

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD**

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at The Jeffrey Room,  
The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday, 6  
June 2019 at 6:00 pm.

**George Candler  
Chief Executive**

**AGENDA**

1. APOLOGIES
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR
4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR
5. MINUTES
6. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN - ISSUES  
CONSULTATION
7. FUTURE MEETINGS
8. URGENT BUSINESS

## South Northamptonshire Council

### West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board

Minutes of a meeting of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board held at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, Northants, NN12 6AD on Monday 17 December 2018 at 6.00 pm.

Present      Councillor Tim Hadland (Chairman)  
                 Councillor Mike Warren (Vice-Chairman)  
                 Councillor James Hill  
                 Councillor Phil Larratt  
                 Councillor Alan Chantler  
                 Councillor David James  
                 Councillor Roger Clarke

Apologies    Councillor Rebecca Breese  
for  
Absence:      Councillor Ian McCord

Officers:      Colin Staves, Principal Spatial Planner, West Northamptonshire  
                 Joint Planning Unit  
                 Simon Bovey, Deputy Chief Executive, Daventry District Council  
                 Andy D'Arcy, Planning Policy and Growth Strategy Manager, South  
                 Northamptonshire Council  
                 Richard Wood, Local Strategy Manager, Daventry District Council  
                 Paul Everard, Planning Policy and Heritage Manager, Northampton  
                 Borough Council  
                 Emma Faulkner, Democratic and Elections Officer, South  
                 Northamptonshire Council

#### 1      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2      **Appointment of Chairman**

##### **Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Tim Hadland be appointed Chairman of the Board for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year

### 3 **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Mike Warren be appointed vice-Chairman of the Board for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year.

### 4 **The Role of the Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board**

The Principal Spatial Planner presented a report that explained the role and purpose of the Board.

The Principal Spatial Planner explained that the Board had an advisory role, and could consider draft documents, but it didn't have any formal decision making powers. Any decisions required would need to be referred back to each of the individual partner Councils.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the role of the Board and the Terms of Reference be noted.

### 5 **West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan - Scoping Document**

The Principal Spatial Planner presented a report that outlined a draft scoping document for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.

The report explained that there was a new legal requirement for policies to be reviewed every 5 years. As the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy had been adopted in December 2014, the 5 year period had now elapsed.

In response to questions from the Board, the Principal Spatial Planner explained that the detailed process of evidence gathering for the proposed plan had not yet started.

The Principal Spatial Planner emphasised that the indicative figures relating to costs and resources in the draft scoping document were loose estimates, and the details could change.

#### **Resolved**

- (1) That the scope of the proposed West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan be supported.

### 6 **West Northamptonshire Joint Local Development Scheme**

The Principal Spatial Planner presented a report that detailed the West Northamptonshire Joint Local Development Scheme, including the timetable for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.

The Principal Spatial Planner explained that the report was a public statement of the timetable.

The Board commented that the timetable was very tight.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the timetable for the preparation of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan be noted.

**7 West Northamptonshire Growth Deal**

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director (Business) that provided an update on progress with the proposed Growth Deal for West Northamptonshire.

In presenting the report, the Deputy Chief Executive of Daventry District Council explained that the proposed new Unitary Council for West Northamptonshire may come into existence before the completion of the Growth Deal, so any work completed by the partner Councils would be an important legacy for the new authority to take forward.

The Board commented that work on the Growth Deal would be the number one priority, and it was important that local government reorganisation didn't impact on the work.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that SEMLEP would be a key partner to the work, as well as the partner Councils and the Government.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the progress on the Growth Deal to date be noted
- (2) That further work to achieve a suitable Deal with Government be supported

**8 Part 2 Local Plans**

The Chairman invited representatives from each Council to give a progress update on their Part 2 Local Plan.

**South Northamptonshire Council**

Councillor Roger Clarke advised the Board that the consultation period had closed for the Part 2 Local Plan, and the responses were being analysed.

The Plan would then be considered by full Council on 14 January 2019, in order to be approved for submission to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

### **Northampton Borough Council**

The Planning Policy and Heritage Manager explained that Cabinet would be considering the Proposed Submission (Regulation 19) Part 2 Local Plan in January 2019, ahead of consultation scheduled for a 6 week period that would end in March.

It was then anticipated that Regulation 22 submission would occur during the summer, with examination taking place during the Autumn of 2019, ready for the plan to be adopted in March 2020.

