AGENDA

This is a virtual meeting of the Planning Policy Committee to be held using Zoom and live-streamed via YouTube.

Committee Members, officers and previously-notified speakers will be sent Zoom meeting joining instructions separately.

To watch the live meeting on YouTube, please follow the instructions below:-

1. Click or visit the following link www.kettering.gov.uk/youtube
2. Select the following video (located at the top of the list) – “Planning Policy Committee 12/10/2020”

Committee Administrator: Anne Ireson
Direct Line: 01536 534398
Email: anneireson@kettering.gov.uk
1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest
   *(Members are asked to make any declarations of financial or other interests they may have in relation to items on this agenda. Members are reminded to make a declaration at any stage throughout the meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.)*
   
   (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
   
   (b) Personal Interests

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2020 to be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

4. Any items of business the Chair considers to be urgent

5. The Chair to ask members of the public present if they want to speak on any public items on the agenda


<table>
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<tr>
<th>Members of the Planning Policy Committee:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Mike Tebbutt (Chair), Cllr Ian Jelley (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Linda Adams, Cedwien Brown, John Currall, Ash Davies, June Derbyshire, Ruth Groome and Jan O’Hara</td>
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<th>Substitute Members:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cllrs Michael Brown, David Howes, Clark Mitchell, Cliff Moreton, Mark Rowley, Margaret Talbot, and Greg Titcombe</td>
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**Private and Confidential Items**

The press and members of the public can be excluded from business of the meeting on the grounds that it involves items of business which include the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 1-7 of the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 in respect of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for discussing the issue in private is indicated on the Order of Business and was advertised by way of a Public Notice in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.
Present:-

Councillor Michael Tebbutt (Chair)
Councillors C Brown, Davies, Groome, Mitchell, Talbot
and O’Hara

20.PP.08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Linda Adams,
John Currall and Ian Jelley. It was noted that Councillor Mitchell was
acting as a substitute for Councillor Adams and Councillor Talbot as a
substitute for Councillor Currall.

20.PP.09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ruth Groome declared an interest in Item 6 as a member of
Burton Latimer Town Council and an employee of Northamptonshire
County Council Libraries Service.

Councillors Margaret Talbot and Cedwien Brown declared an interest in
item 6 as members of Rothwell Town Council.

20.PP.10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Planning Policy Committee held on
21st May 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the
Chair.

20.PP.11 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20.PP.12 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

(Planning Policy No. 1)
01.09.2020
A report was submitted which sought members approval to agree an update to the Council’s Local Development Scheme (LDS); and to recommend that the Scheme be submitted to Full Council for adoption.

It was heard that the LDS was to be adopted ahead of the commencement of Examination hearings on the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan (SSP2), which was submitted for Examination on 28th May 2020, with hearings expected to be held in early October 2020. The remaining programme for producing this document was noted as follows:

• Examination – October 2020
• Proposed Modification consultation – November/December 2020
• Receipt of Inspector’s Report – January 2021
• Adoption – March 2021

Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy

Members heard that the Council had published a revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in March 2019, and was working towards a series of initiatives to deliver against the identified need. One of the options was to include the identification and allocation of sites through a standalone local plan document. Gypsy and traveller housing provision sat alongside the Council’s responsibility to meet the housing requirements of the settled community. Progressing a policy to identify and allocate sufficient land or provide other solutions to meet identified need in a timely manner was important in meeting this requirement, and was expected to form a part of the Inspector’s considerations through the Examination into the SSP2.

Rothwell and Desborough Urban Extension Area Action Plan (AAP)

The Council provided no clear timetable for the progression of the historic policy document in the previous LDS, its Submission to the Secretary of State having been put on hold. Since then clear progress had been made with applications at Desborough and Rothwell, both having been granted outline planning permission. In both cases the sites had made progress towards delivery, and in the case of Rothwell, developers were now on-site installing infrastructure and constructing the first properties. The commitment through the previous LDS was to retain this AAP and review the necessity for it with commencement of the urban extensions or with Submission of the SSP2. It was proposed to revoke this AAP given the advanced position of both schemes and the SSP2.

Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

It was heard that with changes in shopping patterns, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and pressures brought on Kettering town centre by the Rushden Lakes out of town shopping facility, the Council intended to review the planning policies contained within the Kettering Town Centre
AAP. The LDS also included additional plan-making documents, such as the Policies Map.

Once the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan Examination is complete, it was proposed to accelerate work on the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy, and shortly after commence a review of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan. This would mean that more resources can be directed towards preparing both Development Plan Documents as a matter of urgency.

It was then heard that following any comments and subsequent amendments agreed by the Committee, the document would be amended and forwarded to Full Council for adoption, with the recommendation that Full Council resolve that the Local Development Scheme is to have effect from 23rd September 2020.

Councillor Jim Hakewill addressed the meeting, stating that the revised LDS had failed to look after the settled and traveller community and that the neighbourhood plans had not been brought forward sufficiently.

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED** that:-

Members agreed the draft Local Development Scheme as discussed at paragraph 2.6 to 2.14 of the officers report be recommended to Full Council that the revised LDS be adopted.

20.PP.13 **GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS SITE ALLOCATION POLICY UPDATE**

A report was submitted which provided Members with an update on the progress being made with the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy.

It was noted that at a previous meeting of the Planning Policy Committee on 10th September 2019 (Minute 19.PP.12 refers) Members noted the content of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) and that officers sought to progress a series of Proposed Actions Going Forward. The report highlighted that specialist consultants in this field have a greater depth of skills and knowledge of working with the gypsy and traveller community. It was confirmed to members that The Council had appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS), authors of the North Northamptonshire GTAA to undertake a Pitch Delivery Assessment on the Council’s behalf.

It was heard that ORS would work to identify potential delivery models where need cannot be met on existing sites. This included identifying potential locations for the identified need to be met across the wider
North Northamptonshire area, in line with changes in Council boundary with the new North Northamptonshire Unitary Council. This could include through the allocation of new sites or extension/intensification of existing sites. In addition, upon request ORS was to ensure it engages with those Parish Councils closely related to gypsy and traveller sites.

The timescales for the ORS Site Deliverability Assessment report should be completed in good time for progress to be made towards developing a strategy on pitch delivery, and consulting with stakeholders and the public in January 2021.

Councillor Jim Hakewill addressed the meeting, and raised several questions in relation to the appointment of ORS and questioned what would happen should there be a conflict in the allocation of sites. Cllr Hakewill also stated that all parish councils should be consulted as part of the process and not just those closely related to gypsy and traveller sites.

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED** that:-

Members noted the contents of the officers report with regards to progress made in preparing a Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy.

**20.PP.14 PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OPEN SPACE, PLAYING PITCH PROVISION AND SPORTS FACILITIES FOR KETTERING BOROUGH**


It was heard that the publications formed part of the evidence base for plan-making. In addition the documents would support decision making and service development by other service areas within the Council (e.g. Community Services; Environmental Care) as they provided a strategic and action planned approach to the enhancement of existing and creation of new open space, pitch and sporting provision, including changing room and ancillary support facilities.

It was heard that Paragraph 96 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF) established that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity was
important for health and well-being. It stated that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified.

Councillor Jim Hakewill attended the meeting and addressed the committee. He enquired whether members were consulted as part of the development of the studies. The meeting was informed that Parish Council’s were consulted and an on-line public consultation was run for a minimum of 6 weeks inviting comments from all who reside, work and visit the Borough. The consultation strategy was considered robust and that through the process Members had every opportunity to engage. Cllr Hakewill also stated that Wicksteed Park should be included within the research due to Kettering’s unique position in having the park.

