



West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at the Council Chamber, Towcester on Tuesday, 26 October 2010 at 6:00 pm.

D. Kennedy
Chief Executive

Contact: Frazer McGown, Democratic Services Manager
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Agenda

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. MINUTES
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
 - Personal
 - Prejudicial
4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

To consider any issues that the Chairman is of the opinion are Matters of Urgency.
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IF ANY)
6. DRAFT JPU BUDGET 2011/12
(Copy attached)
7. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY
(Copy attached)
8. COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY FOR THE PRE SUBMISSION JOINT CORE STRATEGY
(Copy attached)
9. THE CHAIRMAN TO MOVE:

“THAT THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF SUCH CATEGORIES OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED BY SECTION 100(1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS ARE LISTED AGAINST SUCH ITEM OR ITEMS OF BUSINESS BY REFERENCE TO THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH OF SCHEDULE 12A TO SUCH ACT.”

Monday, 26 July 2010 at County Hall, Northampton

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Millar; Councillor Mary Clarke (Deputy Chair); Councillors Jim Bass, Sally Beardsworth, Robin Brown, Joy Capstick, Richard Church, Stephen Clarke, , Andre Gonzalez de Savage, Brian Hoare, Brian Markham, Chris Over, John Townsend, Colin Poole and Deanna Eddon. Mr David Dickinson.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Wendy Amos and Tony Woods.

2. MINUTES

Subject to the third paragraph of minute 7 "The Northamptonshire Arc" being amended to read "The Arc could only be secondary to....", the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 7 June 2010 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

The Chair was of the opinion that the following item be discussed as a Matter of Urgency due to the undue delay if consideration of it were deferred:

Chair's Reply to a Petition Submitted by Mr Hawkins on 7 June 2010.

The Chair commented that the following reply was a holding response in the light of changing circumstances and that more detail would be available when a pre submission version of the Joint Core Strategy would be discussed by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 31 January 2011.

The Chair made the following statement:

"Partner Councils in their response to the RSS Review Consultation last year urged Government to reduce downwards the annualised housing targets set out in RSS8, as they had become plainly unachievable. The RSS figures themselves were clearly so high that they could not have been found "sound" under prescribed tests. Since then Officers of the Joint Planning Unit in conjunction with Partner Councils have been preparing a strategy for reduced housing numbers, which would represent a local perspective, reflect local circumstances and local knowledge of infrastructure capacity, and respond appropriately to local representations from the emergent Joint Core Strategy's consultation process.

The more recent announcements from the Government concerning their intention to revoke RSS8 are also material to a revised strategy that will need to be considered by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, before being subject to a further round of consultation. Government advice is quite clear. Revocation of RSS8 is not a signal for Local Authorities to stop making plans for their areas. Indeed the express advice is to continue. Much of the evidence base prepared for the Joint Core Strategy will still be relevant, albeit the headline housing numbers will be substantially reduced. There will, as a result, be a consequential

impact on other policy areas. To abandon plan making at this time would be unwise and pose a serious risk to all Partner Councils and their communities.

It is pleasing to note that Partner Councils will now be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their areas, and for identifying a long-term supply of housing land. This responsibility however, cannot be taken lightly and local housing figures will have to be justified with evidence and will be subject to scrutiny at an Examination.

The Partner Councils intend therefore, to proceed together to prepare a pre-submission version of the Joint Core Strategy which will then have a strong focus on local housing numbers, will signal to the development industry that the RSS figures have been substantially reduced downwards, and will be supported with evidence to reflect the housing needs of our local population.

Given the consequential work required of the Joint Planning Unit, a Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy will be ready for consideration at the 31 January 2011 Joint Planning Committee meeting and during the interim period Partner Councils will continue discussions as to how best to continue plan making into the future.”

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IF ANY)

Dr Jane Doughty addressed the Joint Planning Committee and thanked the Officers for their responses to her queries. She noted that there had been more than 6,000 responses to the consultation. Dr Doughty expressed some surprise that the comments that she and her husband had made were not readily identifiable and she felt that it would have been useful to have had a quantitative analysis alongside the responses. She believed that only 4% of respondees supported the West Northamptonshire vision and only 2% the policy approach of growth. Dr Doughty noted that £70,000 had been spent on the consultation exercise excluding Officer time and that the Joint Committee needed to be smarter in consulting with the public; not everyone had access to e-mail. She noted that a recent edition of the County Council’s magazine had not included any mention of the consultation. Dr Doughty referred to the minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Committee and the reference to the Northamptonshire Arc and expressed concern at the idea of an “urban spine” through the county. People generally objected to urban spread. Dr Doughty welcomed the change in political landscape and the concept of the “Big Society” with people making their own decisions locally including planning policy. She presumed that all the partner Councils and the Joint Committee would want to embrace this new local agenda.

