exhibitions Focus group	Website Media Area Partnerships	Website Media Area Partnerships	Website Media	Website Media
Hard to reach groups	Forums Public exhibitions	Forums Public exhibitions	Forums Public exhibitions	Forums	Forums Public exhibitions
Councillors	Stakeholder workshop Scrutiny committee	Scrutiny committee	Scrutiny committee	Scrutiny committee	Scrutiny committee
Ward members	Stakeholder workshop	Draft documents Area Partnerships	Enquiry by Design workshops		Enquiry by Design workshops
Businesses	Stakeholder workshop	Draft documents	Enquiry by Design workshops		
Parish councils	Stakeholder workshop	Meetings	Enquiry by Design workshops	Draft documents	Meetings
Developers/ landowners/ Agents	Stakeholder workshop Draft documents	Meetings	Enquiry by Design workshops	Draft documents	Public exhibitions Meetings
Central, regional & local government	Stakeholder workshop Draft documents	Draft documents	Draft documents	Draft documents	Draft documents
Other NBC Departments	Concordia Intranet/ Core Brief Informal discussion	Concordia Intranet/ Core Brief Informal discussion	Concordia Intranet/ Core Brief Informal discussion	Concordia Intranet/ Core Brief Informal discussion	Concordia Intranet/ Core Brief Informal discussion
Statutory bodies	Stakeholder workshop Draft documents	Draft documents Meetings	Enquiry by Design workshops	Draft documents	Draft documents Meetings
Interest groups	Stakeholder workshop		Enquiry by Design workshops	Draft documents Meetings	Enquiry by Design workshops
Resident associations	Stakeholder workshop	Area Partnerships	Enquiry by Design workshops		Enquiry by Design workshops

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT EXERCISE**Stage One: Community Involvement Appraisal**

Details of the proposed development	
Description of proposed development	
Location of proposed development	
Size of site/ floor area of development	
Name of person completing this form	
Address	
Phone number	
Email address	

Effects of the proposed development on the surrounding area

Possible effect	Positive/ negative effect	Explain briefly what the effect will be
Access arrangements		
Car parking		
Nature conservation		
Listed buildings		
Conservation Area		
Protected species		

Ancient monuments and archaeological sites		
Scale of development		
Effect on trees		
Traffic generation		
Public right of Way		
Noise and disturbance		
Use in unsocial hours		
Human health		
Odours		
Height/mass or density of development		
Attraction of crowds		
Pollution potential		
Employment potential		
Ground conditions		
Disruption during construction		

Surface water drainage or flooding problems		
Other Significant effects (please state)		

Defining the extent of the community that may be affected.

1. The immediate area

List of streets/roads:

2. The wider area

List settlements:

3. Particular community interest (e.g. important views, public transport, school places, employment etc.)

Please list:

Identification of the best ways of informing the community about the proposals (Tick appropriate boxes)	
	Circulate letter and statement in the locality explaining proposals with plans or diagrams
	Circulate specially prepared leaflet
	Arrange exhibition and invite local people
	Arrange press release/advertisement in local newspapers
	Arrange public meetings
	Arrange meetings with particular groups in community
	Arrange a Citizens workshop/forum
Additional measures (please specify)	

Council ward members, parish councils and residents' associations

It is important that Council ward members, parish councils and residents' associations are made aware of development proposals in their area. Members of the Council's Planning Committee could also be informed of development proposals in the same way as their ward colleagues, but they should not be requested to discuss or give their views on proposals because this would prevent them taking part in determining the subsequent planning application.

Note that development proposals may affect more than one ward. For example a site may cross or adjoin ward boundaries, or the site may be in one ward but the community likely to be affected is in the adjoining ward.

Ward members should be informed of proposals no later than the community and preferably in advance.

Information on ward boundaries and representatives can be obtained from the Council's Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Division.

Details of the Council Members you have informed

Name of Councillor	Name of Ward	Date Informed

Details of Parish Councils, and Residents' Associations you have informed

Name of Contact	Name of Parish Council/Residents' Association	Date Informed

Stage Two: The nature and extent of the Community Involvement Exercise

Carry out the Exercise you have decided on. Remember to:

- a) give adequate advance publicity to exhibitions, meetings or events)
keep a record of which addresses contacted and the information sent;
- b) keep a copy of all press advertisements, press releases and notices;
- c) keep a record of those attending exhibitions and (if possible) meetings;
- d) retain all comments slips filled in by people attending exhibitions or meetings;
- e) advise local planning authority of dates of meetings.

Stage Three: Complete a Community Involvement Submission

The purpose of this submission is to record what you did and what the outcome was.

Please complete:

1. How was the Community informed about the proposals?

2. Summary of responses received from community:

Number of responses

Number generally in favour

Number of objections

(please provide copies of comments and addresses of respondents)

Main points of objection:

Other matters raised:

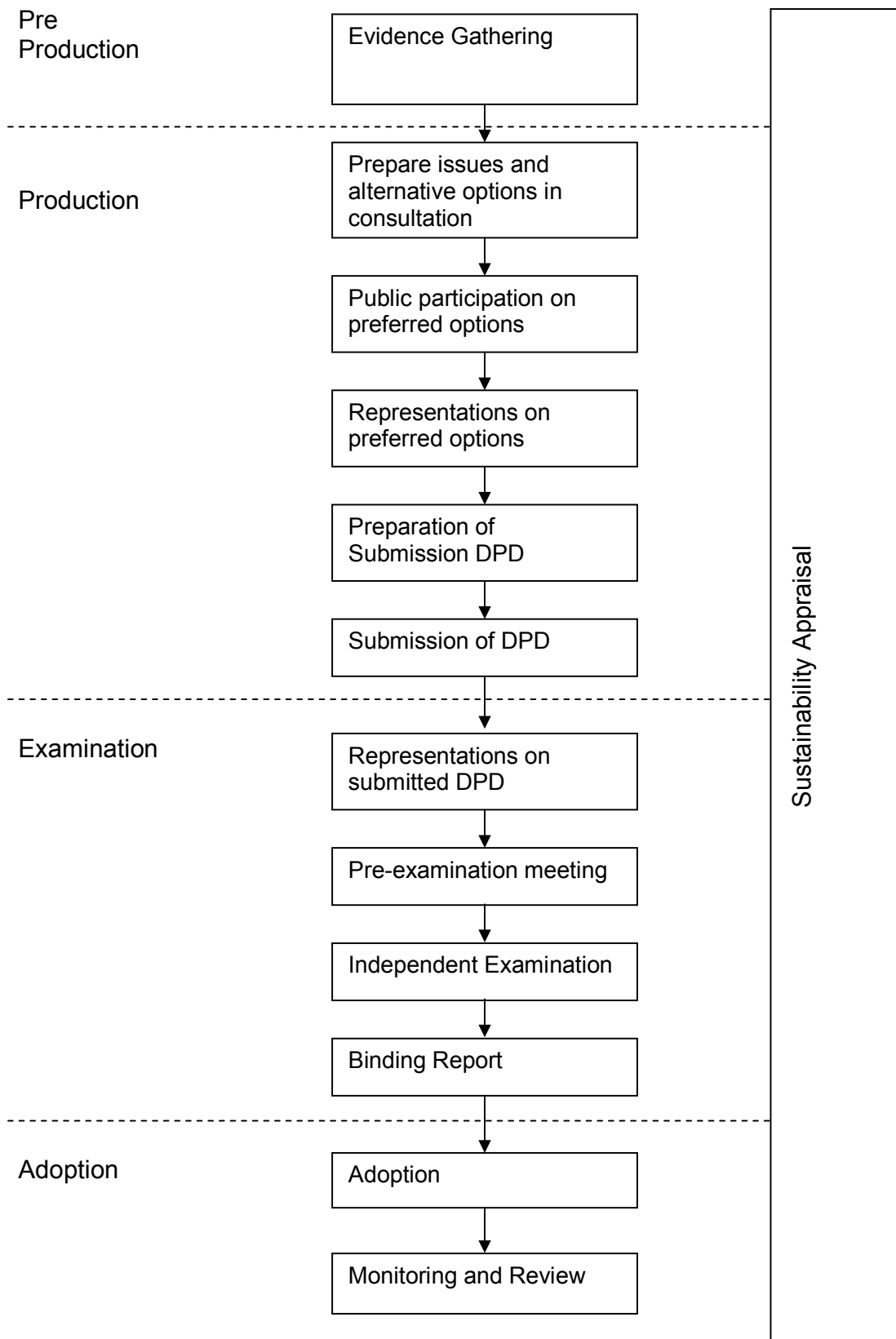
Your comments on the responses received:

Amendments made as a result of Community response

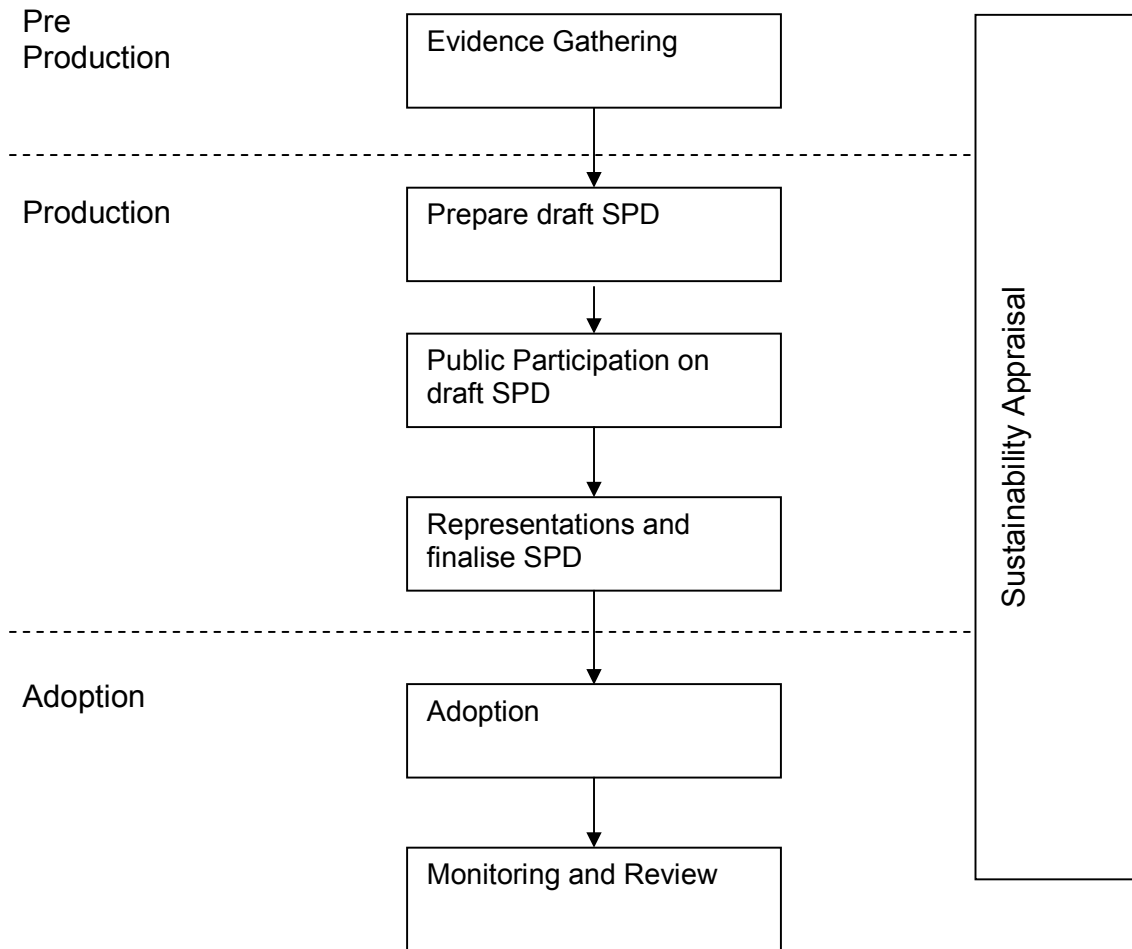
What to do next

Send in a completed copy of your Community Involvement Report with your planning application. This will enable those deciding your application to understand the steps you have taken to engage with the local community.

APPENDIX F - DPD Process



APPENDIX G - SPD Process



INSPECTOR'S REPORT
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Inspector: Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Date: 12th January 2006

Northampton Borough Council - Statement of Community Involvement (June 2005)

INSPECTOR'S REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 An independent examination of the Northampton Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been carried out in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Following paragraph 3.10 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, the examination has been based on the 9 tests set out (see Appendix A). The starting point for the assessment is that the SCI is sound. Accordingly changes are made in this binding report only where there is clear need in the light of tests in PPS12.
- 1.2 A total of 25 representations were received all of which have been considered. Clarification was sought from the Council in relation to Test iv and the response received has been taken into account in preparing this report (see Appendix B).

Test 1

- 2.1 The Council has undertaken the consultation required by under Regulations 25, 26 and 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. This is confirmed in the Council's pre-submission consultations and representations statements.
- 2.2 This test is met.

Test 2

- 3.1 Paragraph 2.13 of the SCI acknowledges that the LDF is a way of delivering the aims of the Community Strategy, and recognises the links between the Community Strategy and the LDF. Reference is made at Paragraph 2.14 to the existing groups set up by the Local Strategic Partnership, and the SCI explains that these groups will be used during the preparation of the LDDs.
- 3.2 This test is met.

Test 3

- 4.1 The Council has set down in Appendix B of the SCI those groups which will be consulted in the preparation of the DPDs. This list includes the statutory bodies from PPS12 Annex E. The Council will consult with bodies where appropriate, and propose to keep a database of consultation bodies and stakeholders to be updated as new groups, organisations and individuals are identified.
- 4.2 This test is met.

Test 4

- 4.3 Paragraphs 2.23 to 2.25 of the SCI failed to set out clearly the early stages of DPD preparation, and the Council was asked clarify the consultation they propose to undertake during the preparation of the preferred options, in accordance with Regulation 25. Whilst the Council's reply (dated 6th January 2006) makes reference to the possibility of consultation at the issues and options stage, the Council goes on to say that the Regulations "do not require the inclusion of an issues and options stage", and that an issue and options stage will not be appropriate for all DPDs.
- 4.4 Whilst I accept that the Regulations do not make specific reference to an "issues and options stage", the term is used throughout PPS12 and the Companion Guide (ODPM, 2004). In particular, Figure 4.1 of PPS12 sets out clearly the need for consultation (described as "ongoing engagement") during the preparation of "issues and alternative options" in accordance with Regulation 25. This is a necessary part of the DPD preparation process and is distinct from the consultation required under Regulation 26 of the legislation. This is explained in Paragraph 4.3 of the PPS12 Companion Guide, and also in Paragraph 3 of the attached letter (see Appendix C of this report) from ODPM which relates specifically to SCIs but is equally relevant to all DPDs. By failing to distinguish between the consultation required under Regulation 25 and that required under Regulation 26, the approach proposed by the Council in their SCI and in their response to my letter of the 2nd December 2005, fails to accord with that set out in PPS12 and the Companion Guide (ODPM, 2004). Whilst I accept the Council's reply that Paragraph 2.26 makes reference to the consultation bodies listed under Regulation 25, this is in the context of the consultation required under Regulation 26 and not 25.
- 4.5 On this basis I am unable to conclude that the SCI meets Test iv. In order to meet this Test the SCI should be amended in accordance with recommendation R1 set out below.
- 4.6 In relation to Test iv, the Council was asked to revise the Diagrams in Appendices F and G to clarify the stages in DPD and SPD preparation. These were provided (Council's Letter 6th January 2006) and I recommend that the SCI be amended accordingly.

Recommendations

(R1) Delete paragraphs 2.24 and 2.25 and under the heading "Pre-submission Involvement" insert the following before Paragraph 2.26:

"Early community engagement will involve consultation bodies in identifying and considering the issues and options that a DPD will need to address prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State. Decisions on which of the consultation bodies listed at Appendix B of the SCI are to be consulted at this stage will depend on the extent to which the DPD subject matter affects them or is relevant to them. There are a variety of ways in which this consultation can take place including through the publication and circulation of a formal Issues and Options document containing questions, informal round-table

workshops, and exhibitions. This will lead to the preparation of a preferred options document.”

(R2) That the diagrams in Appendix F and Appendix G of the SCI be deleted and replaced with those at Appendix D of this report.