### **Daventry District Council**

Councillor Alan Chantler reported that the Settlements and Countryside plan had been approved for submission on 6 December, and was having final cosmetic and grammatical checks made before submission. It was hoped that examination would take place during Summer 2019.

In response to questions from the Board, officers explained that it was not known how inspectors were allocated to Part 2 Local Plans, and the volume of plans being submitted in such a short space of time could impact on the capacity of PINS

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the verbal progress updates be noted.

## **9 Future Meetings**

The Principal Spatial Planner proposed to the Board that meetings be arranged on a quarterly basis.

The Board agreed that having a schedule of meetings in place would help with timetabling of various activities, particularly in light of ongoing local government reorganisation.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That a schedule of quarterly meetings be agreed and circulated to all Members of the Board.

## **10 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm

Chairman:

Date:

Item No: 6
Date: 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2019

## WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

### JOINT PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD

<b>West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Issues Consultation</b>
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#### 1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek the views of the Board on the proposed Issues consultation for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. The draft text of the proposed consultation document is attached as Appendix 1.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the views of the Board are sought on the draft Issues consultation document attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That, subject to any amendments required by the Board and arising from the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the Board recommends the Issues consultation document be approved by the partner Councils for the purposes of public consultation.
- 2.3 That a revised Joint Local Development Scheme is prepared and presented to the partner Council's committees for approval.

#### 3. Issues Consultation Document

- 3.1 Officers from the partner Councils, supported by the Joint Planning Unit and the County Council have prepared a draft Issues consultation document which is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It should be noted that this is a text version of the document and it is intended that the published version will be supplemented by graphics, maps and diagrams.
- 3.2 The Issues consultation is the first stage in preparing the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. The Issues document is designed to stimulate debate at an early stage and it is important to emphasise that no decisions have yet been made on the scale of growth or where that growth should be located. We want to engage with stakeholders and communities across the area and work together to ensure that we prepare the best plan possible for a sustainable future.
- 3.3 The draft Issues consultation document attached as Appendix 1 covers the following matters:
  - **Introduction** – setting out the broad scope of the WNSP and why we are preparing it.

- **Spatial context** – a broad overview of the plan area and its key spatial characteristics, the existing spatial strategy provided by the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and the emerging proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
- **Vision and objectives** – seeking views on whether changes are required to the existing vision and objectives in the JCS.
- **Place-making and Sustainable Communities** – outlining key principles to ensure that the plan creates places where existing and future residents want to live now and can do so sustainably into the future.
- **Natural and Built Environment** – setting out key principles for landscape, biodiversity, climate change resilience, green infrastructure, flood risk, water quality and supply, the historic environment and heritage assets.
- **Housing** - ensuring the right number and type of houses are delivered across West Northamptonshire
- **Economic Growth** – identifying key economic issues including retail, town centres and the rural economy
- **Infrastructure** – suggest key principles and objectives for the delivery of the infrastructure required to support growth across the plan area.
- **Process and Next Steps** – providing guidance on how to comment and the next steps in the plan preparation process

3.4 The Board is asked to consider the content of the draft Issues consultation document and the proposed consultation questions. Amendments arising from the views expressed by the Board will be incorporated into a final version of the document which will be presented to the relevant committees of the partner Councils for approval.

#### 4. Oxford-Cambridge Arc

4.1 The West Northamptonshire area falls within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc where the Government has identified an opportunity to accelerate growth in order to maximise the economic potential of the area and to contribute towards its targets for increasing housing delivery. In March 2019 the Government published a paper setting out their ambition for the Arc together with a joint declaration agreed by local authorities and local enterprise partnerships across the area. In meeting the economic and housing ambitions for the area there is a clear need for substantial investment in new infrastructure and a clear commitment that growth should not be at the expense of the quality of the environment.

4.2 At the meeting in December the Board received a report outlining progress on a proposed Growth Deal for West Northamptonshire along similar line the deal that was agreed for Oxfordshire earlier in 2018. Negotiations on the Growth Deal have not progressed as originally anticipated and Government are no longer pursuing growth deals of the type agreed with Oxfordshire. They are however keen to explore other financial arrangements to support local authorities and other partners to deliver their ambitions for the Arc. The Government are looking to support the delivery of housing and infrastructure across the central area of the Arc, which includes West Northamptonshire, and to this end discussion with the Government's OxCam Unit are continuing.

