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**North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement**

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**SYNOPSIS**

**To provide an overview of the comments received in response to the consultation and to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for North Northamptonshire in relation to plans prepared by Corby Borough Council.**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 All planning authorities are required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how they will consult and engage with people over the preparation of development plan documents as well as on planning applications.
- 1.2 The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee has coordinated the production of the new SCI on behalf of the partner councils but can only adopt it as it relates to the Joint Core Strategy and other joint plans. It is therefore recommended that the SCI is also adopted by the partner LPAs in relation to their responsibilities.

**2 Background**

- 2.1 The previous North Northamptonshire SCI was adopted by the Joint Planning Committee in 2006.
- 2.2 The revised SCI has been prepared in consultation with officers of the partner planning authorities. It has been updated to reflect changes made to the development plan system since its adoption in 2006, notably the greater flexibility that LPAs have when preparing Local Plans, and the requirements of the Localism Act. Guidance in relation to Development Control has been revised to make it more strategic and updated as appropriate.
- 2.3 Members will recall the report made to committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> July to seek approval for consultation on the SCI. The consultation ran for eight weeks from 16th August through to 11th October 2013. During the consultation 48 responses were received to the SCI from 21 respondents. These are included in Appendix 1 along with officer responses.

**3. Discussion**

- 3.1 *The revised SCI is a significantly streamlined document compared to the previously adopted version. The document does not seek to prescribe the extent of consultation that should be undertaken for Local Plans beyond the statutory requirements and stages, instead making provisions at paragraph 4.19 for LPAs to undertake additional consultation should they seek further ongoing feedback.*
- 3.2 It is considered that by streamlining the SCI it will make the document more usable, and that by not setting out consultation requirements beyond Local Plans and planning applications, will allow the LPAs to undertake consultation on other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents in accordance with national regulations.
- 3.3 The JPU has coordinated the preparation of the revised SCI on behalf of the partner authorities and, with the officers of the districts/ boroughs, has given detailed consideration to the representations received in respect of the consultation.
- 3.4 The revised SCI is attached as Appendix 2 to this report, showing amendments from the consultation draft as track changes. Other changes include a new paragraph 2.9 on electronic

documents; more information on the Duty to Cooperate and a new section (4.20 - 4.21) dealing with the conclusions from consultation.

- 3.5 The proposed changes to the SCI were agreed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee on the 14th November together with a recommendation that the partner authorities adopt the SCI in relation to their responsibilities. A further change is being recommended by all partner authorities to clarify the requirements for pre-application consultation. Paragraph 5.12 is considered too onerous and could create an unrealistic expectation that applications will not be registered if they have not been subject to pre-application consultation.
- 3.6 It is recommended that the Committee adopts the revised SCI included as Appendix 2 subject to the additional amendment to paragraph 5.12 as set out below (the grey changes are as agreed by the NN Joint Planning Committee).

*Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant (see below), developers/applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. This will include town and parish councils and any neighbourhood planning group.*

*Developers/applicants ~~will need~~ are encouraged to submit a 'Statement of Local Engagement' showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence. ~~Planning applications deemed significant that are not accompanied by a Statement of Local Engagement when submitted may incur difficulties in being registered as a valid application by the planning authority.~~ Applicants should discuss, if they are unclear, with the local authority if the proposal is significant. Developers and applicants should consider the benefits of involving the community in developing proposals and preparing schemes even when the proposal is not deemed to be 'significant'.*

#### **4. Next steps**

- 4.1 Once adopted by the Council, this SCI will set out our procedures and methods for engagement in plan making and on planning applications.

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

##### ***Policy Priorities***

The SCI will set out how LPA's in North Northamptonshire will consult and engage with the public and statutory consultees in the preparation of Development Plan documents.

##### ***Financial***

None directly related to this report.

##### ***Legal***

S18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to prepare an SCI and S 19(3) requires local development documents to be prepared in accordance with that SCI.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 make provision for the operation of the system of development planning including the minimum requirements for public participation.

The Development Management Procedure Order 2010 sets out the consultation timeframes for planning applications.

The Localism Act (s122) requires developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments (to be specified in a development order); to consider the response; and to show how comments have been taken into account.

##### ***Performance Information***

None directly related to this report.

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

Community involvement is an essential part of plan making and enables all members of the public to have their say in the production of development plan documents.

#### ***Risk Management***

Failure to produce an SCI would mean that any development plan documents produced including the Joint Core Strategy review could be challenged at examination.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The SCI sets out how the LPA's in North Northamptonshire will consult and engage with people over the preparation of development plan documents as well on planning applications. The revised SCI has been updated to reflect changes to the development plan system and is significantly streamlined.

#### **7. Recommendation**

- 7.1 The Local Plan Committee adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement as a statutory planning policy for Corby Borough Council subject to the additional amendment at paragraph 5.12 as detailed in paragraph 3.6 of this report.