Following debate is was:

**RESOLVED** that members noted the contents of the report and noted the publication of the:
- Open Space Audit and Needs Assessment (2020) (KKP)
- Open Space Standards Paper (2020) (KKP)
- Playing Pitch Audit and Needs Assessment (2019) (KKP)
- Playing Pitch Strategy (2020) (KKP)
- Sports Facilities Audit and Needs Assessment (2020) (KKP)
- Sports Facilities Strategy (2020) (KKP)

### 20.PP.15 ENGLAND’S ECONOMIC HEARTLAND – DRAFT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Members received a report which sought to make them aware of the England’s Economic Heartland – Draft Transport Strategy consultation and to agree comments to be fed into a response to be agreed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee.

It was heard that the consultation on England’s Economic Heartland Draft Transport Strategy ran until 6th October 2020. The Draft Strategy proposed a step-change in the approach to transport in the region. The extent of the region was large, including Northamptonshire, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire to the north and east; and Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire to the south and west. It also included the counties, town and cities between, such as Milton Keynes and Bedford.

The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU) had arranged a briefing for Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and Shadow Authority Members for 8th September. This was to provide the opportunity to explore at greater depth the proposals being put forward.
and the role North Northamptonshire can play to support the ambitious step-change. The JPDU had also agreed with England’s Economic Heartland an extension for its response, to follow a meeting of the JPC scheduled for 28th October. Given the strategic nature and scale of the Draft Strategy, it was proposed that Kettering Borough Council feed into a more comprehensive response to be submitted to the extended timetable agreed by the JPDU.

Members heard that the ambition was for the Strategy to be bold, and use the Heartland’s strength in science and technology innovation to deliver new solutions which improved connectivity and achieve net environmental gain. The Strategy was shaped by four overarching principles, these were:

- Achieving net zero carbon emissions from transport no later than 2050
- Improving quality of life and wellbeing through an inclusive transport system accessible to all which emphasises sustainable and active travel
- Supporting the regional economy by connecting people and businesses to markets and opportunities
- Ensuring the Heartland works for the UK by enabling the efficient movement of people and goods through the region and to/from international gateways.

Councillor Jim Hakewill and John Padwick attended the meeting and raised points in relation to Kettering Borough Council’s Climate Emergency zero carbon emissions target of 2030 which was in contradiction to the 2050 target set out in the strategy.

Officers reported that the points raised in relation to the zero carbon emissions targets were to be raised at the meeting of the Joint Planning Committee.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED that members noted the contents of the report and the consultation on England’s Economic Heartland – Draft Transport Strategy and that points raised by members be fed into a joint North Northamptonshire response; and

That input into a response be delegated to members of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and the Shadow Authority members.
A report was received which sought to inform members of the consultation on the *Planning for the future* White Paper, and to seek Members initial feedback on the proposals. Members were also asked to delegate the preparation of the Council’s response on the consultation to the Interim Head of Development Services in consultation with the Chair of Planning Policy Committee.

It was heard that the Planning for the future White Paper was published on 6 August 2020 for a 12-week consultation. The White Paper proposed significant reforms of the planning system through which the Government sought to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it was needed. It was noted that subject to the outcomes of this consultation, the Government would seek to bring forward legislation and policy changes to implement the reform.

Members noted that alongside the White Paper the Government had also published a Changes to the current planning system consultation. The consultation on this document ran for 8 weeks, the closing date was 1st October 2020. This consultation set out the Government’s proposals for measures to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. The four main proposals were:

- Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need
- Securing of First Homes through developer contributions in the short term until the transition to a new system
- Supporting small and medium-sized builders by temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing
- Extending the current Permission in Principle for major development

Councillor Jim Hakewill, Dez Dell and John Padwick attended the meeting and addressed the committee expressing that these are major matters that the need committee’s considered response following debate, Town and Parish Councils should be encouraged to comment. Also, the current Climate Emergency needed to be central to Kettering Borough Councils response and emphasised that planning applications need proper and appropriate consultation periods that involves the local community.
Members raised concerns regarding proposals for alterations to the planning process stating that any response needs to have member input to ensure local communities are protected.

