

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
DOCUMENT/LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN STEERING GROUP**

Thursday, 14 December 2006

PRESENT:	Councillor Hadland	NBC (Chair)
	Councillor Barnes	SNC
	C Berry	NBC
	R Boulton	NCC
	S Bovey	DDC
	Councillor Caswell	NBC
	C Cavanagh	NBC
	M Chant	NCC
	M Hayes	WNDC
	Councillor Millar	DDC
	S Pointer	NBC
	R Pulling	BCW
	R Strugnell	SNC
	C Thomas	NBC
	Councillor Townsend	SNC
	R Wood	DDC
	B Wooding	NCC
	C Ledward	EDAW
	A Young	EDAW
	M Davison	EDAW
	S Phillips	GVA Grimley
	N Fernig	Atkins

ACTION

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harker, Councillor Smith and G Hughes.

2. NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2006

The above minutes were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Joint Planning Team Manager

It was noted that the Joint Planning Team Manager from North Northamptonshire was unable to participate in the interview process due to prior commitments. Councillor Barnes suggested that another technical advisor be asked to participate in the interviews.

Agreed: That another technical advisor, to replace the Joint Planning CT

Team Manager from North Northamptonshire, be invited to participate in the interview and selection process.

4. PROGRAMME DIRECTOR'S PROGRESS REPORT

C Thomas presented the report circulated and amended recommendation (a) as the Steering Group did not have the authority to “agree” the amendments to the draft LDS, therefore this was amended to read “note”.

Joint Planning Team Manager

C Thomas advised that the closing date for applications was 12:00 midnight on that day (14 December 2006) and as yet no applications had been received. There had been 238 enquiries on the Internet and 3 application packs had been sent out. The position would be reviewed the following day, after the deadline for applications, and it was suggested that Tribal be asked to undertake some research in relation to the potential applicants that had made enquiries via the Internet. Members of the Steering Group expressed concern at the lack of applications and it was suggested that, if no suitable applications were received, that the possibility of a secondment from one of the 3 local authorities be explored.

Joint Planning Team Office Location

C Thomas advised that a further focused search was being undertaken to explore underutilised voluntary/public sector accommodation however, if this was not successful, a local agent would be commissioned at the beginning of January 2007. R Boulton referred to the ongoing search for a suitable accommodation and suggested that it may be appropriate to look for a Town Centre shop front premises from which the Joint Planning Team could work. Also it could be used to front a continuous PR campaign. The Steering Group discussed the possibility of using a Town Centre shop and the additional benefits this would provide as an ongoing public relations opportunity.

R Strugnell referred to the concern expressed in relation to the disappointing response to the advertisement to recruit the Joint Planning Team Manager post and also the time it was taking to agree an office location for the Joint Planning Team. He expressed concern that no real progress seemed to be being made. C Thomas suggested that there was a danger that not having a shared office location would mean that work was not progressing however, this was not the case and work was progressing in accordance with the programme. He referred to the Resource Plan and the concerns expressed by GOEM that adequate resources had not been identified by all three Councils. He suggested that all three Local Authorities should be ensuring that, as part of their individual budget processes, an appropriate amount was included to adequately fund the process. Although he supported in principle the suggestion that the Team be based at a Town Centre shop front location, in practice this would be very expensive and would require additional resources.

Brand/Identity

It was noted that some art work showing different options for the “One Vision – Three Council” branding had been circulated and it was suggested that members of the Steering Group look at the suggested logos outside of the meeting and advise the Officers on the Programme Board of their preferences.

Submission of LDS and GOEM's Consideration

The Chair referred to the letter that had been circulated at the meeting, sent by GOEM to R Fox at South Northamptonshire Council, in relation to the Joint LDS. The letter expressed concern in relation to the timetable, which they felt was very ambitious and would be difficult to achieve. GOEM was also expressing concern that the Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents had not been adequately scoped to give a clear indication of the remit of the documents and to define resources for delivery.

The Steering Group discussed the concerns of GOEM in relation to the number of documents and the resourcing of the programme and S Barnes advised that South Northants Council had requested a meeting with GOEM to ascertain exactly what they required. C Millar advised that Daventry District Council had had the same type of discussion with GOEM and there was concern that such matters should be dealt with through the democratic process. Daventry District Council were sending a cross party letter to GOEM expressing these concerns. S Barnes invited Daventry District Council members to participate in the meeting with GOEM should they wish to be involved.

S Pointer clarified that the main concern was that there was sufficient resources allocated to joint working and advised that Northampton Borough Council had reduced the number of documents they were going to produce to enable them to focus on the priorities and be sure that these could be delivered. Also measures were in place to ensure that NBC could demonstrate that they were allocating adequate resources to delivering the programme.

S Bovey referred to the previous discussions in relation to taking a joint approach and was comfortable that adequate resources would be available to ensure delivery. However it would be a real concern if the Joint Planning Team Manager post could not be filled.

The Steering Group then discussed the resources that would be required to fund the programme, the need to appoint a Joint Planning Team Manager and to be able to demonstrate that real progress was being made.

Agreed: (1) That the Steering Group note the resolutions of respective councils regarding the draft LDS.

(2) That if no suitable applications are received by the deadline consideration be given to agreeing a secondment from one of the three Local Authorities.

Board

(3) That members of the Steering Group consider the branding/logo option circulated suggesting to the Programme Board which options they want to take forward for formal agreement.

ALL

5. GOVERNANCE

R Strugnell presented the report circulated and the revised Memorandum of Understanding, which had taken into account the comments, and amendments that had been agreed. It was noted that Northamptonshire County Council were now party to, and would sign up to, the Memorandum of Understanding and the

four Local Authorities would be working in association with the WNDC. WNDC were recognised in the document as a key partner. It was noted that there was a greater emphasis throughout the document on the three plan making Local Authorities and it was felt that there was now a good balance in recognising those that would produce the document as well as the importance of the two other key players.