6. EMERGENT JOINT CORE STRATEGY- CONSULTATION RESPONSES SUMMARY

The Head of the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) had submitted a report that requested that the Joint Committee formally receive and note the summaries of the responses that had been received to the West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy consultation that had been held in 2009. This was a necessary procedural step in the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The Development Plans Team Leader noted that the Joint Committee had already agreed a Local Document Scheme that set out the timetable for the production of a Joint Core Strategy (JCS). The need for a JCS remained a statutory requirement; the Regulations and evidence base remained in place. In having regard to both the volume and content of the consultation responses the resulting JCS still needed to be a robust qualitative plan that was evidenced based.

The Emergent Joint Core Strategy had been published for public consultation for six weeks, but later extended to 8 and a half weeks from 31 July 2009. The 30 March 2010 meeting of the Joint Committee had received a summary of the consultation methodology including details of how responses were made as well as a quantitative analysis of the responses to

the individual questions. The methods of responding to the Emergent Joint Core Strategy were by: questionnaire; e-mail; online; recorded phone message; exhibition feedback form; and fax. . Nearly 5,000 individuals and organisations had made over 6,000 responses comprising over 120,000 individual comments (representations). All these had been logged and acknowledged and all were available to view on the JPU website or at the JPU offices. The Development Plans Team Leader noted that the quantitative analysis of the responses to the questions previously supplied and an executive summary could be added to the report if required. It was noted that no weighting was given to any particular strength of feeling whether in favour or against as every comment is equally valid.

The appendix to the report summarised all the responses that had been made to the Emergent Joint Core Strategy. Following this meeting all the respondees would be contacted to explain the next steps of the Plan preparation process including the consideration of the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy on 31 January 2011. Counsel's advice had confirmed the approach adopted in reporting the consultation responses to the Joint Committee.

The Development Plans Team Leader noted, that as reported to the Joint Committee previously, the bulk of responses had come from postcodes to the south, southeast and southwest of Northampton. There were large parts of Northampton and West Northamptonshire from which no responses had come. There had been a higher response rate to this consultation than to similar consultations elsewhere in the country.

The Chair noted that the JPU had been created in the first place to resolve the issue of Northampton needing to expand beyond its current boundaries. The proposal to provide 18,000 homes to the southeast of Northampton had attracted most of the objections.

Councillors noted that people often were uneasy with the term "growth". People generally wanted economic growth and the prosperity that it brought but this would create a demand for housing and would attract people to the area. It was always envisaged that two thirds of the planned growth was to meet local need caused by people living longer and the increase in single person households. This would be the case whatever else applied. Affordable housing would be an important part of housing provision and therefore some respondents negative comments about this were worrying in terms of their interpretation of what this meant.

The Chair drew specific attention to the Next Stages set out in paragraph 6 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the summaries of the responses that were received to the West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy consultation held in 2009 and set out in the appendix to the report, be formally received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 18.50 hours

Agenda Item 6

Item No:

Date: 26th October 2010

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

REPORT OF CHAIR OF THE PROGRAMME BOARD AND HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

Draft JPU Budget: Financial Year 2011-12

1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable consideration to be given to a proposed budget for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit for financial year 2011-12. This budget should be approved prior to 31st October 2010 to accord with requirements set out in paragraph 5 of the fifth schedule of the agreement between the partner Councils. The report has been considered and approved by the Programme Board and the Business Sub Group. The South Northamptonshire Council accountant, Mandy Anderson, has been instrumental in assisting the JPU in formulating this proposed budget for 2011 - 12.

2. Context

- 2.1 At the Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC) meeting of 16 December 2008 the budget for the three financial years 2009-10 to 2011-12 was agreed in-principal. The total budget for 2011-12 was **£1,229,300** to be contributed from the partner authorities. This report sets out a draft budget for 2011-12, which proposes a substantial reduction from the 2011/12 budget agreed in 2008.

The full apportionment to individual partner councils based on the original budget proposed for 11/12 would have been ;

• Daventry District Council	£307,325
• South Northants Council	£307,325
• Northampton Borough Council	£409,767
• Northamptonshire County Council	£204,883
Total Contributions for 2011-12	£1,229,300

Circumstances in terms of national policy and financial pressure on local government have changed substantially since 2008. The officers of the JPU recognise these factors and the need to refocus their resources on a core programme of work with priority in 2011-12 being to secure an adopted plan meeting local needs (subject of course to the decisions of the JSPC).

This draft budget proposes substantial savings to each partner authority with the work programme having been prioritised to the adoption of a plan. The financial contribution of each council under these proposals would be;

• Daventry District Council	£230,495
• South Northants Council	£230,495
• Northampton Borough Council	£307,320
• Northamptonshire County Council	£153,660
<u>Total Revised Contributions for 2011-12</u>	<u>£921,970</u>

Additionally, a carry-forward of **£140,000** is proposed, subject to partner agreement, from the 2010/11 budget. This carry forward relates to the budget for Counsel and the fact that the Examination in Public relating to the Joint Core Strategy will not now take place in 2010/11 but will take place in 2011/12 due to work programme changes necessitated by recent alterations to Government Policy.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee approve the 2011/12 reduced base budget of **£921,970** for the JPU so that it may be forwarded on to partner Councils for their ratification.
- 3.2 That the Committee approves, in-principle, the carrying forward of some **£140,000** from 2010/11 to 2011/12 financial year subject to further review at the end of the financial year.