4.3 The WNSP Issues consultation provides an opportunity to seek views on the proposals for the Arc, and the Issues paper therefore includes questions

regarding the opportunities presented by the Arc and the extent to which this would justify additional growth in the area.

## **5. Sustainability Appraisal**

- 5.1 The preparation of the WNSP must be informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment. Land Use Consultants Ltd have been commissioned to produce an initial SA Scoping Report. This is currently being prepared and the final report will be available by the 18<sup>th</sup> June, in advance of the consideration of the Issues consultation by the partner Council's committees. Further changes to the Issues consultation document may be required to reflect the final SA Scoping Report.
- 5.2 The SA Scoping Report will be published for comments from statutory bodies and other stakeholders as part of the Issues consultation.

## **6. Timeline for the Consultation**

- 6.1 Following consideration of the Issues paper by the Board, a final version of the consultation document will be produced. It will be necessary for this document to be agreed by each of the partner Councils before it can be published for consultation. It is proposed that reports seeking approval for the Issues consultation will be presented to the following Committees:
- Daventry District Council – Strategy Group – 4<sup>th</sup> July
  - Northampton Borough Council – Cabinet – 24<sup>th</sup> July
  - South Northamptonshire Council – Planning Policy and Regeneration Strategy Committee – 31<sup>st</sup> July
- 6.2 Following the final committee approval on 31<sup>st</sup> July it is suggested that the consultation period would start on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> August and run until Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October. This is an extended consultation period which takes account of the summer holidays.

## **7. Local Development Scheme**

- 7.1 The Joint Local Development Scheme (LDS) agreed by the partner Councils in October 2018 had originally anticipated the Issues consultation taking place in April 2019. It will therefore be necessary for the LDS to be updated to reflect the revised timing of the Issues consultation and to reschedule the subsequent stages of plan preparation. This revised LDS should be prepared and presented to the partner Councils committees for approval.

**Name:** Colin Staves  
**Title:** Principal Spatial Planner - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit  
**Date:** May 2019

**Contact Officer(s): Colin Staves email:cstaves@northampton.gov.uk tel: 01604  
838678**

## APPENDIX 1 – WNSP Issues Consultation – Draft for Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board

### West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Issues Consultation

#### Introduction

The local planning authorities in West Northamptonshire, i.e. Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils with support from Northamptonshire County Council, have agreed to prepare a new Strategic Plan for the area. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) will set out a spatial vision for the future of the area extended up to 2050. To address the key strategic priorities for the area the scope of the WNSP will include:

- **The spatial strategy for the distribution of development** – this will include consideration of a range of spatial options to deliver sustainable development.
- **Place-shaping / sustainable development** – Key principles to ensure quality development and sustainable places including the protection and enhancement of natural/built and historic assets and achieving net biodiversity gain.
- **The housing requirement** – the number and type of new homes to be provided across West Northamptonshire and the proportion of the overall housing requirement that should be affordable.
- **Economic growth** – Targets for the provision of jobs and employment land in West Northamptonshire and guidance on the strategic locations for new employment land to meet the jobs requirement. New policy guidance for town centres and retail development.
- **Strategic infrastructure** – The key primary infrastructure projects that are required to deliver the strategy such as strategic transport schemes utility networks and community facilities.
- **Health** - ensuring people can lead active lifestyles, including access to good quality open space, natural and semi natural greenspace and enjoy cleaner air.

**Local Government Review in Northamptonshire** – Following a review of local government in the county the Government has confirmed that two new unitary councils will be established in Northamptonshire on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The West Northamptonshire unitary will cover Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire, and the North Northamptonshire unitary will cover Corby, East Northants, Kettering and Wellingborough. The existing district and borough councils and Northamptonshire County Council will all be abolished. The latter stages of preparing the Strategic Plan including its adoption will therefore be the responsibility of the new West Northamptonshire unitary council.

The West Northamptonshire area is already covered by a joint plan. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in December 2014 and covers the period up to 2029. There are however a number of reasons why a new plan is required:

- **Reviews at least every five years:** are now a legal requirement for all local plans. This means that policies should be reviewed at least once every five years and then updated as necessary. A number of the JCS

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policies will need to be updated, for example to reflect changes to national policy and changing local circumstances.

