Kettering Borough Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan Examination

Opening Statement – 8th October 2020

Kettering Borough Council is pleased to welcome the Inspector and participants to the Examination of the Kettering Borough Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan. The Council is pleased that the hearing sessions were able to progress in a virtual format and is grateful for this flexible approach which ensures that plan-making can progress in light of the current restrictions.

Kettering Borough Council is a proactive authority which has sought to embrace growth and to deliver homes, jobs, infrastructure, services and facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents while ensuring that the characteristics of the area which make it special are protected.

Kettering Borough will soon form part of the North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority which will be created on 1st April 2021, and the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan will form part of the development plan for the new Unitary Authority.

The Local Plan for Kettering Borough has been prepared in two parts. The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), which is the Part 1 Local Plan, was adopted in July 2016. The JCS covers the four North Northamptonshire Authorities of Kettering, Wellingborough, East Northamptonshire and Corby. In addition to this there is also an adopted Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan which provides policies for Kettering Town Centre, and a Neighbourhood Plan which provides policies for the village of Broughton. There are a number of other Neighbourhood Plans in preparation in the Borough which when made will also form part of the development plan.

The Joint Core Strategy sets out strategic policies for the area, it sets the scale and distribution of development. It directs growth principally to the Growth Town of Kettering, which is the focus for infrastructure investment and higher order facilities to support major, employment, housing, retail and leisure development. The Market Towns of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell provide a strong service role for their local communities and surrounding rural area with growth in homes and jobs to support regeneration and local services. In the rural area, development is limited to that which supports a prosperous rural economy, or to meet a locally arising need.

The JCS sets out a requirement for 10,400 dwellings and 8,100 jobs in the period 2011 to 2031.

The Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan has been prepared in the context of the spatial strategy and requirements set out in the JCS.

The purpose of the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan is to allocate non-strategic sites and to provide detailed local policies for Kettering Borough. It does not review the housing requirement or the spatial strategy. The sites proposed, alongside strategic sites and existing commitments, will meet the requirements set out in the JCS. A flexibility allowance has been included in the plan for housing allocations at Kettering and the Market towns, to ensure that the housing requirements set in the JCS are achieved in
the plan period. The housing site schedule identifies a supply of sites to provide 12,929 dwellings in the plan period, this is 24% above the housing requirement of 10,400 dwellings set out in the JCS.

The plan provides local policies which address topics such as housing for older people, self-build and custom build housing, safeguarding of employment land, town centres, sport and recreation, Local Green Space and open space.

There is a strong focus on green infrastructure in the plan, this builds on the more strategic regional and local corridors identified in the JCS and seeks to connect local communities to these corridors through the creation of borough level corridors.

The plan also places a strong emphasis on good quality design with development principles for the rural area which were developed following a detailed analysis of the rural settlements, set out in the Rural Masterplanning Report.

Plan preparation has included extensive and thorough consultation which has sought to identify and address issues, consultation included five formal public consultations, several informal focused consultations and ongoing engagement with key agencies and adjoining authorities.

Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken throughout the preparation of the plan and the Sustainability Appraisal demonstrates that reasonable alternatives have been considered. The Sustainability Appraisal predicted that for the SA topics housing, health, biodiversity and town centres the plan would have significant positive effects and for SA topics accessibility, crime, community, livability, water and wealth creation there would be minor positive effects. There were some minor negative effects predicted but these impacts can be suitably mitigated.

The Council considers that the plan has met all of the statutory requirements and that the submitted plan is sound, however through the Publication Plan consultation a number of comments were received which the Council considered would result in a more effective document. Therefore, the Council has proposed a number of changes to the Publication Plan, these are set out in the ‘Schedule of proposed changes to the Publication Plan’. This schedule has been updated following the submission of the Council’s Matters Statements to incorporate additional proposed changes in response to the Inspector’s questions.

The Council has already indicated that it would like the Inspector to recommend main modifications to the plan where necessary to make the plan sound and legally compliant.

The Council welcomes the independent examination of the plan and looks forward to engaging positively in discussions with the Inspector and participants throughout the hearing sessions.

Julia Baish
08/10/2020