

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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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 2004 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 2004 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 2004 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 2004 778">1.4. Meetings with each of the Local Strategic Partnerships <li data-bbox="790 818 2004 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 2004 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 1002 2004 1074">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 1114 2004 1153">2.2 Articles to be included in JPU and partner authority newsletters. <li data-bbox="790 1193 2004 1297">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 1337 2004 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.