

Item No:
Date: 17 December 2009

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

Revised Local Development Scheme

Background

1.0 The Local Development Scheme is a public statement setting out details of which spatial planning documents will be produced over a three year period and key milestones in their production. It sets down the combination of policy documents (and their purpose) that has been selected to address the effective planning of the area and its unique character.

1.1 The Committee has been invited by the Government Office for the East Midlands to revise the Local Development Scheme for West Northamptonshire. The full letter is attached at Appendix A. It notes:

“...we recognise there are complex infrastructural issues that need to be better understood and reasonably resolved before pre-submission. We understand that the complexity, sensitivity and financial impact of these issues has led to key agencies and partner authorities needing more time to conclude essential evidence base studies....We invite you to submit an amended Local Development Scheme for West Northamptonshire to us once you have mapped out the critical paths for the outstanding evidence base studies and have a common understanding with key agencies of a way forward”

1.2 Officers have continued to undertake discussions with the Environment Agency, Highways Agency and Natural England with respect to further requirements. These have been accounted for in production of the revised Local Development Scheme as has the need for full engagement of members of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and public consultation periods.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to present the revised Local Development Scheme to the Committee and request approval for submission to the Government Office for the East Midlands. The revised Scheme is attached at Appendix B and briefly explained in this report.

- 1.4 The revised Scheme sets out the key milestones for each document in Appendix 3 and a composite timetable showing all the key milestones for each document is shown in Appendix 15 of the revised Scheme. The detailed work programmes for each document are living documents.

Recommendations

- 1.5 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee agrees the revised Local Development Scheme to go forward for submission to Government Office for the East Midlands for its consideration.
- 1.6 That the Local Development Scheme be brought into effect following agreement by the Government Office for the East Midlands.
- 1.7 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee notes that this Local Development Scheme is predicated on the full funding of the programme as agreed at its meeting on 16th December 2008 and a full complement of staff again, agreed at that meeting.
- 1.8 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee notes the progress to date and that this is recognised by Government Office for the East Midlands.

Development Plan Documents

- 2.0 **The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy** together with its underlying infrastructure programme is the key priority. This document will set down the spatial vision for West Northamptonshire (reflecting the sustainable community strategies and local area agreement) and a proposed approach to how the places within it will develop, addressing a range of spatial and strategic development issues related to the regeneration, growth and accompanying transport agenda. This will address key matters such as the roles of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester, Brackley, local commercial centres and the villages, the nature of the future economy including the development of rural enterprise, access to housing and services such as education, health and leisure opportunities and the building and cohesion of existing and new communities. It will establish those areas where there may be only very special circumstances for development such as rural affordable housing or critical services. Work is well advanced on the Joint Core Strategy and has progressed since the Emergent Joint Core Strategy was published in the summer of 2008.
- 2.1 **The West Northamptonshire Developer Contributions Development Plan Document** will be produced in parallel with the core strategy and work to the same infrastructure programme. This will set out the approach taken to achieving development gain to contribute to providing for community and infrastructure needs in West Northamptonshire across the plan period. Examples could include finance for transport projects and community facilities not already provided on site in large scale developments. This work would form the basis of the use of a Community Infrastructure Levy should it be enacted. Work on this document is already advanced.

- 2.2 **Northampton Central Area Action Plan** will develop policy for the transformation of the centre of Northampton. Work is already well advanced on this plan and the revised timetable will closely follow that of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 2.3 **The West Northamptonshire Site Allocations Development Plan Document** will deal with site specific policies and allocations on small sites as necessary.
- 2.4 **Daventry Town Development Plan Document** will include site specific proposals for Daventry Town should they be required following the adoption of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents.
- 2.5 **South Northamptonshire Council Rural Settlements Development Plan Document** will address development in rural settlements in South Northamptonshire, should it be required, beyond that addressed by the Joint Core Strategy in setting the hierarchy of settlements.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 2.6 Supplementary Planning Documents give further guidance on policy, they do not set policy or allocate land. There is no longer a requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents to be included within the Local Development Scheme and so these no longer appear. However it is important to note that the following Supplementary Documents are scheduled for completion:
 - 2.6.1 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document – this will be based on the policy that will be set down in the Joint Core Strategy (which will set proportions of affordable housing and the circumstances under which this will be required) and explain the details of requirements for affordable housing such as tenure.
 - 2.6.2 Silverstone Circuit Supplementary Planning Document which is jointly produced with Aylesbury Vale District Council will guide development at Silverstone Circuit and involve the conversion of the current Development Brief to a Supplementary Planning Document.
 - 2.6.3 Daventry District Village and Town Design Statements Supplementary Planning Documents will continue to be produced by communities as needed. The programme for the villages will come forward in response to community action and their form and content are guided by Daventry District Council.