Name:	David Atkinson	David Bailey
Title:	Head of Joint Planning Unit	Chair of the Programme Board
Date:	October 2010	

Contact Officer(s): Mandy Anderson (Accountant - SNC) 01327 322233

Agenda Item 7

Item No:
Date: 26 October 2010

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is:

- 1) To explain the recent changes to the planning system as a result of the emerging new Government's policies in May 2010;
- 2) To explain the implications of these changes for the preparation and content of the Joint Core Strategy; and
- 3) To explain the next stages of the Joint Core Strategy preparation process in the light of these changes.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee:

- 1) Notes the recent and emerging changes to the planning system as a result of the new Government being elected in May 2010;
- 2) Agrees the resultant approach that is being taken to the preparation, scope and content of Joint Core Strategy principally as set out in paragraph 5.3 and notes that the annualised housing target will be substantially revised downwards and that the headline Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) housing figure of 62,125 will be replaced with a much reduced figure of around 50,000 homes.

3. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

- 3.1 The Joint Core Strategy will be the long term strategic plan for the development of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire administrative areas – it deals with the big picture of what will happen in the future. It is a spatial policy document, which means it deals with places and the activities that happen within and between them. Preparation of the Joint Core Strategy is a legal requirement. The Joint Core Strategy is the priority document for preparation as part of the Local Development Framework for the area. It is the overarching document and all subsequent documents must reflect what it says.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 6 July 2009 the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee approved the publication of the West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy for consultation. The Emergent Joint Core Strategy was published on 31 July 2009 for a six week consultation period which was subsequently extended. The responses to the Emergent Joint Core Strategy consultation were considered by the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee at its meetings on 30 March 2010 and 26 July 2010.

4. Changes to Government Policy

- 4.1 On 27 May 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced his intention to abolish Regional Strategies. This was confirmed on 6 July 2010 by the decision to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies, including the East Midlands Regional Plan incorporating the Milton Keynes and South Midland Sub-Regional Strategy, with immediate effect.
- 4.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government published guidance on the implications of this decision in the form of questions and answers. This guidance, and its accompanying covering letter, is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 4.3 The following advice in relation to continuing to prepare LDF documents is of particular relevance:

“the revocation of Regional Strategies is not a signal for local authorities to stop making plans for their area. (JPU emboldening)

Local planning authorities should continue to develop LDF core strategies and other DPDs, reflecting local people’s aspirations and decisions on important issues such as climate change, housing and economic development.

These local plans will guide development in their areas and provide certainty for investors and communities. Local

authorities may wish to review their plans following the revocation of Regional Strategies. We recommend reviews should be undertaken as quickly as possible.”

- 4.4 The following advice in relation to the question of what to do if the LDF document is still under preparation is also of particular relevance to the stage the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy has reached:

“Where local planning authorities are currently bringing forward development plan documents they should continue to do so. Authorities may decide to review and/ or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of Regional Strategies. Where authorities decide to do this they will need to ensure they meet the requirements for soundness under the current legislation. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.”

- 4.5 In relation to determining housing numbers in the absence of Regional Strategy targets the advice states:

“Local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land (JPU emboldening) without the burden of regional housing targets. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategies. Others may decide to review their housing targets. We would expect that those authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and land owners know where they stand.”

- 4.6 Following the Government announcing its intention to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government at the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 26 July 2010 the Chair of the Committee provided a holding response to a Petition Submitted by Mr Hawkins on 7 June 2010. The Chair explained that the reply was a holding response in the light of changing circumstances and that more detail would be available when a pre submission version of the Joint Core Strategy would be discussed by the Joint Committee at its meeting on 31 January 2011. The Chair’s statement is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

5. Implications for the Preparation and Content of the Joint Core Strategy

- 5.1 Since the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee meeting on 26 July 2010 the Joint Planning Unit has focused all its resources to the objective of preparing the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy for consideration at the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 31 January 2011. The priority has been consideration of the housing provision having regard for deliverability and meeting local housing need.

Housing Provision

- 5.2 Officers are recommending against a fundamental root and branch review of the emerging Joint Core Strategy, including the creation of “locally derived” housing targets, as this could lead to a requirement to return to the ‘Issues and Options’ stage undertaken in 2007 and would therefore result in a significant delay to the plan making process. This would also require a fundamental revisiting of all the current evidence base with associated additional cost and time requirements.
- 5.3 Instead, the Joint Strategic Planning Committee is recommended to **pursue the approach of looking at what can reasonably be achieved and delivered up to 2026, given the current economic difficulties, the reduced levels of funding for infrastructure and the potential time it will take for a full economic and associated housing market recovery to occur.** Evidence has been sought on the potential level of house building during the remaining plan period, and a new housing trajectory¹ has been prepared on this basis. Population forecasting work has been undertaken to test the implications of this trajectory on population, households and labour force.
- 5.4 The Government has made no formal announcement on the status and future of Growth Areas, as defined under the Planning and Communities Act 2003, but it is understood that as this designation was linked to the Regional Spatial Strategy, this status no longer applies. Notwithstanding this, the growth which has already taken place across the plan area has implications for future needs as the population ages and children grow to adulthood and form their own new households. The housing work has not therefore included any specific additional allowances for ‘growth area’ related increases, but it has taken into account growth requirements of all the existing population, i.e. local housing need.
- 5.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that a plan is “sound”. Planning Policy Statement 12

