
Planning Policy Update

SYNOPSIS

This report provides an update on planning policy matters, including progress made in preparing the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby and some other key areas of work being undertaken.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on planning policy matters, including progress made in preparing the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby, consultation on Part 2 Local Plan for Kettering, neighbourhood planning, East Midlands Rail Franchise, North Northamptonshire Housing and Growth Deal and publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Part 2 Local Plan for Corby

- 2.1 Public consultation on the second Regulation 18 document and supporting evidence commenced on Monday 2nd July 2018 and will run until Tuesday 28th August 2018.
- 2.2 To encourage community involvement, a range of activities are taking place to publicise the consultation, including email notification to nearly 800 contacts on the Local Plan consultation database, a statutory notice and news article in the Evening Telegraph, all documents uploaded to the councils dedicated consultation software hosted by INOVEM, copies of the consultation documents deposited at the One Stop Shop and local libraries, social media alerts including Twitter and Facebook, parish councils and resident associations were sent posters to display, article published on the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning & Delivery Unit website, news bulletin on Corby Radio and attendance at the Rural Area Forum.
- 2.3 In addition to the general publicity of the consultation document, officers from the Local Plans team are holding a series of staffed drop-in exhibitions around the borough. At the time of writing, events have been hosted at Corby Cube, Weldon Village Hall and Cottingham and Middleton Village Hall Annex. The level of engagement has been variable with relatively high levels of visitors at the Cottingham and Middleton event and Corby Cube events but no visitors at the Weldon event. Key issues of discussion raised during the events have included general enquires about the future of Rockingham Motor Speedway, plans for walking connections between Priors Hall Park and Weldon, possible future retail development at Market Walk, opportunity for further tranquillity areas, scale of West Corby Sustainable Urban Extension and connectivity, rural housing needs, designation of Local Green Spaces, implications of Restraint Village designation, future growth at Little Stanion and more specific enquiry regarding the status of permitted development rights.

- 2.4 Further drop-in events are to be held at Corby Cube, Oakley Vale Community Centre and Gretton Village Hall.
- 2.5 Alongside the consultation, work continues on compiling the evidence base to support the preparation of the Pre-Submission version of the document, including:
- Local site surveys and parking surveys completed to form baseline information for town centre parking study.
 - Three Dragons have been appointed to produce a Custom and Self Build Housing Demand Assessment Framework that will provide an assessment of future demand. A report is expected in September/October 2018
 - Survey of travelling communities being conducted by consultants ORS as part of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update. Initial briefing on emerging outcomes expected in August 2018
- 2.6 The current Regulation 18 consultation is not the final opportunity for stakeholders and local people to comment on the Part 2 Local Plan. An invitation to provide representations under Regulation 19 (Pre-Submission) and 20 (Submission) of the Council's final version of the Plan, will be issued early in 2019.

3. Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan for Kettering – Draft Plan

- 3.1 Kettering Borough Council published the Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan for public consultation between 22nd June and 3rd August 2018.
- 3.2 The Draft Plan provides detailed local policies specific to Kettering Borough. Topic based chapters within the document include housing, employment, town centres and the natural environment and heritage. This is followed by chapters for Kettering, Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell, These sections set out the category of settlement, settlement specific policies, housing allocations, settlement boundaries, town centre opportunity sites, environmental improvements and development principles. The next chapter covers the rural area and sets out village categories and general development principles. This is followed by sections for each village which cover housing allocations, settlement boundaries, development principles and Local Green Space.
- 3.3 The key points proposed as part of the Draft Plan that are most relevant to Corby are set out below.
- Identification of housing sites to meet the housing requirements of the Joint Core Strategy, including 10% uplift in the towns
 - Proposed locally set impact assessment floorspace thresholds for each of the four towns in Kettering Borough: Kettering (750m²), Rothwell (500m²), Burton Latimer (400m²) and Desborough (300m²).
 - Identification of Borough level Green Infrastructure corridors to supplement the strategic network identified in the Joint Core Strategy
- 3.4 The Kettering Borough Council Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan is framed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy shared with Corby Borough Council as the strategic Part 1 Local Plan. Inevitably, it contains policies similar to those in the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby. A notable difference is the thresholds for requiring impact assessments for retail, leisure and office proposals outside of town centres. The Part 2 Local Plan sets out proposals to introduce a lower threshold of 400m² for Corby Town Centre and 130m² for elsewhere. It is considered that a

higher threshold for Kettering Town Centre is appropriate as the largest centre within North Northamptonshire.