#### **Officer to Contact**

Joanne Singleton x4165

Planner Officer

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
009	Paul Rowland	Bedford Borough Council			No comment to make		Noted
011	Rachel Terry			a) Do you agree with the suggested methods of consultation as outlined in chapter 3 of the SCI	Yes		Noted
011	Rachel Terry		5.12	e) Do you agree with the definition of Significant Developments in para 5.12 of the SCI	Yes		Noted
011	Rachel Terry			f) Do you have any further suggestions on how the LPA's should consult on planning applications. If so please outline them below	LPA's should notify all landowners with adjacent property of any planning application.		Local Planning Authorities send neighbour notifications to all adjacent properties and site notices are displayed at the application site. In addition the local press is used to advertise applications. It is considered that this is sufficient notification of a planning application being made and meets the regulations.
011	Rachel Terry			g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?	No		Noted
020	Caroline Wardle	NNDC			With regard to comments on the revised statement of Community Involvement, we can understand this is consistent with emerging policy believe the NNJPU with partners have captured the appropriateness here, however, but only time will tell whether this will add more delay to the planning process?		Noted
021	Nigel Cheetham	Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan SG			Noted. We are similarly involved in a consultation exercise and have produced a Consultation Strategy to guide us in this work.		Noted
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	Ch 3	a) Do you agree with the suggested methods of consultation as outlined in chapter 3 of the SCI?	The Council agrees with the suggested methods of consultation and agrees that while the emphasis will be on electronic communication and online representations, hard copies of documents will continue to be made available and written representations will continue to be accepted.		Noted
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council		b) Should statutory "Duty to Cooperate" consultation bodies also be named in the SCI?	The Council considers it appropriate to name the statutory duty to cooperate consultation bodies in the SCI given that the specific and general consultation bodies have been named. This will ensure consistency throughout the document.		The addition of Table 2 after paragraph 4.10 identifies all those statutory duty to cooperate consultation bodies.
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council		b) Should statutory "Duty to Cooperate" consultation bodies also be named in the SCI?	The Council also recommends that this section of the document elaborates on how best to exercise the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities.		There are very few guidelines available that set out how to comply with the Duty to Cooperate. The National Planning Practice Guidance set out the requirements and the Planning Advisory Service has made case studies available. These can be used as necessary by the Local Authorities.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	4.6	<i>c) Do you have any further suggestions on consultation on Local Plans?</i>	The Council recommends that details of how to register on the individual local authority consultation databases are provided in paragraph 4.6. This will avoid any potential misunderstanding that registering on the JPU database will provide notifications for all Development Plan Documents in their area.		Noted - wording added to make this clear for readers in paragraph 4.6.
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council		<i>d) Do you agree with the suggested methods of consultation as outlined in Chapter 4 of the SCI?</i>	The Council agrees with the suggested methods of consultation outlined in the SCI.		Noted
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	5.12	<i>e) Do you agree with the definition of Significant Developments in para 5.12 of the SCI</i>	The Council agrees with the definition of significant development in paragraph 5.12 but suggests that consideration be afforded to adding a "rural areas" threshold into the definition of "locally significant developments".		This is noted, however it is considered that wording within the definition applies to development in rural areas.
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	5.12	<i>e) Do you agree with the definition of Significant Developments in para 5.12 of the SCI</i>	The Council also suggests that there is an opportunity in this section of the document to provide developers/applicants with more detail regarding how to demonstrate that the views and opinions of the local community have been taken into consideration.		This is noted, however as each application will be different with different views and opinions provided through the consultation, it will be difficult to provide a set way of developers demonstrating this. Dialogue with the local authority can give guidance that is appropriate to the application.
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council		<i>f) Do you have any further suggestions on how the LPA's should consult on planning applications. If so please outline them below</i>	The Council does not have any further suggestions on how LPA's should consult on planning applications.		Noted
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	5.7	<i>g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?</i>	At paragraph 5.7 the Council recommends that reference to "land use considerations" be amended to read "material planning considerations".	At paragraph 5.7 the Council recommends that reference to "land use considerations" be amended to read "material planning considerations".	This paragraph will be amended to reflect this change.
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	5.8	<i>g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?</i>	At paragraph 5.8 the Council suggests that the first sentence is amended to read "The minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications is set by regulation".	At paragraph 5.8 the Council suggests that the first sentence is amended to read "The minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications is set by regulation".	Noted, this has been added into paragraph 5.8.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
023	Julia Baish	Kettering Borough Council	5.11	<i>g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?</i>	The Council suggests that paragraph 5.11 clarifies what is meant by "The period of community involvement undertaken". It is not clear whether this relates to the consultation that local planning authorities are required to carry out or whether it relates to consultation that the applicant/development should carry out.	The Council suggests that paragraph 5.11 clarifies what is meant by "The period of community involvement undertaken". It is not clear whether this relates to the consultation that local planning authorities are required to carry out or whether it relates to consultation that the applicant/development should carry out.	This paragraph relates to the consultation notices sent by the Local authority, the text will be amended to make this clear.
024	Jenny Dixon			<i>d) Do you agree with the suggested methods of consultation as outlined in Chapter 4 of the SCI?</i>	I always have concerns about the use of electronic communications for consultation and information. It can be restrictive in that if you are not on a list for consultation but you may miss out. If you don't know about what you are supposed to be looking for on the net how can you look for it? So it is still important to have some posters around and use the newspapers and news magazines. Just a hobby horse of mine		This is noted, an addition regarding the use of press releases will be inserted into paragraph 4.4 and 4.15.
031	Nikki Daft	Irchester Parish Council			No comments.		Noted
035	Arasu Gurusamy	Highways Agency		<i>g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?</i>	The HA welcomes that the JPU has actively engaged with the HA and local highway authority on transport matters which is consistent with the new Duty to Co-operate in plan-making.		Noted
036	Dave Hemmett	West Northamptonshire JPU			No comments are made in respect of the revised Statement of Community Involvement		Noted
040	Tom Gilbert-Woodridge	English Heritage			We have considered the revised document and do not wish to make any specific comments. We look forward to continued consultation from the Joint Planning Unit and the District/Borough Councils on relevant planning policy and planning application matters. This includes neighbourhood planning (where appropriate) and emerging Local Plans.		Noted
044	Fiona Cowen	Collyweston Parish Council	2.8 More emphasis on electronic communication	<i>a</i>	Although members recognise the need to minimise the cost of consultations, this should not be seen as an excuse for documents to become bloated and poorly structured, just because the strictures on page numbers and weight have been lifted for technical reasons.		Noted