¹ A housing trajectory shows the annual pattern of housing building during the plan period, and is a requirement as a part of the evidence base.

continues to state that for a plan to be found sound it must be justified, effective and consistent with national policy. In terms of effectiveness this means that the plan must be deliverable. In view of the recession and the current economic climate, it has become even more certain that the 62,125 new homes target is not achievable, and therefore the emerging Joint Core Strategy is based on a combination of what is achievable and deliverable while ensuring that local housing need and community aspirations are met. Members will recall that this approach to the regional housing figures was first put forward during earlier discussions in respect of the review of the RSS where reduced annualised housing targets were recommended.

- 5.6 The results of some, 'light touch'², population re-forecasting work suggests that a dwelling provision (2001-2026) of between 45,000 and 48,000 would meet the 'natural growth'³ requirements of the existing 2009 population. Adding in community aspiration, particularly in respect of the growth of Daventry, the proposed dwelling requirement rises to **50,153** dwellings. Of these 15,683 have already been built between 2001 and March 2010, and there is a significant number of dwellings already with planning permission or otherwise committed. This is all summarised in Appendix 3.

Completing and Refocusing the Evidence Base

- 5.7 As a result of reducing the overall housing numbers to be provided in the Joint Core Strategy it is also necessary to update, not restart, other aspects of the evidence base to reflect the reduced scale of development and to enable testing of the consequential distribution of development. In the light of this, the retail, employment land, water cycle, infrastructure, transport strategy and affordable housing elements of the plan are all being updated.

Writing the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy

- 5.8 In parallel with the work set out above, officers in the Joint Planning Unit are writing the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy with the close input of officers from the Partner Councils and technical bodies including Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency.

6. The Next Stages of the Joint Core Strategy Preparation Process

- 6.1 The Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy will be prepared for consideration by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on **31 January 2010**. Following consideration by the Committee the

² The RSS evidence base population forecasting was re-run with a constraint of the revised reduced housing numbers to test the likely implications on households and labour force.

³ Natural Growth is a term used to show that the requirements of the existing population can be accommodated within its own area.

Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy will be published for public consultation.

- 6.2 The outcome of this Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy public consultation will lead to the preparation of the Submission Joint Core Strategy by June 2011. The Submission Joint Core Strategy will be published for comment at the same time as being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration at a Public Examination.
- 6.3 The independent Public Examination will test the “soundness” of the Joint Core Strategy and consider representations on the basis of whether the plan is sound. The Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the Examination will produce a report with recommendations which will be binding. Any changes required by the Inspector will be incorporated and then the Joint Core Strategy will move towards adoption. The adoption of the Joint Core Strategy will be advertised. It is expected that the Joint Core Strategy will be adopted in May 2012 and published shortly afterwards.

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Appendix 1 – Letter and accompanying Guidance from Communities and Local Government



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The Chief Planning Officer
Local Planning Authorities in England

6 July 2010

Chief Planning Officer Letter:

REVOCATION OF REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Today the Secretary of State announced the revocation of Regional Strategies with immediate effect.

I have attached some 'questions and answer' advice on immediate issues that may arise from this announcement. It will be important for local planning authorities to carry on delivering local development frameworks and making decisions on applications and the attached document focuses on how to continue taking these forward.

Please address any queries to Eamon Mythen at CLG in the first instance (Eamon.Mythen@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Quartermain", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE QUARTERMAIN
Chief Planner

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Guidance for Local Planning Authorities following the revocation of Regional Strategies

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government confirmed today that Regional Strategies will be revoked (see the attached copy of the Parliamentary Written Statement). In the longer term the legal basis for Regional Strategies will be abolished through the “Localism Bill” that we are introducing in the current Parliamentary session. New ways for local authorities to address strategic planning and infrastructure issues based on cooperation will be introduced. This guidance provides some clarification on the impact of the revocation; how local planning authorities can continue to bring forward their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs); and make planning decisions in the transitional period.

1. Under what powers are Regional Strategies being revoked?

Regional Strategies have been revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This guidance covers the period between revocation of Regional Strategies and legislation to abolish them altogether.

2. Do Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) remain in force?

Yes. The Policy Statement on Regional Strategies (February 2010) is cancelled, and references to Regional Strategies in other Policy Statements are no longer valid. But all other PPSs will continue to apply until they are replaced by the National Planning Framework.

3. Will this affect the London Plan?

The London Plan will continue to provide the planning framework for London boroughs. As part of a wider process of decentralisation in London, we are reviewing how powers and discretion can be shifted downwards from central government to the Mayor and Assembly, to London Boroughs and to local neighbourhoods. This will include reviewing the scope for devolving power from the Greater London Authority down to the Boroughs and below.