- **Local Housing Need Assessment:** the government's revised National Planning Policy Framework introduced a standard national method to determine local housing need. With effect from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (i.e. 5 years following adoption) the local housing need calculated using the national methodology will effectively supersede the JCS housing requirement.
- **Housing and Infrastructure Delivery:** Whilst the rate of housing delivery has increased significantly in the years since the JCS was adopted it has not kept pace with housing trajectory set out in the plan. Likewise whilst there have been a number of key infrastructure projects which have been delivered as envisaged by the JCS, such as the recently opened Daventry Development Link, but other projects have not progressed as quickly as expected.
- **Oxford Cambridge Arc:** The West Northamptonshire area falls within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The government have designated the Arc as a key economic priority, affirmed its ambition for up to one million high-quality new homes across the Arc by 2050, committed to completing East West Rail and the Expressway, and committed to achieving growth in the Arc while improving the environment for future generations. The preparation of a new Strategic Plan provides a mechanism for our area to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by the government's proposals for the Arc.

The WNSP would review and, where appropriate, replace strategic policies in the JCS. Whilst the new vision will look up to 2050, the statutory plan-period will be from 2019-2041. This is the first stage in preparing the WNSP. This Issues document is designed to stimulate debate at an early stage and it is important to emphasise that no decisions have yet been made on the scale of growth or where that growth should be located. We want to engage with stakeholders and communities across the area and work together to ensure that we prepare the best plan possible for a sustainable future. Please get involved and sign up to be kept informed at all the key stages in the process.

### Spatial Context

West Northamptonshire is located within the southern part of central England. It covers a large geographical area and encompasses Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northamptonshire District the County of Northamptonshire. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 the area will be covered by the new unitary council for West Northamptonshire. The area includes four main towns: Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley and the extensive rural areas within South Northamptonshire and Daventry Districts incorporating over 190 villages.

There are strong connections between Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Northampton, reflected in significant household and travel to work movements between the settlements in these areas. To the north and east, there are strong travel links between Northampton and Wellingborough and to a lesser extent

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Kettering. There are also significant commuter flows into Milton Keynes from Northampton and South Northamptonshire.

West Northamptonshire has excellent connections to the rest of the country and to mainland Europe. The area benefits from key strategic transport infrastructure including linkages to the M1, M40, M6, the Haven Ports and the West Coast Mainline, Chiltern and Midland Mainline railways. The area is often described as being at the crossroads of the M1 north-south route and the A14/M6 east-west route.

{INSERT MAP}

West Northamptonshire is within the influence of Greater London and Birmingham, the country's two largest cities. Travel times from Northampton to both London and Birmingham by train are only one hour. For air travel most passenger journeys by residents and businesses in West Northamptonshire are made from major gateway airports at London and smaller regional airports at East Midlands, London Luton or Birmingham International. Whilst both East Midlands Airport and London Luton Airport are accessible by car within one hour's journey time from Northampton there are limited rail connections to both destinations.

For shopping, Northampton town centre together with its retail parks is the main attractor for the majority of West Northamptonshire residents and for some residents of areas beyond. However, there is a pull from Milton Keynes in the southern part of the West Northamptonshire area for town centre shopping and likewise from Banbury and Rugby for the western parts of the West Northamptonshire area. Northampton, as the County town, is also the focus for major services and facilities for the surrounding towns including those beyond West Northamptonshire such as Wellingborough and Kettering.

West Northamptonshire has an overall population of 399,400 people (Office of National Statistics 2017 mid-year estimate). The population is growing and has increased by just over 9% or 33,000 since 2007, which is higher than the national average over the equivalent period. Whilst the land area is predominately rural, 56% of this population lives within the urban area of Northampton. The majority of residents from South Northamptonshire and Daventry districts live in the rural areas outside the market towns of Brackley, Daventry and Towcester.

Northampton has an above average young population (ages 0-15) and a below average older population (age 65 plus). The reverse is true for Daventry and South Northamptonshire in that the young population (ages 0-15) is below the national average and the older population (age 65 plus). In all areas population projections indicate that the proportion of elderly people within the population will continue to rise.

### **Current Spatial Strategy**

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The existing JCS sets out a spatial strategy for the area which outlines the hierarchy of places and how development is distributed between these places. This includes maximising the use of land and buildings within the urban areas as well as developing new sustainable urban extensions to the towns. The JCS identifies Northampton as the Principal Urban Area, Daventry as a Sub Regional Centre and Brackley and Towcester as Rural Service Centres. The spatial strategy has sought to concentrate development within the existing urban areas as far as possible and in a small number of large development areas, known as sustainable urban extensions, adjoining urban areas. Limited development is supported in the rural area at a scale which is consistent with meeting local needs and supporting local services.