Following debate is was proposed by Councillor Talbot and seconded by Councillor O’Hara that the officers recommendation be amended to allow Members to meet to debate and agree a considered response based upon a first draft prepared by officers.

**RESOLVED** that members noted the contents of the report; and

That officers prepare a draft response to the White Paper Consultation for consideration at a future meeting of this committee.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.24 pm)

Signed ....................................................
Chair

AI
1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the contents of the consultation on the Planning for the Future White Paper, and to agree the Council’s response.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 The Planning for the Future White Paper was published on 6 August 2020 for a 12-week consultation. Members will recall that a report was presented to the last meeting of this committee on 1st September 2020, where Members received headlines from the White Paper, and resolved that officers prepare a draft response to the White Paper consultation for consideration at a future meeting of this committee (draft Minute 20.PP16 refers).

2.2 Members will recall that the White Paper proposes significant reforms of the planning system through which the Government seeks to streamline and modernise the planning process, bring a new focus to design and sustainability, improve the system of developer contributions to infrastructure, and ensure more land is available for development where it is needed. Subject to the outcomes of this consultation, the Government will seek to bring forward legislation and policy changes to implement the reforms.

2.3 The consultation closes on Thursday 29 October 2020, and a full copy of the White Paper is available to view at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future.

2.4 The proposals contained in the White Paper are fundamental and propose radical changes to the planning system.

2.5 The paper recognises the importance of the planning system:

The planning system is central to our most important national challenges: tackling head on the shortage of beautiful, high quality homes and places where people want to live and work; combating climate change; improving biodiversity; supporting sustainable growth in all parts of the country and rebalancing our economy; delivering opportunities for the construction sector, upon which millions of livelihoods depend; the ability of more people to own assets and have a stake in our society; and our capacity to house the homeless and provide security and dignity.'
2.6 To succeed in meeting these challenges the Government says the planning system must be fit for purpose. It must make land available in the right places and for the right form of development. In doing this, it must ensure new development brings with it the schools, hospitals, surgeries and transport local communities need, while at the same time protecting our unmatchable architectural heritage and natural environment. It is the Government’s view that the current system is inefficient, opaque and results in poor outcomes. The following problems are identified of the current system:

- It is too complex
- Planning decisions are discretionary rather than rules based
- It takes too long to adopt a Local Plan
- Assessments of housing need, viability and environmental impacts are too complex and opaque
- It has lost public trust
- It is based on 20th century technology
- The process for negotiating developer contributions to affordable housing and infrastructure is complex, protracted and unclear
- There is not enough focus on design, and little incentive for high quality new homes and places
- It simply does not lead to enough homes being built

2.7 The White Paper puts forward 24 proposals for the planning system and asks 27 questions. An overview of the proposals is set out under 5 general themes as detailed below:

Firstly streamlining the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage, and replacing the entire corpus of plan-making law in England to achieve this:

- Simplifying the role of Local Plans, to focus on identifying land under three categories - **Growth areas** suitable for substantial development, and where outline approval for development would be automatically secured for forms and types of development specified in the Plan; **Renewal areas** suitable for some development, such as gentle densification; and **Protected areas** where – as the name suggests – development is restricted.
- Local Plans should set clear rules rather than general policies for development. General development management policies will be set nationally.
- Local councils should radically and profoundly re-invent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with communities as they consult on Local Plans.
• Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test.
• Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template.
• Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable for adopting a local plan (of no more than 30 months in total).
• Decision-making should be faster and more certain.
• Strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions.
• Develop a comprehensive resource and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of reforms.