The following sections provide advice on some of the issues likely to arise following revocation of Regional Strategies, until the “Localism Bill” and the new National Planning Framework are in place. This guidance should be regarded as a material consideration by local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate in their decisions.

4. How will this affect planning applications?

In determining planning applications local planning authorities must continue to have regard to the development plan. This will now consist only of:

- Adopted DPDs;

- Saved policies; and
- Any old style plans that have not lapsed.

Local planning authorities should also have regard to other material considerations, including national policy. Evidence that informed the preparation of the revoked Regional Strategies may also be a material consideration, depending on the facts of the case.

Where local planning authorities have not yet issued decisions on planning applications in the pipeline, they may wish to review those decisions in light of the new freedoms following the revocation of Regional Strategies. The revocation of the Regional Strategy may also be a material consideration.

5. Should we continue preparing LDF documents?

Yes – the revocation of Regional Strategies is not a signal for local authorities to stop making plans for their area.

Local planning authorities should continue to develop LDF core strategies and other DPDs, reflecting local people's aspirations and decisions on important issues such as climate change, housing and economic development.

These local plans will guide development in their areas and provide certainty for investors and communities. Local authorities may wish to review their plans following the revocation of Regional Strategies. We recommend reviews should be undertaken as quickly as possible.

6. How does this affect adopted local plans / LDFs?

Adopted DPDs and saved policies will continue to provide the statutory planning framework. Local authorities may decide to review these now that Regional Strategies have been revoked. There is no need to review the whole LDF, only those issues or policies which local authorities wish to revisit. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

7. What if my LDF document is still being prepared?

Where local planning authorities are currently bringing forward development plan documents they should continue to do so. Authorities may decide to review and/or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of Regional Strategies. Where authorities decide to do this they will need to ensure they meet the requirements for soundness under the current legislation. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

8. Will Examinations in Public continue for DPDs?

Yes – where local planning authorities are bringing forward new development plan documents or reviewing adopted plans they should present evidence to support their plans. The examination process will continue to assess the soundness of plans, and Inspectors will test evidence put forward by local authorities and others who make representations.

9. Will data and research currently held by Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards still be available?

Yes. The regional planning function of Regional LA Leaders' Boards – the previous Regional Assemblies – is being wound up and their central government funding will end after September this year. The planning data and research they currently hold will still be available to local authorities for the preparation of their local plans whilst they put their own alternative arrangements in place for the collection and analysis of evidence. Notwithstanding, the new Government regards the Regional Leaders' Boards as an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy.

Clarification on policy issues

There are a number of areas where Regional Strategies supplemented the national policy framework. Further clarification on these areas is set out below.

10. Who will determine housing numbers in the absence of Regional Strategy targets?

Local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land without the burden of regional housing targets. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategies. Others may decide to review their housing targets. We would expect that those authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and land owners know where they stand.

11. Will we still need to justify the housing numbers in our plans?

Yes – it is important for the planning process to be transparent, and for people to be able to understand why decisions have been taken. Local authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process. They should do this in line with current policy in PPS3.

12. Can I replace Regional Strategy targets with “option 1 numbers”?

Yes, if that is the right thing to do for your area. Authorities may base revised housing targets on the level of provision submitted to the original Regional Spatial Strategy examination (Option 1 targets), supplemented by more recent information as appropriate. These figures are based on assessments undertaken by local authorities. However, any target selected may be tested during the examination process especially if challenged and authorities will need to be ready to defend them.

13. Do we still have to provide a 5 year land supply?

Yes. Although the overall ambition for housing growth may change, authorities should continue to identify enough viable land in their DPDs to meet that growth. Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments can help with this. Local planning authorities should continue to use their plans to identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years from the date the plan is adopted. Authorities should also have a five year land supply of deliverable sites. This too will need to reflect any changes to the overall local housing ambition.

14. How do we determine the level of provision for travellers' sites?

Local councils are best placed to assess the needs of travellers. The abolition of Regional Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy. *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* (GTAAs) have been undertaken by all local authorities and if local authorities decide to review the levels of provision these assessments will form a good starting point. However, local authorities are not bound by them. We will review relevant regulations and guidance on this matter in due course.

15. How do we establish the need for minerals and aggregates supply without Regional Strategy targets?

Minerals planning authorities will have responsibility for continuing to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to support economic growth. They should do this within the longstanding arrangements for minerals planning. Technical advice provided by the Aggregate Working Parties, including their current work in sub-apportioning the CLG guidelines for 2005-2020 to planning authority level will assist with this.

Planning authorities in the South East should work from the apportionment set out in the "Proposed Changes" to the revision of Policy M3, published on 19 March 2010.

Planning authorities can choose to use alternative figures for their planning purposes if they have new or different information and a robust evidence base. We will work with the minerals industry and local government to agree how minerals planning arrangements should operate in the longer term.

16. How do we establish the need for waste management without Regional Strategy targets?

Planning Authorities should continue to press ahead with their waste plans, and provide enough land for waste management facilities to support the sustainable management of waste (including the move away from disposal of waste by landfill). Data and information prepared by partners will continue to assist in this process. For the transitional period this will continue to be the data and information which has been collated by the local authority and industry and other public bodies who

currently form the Regional Waste Technical Advisory Bodies. We intend for this function to be transferred to local authorities in due course.