The current spatial distribution of the housing requirement in the JCS is given in Table 1 (the figures for the Northampton Related Development Area have been included with Northampton Borough figures).

**Table 1- Existing Housing Requirement in the adopted Joint Core Strategy**

Policy Area	Requirement	Proportion
Principal Urban Area; Northampton (inc NRDA)	28,470	66.8%
Sub-Regional Centre; Daventry Town	4,620	10.8%
Rural Service Centre; Brackley Town	2,160	5.1%
Rural Service Centre; Towcester Town	2,650	6.2%
Rural Area - Daventry	2,360	5.5%
Rural Area - South Northants	2,360	5.5%
Total	42,620	

One of the key issues to consider is whether this strategy remains appropriate or whether alternative options for the distribution of development need to be considered.

### Oxford – Cambridge Arc

The Government has recently published a paper setting out their ambition for the Arc together with a joint declaration agreed by local authorities and local enterprise partnerships across the area. Government wishes to maximise the economic potential of the Arc. In order to achieve this it will be necessary to accommodate a substantial increase in the delivery of new homes and substantial investment in new infrastructure. In meeting the economic and housing ambitions for the Arc there is a clear commitment that this should not be at the expense of the quality of the environment.

The joint declaration sets out four thematic areas which reflect the government's ambition for the Arc as follows:

- **Productivity** – ensuring we support businesses to maximise the Arc's economic prosperity, including through the skills needed to enable communities to benefit from the jobs created;
- **Place-making** – creating places valued by local communities, including through the delivery of sufficient, affordable and high-quality homes, to

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increase affordability and support growth in the Arc, as well as wider services including health and education;

- **Connectivity** – delivering the infrastructure communities need, including transport and digital connectivity, as well as utilities;
- **Environment** – ensuring we meet our ambitions for growth while leaving the environment in a better state for future generations.

Government will be preparing, with local stakeholders, a spatial vision or strategy for the Arc as a whole. The WNSP would clearly need to take this into account. Later in this document responses are invited on how the Arc should be approached.

### **Vision and Objectives**

The existing JCS includes the following vision for the area. This provides a starting point for the WNSP, but it is necessary to consider what changes are required and how the vision could be extended up to 2050.

#### **The Joint Core Strategy Vision**

**In our vision of the future...**

**.....the area will form an outstanding UK location of choice for diverse employment opportunities, high academic and vocational educational attainment, high quality housing for all and a superb quality of life for its communities. The area will blend the best of modern cultural urban living with an enhanced network of green spaces and high quality parks and gardens. The rural areas will include vital and tranquil villages within its rolling landscapes. The area's proximity to London and connections to other parts of the UK and beyond will continue to be a great economic strength. The area will be a national example of low environmental impact development in response to climate change and high biodiversity and habitat protection.**

**With new development focused on the four towns of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley regeneration initiatives and successful and expanded economies will flourish. Communities will be diverse and sustainable and social cohesion and integration will be strong. Services, facilities and infrastructure will support the communities adding to the quality of life, and supporting their residents and visitors.**

**Northampton as the principal urban area will be a beacon of high quality urban design with an outstanding public realm. It will successfully blend its distinctive historic character with innovative new development both of which will enhance its riverside setting. It will be repositioned as the key economic driver at the cultural heart of Northamptonshire. It will enhance its role as the leading retail, entertainment, employment, health and learning centre, based upon a thriving mixed economy and the services it offers, with continuing pride in its theatres, museums and**

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**professional sports teams. Northampton will provide the focus and heart for its well integrated neighbourhood communities. Northampton will be linked with the reinvigorated towns of Daventry, Towcester and Brackley.**

**Daventry will be a vibrant historic market town with a population approaching 40,000. It will offer a thriving town centre which values its historic assets, with attractive retail and leisure opportunities, high quality public realm and a robust commercial core moving strongly towards a well developed office sector. Local economic strengths in engineering and sustainable construction will have been developed. It will provide an enhanced walking and cycling environment throughout the town and it will have strong connections with Northampton.**

**Towcester will have a successful historic town centre that is the focus of its rural catchment. The town will retain its visual and physical connections to the landscape through Easton Neston Park, nearby Watermeadows and Towcester Racecourse. It will provide a diverse economy based on high technology, tourism and leisure.**