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
044	Fiona Cowen	Collyweston Parish Council	2.8 More emphasis on electronic communication	a	The majority of consultees struggle to read and absorb lengthy documents on screen, and should not be put to the personal expense and inconvenience of printing out multiple documents, Appendices and reference material for themselves. It is perfectly possible to edit these documents so that they remain manageable and accessible for all, and care must be taken to ensure that this happens. (An example of this is the lack of Contents listing in the Strategic Housing and Employments Sites document.)		Noted. An addition to the SCI, new paragraph 2.9, will be made to suggest that contents pages and executive summaries are used where possible. The use of colour will be minimised and used in such a way that will facilitate printing in black and white. Paragraph 4.15 does set out that documents will be provided free of charge to most groups.
044	Fiona Cowen	Collyweston Parish Council	4.13 Consultation periods	c	For the above reasons, six weeks is not long enough.		Six weeks is the consultation period prescribed by the Development Plan Regulations. However wherever possible the planning authorities will give advance notice of consultations and, at non-statutory stages of consultation, may be flexible on deadlines to secure input from town and parish councils.
044	Fiona Cowen	Collyweston Parish Council	5.12 Locally significant developments	c	Parish Councils should have a say in what proposals would or might affect local character by reason of its scale, use of visual appearance". Members have the local knowledge and have been directly elected by their community, who expect this sort of representation from them. This needs to be specifically included in the wording, in the interest of local democracy.		This is noted, however it is considered that wording within the definition applies to development in rural areas.
050	Andrew Hiorns	Midlands Co-Operative Society			We have no comments at this stage on this document other than to raise an issue with paragraph 4.10 in relation to the 'duty to cooperate' where it states - 'A number of issues, such as transportation, strategic infrastructure projects, flood risk and waste management, have implications across Council boundaries and local councils and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature.' What is not mentioned is the issue of housing provision. Clearly, the four authorities making up the North Northants Housing Market Area are working jointly together in plan making for the area as a whole, but the housing provision in the area meets a larger requirement related to the wider sub-region and region.		Noted. Housing provision will be added to paragraph 4.10.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
051	Allan Matthews	Desborough Town Council		<i>g) Do you have any further comments on the content of the SCI?</i>	Referring to page 4 on this document, item 2.4 emphasises the need for local community involvement which strengthens our rationale for developing our Neighbourhood Plan. Some items appear to be contradictory on this draft however. Item 5.10 refers to a normal period for consultations of 21 days, but 5.11 then refers to 8 to 13 weeks for major applications [over 10 dwellings]. We are surprised that 10 dwellings constitute a major development but on a serious point our Town Council meets on a 28 day cycle and, if statement 5.10 is correct, we could be disadvantaged in meeting this time frame for consultations.		This is no change from the current situation. The 21 day time frame is set out in the Development Management Procedure Order 2010 and is to enable the planning authority to consider responses while determining the application within the 8 or 13 week timescale set by central government. Input from the town and parish councils is important and the planning authorities will, where possible, be flexible on deadlines in order to secure this. However this needs to be dealt with on a case by case basis rather than the norm set out in the SCI.
073	John O'Neill	Environment Agency			No comments.		Noted
079	Neil Osborn	Hampton Brook			Hampton Brook do not have further comments to make at this stage on the alterations proposed to the Statement of Community Involvement		Noted
083	Susan Suttle				I'm pleased to note that the Statement of Community involvement, as suggested in 2.2 - 2.4 has been recognised for revision since 2006. Having studied the Targeted Audience for Consultation however I notice that the consultees listed under 'Specific Consultation Bodies', as expected, include Parish Councils and Stakeholders, but that General Consultation Bodies seems to include every group from schools and elderly, religious and charitable organisations to travellers and gypsies without any mention of residents groups who are likely to be direct neighbours of a proposed development. In 2006 residents directly affected by neighbouring proposed large scale developments were omitted from stakeholder meetings and the last to be consulted on plans already amended for the benefit of other parties. I would therefore expect and hope to see residents' groups at least included and preferably directly referred to in the revised list under General Consultees, if not Specific.		Noted. Add into paragraph 5.9 and table 1 residents groups.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>a</i>	The revised SCI correctly highlights the greater emphasis upon electronic communication. It may be appropriate to explain that previous regulations required that multiple copies of all relevant documents must be made available in paper format, e.g. former requirement for multiple copies of all documents to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate. However, it should also be recognised that there continues to be sections of the community who do not have access to electronic communication.	Proposed additional paragraph (2.9): "The previous (2006) SCI and regulations were founded upon an assumption, at that time, that printed documents remained the predominant source of communication. The current (2012) regulations and SCI both now recognise that electronic communication is now the predominant means of disseminating information for planning consultations."	Noted. No change necessary as paragraph 2.8 covers this issue.
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>b</i>	It is recognised that the new SCI needs to be concise and easy to read, but not so detailed as to become outdated by the time it is formally adopted/ published. Nevertheless, for consistency with paragraph 4.9/ Table 1, a new Table 2 could be included, listing the statutory "Duty to Cooperate" consultation bodies.		Noted. An additional table to be inserted that lists the Duty to cooperate consultation bodies - this is inserted after paragraph 4.10.
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>c</i>	It is considered appropriate to include an additional "Consultation Techniques" section (6)/ Appendix, in order to explain how consultation techniques would expect to be used in practice. It might be appropriate to include an updated table in the SCI of appropriate consultation methods, including taking account of the Localism Act proposals for the promoters of developments to undertake community consultation.		As every application and circumstance is different this would be difficult to do. Dialogue with the local authority means that specific information in relation to that application can be given as set out in paragraph 5.13.
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>d</i>	It may be appropriate to reiterate that different consultations techniques may be appropriate in different circumstances. For example, public meetings are often not the most appropriate means of reaching people.		As every application and circumstance is different this would be difficult to do. Dialogue with the local authority means that specific information in relation to that application can be given as set out in paragraph 5.13.
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>e</i>	1st sentence – insertion of text "clearly controversial" was made in response to a specific request from the Planning Policy Committee (22 July 2013)		Noted.
089	Mike Burton	East Northamptonshire Council		<i>further comments</i>	A factual error has been identified in the paragraph 5.11 footnote for the definition of a major application. The final sentence of the footnote should be corrected as follows: "In respect of other land uses the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1000m2 or greater".		This has been noted and changed in the document.
094	George Sneddon	Burton Latimer Town Council			It is essential that the Burton Latimer public receive adequate advance notice of consultation meeting(s)		Noted. The addition in paragraph 4.13 sets that were possible advance notice of consultations will be given.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
094	George Sneddon	Burton Latimer Town Council			Maximum publicity should be given to the consultation meeting(s) - led by NNJPU/KBC but BLTC will assist (website and newsletter articles)		Paragraph 4.4 and 4.14-4.16 state where documents will be publicised. The assistance of Town and Parish Councils and neighbourhood Planning Groups is welcomed.
094	George Sneddon	Burton Latimer Town Council			Such meeting(s) to be held both in working hours and outside of working hours and a minimum of 2 meetings be held in Burton Latimer, on separate weeks		An addition made to paragraph 4.4 that where plans directly affect a particular community, planning officers, where possible, will attend a meeting with the Town and Parish Council. Combined meetings and forums will be used to reduce pressure on resources where a plan affects more than one community.
094	George Sneddon	Burton Latimer Town Council			All relevant information be available at the meetings, presented by qualified persons		Noted
094	George Sneddon	Burton Latimer Town Council			The preliminary results of the consultation to be fed back to Burton Latimer Town Council before decisions are made		Additional paragraphs on how the results of the consultation will be used has been inserted at 4.20-4.23. The results of the consultation will be presented to the relevant committee alongside a schedule of all representations received with a response from the local authority.
086	Debra Harper	Oundle Town Council			This suggests that hard copies might not be made available for all town and parish councils to display in their reception areas unless specifically requested; however we believe they should be received as a matter of course unless the town or parish council elect not to receive it.		In the interests of the resources available to the local authority, it is considered appropriate to only provide hard copies of documents when they are requested.
086	Debra Harper	Oundle Town Council			A large scale development includes proposals for residential developments of 100 or more dwellings or a site area of 3ha or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. Such developments are likely to require additional community involvement if the proposal will have a significant impact upon the area or create significant public interest or controversy. the type and extent of community involvement will need to be related to the scale and likely impact of the development taking into account whether or not there has already been consultation through the development plan process and the extent of community involvement undertaken by the applicant at the pre-application stage. Councils will offer prospective developers advice on the methods of consultation to be used, its scale and whether any special or community groups should be involved.		The support of further community consultation on large or controversial applications is noted.
003	Miss Carla Jackson	Natural England			No Comment		Noted.