Secondly, take a radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process. This means moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data:

• Support local planning authorities to use digital tools to support a new civic engagement process for local plans and decision-making.
• Insist local plans are built on standardised, digitally consumable rules and data.
• Standardise, and make openly and digitally accessible, other critical datasets that the planning system relies on.
• Work with tech companies and local authorities to modernise the software used for making and case-managing a planning application,
• Engage with the UK PropTech sector through a PropTech Innovation Council.

Thirdly, bring a new focus on design and sustainability:

• Ensure the planning system supports our efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits.
• Facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings.
• Ask for beauty and be far more ambitious for the places we create, expecting new development to be beautiful, and to create a ‘net gain’ not just ‘no net harm’.
• Make it easier for those who want to build beautifully through the introduction of a fast-track for beauty.
• Introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities.
• Expect design guidance and codes – which will set the rules for the design of new development – to be prepared locally and to be based on genuine community involvement rather than meaningless consultation.
• Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every
part of the country.

- Ensure that each local planning authority has a chief officer for design and place-making.
- Lead by example by updating Homes England’s strategic objectives to give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.
- Protect our historic buildings and areas.

Fourthly, improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions:

- The Community Infrastructure Levy and the current system of planning obligations will be reformed as a nationally-set value-based flat rate charge (‘the Infrastructure Levy’).
- More ambitious for affordable housing provided through planning gain, and ensure that the new Infrastructure Levy allows local planning authorities to secure more on-site housing provision.
- Give local authorities greater powers to determine how developer contributions are used.
- Look to extend the scope of the consolidated Infrastructure Levy and remove exemptions from it to capture changes of use through permitted development rights.

Fifthly, ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centres:

- A new nationally-determined, binding housing requirement that local planning authorities would have to deliver through their Local Plans.
- To speed up construction where development has been permitted - substantial development should seek to include a variety of development types from different builders which allow more phases to come forward together.
- To provide better information to local communities, to promote competition amongst developers, and to assist SMEs and new entrants to the sector, we will consult on options for improving the data held on contractual arrangements used to control land.
- To make sure publicly owned land and public investment in development supports thriving places, we will:
  - ensure decisions on the locations of new public buildings – such as government offices and further education colleges – support renewal and regeneration of town centres; and
  - explore how publicly-owned land disposal can support the SME and self-build sectors.
2.8 Attached at Appendix 1 is a draft response for submission by Kettering Borough Council. It is proposed that this will form the fundamental basis of the Council’s response. However, further work is being undertaken across North Northamptonshire, including a seminar on 15th October for Members of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and the North Northamptonshire Shadow Executive. It is suggested that any additional comments developed at this event, and considered beneficial for the Council’s response, are included. A report will also be presented to Members of the Joint Planning Committee who meet on 28th October 2020.

2.9 Given the above, Members are asked to delegate the preparation of the Council’s response to this consultation to the Interim Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Policy Committee.

2.10 Alongside the White Paper, the Government published a Changes to the current planning system consultation. The consultation on this document ran for 8 weeks, the closing date was 1st October 2020. Officers submitted a response from the Borough Council, at which it stressed this was an officer only response as a report could not be provided to this committee within the consultation period. This consultation set out the Government’s proposals for measures to improve the effectiveness of the current planning system. The four main proposals are:

- Changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need
- Securing of First Homes through developer contributions in the short term until the transition to a new system
- Supporting small and medium-sized builders by temporarily lifting the small sites threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing
- Extending the current Permission in Principle for major development

2.11 The Changes to the current planning system consultation is still available to view at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-current-planning-system.

Planning for the Future White Paper

2.12 A summary of the proposals set out in the White Paper is provided below, but an overview of the Government’s proposals includes:

- Streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan-making stage and will replace the entire corpus of plan-making law in England.
- A radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process. This means moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data.
- A new focus on design and sustainability.
• To improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part, through reform of developer contributions.
• To ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centres.