Test 5

6.1 In Appendix C of the SCI the Council usefully identify and define the different types of consultation and involvement methods that they may employ during DPD preparation. These cover a range of recognised techniques that will enable community consultation and involvement through a range of different media. The Consultation Matrix in Appendix D of the SCI sets out the methods appropriate for the different types of DPDs and the different groups to be consulted. The SCI acknowledges that consultation may have to be tailored to the needs of certain groups or individuals (Paragraph 2.19) and (Paragraph 2.7) explains how existing Forums covering such groups will be used.

6.2 This test is met

Test 6

7.1 Paragraph 2.44 acknowledges that the Local Authority’s resources are limited, but that the budget for the LDF contains resources to undertake community involvement.

7.2 This test is met.

Test 7

8.1 Paragraphs 2.45 to 2.48 explain how the results of community involvement will be taken into account by the Council and used to inform decisions. However, the Council were asked to clarify who makes up the Council’s Executive referred to at Paragraph 2.45. On the basis of the Council’s reply I recommend the SCI be amended accordingly.

8.2 Subject to the following recommendations, this test is met.

(R3) Amend Paragraph 2.45 in accordance with the following:

- delete the heading of this paragraph and replace with “Cabinet”.
- delete the word “Executive” in Paragraph 2.45 and replace with “Cabinet”.
- insert the following text after Paragraph 2.45, “The Cabinet takes executive decisions and provides political leadership for the implementation of the Council’s corporate strategy, other policies and budget. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council together with 5 other Councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Council. Each member of the Cabinet, including the Leader, has a portfolio of responsibilities. One of these portfolios is Economy and

Infrastructure, which includes planning policy. The Cabinet meets 6 times a year. Cabinet meeting papers are available on the Council's website or at the Council's offices."

Test 8

9.1 Paragraph 5.1 explains clearly the Council's proposals for monitoring and reviewing the success of community involvement techniques.

9.2 This test is met.

Test 9

10.1 The SCI at Section 3 clearly describes the Council's policy for consultation on planning applications.

10.2 This test is met.

Conclusions

10.3 The Council have set out in their Regulation 31 Representations Statement (October 2005) a number of proposed changes to the SCI in response to representations received on the submission document. These suggested amendments do not affect the substance of the SCI but (with the exception of the change proposed for Paragraph 5.5) they do improve the clarity and transparency of the submission SCI. I therefore recommend that they be included and I set out the recommendations below.

10.4 In addition, the Council proposed a number of amendments in response to further information submitted during the examination by the Government Office for the East Midlands which is provided as Appendix E of this report. I set out below a recommendation (R4) in relation to these amendments

10.5 Subject to amendments in accordance with the recommendations set out in this report, the Northampton Borough Council SCI (June 2005) is sound.

Recommendations

R4) That the SCI be modified in accordance with the amendments set out in Appendix E to this Report.

R5) Add to Appendix B1 Defence Estates, Department for Work and Pensions, Office of Government Commerce, Department of Constitutional Affairs; and other consultees not referred to in PPS12, including the Theatres Trust and Northampton Primary Care Trust.

R6) Amend Appendix B of the SCI to include "West Northamptonshire Development Corporation", and all Parish Councils that adjoin Northampton Borough Council.

R7) Include a new sentence after the first sentence of Paragraph 3.7 to read: "Parish Councils outside of the area in which the application is located may also be notified if, in the opinion of the case officer, the development is likely to have a wider impact."

R8) Include sentences at beginning of Paragraph 2.6 to read: "The Council has set up a number of Area Partnerships which are made up of ward councillors, plus other interested parties such as county or parish councillors, the Police etc. The Area Partnerships, which meet about 5 times a year, have a consultative role and provide an opportunity for local people to discuss issues and future plans for the area."

R9) The following sentence should be inserted as the second sentence in Paragraph 2.41: "The draft SPD will be available for inspection at the Council's offices and other appropriate places as listed in Paragraph 2.9 of this SCI."

R10) The following text should be inserted after "available" and before "and" in the second sentence of Paragraph 2.42: "i.e. the Council's office and other appropriate places,".

R11) The third sentence of Paragraph 2.41 should be amended to read: "All those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI which the Council considers will be affected by the SPD will be sent the SPD, the Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of SPD matters, the Statement of main issues and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times."

R12) The second sentence of Paragraph 2.26 should be amended to read: "The pre-submission proposals document, the proposals matters and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times will be placed on the Council's website and will be made available for inspection at the Council's offices and local libraries."

R13) The last sentence of Paragraph 2.26 should be amended to read: "Copies of the draft DPD, the relevant supporting documents and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD."

R14) For clarity the following sentence should be included in Paragraph 2.28: "Copies of the DPD, the Sustainability Appraisal, Pre-Submission Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of DPD matters and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD."

R15) For clarity an additional sentence should be added to the end of Paragraph 2.28 that states: "Notice will also be given to all persons who asked to be notified of the submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State."

R16) For clarity a new second sentence should be included in Paragraph 2.29 that reads: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the following information will be published on the Council's website: the representation/s, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and

person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s are available for inspection."

R17) For clarity a new third sentence, after the new second sentence, should be included in Paragraph 2.29 to read: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will send to the DPD bodies the following information: the address of the site to which the representation/s relate, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s is available for inspection."

R18) For clarity a new fourth sentence, after the new third sentence, should be included in Paragraph 2.29 to read: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will advertise in the local press: the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, and a statement of when and where the representation is available for inspection."

R19) The following additional bullet point should be added to Paragraph 2.32: "the adoption statement will be published on the Council's website."

R20) Include new paragraph after 2.16 under heading 'Northamptonshire Compact' to read: "Developing relationships is fundamental to partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. Local compacts set out what the voluntary sector, local authorities and other local bodies can expect from each other. The Northamptonshire Compact, launched in December 2002, has been signed up to by the Borough Council. The Compact includes an undertaking for public bodies to provide mechanisms for the voluntary and community sectors to influence their objectives and the plans that emerge out of them."

R21) Add Human Health to the table entitled 'Effects of the proposed development on the surrounding area' on page 26 in Appendix E of the SCI.



K Holland BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS
Inspector

APPENDIX A
TESTS OF SOUNDNESS

Examination of the soundness of the statement of community involvement

3.10 The purpose of the examination is to consider the soundness of the statement of community involvement. The presumption will be that the statement of community involvement is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the examination. A hearing will only be necessary where one or more of those making representations wish to be heard (see Annex D). In assessing whether the statement of community involvement is sound, the inspector will determine whether the:

- i. local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;¹
- ii. local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;
- iii. statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
- iv. statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- v. methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
- vi. resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
- vii. statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- viii. authority has mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement; and
- ix. statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

From: Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPENDIX B – RESPONSE TO QUERIES

Inspector: Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Date: 12th January 2006



The Planning Inspectorate

Room 3/25 Hawk Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

Direct Line 0117-372 8468
Switchboard 0117-372 8000
Fax No 0117-372
GTN 1371-8468
Stephen.carnaby@pins.gsi.gov.uk
<http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk>

Claire Eisley
Northampton Borough Council
Cliftonville House
Bedford Road
Northampton
NN4 7NR

Your Ref:

Our Ref: PINS/V2825/429/2

Date: 2nd December 2005

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Dear Ms. Eisley

As the appointed Inspector for your Authority's Statement of Community Involvement I am requesting comments from the Council on the following point in order to assist in assessing the soundness of Northampton Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement.

- In order to comply fully with Tests iv and v please could the Council set out clearly the early stages of DPD preparation; Paragraphs 2.23 to 2.25 of the SCI are particularly unclear. The SCI should set out the consultation that the LPA proposes to undertake during the consideration of the "issues and options". This should include reference to specific and general consultation bodies (which you have listed in Appendix B of the SCI) in accordance with Regulation 25, and any other consultation that the Council propose to undertake beyond the minimum requirements.
- The diagrams in Appendices F and G are not particularly clear and I suggest that these be redrafted to more closely reflect Figures 4 and 4.2 of PPS12.
- Could the Council provide for insertion into Paragraph 2.45 an explanation of who makes up the "Council's Executive".

These answers are to assist in the production of a binding report. Once you have submitted your response to these questions, the report will be produced as quickly as possible. Please reply to Steve Carnaby whose details are given above. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Northampton Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement

Northampton Borough Council's Response to Mr K Holland's letter dated 2nd December 2005

Paragraphs 2.23 to 2.25

Northampton Borough Council does not accept that Paragraphs 2.23 and 2.24 are unclear. As Paragraph 2.25 of the SCI states the initial engagement stage is not prescribed in Regulations and it is for the local planning authority to determine the most appropriate means of community involvement. Different techniques will be employed and different groups targeted depending on the type of LDD document. An issues and options stage may not be always necessary or appropriate. Consequently the Borough Council considers it is too prescriptive to set out in the SCI the consultation that the LPA proposes to undertake during the consideration of "issues and options" of all DPDs. However, the Borough Council does accept that reference could be made in Paragraph 2.25 to issues and options. The Borough Council proposes that the following additional sentence is added to Paragraph 2.25:

"One technique is to include an issues and options stage in the DPD process. Such a stage involves stakeholders in identifying and considering the issues and options that a DPD will need to address prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State. There are a variety of ways in which an issues and options stage can be undertaken including: the publication and circulation of a formal Issues and Options document containing questions; informal round-table workshops; and exhibitions. The Regulations do not require the inclusion of an issues and options stage, and indeed an issues and options stage will not be appropriate for all DPDs due to their nature."

Paragraph 2.26 of the SCI deals with Pre-Submission Involvement and, reflects Regulation 25 by including reference to specific and general consultation bodies (listed in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI).

Appendices F and G

Northampton Borough Council accepts that Appendices F and G of the Submission Draft SCI are not particularly clear. Therefore, both Appendices F and G have been redrafted to more closely reflect Figures 4.1 and 4.2 of PPS12. A copy of each Appendix is attached to this response.

Paragraph 2.45

Northampton Borough Council accepts that Paragraph 2.45 does not provide an explanation of the Council's Executive.

Furthermore, at its meeting on 29 September 2005 Northampton Borough Council approved amendments to its Constitution. One of these amendments was to replace the Executive with the Cabinet.

Consequently the Borough Council proposes the following changes to Paragraph 2.45:

Delete the heading of Paragraph 2.45 and replace with "Cabinet".

Delete the word "Executive" in Paragraph 2.45 and replace with "Cabinet".

Insert the following additional paragraph after Paragraph 2.45:

"The Cabinet takes executive decisions and provides political leadership for the implementation of the Council's corporate strategy, other policies and budget. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council together with 5 other Councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Council. Each member of the Cabinet, including the Leader, has a portfolio of responsibilities. One of these portfolios is Economy and Infrastructure, which includes planning policy. The Cabinet meets 6 times a year. Cabinet meeting papers are available on the Council's website or at the Council's offices."

Claire Berry,
Northampton Borough Council,
6th January 2006.

INSPECTOR'S REPORT
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPENDIX C – O.D.P.M. LETTER

Inspector: Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Date: 12th January 2006

To: Chris Snarr

From: Alan Cornock
Senior Planning Officer
Plans International
Compensation and
Assessment

Location: Zone 3/J3
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3563
Fax: 020 7944 3919
Ref:
(Paper)

Date: 30 August 2005
Copies: Rick Blyth
Patrick Akindude

Statements of community involvement - Regulations 25 and 26

1. Further to your email dated 26th August, 2005 I have set out the process for the preparation of a statement of community involvement.
2. Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) at para 3.9 sets out that the pre-submission consultation process requires local planning authorities to involve the community and stakeholders during the preparation of the statement of community involvement. Community involvement on a draft allows them to influence the scope and form of community involvement that the local planning authority intends should take place when local development documents are prepared. Local planning authorities must ensure that all participants involved in the preparation process are able to make their views known and should therefore consult them in the preparation of the draft document in accordance with Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004. Once this has been undertaken, the local planning authority should publish the draft statement of community involvement and invite representations over a period of six weeks in accordance with Regulation 26.
3. Although the diagram on page 17 of PPS12 shows them as one stage, in effect the local planning authority must comply with the requirements of Regulation 25 before it can proceed to Regulations 26. That means that the local planning authority should have consulted with the regional planning body or the Mayor of London (whichever is applicable), the Highways Agency and each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the authority.
4. As long as the authority had consulted with those bodies identified above prior to consulting on the draft in accordance with Regulation 26, then they will have complied with the requirements of the Regulations. If they had not then the authority has not complied with the minimum requirements for consultation and as required by Test 1 of the tests of soundness for statement of community involvement.

5. It would appear that both the authorities to which you refer would be in the later category and have not complied with the requirements of the Regulations.

6. Where the statement of community involvement differs from a DPD in its preparation is that at the Regulation 25 stage the authority can produce a draft statement of community involvement as opposed to issues and alternative options.

I hope this is of assistance.