Reference	Name	Organisation	Section	Question	Summary of Response	Respondents Proposed Change	JPU Response
097	Sue Bateman	Borough Council of Wellingborough			<p>It is recommended that the SCI be approved for consultation, subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Wellingborough contact details in Appendix 1 be amended to read:</li> </ul> <p>A Planning Officer is usually available between 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 9.30am to 4.00pm on Thursday.            Contact 01933 231568 for more details or email <a href="mailto:planning@wellingborough.gov.uk">planning@wellingborough.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Borough Council of Wellingborough Swanspool House            Wellingborough            Northants            NN8 1BP</p>		Noted and amended.
097	Sue Bateman	Borough Council of Wellingborough			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS England is added to the Consultation Bodies in Table 1.</li> </ul>		Noted and added.

## **APPENDIX 2**



**North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement  
Changes post consultation for Adoption**

**November 2013**

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## **1. What is a Statement of Community Involvement?**

- 1.1 The planning system touches the lives of everyone in the districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. However, many of us only come into contact with it when we find out about a nearby planning application. What is often not known is that planning applications should fit in with the wider statutory development plan (or Local Plan) for an area. It is important that we consult and engage with people and organisations at an early stage (i.e. when plans are being produced), as well as at the point that planning applications are submitted for determination.
- 1.2 To help set out how we will consult people in the preparation of plans and planning applications the North Northamptonshire planning authorities have prepared a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This Statement replaces the previous SCI that was adopted in 2006.
- 1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement is prepared on behalf of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and the four district/borough councils in North Northamptonshire (Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Council). All the partners agree that plans and decisions on planning applications should be shaped by the whole community.
- 1.4 This Statement deals with all the consultation that will be undertaken in relation to Local Plans produced in North Northamptonshire. This means it covers all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) prepared either by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee or individually by the local planning authorities. It is accompanied by the March 2012 updated Participation Action Plan that was agreed by the Joint Planning Committee which sets out the key consultation principles for the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Review.
- 1.5 Consultation arrangements in relation to minerals and waste development plan documents prepared by and planning applications submitted to Northamptonshire County Council are set out in a separate Statement of Community Involvement prepared by the County Council and adopted in 2012.

## **2. Why is the adopted Statement of Community Involvement being revised?**

2.1 Since the first SCI was adopted there have been a number of changes to national legislation and regulations, which mean that parts of it are now out of date.

### ***What has changed?***

2.2 New planning rules brought in by the Planning Act 2008 and the Localism Act 2011 introduced new types of planning documents and changed the way that these are produced. As part of these reforms, the government has changed the requirements for consultation in the preparation of Local Plans and the planning applications process. The 2006 Statement of Community Involvement, pre dates these reforms, which has necessitated a review.

2.3 Altered procedures for consultation and publicity are designed to speed up the plan-making process and provide councils with much greater flexibility in determining how and when engagement should take place.

2.4 The government has placed even greater emphasis on the early engagement of communities in the planning process. The intention is to enable local people to influence and make changes to plan and development proposals while there is still genuine scope to influence and participate in evaluating the different options.

### ***A new plan-making process***

2.5 The previous requirements for formal consultation at the Issues and Options stage, Preferred Options stage and submission stage have been reduced. The requirements for consultation are now focussed on the scope of the local plan and the proposed submission plan that will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination.

