

Appendices: 3



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Arrangements for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Cabinet Meeting Date:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2018
<b>Key Decision:</b>	YES
<b>Within Policy:</b>	YES
<b>Policy Document:</b>	YES
<b>Service Area:</b>	Planning
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor James Hill
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All Wards

### 1. Purpose

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1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval of :

- A Statement of Common Ground for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan
- A Joint Local Development Scheme for West Northamptonshire
- A Memorandum of Co-operation and Terms of Reference for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board

### 2. Recommendations

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2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves:

- a) The Statement of Common Ground (attached at Appendix A);
- b) The Joint Local Development Scheme for West Northamptonshire (attached at Appendix B); and
- c) The Memorandum of Co-operation and Terms of Reference for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board (attached at Appendix C)

### **3. Issues and Choices**

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#### **3.1 Report Background**

- 3.1.1 Members may recall that, at the meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016, it was agreed that Cabinet supported the replacement of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee by a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board supported by a Memorandum of Co-operation. The order for the Joint Strategic Planning Committee was revoked by the Secretary of State in January 2018.
- 3.1.2 Members may recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018, a report was considered on a Growth Deal for Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire Councils. Among the recommendations that were agreed at that meeting that a timescale for delivery of milestones be agreed, including agreeing a statutory Strategic Plan for West Northamptonshire.
- 3.1.3 At the last meeting of Cabinet the principle of submitting an outline application for a West Northamptonshire Growth Deal was approved recognising the opportunity that Northampton and its environs have in contributing to the Government's ambitious targets for housing and employment growth as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor. To plan for future growth in West Northamptonshire, it will be necessary to have a Strategic Plan for West Northamptonshire to replace and update the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS).

#### **3.2.1 Issues**

- 3.2.1 Officers from this council, Daventry District Council, South Northamptonshire Council, the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit and Northamptonshire County Council have been working together on plan-making arrangements that need to be put in place before work can start on producing the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. The arrangements that need to be put in place are:
- A Statement of Common Ground - so that it is clear that there is agreement on key priorities and the scope of the Strategic Plan.
  - Local Development Scheme (LDS) – to set the timetable for the production of the Strategic Plan.
  - Memorandum of Co-operation and Terms of Reference for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board – to ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place for the Strategic Plan to be delivered.
- 3.2.2 Other councils in West Northamptonshire are also considering these arrangements.

## Statement of Common Ground

3.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advocates the preparation of SOCGs as a way of demonstrating effective and ongoing joint working between and compliance with the duty to co-operate. The draft Statement of Common Ground (SOCG), attached at Appendix A, has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF and advice contained in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance. If agreed by all of the councils concerned, the signatories to the SOCG will be Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

3.2.4 The key strategic matters and scope of the Strategic Plan set out by the SOCG will comprise:

- **The spatial vision for West Northamptonshire** – extended up to 2050 to reflect the wider spatial vision being prepared for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford corridor.
- **The spatial strategy for the distribution of development** – this could include new spatial options such as new settlements (garden towns), where these would be a long term sustainable approach to development.
- **The housing requirement** – the number of new homes to be provided across West Northamptonshire. Targets to be split by Policy Area and/or strategic locations.
- **Affordable housing** – Proportion of the overall requirement that should be affordable. Guidance on the tenure split having regard to the expanded definition of affordable housing in the revised NPPF.
- **Economic growth** – An overall jobs target for West Northamptonshire and guidance on the strategic locations for employment, including new employment land. This would also include a review of the strategy for town centres / retail as the exiting JCS evidence / policy is out of date.
- **Strategic infrastructure** – The key primary infrastructure projects that are required to deliver the strategy such as strategic transport schemes and utility networks.
- **Place-shaping / sustainable development** – Key principles to ensure quality development and sustainable places including the protection and enhancement of natural/built and historic assets.

## Local Development Scheme

3.2.5 For all Local Plans, local planning authorities are required to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the milestones and timetable for the production of plans. A joint LDS has been produced and is attached at Appendix B. The relevant planning authorities for the production of the Strategic Plan are this council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire District Council. It is intended that the LDS will be brought into effect as soon as possible after the three councils have approved it.