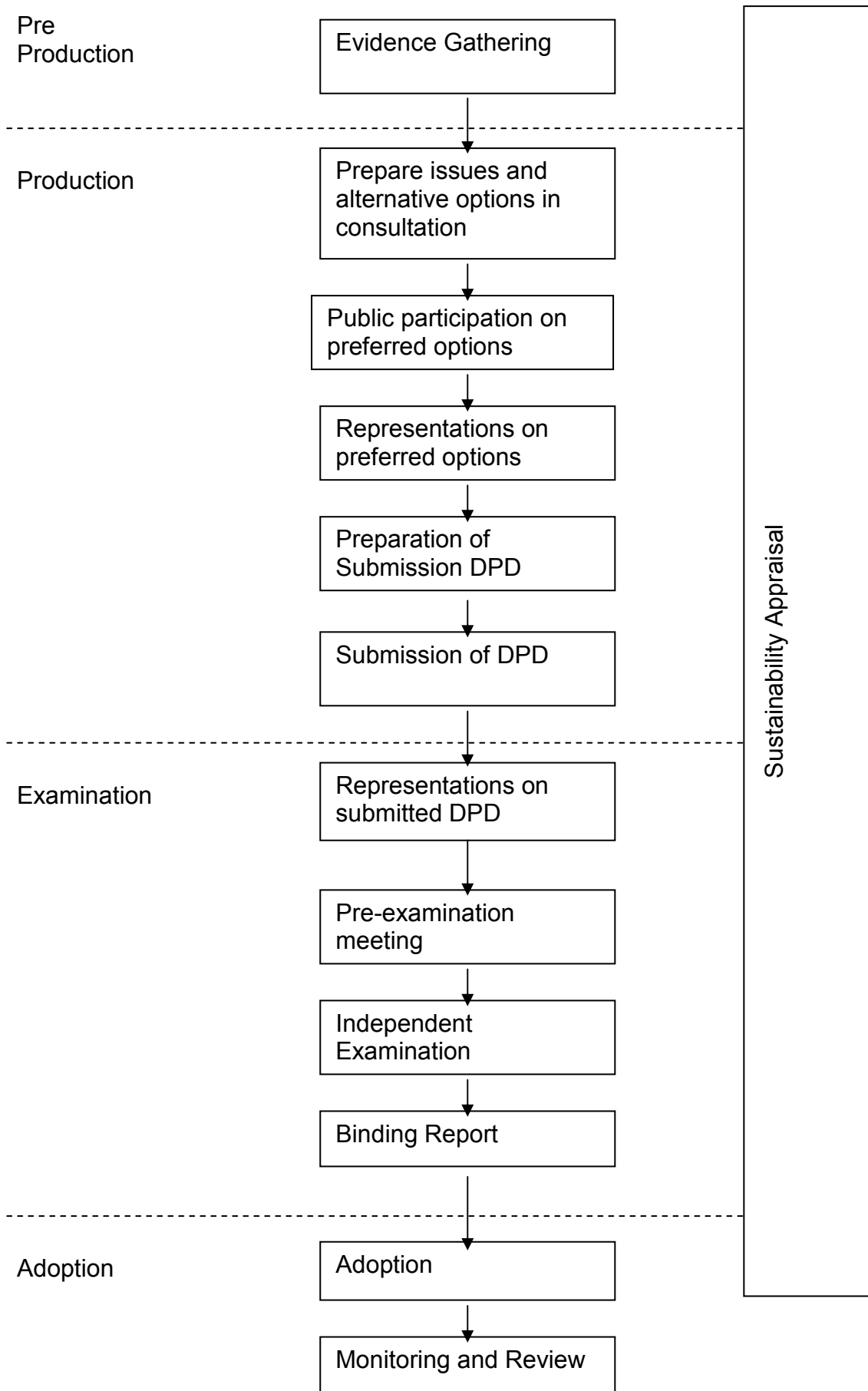
Alan Cornock

INSPECTOR'S REPORT
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPENDIX D – REPLACEMENT DIAGRAMS

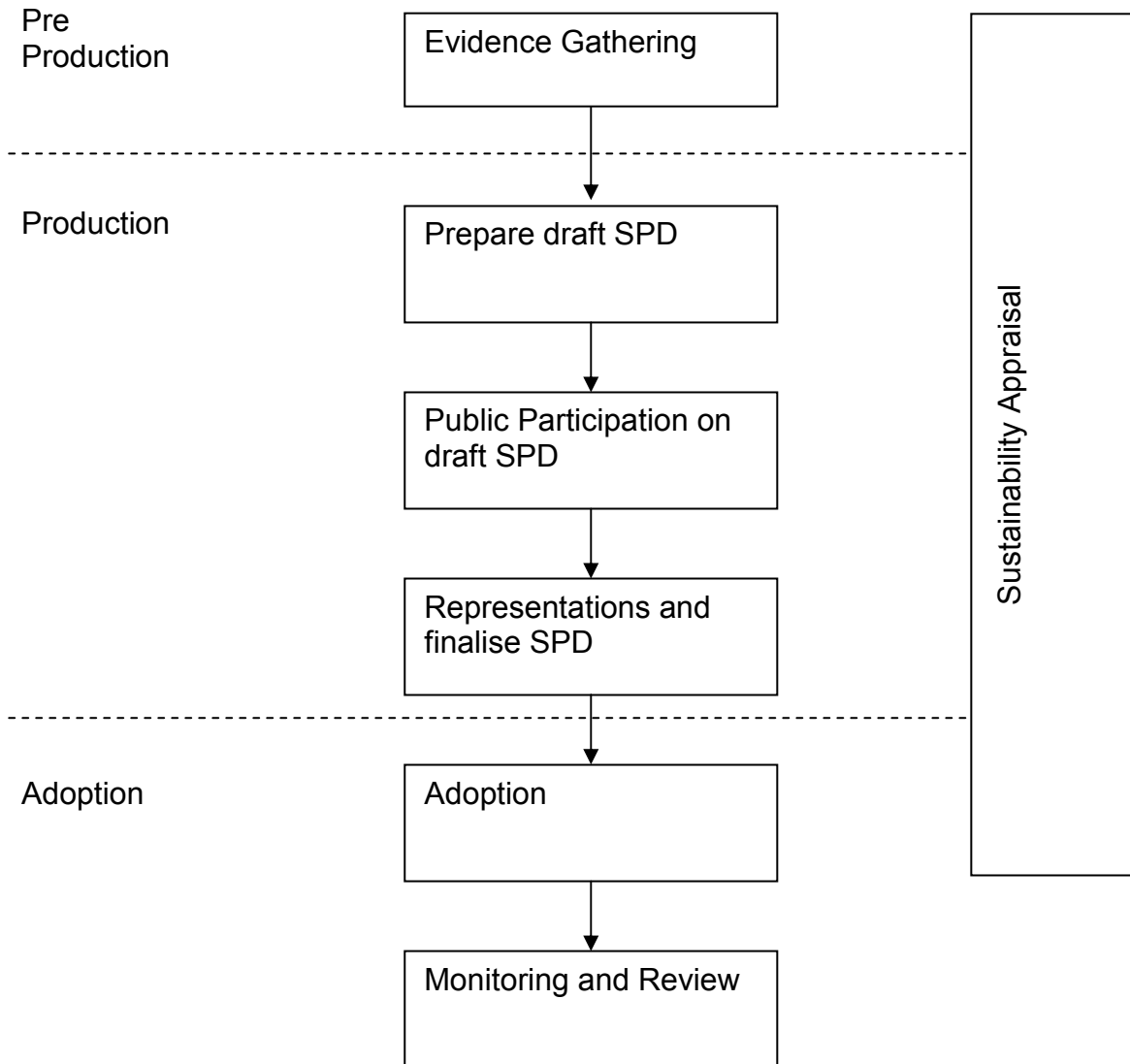
Inspector: Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Date: 12th January 2006

Proposed Changes to Statement of Community Involvement
APPENDIX F - DPD Process



**Proposed Changes to Statement of Community Involvement
APPENDIX G - SPD Process**



INSPECTOR'S REPORT
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
APPENDIX E – CORRESPONDENCE FROM G.O.E.M

Inspector: Keith Holland BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI ARICS

Date: 12th January 2006

Northampton Development Framework – Statement of Community Involvement

Northampton Borough Council's Response to Government Office for the East Midlands' letter dated 7th December 2005

New Paragraph

Northampton Borough Council accepts that it would be helpful to include an additional paragraph outlining that the Borough Council intends to optimise consultation exercises so that they help to inform the wider agenda wherever possible.

Therefore, the Borough Council proposes that the following paragraph be inserted after the existing Paragraph 2.44:

“In order to optimise scarce resources, reduce demands on consultation bodies and inform the wider agenda, opportunities will be taken to undertake joint consultation events with partners such as other Councils in West Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, and other departments of Northampton Borough Council for similar documents or issues.”

Paragraph 2.46

Northampton Borough Council accepts that the SCI should include reference to how the WNDC will be consulted during early plan preparation.

At its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Borough Council's Cabinet approved proposals for the development of the Local Development Document Steering Group into a broader Planning Advisory Panel to ensure dialogue between the WNDC, the Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council in the light of the future transfer of development control responsibilities to WNDC and to enable the three organisations to jointly assist in the development of local planning documents.

Therefore, the Borough Council proposes the deletion of existing Paragraph 2.46, including its heading, and its replacement with the following:

Insert the following heading: “Planning Advisory Panel”

Insert the following paragraph:

“The Borough Council has established a Planning Advisory Panel. The Panel has no decision-making powers, reporting directly to the Council's Cabinet. The role of the Panel is to ensure dialogue between the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council in the light of the future transfer of development control responsibilities to the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and to enable the three organisations to jointly assist in the development of local planning

documents. The Panel will meet periodically as and when different stages of LDD preparation are reached. The Panel includes the Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Economy and Infrastructure, a representative of the Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a representative of the Borough Council's Planning Committee, a representative of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and a representative of Northamptonshire County Council."

As its meeting on 18 July 2005 the Borough Council's Executive endorsed the establishment of a Town Centre Commission to oversee the development of the Central Area Action Plan LDD. At its meeting on 5 December 2005 the Borough Council's Cabinet noted the development of the Town Centre Commission Steering Group.

The Borough Council considers it appropriate to include reference to the Town Centre Commission and the Town Centre Commission Steering Group in the Statement of Community Involvement.

Therefore, the Borough Council proposes the inclusion of the following new paragraph after Paragraph 2.46:

Insert the following heading: "Town Centre Commission and Town Centre Commission Steering Group"

Insert the following paragraph:

"The Borough Council has established the Town Centre Commission to oversee the production of the Central Area Action Plan Local Development Document. The Commission is time-limited. The Commission consists of up to 150 people drawn from a wide range of organisations and bodies as well as individuals. A Town Centre Commission Steering Group has also been established with responsibility for commissioning, planning and actioning research, and compiling the Action Plan on behalf of the Commission. The Steering Group has 15 members including representatives of the Borough Council, the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton Local Strategic Partnership and a range of other stakeholders."

Northampton Borough Council accepts that an additional paragraph should be included in the SCI explaining how the SCI links with the Regeneration Framework being produced by the WNDC.

Therefore, the Borough Council proposes the inclusion of the following new paragraph after the new paragraph set out above:

Insert the following heading: "West Northamptonshire Development Corporation's Regeneration Framework"

Insert the following paragraph:

“West Northamptonshire Development Corporation is developing a Regeneration Framework that will set out how the regeneration of West Northamptonshire will be achieved. The Regeneration Framework is being developed in two stages. The first stage is a Prospectus which sets the scene for regeneration and growth activities over the next ten years and beyond. The second stage is the preparation of a Growth Delivery Plan. This will set out what needs to be done, who does it, how it will be done and how much it will cost. The nature of community involvement in the development of the Regeneration Framework is a matter for the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation but the Borough Council encourages the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to follow the principles of community involvement set out in this Statement of Community Involvement. The Planning Advisory Panel provides a mechanism for discussing the content and preparation processes of both the Local Development Framework and the Regeneration Framework.”

Appendix D

Northampton Borough Council does not accept that WNDC should be listed in Appendix D of the Statement of Community Involvement. Specific consultation bodies are not listed in Appendix D, instead consultation bodies are grouped together as Target Groups. To name just one consultation body and list it, such as WNDC, and not to similarly list all others would create an inconsistent approach. Furthermore, to list all consultation bodies separately in Appendix D would increase the length and complexity of the SCI unnecessarily.

Claire Berry,
Northampton Borough Council,
6th January 2006.

Appendix 2

Northampton Borough Council – Statement of Community Involvement Inspector’s Report

Recommendations

(R1) Delete paragraphs 2.24 and 2.25 and under the heading “Pre-submission Involvement” insert the following before Paragraph 2.26:

“Early community engagement will involve consultation bodies in identifying and considering the issues and options that a DPD will need to address prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State. Decisions on which of the consultation bodies listed at Appendix B of the SCI are to be consulted at this stage will depend on the extent to which the DPD subject matter affects them or is relevant to them. There are a variety of ways in which this consultation can take place including through the publication and circulation of a formal Issues and Options document containing questions, informal round-table workshops, and exhibitions. This will lead to the preparation of a preferred options document.”

(R2) That the diagrams in Appendix F and Appendix G of the SCI be deleted and replaced with those at Appendix D of this report.

(R3) Amend Paragraph 2.45 in accordance with the following:

- delete the heading of this paragraph and replace with “Cabinet”.
- delete the word “Executive” in Paragraph 2.45 and replace with “Cabinet”.
- insert the following text after Paragraph 2.45, “The Cabinet takes executive decisions and provides political leadership for the implementation of the Council’s corporate strategy, other policies and budget. The Cabinet consists of the Leader of the Council together with 5 other Councillors appointed to the Cabinet by the Council. Each member of the Cabinet, including the Leader, has a portfolio of responsibilities. One of these portfolios is Economy and Infrastructure, which includes planning policy. The Cabinet meets 6 times a year. Cabinet meeting papers are available on the Council’s website or at the Council’s offices.”

(R4) That the SCI be modified in accordance with the amendments set out in Appendix E to this Report.

The amendments set out in Appendix E are:

(A) Paragraph 2.44

Insert the following paragraph after the existing Paragraph 2.44: “In order to optimise scarce resources, reduce demands on consultation bodies and inform the wider agenda, opportunities will be taken to undertake joint consultation events with partners such as other Councils in West

Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire County Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, and other departments of Northampton Borough Council for similar documents or issues.”

(B) Paragraph 2.46

Delete the existing Paragraph 2.46, including its heading, and replace with the following:

Insert the following heading: “Planning Advisory Panel”.

Insert the following paragraph: “The Borough Council has established a Planning Advisory Panel. The Panel has no decision-making powers, reporting directly to the Council’s Cabinet. The role of the Panel is to ensure dialogue between the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, the Borough Council and Northamptonshire County Council in the light of the future transfer of development control responsibilities to the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and to enable the three organisations to jointly assist in the development of local planning documents. The Panel will meet periodically as and when different stages of LDD preparation are reached. The Panel includes the Borough Council Portfolio Holder for Economy and Infrastructure, a representative of the Borough Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a representative of the Borough Council’s Planning Committee, a representative of the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation and a representative of Northamptonshire County Council.”

(C) Include the following new paragraph after Paragraph 2.46:

Insert the following heading: “Town Centre Commission and Town Centre Commission Steering Group”.

Insert the following paragraph: “The Borough Council has established the Town Centre Commission to oversee the production of the Central Area Action Plan Local Development Document. The Commission is time-limited. The Commission consists of up to 150 people drawn from a wide range of organisations and bodies as well as individuals. A Town Centre Commission Steering Group has also been established with responsibility for commissioning, planning and actioning research, and compiling the Action Plan on behalf of the Commission. The Steering Group has 15 members including representatives of the Borough Council, the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, Northamptonshire County Council, Northampton Local Strategic Partnership and a range of other stakeholders.”

(D) Include the following new paragraph after the new paragraph set out above:

Insert the following heading: “West Northamptonshire Development Corporation’s Regeneration Framework”.

Insert the following paragraph: "West Northamptonshire Development Corporation is developing a Regeneration Framework that will set out how the regeneration of West Northamptonshire will be achieved. The Regeneration Framework is being developed in two stages. The first stage is a Prospectus which sets the scene for regeneration and growth activities over the next ten years and beyond. The second stage is the preparation of a Growth Delivery Plan. This will set out what needs to be done, who does it, how it will be done and how much it will cost. The nature of community involvement in the development of the Regeneration Framework is a matter for the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation but the Borough Council encourages the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation to follow the principles of community involvement set out in this Statement of Community Involvement. The Planning Advisory Panel provides a mechanism for discussing the content and preparation processes of both the Local Development Framework and the Regeneration Framework."

(R5) Add to Appendix B1 Defence Estates, Department for Work and Pensions, Office of Government Commerce, Department of Constitutional Affairs; and other consultees not referred to in PPS12, including the Theatres Trust and Northampton Primary Care Trust.

(R6) Amend Appendix B of the SCI to include "West Northamptonshire Development Corporation", and all Parish Councils that adjoin Northampton Borough Council.

(R7) Include a new sentence after the first sentence of Paragraph 3.7 to read: "Parish Councils outside of the area in which the application is located may also be notified if, in the opinion of the case officer, the development is likely to have a wider impact."

(R8) Include sentences at beginning of Paragraph 2.6 to read: "The Council has set up a number of Area Partnerships which are made up of ward councillors, plus other interested parties such as county or parish councillors, the Police etc. The Area Partnerships, which meet about 5 times a year, have a consultative role and provide an opportunity for local people to discuss issues and future plans for the area."

(R9) The following sentence should be inserted as the second sentence in Paragraph 2.41: "The draft SPD will be available for inspection at the Council's offices and other appropriate places as listed in Paragraph 2.9 of this SCI."

(R10) The following text should be inserted after "available" and before "and" in the second sentence of Paragraph 2.42: "i.e. the Council's office and other appropriate places,".

(R11) The third sentence of Paragraph 2.41 should be amended to read: "All those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI which the Council considers will be affected by the SPD will be sent the SPD, the Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of SPD matters, the Statement of main issues and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times."

(R12) The second sentence of Paragraph 2.26 should be amended to read: "The pre-submission proposals document, the proposals matters and a statement that the documents are available for inspection including the location and times will be placed on the Council's website and will be made available for inspection at the Council's offices and local libraries."

(R13) The last sentence of Paragraph 2.26 should be amended to read: "Copies of the draft DPD, the relevant supporting documents and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD."

(R14) For clarity the following sentence should be included in Paragraph 2.28: "Copies of the DPD, the Sustainability Appraisal, Pre-Submission Consultation Statement, relevant supporting documents, the Notice of DPD matters and a statement of locations and times for inspection will be sent to those bodies referred to in Appendices B and B1 of the SCI, which the local authority considers will be affected by the DPD."

(R15) For clarity an additional sentence should be added to the end of Paragraph 2.28 that states: "Notice will also be given to all persons who asked to be notified of the submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State."

(R16) For clarity a new second sentence should be included in Paragraph 2.29 that reads: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the following information will be published on the Council's website: the representation/s, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s are available for inspection."

(R17) For clarity a new third sentence, after the new second sentence, should be included in Paragraph 2.29 to read: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will send to the DPD bodies the following information: the address of the site to which the representation/s relate, the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, a statement of when and where the representation/s is available for inspection."

(R18) For clarity a new fourth sentence, after the new third sentence, should be included in Paragraph 2.29 to read: "As soon as possible after the consultation period the Council will advertise in the local press: the period within which representations on the site allocation representation/s must be made, address and person to whom written and electronic representations must be made, and a statement of when and where the representation is available for inspection."

(R19) The following additional bullet point should be added to Paragraph 2.32: "the adoption statement will be published on the Council's website."