- 3.5 It is considered that the proposals within the Kettering Borough Council Site Specific Part 2 Local Plan – Draft Plan do not raise issues on which Corby Borough Council needs to make comment.

4. Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 brought in the ability for local communities to develop Neighbourhood Plans to decide the future shape of the places where they live.

- 4.2 Set out below are updates that the Council is aware of in neighbourhood plan preparations

Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Area Designation	Evidence Gathering and engagement	Drafting policies	Regulation 14 consultation	Regulation 16 consultation	Examination	Referendum	Made
Corby Central	X	X						
Cottingham	X							
Gretton	X	X	X					
Stanion	X							
Weldon	X							

- 4.4 On 5th August 2016 Corby Borough Council resolved to designate the whole of the parish of Stanion as a Neighbourhood Plan area. Following the Community Governance Review conducted in 2017, it was agreed that a parish council be created for the area known as Little Stanion. The creation of Little Stanion Parish Council in April 2018 means that it is no longer part of Stanion Parish. The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 became law on 27th April 2017. The Act introduces a process for modifying neighbourhood plan areas, such as to reflect the changed boundaries and to ensure that a plan continues to have affect despite one part of the original plan area no longer being covered by that plan. Officers are currently investigating the procedures that need to be followed to modify the neighbourhood plan area so that it is consistent with the parish boundary.

5. East Midlands Rail Franchise

- 5.1 The Department for Transport ran a consultation to seek views on the future of the East Midlands rail franchise, which closed in October 2017. An officer response to the consultation was endorsed at Local Plan Committee on 18th October 2017.

- 5.2 The Department for Transport response to the comments received to the consultation have now been published in the Stakeholder Briefing Document¹ which outlines the responses to the issues raised. It is accompanied by an Invitation to Tender, which sets out the framework against which three shortlisted bidders (Abellio, Arriva Rail and Stagecoach) will make their bids for the new franchise, which will come into effect in late 2019.
- 5.3 Specific requirements in the Invitation to Tender, expected to be met by the shortlisted bidders as a minimum, of particular relevance to Corby include the following:
- Increase the frequency of services across the franchise, including two trains per hour between Corby and London.
 - Provide more trains on a Sunday, with earlier starts and later finishes during the week
 - At least one intercity service per hour will call at Kettering to retain connections to Nottingham, Sheffield and Leicester
 - Retention of a daily direct London to Melton Mowbray service, calling at Oakham
 - Provide high quality Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity on trains
 - Improve seating and luggage on trains and enhanced facilities at stations
 - Provide enhanced delay repay compensation for journeys delayed by more than 15 minutes – compared to 30 minutes now
- 5.4 It is encouraging that the new operator will be required under the new minimum specifications to increase services across the franchise, including an additional train every hour between Corby and London. The requirement for dedicated commuter trains on the newly electrified line out of London with Corby being the first and last stop is welcomed and supported, as is the retention of direct services to Melton Mowbray and requirement for at least one intercity service per hour to call at Kettering to retain connections with stations served by the Corby dedicated commuter trains. Commitments to improve technology on trains, accessibility at stations, improving the fare structure and requiring more engagement with local communities by the new franchise operator are also welcomed and supported, and reflect the Council's response to the consultation in October 2017. However, the consultation response document makes no mention of the bidders needing to consider future connectivity between HS2 and the East Midlands rail network, something that was called upon in the Council's consultation response last year. While this can still be demonstrated by the bidders, giving the strategic importance of HS2 for the country as a whole it is disappointing for it not being set as a specific requirement.
- 5.5 It is emphasised throughout the Department of Transport's document that the service specifications are the minimum and the Department for Transport incentivise bidders to propose additional service, over and above this minimum, that will maintain existing connectivity where possible. Bidders that seek to provide over and above this service will receive additional credit in the evaluation process for doing so.