2.13 The proposals in the White Paper are set out in 3 pillars:
• Pillar One – Planning for development
• Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places
• Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

2.14 Within each of these Pillars there are a series of proposals and the consultation document contains questions relating to each of these proposals. The proposals for each pillar are summarised below.

Pillar One – Planning for development

A New Approach to Plan Making

Proposal 1 – The role of land use plans should be simplified. It is proposed that Local Plans should identify three types of land – Growth areas suitable for substantial development, Renewal Areas suitable for development, and areas that are Protected.

Proposal 2 – Development management policies established at a national scale and an altered role for Local Plans.

Proposal 3 – Local Plans should be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test, replacing the tests of soundness. This proposal includes the abolition of Sustainability Appraisals, removal of the Duty to Cooperate and a slimmed down assessment of deliverability for the plan.

Proposal 4 – A standard method for establishing the housing requirement figures which ensures enough land is released in areas where affordability is worst, to stop land supply being a barrier to enough homes being built. The housing requirement would factor in land constraints and opportunities to more effectively use land, including through densification where appropriate, to ensure that the land is identified in the most appropriate areas and housing targets are met.

A streamlined development management process with automatic planning permission for schemes in line with plans.

Proposal 5: Areas identified as Growth areas (suitable for substantial development) would automatically be granted outline planning permission for the principle of development, while automatic approvals would also be available for pre-established development types in other areas suitable for building.

Proposal 6: Decision-making should be faster and more certain, with firm deadlines, and make greater use of digital technology.

A new interactive, web-based map standard for planning documents
Proposal 7: Local Plans should be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new template.

A streamlined, more engaging plan-making process

Proposal 8: Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet the statutory timetable for key stages of the process, and the Government will consider what sanctions there would be for those who fail to do so.

Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans should be retained as an important means for community input, and we will support communities to make better use of digital tools.

Speeding up the delivery of development

Proposal 10: A stronger emphasis on build out through planning.

Pillar 2 – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Creating frameworks for quality

Proposal 11: To make design expectations more visual and predictable, the Government will expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement and ensure that codes are more binding on decisions about development.

Proposal 12: To support the transition to a planning system which is more visual and rooted in local preferences and character, the Government will set up a body to support the delivery of provably locally-popular design codes, and propose that each authority have a chief officer for design and place-making.

Proposal 13: To further embed national leadership on delivering better places, the Government will consider how Homes England’s strategic objectives can give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places.

A fast-track for beauty

Proposal 14: It is proposed to introduce a fast-track for beauty through changes to national policy and legislation, to incentivise and accelerate high quality development which reflects local character and preferences.

Effective stewardship for enhancement of our natural and historic environment

Proposal 15: The Government intends to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that it targets those areas where a reformed planning system can most effectively play a role in mitigating and adapting to climate change and maximising environmental benefits.

Proposal 16: The Government intends to design a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities, that speeds up the process while protecting and enhancing the most valuable and important habitats and specific in England.
Proposal 17: Conserving and enhancing our historic buildings and areas in the 21st Century.

Proposal 18: To complement the planning reforms, the Government will facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings to help deliver its world-leading commitment to net-zero by 2050.

Pillar 3 – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

A consolidated infrastructure levy

Proposal 19: The Community Infrastructure Levy should be reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a threshold, with a mandatory nationally-set rate or rates and the current system of planning obligations abolished.

Proposal 20: The scope of the Infrastructure Levy could be extended to capture changes of use through permitted development rights.

Proposal 21: The reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing provisions.

Proposal 22: More freedom could be given to local authorities over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy

Delivering Change

2.15 The White Paper sets out how the Government intends to deliver the change proposed. Subject to the responses to the consultation the Government will consider arrangements for implementation to minimise disruption to existing plans and development proposals and ensure a smooth transition.

2.16 This includes making sure that recently approved plans, existing permissions and any associated planning obligations can continue to be implemented as intended; and that there are clear transitional arrangements for bringing forward new plans and development proposals as the new system begins to be implemented.

