



Item No.

9

Joint Strategic Planning Committee

Joint Planning Unit

Manager:

Date: 21 10 2008

Report Title

Review of the Local Development Scheme

1. Recommendations:

- 1.1 The Committee approves the Local Development Scheme attached for submission to Government Office for the East Midlands by the deadline of 25th October 2008.
- 1.2 The Committee notes the urgent need to bring forward further resources to deliver the Local Development Scheme.
- 1.3 The Committee notes the progress made to date and the next steps for the work of the committee and Joint Planning Unit.
- 1.4 The Committee approves the establishment of a Business Sub-Group of the Committee, to monitor the LDS work programme and its resourcing.

2. Summary:

The West Northamptonshire Local Development Framework is the most important tool to enable Councils to shape the towns, villages and countryside into the future and deliver growth on the Councils' terms.

The combination of documents in the Local Development Scheme attached represents the most practical and effective way forward to produce the policy frameworks and deliver development in a coherent manner that will serve West Northamptonshire well.

The alteration in the names and timing of Development Plan Documents since the 2007 Local Development Scheme enables the same spatial issues and development pressures to be managed as intended by the previous Local Development Scheme in a more coherent and resource effective manner. It is still possible, on review of the Local Development Scheme that other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents may come forward depending upon the circumstances at the time of review.

The revised Local Development Scheme is required by Government Office by the 25th October. The Secretary of State has powers to direct local authorities, and thereby the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, should the LDS not be delivered on time and to a good enough standard. Clearly the constituent authorities have no desire to be subject to any such direction.

Similarly the Secretary of State has the power to intervene should performance in delivering the Local Development Framework against the agreed Local Development Scheme be less than committed to in the scheme. The constituent authorities will, therefore, be committed to providing the necessary resources, leadership and backing required to meet the timetable set down in the approved scheme.

3. Background:

Introduction

The 2004 Planning and Compensation Act that replaced the land use planning system with a spatial planning system has put planning at the heart of enabling local government to achieve its ambitions. Within the context of Northamptonshire being a key national growth area during the next twenty five years West Northamptonshire will accommodate significant growth. This will mean more homes, jobs, leisure and health facilities for the area. The Councils in West Northamptonshire have a unique role in: shaping the places they govern; delivering the ambitions of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and its constituent councils for the future quality of life offered by the towns, villages and countryside of West Northamptonshire expressed in the sustainable community strategies; and delivering the agreements with central government on priorities for their communities found in the Local Area Agreement.

The West Northamptonshire Local Development Framework, together with regional and national policy, has the job of ensuring that this growth happens in a way that is well directed and brings a wide range of benefits to existing and future residents of all generations as well as businesses. This is key to the Councils' place shaping agenda and the Local Development Framework is therefore the most important policy tool to manage this growth and harness the social, economic and environmental benefits that development can bring. Not all of the West Northamptonshire area will be subject to significant change. Alongside areas where communities will expand and grow there will be areas that will remain similar to their current form. There are difficult choices to be made and these must be made openly and transparently in the process of production of the West Northamptonshire Local Development Framework.

In delivering this growth agenda and ensuring that the nature of the growth is achieved in the terms desired by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee it is critical that seamless planning is undertaken by producing a coherent policy framework for West Northamptonshire and delivering the facilities and infrastructure needed. This requires close partnership working between the constituent councils, the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation, public agencies and private investors to provide an end to end planning process that sets policy which supports decisions on individual proposals for development guiding investment in a fruitful manner for current and future generations of the population.

The Local Development Scheme

The Local Development Scheme is a public statement setting out details of which spatial planning documents will be produced over the next three year period. It sets down the combination of policy documents (and purpose) that have been selected to ensure effective planning of the area and accounting for its uniqueness. It is a legal requirement that the a Revised Local Development Scheme is produced following the creation of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee. The Order requires production of a revised Joint Local Development Scheme by 25th October 2008.

The proposed West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme is attached at Appendix 1.

This Local Development Scheme reflects the progress made on the previous scheme jointly agreed by the councils. It reprofiles the documents proposed earlier to:

- Bring the Local Development Framework in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and guidance in Planning Policy Statement 12 –(all local planning authorities are considering the need to reprofile their Local Development Schemes)
- Bring forward the policy tools in a coherent and effective order to address the current and future spatial and development issues given the current understanding of good spatial planning practice.
- Account for the progress made to date and impact this has had on the timing of adoption of policy in the context of urgent need to progress.
- Assist the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and Councils to respond flexibly to circumstances that pertain across the life of the Local Development Scheme.