17. Does the abolition of the hierarchy of strategic centres mean the end of policies on town centres?

No. Local authorities must continue to have regard to PPS 4: *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth* in preparing LDFs and, where relevant, take it into account in determining planning applications for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses.

In assessing any planning applications proposing unplanned growth in out of town shopping centres, particularly those over 50,000 sqm gross retail floor area, local authorities should take account of the potential impacts of the development on centres in the catchment area of the proposal.

18. What about regional policies on the natural environment?

Local authorities should continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment – including biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscape interests. Authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.

19. What about regional policies on Flooding and Coastal Change?

Local authorities should continue to work together across administrative boundaries to plan development that addresses flooding and coastal change. For flooding matters local authorities already have a duty to co-operate under the Floods and Water Management Act. The Environment Agency will continue to work with local authorities individually and/or jointly to provide technical support on these matters. The Coalition agreement is clear that we should prevent unnecessary building in areas of high flood risk.

20. What about regional policies on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy?

Through their local plans, authorities should contribute to the move to a low carbon economy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, help secure more renewable and low carbon energy to meet national targets, and to adapt to the impacts arising from climate change. In doing so, planning authorities may find it useful to draw on data that was collected by the Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards (which will be made available) and more recent work, including assessments of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy.

21. What about regional policies on Transport?

Local authorities should continue to ensure their land use and local transport plans are mutually consistent, and deliver the most effective and sustainable development for their area. Local authorities should work with each other and with businesses and communities to consider strategic transport priorities and cross boundary issues.

22. Does the end of Regional Strategies mean changes to Green Belt?

No. The Government is committed to the protection of the Green Belt and the revocation of Regional Strategies will prevent top-down pressure to reduce the Green Belt protection. Local planning authorities should continue to apply policies in PPS2. As part of their preparation or revision of DPDs, planning authorities should consider the desirability of new Green Belt or adjustment of an existing Green Belt boundary, working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.

Parliamentary Statement Revoking Regional Strategies

Today I am making the first step to deliver our commitment in the coalition agreement to “*rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”, by revoking Regional Strategies.

Regional Strategies added unnecessary bureaucracy to the planning system. They were a failure. They were expensive and time-consuming. They alienated people, pitting them against development instead of encouraging people to build in their local area.

The revocation of Regional Strategies will make local spatial plans, drawn up in conformity with national policy, the basis for local planning decisions. The new planning system will be clear, efficient and will put greater power in the hands of local people, rather than regional bodies.

Imposed central targets will be replaced with powerful incentives so that people see the benefits of building. The coalition agreement makes a clear commitment to providing local authorities with real incentives to build new homes. I can confirm that this will ensure that those local authorities which take action now to consent and support the construction of new homes will receive direct and substantial benefit from their actions. Because we are committed to housing growth, introducing these incentives will be a priority and we aim to do so early in the spending review period. We will consult on the detail of this later this year. These incentives will encourage local authorities and communities to increase their aspirations for housing and economic growth, and to deliver sustainable development in a way that allows them to control the way in which their villages, towns and cities change. Our revisions to the planning system will also support renewable energy and a low carbon economy.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will provide a clear signal of the importance attached to the development and application of local spatial plans, in the form of Local Development Framework Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents. Future reform in this area will make it easier for local councils, working with their communities, to agree and amend local plans in a way that maximises the involvement of neighbourhoods.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will require legislation in the “Localism Bill” which we are introducing this session. However, given the clear coalition commitment, it is important to avoid a period of uncertainty over planning policy, until the legislation is enacted. So I am revoking Regional Strategies today in order to give clarity to builders, developers and planners.

Regional Strategies are being revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and will thus no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Revoking, and then abolishing, Regional Strategies will mean that the planning system is simpler, more efficient and easier for people to understand. It will be firmly

rooted in the local community. And it will encourage the investment, economic growth and housing that Britain needs.

We will be providing advice for local planning authorities today and a copy has been placed in the house library.

**Appendix 2 – WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC
PLANNING COMMITTEE
26 JULY 2010**

Chair's Reply to Petition

“Partner Councils in their response to the RSS Review Consultation last year urged Government to reduce downwards the annualised housing targets set out in RSS 8, as they had become plainly unachievable. The RSS figures themselves were clearly so high that they could not have been found “sound” under prescribed tests. Since then Officers of the Joint Planning Unit in conjunction with Partner Councils have been preparing a strategy for reduced housing numbers, which would represent a local perspective, reflect local circumstances and local knowledge of infrastructure capacity, and respond appropriately to local representations from the emergent Joint Core Strategy’s consultation process.

The more recent announcements from the Coalition Government concerning their intention to revoke RSS 8 are also material to a revised strategy that will need to be considered by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, before being subject to a further round of consultation.

