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## East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2: Response to Draft Plan consultation

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### SYNOPSIS

To inform members of East Northamptonshire's consultation on its Local Plan Part 2 consultation draft. To alert members to the key planning policy implications for Corby Borough and to agree the Council's response to the consultation.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 is the District-wide site specific statutory development plan, prepared by East Northamptonshire Council to guide the determination of planning applications. Like the emerging draft Part 2 Local Plan for Corby, it supports the strategic policies of the Local Plan Part 1, the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. When adopted, the Part 2 Plan will form part of the statutory development plan for East Northamptonshire.
- 1.2 The draft Plan has been published for consultation which is taking place between Friday 2 November and Monday 17 December. Consultation documents can be viewed on East Northamptonshire District Council's website at <https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk>.

## 2. Layout of the Local Plan Part 2

- 2.1 The Plan consists of the following key elements:
  - Introduction, Area Portrait, and Vision and Outcomes – sets the scene in terms of the evidence base and the context of higher level national or Joint Core Strategy policies; outlines key reasons and factors that entail the need for suitable local policies; and sets out Plan-level Vision and Outcomes to be achieved;
  - Spatial Development Strategy – provides additional strategic and spatial policy direction for the district, over and above the overarching spatial policy framework set out in the Joint Core Strategy;
  - Natural and Social Capital – sets out additional policies for the protection and enhancement of natural, heritage, cultural and community assets;
  - Economy and Housing – sets out proactive policies and proposals for delivering economic growth and the housing requirements for the remainder of the Plan period;
  - Town Strategies – sets out detailed policies and proposals for the re-imagining of existing urban areas;
  - Monitoring and Implementation – each policy is supported by relevant indicators and targets, which will be reviewed annually through the North Northamptonshire Authorities' Monitoring Report; and
  - Appendices – glossary and other supporting evidence and information for the Plan.

## 3. Context and key features of the draft East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 with potential implications for Corby Borough

- 3.1 The Joint Core Strategy provides the strategic framework for growth and development in North Northamptonshire up to 2031 and deals with cross boundary issues such as strategic development, infrastructure priorities, housing and employment need and improving the environment. It also provides the context for 'Part 2' Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans to make further non-strategic land allocations and more detailed policies for

implementation and development control, where necessary. The Part 2 Plans for both Corby and East Northamptonshire will follow on from the Joint Core Strategy to help guide future planning decisions in the districts for the period of 2011 to 2031.

3.2 As the Draft East Northamptonshire Local Plan is framed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy shared with Corby Borough Council, it inevitably contains policies similar to those in the emerging Part 2 Local Plan for Corby. The draft Plan makes reference to a number of cross boundary issues which are established in the Joint Core Strategy, including:

- Strategic Employment at Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area, Corby/Deene; job creation at this location will be counted as part of Corby Borough's jobs requirement (which is 9,700 jobs across Corby Borough, 2011-2031);
- The proposal for the new Tresham Garden Village, including up to 1,500 homes, community facilities, shops, business premises and generous green spaces, would occupy part of the 600 acre airfield site located between the villages of Deenethorpe and Benefield to the east of Corby.
- Corby Northern Orbital Road Phase 2 which is noted in the draft Plan as a key infrastructure project; and
- Implementation of the consented development at Rushden Lakes serving residents in the southern area of North Northamptonshire.

#### **4. Proposed response**

4.1 East Northamptonshire Council work collaboratively with Corby Borough Council through the joint plan making arrangements to ensure that strategic and cross boundary issues are addressed through the Joint Core Strategy. Accordingly it is considered that the vast majority of proposals within the Draft Plan do not raise issues on which Corby Borough Council needs to make detailed comment, however it is suggested that the following comments are made to the Draft Plan via the East Northamptonshire Local Plan consultation portal, mostly in order to aid clarity and readability:

##### Introduction

No comments to make.

##### Area Portrait

This provides a clear and useful introduction to the Plan area, which also describes the location of the Plan area in relation to Corby and includes a description of Rockingham Forest bisected by Harper's Brook and Willow Brook. This is a helpful complement to the wider spatial portrait of North Northamptonshire provided by the Joint Core Strategy. It would perhaps be helpful to provide live links to each of the Neighbourhood Plans/websites referred to in this section.

##### Vision and Outcomes

No comments to make.

##### Spatial Development Strategy

Given the diverse settlement pattern of East Northamptonshire the bespoke local spatial strategy provides a more detailed, local direction for the district including the role of the Growth Town, market towns, villages and open countryside and provides an important complement to the Joint Core Strategy. However, it is suggested that Policy EN6: Replacement dwellings in the open countryside be moved to section 8 (Housing Delivery) to aid with the flow and readability of the document.