¹ [East Midlands Rail Franchise Stakeholder Briefing Document and Consultation Response](#), Department for Transport, June 2018

5.6 The Department for Transport has set a deadline of September 2018 for the shortlisted franchise bidders to submit their bids. From this point, the Department for Transport will evaluate each bid and choose the winning operator who will be scheduled to take over the franchise from August 2019.

6. North Northamptonshire Growth Deal

6.1 Alongside the Autumn Budget 2017, and following the National Infrastructure Commission's report², the Government published a visioning document³ in which the Government announced its ambition to work with authorities in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor to realise its economic and housing ambitions. Sitting at the northern edge of the corridor, North Northamptonshire has a significant role to play in delivering on the Government's ambitions for the corridor, and beyond.

6.2 In March 2018, the North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee resolved to support officers initiating discussions with Government and Homes England over a bespoke Housing and Growth Deal for North Northamptonshire based on the acceleration of existing growth commitments to 2031 and subject to a series of safeguards. This Growth Deal will be an important step towards realising the economic and housing growth potential of this part of the corridor.

6.3 A Project Group has been established to support the preparation of a North Northamptonshire Growth Deal, with a Steering Group of Chief Planning Officers and/or Directors reporting to Chief Executives. To oversee the implementation of any Growth Deal, the North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee agreed in principle at its meeting on 12th July 2018 to become a North Northamptonshire Growth Board.

6.4 If endorsed the deal would see the authorities in North Northamptonshire commit to accelerate the delivery of development identified in the Joint Core Strategy to 2031, and in return the Government would offer a substantial package of support in addition to existing funding streams and commitments.

6.5 The North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee identified that the following specific components of a North Northamptonshire Growth Deal 'asks' should include:

- Measures to increase economic prosperity/GVA including addressing skills gaps and capitalising on sectoral priorities/opportunities to meet local needs and the needs of the wider corridor;
- Strategic Infrastructure Fund to unlock sites, improve viability, support the market through enhanced place-quality and connectivity, and to deliver priority projects (e.g. related to construction skills and the health agenda);
- A Land Fund to acquire and de-risk sites, making them available to a diverse range of providers. This could include early intervention in strategic developments and acquiring smaller sites such as those on brownfield registers and within town centres to facilitate wider regeneration as a complementary offer to the Sustainable Urban Extensions;
- Affordable Housing Fund and freedoms (including raising Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap) to allow councils and Registered

² [Partnering For Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc](#), National Infrastructure Commission, November 2017

³ [Helping the Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Oxford corridor reach its potential](#)

Providers to accelerate delivery of a range of housing products in addition to those supported by existing funding programmes;

- Capacity Funding to include the joint strategic plan to 2050, implementation of innovative delivery arrangements and exploring a strategic tariff/Community Infrastructure Levy;
- Flexibility on housing land supply and delivery tests, including the existing Joint Core Strategy approach that assesses supply against distributed local housing need rather than the strategic opportunity to go higher;
- Safeguards to ensure that the local authorities are not penalised for any future short-fall in house building if the reasons are beyond their control;
- Commitment from the Government and its agencies to provide coordinated and prioritised support.

6.6 Officers are working over the summer to refine these 'asks' into a costed proposal. Litchfield Planning and Development Consultancy have been appointed to prepare a North Northamptonshire Investment Framework to underpin this work. Officers are also engaging extensively with stakeholders including SEMLEP, other authorities in the Corridor, site promoters and house builders. The North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee will be considering the outputs of this work on 20th September 2018.