C Berry noted that bullet point c) under paragraph 7 of the Memorandum of Understanding still referred to the preparation of an Area Action Plan for the Northampton Implementation Area which reflected the old LDS's. She suggested that this be corrected to refer to the area action plans in relation to the urban extensions.

M Hayes referred to paragraph 10 of the Memorandum of Understanding which suggested that officers from the WNDC and NCC would be invited to meetings when the Group considered it appropriate, however paragraph 12 suggested that the WNDC would be represented by its Chief Executive or his nominated representative. It was acknowledged that it was important to be as inclusive as possible and therefore it was suggested that the words "when the Group considered it appropriate" be removed from the second sentence of paragraph 10 within the Memorandum of Understanding.

ALL

Agreed: (1) That the revised Memorandum of Understanding relating to the preparation of Development and Transport Plans for West Northamptonshire be agreed, as slightly amended above.

(2) That the proposals made in paragraph 3 of the report be agreed.

Board

(3) That arrangements be made to ensure that the Memorandum of Understanding is signed by the Leaders of the four Councils.

6. LONGER TERM GROWTH OPTIONS FOR NORTHAMPTON STUDY - PRESENTATION

Charles Ledward and Alison Young from EDAW made a presentation to the Steering Group in relation to the Longer Term Growth Options Study.

C Ledward advised the Steering Group of the number of new dwellings that would need to be accommodated up to 2026 and the land budget to deliver growth, including residential, industry, office, retail, etc.

C Ledward advised that the three thematic scenarios identified were Neighbourhood Centres, Urban Renaissance and Employment and Skills and he then advised the Steering Group of the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

It was noted that the scenarios would be used to test growth options and the next stage, which was essential, was the transport testing.

The Steering Group were then advised of the three draft options for growth and drew particular attention to the implications of each option for the transportation network.

It was noted that the next stage would be to revisit the options and look at them in more detail, after which a draft report would be completed and circulated to officers on the Steering Group for comment. It was anticipated that there would be a joint Councillor briefing event during January 2007 to present the conclusions.

The members of the Steering Group discussed the importance of the transport testing that would be essential in informing the process to determine the preferred options. The Steering Group discussed the land budget identified and there was some concern expressed that this may not be adequate for the amount of growth to be accommodated. The Steering Group also discussed the importance of testing the capacity of the utilities and M Hayes advised that WNDC were already undertaking work with the utilities and suggested that they may be able to provide some assistance.

C Berry advised that the Officers on the Steering Group envisaged that the options would be included in the Issues and Options Discussion Paper and that the testing would be done in parallel as there was not sufficient time to do the testing beforehand. B Wooding, NCC, referred to the letter that had been circulated from the Highways Agency expressing concern that the study may fail to consider the fundamental link between land use and transport which may result in the options presented being flawed or misleading with regard to their full implications.

Councillor Barnes asked how the options would be presented during the consultation process. The Steering Group discussed the approach that should be taken and it was stressed that it needed to be made clear that the scenarios presented were merely options and that no conclusions had been reached as yet.

The Steering Group then returned to discussing the growth options and the need to test the impact of each scenario on the boundaries and against recent employment studies.

The Chair thanked C Ledward, A Young and their colleagues from EDAW for attending the meeting and making the presentation.

7. JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME AND JOINT CORE STRATEGY

C Berry presented the report that was circulated at the meeting detailing the progress on the Joint Core Strategy and proposing the arrangements for the Issues and Options Consultation. It was proposed that the Joint Planning Team would be producing one Issues and Options Consultation paper and the consultation period would be six weeks, running from Thursday 8 February 2007 to Thursday 22 March 2007. This would be one month later than stated in the Joint Local Development Scheme as a result of the need. This was necessary to enable the conclusions and recommendations of the Longer Term Growth Options Study to be incorporated into the Issues and Options paper and to enable the Councillors from the Boroughs, Districts and County Councils to be briefed on the conclusions of the Study. This timetable would enable the consultation period to be completed well in advance of the purdah period before the May local elections and the Easter holidays.

The report also included details of the methods of consultation that would be

used and a summary of those that would be consulted. It was anticipated that approximately 500 copies of the Issues and Options Consultation paper and accompanying leaflets would be produced.

The Steering Group then discussed the proposed way forward and whether the timetable suggested within the report was achievable. There was also some discussion in relation to the timing and dates of future meetings of the Steering Group and the Programme Board to ensure that the proposed timetable could be achieved. It was suggested that the individual Cabinets from the three Local Authorities may wish to sign off the Issues and Options paper before consultation and this had not been taken into account.

The Steering Group then discussed how, and by whom, the consultation document would be presented and it was suggested that it may be that advice from PR specialists should be sought.

Agreed: That the Steering Group note the progress on the Joint Core Strategy and agree, subject to further discussion in relation to the dates, the arrangements for the Issues and Options consultation. ALL

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Steering Group discussed the proposed dates for the Joint Programme Board and the Joint Steering Group to consider the Issues and Options Paper and the need to give a briefing to the wider audience of all Councillors on the three Local Authorities. C Berry also reminded the Steering Group that, as from the end of March 2007, the Chair and the administration of the Steering Group would pass to either South Northants and Daventry District Council and asked that they consider who would be taking over this role.

Agreed: That C Berry discuss further with her colleagues at South Northants and Daventry District Councils possible dates for future meetings of the Programme Board and the Joint Steering Group to meet the programme in relation to the Issues and Options Consultation Paper. CB

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be advised.