2.17 The Government sets out that it wants to make rapid progress towards this new planning system and the White Paper references changes that have already been recently introduced, including the new Use Classes Order, and associated permitted development rights for High Streets and new permitted development rights to enable more new homes to be built on top of existing buildings and the demolition and rebuild of vacant buildings for housing, without the need for usual planning permission.

2.18 The consultation document also sets out that the Government wants to:

- Make better use of public assets and investments
- Support innovation in delivery
• Make sure the system has the right people and skills
• Place more emphasis on enforcement

2.19 The proposals set out in this section include:

Proposal 23: As the Government develops their final proposal for this new planning system, they will develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of their reforms.

Proposal 24: The Government will seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions.

2.20 The consultation document contains 26 questions relating to each of the proposals and to implementation of the proposals. It is not proposed that the Council respond to each of the questions, Appendix 1 to this report (attached) provides comments Members are asked to agree, which will form a letter of response to the consultation. The joint committees seminar on 15th October may identify additional issues for comment. It is proposed the Council add any of these points it thinks worthwhile, and that Members of this Committee delegate the Council’s final response to the Interim Head of Development Services in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee.

3. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER IMPACT

3.1 Kettering Borough Council is a consultee to the Planning for the Future White Paper and the Changes to the Current Planning System consultations.

4. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals contained in the Planning for the Future White Paper will have significant implications for both policy development and resource implications for Development Services. When the proposals are finalised, the Council will need to take the proposals into consideration in preparing its Local Plan and in determining planning applications.

5. LEGAL AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposals will result in changes to legislation and regulatory requirements which the Council will need to take into account when carrying out plan making and development management functions.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The proposals set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper will fundamentally change the way the planning system operates and therefore have
the potential to have significant climate change implications. Consideration will be given to Climate Change implications in drafting the Council’s response to the consultation.

7. **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the consultation on the *Planning for the Future* White Paper;
- Agree the content of Appendix 1 should form the response of Kettering Borough Council; and
- Agree that any additional points to be added to the Council’s response ahead of the closing date be delegated for agreement to the Interim Head of Development Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee.

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**Background Papers:**

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Planning for the Future White Paper – Draft Response to be Submitted by Kettering Borough Council

1. Thank you for the opportunity for the Council to provide a response to the Planning for the Future White Paper. The Council looks forward to working with the Government and other partners in constantly improving planning and the ability to deliver high quality, responsive development.

General Comments

2. The Council is seriously concerned at the lack of evidence or detail the White Paper provides to substantiate the proposals it promotes. It feels it asks more questions than it answers, painting a vision of planning, but providing no substance to direct how that vision is delivered – from a strategic level to the local neighbourhood planning level. Disappointingly, it is also unclear on how climate change targets are to be achieved quickly, and on a national scale.

3. It is felt the proposals set out will significantly reduce the link planning has with democracy, and local people’s ability to influence planning, development and the environment in their local area. It will discourage people from taking part in any process, and result in a lack of care and ownership of the places in which they live, negatively affecting pride and interest in planning for now and for future generations. The blame again on speed of delivery and poor design appears to be directed towards the decision makers, not the development industry.

4. There are already clear signs of failings where the Government have extended permitted development rights, this having led to numerous reported cases of poor standards in flatted developments in buildings constructed as office blocks, subsequently simply adapted to residential spaces.

5. The foundation of planning is laid by evidence that guides and supports the decisions to be made. This White Paper appears devoid of this as a basis for making quite radical decisions. The understanding behind the direction the White Paper proposes should be shared, without it the recommendations made cannot be fully understood and then enacted.

6. The White Paper criticises local authorities for a shortage of housing land being down to a lack of permissions, yet many authorities can boast they are meeting their requirements with consented sites, and these sites being of different sizes. Kettering Borough can identify land for 12,929 dwellings, a high proportion of which already have planning permission, against its requirements to provide 10,400 homes in the plan period to 2031.