(R20) Include new paragraph after 2.16 under heading 'Northamptonshire Compact' to read: "Developing relationships is fundamental to partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. Local compacts set out what the voluntary sector, local authorities and other local bodies can expect from each other. The Northamptonshire Compact, launched in December 2002, has been signed up to by the Borough Council. The Compact includes an undertaking for public bodies to provide mechanisms for the voluntary and community sectors to influence their objectives and the plans that emerge out of them."

(R21) Add Human Health to the table entitled 'Effects of the proposed development on the surrounding area' on page 26 in Appendix E of the SCI.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

27 March 2006

Item No.

Report of Directorate:
Citizens, Governance and Finance

Author/Contact Officer:
Thomas Hall ext 7593

**Reconfiguring Primary Care Trusts
in Northamptonshire**

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to invite the Council to endorse the response to consultation on the options for reconfiguring Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in Northamptonshire agreed by the Improvement Board on 16 March.

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

Endorse the response made to the Strategic Health Authority in response to their consultation on the options for reconfiguring Primary Care Trusts in Northamptonshire.

Summary and Links to Corporate or Recovery Plan

A response (attached) and covering letter have been sent on behalf of the Council, following the Improvement Board decision of 16 March. This was necessary in order to meet the consultation deadline. Council is now being invited formally to endorse that response. This report repeats the background and analysis from the Improvement Board report.

The outcome of these changes may have an effect on partnership working on health issues. Working together in partnership is a key element of the Corporate Plan.

1 Background

- 1.1 Primary Care Trusts are the cornerstone of the NHS, and receive 75% of the NHS budget. The strategic health authority area of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland currently has nine PCTs, three of which are in Northamptonshire:
- Northampton PCT
 - Northamptonshire Heartlands PCT
 - Daventry and South Northants PCT
- 1.2 New systems within the NHS, such as 'practice-based commissioning' and 'payment by results', mean that PCTs' role will change. The new primary care trusts will focus on commissioning and public health. They will need significant expertise to support GP practices, assess the health needs of the local population, identify and plan new community services and negotiate contracts with a wide range of hospitals and service providers, expertise which is currently spread across all three PCTs in the County. They must also be ready to work more closely on joint commissioning with social services and other non-NHS partners.
- 1.3 A national consultation is now taking place, lead in each area by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA). As well as the factors above, reorganisation aims to reduce management costs, thereby releasing funding that can be reinvested in providing frontline health services.
- 1.4 The SHA has sought responses to its proposals by 22 March. Following discussion, Improvement Board on 16 March agreed to support the option of a single PCT for the whole of Northamptonshire, and a response plus covering letter to this effect were duly sent to the SHA. These are attached.

2 Summary of the proposals

- 2.1 The SHA has proposed the following options for Northamptonshire:

Option 1

- One PCT for the county of Northamptonshire

Option 2

- One PCT for the north of the county, covering Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire
- One PCT for the west of the county, covering Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire

- 2.2 The stated aim of the SHA in carrying this out is to create organisations that are better able to :
- Secure high quality services
 - Improve the health of their local population
 - Improve public involvement
 - Improve commissioning and the effective use of resources
 - Manage financial risks and achieve financial balance

- Improve co-ordination with social services
- Deliver at least 15% reduction in management and administrative costs
- Improve engagement with GP's and rollout practice- based commissioning

2.3 Option 1

Option 1 – the single county-wide PCT – is supported by Northampton PCT and by Daventry and South Northants PCT. It is also the SHA's preferred solution following its own appraisal process, and the option preferred by Northampton's Local Strategic Partnership. The key potential strengths are:

- Greater efficiency through reduction in overheads and hence economies of scale – allowing resources to be refocused to front-line healthcare services
- Greater resilience and stronger capacity for specialism
- More effective joint working through boundaries which match the countywide Local Area Agreement
- Greater ability to plan and integrate services strategically
- More financial flexibility
- A more attractive organisation for recruitment and retention of high-quality staff.

2.4 Option 2

Option 2 – two PCTs, for north and west Northamptonshire – is supported by Heartlands PCT. The key arguments for this option are that:

- Smaller PCTs would be less remote from the populations they serve, and hence could better reflect the particular needs and demands of communities and other stakeholders
- Communication between the PCTs and their communities would be easier and better, with shorter and more natural links
- The two PCT option matches the structure set up to manage growth in the county, and hence fits the way in which strategic infrastructure will be being planned.

2.5 The strengths of each option can be seen as the potential weaknesses of the alternative.

3 Assessment

3.1 Evaluating the two options against the aims of the reconfiguration suggests that both options have points in their favour. Option 1 perhaps offers the potential for more efficient use of resources (financial, personnel and specialist) and a match with LAA structure, while option 2 may be able to deliver more locally-sensitive service and a match with the growth agenda structure.

3.2 Improvement Board felt that the support of the majority of health-based organisations and other agencies in the county for the single PCT option, the clearer alignment with social services which this would give

and the assurances given about the strengthening of local responsiveness indicated that this option (Option 1) should be preferred.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no obvious direct financial implications for this Council. There is some potential to reduce the costs associated with liaising with several bodies, but the great majority of such transactions on health matters are already with only one PCT.

5 Social Impact

- 5.1 Arguments for both options stress the potential for positive impact on people's quality of life through improved delivery of health services. Option 1 carries the potential for releasing resources to front line service through improved efficiency, while option 2 might in theory be more sensitive to local social issues.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Following a full debate which recognised the merits of both options, Improvement Board concluded that Option 1 was to be preferred, and a response has been made to that effect. Council is invited formally to endorse that conclusion.

Consultees

Northampton Local Strategic Partnership and the existing PCTs have been consulted as part of this process and their views are reported above.

Background Papers

'Consulting on New Primary Care Trust Arrangements...' – Leics, Northants and Rutland SHA (Dec 2005)

'The View of Northampton PCT' – Northampton PCT (Feb 2006)

Position Paper – Heartlands PCT (Jan 2006)

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Contact:

Ext / Direct:

E-Mail:

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam

Consultation on New Primary Care Trust Arrangements

This Council's Improvement Board has debated the proposals thoroughly, and its response to the consultation on revised PCT arrangements has been sent electronically. I should stress that this is subject to formal endorsement by a meeting of the full Council on 27 March, after the closing of the consultation period. If Council reaches an alternative conclusion at that meeting, I will inform you.

Concern was raised about the potential loss of a focus on the natural community that is the town of Northampton, and that the patient and community perspective must not be lost in the understandable drive for greater efficiency. We understand the assurances that have been given on these points, but are keen to see clear evidence of the prioritising of these vital issues in the forthcoming changes.

Northampton Borough Council looks forward to continuing and building on its relationships with local health service organisations, and to identifying and delivering together a programme of improvements which is of mutual benefit.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Tim Hadland



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PCT Consultation reply form

Section 1

Do you favour Proposal 1 or Proposal 2? Please tick your choice in the box to t

Proposal 1: to create

- One Primary Care Trust (PCT) for the city of Leicester
- One PCT for the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland
- One PCT for the county of Northamptonshire.

Proposal 2: to create

- One Primary Care Trust (PCT) for the city of Leicester
- One PCT for the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland
- Two PCTs for the county of Northamptonshire.

Section 2

Please use this section as appropriate to indicate how your preferred option than the alternative in terms of the national criteria for the new PCTs. (Please 3 on page 26 of the consultation document for a fuller wording of the national criter local considerations relating to these criteria as used in the earlier engagement prc

National Criteria:

Your comments:

i) the securing of high quality services

Either proposal has the potential to deliver these services

ii) improving health

Either proposal has the potential to deliver improvements

iii) improving the engagement of GPs

	No comments
iv) improving commissioning and the effective use of resources	A single PCT for Northamptonshire may have a greater ability to direct specialist resources where needed
v) managing financial balance and risk	A single PCT for Northamptonshire is likely to have greater financial flexibility
vi) improving public involvement	Either option needs to deliver strong involvement from public and service users. This may be a particular challenge for a single larger PCT
vii) improving coordination with social services	Co-ordination with social services should be facilitated by the creation of a single co-terminous body
viii) delivering at least 15% reduction in management and administration costs	The single PCT, by avoiding duplication of management structures, may be able to deliver these savings more easily.

Section 3

Please use this section to address the topics which emerged within the local process

i) the need for the new PCTs to establish effective locality arrangements	There is a concern that a change to a single large PCT in Northamptonshire will dilute local responsiveness
ii) maintaining active public and patient involvement processes	The concern about loss of 'localness' extends to public engagement processes
iii) ensuring effective clinical engagement	None specifically on this
iv) ensuring the equitable application of funds within PCTs	

None specifically on this

Section 4

Additional comments

If you are replying as an individual, please complete 1 and 4 below.
If you are replying on behalf of an organisation (e.g. local authority, voluntary orgai
professional group) please complete 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

1. Your name

Thomas Hall

2. Your organisation

Northampton Borough Council

3. Your position within the
organisation

Corporate Manager (on behalf of Leader

4. Your address

Guildhall Northampton NN1 1DE

Please return this form by 22 March 2006.

Submit Form

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NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name of Committee
Council 27 March 2006

Item No.

Report of Councillor J Lill
Directorate: Customer Services and
Delivery

Author/Contact Officer: S D Elsey,
Environmental Health Manager
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STATUTE AUTHORISATIONS

Purpose of Report

This report has been endorsed by Cabinet on the 6 March 2006 and is referred to Council for final approval

The purpose of this report is to update and extend the existing procedure for authorising individual members of staff within Environmental Health to carry out enforcement functions described by statute.

Recommendations

Cabinet endorses the following recommendations and refers the report to Council for decision with a view to amending the Council's Constitution in respect of the Proper Officer appointments in recommendation 3 below:

It is recommended that:

1. The Environmental Health Manager, Development and Building Control Manager be authorised to approve individual authorisations for members of Northampton Borough Council staff involved with the enforcement of environmental planning and building related legislation. That the authority to authorise staff be extended for the Environmental Health Manager to include those within other divisions of NBC and Parish Councils that may be part of an enforcement matrix involved with environmental related enforcements.
2. The register of authorisation is maintained by the respective officers of those staff that are deemed to have the relevant competencies and follow the prescribed processes for the application of the duties within each of the service.
3. That the Environmental Health Manger be appointed as Proper Officer for the purpose of Public health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984, Public Health (Control of Diseases) Regulations 1988 and Section 47 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

4. That for the purposes of Section 40 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 the Power of Closure (in cases of environmental related nuisance) be delegated from the Chief Officer of the Council to the Environmental Health Manager.

Summary and Links to Corporate Plan

The report updates and extends the method of Authorising Enforcement officers within the Council (and its partners in limited circumstances) that has been in use since 1995.

This method enables a flexible approach to ensuring appointed officers are able to carry out their enforcement duties in a legal and robust manner in order for their activities to contribute to the fulfilment of the Council's Corporate Plan. These activities particularly affect and improve the cleanliness of the town, protect the environment and ensure citizens benefit from an improving quality of life.

The report also ensure that the Council correctly appoints Proper Officer functions to fulfil its obligations to protect individuals and the general public from the spread of communicable diseases.

Arrangements are also required to be put in place, to ensure new enforcement tools for the control of public nuisances, primarily noise, from Licensed premises can be dealt with as a matter of urgency in appropriate cases.

Background

Authorising Officers

Environmental Health and Planning and Building Control are responsible for enforcement of a multitude of legislation, the majority of which are listed in Appendix 1 to this report.

Some service sections have a wide remit of responsibilities others have a narrow specific focus. Each Officer would have a specific list of legislation under which he is authorised to act.

Members of staff usually have a particular area of expertise, however, it is not uncommon for officers to assist others in new areas of work. For this reason and also to cover occasions where members of staff join or leave the relevant divisions, it is important that every officer is properly authorised to undertake the various functions prescribed by a particular act. It is also vital that officers are empowered, where applicable, to enter and inspect premises. Each officer is required by law to carry an authorisation warrant card, which must specify the statutes under which he or she is entitled to act. Without the card, an officer has no power to carry out his or her responsibilities. Similarly without a specific authorisation under a particular Act an officer has no power to enforce that Act.

Within the council the Environmental Health Manager and Planning and Building Control Manager are primarily aware of responsibilities of their staff and 'who is doing what' hence it is recommended that the power to authorise particular members of staff is delegated to

these officers. The consequences of agreeing to this suggestion will be that every officer carrying out specific tasks will be equally empowered, for example an inspection of premises under the Food Safety Act where it is necessary to have of Health and Safety powers also. Furthermore since most authorisations are required by law to be in writing it will be necessary for the Environmental Health Manager and the Planning and Building Control Manager to maintain a register of authorisations.

Where staff of other Divisions such as Street Scene and those employed by Parish Councils use enforcement powers occasionally, it will be those specified within the Environmental Health Division's remit. The decision making process prescribed within Environmental Health's process documentation will be followed and monitored by the Environmental Health Manager and Team Leaders to ensure consistency and robust legal application.

Proper Officer functions in Environmental Health

'Proper Officer' is a term widely used in local government and is defined in Section 270(3) of the Local Government Act 1972) as 'an officer appointed for that purpose by that body'. That is to say, a person (who need not be an officer of the council) who exercises certain powers and duties of the council, in the name of the council but without the need to have those actions specifically approved by the council. It is the correct appointment as proper officer that gives that person the power, and once that appointment is made, no further approval of their actions is required.

The most widely used powers of the Proper Officer within Environmental Health is exclusion under Section 20 of the Public Health Control of Diseases 1984 Act. This permits the Proper Officer of any district council to request any person to discontinue work 'with a view to preventing the spread of' a notifiable disease. As it is only a request, there is no sanction for non-compliance, but there is a requirement for the district council to pay compensation to a person who accedes to the request.

Other powers, that are rarely used include the temporary removal of occupants from a house where there is a case of infectious disease and excluding children from schools and places of entertainment.

Licensed premises and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

Section 40 and 41 of the above act provides that if the noise from any licensed premises is causing a public nuisance, an authorised Environmental Health Officer has the power to issue a closure order in respect of it for up to 20 hours.

If after receiving closure order the premises remain open, the person responsible may upon summary convictions receive a fine of up to £20000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or both. This compliments Police powers under section 160 of the act to close premises.

Under this provision it will be for the Chief Executive of the local authority to delegate his/her powers to Environmental Health Officers within the local authority.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Social Impact

The Services using these legislative provisions have a major impact with residence, businesses and visitors to Northampton and it is the legal duty of the Council to ensure such provisions are fully utilised.

Conclusions

This is an update of the premises arrangements to take into account the Council's restrictive changes in legislative tasks and the need to work closer with partners to achieve the Council's corporate objectives and priorities.

Consultees (Internal and External)

Development and Building Control Manager, Solicitor to the Council, Street Scene Manager.

Background Papers

Environmental Services Committee 6 June 1995 report of Statute Authorisations – Environmental Health Section and Health and Environmental Health Housing Services Section.

Environmental Health

Animal Boarding Establishments Act 1963	Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Anti Social Behavioural Act 2003 Parts 2,6 & 9	Health Services and Public Health Act 1968
Breeding of Dogs Act 1973	Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, 2004
Breeding of Dogs Act 1991	Licensing Act 2003
Breeding and Sale of Dogs Act 1999	Local Government Act 1972
Building Act 1984 Parts III and IV	Local Government and Housing Act 1989
Caravan Sites Act 1968	Dogs (Fouling of land) Act 1996
Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Children and Young Persons Act 1933	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982
Cinemas Act 1985	National Assistance Act 1948
Clean Air Act 1993	National Assistance (Amendment) Act 1951
Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005	Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993
Control of Pollution Act 1974	Offices, Shops and Railways Premises Act 1963
Criminal Procedure & Investigation Act 1996	Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925
Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994	Pesticides (Fees and Enforcement Act) 1989
Dangerous Dogs Act 1991	Pet Animals Act 1951
Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976	Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999
Deregulation and Contracting Out Act 1994	Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920	Private Place of Entertainment (Licensing) Act 1967
International Carriage of Perishable Food Stuffs act 1976	Public Health Act 1875 (Support of Sewers) Amendment Act 1883
Environment Act 1995	Public Health Act 1936, 1961
Environmental Protection Act 1990	Public Health (Reoccurring Nuisances) Act 1969
European Communities Act 1972	Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
Factories Act 1961	Riding Establishments Act 1964,1970
Food Act 1984	Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964
Food and Environmental Protection Act 1985 Part III	Sunday Trading Act 1994
Food Safety Act 1990	Vehicle (Crime) Act 2001
Guard Dogs Act 1975	Water Act 1989, 1991
	Zoo Licensing Act 1981

Planning and Building Control

Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991)
 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
 Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (relating to Part 8: High Hedges)
 Building Act 1984
 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

Note

Authorisation will also extend to all Regulations, Statutory Instruments and any consequential amendments made under the above legislation



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Review of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Planning Committee Meetings at Northampton Borough Council

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Planning Task and Finish Group

MARCH 2006

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Foreword

Following a referral from Northampton Borough Council, our Overview and Scrutiny committee was asked to review the effectiveness of our Planning committee meetings. In particular we were asked to look at the length of the meetings, length of the Agenda, the frequency of the meetings and how citizens engage with us.