Government advice is quite clear. Revocation of RSS 8 is not a signal for Local Authorities to stop making plans for their areas. Indeed, the express advice is to continue. Much of the evidence base prepared for the Joint Core Strategy will still be relevant, albeit the headline housing numbers will be substantially reduced. There will, as a result, be a consequential impact on other policy areas. To abandon plan making at this time would be unwise and pose a serious risk to all Partner Councils and their communities.

It is pleasing to note that Partner Councils will now be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their areas, and for identifying a long-term supply of housing land. This responsibility however cannot be undertaken lightly and local housing figures will have to be justified with evidence and will be subject to scrutiny at an Examination.

The Partner Councils intend therefore to proceed together to prepare a pre-submission version of the Joint Core Strategy which will have a strong focus on local housing numbers, will signal to the development industry that the RSS figures have been substantially reduced downwards, and will be supported with evidence to reflect the housing needs of our local population.

Given the consequential work required of the Joint Planning Unit, a Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy will be ready for consideration at the January 31st 2011 Joint Planning Committee meeting and during the interim period Partner Councils will continue discussions as to how best to continue plan making into the future”.

Appendix 3 – Housing Table – 2001-2026

A		Daventry	Northampton	South Northamptonshire	Plan Area Totals
B	Revised emerging housing target	11883	26217	12053	50,153
C	Of which already built	2696	9028	3959	15,683
D	And committed: inc. Urban Capacity	3387 ¹	15189	3654 ²	22,230
E	Sub Total Row C + Row D	6083	24217	7613	37,913
F	Residual – to be allocated (Row B – Row E)	5800	2000	4440	12240

¹ Includes Monksmoor and Buckton Fields

² Excludes Radstone Fields and Towcester

Agenda Item 8

Item No:
Date: 26 October 2010

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT
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Communication and Consultation Strategy for the Pre-submission Joint Core Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Joint Strategic Planning Committee's approval for a Communication and Consultation Strategy to support the Pre-submission version of the Joint Core Strategy.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee is asked to approve the Communication and Consultation Strategy attached as Appendix 1.

3. The Communication and Consultation Strategy

- 3.1 A proposed Communication and Consultation Strategy for the Pre-submission Document is attached to this report as Appendix 1. This paper sets out a proposed approach to consultation to meet the requirements of the relevant regulations and the Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted by the partner authorities.

- 3.2 The Strategy suggests a three stage approach as follows:

- 1. Information and engagement** – Area based engagement to explain the changes to the planning system, the implications for the Core Strategy and the next stages of the process – involving the Partner Councils, Local Strategic Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils, and other key stakeholder groups as specified in the SCIs.
- 2. Pre-submission publicity** – Advanced publicity through press releases, articles in JPU and partner's newsletters etc..., to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the statutory consultation period on the Pre-submission Document, before this commences.

3. Pre-submission – 6-week statutory consultation period – Ensuring compliance with the statutory requirements prescribed by Regulation 27 of the 2004 Regulations (as amended).

- 3.3 Further detail is provided in the table at Appendix 1. Subject to Business Sub-Group's approval of the approach, a more detailed action plan will be finalised.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the primary purpose of the Pre-Submission stage is to publish the draft Core Strategy prior to its submission to the Secretary of State to enable formal representations to be made on the soundness and legality of the Plan. As such it is different from the earlier stages of plan preparation which allow for much wider public consultation and engagement. Whilst there are likely to be significant changes from the Emergent Joint Core Strategy, the key issues and sites have all been subject to previous consultation.
- 3.5 The primary purpose of the Strategy is therefore to ensure that there is effective communication and advanced publicity to ensure that all stakeholders understand the process and are prepared for the statutory six-week representation period. It is anticipated that during the information and engagement stage the Joint Planning Unit will be able to give some clear messages about the implications of the revised strategy in terms of the overall quantum of development which is being planned for, but will not at this stage provide site specific information. Once the agenda for the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 31 January is published, there will be the opportunity for more targeted briefings for those communities directly affected by site specific proposals.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Strategy attached as appendix 1 will ensure effective communication with stakeholders regarding the changes the planning system and the key implications for the Joint Core Strategy, and will provide advance notice of the formal representation period for the Pre-submission plan. The Strategy also ensures compliance with the requirements of the Statements of Community Involvement and the relevant regulations.

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Head of the Joint Planning Unit
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West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Communication and Consultation Strategy for the Pre-Submission Document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) by the Coalition Government the Joint Planning Unit are preparing the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy for consideration by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 31 January 2011.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the proposed arrangements for communication and consultation with the local community and all other stakeholders in respect of the Pre-Submission Document. The proposals have regard to the legal requirements set out principally in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and in subsequent amendments to these regulations. Consideration is also given to the Statements of Community Involvement (SCI) which have been adopted by the partner authorities.
- 1.3 In addition to the statutory requirements the proposals also seek to respond to the recent changes introduced by the Coalition Government. As a consequence of the revocation of the RSS there will be significant changes to the content of the Pre-submission Document in comparison with the Emergent Joint Core Strategy (EJCS). These changes prompt the need for further communication with local communities prior to the publication of the Pre-submission Document.

