

<b>NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE</b>		Item 6	Page 1 of 5
Date	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2019</b>		
Report Originator	<b>HEAD OF NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING &amp; DELIVERY UNIT</b>		
Title	<b>NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE PLACE SHAPING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT</b>		

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Joint Planning Committee on progress on the North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Supplementary Planning Document and to seek approval for a revised timetable.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Extensive work has been undertaken in the development of the Place Shaping Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Work on the document was paused in 2019 as resources within the JPDU were focussed on other priorities, notably progressing a Growth Deal for North Northamptonshire. It was also delayed due to temporary loss of design capacity within the JPDU. Completion of the SPD is now a priority for the JPDU.
- 2.2 The JPC has considered the SPD on several occasions, including 2 Member Workshops to consider detailed wording of the SPD. Key milestones in the development of the SPD, including where the JPC have been involved are set out below.

Date	Event
24 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	JPC
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	JPC
12 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Street Trees Workshop
15 <sup>th</sup> June 2017	Member Workshop
14 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	Member Workshop
7 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	JPC
28 <sup>th</sup> November 2017	OPUN Design Review
28 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Officer Workshop

- 2.3 A Design Review of the draft document by OPUN (the architecture centre for the East Midlands) was undertaken on 28th November 2017. The OPUN Panel felt that the document said all the right things but was too wordy and needed better illustration and a clearer structure to ensure that developers use it. The JPDU sought to address the feedback from OPUN, most notably on the structure and design of the document to make it easier to navigate and use. As part of this process there was a significant amount of re-structuring and editing of text.

<b>NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2019</b>	Item 6	Page 2 of 5
---	-----------	----------------

2.4 An internal workshop was held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018, with a broad range of attendees including Planning Policy, Development Management, Environmental Health officers, NCC Highways, Public Health and Northamptonshire Sport. This workshop provided valuable feedback on the detail of the document, but also emphasised the importance that the document is usable and well presented. The content of the SPD was broadly supported but several attendees felt it was too long and difficult to navigate. However, others wanted the SPD to provide detailed guidance in relation to specific issues. The importance of the website being operational alongside the SPD was also emphasised.

2.5 The development of the accompanying website is key to the implementation of the SPD. The website will support the content within the SPD, whilst provide a platform for further technical detail, detailed guidance, local contextual information and case studies. The website will also have the scope to be updated regularly as an on-line resource for a wide audience.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE SPD**

3.1 Comments received on the SPD illustrate an inherent tension in relation to the expectations of the document. Some want it to provide detailed guidance on all relevant issues, others seek a more streamlined, useable document.

3.2 It is considered that the scope of the SPD needs to be refined to make the document shorter and more usable, particularly for Developers and Development Management officers. This will focus on two elements:

- An adopted Place Shaping SPD, which sets out the process of good design. This should do two things; set out what applicants can expect in terms of service across North Northamptonshire; and set out what designers are expected to demonstrate in terms of their design thinking.
- A website acting as an 'online portal' which provides supplementary guidance, case studies and spatial information. The online portal will not be part of the adopted SPD, and act as an on-line resource which can be regularly updated. It should, however, be used by applicants in developing proposals and using the SPD. A significant amount of the contextual text already drafted in the SPD and case studies will be taken out of the document and hosted on the website.

3.3 Refining the scope and length of the SPD will necessitate the removal of some detail from the document. The JPDU will seek to ensure that the valuable input received on previous drafts of the SPD, including from JPC Members is taken forward appropriately. Therefore, it may be necessary for additional documents to be produced to provide detailed guidance on specific issues that have been raised, but which may better sit outside the SPD. The JPDU will discuss this with the partner LPAs and other stakeholders.