**Brackley will be the major service provider for the residents of the town and the surrounding countryside. It will provide knowledge based, research and high technology based jobs and leisure facilities as well as a distinctive and vibrant historic town centre which will offer both retail opportunities and community services and facilities.**

**Silverstone Circuit will continue to be at the pinnacle of international motor sport venues. It will foster high technology motor sport business at the forefront of technology with a motorsport cluster located nearby.**

**Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) will maintain its role as an internationally significant centre for rail connected strategic distribution. It will be exemplary in the field of sustainable logistics with links to the University of Northampton. It will be well connected by public and sustainable transport to the surrounding workforce.**

**Our rural areas will support a network of vibrant rural communities. Villages will retain their local distinctiveness and character, providing affordable homes for local people set within a beautiful landscape. The countryside will support a diverse rural economy including leisure and tourism through its waterways, country houses, parks and woodlands.**

### **Consultation Questions:**

- 1. Is this vision still appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire and can it be extended up to 2050?**
- 2. Are changes to the vision needed having regard to spatial options and the emerging proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc?**
- 3. Are there any other changes you would like to see to the vision?**

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The vision is supported by 16 Spatial Objectives as follows:

### **Objective 1 - Climate Change**

To minimise demand for resources and mitigate and adapt to climate change, by:

- Promoting sustainable design and construction in all new development;
- Ensuring strategic development allocations are located and designed so as to be resilient to future climate change and risk of flooding;
- Encouraging renewable energy production in appropriate locations; and
- Ensuring new development promotes the use of sustainable travel modes.

### **Objective 2 - Infrastructure and Development**

To protect and enhance existing local services and to ensure social, physical and green infrastructure is adequately provided to meet the needs of people and business in a timely and sustainable manner in response to regeneration and new development in West Northamptonshire.

### **Objective 3 - Connections**

To reduce the need to travel, shorten travel distances and make sustainable travel a priority across West Northamptonshire by maximising the use of alternative travel modes. In so doing, combat congestion in our main towns and town centres, reduce carbon emissions and address social exclusion for those in both rural and urban areas who do not have access to a private car.

### **Objective 4 - Protecting and Building Urban Communities**

To ensure new development in urban areas effectively supports and links new and existing communities physically and socially, to achieve social cohesion and address the areas of deprivation identified in parts of Northampton and Daventry.

### **Objective 5 - Supporting Northampton Town Centre**

To support the regeneration of Northampton's town centre by making it the focus of high quality retail, employment, leisure and cultural development at the heart of Northamptonshire and to support the delivery of the Northampton Central Area Action Plan.

### **Objective 6 - Supporting Daventry Town Centre**

To support the regeneration of Daventry town centre through planned growth and infrastructure delivery.

### **Objective 7 - Supporting Towcester and Brackley's Town Centres**

To support Towcester and Brackley in their rural service centre roles to ensure their communities are self-sufficient sustainable

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places and the towns are the focus of services and facilities for surrounding villages.

### **Objective 8 - Economic Advantage**

To strengthen and diversify West Northamptonshire's economy by taking advantage of our internationally well-placed location, strategic transport network and proximity to London and Birmingham.

### **Objective 9 - Specialist Business Development**

To support and develop opportunities for specialist employment clusters and business development focused on a low carbon economy.

### **Objective 10 - Educational Attainment**

To raise educational achievement and the skills base of our communities through supporting the development of West Northamptonshire's learning infrastructure and strengthening the link between local businesses and local schools, Moulton and Northampton Colleges, the University of Northampton and Daventry and Silverstone University Technology Colleges.

### **Objective 11 - Housing**

To provide a range of housing in sustainable locations to ensure all residents have access to a home that they can afford and that meets their needs. Housing development will be focused at the most sustainable location of Northampton, supported by Daventry and Towcester and Brackley in their roles as rural service centres with limited development in the rural areas to provide for local needs and support local services.

### **Objective 12 - Protecting and Supporting Rural Communities**

To protect and support rural communities to ensure they thrive and remain vital.

### **Objective 13 - Rural Diversification and Employment**

To support rural diversification and rural employment opportunities, in particular those related to agriculture, horticulture and forestry.

### **Objective 14 - Green Infrastructure**

To protect natural species present in West Northamptonshire and enhance the existing strategic green infrastructure network, including biodiversity corridors, by incorporating and designing these into Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) at Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley.

### **Objective 15 - High Quality Design**

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To achieve high quality design in both rural and urban areas that takes account of local character and heritage and provides a safe, healthy and attractive place for residents, visitors and businesses.