Northampton Borough Council Meetings were lasting over 4 hours starting at 6.00pm and meet on a 4 weekly cycle, also we had recently introduced public speaking and wanted to review this.

Northampton Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Task and Finish group consisting of Cllr Richard Church and myself.

We observed Northampton Borough and Colchester Council's as well as interviewing witnesses, cold calling other authorities and carrying out desktop research using the internet.

Work started in late November 2005 and concluded in February 2006.

I would like to thank those involved in producing this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jamie Lane', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Jamie Lane

Executive Summary

Following a referral from Northampton Borough Council, our Overview and Scrutiny committee were asked to review the effectiveness of our Planning committee meetings. In particular we were asked to look at the length of the meetings, length of the Agenda, the frequency of the meetings and how citizens engage with us.

Northampton Borough Council Meetings were lasting over four hours starting at 6.00pm and meet on a 4 weekly cycle, also we had recently introduced public speaking and wanted to review this.

Upon examining the facts around Northampton Borough Council's Planning Committee Meetings our research shows that we in fact compare favourably to the other Councils we have spoken to; with our last five committee meetings averaging three hours twenty minutes compared to a minimum of four hours from the best practice Councils questioned - whilst allowing the public to speak for the greatest length of time.

The recommendations the group are proposing are aimed at increasing public satisfaction with the both the Planning committee and the Council's website.

To form the recommendations we observed Northampton Borough and Colchester Council's as well as interviewing witnesses, cold calling other authorities and carrying out desktop research using the internet.

Task and Finish Group: Planning

1.0 Purpose

To submit a report to Overview and Scrutiny detailing the groups findings following extensive research into our own and other Councils' planning committee meetings

2.0 Context

This Task and Finish was set by the Overview and Scrutiny committee following a referral from Full Council to 'review the effectiveness of Planning Committee Meetings for Councillors and the public'. In particular we looked at the following issues:

- Long meetings 4 hours +
- Long Agenda
- Public Speaking
- Frequency of meetings.

Cllr's Jamie Lane and Richard Church were given this task and report the following findings based on their research which included observations, witness statements, internet research and cold calling other authorities.

- Witnesses were interviewed for their experience in planning matters
- Councillor Lane observed Northampton Borough Council's Planning meeting
- Councillor Church visited Colchester Council's planning meeting
- Lewis Young Cold called other authorities and reviewed Northampton Borough Council's last 5 Planning Committee Meetings
- Councillor Lane and Lewis Young carried out Desktop research

3.0 Evidence

3.1 Witness interviews

Two meetings were held where witnesses were asked for their views on planning meetings and how they felt the meetings could be made shorter and more effective. Statements were heard from:

- Christine Stevenson (Corporate Manager Planning, Environmental Health & Leisure NBC)
- Jennifer Chance (Team Leader Development Control NBC)

- Stacey Rawlings and David Bainbridge (Senior Planning Associates, Bidwells Planning Team)
- Cllr Boss (Chairman of Planning)
- Cllr's Flavell and Caswell (Local Environment & Economy & Infrastructure Portfolio Holders respectively).
- Cllr Glynane also attended in his role as Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.

It was felt that having spoken to all our witnesses (see appendices A and B) and from the results of the cold calling exercise (see appendix C) that the length of our meetings are satisfactory.

All the information received actually showed that our meetings are shorter than average rather than the perceived longer than average - some authorities take all day with site visits, pre-meetings and then the meeting. It was also noted from our witnesses that the frequency of meetings couldn't be shortened, as it would not give officers and councillors' time to prepare for the following meeting. The research also showed that 4 weekly meetings are the norm.

It was felt that strong Chairmanship and a good Solicitor were the key to keeping to the agenda and staying to the issues that matter. It was also felt that allowing the public to speak for 3 minutes gave them the opportunity to be heard and even if the decision didn't go their way they felt that they had made their case.

3.2 Observation of Northampton Borough Council's Planning Committee

See appendix D

3.3 Observation of Colchester Borough Council's Planning Committee

See appendix E

3.4 Cold Calling Research

Three best practice Councils were contacted (for results see Appendix C). The results showed that we allow the longest speaking time, but had the shortest meetings and deal with on average the greatest number of applications.

3.5 Desktop Research

We tried to find a planning application from the planning lists on our Internet home page. To find the planning pages is relatively straight forward (from home page click planning then once on planning click on planning applications), however the planning application lists are in date order; so finding a particular application in your street may take a while unless you know the date the application was received. The planning portal was not easy to use, as you need to register to use it

and then forward plans to the Guildhall so people with little computer skills would find it hard to use.

3.6 Review of Northampton Borough Councils' last 5 Planning Committee Meetings

The minutes from the last 5 Planning Committee Meetings were analysed (for full list of results please see Appendix E). The results show that on average the last 5 meetings took 3 hours 20 minutes. On average 14 applications were approved, 1.4 applications were approved in principal and 3.4 applications were refused.

3.7 Other Information

With more planning decisions going before WNDC and the Government target of 90% of planning decisions being made by officers we felt that planning meetings may get shorter in time anyway (see appendix G).

4.0 Conclusion

Our conclusions are that the lengths of Northampton Borough Councils Planning Meetings are in fact no longer than other authorities. Given the possible changes highlighted in section 2.7 to the way planning decisions may be made, meetings would become shorter as less agenda items would be brought to the meetings.

We also felt that allowing the public to speak at meetings had been adopted well and should continue.

Given the amount of time and work involved in setting up each Planning Meeting, we agreed that the current 4 weekly cycles should continue.

We feel that Northampton Borough Councils Planning meetings are well chaired and well organised however; we would like to make the following recommendations to build upon their success.

5.0 Recommendations

Our recommendations are that Northampton Borough Council adopts the following in its planning meetings.

- Councillors should be allowed to speak without giving a for or against reason when registering to speak (they may wish to just make a comment).
- MP's and County Councillors given the same right to speak as Ward Councillors.

- Items on the Agenda where no one wishes to speak or make a comment and where officers do not have an update be taken on block at the start of the meeting.
- Chairperson to sum up each item on the agenda once a decision has been reached so that the members of the public are clear as to what has been agreed.
- An officer to be employed to work as an 'Usher' to help the public know what's happening and to assist them during the meeting and to advise them if items are withdrawn at short notice.
- Microphones are available to the public so that all members of the committee can hear what they are saying as well as the public who sit behind them.
- Agenda to be bound in a more professional manner with advertising on the back cover of forthcoming meetings.
- Protocol of the meeting to be on the inside front page, outlining who can speak and for how long and how business is conducted.
- Protocol for the meeting to be sent out to those registering to speak so that they are aware of what to expect. The Protocol should also be published on the website.
- NBC website be updated so that public speaking is no longer a 6 month trial.
- NBC Website to index applications in alphabetical order by street name so that finding an application is easier.
- The letter that is issued to consultees to include information that planning applications are now available on NBC website.
- Phone numbers on NBC website be changed so that the numbers are for departments rather than individuals to ensure good customer service.
- It is re-iterated to Councillors that they can ask for any planning application to be presented to the committee if they feel that the committee should look at it.
- Following its submission to Full Council, this report be submitted to the West Northants Development Corporation

Please find attached minutes from all meetings held, Cllr Church's report on Colchester Council together with the Agenda of Colchester's meeting. Cllr Lane's Report on NBC's planning meeting, Lewis Young's Desktop research together with Cold Calling results.

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Planning

5 December 2005

Present:

Councillors Lane (Chair)
Councillor Church
Councillor Glynane

Jennifer Chance	-Development Control Team Leader
Christine Stevenson	-Corporate Manager Planning, Environmental Health & Leisure
Margaret Martin	-Consortium

Councillor Lane reminded those present that the purpose of the Group was to review the effectiveness of Planning Committee, with a view to creating shorter meetings and agreeing certain protocols. As such, the Group needed to gather certain information and baseline data, which was the purpose of this meeting.

Members asked a number of questions of the Development Control Team Leader and the Corporate Manager and ascertained the following information:

- Applications were delegated or went to Committee depending on their size and/or how contentious.
- NBC receives around 1800 planning applications per year
- Government BVPI for applications to be considered under delegated powers is 90%
- c.85% of applications were dealt with by delegated powers
- Being a growth area, it was likely that NBC received a higher percentage of applications than other, similar authorities.
- BVPI for determining applications:
8 weeks – minor applications
13 weeks – major applications
- Planning Committee agenda items are split into 2 – Principal items:
Principal Items – large applications of 10 Units/1000m², 5 or 6 every committee
Schedule of applications – smaller applications, 20-30 every committee
- Principal items are placed on the agenda first, in order of date of receipt of application

- Public speaking at Committee is 3 minutes per person.; 5 minutes for ward councillors
- No. of speakers per item is 2 people for and 2 against plus ward councillors
- Speaking was timed by the solicitor
- Speakers had to register by 12 noon on the day of the meeting to be eligible to speak
- The agenda could be re-ordered to bring forward items where people had registered to speak
- Length of debate will depend on how contentious the application is
- Planning officers gauge whether an application needs good deliberation and will draw attention to this at the meeting
- A Chair's briefing is held before the meeting
- Committee meetings used to be held every 3 weeks, but this became logistically very difficult in terms of deferred items because of the statutory consultation period

Councillor Church asked whether changing the meetings to a 2-week cycle could work. J Chance responded that the time made up at the meetings would not be outweighed by the extra time it would take to process the necessary paperwork and for the background work to be carried out.

Councillor Glynane commented that he had received positive feedback from people about being given the opportunity to speak, even if the decision had not been what they wished for, as they had at least been able to have a say.

In terms of manageability, it was felt that public speaking was not a problem but the length of debate after the public speakers could be very lengthy. However, it was important to strike a balance between the speed of proceedings at the meeting and allowing people the opportunity to speak. It was also noted that the Authority would be open to criticism if it did not permit public speaking

Councillor Church questioned whether West Northants Development Corporation would take on a significant proportion of Planning Committee business. J Chance responded that this remained to be seen, but part of the service level agreement was that WNDC sought the views of the Committee in making their decisions. C Stevenson pointed out that this could in fact increase the length of the committee as it would have no power of determination so may want to influence the decision by debate.

Councillor Church asked what the implications of splitting the Committee in two to consider applications e.g. by north/south divide. J Chance felt that the aggregate time of the two committees would be longer than a single one and would also have some logistical difficulties.

Councillor Glynane felt that it was important to ascertain more information about how WNDP would determine applications. I.e. would the Board make decisions; will the public be able to speak at the meetings. M Martin agreed that it was imperative to know exactly how WNDP would operate. Councillor Church added that he was of the understanding that 2 members of NBC Planning Committee would be co-opted onto their decision making body.

M Martin asked how public levels of satisfaction with the planning process were checked. J Chance advised that a satisfaction survey was periodically given out and C Stevenson added that there was a satisfaction BVPI. This was a statutory survey, with questions set by Government. M Martin suggested that it might be pertinent to look at the last survey and reconvene the task group in a year to assess levels of satisfaction, as the WNDP would be up and running.

Councillor Church commented on the start time of meetings, being 6:00pm, and asked what impact an earlier start or daytime meeting would have. J Chance responded that meetings were held in the evenings as a lot of councillors had full-time jobs, and it also enabled more members of public to attend. The Group discussed various ways of organising the agenda, such as hearing items that did not have speakers to them earlier, with a break for councillors to have something to eat, followed by the items with speakers commencing at 6:00pm. It was also suggested that a break could be included on the agenda, or time slots specified on the agenda for each item.

In terms of what went into the agenda reports, J Chance advised that the reports included as much information as possible, as the whole process was very much open to scrutiny by the Ombudsmen.

Once an application was received, it went out for a 21-day consultation, during which time, the reports were written. However, some responses from the consultation may not be received until after the report was written and those responses would be included in an addendum, which was circulated to councillors on the night of the meeting. This meant that time was taken for councillors to assimilate this added information. However, the timeframe could not be changed as this was set by government and therefore had to be adhered to.

J Chance commented that ward members could ask for an application to go to Planning Committee if they did not want it determined by officers. Similarly, applications went to Committee as an automatic reaction to someone objecting to a ward councillor. Councillor Church questioned how often this happened. J Chance responded that over the past couple of years 2-3 of these had gone to each committee and were very time consuming. It was commented that when this happened, the ward councillor should also speak

at the committee. A suggestion was made that this should be included in the planning protocol.

- Agreed:**
- (1) That C Stevenson would suggest names of relevant officers and/or external persons who would be best placed to provide more details about the WNDC operational process.
 - (2) That J Chance would circulate copies of the planning BVPIs; the BVPI on satisfaction; NBC Scheme of Delegations; the WNDC Service Level Agreement and consultation papers for information.
 - (3) That J Chance would seek examples of Beacon/good practice councils and report back to the Group.
 - (4) That a meeting be organised to assess the baseline data.
 - (5) That a meeting be held on Tuesday 10 January to meet with further witnesses, including a representative from WNDC; NBC's planning solicitor; Planning Committee members and the relevant portfolio holder.

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Planning

10 January 2006

Present:

Councillor Lane (Chair)
Councillor Church
Councillor Glynane

Jennifer Chance	-Development Control Team Leader
Christine Stevenson	-Corporate Manager Planning, Environmental Health & Leisure
Margaret Martin	-Consortium consultant
Lewis Young	-Minutes

Witnesses:

Councillor Boss	
Councillor Caswell	
Councillor Flavell	
Jennie Jahina	- Legal services
David Bainbridge	- Bidwells planning consultants
Stacey Rawlings	- Bidwells planning consultants

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The chair with agreement from all present at the meeting 5th December agreed that the minutes were a true reflection of the previous meeting

3. Witness interviews

Councillor Lane asked the two representatives from Bidwells to speak first

Stacey Rawlings stated:

- Her background was from the private sector
- Attends meetings throughout area for clients
- 3 Councils to her knowledge split their area in two creating two shorter planning committee meetings, if anything contentious arose it could be sent to the other committee
- Southend Council ensure that people have to register 1 week in advance if they wish to speak at the meeting rather than our 6 hours

David Bainbridge stated:

- His background was from the public sector – ex NBC employee of 5 years also worked for Milton Keynes Council
- Attends meetings throughout the area for clients
- Stated that the length of our meetings was not always the problem; format, access and quality of reports were also issues
- Milton Keynes meetings start at 17:30 and have gone on until 00:00, Bedford Councils meetings generally go on for 4 hours, South Cambridgeshire start at 10:00 and usually end at 18:00
- Site visits before the meeting seemed to help with regards to ensuring there are no deferments at the meeting
- Common themes coming from all Councils planning meetings: Public speaking – amounts and lengths vary, in the afternoon/evening, 3 – 4 hours is normal

Councillor Lane then asked Stacey and David where they perceived our Planning meeting could improve

- Framework and procedures need to be clearer – the logistics are not clear
- Think about 2 halves to the agenda for major and minor applications
- Make the deadline for allowing people to speak tighter
- Only allow people to speak if they have something to say – stop people speaking for speaking sake
- 90% of applications should be delegated
- Site visits before meetings
- They use the fact that there hasn't been a site visit as a tactic for there clients to get cases deferred
- Clearer rules for public speaking
- The Chair needs to be strong – it was recognised that the current Chair is a good Chair
- Meeting frequency needs to be every 3 weeks instead of every 4
- A procedure manual should be introduced

J Chance commented that usually they try and give all information to Councillors in writing however if information comes in at the last minute there might be the need to give verbal updates

J Jahina advised that the constitution is currently being reviewed and updated and following on from a point raised by Bidwells the deadline time could be changed as it is currently open to interpretation

Cllr Boss stated that he feels that the meetings recently have been shorter; he felt that the solicitor did a very good job by behaving consistently and being well disciplined

Cllr Church mentioned that he observed a planning meeting at Colchester Council last week and he felt that the pre-meeting was particularly useful to discuss any potential issues with a representative from each Political party (4)

Cllr Boss stated that a pre meeting is currently held involving the Chair and Deputy Chair, he felt that the meeting was not and has never been political and so it did not need to change. Cllr Flavell agreed on this point

Cllr Church also mentioned that at Colchester members of the public and councillors are asked to give notification if they wish to speak about a certain application before the start of the meeting. All of the applications where no-one wishes to speak are dealt with in one block at the start of the meeting at the meeting he attended 7 out of 22 applications were dealt with in this matter.

