

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE		Item 7	Page 1 of 5
Date	23rd OCTOBER 2019		
Report Originator	HEAD OF NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING & DELIVERY UNIT		
Title	WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN ISSUES CONSULTATION		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For the Joint Planning Committee to endorse the submitted response to the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan Issues consultation

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The local planning authorities in West Northamptonshire (Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils) with support from Northamptonshire County Council, have agreed to prepare a new Strategic Plan for the area. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) will set out a spatial vision for the future of the area extended to 2050, with the statutory plan-period being 2019-2041. It will review, and where appropriate replace strategic policies in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), which was adopted in December 2014 and covers the period up to 2029.
- 2.2 As the first stage in preparing the WNSP, consultation on Issues was undertaken between 5th August and 11th October 2019. An [Issues consultation document¹](#) was produced which was designed to stimulate debate at an early stage. The Issues document emphasised that no decisions have been made on the scale of growth or where growth should be located.
- 2.3 The Issues document was accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Housing Background Paper, which sets out the current national and local policy context and guidance relating to the provision of housing.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND PROPOSED RESPONSE

- 3.1 The Issues document covers the following matters that will be addressed in the WNSP:
- **Introduction** – setting out the broad scope of the WNSP and why it is being prepared.
 - **Spatial Context** – a broad overview of the plan area and its key spatial characteristics, the existing spatial strategy provided by the JCS and the emerging proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

¹ https://westnorthantsplan.inconsult.uk/gf2.ti/f/1046082/54068613.1/PDF/-/WNSP_FINAL_smaller_003.pdf

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23rd OCTOBER 2019	Item 7	Page 2 of 5
---	-----------	----------------

- **Vision and objectives** – seeking views on whether changes are required to the existing vision and objectives in the JCS.
 - **Place-making and Sustainable Communities** – outlining key principles to ensure that the plan creates places where existing and future residents want to live now and can do sustainably into the future.
 - **Natural and Built Environment** – setting out key principles for landscape, biodiversity, climate change resilience, green infrastructure, flood risk, water quality and supply, the historic environment and heritage assets.
 - **Housing** – ensuring the right number and type of houses are delivered across West Northamptonshire. The document sets out that the Local Housing Need figure for the plan period is 48,862 dwellings and also identifies two potential contingency options of LHN + 10% - 53,700 dwellings and LHN + 20% - 58,600 dwellings.
 - **Economic Growth** – identifying key economic issues including retail, town centres and the rural economy.
 - **Infrastructure** – suggests key principles and objectives for the delivery of the infrastructure required to support growth across the plan area. The potential reopening of the North-South rail route connecting Northampton with Market Harborough is identified.
 - **Process and Next Steps** - providing guidance on how to comment and the next steps in the plan preparation process including reference to the development of spatial options as the next steps in plan preparation.
- 3.2 The issues document discusses the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and includes questions regarding the opportunities presented by the Arc and the extent to which this would justify additional growth in the area.
- 3.3 In relation to the development of spatial options, the issues document identifies the type of options that will be considered: Urban Intensification; Urban Extension; New Settlements; Corridor based growth; Employment Focus and Dispersed Options. It also acknowledges that the development and consideration of spatial options will need to take account of a range of influences such as the plans of neighbouring Councils and the outcome of the proposals for the Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges which are being considered through the National Infrastructure Planning process.
- 3.4 Cross-Boundary issues were extensively considered in the development of the North and West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategies. The key cross-boundary issues that were identified in the preparation of the JCS's can be summarised as:
- *Infrastructure including sustainable transport*
 - *Employment provision*
 - *Green Infrastructure*
 - *Sub-Regional Facilities*
 - *Directions of Growth and the longer-term growth of Northampton, including the need to avoid coalescence.*

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23rd OCTOBER 2019	Item 7	Page 3 of 5
---	-----------	----------------

