



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy – Review of Policies
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC / PRIVATE

Cabinet Meeting Date:	5 th February 2020
Key Decision:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Service Area:	Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr James Hill
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a review of policies in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (WNJCS) in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). A schedule setting out the review of policies is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that this Council endorses the review of policies in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

3.1.1 It is now just over 5 years since West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy was adopted on 14th December 2014 having been found sound when assessed against the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework.

3.1.2 Regulation 10A Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires local planning authorities to review a local development document within the following time periods:

(a) In respect of a local plan, the review must be completed every five years, starting from the date of the adoption of the local plan, in accordance with section 23 of the Act (adoption of local development documents)

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The purpose of the 5-year review is to establish if a review in part or whole of the plan is required. The partner Councils have already committed to a review of the plan through the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP). Officers from the partner Councils and the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) have undertaken a review of policies in the WNJCS in compliance with the regulation, however, given the commitment to prepare a new Strategic Plan, it takes a proportionate, light touch approach.

3.2.2 The schedule attached at Appendix 1 presents a review of policies in the WNJCS against the current National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019). There is a common misconception that just because a plan is 5 years old it is automatically out of date. However, the schedule shows that many of the policies in the WNJCS remain up to date and consistent with the NPPF and on this basis they should continue to be given full weight as part of the development plan for the purposes of decision making.

3.2.3 The review helpfully identifies those instances where certain policies will require updating or modification, for example through the preparation of the new Strategic Plan. There are also a number of cases where existing policies in the WNJCS are being effectively superseded through the inclusion of more up to date policies in the Part 2 Local Plans being prepared by the partner Councils.

3.2.4 One key issue to highlight is the status of the housing requirements set out in Policy S3 of the WNJCS. The Strategic Plan will clearly review the scale of housing provision using the national methodology to calculate Local Housing Need (LHN) as a starting point over extended plan period either up to 2041 or 2050. In the interim however the review of Policy S3 concludes the housing requirement figures in the policy should continue to be used for the purposes of calculating 5-year land supply. This is because the residual housing requirement in the WNJCS is over 6700 dwellings higher than the LHN figure and, having regard to the NPPF objective of boosting housing supply, this is

considered to provide a sufficient level of contingency during the transition period to the new plan.

3.2.5 At its meeting of 14th January, the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board recommended that the partner Councils endorse the schedule attached at Appendix A.

3.2.6 Because the Board is advisory, the schedule must be endorsed by each of the four constituent authorities. Subject to this endorsement, the review of WNJCS policies will then be published on the websites of each of the partner Councils and the JPU.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 **Option 1** – Cabinet endorses the review of the WNJCS as set out in Appendix 1 to this report. Provided it is endorsed by all of the other partner Councils, the Councils and the JPU will then be able to publish the schedule on their respective websites. Since the WNJCS forms part of the statutory development plan for Northampton, this will help to inform developers, agents and landowners when they submit planning applications.

3.3.2 **Option 2** - Cabinet does not endorse the review of the WNJCS as set out in Appendix 1 to this report. If this happens, the schedule will not be published on the Council's website and it will not be clear to the development industry or the public that such a review has taken place. This will leave the Councils open to allegations that the WNJCS has not been reviewed in accordance with Government regulations and that its policies need not be complied with.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The review of the Joint Core Strategy shows that most of its policies remain up to date and should continue to be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are no financial implications, risk or non-financial resource implications arising from this proposal.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The review of the Joint Core Strategy shows that most of its policies remain up to date and should continue to be taken into account in the consideration of planning applications.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 Since this proposal does not alter the policies in the Joint Core Strategy, no further assessment is necessary.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

4.5.1 This proposal was considered first by the West Northamptonshire Strategic Programme Board, which is a group of officers from the constituent authorities and the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. Subsequently, it was considered by this Council's Corporate Management Board.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 The Joint Core Strategy forms part of the statutory development plan for Northampton. As such its policies help to deliver priority outcomes set out in the Council's Corporate Plan including delivering a stronger economy and more resilient communities. The review of those policies will ensure that these policies can continue to be taken into account when considering planning applications.

4.7 Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

4.7.1 The Joint Core Strategy contains a number of policies that address environmental and climate change issues. The review of those policies will ensure that those policies that are up to date can continue to be taken into account when considering planning applications.

4.8 Other Implications

4.7.1 None.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Appendix 1 – West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1)
– Review of Policies in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
– December 2019.

6. Next Steps

6.1 If the review of policies in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to this report is endorsed by this Council, Northamptonshire County Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council, it will be posted on each of their websites and the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit's website.

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