2.6 In addition, the government's requirements for publicity and consultation in plan-making are significantly less prescriptive. Therefore, there is much greater flexibility in determining who, when and how to consult and publicise information.

### ***New types of optional documents***

2.7 Legislative reforms have introduced the option for local authorities to produce a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule to help fund infrastructure for their local area. In addition, Parish Councils, Town Councils and, in areas with no parish Council, neighbourhood forums can prepare neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood development orders for their local neighbourhoods to bring forward additional development.

***More emphasis on electronic communication***

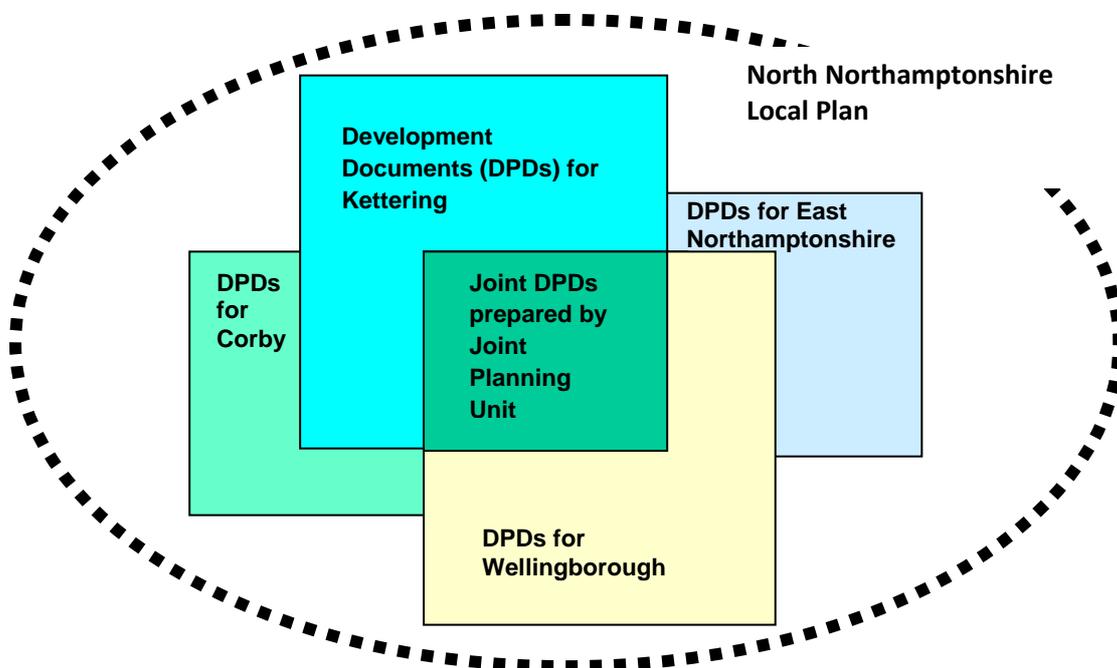
2.8 We need to reduce expenditure and use the resources available to us as efficiently as possible. Therefore, we are increasingly reliant on electronic communications, such as websites and the use of email/email alerts for publicising documents and information, as recognised by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.-

2.9 Alongside the full electronic documents, where possible, contents pages and executive summaries will be included to make online navigation easier. Documents will also be divided, if appropriate, for easier management and to facilitate downloading. In addition the use of colour will be minimised, where this does not affect the readability of the document, to enable printing in black and white.

### 3. The Local Plan for North Northamptonshire

- 3.1 The Planning framework for North Northamptonshire is set through the North Northamptonshire Local Plan. The North Northamptonshire Local Plan is the collection of development plan documents that set out the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire.
- 3.2 The Joint Core Strategy (“the Plan”) is the overarching/principal element of the Local Plan for North Northamptonshire and provides the ‘big picture’ on issues that need to be tackled across the four districts.
- 3.3 The first Joint Core Strategy was adopted in June 2008 and sets the framework for long term change and development in North Northamptonshire, including housing, jobs, shopping and the environment. The Plan sets out how the area should change and has targets for the number of new houses, jobs and the amount of new shopping floor space required. It also has policies to guide how change will be managed, such as where development should be located, guidelines about its design and controls over the impact of developments on their surroundings, together with necessary infrastructure.
- 3.4 The Plan was prepared by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) and is currently being reviewed. Decisions on the Plan are taken by a Joint Planning Committee, made up of councillors from Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough Councils, and Northamptonshire County Council.
- 3.5 As well as Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that form the Local Plan, there are also a number of Supplementary Planning Documents that provide detailed guidance on various planning matters which explain and amplify the policies in DPDs. Consultation on these documents is governed by separate regulations, but will be undertaken consistent with the methods set out in this SCI.

