
North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review

SYNOPSIS

This report provides an update to Members on the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Joint Core Strategy (the 'Part 1', strategic part of the Local Plan) will provide the strategic framework for growth and development in North Northamptonshire. It will deal with cross boundary issues such as strategic development, infrastructure priorities, housing and employment need and improving the environment. It will also provide 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.
- 1.2 The Joint Core Strategy is the responsibility of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee, set up by the Secretary of State in 2005. This is made up of three members from each of the partner authorities. The Joint Planning Committee is supported by officers at the Joint Planning Unit who are managed through a Steering Group of the Chief Planning Officers from the councils. These arrangements ensure that the emerging plan reflects local priorities and objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Councils corporate plan.

2.0 Progress/Update

- 2.1 Work on the Joint Core Strategy began in 2009. This has involved extensive engagement with the community, and close partnership working with key stakeholders. A significant amount of supporting technical and background work has also taken place, on strategic matters such as housing, jobs and retail growth, and on specific strategic sites such as Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit and Corby West.
- 2.2 Most recently, a draft Local Plan was published for six weeks consultation between 26th January and 9th March 2015. Responses were received from 112 organisations and individuals, which broke down into over 1,000 specific representations on elements of the Joint Core Strategy. A summary of the representations is available to view online at www.nnjpu.org.uk. The main issues made in representations were identified and discussed at the Joint Planning Committee on 4th June 2015 including:
 - Responding to housing needs of Northampton beyond 2029
 - Potential for jobs growth to outstrip the labour force
 - Sustainability appraisal assessment of sites and assessment of alternative options
 - Mitigation measures to protect the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area
 - Assessment of the full objectively assessed need for housing
 - Deliverability of the Sustainable Urban Extensions
 - Financial implications of sustainability standards and affordable housing targets
 - Approach to Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity
 - Approach to renewable energy schemes

- Approach to Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area
- Strength of evidence to apply national housing standards on space and accessibility
- Additional development sites are promoted.

3.0 Proposed Focused Changes

3.1 At this stage in the plan making process, there is not a statutory requirement for the Joint Planning Unit and partners to respond to individual representations. However the National Planning Practice Guidance offers flexibility to respond to issues raised by representations by submitting the Joint Core Strategy together with any proposed changes it considers appropriate. The Joint Planning Committee agreed a number of 'focussed changes' to the Joint Core Strategy to address matters raised in representations, or to otherwise improve the plan, which the Joint Planning Unit are consulting upon for six weeks from 15th June to 27th July 2015. A full list of the 'Focused Changes' for consultation can be found at <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/consultations/detail.asp?id=18>

3.2 None of the proposed changes fundamentally alter the strategy of the Joint Core Strategy. The most significant changes to which Members may want to give particular consideration include:

- Boundary for Site 17 – Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit updated to be consistent with the Rockingham Development Framework.
- References to Rushden Lakes amended from 26,747m² net sales area to 28,209m² net to reflect the most recent variation approved by East Northamptonshire Council which increased the floorspace
- Paragraph added within the employment chapter to explain that the balance between jobs and labour force will be monitored to ensure that Part 2 Local Plans will be able to respond if the economy is not delivering jobs or if jobs growth outstrips the growth in labour force
- Additional sentence added to the Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity policy to ensure that impacts on historic assets are considered in developing a masterplan for the site.
- Logistics policy continues to promote a mix of smaller employment uses on strategic distribution sites but the prescriptive requirement for 30% has been deleted
- Policy for Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area remodelled to provide additional flexibility
- Housing requirements recalibrated to give an annualised figure over the plan period
- Criteria within Policy 31 that applicants for gypsy and traveller sites should demonstrate need deleted.
- Minor amendments to the development principles for West Corby Sustainable Urban Extension to clarify that future development beyond the plan period will be subject to a technical assessment and that strategic links should be provided to adjoining settlements.
- Minor amendments to the development principles for Cockerell Road to clarify that Willowbrook is designated a 'main river', a gas main is located adjacent to the boundary and that sewage provision should be considered as part of any planning application.

3.3 These changes have been discussed at some length through policy officer workshops and the Chief Planner Officers steering group before being agreed at the Joint Planning Committee. It is therefore considered that the changes can be supported.

3.4 Other than the Focused Changes set out above, no other changes are considered necessary prior to submission of the Joint Core Strategy. Where changes are not proposed in relation to representations, or consultees do not consider the changes resolve their previous representations, these issues will be debated at the examination.

4.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

4.1 Following the close of the consultation on 27th July 2015, the Joint Core Strategy and Addendum of Focused Changes will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. Copies of all representations on the Joint Core Strategy and Addendum of Focused Changes will be provided to the Inspector, together with updated background papers. The examination is currently expected to commence in October 2015.

5.0 Options to be considered (if any)

The preparation of the Local Plan is a corporate priority. The option not to progress with the preparation of the Joint Core Strategy can therefore be discounted.

6.0 Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities

It is essential that the Council secures an up to date Joint Core Strategy to provide a basis for future development control decisions and for the Part 2 Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plans.

Financial

The examination involves costs which will be borne by existing budgets

Risk

It is essential that the Joint Core Strategy policies are based on sound evidence and reflect national policy, as well as taking account of comments received during previous stages. The document will need to be submitted to the Secretary of State, who will appoint an inspector to examine the soundness of the document. Where policies do not reflect the evidence gathered, or deviate from national policy without adequate justification, there is a risk that the inspector may find the Joint Core Strategy unsound.

Legal

The Joint Core Strategy forms part of the statutory Development Plan, and its production is therefore a requirement of the planning acts. The 'Pre-Submission' stage represents a statutory stage in the preparation of the document.

Performance Indicators, Best Value, Human Rights and Community Safety

None directly from this report

Equalities and Sustainability

None directly related to this report. The Joint Core Strategy review will be subject to an on-going process of sustainability appraisal and equality impact assessment.

7.0 Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the progress on the Joint Core Strategy and publication of the Addendum of Focused Changes for consultation

Background Papers

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee, 4th June 2015 [NNJPC - 4 June 2015](#)

Officer to Contact

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