<b>NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2019</b>	Item 6	Page 3 of 5
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#### 4. OUTSTANDING ISSUES

4.1 Stakeholder buy-in to the document will be essential. The partner LPAs will need to adopt the document individually so will need to agree the content. It will also be important that Northamptonshire Highways endorse the document to ensure that once adopted the SPD is implemented through the development management process. To support this process, a working group will be established to support the refinement of the SPD before it is reported to the JPC. Highways issues that have previously been discussed by the JPC relate to:

- The relationship of Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) with the adopted Highway;
- Street trees;
- Parking;
- Street Hierarchy and detailed design – pedestrian priority, cross-roads, forward visibility.

4.2 Discussions with NCC Highways are ongoing to seek to resolve these issues. Work on a highways design manual for Tresham Garden Village is being used as a test-bed for good practice that could be incorporated into the SPD.

#### 5. NATIONAL DESIGN GUIDE

5.1 The '[National Design Guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide)'<sup>1</sup> was published on 1st October 2019 by MHCLG. It sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It forms part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance (PPG) and should be read alongside the separate [PPG on Design Process and Tools](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design)<sup>2</sup> (published March 2014, updated October 2019).

5.2 The 'Design Process and Tools' PPG provides advice on planning for well-designed places, decision making about design, tools for assessing and improving design quality and effective community engagement.

5.3 Of particular relevance to the Place Shaping SPD, is reference to Local design guides in para 005 of the PPG. This highlights the requirement for Local Design Guides to set out general design principles and standards for the area, be informed by the ten characteristics outlined in the National Design Guide, be shaped by the local area's qualities, opportunities and communicate local design expectations. They should be concise, positive documents which are accessible and use tools (such as illustrations and checklists) to highlight key design issues and possible solutions.

5.4 The Place Shaping SPD can be taken forward as the Local Design Guide for North Northamptonshire. The emerging SPD has been assessed in the context of the National Design Guide. From this initial review it is considered that the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>

document is broadly consistent with the National Design Guide and the ten characteristics embedded within it. Further work will be undertaken to ensure that the SPD is fully aligned with current government guidance and advice on design.

## 6. PROPOSED TIMETABLE

- 6.1 In light of the issues discussed in this report, a revised timetable for the SPD is set out below. It is considered that alongside finalising the content of the SPD, the design of the document and completion of the accompanying website are critical.

Action	Date
JPC agree revised scope of SPD	23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2019
Stakeholder Workshop	December 2019
JPC endorses SPD for consultation	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2020
Consultation on draft SPD	February- March 2020
Development of the website	
Joint Committee endorses final SPD	April 2020 JPC
Partner LPAs adopt SPD	May onwards
Launch SPD and Website (live)	May 2020

## 7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 It is evident that despite the extensive work undertaken on the SPD, including amendments to the document following the OPUN Design Review, further work is needed to refine the scope of the document to ensure that the document is more concise, manageable and useable for Developers and Development Management officers in particular. There is now an opportunity to ensure that the document takes forward recently published Government guidance as the Local Design Guide for North Northamptonshire, before public consultation and to develop and launch the website as an additional online guide and resource.
- 7.2 It will be essential that key stakeholders, notably the partner LPAs are happy with the content of the document before consultation. The Chief Planning Officers Steering Group have stressed the importance of having sign up from the partner LPAs to the detailed content of the SPD, to ensure that they will be able to recommend the document for adoption. This will be critical as the partner LPAs will need to individually adopt the SPD. It will also allow the design of the document and website to be developed prior to consultation, which will be important to ensure a robust and effective consultation process. Meeting the identified timetable will be dependent on ensuring sufficient resources to complete the document, alongside the other work streams of the JPDU.

<b>NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER 2019</b>	Item 6	Page 5 of 5
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**8. RECOMMENDATION**

**8.1 The Head of the NNJPDU recommends that the Joint Planning Committee:**

- 1. Notes the progress on the Place Shaping Supplementary Planning Document and issues that need to be resolved prior to consultation; and**
- 2. Agrees the timetable set out at para 6.1.**

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