##### Natural Capital

The draft Plan establishes the Greenway, a green corridor route that runs from the south of the district to the north. Paragraph 5.15 indicates that a principle element of the Greenway includes connections from Weldon, Deene, Deenethorpe and surrounding villages to Tresham Garden Village and Oundle. The Greenway will offer an alternative means of

transport, predominantly for walkers and cyclists, and provide opportunities for informal recreation which is welcomed. However given the relationship of the Sustainable Urban Extension at Priors Hall Park and Weldon Park to Tresham Garden Village and the surrounding villages, it is vital that sufficient consideration is given to expanding the principal elements of the Greenway to ensure that stronger connections to Corby and the Sustainable Urban Extensions are encouraged.

### Social Capital

The draft Plan chapter on social capital provides valuable local detail to the policy framework provided by the Joint Core Strategy which aims to deliver 'empowered and proactive communities', 'enhanced local character', 'excellent services and facilities', 'a more diverse economy', 'more walkable places and an excellent choice of ways to travel', 'stronger, more self-reliant towns' and 'enhanced quality of life for all residents'. Specifically, policies on Heritage, Tourism and Culture appear well evidenced. However, it is not clear how Policy EN12: Design of Buildings adds local detail to guidance given in the National Planning Policy Framework and Joint Core Strategy.

### Economic Prosperity

The draft Plan recognises the economic development opportunities provided by Rushden Lakes. However it should be clarified that this relates to the consented development and not current proposals to extend the major out-of-centre retail centre. Corby Borough Council has previously written to the Chief Planning Officer at East Northamptonshire Borough Council stating that any additional floorspace at Rushden Lakes should only be tested as part of a revised Joint Core Strategy to enable the wider retail strategy for the whole of North Northamptonshire to be appropriately considered as part of a review of the Joint Core Strategy.

Paragraph 7.9 of the draft Plan recognises that the Joint Core Strategy encourages high performance technologies, particularly related to motorsports at Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area that straddles Corby Borough Council and East Northamptonshire. It also recognises that motorsport activities at this area have proved difficult to establish. On this basis the draft Plan states that alternative employment uses will need to be explored. Whilst a more pragmatic approach to Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area is supported, it is suggested that significant changes to strategic policies should only take place as part of the review of the Joint Core Strategy.

It is suggested that Table 11: Employment use types can be moved to an appendix if its inclusion is warranted. There is also a lengthy introduction to SEMLEP which could be shortened by providing relevant weblinks. It is also suggested that paragraphs 7.45 to 7.72 covering town centres, local centres and shopping frontages be moved to section 9 (see comment under section 9 below) so focusing section 7 on issues relating to jobs/workers, employment land, sectoral strengths, skills and rural economic development etc. This would better fit the structure of the Joint Core Strategy and provide clearer guidance for developers, agents and landowners.

### Housing Delivery

No comments to make.

### Town Strategies

It is noted that a number of Town Centre policies are found within section 7 'Economic Prosperity', including policy around Town Centres and primary shopping frontages', whereas issues centred around 'understanding how town centres need to evolve to be fit for purpose in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain' are located within section 9. This is potentially confusing. It is suggested that a single chapter 'Town Centres and Town Centre Uses', include issues around retailing and town centre uses, including shopping frontages, in line with the layout and structure of the Joint Core Strategy.

## Monitoring and Implementation

The monitoring and implementation framework is generally supported. However, there may be value in revisiting a number of the targets in Table 27 as many appear to be contextual or qualitative and instead replace these with more readily measurable quantitative targets e.g. the target for EN32 'Delivery of self and custom build' target is 'meeting the housing needs of the wider community' which although laudable could be widely interpreted and therefore difficult to measure the success or otherwise of this policy in practice.

### General/other

No further comments to make.

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 East Northamptonshire will consider all comments received by the deadline and prepare a summary of responses and issues arising from the consultation for presentation to their members in early 2019. It is currently anticipated that there will be another period of consultation in March 2019 before the final draft plan is submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2019.

## **6. Options to be considered (if any)**

- 6.1 This is an update and response report on the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2: Draft Plan consultation so there are no alternative options.

## **7. Issues to be taken into account:-**

### ***Policy Priorities***

Part 2 Local Plans are the District-wide site specific statutory development plans, prepared by the North Northamptonshire district and borough councils to guide the determination of planning applications. They support the strategic policies of the Local Plan Part 1, the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. When adopted, the Part 2 Plans will individually form part of the statutory development plan for Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough.

### ***Financial***

There are no costs associated with the submission of a response to East Northamptonshire's Local Plan Part 2: Draft Plan consultation.

### ***Legal***

As this is a consultation response there are no direct legal implications at this time.

### ***Human Rights, Community Safety, Equalities and Sustainability***

None directly linked to this report.

### ***Performance Information***

None directly linked to this report.

### ***Best Value***

None directly linked to this report.

### ***Risk Management***

There are no risks associated with this report.

## **8. Recommendations**

1. That Members note the publication of the Draft East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 and its implications for Corby Borough.
2. That Members consider the issues raised in the report; discuss any additional comments to be included within the consultation response; and agree that the final consultation response be delegated to the Planning Manager and Chair of this Committee.

## **Background Papers**

- Draft East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 2011-2031 (November 2011) available at <https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk>
- North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (adopted July 2016) available at <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk>

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