**Figure 1: North Northamptonshire Local Plan**



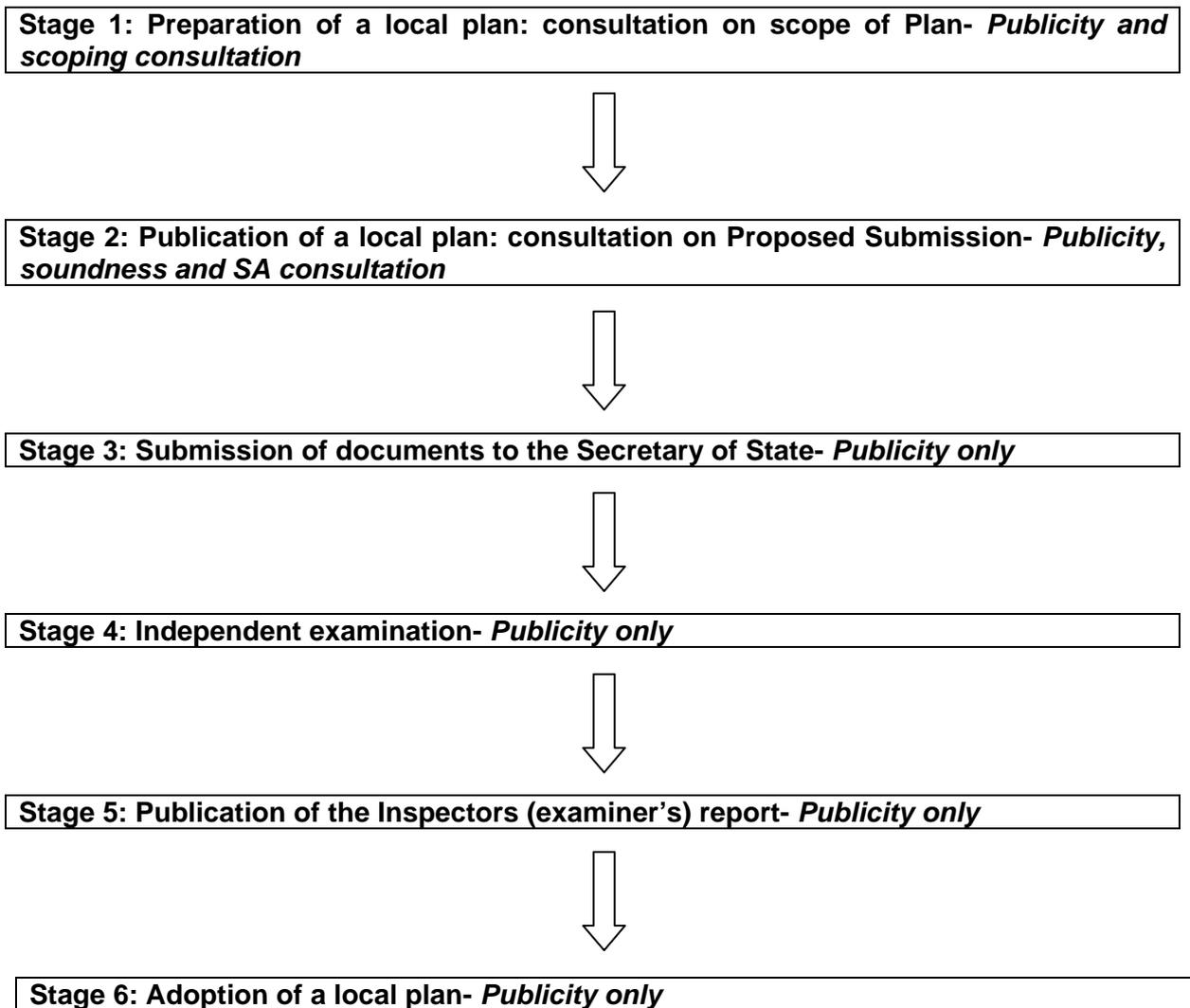
## 4. Consultation: Local Plans

### *The Local Plan process*

4.1 This SCI is intended to set out consultation processes for development plan preparation which will be carried out by the JPU or the partner LPAs. This will cover the review of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) to cover the period 2011-31, and other site specific Local Plan documents that are prepared by the partner LPAs which identify and allocate sites for development and provide more detailed local policies.

4.2 Local Plans are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A summary is included as follows:

**Figure 2:** *Process of Local Plan preparation and consultation and publicity that will be undertaken:*



- 4.3 A key aim of consultation and engagement is to attempt to build consensus for the way forward in relation to development and to conform to government requirements on the duty to co-operate. Whilst it is accepted that full consensus may not be possible, greater understanding may help minimise conflict in plan preparation and in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.4 The most appropriate method of consultation will be used for the different stages of the plan-making process. Electronic communication and online representations will be used as widely as possible. It is recognised that 'hard to reach groups' may not have access to a computer; in such cases a hard copy of the documents can be made available, and letters will be sent to inform on consultation stages and that written representations will still be accepted. Where appropriate, press releases will be issued to seek local publicity. Where a plan directly affects a particular community planning officers may attend meetings of the relevant Town and Parish Councils. Due to limited resources forums and combined meetings will be preferred where plans affect a number of communities.

#### ***Who will be consulted on Local Plans***

- 4.5 The Councils have a long history of engagement with local residents, Parish and Town councils, businesses, stakeholders, community groups, voluntary organisations and others in preparing Local Plans. These make up an extensive consultation database.
- 4.6 The JPU and constituent authorities have consultation databases. Anyone can be added to these in order to receive information about consultation documents. This will form the main basis of communicating consultation information with interested parties in relation to relevant Local Plans that are being prepared. Councils will also use their websites and other measures such as the local press to undertake consultation. Unless you are included on consultation databases, you will not be notified or consulted directly, and will need to refer to the local authority's web sites and the local press for information about plan consultations. To request inclusion on the JPU's database, please email [info@nnjpu.org.uk](mailto:info@nnjpu.org.uk) or contact the Local Councils using the details set out in Appendix 1 to be included in their planning consultation database.
- 4.7 If you have provided comments in response to a plan consultation you will normally be added to the relevant consultation database, unless you have requested not to be included. From time to time the local authorities will review their databases and contact you by email or post to find out if you would like to remain on the database.
- 4.8 Consultation with certain consultees is a statutory requirement, whereas others are discretionary. There are two main groups: specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include government agencies, utility providers and other local authorities, which we are required to consult on Local Plans. General consultation primarily relate to interest groups, which are considered for consultation as appropriate.

4.9 ~~The table 1 below~~ provides information on who we wish to engage with at each consultation stage. Interested parties or individuals can be added to our list of consultees if they wish to be notified of consultations.