The Differences between the 2008 and 2010 Local Development Scheme

- 3.0 Setting any timetabling matters aside and the exclusion of Supplementary Planning Documents the only difference between the 2008 and the proposed 2010 Local Development Scheme is the splitting of the Affordable Housing and Developer Contributions Development Plan Document. Members were recently asked to agree to split this document into two Development Plan documents and discussion was then held with Government Office East Midlands to this effect. As a result it is proposed that the policy intended for developer

contributions is now represented in the Developer Contributions Development Plan Document whilst affordable housing is addressed in core policy in the Joint Core Strategy and a supplementary planning document on affordable housing. This approach is now often used in practice, is supported by Government Office of the East Midlands and presents a more efficient use of resource than producing two development plan documents.

Resources

- 4.0 To achieve the programme now set out in the revised Local Development Scheme the full funding agreed by this Committee on 16th December 2008 will be required. It will also require the full complement of Officers previously approved by the JSPC.
- 4.1 The contribution of resources follows the pattern of votes on the Joint Strategic Planning Committee hence :
- Daventry District Council – one quarter
 - Northampton Borough Council – one third
 - Northamptonshire County Council – one sixth
 - South Northamptonshire Council – one quarter.
- 4.2 Some officer time from the partner authorities is also put to the resource pool and in addition contributions of work and partner time from West Northamptonshire Development Corporation contribute to the programme.
- 4.3 In addition to some Housing and Planning Delivery Grant being awarded for joint working to each authority there is award of resource for Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Assessment publication. Therefore some recompense for the investment in the work does return directly to authorities via Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

Matters for the Programme of the Joint Core Strategy

- 5.0 A number of matters have proven critical to progressing the Joint Core Strategy and are equally important for the proposed Local Development Scheme. These should be noted by members and are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 5.1 Following recent meetings with the Highways Agency and Department for Transport advice was received to the effect that further work on sustainable transport measures and low carbon transport planning is required by the Highways Agency in addition to that already planned. A detailed project programme is currently being discussed and agreed with the Highways Agency, Department for Transport and Highways Authority and specialists. The expectation is that the work will run in parallel with existing transport workstreams and be completed by Mid June 2010 at the latest. It will require significant input to partnership working to resolve- which the programme board has agreed.
- 5.2 The discussions with English Nature to accommodate study of the behaviour and population of the Golden Plover in relation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits potential Special Protection Area in response to the draft Appropriate Assessment (under the Habitat Directive 92/43/EEC) have resulted

in a survey being undertaken of an area south east of Northampton. The main report is due to be completed in March 2010. This is expected to provide adequate data to determine the potential area of developable land in the option of the south east extension to Northampton, and mitigation measures in this respect.

5.3 Discussions with the Environment Agency conclude that the stage required for the West Northamptonshire Water Cycle Study to inform Joint Core Strategy will be reached by end April 2010.

5.4 The next stages of policy making will now crystallise the thinking on review of and progression of the policy direction expressed in the Emergent Joint Core Strategy. It will integrate additional evidence particularly that relating to highway infrastructure capacity and a reality check on the RSS annualised housing targets, and will evaluate the responses from the summer 2009 consultation. Engagement of the members of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee prior to the formal consideration of a pre submission document is clearly critical to this stage and has been the subject of much discussion. The programme allows for the following, briefly described :

- Policy discussions with members setting the agenda up to end March 2010
- Work sessions considering the evidence, options and officers advice from April through to early July 2010
- Work sessions considering final officer draft of pre submission document prior to presentation to the Joint Strategic Planning Committee which would be programmed for September 2010. This committee would then be requested to approve for publication a pre-submission draft plan and a further period of public consultation.