Initially Cllr Boss, J Jahina and J Chance were sceptical wondering whether the public's perception would be that we were not giving the application enough thought. J Jahina wondered we would be leaving ourselves open for a judicial review saying that we need to be open and transparent.

Cllr Flavell stated she would like to know how many appeals Colchester received everyone agreed this would be useful to know.

Cllr Glynane thought it sounded like a sensible idea.

Cllr Church re-iterated the fact that the public and councillors were given every opportunity to advise whether they would like to speak or not and only those applications where no-one wanted to say anything were dealt with in this block.

C Stevenson commented that it would stop applications that are towards the end of the meeting not being given the full attention they deserve.

M Martin wondered whether the block agreed applications could be treated as delegated powers and help increase our BVPI performance in this area.

After hearing Cllr Church run through the process again all agreed it could be a very good idea but would like J Jahina to speak to a solicitor at Colchester Council to discuss their appeal record, what happens if someone arrives at the meeting late and wanted to talk about the application but it had been approved within the block at the start of the meeting, how long they been doing this, how successful it is and how much time do they feel it saves.

Cllr Lane commented that at the meeting he observed there was a withdrawn item that caused confusion with some members of the public and wondered what the procedure was. J Chance advised that they always attempt to inform everyone who has registered an interest in the particular application that has been cancelled. However people have the right to remove applications at the last minute and sometimes it is only possible to ask the Chair to inform the public verbally. It was agreed that the P.R. of the meeting could be improved in general not just on this point including creating a fact sheet for members of the public, ensuring that all summing up is clear to all and ensuring they have someone to talk to discuss the outcome of the application.

C Stevenson advised that she would ask someone to check the information we display on our website as well.

J Jahina advised that our constitution is currently being reviewed; any planning amendments could be made in isolation however

Cllr Lane asked whether the cut off for people to register for public speaking could be made closer to the meeting. J Chance advised this would make things worse as it would not give officers enough time to contact everyone.

J Jahina advised that sending things by 2nd class post sometimes causes problems especially when bank holidays are involved.

Cllr Glynane wondered whether an applicant could ring up and give two names to speak against an application so the spots were booked and no one would attend to be against the application. J Chance advised that this was possible but was unaware of it actually happening.

4. Review of the last five planning committees

L Young presented his findings from the research he carried out, it was noted that the length of the meetings has gone down since Cllr Boss took over as Chair of the meeting.

5. Cold calling excellent performing authorities

L Young presented his findings from the research he carried out. It was agreed by all that the length of our meetings was better than those other Councils surveyed. We allowed the longest possible speaking time and two of the authorities meetings were 3 weekly as opposed to our 4 weekly meetings.

6. Colchester visit

Cllr Church re-iterated the main points from his visit. He also advised that the meeting started at 18:00 and when he left at 19:30 there were only two applications. Cllr Church felt this was helped significantly by the fact that 7 out of the 22 applications were dealt with at the start of the meeting.

7. AOB

C. Stevenson advised that there is be a meeting on Friday between herself and Stephen Kelly from the WNDC. L Young has been invited as well to observe and report back to the task and finish group

Agreed:

J Jahina to liaise with Colchester Council as previously stated

L Young to attend WNDC meeting Friday 13th January and report back to the Chair

The Chair and L Young to have a meeting in 2 weeks time to draft final report including recommendations

L Young to report back to the chair re WNDC meeting

Results of cold calling exercise

Question	NBC	Cheltenham	Uttlesford	Worcester
Frequency of meetings	4 weekly on a Wednesday	4 weekly on a Thursday	3 weekly on a Wednesday	3 weekly on a Thursday
Average length of meeting	3 & ½ – 4 hours	4 – 4 & ½ hours	10:00 – 14:00 site visits 14:00 – 17:30 meeting	13:30 – 18:00 including site visits
On average how many applications do you deal with per meeting	25	25	8 + planning matters	15
Public speaking details	2 for – 3 minutes each 2 against – 3 minutes each Ward councillor – 5 minutes in total Longest possible total – 17 minutes	1 for – 3 minutes 1 against – 3 minutes 1 ward councillor – 3 minutes Longest possible total – 9 minutes	1 for – 3 minutes 1 against – 3 minutes Longest possible total – 6 minutes (e-mails will be considered if received before 12:00 on the day)	Applicant – 5 minutes Objectors – 5 minutes Longest possible total – 10 minutes (Applicants can only speak if it is being objected to)
Average number of deferrals per meeting	2	0 – couldn't remember the last deferral	2	0 – only had 1 in the last year
What do you perceive you do well?		Keep debate moving – very good chair Delegate as many as possible Major applications are dealt with as a matter of urgency so if deferred they can go back in time They keep a close eye on dates coming up to ensure they are resolved in time	Prior reporting major applications helps to prevent deferrals. Run a tight delegation scheme which is available on their internet having the option to “call them in” These are the two key things they focused on to improve	Write up 106's on the day they arrive “Open door” policy for pre application work 106's are on a fixed timetable if not presented in time it is refused Members are mindful of the implications of refusal against 8/13 week targets

Observations of Planning Meeting 21st December 2005

Meeting started promptly at 6.00pm

The meeting started with an announcement that an item on the agenda had been withdrawn, as there had been a mix up over timescales. The paperwork relating to this item had been received on 19th October 2005 however it had been stamped received on the 4th November and therefore the 56 days had expired and automatic approval had been given. Although it's not something that this task and finish group need to investigate, systems need to be put into place to make sure that it doesn't happen again. Members of the public who had registered to speak on this item were not informed prior to the start of the meeting of this and this caused some confusion later on in the evening. However at this stage the objections from those members of the public were dealt with well by the Chairman and an explanation given by the planning officer.

I would suggest that in future when an item is withdrawn those registered to speak are told if items are withdrawn prior to the meeting starting.

Principle Items

Reports are given out in plenty of time before the meeting so that members have time to read them, some of the maps aren't very clear as road names and major landmarks are missing making it hard to locate the land the application relates to.

I would suggest that at least the major roads and those affected by the application are on the maps, it was pointed out that this is due to the type of map that we use and sometimes they are not clear.

Excellent presentations by the officers, maps & plans can be clearly seen on the big screen and speaking was very clear. Time limits adhered to in every case and the public made to feel at ease by joining the committee at the table.

Members of the public may not be used to speaking in public and can't always be heard by committee members, also they have their back to the public; I would suggest that they could have access to a microphone.

Comfort breaks taken during the meeting which was well planned.

Around the item that was withdrawn, 2 members of the public thought that they could still speak on that agenda item, when they passed this item by they became very vocal. The Chairman reacted quickly to remain in control of the meeting and the borough Solicitor spoke to the gentlemen concerned. The Chairman then adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes.

I would suggest that a comfort break be put on the agenda so that the public are aware that one is to be taken at some point during the meeting. I realise that some agenda items take more time than others but this can be moved around like any other item.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm

**Visit to Colchester Borough Council Planning Committee
5th January 2005**

Colchester Borough Council serves a population of 160,000 (mostly urban, but with some rural). They have one planning committee of 11 members.

Meetings start at 6pm, and lasts 2-3 hours, but have been longer.

Site visits are held during the day of the meeting (they are a relatively new innovation in Colchester).

A pre-meeting is held at 4.30 pm to which the spokespersons of all 4 groups are invited. Colchester is a 'no overall control' council like ours, with Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent councillors.

During this pre-meeting group spokespeople and planning officers highlight matters of concern on the agenda, and issues which are likely to lead to debate.

Before the main meeting, group spokespeople report back to their members any relevant points and issues that will arise during the meeting.

Members of the public and councillors who do not serve on the committee are asked to give notification of their wish to speak at the beginning of the meeting using a form circulated in the public area. One speaker for and against each application is allowed, with a time limit of 3 minutes. This is timed by a member of council staff who uses a bell when 2 minutes are up, and again after 3 minutes. Councillors have five minutes to speak.

Members of the committee are also asked, using a form, if there are any items on which they wish to speak or ask questions. Any supplementary reports by officers, including additional objections etc, are submitted as written reports at the meeting.

The chair then identifies all of the planning applications on which there are no public representations and no councillor has any comments or questions. All of these items are then taken and voted on as a bloc without comment from councillors or staff. At the meeting I attended 7 out of the 22 applications on the agenda were dealt with in this way.

This enabled the meeting to focus on the items in which there is public interest. It focuses the committee's attention on those items and reduces superfluous comments on uncontroversial items.

I left the meeting at 7.30pm, by which time there were only 3 items left on the agenda. One major and very controversial item had been deferred though, I think that would have taken considerably more time.

Conclusions

Colchester's system did reduce the length of meetings, although probably not by much.

Their system made it easier for members of the public to speak, with notification only having to be made by the beginning of the meeting.

They ensured that uncontroversial items were dealt with swiftly and effectively.

The pre-meeting reduced questions and comments during the meeting, and improved the conduct of the meeting.

The meeting was effectively chaired, and it was clear that the chair was well aware, due to the pre-meeting, where concerns from members were likely to arise and ensured that those points were effectively heard and dealt with.

Richard Church

Appendix F

Average figures from the last five planning committee meetings

17 th Aug 2005 - 30 th Nov 2005	<u>Approval</u>	No of reasons for a decision	<u>Approval in Principle</u>	No of reasons for a decision	<u>Refusal</u>	No of reasons for a decision	Total no of applications	Duration
Average per meeting	14	18.8	1.4	25	3.4	2	18.8	18:00 – 21:20

(See overleaf for full listing of figures)

- Approval, approval in principle and refusal are the three possible decisions for each agenda item
- The average duration of the first two meetings 17th August and 14th September was 18:00 – 21:40 (three hours 40 minutes)
- The average duration of the last three meetings 12th October 2nd and 30th November was 18:00 – 21:07 (three hours 7 minutes)
- The total number of applications presented to the planning committee ranges from 14 – 22
- The maximum number of reasons for making a decision ranges from:
 - 12 – 24 for applications that are approved
 - 8 – 38 for applications that are approved in principle
 - 1 – 4 for applications that are refused

Report on WNDC meeting held 13th January 2006

1.0 Introduction & Background

The West Northamptonshire Development Corporations (WNDC) powers will come into effect 1st April 2006. They will have the final say on all major planning decisions made in the area (excluding the town centre) – removing the responsibility for larger applications from our planning committee and the planning committees from South Northants Council and Daventry District Council.

I was asked to attend the meeting in my capacity as support officer to the planning task & finish group, who are reviewing the length and effectiveness of planning committee meetings.

Present at the meeting were:

Christine Stevenson – Corporate Manager Planning, Environmental Health & Leisure

Edward Hanson-Assan – Consultant reviewing the processes within Planning

Stephen Kelly – WNDC Planning & Development Director

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss further how Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and the WNDC will work together and ensure a quality service is provided to citizens.

2.0 Information

Key points:

- The situation we will be in is relatively un-tested as there are only 3 Urban Development Corporations in the Country.
- The reason for introducing the WNDC is to deliver houses, jobs, employment and sustainable communities to the local area.
- As explained by Stephen Kelly it is not the number of planning decisions that has to increase but the quality of the decisions in order to provide better outcomes for all.
- WNDC still intend to allow members of the public to speak for and against applications.
- The introduction of the WNDC will result in the major planning applications not being decided upon by NBC's planning committee – the WNDCs' committee will have final say. Applications will be presented to our committee who will be asked for a judgement whether to:
 - Approve in principle
 - Approve
 - Refuse
- The judgement will be documented and presented to the WNDC when they make their decision however WNDC ultimately will make the final decision.
- Approximately 3 NBC Councillors will be on the WNDC committee.

3.0 Conclusion

The powers that have been granted to WNDC will impact significantly the length of our planning committee meetings. The meetings will become shorter as WNDC will be making decisions on larger applications. Whilst the committee will be asked to comment upon the application WNDC will have the final decision.

These changes are will result in planning committee meetings becoming shorter.



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Date: 27 March 2006

Item No:

Directorate: Finance, Governance and
Citizens
Mario Abela

Author/Contact Officer:

Francis Fernandes
Solicitor to the Council
Ext. 7334

Title of the Report:

Political Structures and Miscellaneous
Matters

Purpose of the Report

To seek Council's approval to a number of changes to the Constitution and
some miscellaneous matters outlined in the report

Recommendations

Council notes the report and:

- (i) Delegates powers to the Solicitor to the Council to make changes to the Constitution to enable delegated decision-making by Cabinet members to be made in the format outlined in the report.
- (ii) Agrees the changes to the format of Council meetings and delegates powers to the Solicitor to the Council to make changes to the Constitution (including standing orders) to implement the changes
- (iii) Agrees the principle of using a formula based approach for appointing the Mayor from May 2007.
- (iv) Confirms the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Improvement Board.
- (v) Appoints any necessary members of the Cabinet and delegates powers to the Leader to assign portfolio responsibilities to members of the Cabinet.
- (vi) Appoints Councillor Roger Conroy to the Licensing Committee

Background

An important aspect of the review of the Council's political structures is the use of delegated decision-making powers by Portfolio Holders. The concept of delegated decision-making has already been agreed by Council. One of the matters that needs resolution is how the decisions are actually made.

Council considered a report on 23 January 2006, which, amongst other things, recommended changes to allow delegated decision-making by Portfolio Holders to take place in non-formally constituted meetings subject to certain criteria.

Following that Council meeting, the Constitutional Review Working Group (CRWG) met on 8 February 2006 to consider a number of issues referred to it by Council.

A verbal update of discussions was given to the Improvement Board on 16 February 2006, and a further update report taken to Council on 27 February 2006. The CRWG undertook to bring its proposals to this Council meeting.

The CRWG met on 8 March 2006, to firm up its recommendations to Council in relation to three areas:-

1. The format of meetings for delegated decision-making.
2. The format of Full Council meetings.
3. Mayoralty formula.

Delegated Decision-Making

The Local Government Act 2000 brought about a sea change in the way Councils operate in order to make "*decisions more efficient, transparent and accountable so that local authorities can be more open and responsive to the needs and aspirations of the communities they serve.*" (DETR guidance – new Constitutions). The Leader and Cabinet model, which in many ways emulates the parliamentary model, for the first time allows individual Portfolio Holders to make decisions and the legislation and its associated regulations clearly facilitate this.

The Government approach has been to encourage delegation and to ensure that there is clear accountability for the decisions made. Therefore, Councils have to ensure that it is clear who is responsible for a decision, how the public can access information and input in the decision-making and that there is effective scrutiny of decisions made.

The changes suggested in this report comply with the letter and spirit of the legislation.

What Other Councils Do

Research was conducted on the delegated decision-making processes of a number of Councils chosen randomly. The findings of the research can be found at Appendix 1.

Local authorities can be placed on different ends of a continuum in terms of their approach to using delegated powers. At the extreme end of the continuum is Westminster City Council. The Council, as indicated in its Constitution, gives Portfolio Holders very broad and extensive delegated decision-making powers. Most executive decisions are made by the Portfolio Holders using delegated powers. It is only the very large and important decisions that are made by the Council's Cabinet. Many (if not most) of the decisions are made in private.

However this model does not in any way violate the ethos of openness and accountability outlined in the Local Government Act 2000 or related government guidance. The protection imposed by the law are still applied. Pre-decision requirements ensure that there is an opportunity for individuals to input into a decision before it is made and that other Councillors and the public are clear who made the decision; what that decision was and that there are effective scrutiny arrangements to influence the decision if need be. Key decisions are, as required by the law, made in public.