**Table1: Engagement at Consultation Stage for Local Plans**

Audience targeted	Who this means
Specific consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Agency</li> <li>• English Heritage</li> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Network Rail</li> <li>• Highways Agency</li> <li>• Local authorities, parish councils and policing body in or adjoining the planning authority area</li> <li>• Communication operators/facility owners (eg mobile phones)</li> <li>• Electricity, gas, sewerage and water companies</li> <li>• <del>Homes and Communities Agency</del></li> <li>• <u>The National Health Service</u></li> <li>• The Coal Authority and Marine Management Organisation also have to be consulted</li> </ul>
General consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary/community/local charitable bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area <del>in</del> <u>the area</u></li> <li>• Bodies which represent the interests of the elderly in the authority's area</li> <li>• Local schools in the authority's area</li> <li>• Bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area</li> <li>• Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area</li> <li>• Bodies representing disabled persons in the authority's area</li> <li>• Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the authority's area</li> <li>• Bodies representing business in the area- i.e. Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>• <u>Landowners and developers with interests in the authority's area and bodies that represent, such as agents</u></li> <li>• <u>Residents group in the local authority area</u></li> <li>• <u>Neighbourhood Planning Groups</u></li> </ul>

**Duty to Cooperate**

4.10 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new statutory 'duty to cooperate', whereby local planning authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in preparing the development plan for their area. A number of issues, such as transportation, housing provision, strategic infrastructure projects, flood risk and waste management, have implications across Council boundaries and local councils and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature. These bodies are identified in table 2 below, and consultation will form part of wider work to ensure cross boundary issues are identified and addressed where possible in plan preparation.

**Table 2 The Statutory bodies for Duty to Cooperate**

<a href="#"><u>The Environment Agency</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>English Heritage</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Natural England</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Civil Aviation Authority</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Homes and Community Agency</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The National Health Service</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Office of Rail Regulations</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Transport Authority</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Highways Agency</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Northamptonshire County Council</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Adjoining local authorities</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Adjoining County Councils</u></a>

**4.11** [The draft National Planning Practice Guidance sets out more detail on the Duty to Cooperate and the Planning Advisory Service provides examples and case studies on its website.](#)

### **Reaching everyone**

4.12 We appreciate that there are some groups who have been traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises. The JPU and councils will try to directly liaise with these 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that takes account of their particular needs.

4.13 As organisations the JPU and Councils are committed to eliminating any forms of discrimination, ensuring that the impacts of the services provided and policies produced are minimised. Some plans or planning documents may affect certain communities differently and more significantly than others. Such impacts may need to be subjected to an equality impact assessment to identify any negative or differential impacts. These should be mitigated if they cannot be avoided. All planning policy documents will be screened to establish if an equality impact assessment is required.

### **Consultation periods**

4.14 All consultation will be for a minimum of six weeks, [unless legislation states otherwise.](#) ~~Longer consultation periods will be employed over key holiday periods.~~ [Where possible advance notice will be given ahead of statutory consultation periods to allow additional time, including over key holiday periods.](#)

### **Availability of documents**

- 4.15 All consultation documents and supporting material will be made available in hard copy as well as in electronic format. Hard copies of all statutory documents will be made available for viewing at all libraries in the plan area and in the reception areas of the relevant district and borough councils. Press releases will also be issued.
- 4.16 Hard copies of consultation documents will be sent on request to specific and general consultation bodies or hard to reach groups who do not have access to a computer. A charge to cover costs may be made for other requests.
- 4.17 All documents relating to the JCS review will be available on the JPU's website and in relation to other Local Plans, on the relevant district and borough council websites and can also be emailed on request.

### **Consultation stages**

- 4.18 Some stages of consultation, particularly the latter stages of the plan making process, are formal and are governed by statutory regulations. Earlier stages are more flexible. Figure 2 shows key stages in the preparation of Local Plans and the consultation and engagement that will be carried out at each stage.
- 4.19 When preparing local plans, the local authorities may carry out more extensive consultation than required by the regulations to ensure that on-going feedback can be obtained during the development of the Local Plan.

### **Dealing with the conclusions from the consultation**

- 4.20 Once a consultation period is over, all representations will be collated and a report prepared summarising the main issues raised and recommending how these should be addressed. This will include identifying if and how the emerging plan should be amended in the light of the representations.
- 4.21 This report will be considered by the the appropriate Committee of the Council or, in the case of joint plans, the Joint Committee. Members of the public can speak for a set time provided they request to do so in advance of the meeting.
- 4.22 A Statement of publicity and consultation will be prepared to accompany a pre-submission Local Plan. This will set out the consultation undertaken, the nature of the response and how the main issues have been addressed in the plan.

## 5. Consultation: Development Proposals and Planning Applications

### ***What planning applications are covered by this SCI?***

- 5.1 This statement sets out how the community can become involved with planning applications ranging from minor development such as house extensions to major housing, employment and shopping schemes.
- 5.2 Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for determining minerals and waste applications. Community involvement in helping to determine these proposals is set out in a separate Statement of Community Involvement prepared by the County Council.
- 5.3 Development can be either “permitted development” where a formal planning permission is not required, or development requiring the submission of a planning application. Other types of applications include applications for advertisement consent and listed building consent.
- 5.4 The Councils will be responsible for administering “light touch” neighbourhood consultation as part of the Government’s changes to grant permitted development rights for larger house extensions for a period of three years. Under these proposals, homeowners wishing to build extensions would have to notify, in advance, their local Council with the details. The Council will then inform the adjoining neighbours. If no objections are made to the Council by the neighbours within 21 days then the development can proceed. If objections are raised by neighbours, the Council will consider whether the development would have an unacceptable impact on neighbour’s amenity.
- 5.5 If you are unsure whether or not you need planning permission, or other planning related consents, for the development you are considering you can obtain advice from the relevant Council (see Appendix 1). Up-to-date information on how to make planning applications is also available on the Council websites.

