

Item No: 8
Date: 17 February 2009

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Programme Monitoring Report

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the progress on the approved Local Development Scheme programme and the evidence base workstreams to date.

West Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme Milestones

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

- 1.2 The next milestone for the Joint Core Strategy in the approved Local Development Scheme is the publication of the Joint Core Strategy in November 2009. This is also known as the pre-submission stage. The Joint Core Strategy preparation is on target to meet the next milestone.
- 1.3 The Regulation 25 consultation letters were posted out in early January to everyone on the Joint Planning Unit's consultation database (over 2,300 individuals and organisations). Details of the consultation are also on the Joint Planning Unit's website. This part of the Regulation 25 consultation closes on 5 March 2009.
- 1.4 Work is continuing on the spatial vision and objectives. A workshop was held on 20 January 2009 for the Joint Strategic Planning Committee members and officers.
- 1.5 The officer charette started on 22 January and concluded on 11 February 2009.
- 1.6 The invitations to tender for the Appropriate Assessment have been sent out.

West Northamptonshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 1.7 The Affordable Housing SPD will provide interim supplementary policy guidance until the Joint Core Strategy and the West Northamptonshire Development Contributions and Affordable Housing DPD come into effect. The SPD will be based on the Saved Adopted Local Plan policies.

- 1.8 The next milestone for the Affordable Housing SPD in the approved Local Development Scheme is consultation on the draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report in April and May 2009. The SPD preparation (if approved for the purpose of consultation at this meeting) will be ahead of target to meet the next milestone.
- 1.9 The working draft Affordable Housing SPD has now been completed and is a separate item for consideration on the agenda of this Committee meeting.

West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (DPD)

- 1.10 The first milestone for the Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing DPD in the approved Local Development Scheme is commencement of preparation of the DPD and consultation with the statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.11 The first milestone was achieved on 30 January 2009, on target, with the start of the consultation with the statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.12 The invitations to tender for the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report were also sent out on 27 January 2009.

Progress on Evidence Base Workstreams

- 1.13 The names in brackets below are references to consultancies engaged in the delivery of the evidence base workstreams.
- 1.14 Green Infrastructure and Environmental Sensitivity Studies:

Northampton Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study [Living Landscapes] – Comments have been received from the local planning authorities and the key environmental stakeholders on the draft study. The consultants will be working on amendments over the next few weeks. There has been a short delay in the programme (about two weeks) due to late responses from stakeholders to the draft report. There is no risk to the Local Development Scheme milestones.

Towcester and Brackley Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Studies [Quartet Design] – The first draft reports have been received for checking. This study is on target.

- 1.15 West Northamptonshire Sports Facility Strategy [Synergy]
Comments have been received from the local planning authorities and the key sports bodies. Sport England has raised concerns with the study. A meeting will be held within the next week with the consultants, Sport England and another representative of the Steering Group to address the concerns raised by Sport England and progress this study. It is still anticipated that the project will be completed on time.
- 1.16 Pursuit of Evidence of Service Needs [Being Prepared In-House by the JPU]
A start has been made and the work is ongoing.

- 1.17 Joint Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal [Environ]
The consultants are currently updating the Scoping Study. This work is on target.
- 1.18 West Northamptonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment [Scott Wilson]
The Level 1 report has been sent to the Environment Agency for them to sign it off. The Level 2 Northampton Scoping Study has also been sent to the Environment Agency for their comments. The Environment Agency's response to the Level 1 report and the Level 2 Northampton Scoping Study has been received. The draft Level 2 reports for Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District have been received from Scott Wilson for checking. This project is on track.
- 1.19 West Northamptonshire Outline Water Cycle Strategy [Halcrow]
The second draft was received just before Christmas and comments have been sent to the consultants Halcrow. A final draft is expected in mid February. This study is on target.
- 1.20 Rural Accessibility
The assessments and modelling will commence shortly.
- 1.21 Strategic Urban Design Appraisals
Currently scoping any further work required.
- 1.22 Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment [Atkins et al]
The study is progressing to timetable. The request for sites letter has now been sent to landowners, developers and commercial agents. Responses are required by 27 February.
- 1.23 West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) [Being Prepared In-House by the JPU]
Site identification and surveying is continuing. The study is now on target. The draft SHLAA report will be issued for consultation by 31 March 2009.
- 1.24 West Northamptonshire Retail Study [CACI]
Comments on the revised draft report have been sent to the consultants. The consultants will be working on amendments over the next two weeks. The study will be signed off by 28 February 2009.
- 1.25 West Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (HMA) [Consultants to be commissioned shortly]
The housing strategy officers at each of the West Northamptonshire Borough and District Councils have reviewed the WNHMA in the light of the Department for Communities and Local Government – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Practice Guidance Version 2 (August 2007) and concluded that there are two gaps in the WNHMA – meeting the needs of people who have disabilities and stock condition. The housing officers also consider that the WNHMA would benefit from an update, the first of a series of annual updates. The housing strategy officers will have prepared a consultant's brief (including a timetable) and an estimate of cost for this work by mid February. The HMA

review will update our evidence base and understanding but will not impact on the Local Development Scheme milestones.

Recommendation

- 1.26 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee notes the progress on the approved Local Development Scheme milestones and the evidence base workstreams.