2. The Communication and Consultation Strategy

- 2.1 The primary purpose of the Pre-Submission stage is to publish the draft Core Strategy prior to its submission to the Secretary of State to enable formal representations to be made on the soundness and legality of the Plan. As such it is different from the earlier stages of plan preparation which allow for much wider public consultation and engagement. The Pre-submission stage is not the opportunity for consultees to make representations on the wording of the document, or the policy content other than in relation to the test of soundness and legal process. The approach to encouraging public and stakeholder engagement should reflect this constraint.
- 2.2 However, given the particular circumstances in West Northamptonshire there are strong arguments for the Consultation Strategy to do more than the minimum as follows:
 - There will be a significant reduction in the housing numbers proposed in the EJCS. This will have implications for other aspects of the strategy such as job numbers and retail requirements;
 - The number and nature of responses to the EJCS indicated substantial objections to the strategy being promoted at the time that document was consulted upon;
 - There is a need to respond to criticisms of the consultation on the EJCS in particular in terms of its timing and the accessibility of the document.
- 2.3 The Consultation Strategy proposes a **three stage** approach which is summarised below:

1. **Information and engagement** – Area based engagement to seek ‘buy in’ and ownership for the revised strategy – involving the Local Strategic Partnerships, Town and Parish Councils, and other key stakeholder groups as specified in the SCIs.
2. **Pre-submission publicity** – Advanced publicity through press releases, articles in JPU and partner’s newsletters etc..., to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the statutory consultation period on the Pre-submission Document, before this commences.
3. **Pre-submission statutory period for representations** – Ensuring compliance with the statutory requirements prescribed by Regulation 27 of the 2004 Regulations (as amended).

2.4 The table below sets out this three stage approach in more detail.

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy – Communication and Consultation Strategy for the Pre-Submission Document

Stage	Timing	Actions
1. Information / Engagement	November – December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="790 331 1993 443">1.1. A briefing note for all Councillors from the partner local authorities to explain the recent changes to the planning system, the implications for the Core Strategy and the next stages of the process. <li data-bbox="790 483 1993 555">1.2. Joint news release to be issued in accordance with the JPU Communication Strategy following the Joint Strategic Planning Committee on 26 October. <li data-bbox="790 595 1993 699">1.3. Three briefing meetings for Councillors from the partner local authorities and representatives from Town and Parish Councils. One meeting to be held in each local authority area <li data-bbox="790 738 1993 778">1.4. Meetings with each of the Local Strategic Partnerships <li data-bbox="790 818 1993 890">1.5. Briefing meeting for community and environmental interest groups as specified in the adopted Statements of Community Involvement. <li data-bbox="790 930 1993 970">1.6. Letters/emails to all those on the JPU Consultation Database.
2. Pre-submission Publicity	January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="790 1003 1993 1075">2.1 Leaflet / flyer produced explaining the Core Strategy process and giving advanced notice of the Pre-submission Document consultation period. <li data-bbox="790 1115 1993 1155">2.2 Articles to be included in JPU and partner authority newsletters. <li data-bbox="790 1195 1993 1299">2.3 Joint news release and press conference for local media. To be agreed by the Chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and the Leaders of the partner Councils. <li data-bbox="790 1339 1993 1404">2.4 Potential targeted briefings for Parish Councils and Community Groups who will be most affected by proposals in the Pre-Submission Document.

<p>3. Pre-submission – statutory period for representations</p>	<p>February 2011- March 2011 (6 week statutory period from Thursday 17 February to Thursday 31 March 2011)</p>	<p>3.1 Statutory advert to be placed in local newspapers circulating across the West Northamptonshire area. All pre-submission related documents to be made available at the partner Councils offices, and in all the other ‘deposit venues’ specified in the adopted Statements of Community Involvement.</p> <p>3.2 A short summary leaflet explaining the key proposals and the consultation process will be circulated to consultees, Town and Parish Councils and made available at all Council offices and other deposit venues.</p> <p>3.3 Full ‘on-line’ consultation hosted on the JPU website with links from the partner authorities websites.</p> <p>3.4 Detailed letters explaining the key changes to the Core Strategy sent to all the specific consultation bodiesⁱ and Town and Parish Councils, with a CD containing the pre-submission related documents and paper copies of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pre-submission Core Strategy; • The statement of representation procedures; • The statement of arrangements (i.e. when and where the documents are available); and • A Representation Form and Guidance Note for Respondents. <p>3.5 Letters or emails to each of the general consultation bodiesⁱⁱ and all organisations and individuals on the JPU Consultation database containing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement of representation procedures; • The statement of arrangements; and
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Representation Form and Guidance Note for Respondents. <p>3.6 News release for the local media.</p> <p>3.7 Articles to be included in the JPU and partner authority newsletters.</p> <p>3.8 Static exhibitions at each of the partner Council's offices.</p>
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ⁱ The specific consultation bodies are listed in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and relate to organisations responsible for services and utilities and infrastructure provision.

ⁱⁱ The general consultation bodies are also specified in the Regulations and comprise:

- voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the council's area
- bodies which represent the interests of:
 - different ethnic or national groups in the local authority's area
 - different religious groups in the local authority's area
 - disabled people in the local authority's area
 - people carrying on business in the local authority's area.