This re-profile means that the range of issues that the previous Local Development Scheme covered does not change, but the names of documents, timing and grouping of policy matters does change. It has been produced on behalf of the Joint Planning Unit in partnership with officers in each of the Councils and the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.

Section 4 of the Local Development Scheme that outlines the documents to be produced is reproduced below. The details of each proposed Development Plan Document and Supplementary Planning Document are found in Appendix 3 of the Local Development Scheme. The lead body that will be responsible and accountable for its preparation, its role and position in the chain of conformity of policy, its geographical coverage. Its status as a DPD or SPD, its key milestones for production, a broad indication of resource requirement and an approach to involving stakeholders and the community.

The logic of the Local Development Scheme

The West Northamptonshire Core Strategy for the whole of West Northamptonshire is to be produced first. In line with “Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning” 2008 this will include some ‘strategic allocations’ that are critical to delivery of the spatial strategy. These ‘strategic allocations’ will include allocated sites for the early phases of growth to meet the requirements of the East Midlands Regional Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy) and include sustainable urban extensions as well as any other strategic sites that are critical to delivery of the strategy. They are expected to cover the early phases of housing and employment allocations together with all related social, green and transport infrastructure needed for these growing communities up to 2021. The strategic allocations will indicate some detail in terms of the disposition of land uses, infrastructure, access to sites and other details.

When it has been adopted therefore the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy will provide adequate detail to allow developers and the Joint Planning Unit to produce master plans for the strategic allocation sites (including sustainable urban extensions) if the market is ready to bring forward the development. For the later phases of growth the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy will indicate broad locations.

The choice can then be made with respect to moving these 'broad locations' to clear policy statements that bring forward the land for development either by inclusion in the West Northamptonshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) or an Action Area Plan for these 'Growing Communities' – the specific locations of both these strategic sites and the directions of growth have not yet been fixed and this is the job of the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

A timetable showing both joint and individual Local Development Document timetables is in Appendix 10 of the Local Development Scheme. During the period of completion of the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy the Councils are producing masterplans for key sites and areas to assist them in managing current pressures for development. These masterplans will form part of the evidence for the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and when the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy is adopted could be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents in part or whole depending upon the circumstances that pertain at the time. The status of these would need to be reviewed when this Local Development Scheme is reviewed. These masterplans are for the following areas:

- Daventry Town
- Towcester
- Brackley
- Roade Village
- Sixfields

Until the directions of growth for Northampton are established it would be premature to adopt the masterplan for Sixfields as a Supplementary Planning Document and therefore this is not included in this Local Development Scheme. Northampton Borough Council will continue to work with land owners and English Partnerships to prepare a masterplan to inform the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and the suitability of adopting the masterplan as a Supplementary Planning Document for this area will be revisited during the review of this Local Development Scheme.

The documents that will be produced from 2008 to 2011

West Northamptonshire Core Strategy

The key priority in the Local Development Scheme for West Northamptonshire is the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy. The West Northamptonshire Core Strategy is a strategic document that will set out a spatial vision for West Northamptonshire (which reflects the sustainable community strategies of the area) and a proposed approach to how the places within it will develop, addressing a range of spatial and strategic development issues. This strategy will address key spatial issues for West Northamptonshire such as the roles of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley as well as the villages, the nature of the future economy including the development of rural enterprise, access to housing and other services, educational standards and provision, health and leisure opportunities and how these are accommodated. It will set out how much and what type of development is intended to happen, where, when and how it will be delivered.

The core strategy represents a key phase to establish the broad spatial framework for the area indicating the kind of places sought in the future and the facilities needed to support sustainable communities. It will also set some detail by making some key strategic allocations for the early phases of urban growth together with establishing directions of growth for later phases.

At the same time it will establish those areas where there may be only very special circumstances for development e.g. to provide rural affordable housing or critical services.

Following adoption, all future Development Plan Documents produced in West Northamptonshire must be in conformity with the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing DPD and Affordable Housing SPD

The West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Development Plan Document will be produced alongside the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy. The work required to produce this Development Plan Document forms part of the evidence base for the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy in terms of identifying the infrastructure and facilities needed to accompany development, the sources of funding for this infrastructure and the expected contribution to this by developers. It is sensible to divide this from the Core Strategy however as it can provide more detail than would be found in the Core Strategy and can be updated where necessary. The choice of a Development Plan Document for Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing rather than a Supplementary Planning Document is to reflect the need for clear public examination of the benefits being sought. This work may form the basis for the Community Infrastructure Levy should this be enacted and implemented. There is an urgent need to provide more affordable housing in West Northamptonshire and in recognition of this fact in the interim period before the Development Plan Document can be adopted an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is being produced that will supplement existing policies . This will be produced by consultants and the aim is to appoint before the end of 2008.