- 3.5 The longer-term growth of Northampton was considered during the preparation of the North Northamptonshire JCS. Whilst it is not explicitly referenced in the Issues document, it is considered that this will be a key cross-boundary issue for consideration in the Strategic Plans and will link to the development of spatial options. The NN JCS recognises this issue at para 1.14: *“The Joint Core Strategy does not identify any housing or other development specifically related to meeting objectively assessed needs for adjoining areas and vice versa as it has been confirmed that this is not necessary before 2029. For the period post-2029, options outside of the West Northamptonshire boundary area may need to be tested alongside others for meeting Northampton’s longer term development needs. Through the duty to co-operate and co-ordination of plan making, the respective local planning authorities will work together to positively address this issue in reviewing future Local Plans.”*
- 3.6 Both Joint Planning Units have worked closely along with the partner LPAs to ensure ongoing co-operation in identifying and addressing strategic cross-boundary matters. This will be important in the preparation of both Strategic Plans to meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. It is considered that the cross-boundary issues that were previously identified and considered remain relevant to North and West-Northamptonshire and the preparation of the Strategic Plans. The NN JPDU and partner LPAs (and future NN Unitary authority) will continue to work with West Northamptonshire to ensure these and other relevant issues are addressed through the preparation of the Strategic Plans and the evidence base that informs them.
- 3.7 The statutory plan-period of the WNSP is 2019-2041, with the spatial vision extended to 2050. At its meeting on 25th July 2019, the JPC agreed that when an update of the North Northamptonshire JCS commences it should be referred to as the NN Strategic Plan and should cover the period 2020-2041, with the spatial vision potentially extending to 2050 to align with the Arc. An end date of 2041 is consistent with the proposed end date for the WNSP, which should allow evidence and cross-boundary issues to be considered more effectively (including potential for joint commissioning of technical work).
- 3.8 It will be important to consider sustainable transport links between West and North Northamptonshire, notably the A45 between Wellingborough and Northampton and the A43 between Northampton and Kettering. Improvements to the A45 and the A43 between Northampton and Kettering are identified in the NN JCS and the recently published North Northamptonshire Investment Framework. Future retail strategy and hierarchy will be an important cross-boundary consideration through the development of the Strategic Plans.
- 3.9 In relation to the previously identified issue of the longer term growth of Northampton post-2029 the JPDU fully supports the need to consider all of the spatial options set out in the next steps section of the issues document. Recognition within the issues document that the development of spatial options will need to take account of a range of influences such as the plans of neighbouring Councils is also welcomed.

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23rd OCTOBER 2019	Item 7	Page 4 of 5
---	-----------	----------------

- 3.10 It is noted that the Natural and Built Environment section of the document references 'Biodiversity Net Gain'. It is considered that, in accordance with the government's '25 year Plan to Improve the Environment' and the stated aims for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc, the plan should be seeking to achieve an overall net environmental gain. The impact of future growth on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area will also be a key consideration in developing the Strategic Plans.
- 3.11 In order to meet the consultation deadline, an officer response to the Issues consultation was submitted on 11th October. This is set out at Appendix 1. The response re-emphasises what the JPDU considers to be the key cross-boundary issues. It also confirms that the NN JPDU and partner LPAs will continue to work with West Northamptonshire to ensure cross-boundary issues (including the development of spatial options) are addressed through the preparation of the Strategic Plans. It also sets out that the JPDU fully supports the need to consider all of the spatial options set out in the next steps section of the issues document, which is consistent with the approach set out in para 1.14 of the JCS. It is recommended that the Joint Planning Committee endorses the submitted response. The West Northamptonshire JPU have advised that they will accept a late representation any additional comments that the Committee may wish to make.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Both Joint Planning Units have worked closely along with the partner LPAs to ensure ongoing co-operation in identifying and addressing strategic cross-boundary matters. This will be important in the preparation of both Strategic Plans to meet the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate. It is considered that the cross-boundary issues that were previously identified and considered remain relevant to North and West-Northamptonshire and the preparation of the Strategic Plans. The NN JPDU and partner LPAs will continue to work with West Northamptonshire to ensure these and other relevant issues are addressed through the preparation of the Strategic Plans and the evidence base that informs them.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Head of the NNJPDU recommends that the Joint Planning Committee endorses the submitted response to the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan Issues consultation set out in Appendix 1.**

Contact Officers: Simon James tel. 01832 742361; Andrew Longley 01832 742359

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE 23rd OCTOBER 2019	Item 7	Page 5 of 5
---	-----------	----------------

**Appendix 1: West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan Issues consultation
response**