At the other end of the continuum, lies Chester City Council which does not have powers specifically delegated to Portfolio Holders and decisions are made collectively by Cabinet in a model of governance that is similar to the one currently used by NBC. This model does not enjoy many of the benefits offered by the Local Government Act 2000.

There are various hybrid models used by other Councils which lie along various ends of the continuum. The approach suggested in this report represents a further innovative hybrid model that seeks to enhance efficiencies in decision-making but has the facility for meetings to be held in public, if Councillors or members of the public require this.

Constitutional Review Working Group Recommendations

The CRWG met and considered the approach NBC should adopt. The following has been agreed by the CRWG.

Prior to the making of delegated decisions, a Non-Statutory "Delegated Decision List" will be prepared and published on the inter/ intranet. The list will be fairly similar to the list provided for the Forward Plan, although care will be taken to ensure that the two lists are not confused. In order to maintain consistency the Forward Plan and the Delegated Decision List will be published as separate documents. The Delegated Decision List will mirror the publication dates for the Forward Plan.

How it will work in practice

The Forward Plan comes into effect on the first working day of each month and covers a four month period, looking forwards. The actual statutory publication date for the Forward Plan is at least 14 days before the list comes into effect i.e. at least 14 days backwards from the first working day of each month. An updated Forward Plan is published each month.

The Non-Statutory Decision List will be published on exactly the same dates as the Forward Plan. Therefore, when the Non-Statutory Decision List is published, Councillors and members of the public would have at least 14 days within which to indicate which item on the list they would want to be considered in public. Councillors should be aware that at this stage it is unlikely that the full report will be available. Councillors and members of the public will therefore need to form a judgement about whether to request a public meeting, from an explanation of the decision to be made, in the subject line of the Decision List. Once the 14-day window has passed, Councillors or members of the public will not have an opportunity to request that the matter be heard in a public meeting, unless they have complied with the notification within the 14 days. The Decision List will be updated each month and re-published at least 14 days before it takes effect. Councillors or members of the public will only be able to request public meetings in relation to new items in the updated list.

If Councillors or members of the public have complied with the 14-day rule, the item identified for a public meeting will be considered at a public meeting in the normal way i.e. an agenda and report will be prepared and published.

All delegated decisions by Portfolio Holders will be made on the basis of reports prepared by Officers in the normal way. The report structure and format will, in the main, be similar to that currently used for Cabinet. The same rigour and depth of analysis will be required in the report and Portfolio Holders will have access to the same level of Specialist Officer support, for example legal and financial advice before the decision is actually made.

It should be noted that normal rules regarding exempt reports will apply, this would include circumstances where, for example, commercially sensitive or personal information was being considered. Therefore, if a report does contain exempt information as defined by the Local Government Act 1972 then this will be considered in private.

Delegated decision-making where no prior notification of requirement for a public meeting

Where Portfolio Holder delegated decisions are not to be made in public meetings (where the requirement for a public meeting has not been triggered by a Councillor or a member of the public) there will be an additional requirement for the report to be published on the intranet and a decision will not be made until 5 clear days from publication has passed. This would mean that Councillors would have a 5-day window within which to read any reports published, and to pass any relevant comments to the Portfolio Holder or officer concerned. After the 5 days has passed the Portfolio Holder would be able to sign off the decision. A formal notification of the decision will then be published in a pre-determined format (Decision Notice) on the inter/intranet and Councillors would have a further 3 days from publication to call-in the decision, if appropriate.

Processes will immediately be put in place to ensure that the Chair of Scrutiny will automatically receive a copy of the Decision Notice as soon as the decision is available.

There will be protection in the Constitution to prevent **abuse of the requirement** for a delegated meeting to be held in public, for example **where block requests are made** for decisions to be referred to public meetings, **without good reason**.

A special urgency provision similar to the one in the Constitution (Part 5, clause 16, pp 4.24) will be drafted to apply to the decisions made by Portfolio Holders. This will allow a decision to be made, in exceptional circumstances, even if it does not appear on the Decision List as long as the Chair of Scrutiny, or if he is unavailable the Mayor or if she is unavailable the Deputy Mayor agrees that that the decision cannot for good reason be deferred.

Processes will also be in place to support Councillors in understanding and using the new system.

There will be a 6-month review, by the CRWP on how the new system is working and all Councillors will be encouraged to share their experiences and input into the review. A report outlining the review and proposing any necessary changes will be brought to Council soon after the review period.

A flow chart illustrating the main steps in the new process is attached at Appendix 2.

Council Meetings

The CRWG also considered changes to the format of Council meetings.

It was noted by the Group that various piecemeal changes had already been made to the Constitution. In order not to add to the increasing complexity of the Constitution, it was decided that only changes that required minimal adjustments to the Constitution would be put to Council at this stage. The whole Constitution is to be reviewed by the CRWG and more fundamental changes will be proposed to Council later in the year.

It was agreed that in addition to the current items (minutes; apologies; Mayor's announcements; deputations; public addresses; Councillor questions; notices of motion and matters of urgency) the following would be added.

Portfolio Holder Presentations – Portfolio Holders will at the Council meeting present (in bullet point form) a report on relevant, significant or otherwise interesting issues

affecting their Portfolios. The allotted time for such presentations will be no more than 10 minutes. Councillors will then have a maximum of 5 minutes within which to ask any relevant questions based on the presentations. It should be noted that these questions are separate from the formal Councillor questions under Procedure Rule 5.2.

An additional item will be added to the agenda entitled Policy Framework. This will consider any policy issues that are relevant for Council. There will also be additional items for reports from Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committee. In addition there will be the facility for a slot to be given for external presentations on issues of relevance.

In the longer term the CRWG will look at the whole issue of the format and approach to Full Council meetings and changes to the Constitution will be suggested.

Mayoralty Formula

The Constitutional Review Working Group considered the preferred approach for appointing a Mayor. It was agreed that a formula based approach would be fair and therefore the best approach and that the formula based approach should be implemented from May 2007. As such, it is proposed that the exact formula be considered as part of the CRWG's work when it reviews the whole Constitution.

Miscellaneous matters

Recent changes to the Leadership of the Council has given the need to reaffirm the memberships of certain committees.

The Improvement Board

The Improvement Board, in its innovative design is managed by the Chief Executive but is chaired by a Councillor, when formal decisions are made. Given the change in leadership there is a formal need for the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Improvement Board to be appointed by Council. It is proposed by this report that the Leader and the Deputy Leader be appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair respectively.

Portfolios

The Council's Constitution is currently unclear as to where the responsibility for assigning Portfolios lies. Given that Council has given the Leader delegated powers to agree the Scheme of Delegations for Portfolio Holders it would be logical and appropriate for the Leader to be given delegated powers to align the Portfolios to the delegated powers. Changes to the Constitution to enable this to happen are therefore suggested.

Following recent changes in the Leadership of the Council there is a need to clarify the composition of Cabinet. Council will be asked to confirm any necessary appointments.

Licensing Committee

Councillor Concannon (as he then was) had a place on the Licensing Committee. His resignation has left a vacancy on the Committee. It is proposed that this vacancy is filled by Cllr Roger Conroy, on a like for like basis.

Background Papers

Various papers File Ref FJF Political Structures
New Council Constitutions – DETR – Guidance Pack

Delegated Executive Decisions Process in various Authorities

Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
<p>Westminster City Council</p> <p>Ron Cork: 0207 641 3132 (Cabinet Meeting Contact)</p>	<p>How Decisions are made – Council Functions Whilst most decisions are taken by the executive (ie by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members) a number of important decisions are also taken by the full Council or by Committees or Sub Committees of the Council eg planning and licensing applications.</p> <p>How are decisions to be taken by the executive? (a) Executive decisions which have been delegated to the Cabinet as a whole will be taken at a meeting convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution. (b) Where executive decisions are delegated to a committee of the Cabinet, the rules applying to executive decisions taken by them shall be the same as those applying to those taken by the Cabinet as a whole.</p> <p>Individual Cabinet member Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon consideration of a report from the relevant Chief Officer(s) individual Members of the Cabinet may take decisions in respect of the executive functions set out in their terms of reference, subject to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the budget and policy framework approved by the full Council; (ii) the exclusion of any matter which falls within the terms of reference of the Cabinet; (iii) the exclusion of matters falling within the delegated power of officers unless referred to the Cabinet member by the relevant Chief Officer or "called in" by the Cabinet member (see 3.2 below); and • If the relevant Chief Officer is unwilling to refer a matter (or class of matters) falling within his/her delegated powers to the Cabinet Member for 	<p>Majority of decisions are taken by the delegated cabinet member (outlined in their terms of reference), and only the very big decisions actually go to full Cabinet.</p> <p>The Process is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A report of recommendations is submitted to the delegated cabinet member and published 5 clear working days before the actual decision is taken (<i>gives the public an opportunity to raise any issues they may have</i>) 2. After the 5 days notice the delegated member would sign and take the decision subject to call in. <p>NOTE: Their forward plan only shows Key Decisions.</p>

Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
	<p>decision, then the Cabinet member may call the matter (or class of matters) in for his/her own decision by giving written notice to the relevant Chief Officer. A copy of the written notice shall at the same time be given to the Council's Monitoring Officer. Where a matter or class of matters has been "called in" in accordance with this provision, the power or powers in question shall, until the notice is withdrawn, be exercisable by the Cabinet member and not the Chief Officer unless the notice is countermanded by the Leader, or the Monitoring Officer advises that the power or powers in question are not appropriate to be discharged by the Cabinet member for legal or technical reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to making a decision on a report, the Cabinet member shall consult with the Deputy Leader or Chief Whip of the Majority Group (unless both are unavailable and if both are unavailable, with any other available Cabinet Member) provided that:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) This requirement to consult may, at the Cabinet Member's discretion, be dispensed with if, in the Cabinet Member's view, the matter is not sufficiently important to merit consultation (unless the Leader has indicated that the matter in question should be the subject of consultation). (ii) The Leader of the Council may from time to time vary or discontinue the consultation arrangements set out above by notice in writing to the Monitoring Officer. • For avoidance of doubt the requirements of paragraph 3.1 above apply to the Leader only in the context of the discharge of executive functions pursuant to paragraphs (4) and (5) of his terms of reference and the requirement 	
Barnet London Borough Council	Constitution on the Web similar to Above	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All key decisions are taken via full Cabinet Meeting 2. Non Key decisions are taken either:

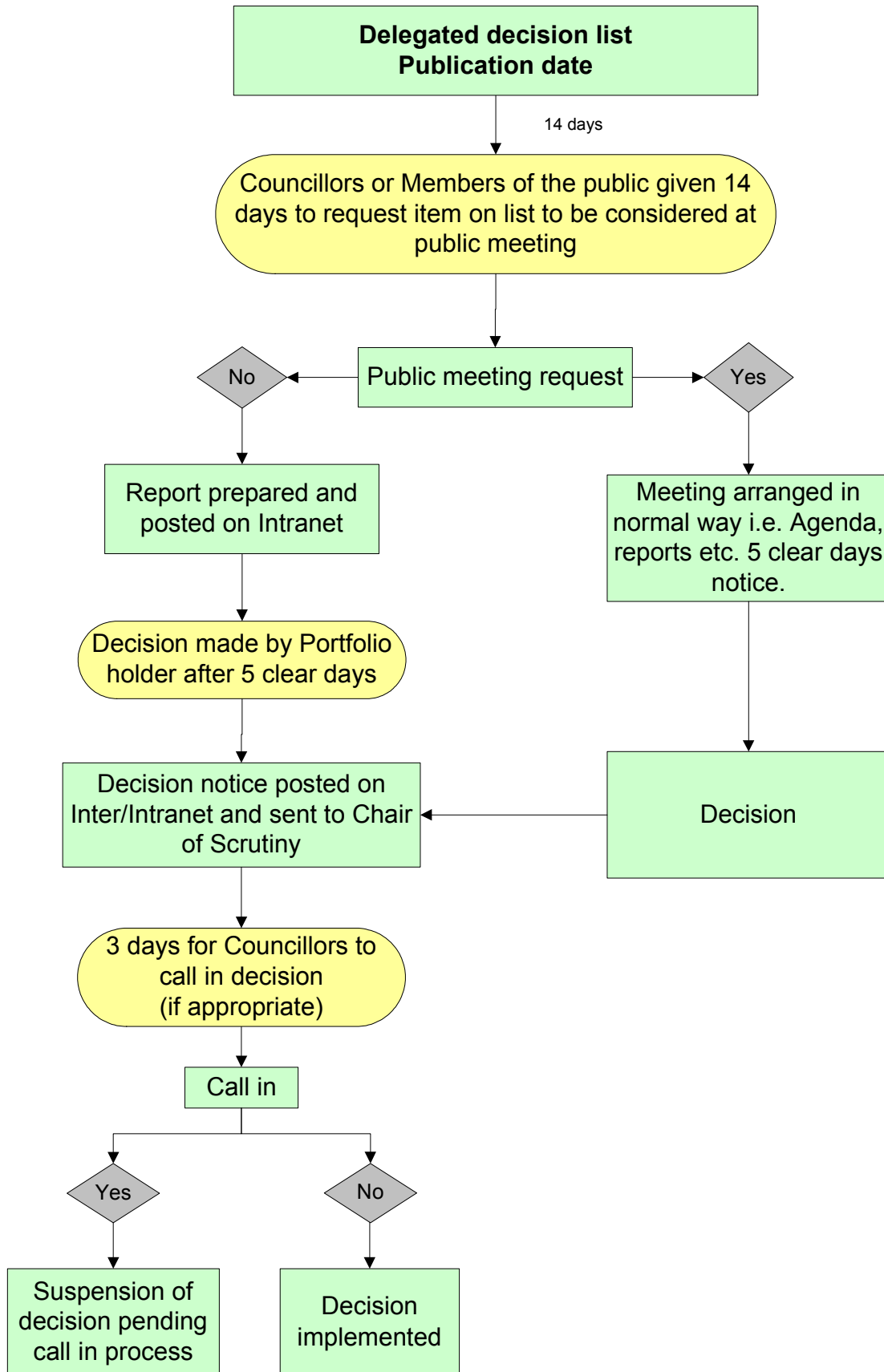
Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
<p>Nick Musgrove: 0208 3592024 (Cabinet Meeting Contact)</p>		<p>a. Cabinet Sub Committees b. Individually – Individual member decisions are taken and then published subject to call-in.</p> <p>NOTE: Their forward plan do not necessarily show key decisions only, to be on the safe side they do sometimes show decisions that maybe non-key.</p>
<p>Hammersmith and Fulham Borough Council</p> <p>Tel: 02087532139</p>	<p>How the council is governed In 1998, Hammersmith and Fulham became the first council to introduce a cabinet-style system for political decision-making. The council is still governed on this cabinet-style system.</p> <p>The council's five scrutiny panels scrutinise decisions made by the Leader's Committee and Cabinet members. They will ask for further information on proposed decisions, hear further reports and consider upcoming decisions that appear on the council's forward plan.</p> <p>Details of executive key decisions</p> <p>On this page, we publish a forward plan of key decisions that the council plans to make in the coming months.</p> <p>The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice of those decisions and an opportunity for consultation on issues to be discussed.</p> <p>Key decisions are decisions that have a significant effect on the community or involve significant budgets using the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anything affecting communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards • any expenditure or savings which are significant, regarding the 	<p>Key decisions are anything above £300k.</p> <p>They do not have a cabinet meeting. Cabinet meets in private, makes recommendations on key and major non-key decisions. These are then taken to the Leaders Committee 28 days prior to the meeting to allow for it to be scrutinised. The Leaders Committee would also take public deputations.</p> <p>Key decisions are put on forward plan four months prior to the decision deadline.</p>

Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
	<p>Council's budget for the service function to which the decision relates in excess of £300,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anything significantly affecting communities within one ward • anything affecting the budgetary and policy framework set by the Council <p>The plan covers the date the decision will be made, a summary of the proposal, who will make the decision, background documents and who to contact for further information.</p> <p>Executive key decisions will be taken by the Leader's Committee The Leader's Committee makes key policy decisions after consulting with the council's stakeholders and partners. Key decisions are publicised up to four months in advance in the Forward Plan. Decisions that are not key decisions, or part of the policy framework, are made by individual executive councillors or officers. Reports of non-key decisions made by individual cabinet members are made to each meeting of the Leader's Committee.</p>	
<p>Croydon Borough Council</p> <p>0208 726 6000 ex 62326</p>		<p>All their key and non key decisions are published in the Forward plan and made at the relevant committee i.e. Cabinet or appropriate Committee.</p>
<p>Cambridge City Council (Council of Excellence)</p> <p>Spoke to Liz Whitcher 01223 457015 Community Development and Leisure (Cabinet Portfolio)</p>	<p>The Executive</p> <p>The Executive comprises the Leader of the Council and six Executive Councillors. The Executive Councillors make decisions relating to the major service areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council • City Centre Development • Planning and Transport • Environmental Services 	<p>They do not have Cabinet Meetings. What they have are Individual portfolio holder meetings,</p> <p>All there key and non-key recommendations have an opportunity to be scrutinised. Decisions are then made via scrutiny.</p>

Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Services and Resources • Community Development and Leisure • Housing and Health <p>These councillors can make decisions individually, usually at a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee relevant to their Executive area. They also meet once a year to determine the Council's budget.</p> <p>As required by the Local Government Act 2000, the City Council's Executive publishes a Forward Plan of key decisions. It contains details of the matters on which those decisions are to be made and is updated monthly. Each plan covers a four month period.</p> <p>Representations about the decisions on the Forward Plan may be made to the officer shown in the Plan. Executive Councillors' contact details are available on this website.</p> <p>Scrutiny Committee reports are available for inspection at least five working days before the date of the relevant Scrutiny Committee meeting shown in the Forward Plan.</p> <p>The reports are available on the Council's website and can also be inspected during office hours at the Guildhall, Main Reception.</p> <p>The report to the Scrutiny Committee is the relevant background document submitted to the decision maker unless indicated otherwise in the Forward</p>	

Name of Authority	Their Constitution Information and/or Information on their Website	Comments by the Local Authority Officer
	<p>Plan</p> <p>Key decisions are taken following pre-scrutiny by the relevant Scrutiny Committee, the date of the Committee is given in the Forward Plan.</p> <p>The Forward Plan can also be inspected free of charge during office hours at the Guildhall, Main Reception. It can also be downloaded in the right hand column of this page.</p>	
<p>Chester City Council (Council of Excellence)</p> <p>01244 402 447</p>	<p>Decision-making</p> <p>The Council appoints a Cabinet, which is responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Cabinet is made up of the Leader and nine other members. The Cabinet's Forward Plan, published each month details major issues for decision or discussion. These meetings are open to the public except when the matters are personal or confidential. The Cabinet must make decisions in line with the Council's overall policies and budget. Matters outside the budget or policy framework must be referred to the full Council to decide.</p>	<p>Only key decisions are published on to the forward plan.</p> <p>All their key and non key decisions are taken by the Cabinet.</p>
<p>Borough Council of Wellingborough (Council of Excellence)</p> <p>David Seabrook 01933 229777</p>		<p>They do not have Cabinet meetings or even Cabinet Members. They have Committee members where all the decision recommendations are put forward and agreed. Some decisions would be taken at Council. Council is informed about all decision. Decisions are made subject to Call-in but that rarely happens.</p>

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION MAKING FLOW CHART



DRAFT SPECIMEN ONLY

NOTICE OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FOR THE PERIOD

This document is non-statutory and should not be confused with the Forward Plan. The Council's Constitution allows for some decisions to be made by individual Councillors who are members of the Cabinet and have areas of responsibility known as Portfolios as listed below.

This Notice sets out those anticipated delegated decisions to be made by Cabinet Portfolio Holders over a period of four months commencing on the first working day of the month following publication.

Councillors and members of the public are invited to indicate which of the items listed below should be dealt with as a public meeting. Councillors and Members of the Public will have to indicate before the plan takes effect (i.e the first working day of the month) which decisions they would want to be held in public. Once the list has taken effect it will no longer be possible to request a public meeting. Each month the list will be updated and published (at least 14 days before the first working day of each month) and new requests for a public meeting can only be made in relation to new items not already on the list.

Prior notice of not less than five clear working days will be given for meetings that are to be held in public, by publication on the Council's website. Any individual requesting a public meeting will be notified directly of the arrangements.

Some matters can be considered after the exclusion of the press and public on the grounds set out in the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12A as amended). In the information about the expected decision to be made the words "(in private)" will also appear if this is the case. Such matters will be exempt from a public request for a public meeting.

A request for a public meeting must be received before the first day that the Plan comes into effect. Unless the urgency provisions outlined in the constitution apply, no decisions on any of the matters listed below will be made before the Plan comes into effect.

The Members of the Cabinet and their Portfolios are:

Councillor Tim Hadland – Leader of the Council and Financial Strategy and Performance	e-mail: cldr.thadland@northampton.gov.uk
Councillor David Palethorpe – Business Intelligence People Support and e Govt	e-mail: cldr.dpalethorpe@northampton.gov.uk
Councillor Yousuf Miah – Residential Operations	e-mail: cllrymiah@northampton.gov.uk
Councillor Penny Flavell and J Lill (joint) – Local Environment	e-mail: cldr.jlill@northampton.gov.uk e-mail: cldr.pflavell@northampton.gov.uk
Councillor John Caswell – Economy and Infrastructure	e-mail: cldr.jcaswell@northampton.gov.uk

For more details, please contact Frazer McGown, Meetings Services Manager at The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DA, 01604 837101; e-mail: fmcgown@northampton.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can register your request for a public meeting by e-mailing meetingservices@northampton.gov.uk.

NOTICE OF DELEGATED DECISIONS

.....(date).....

SUBJECT	EXPECTED DATE OF DECISION TO BE MADE	SUBJECT OF EXPECTED DECISION (BRIEF RESUME OF DECISION TO BE MADE)	DECISION TO BE MADE BY
<i>(TITLE)</i>			<i>(NAME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THEIR E- MAIL ADDRESS)</i>



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Date: 27 March 2006

Item No:

Directorate: Finance, Governance and
Citizens

Mario Abela

Author/Contact Officer:

Francis Fernandes

Solicitor to the Council

Ext. 7334

Title of the Report:

Remuneration Panel

Purpose of the Report

To seek Council's approval to amend the Council's current scheme on Members Allowances, to take into account the advice received by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel.

Recommendations

Council notes the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel and, in accordance with its advice, agrees to amend the Council's Remuneration Scheme to enable the following:-

1. That the Basic Allowance for all Councillors be increased to £6,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005.
2. That the current Travel Allowance of £600 per year regardless of the amount of travel undertaken be removed and that that travel within the Borough should be claimed for in the same way as travel outside the Borough.
3. That the Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Improvement Board should be set at £6,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005 and that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny should be set at £3,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005 and that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Audit Committee should be set at £2,000 per annum backdated to 1 September 2005.
4. That Council notes that a full Review will be brought to the May Council meeting and that that review will consider all allowances including the allowances agreed in this report.

Background

Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Local Government Act 2000, makes provision in relation to various allowances for members of local authorities.

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provide that each local authority has to decide its own scheme and the amounts to be paid under that scheme.

Members are required by law to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise the local authority on its scheme. Whilst it is ultimately for the Council to determine its own scheme, the Council has to, as a matter of law, take into account the Independent Remuneration Panel's advice before determining agreeing or amending its remuneration scheme.

On 28 November 2005, Council agreed to establish jointly with Northamptonshire County Council an Independent Review Panel with specific terms of reference.

The Remuneration Panel has approached its review of the Council's scheme on two basis; a short term interim position and a medium term full review.

Given the very tight timescales to which the Panel have been working, they have decided to prioritise their review and, in the short term, focus on priority allowances. The Remuneration Panel's report, attached to this report at Appendix 1, contains its advice on this interim position.

The Remuneration Panel will continue its work in reviewing the Council's whole scheme, with a projected timescale for its advice in time for the May 2006 Council meeting.

It should be noted by Councillors that the complete review, to be brought to the May 2006 Council meeting, will look at the whole scheme, and this will mean a review of allowances already agreed in this report.

Financial Implications

There is no budgetary provision for the increases in remuneration outlined in the report, but existing budgets will be re-prioritised to meet the identified expenditure.

Background Papers

Remuneration Panel Report March 2006

Various Papers File Ref FJF/ Remuneration

New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local

Authority Allowances – July 2003

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT PANEL FOR
COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES

ANNUAL REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES 2005-06

Introduction

Northampton Borough Council resolved at its full Council meeting on 28 November 2005, to establish jointly with Northamptonshire County Council an Independent Review Panel to exercise the relevant functions in respect of both authorities.

NBC is undergoing massive changes. Major changes to its governance structures have been conceived and implemented by the Council. Remuneration of Councillors, has been identified by Government monitors as an important strand in the Council's recovery.

The Panel has been working to extremely tight timescales. As a result, the Panel has adopted two positions. A short term and medium term position. The short term position provides advice on priority areas and is covered by the advice in this report.

A medium term consideration will look at the whole issue of remuneration and a further report will be prepared and submitted to full Council at a later date. The medium term position will look at all allowances again which could include a further review of the allowances suggested in the short term report.

Background

Northampton Borough Council was identified by the Audit Commission, in its March 2004 Inspection Report as "poor". As a result of this classification, the Government has appointed a Lead Official who has the responsibility of supporting the Council in its recovery programme and if this cannot be

achieved, to advise the Government on whether formal intervention powers should be used.

The Council has instigated a major change programme which has focused, amongst other things, on managerial and political leadership. The latter has been manifested in a major review of the Council's political structures. A number of new and very innovative structures have been created. These include the Improvement Board (which has been established as a formal committee); an Audit Committee and Improvement Clinics. The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees have been reduced from 7 to 1, although there is now a facility for task and finish panels to consider specific issues.

Of the new structures, the Improvement Board is the most innovative. It is comprised of cross-party leading members and as part of its membership includes NBC's Chief Executive and directors, the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council, staff representatives and representatives from the business community (yet to be appointed). The Board considers and is responsible for driving forward Northampton Borough Council's Improvement Agenda. The Improvement Board meets once fortnightly although there is a pre-meeting the week before. This means that Councillors on the Board need to attend to Improvement Board business once a week.

Northampton Borough Council, by resolution of its full Council on 28th November 2005, appointed the Remuneration Panel (jointly with the Northamptonshire County Council) to assist it in reviewing its current remuneration scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended) and the Local Authorities (members allowance) England Regulations 2003.

The Panel has been charged with the following terms of reference:-

- The level of Basic Allowances payable to all members of the Council

- The responsibilities and duties which should receive special responsibility allowances and the level of those allowances
- The duties which should attract travelling and subsistence allowances and the level of those allowances
- As to whether dependents' carer allowance should be payable and the level of such allowance
- As to the circumstances for which Co-optees' Allowances should be paid and the level of such allowances
- As to whether if the Allowances Scheme is amended any allowances should be backdated
- As to whether adjustments to the level of allowances may be determined in accordance with an index (and if so which index) and as to how long such index should apply before its use is reviewed (maximum period 4 years)
- As to which (if any) members of the Council are to be entitled to pensions in accordance with the Local Government Scheme and whether basic allowance or special responsibility allowance, or both, should be treated as amounts in respect of which such pensions are payable

However, given the tight timescales the Panel has, as explained earlier, only been able to take a short term position on priority areas. This has considered the level of basic allowances payable to all members; special responsibility allowances in relation to specific posts; travel allowances and backdating of allowances in this review.

The Panel was provided with background information which included details of the Council's current recovery programme and information about the context within which the Council is currently working. Further, some comparative data on allowances currently provided by other local authorities and various reports on the structural changes taking place in the Council's political structures and governance arrangements.

The Panel had a number of meetings at NBC premises and met with a number of Councillors which included two Leaders and one Deputy Leader; Director of Governing; Chair of Scrutiny; a cross-section of ordinary Councillors and the Government's Lead Official.

The Panel recognised the very considerable efforts being made by all Councillors, together with the enthusiasm and engagement of Councillors in helping to meet the very difficult challenges facing the Council in terms of its recovery. The efforts and level of intervention required by Councillors was well in excess of what would be expected in a normal Council environment. This required, amongst other things, a very different way of working. For example, the Improvement Board meets very regularly, and seeks to obtain cross-party working and consensus, within the environment of a Single Administration Council.

The Panel considered this, the comments and views of those who appeared before it and comparative data from other Councils to form its conclusions.

Panel Advice

The Panel recommends to Northampton Borough Council that:-

1. The Basic Allowance should be increased to £6,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005.
2. That the current Travel Allowance of £600 per year regardless of the amount of travel undertaken should be removed in that travel within the

Borough should be claimed for in the same way as travel outside the Borough.

3. That the Special Responsibility Allowance for members of the Improvement Board should be set at £6,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005 and that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny should be set at £3,000 per annum and backdated to 1 September 2005 and that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chair of Audit Committee should be set at £2,000 per annum backdated to 1 September 2005.
4. That the allowance for members of the Improvement Board be withdrawn from the scheme as soon as the Improvement Board ceases to exist (with a pro rata allowance up to the date the Improvement Board ceases)

Budgetary Implications

Increase in Basic Allowance:	£2,000 x 47 (Councillors) = £94,000
Increase in Allowances for Improvement Board Members:	£6,000 x 6 = £36,000
Audit Committee Allowance:	£2,000
Overview and Scrutiny Chair Allowance:	£1,000 (£3,000 increase from £2,000)
Reduction in Travel Allowance:	(less £28,200)
	NB: However offset by amount claimed

The Panel will now continue with its full review for 2006/2007, and the Panel's advice will be provided to a future full Council meeting.

Panel Members

Ray Starkey

Ross Catlin

Gary Smith



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name of Committee

Council
Date 27 March 2006

Item No.

Report of Director of Customer and Service Delivery

Directorate: Customer and service Delivery

Name :David Taylor

Author/Contact Officer:

Name, Post, Tel & Ext
David Taylor, Director of Customer and Service Delivery, tel 01604 837379

Purpose of Report

To request that councillors nominate representatives to sit on the West Northants Development Corporation (WNDC) Planning Committee, in accordance with the resolution passed by the WNDC board.

Recommendations

That Councillors nominate a representative and a substitute from each of the three main political parties, to represent Northampton Borough Council onWNDC's planning committee.

To note that these representatives will be party to strategic planning decisions made by the WNDC with respect to the regeneration of Northampton and the growth agenda.

To authorise the Solicitor to the Council to undertake any amendments necessary to the council's constitution to implement these nominations and to report to full Council on any changes made.

Summary and Links to Corporate Plan

The WNDC urban development corporation came into being in 2004 to deliver strategic planning decisions in West Northamptonshire (Daventry, Towcester and Northampton). WNDC's planning powers come into effect on 6th April 2006 and from that date all major applications in Northampton and all minor applications in the town centre will be determined by the WNDC. The WNDC planning committee will include councillor's representing each of the district councils, in addition to the council being a consultee on applications that are made. This supports the council's vision and the corporate plan priority of creating and sustaining an attractive economic environment for forward investment and regeneration.

Background

The WNDC is the urban development corporation for West Northamptonshire and was created to help manage the government's growth agenda for the MKSM region. Its intention is to regenerate West Northamptonshire, to create managed, sustainable growth in the region.

Although it will be WNDC that will make the decisions on major planning applications, the local community, including councillors will be involved via consultation. Additionally the council is represented on the board. The WNDC's planning powers come into effect from 6th April and there will be planning committee's for each of the three district council areas. These committee's will make the decisions on planning applications and councillors from the districts are invited to make nominations for representation on them.

Councillors should be aware that if nominees are currently NBC Planning Committee members then in cases where NBC is a formal consultee on planning applications those nominated members may not be able to sit on particular items involving the WNDC, because of the potential of a conflict of interest.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications from this report

Social Impact

The nomination of councillors to the WNDC planning committee enables locally elected representatives of the community to contribute to the regeneration and growth within Northampton. It ensures that local needs are taken into account when strategic planning decisions are made. The delivery of improved infrastructure and regeneration will contribute to an improved economy and create opportunities for the citizens of Northampton to enjoy improved facilities and reduced deprivation.

Conclusions

The nomination of councillors to the WNDC planning committee is recommended as it enables locally elected representatives to play an effective part in the regeneration of Northampton.

Consultees (Internal and External)

Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers

A letter from the WNDC inviting regarding the work of the WNDC www.wndc.co.uk.



NORTHAMPTON
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to this report. Further detail can be found on their website