West Northamptonshire Site Allocations DPD

This will deal with site-specific policies including allocations for key activities such as housing, employment, retail, leisure, health, community and transport facilities.

Northampton Central Area Action Plan DPD

This will develop policy for the transformation of the centre of Northampton as a centre of regional importance, the heart of an urban conurbation projected to be the third largest conurbation in the East Midlands over the planning period. It will also address how the centre will need to grow and develop to meet the needs of the larger population that will be delivered in the Sub-Region through the Core Strategy.

Daventry Town DPD

This Development Plan Document will include site specific proposals for Daventry Town should they be required at this time following the adoption of the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents.

Daventry District Village and Town Design Statements SPD

These community produced design statements will provide guidance as needed. The programme for individual villages will come forward in response to community action and their form and content are guided by Daventry District Council.

South Northamptonshire Council Rural Settlements DPD

This DPD will address the matter of village confines in rural South Northamptonshire in the context of the settlement hierarchy set by the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

Silverstone Circuit SPD

This is a piece of guidance for the future development of the Silverstone Circuit and is jointly produced with Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Proposals Map

A Proposals Map, will express geographically the adopted development policies for West Northamptonshire.

Statement of Community Involvement

Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council and South Northamptonshire Council each adopted a Statement of Community Involvement in spring 2006. These set out how the community will be involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents and consulted on planning applications. Each Statement of Community Involvement will be monitored on an annual basis and the need for review and integration to one statement will be assessed as part of the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report for West Northamptonshire.

Documents required beyond this Local Development Scheme

A Development Management Policies document is scheduled to begin in December 2011. As policy is produced in the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents this will gradually replace existing saved policies. It is likely that the Joint Strategic Planning Committee will conclude that a Development Management Policies document will not be required by that time as development issues will be covered through national policy, regional policy and the adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents and SPD. However, it is included as a marker to indicate that it may be required.

The Joint Strategic Planning Committee may bring forward a series of Action Area Plans for the remaining urban extensions from 2011 when the Core Strategy is due to be adopted. This will be dependent upon the coverage of the West Northamptonshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document and are therefore not included as Development Plan Documents in this Local Development Scheme to allow for flexibility in approach. Indeed further area action plans for areas of regeneration could be brought forward if considered necessary. The need for review of this Local Development Scheme will be monitored as part of the Annual Monitoring Report production.

The differences between the 2008 and the 2007 Local Development Schemes

There are some changes in the names and roles of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents in this Local Development Scheme compared to the 2007 version. These changes reflect current understanding of the needs of West Northamptonshire and its constituent communities, good spatial planning practice and the significant changes in the scope of core strategy advised in Planning Policy Statement 12 of June 2008.

The West Northamptonshire Core Strategy together with the West Northamptonshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document will now incorporate the strategic and site related matters that were intended to be contained in a number of former documents. This is due to a number of factors as well as the change in scope of core strategies:

- The 'Northampton Implementation Area' was a device designed to ensure that the authorities work together. With the advent of a Joint Strategic Planning Committee it was important to revisit the need for a development plan document focussing only on that area.
- The Rural Areas Development Plan Document divorced the planning for the countryside, towns and villages from the West Northamptonshire area as a whole. Good spatial planning will account for towns and villages, the reciprocal relationship with the countryside and manage them as fully functioning networks – in a growth scenario it will also be clear about where significant development and growth will occur and where it will not.
- The inclusion of Development Plan Documents scheduled early in the last Local Development Scheme for Towcester, Brackley and Daventry also removed the planning for these towns to a series of separate documents and represent a significant workload as each Development Plan Document must meet stringent regulations in its production.

In essence it is now understood that a complex portfolio of Development Plan Documents is not likely to be a practical option to produce and the principle core strategy together with the site allocations document will do the same job as the previous set of Development Plan Documents and be more resource efficient in the process. It is sensible therefore that the core strategy, now containing strategic allocations for the early phases of growth will replace what would have defined some of the 'Northampton Implementation Area'. In addition any strategic allocations for the towns and directions of growth will be covered in the core strategy as well as the future settlement hierarchy for the whole area including policy that will set the roles and the mix of facilities needed to support each settlement in its role. The site allocations document will then determine policy with respect to sites across the whole of West Northamptonshire and this will include any non strategic sites that may be key to development in both towns and villages. The core strategy will address issues of accessibility and conservation in the countryside as well as supporting the rural economy.