7. National Planning Policy Framework

7.1 The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework on 24th July 2018. A summary of some of the key changes to the revised National Planning Policy Framework from the version consulted on earlier this year and reported to this committee on 2nd May 2018 is set out below – please note this is not an exhaustive list and does not cover every change.

- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we expressed disappointment that reference to Garden City principles has been excluded. A reference to Garden City principles has been included in the final revised Framework, as part of expanded text on planning for larger scale developments.
- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we raised concerns about the significant change in the definition of affordable housing in the glossary that expanded the definition of affordable housing to include a wide range of intermediate housing products that would not provide housing for those in genuine need for social rented housing. The definition of affordable housing has been amended in the final revised Framework to make clear that 'social rent' and 'affordable rent' products fall within the scope of what is referred to as 'affordable housing for rent'.
- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we expressed concern that the proposed requirement for at least 20% of housing sites in local plans to be small sites (0.5 hectares or less) was too prescriptive and unachievable in a high growth area. The final revised Framework requires local planning authorities to ensure that at least 10% of their housing requirement (rather than 20% of sites allocated) should be accommodated on sites of one hectare or less (rather than 0.5 hectares) that have been identified through the development plan or brownfield registers. There is also a caveat in the final

revised Framework that will allow local planning authorities to demonstrate where such a figure is not appropriate.

- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we called for an explicit requirement for local planning authorities to produce local policies to support the strategic plan. The final revised Framework sets out a requirement that policies to address non-strategic matters should be included in local plans that contain both strategic and non-strategic policies, and/or in local or neighbourhood plans that contain just non-strategic policies.
- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we acknowledged that entry-level exception sites could potentially provide additional smaller scale development opportunities but called for a more detailed definition and greater clarity. The final revised Framework retains support for entry-level exceptions sites. Amendments clarify that this should offer different types of affordable housing. A footnote has been added that states that entry-level exception sites should not be larger than one hectare in size or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement.
- In our response to the draft revised Framework consultation, we raised concerns that the requirement to assess site viability at plan making stage would lead to greater burden on local planning authorities already facing continuing budget constraints and would not reduce detailed discussions at planning application stage. The final revised Framework states that all viability assessments should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance. The updated viability planning practice guidance makes clear that assessing the viability of plans does not require individual testing of every site or assurance that individual sites are viable.

8. Options to be considered (if any)

This is an information report for the Committee so there are no alternative options

9. Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities

The statutory development plan for the Borough forms a part of the Borough Council's over-arching policy framework. It has potentially wide-ranging policy implications beyond the field of spatial planning.

There will be a need for positive interaction between the Plan, and other plans and strategies of the Borough Council (and other stakeholders) to ensure that a consistent and holistic approach is adopted

Financial

Budget to support the preparation of the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby agreed at One Corby Policy Committee on 29th November 2016.

Legal

Preparation of a local plan is a statutory duty upon every Local Planning Authority. Local plans are prepared within the framework set out by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

Once adopted, the Local Plan will become part of the statutory Development Plan. Section 38(6) of the act requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise

Performance Information

None directly linked to this report.

Best Value

None directly linked to this report.

Human Rights

It is intended that the new Local Plan, and the process of preparing it, should be inclusive and respectful of human rights. The adopted Statement of Community Involvement spells out the rights that the public have to engage with the plan-making process.

Implications are (directly or indirectly) considered through the preparation of Sustainability Appraisal and Equalities Impact Assessment

Equalities and Sustainability

Planning policy documents, including the Local Plan will address a wide range of economic, social and environmental considerations with particular regard to identifying and addressing the needs of groups within the community with specific/additional needs. The Local Plan will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks arising from this information report.

10. Recommendation

10.1 To note the content of the report

Background Papers

[Local Plan Committee](#), 18th October 2017

[North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and Joint Delivery Committee](#),
1st March 2018

[North Northamptonshire Joint Delivery Committee](#), 12th July 2018

[National Planning Policy Framework](#), July 2018

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