### ***How will you be informed and can get involved in the Planning Applications Process?***

#### ***Publicising Planning applications***

- 5.6 The development management (also known as “development control”) process largely reacts to proposals submitted by developers and individuals and therefore consultation and engagement cannot normally be scheduled in advance. Consultation will usually take place once a planning application is submitted. For very large scale developments, earlier publicity initiated by the developer may be used.
- 5.7 We will listen to what people have to say but will make clear in publicity that only representations relating to land-use/material planning considerations will be taken account in reaching a decision. Matters such as loss of a private view, or the

character or motivations of the applicant are **not** material planning considerations and, consequently, cannot be considered in determining an application. The Council will not normally reply to any representations received.

- 5.8 The minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications will relate to impact of the proposal, and is set by regulation. ~~The~~A majority of planning applications received are for small developments such as house extensions. It is recommended that applicants discuss such proposals with occupiers and owners of neighbouring land and properties before submitting an application. This can provide an early opportunity to address any concerns expressed by neighbours and may help to reduce delay in determining the planning application once received.
- 5.9 When an application has been submitted, consultation may take the form of letters or e-mails to neighbours, businesses, ~~or~~ agencies or residents groups, site notices, advertisements in newspapers, it is important to respond within the specified time period on any consultation letter or notice to ensure comments are taken into account.
- 5.10 The normal initial period for consultation is 21 days. The precise period will be defined in the notice/notification/advertisement. Any comments will be placed on the planning application file and will be available for public inspection. If a response is not received within the time period specified it might be too late to bring it to the attention of the Committee of Councillors, or the officer responsible for determining the application. Statutory bodies are also consulted and usually given 21 days to respond. Any subsequent consultations on changes to the application may be shorter than the 21 days, and are at the discretion of the local authority,
- 5.11 The period of community involvement undertaken by the local authority on all planning applications will be of a length that gives an appropriate time for a response to be made, but which also acknowledges that planning applications have to be determined by the local authority within 8 weeks, or 13 weeks for a major application\* unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

*\* This is defined in this context by the Government as a proposal for residential development of 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. In respect of other land uses the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is ~~+1,000 meters square~~ hectare or greater*

### ***'Significant' developments***

- 5.12 Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant (see below), developers/applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. This will include town and parish councils and any neighbourhood planning group. Developers/applicants ~~will need~~ are encouraged to submit a 'Statement of Local Engagement' showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence. Planning applications deemed significant that are not accompanied by

~~a Statement of Local Engagement when submitted may incur difficulties in being registered as a valid application by the planning authority. Applicants should discuss, if they are unclear, with the local authority if the proposal is significant.~~ Developers and applicants should consider the benefits of involving the community in developing proposals and preparing schemes even when the proposal is not deemed to be 'significant'.

- **Large-scale developments.** *For the purposes of this SCI a large-scale development includes proposals for residential development of 100 or more dwellings, or a site area of 3 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. In respect of other land the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1000 m<sup>2</sup> or the site area is 1 hectare or greater. Large-scale development applications are likely to require additional community involvement if the proposal will have a significant impact on the area, or create significant public interest or controversy.*
- **Locally significant developments.** *Some proposals that are not of sufficient scale to be defined as large-scale development may have a wider impact beyond neighbouring owners and occupiers. This category includes any proposal that, in the opinion of the local planning authority, would alter the overall character of the locality by reason of its scale, use or visual appearance. It also includes development on sites that are sensitive to development pressures such as proposals for substantial demolition in a conservation area, or proposals for development next to a listed building.*

5.13 The type and extent of community involvement will need to be related to the scale and likely impact of the development and to the target audiences. It will also be appropriate to take account of whether or not the proposal has already been consulted on through the development plan process and the extent of community involvement undertaken by the applicants at the pre-application stage. The Councils will offer advice on pre-application consultation on a site-by-site basis and applicants are therefore invited to contact [the relevant council](#)s before undertaking community involvement in order to agree the method(s) that should be used, the scale of the consultation and any special or community groups that ought to be involved.

### ***Dealing with the conclusions of engagement***

5.14 Some planning application decisions are determined by officers using delegated powers given by the Council, more significant planning applications are usually determined at a planning committee. The exact distinction between the two varies between Councils.

5.15 For each planning application to be determined by a Committee, a report will be drafted setting out the key issues, highlighting responses from the consultation on the application and containing a recommendation from the planning officer as to whether or not planning permission should be granted. People who have responded to the

consultation will be informed of the date of the meeting, as well as the procedure and time period for speaking at the committee, if they wish to do so.

## **Appendix 1 LPA Contact Details:**

### **Corby Borough Council**

Planning hold drop-in sessions in the One Stop Shop on Mondays 1pm - 3pm, Tuesdays 10am - 12pm & Fridays 2pm - 4pm.

Regeneration & Growth  
Corby Borough Council  
Deene House  
New Post Office Square  
Corby  
NN17 1GD  
Tel: 01536 464158  
email: [planning.services@corby.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@corby.gov.uk)

### **Kettering Borough Council**

Municipal Offices,  
Bowling Green Rd,  
Kettering,  
NN15 7QX

Monday to Friday: 8:30am to 5.30pm; Saturdays: 9am to 1pm

A duty planner is available to assist in helping to understand the plans on: Monday – Friday  
9am to 5pm

Tel: 01536 534316  
email: [planning@kettering.gov.uk](mailto:planning@kettering.gov.uk)  
[www.kettering.gov.uk](http://www.kettering.gov.uk)

### **East Northamptonshire Council**

If you need further help with commenting on a planning application please contact the Duty Planning Officer who is available Monday to Friday between 9am and 1pm on 01832 742225 or by emailing: [planning@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk)

East Northamptonshire Council  
Cedar Drive  
Thrapston  
Northants  
NN14 4LZ

### **Borough Council of Wellingborough**

A Planning Officer is usually available between 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and from 9.30am to 4.00pm on Thursday. Contact 01933 231568 for more details or email: [-planning@wellingborough.gov.uk](mailto:-planning@wellingborough.gov.uk)

Borough Council of Wellingborough  
Swanspool House  
Wellingborough  
Northants  
NN8 1BP