This combination of development plan documents makes for better planning for the relationships between the future settlements in the area and proper accommodation of the manner in which they will function e.g. the relationships between the future Northampton and the towns and villages. It will make it clearer where significant development will and will not be accommodated than the earlier configuration of a broad brush core strategy followed by separate Development Plan Documents for the 'Northampton Implementation Area' and the 'Rural Areas'. In short, producing the proposed combination of documents will be a more effective use of resources and holistic approach to planning for development of the area than the previous choice of Local Development Documents.

The Development Plan Documents with the following names therefore no longer appear in the Local Development Scheme:

- Northampton Implementation Area Development Plan Document

- Rural Areas Development Plan Document (with the exception of village confines - refer South Northamptonshire Rural Settlements DPD)
- Towcester Town Development Plan Document
- Brackley Town Development Plan Document

In addition, this reconfiguration coupled with the current masterplanning work being undertaken remove the need to produce the following documents as the work will be taken forward in terms of evidence for the core strategy and site allocations documents and policy and allocations picked up as shown above :

- Moat Lane Supplementary Planning Document
- Sixfields Area Action Plan Development Plan Document

The alteration in the names and timing of Development Plan Documents since the 2007 Local Development Scheme enables the same spatial issues and development pressures to be managed as intended by the previous Local Development Scheme just in a more coherent manner. It is still possible, on review of the Local Development Scheme that other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents may come forward depending upon the circumstances at the time of review.

Governance and adoption

The Joint Strategic Planning Committee will approve and adopt the Local Development Documents on behalf of the Districts and the Borough.

Priorities & Resources

The split of the contribution to resources for the Joint Planning Unit and production of West Northamptonshire wide Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents follows the pattern of votes held on the Joint Strategic Planning Committee. Hence proportions of contributions will be as follows:

Daventry District Council – one quarter
 Northampton Borough Council – one third
 Northamptonshire County Council – one sixth
 South Northamptonshire Council – one quarter

In addition, contributions in partner time from West Northamptonshire Development Corporation are offered and will be used given the need to for the work to be undertaken with close engagement of partners and in partnership.

As a result of the review of the fitness for purpose of the Joint Planning Unit all Councils are seeking to raise further resources to fund this Local Development Scheme. A full establishment of staff will be needed by January 2009 to deliver the programme. In the interim measures are being taken to bolster capacity and to ensure that the work programme remains on track. Award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant will fund, should it be received.

Work completed to date

The work on the Local Development Framework has slipped significantly against milestones in the 2007 Local Development Scheme partly as a result of not achieving the levels of staffing and skills required.

However, a significant amount of work has been achieved with the resources that were put in place, not least on key aspects of the evidence base. In addition infrastructure studies (by councils including Northamptonshire County Council and by the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation) and master plan work are providing significant inputs to the evidence base for policy making and will continue to do so. Any work completed to date is not therefore lost and whilst this is a new Local Development Scheme it does not represent an entirely fresh start. Information gathered from respondents at the issues and options stage and formal studies will all feed into the development of options for the core strategy which is a key next step.

4. Options:

In this instance with respect to the Local Development Scheme the options are somewhat limited. There is significant pressure from GOEM and Department for Communities and Local Government to bring forward the development plan for this area. Delivery of a revised Local Development Scheme is the first step in this delivery. There is a real threat of intervention from the Department for Communities and Local Government if the deadline of 25th October is not met and a Direction issued. Failure to deliver the Local Development Scheme on time is therefore not an option.

The Local Development Scheme is based on a significant increase in resources which is needed to recover from programme slippage against the previous Local Development Scheme. The failure to deliver the increased resource needed would inevitably lead to failure to meet the milestones in the Local Development Scheme. This in itself will impact on the potential Housing and Planning Delivery Grant which may be received.

5. Consultees:

External:	
Internal:	

6. Representations:

N/A

7. Conclusions:

The implications of this Local Development Scheme for all of the Councils

Place Making and Effective Planning

The essential nature of an up to date statutory development framework is well rehearsed and in short avoids short term responses to development pressures and decisions being taken from local control through the appeals process. It helps councils to deliver their aspirations for communities and the places they govern.