3.2.6 The timetable set out in the LDS is necessarily ambitious in order to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the Government's growth proposals for the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor. Preparation of the plan will require significant staff and financial resources to be deployed

by the three councils and their successor unitary authority, should that arise. The milestones and timetable for the production of the Strategic Plan are set out in Table 1 below.

*Table 1 – Timetable for the production of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan*

<b>Commencement of Preparation / Evidence Gathering and Scoping</b>	October 2018 – June 2019
<b>Issues Consultation (Regulation 18)</b>	April 2019
<b>Options Consultation (Regulation 18)</b>	September 2019
<b>Consultation on Draft Document (Regulation 18)</b>	June 2020
<b>Proposed Submission Consultation (Regulation 19)</b>	December 2020
<b>Submission to Secretary of State (Regulation 22)</b>	April 2021
<b>Commencement of Examination (Regulation 24)</b>	September 2021
<b>Adoption of DPD (Regulation 26)</b>	January 2022

### **Memorandum of Co-operation and Terms of Reference for the Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board**

- 3.2.7 A memorandum of co-operation and terms of reference between this council, Daventry District Council, Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire Council have been drafted (see Appendix C).
- 3.2.8 The purpose of the memorandum is to establish a framework for co-operation between the councils for strategic planning and development issues that raise cross boundary matters affecting them. The establishment of a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board is central to this framework. The memorandum sets out broad objectives for the signatory councils and the Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board and strategic planning and development issues, as well as funding arrangements.
- 3.2.9 The terms of reference for the Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board set out its scope, status and membership. It is proposed that the board will consist of three members from each of Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council and that, where possible these should include at least one person who is an elected member of the county council among those appointed by NBC, DDC and SNC. It is important to note that the proposed Board would not be a decision-making body. Any recommendations made by the Board would have to be considered by each of the three constituent councils for decisions to be made.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

3.3.1 There are two possible options regarding the recommendation of this report.

#### **Option 1 – agree the recommendation**

3.3.2 This will allow the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board to be set up, facilitating the start of work on the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. The councils will then be in a position to make sure that West Northamptonshire can take full advantage of the opportunity to contribute to the Government's ambitious targets for housing and employment growth in the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Corridor. If the Growth Deal application is unsuccessful, these arrangements will still need to be in place to ensure that the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy can be reviewed in line with policy contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

#### **Option 2 – do not agree the recommendation**

3.3.3 If the recommendation is not agreed, work on the Strategic Plan could not start. Without these arrangements being in place, it is unlikely that the Government would approve the councils' application for a West Northamptonshire Growth Deal because there would be no obvious mechanism for delivering it. If these arrangements are not in place, and in the absence of an approved Growth Deal, it would also not be possible to review the existing Core Strategy in a timely fashion.

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **4.1 Policy**

4.1.1 The proposals in this report will ensure that the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, which is Part 1 of the Local Plan covering Northampton, can be reviewed.

### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

4.2.1 These proposals do not have any immediate implications for financial resources. However, it is likely that it will be necessary to increase staffing and other resources connected with the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit in order to progress the Strategic Plan. If the Growth Deal application is successful, this would secure substantial funding for additional resources to produce the Strategic Plan. It is also possible that some staff could be assigned from the planning departments of this council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council, but this would be dependent on those councils having dealt with their commitments relating to their Part 2 Local Plans and related planning documents.

### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 The Council prepares local plans and related documents in conformity with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and relevant regulations. The other actions proposed in this report can be executed under the general power of competence provided by the Localism Act 2011 and/or a range of other powers including powers provided under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **4.4 Equality and Health**

- 4.4.1 It is unlikely that these proposals would impact differentially on people with protected characteristics. Because the proposal does not constitute a policy, it is not necessary to produce an equality impact assessment.

### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

- 4.5.1 The proposals the subject of this report are the result of discussions between officers of this council, Daventry District Council, Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire Council.

### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

- 4.6.1 By putting in place the necessary arrangements to deliver the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, these proposals will help to deliver Priority 1 – Northampton Alive and Priority 5 – better homes for the future, particularly as regards:
- Supporting economic growth
  - Stimulating and energising business
  - Improving our offer to businesses and inward investors
  - Managing the supply and growth for the future of Northampton
  - Deliver well designed, high quality homes, neighbourhoods and services

## **5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework, MHCLG, July 2018  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework> .
- 5.2 Planning Practice Guidance, MHCLG  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

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