Principle of ‘The Zones’

7. “Protected Areas” – It is understood that the policy areas would be designated locally, and the development management policies would be set out nationally. There is no indication as to the extent or quality of these nationally set policies, and
their potential suitability for each designated area, which are highly likely to differ. This all goes to make it impossible to form a judgement on the merits of this approach at this time. There is therefore a sense of caution and concern until more is known.

8. “Renewal Areas” – our understanding is that this is likely to include a mix of different planning regimes including permitted development, planning in principle and development management with design codes. All very complex, and potentially disjointed, which is a risk for areas in need of strong policy and support.

9. “Growth Areas” - It is understood that within this zone, permission would be given in effect at the plan adoption stage, subject to proposals meeting national and local design codes and pattern books (a design aid for development). The flexibility allowance for different approaches within a renewal area is not clear, almost like making a designation without seeing the site. Greater clarity on how this might work is needed. Growth Areas would appear to also avoid the Reserved Matters process, which currently allows some form of democratic oversight through officer advice and member determination. Also, this places significantly more emphasis on the plan-making process to “get it right”, at what has traditional been a stage in the planning process when site or development detail is scarce. This detail currently becomes clearer for each site further into the planning process. The risk therefore is that the power for local planning authorities to improve or resolve deficiencies will result in them being unresolved into the scheme’s development, thereby any issues are passed on to the community and local authority. This is unacceptable and should be headed off.

10. The proposed new planning system will further strengthen the developer’s position, at the expense of the environment, and current and new communities. The system of codes and pattern books would provide no discretion at what is currently the final stage of decision-making. Codes and pattern books would therefore need to be very carefully assessed and agreed, with significant detail and little or no room for interpretation or flexibility.

11. Also of note, the White Paper says local plans will be two-thirds shorter than they are currently. With all that’s required in terms of codes and pattern books, and greater detail and certainty at this early stage of the planning process, the plan-making stage, it is nonsense to expect this can be achieved.

Neighbourhood Plans

12. It is unclear how Neighbourhood Plans fit into the proposed three-zone system. Also, with national design codes and government-led development management policies it would seem Neighbourhood Plans may simply be limited to contributing to local design codes. Localism was introduced nearly 10 years ago with the intention being to provide a “bottom up” planning system sensitive to local need. The taking back of planning powers by the Government will harm democracy and the hard work local groups are putting into providing planning policies appropriate for their areas.
13. The current process of politicians determining applications and the opportunity for the public to influence will be lost. Streamlining the opportunity for consultation “because this adds delay” will marginalise local people. Development plans will become the only meaningful way local communities would be left to engage with the planning process, an area traditionally difficult to secure the public’s interest. There is clear risk that the focus around digital information making planning more accessible will be at the expense of more traditional forms of communicating information. This is not likely to have the impact that is desired and will not give communities control or influence in the planning process.

**National Infrastructure Levy**

14. This is another area of the White Paper where the detail is sketchy. It is acknowledged that the Government has persisted with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for many years, but still hasn’t found it as an approach to secure worthwhile levy, and provide the value necessary for sufficient infrastructure to be invested into local communities. From Kettering Borough Council’s point of view, assessments have always shown that sticking to Section 106 Agreements to be more effective than CIL.

15. It is clear that negotiating on Section 106 Agreements has on occasion resulted in delays in issuing planning permissions, this can be down to any of the parties involved. A national Infrastructure Levy may help to reduce or overcome the times this happens, but it is difficult to support proposals that hold so little detail, with no evidence of having been successful through modelling or testing. The concern is that as a proposal it is searching in the dark, and needs to be looked at independently and at far greater depth than it appears to have been to date.

16. In summary, the biggest concern is that in an effort to speed up the planning process, this White Paper will marginalise local people and threaten the reputation of planning as a vehicle of shaping quality places where people want to live.