Resource Requirements

Refer to the 'Priorities & Resources' section above.

Housing and Planning Delivery Grant

The award of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant is based on past performance. GOEM advise that the year April 2009 to March 2010 will be the year that uses this Local Development Scheme for assessment of grant.

The current planning element of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant has a cap of £1million and relates to four separate elements:

- Demonstrating sufficient land for housing – for 2009 – 2011 this is demonstrating a five year supply of deliverable sites for the period April 2009 to March 2014. The production of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment currently being produced by the Joint Planning Unit is expected to provide this evidence. The award is enhanced where a fifteen year supply is demonstrated.
- Delivery of core strategies and development plan documents allocating more than 2,000 dwellings. The grant relates to commencement, submission and adoption stages on these development plan documents. In the case of West Northamptonshire this will apply to the core strategy reaching submission and adoption and the site allocations document being commenced during the three year grant period.
- Joint working on the production of development plan documents. This clearly applies to West Northamptonshire.
- Publication of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Update of this is understood to be in progress.

The housing element awards net additional housing completions equivalent to at least 0.75 per cent of existing housing stock. An additional element to incentivise affordable housing is expected from 2010-11.

The grant is awarded to the individual authorities but clearly reliant on work undertaken jointly through the Joint Planning Unit. However, it must be noted that an abatement of grant is triggered if performance on processing planning applications falls below any national planning standard applied to processing planning applications.

The Implications of the Local Development Scheme for Daventry District

Saved policies from the Local Plan and Structure Plan apply until replaced. Masterplanning work on Daventry Town guides development as a material consideration. The West Northamptonshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance from September 2009. Strategic policy from the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and any strategic sites that may apply come forward for the whole of the district shortly before the Daventry Town Development Plan Document was originally programmed for adoption i.e. January 2011. This is followed in September 2011 by detailed West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Development Plan Document policy and West Northamptonshire Site Allocations for non strategic sites in October 2012. Any remaining detailed policy that may be required comes with the West Northamptonshire Development Management Policies in February 2013.

The Implications of the Local Development Scheme for South Northamptonshire

Saved policies from the Local Plan and Structure Plan apply until replaced. Masterplanning work on Towcester and Brackley Towns and Roade Village guide development as a material consideration. The West Northamptonshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance from September 2009.

Strategic policy from the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and any strategic sites that may apply come forward for the whole of the district shortly before the Towcester and Brackley Towns DPD were originally programmed for adoption i.e. January 2011. This is followed in September 2011 by detailed West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing policy and West Northamptonshire Site Allocations for non strategic sites in October 2012. Rural Areas Development Plan Document is due to come on stream at the same time as the West Northamptonshire Site Allocations replacing existing village confines. Any remaining detailed policy that may be required comes with the West Northamptonshire Development Management Policies in February 2013.

The Implications of the Local Development Scheme for Northampton Borough

Saved policies from the Local Plan and Structure Plan apply until replaced. The West Northamptonshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance from September 2009. Publication of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan will occur at the same time as the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy. Strategic policy from the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy and any strategic sites that may apply come forward for the whole of the district eight months after the Northampton Central Area Action Plan was originally programmed for adoption i.e. January 2011. The Northampton Central Area Action Plan will be adopted in May 2011. This is followed in September 2011 by detailed West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing policy and West Northamptonshire Site Allocations for non strategic sites in October 2012. Any remaining detailed policy that may be required comes with the West Northamptonshire Development Management Policies in February 2013.

Next steps

A Business Sub Group of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee is proposed to monitor the work programme for the Joint Strategic Planning Committee. Early in this programme the development of a spatial portrait, spatial vision and spatial objectives for the development of West Northamptonshire will be programmed as well as how the Committee will move on with a first iteration of options and alternatives for the Core Strategy. These will build on work already completed.

The Joint Planning Unit will develop a spatial strategy in response to the vision and objectives. In addition it will assess the evidence base with respect to its completeness against objectives set for the plan and set out the main strategic options for the core strategy and their implications for the Joint Strategic Planning Committee to consider.

The Chief Officers of the councils will encourage partnership working and cooperation across their organisations to assist rapid progress on the production of the Local Development Framework.

8. Legal Implications:

Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1572 West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order
Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)
(England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008
Statutory Instrument 2004 No. 2204 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)
(England) Regulations 2004
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

9. Background Papers:

Joint Local Development Scheme March 2007: Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, South Northamptonshire Council.
Communities and Local Government Plan Making Manual October 2008
Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning

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