### Objective 16 - Heritage

To conserve and where possible enhance, through carefully managed change, the heritage assets and their settings of West Northamptonshire, and to recognise their role in providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

It is recognised that some updating of these objectives is required, for example Objective 5 refers to the Northampton Central Area Action Plan which will be replaced by the Northampton Local Plan Part 2. Likewise Objective 10 refers to Daventry University Technical College which is now closed.

#### Consultation Question:

4. Are the above spatial objectives still the most appropriate ones for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire? What changes or other objectives would you like to see?

### What time period should the Plan cover?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects Local Plans to have a time-horizon of at least 15 years post adoption, whilst the Government's aspirations for the Arc are looking up to 2050. Whilst 2050 is a suitable time horizon for a vision, those aspects of the plan which need to be evidence based such as housing and jobs numbers are better suited to a shorter time horizon of say up to 2041. An appropriate plan period would therefore be 2019-2041. There may however be benefits in taking a longer term strategic approach by extending the plan-period up to 2050 in line with the aspirations for the Arc.

#### Consultation Question:

5. Is a plan-period of 2019-2041 appropriate or should it be extended up to 2050 to match the Government's aspirations for the Arc?

### Place-making and Sustainable Communities

To meet Local Housing Needs West Northamptonshire will need to plan for a minimum of around 49,000 homes between 2019 and 2041. This figure would be about 69,000 if the new plan ran until 2050. Some of this housing is already planned for in the existing JCS and emerging Local Plans. However the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan will need to identify further strategic locations for development of housing as well as employment to 2041.

The Plan will also set out a vision to 2050, which provides an opportunity to set out the principles to create thriving communities throughout West Northamptonshire in the long term. A key challenge of this Plan is to create

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places where existing and future residents want to live now and can do so sustainably into the future.

This Strategic Plan will help shape places where health and wellbeing is considered in every element of development and where inequalities in health and wellbeing are reduced. Apart from the obvious benefits to people's wellbeing, this should also assist with reducing demands on the local NHS and social care services.

The Office of National Statistics collects data on people's self-assessed levels of life satisfaction, worth, happiness and anxiety<sup>1</sup>. In 2017/18 West Northamptonshire scored overall slightly better when compared to the England average in terms of personal well-being and slightly lower when compared to the wider East Midlands sub region.

In terms of health there are varying inequalities across West Northamptonshire.

- The life expectancy across West Northamptonshire shows that residents in Northampton have a lower than average life expectancy, and Daventry and South Northamptonshire have either similar or better life expectancies when compared to England averages.
- Across West Northamptonshire physical activity of adults is similar compared to adults in England. However, the rates of adult obesity are worse in Northampton compared to Daventry and South Northamptonshire who have similar rates of adult obesity compared with England as a whole.
- The picture is similar for childhood obesity within year 6 children in Northampton with obesity being worse when compared with neighbouring districts and the rest of England.

### **Key Principles for Place-Making and Sustainable Communities**

- Housing will be expected to be located in sustainable locations to encourage people to use active travel modes such walking and cycling as a 1<sup>st</sup> choice wherever possible as well as have access to good public transport links to key destinations including employment, schools, retail and other services.
- Transport and land use will be integrated in new developments to create legible, accessible and connected routes from the outset and/or improve existing links to encourage more journeys on foot, bike or public transport.
- Development proposals will support strong, vibrant and healthy communities where people feel safe, healthy, socially connected and proud of where they live.
- New development will respect and make use of the natural and historic character of West Northamptonshire and ensure that that all residents and visitors can benefit from the advantages these characteristics offers.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/headlineestimatesofpersonalwellbeing>

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- New development will demonstrate a high standard and diversity of design which is appropriate to their location. These will be inclusive enabling accessibility and independence helping to reduce inequalities.
- Development should be fit for the future and incorporate resilience to climate change as well as allowing flexibility to adapt to new smart technology such as that emerging for independent living.

### Consultation Questions:

6. Do you feel that the key principles identified will create sustainable communities?
7. Are there any place making principles that need to be considered?

## Natural and Built Environment

West Northamptonshire is an area of distinct landscape contrasts. The urban centre of Northampton in the east contrasts strongly with a large rural hinterland in the rest of the Plan area, which is punctuated by Daventry as a sub-regional centre, the smaller market towns of Towcester and Brackley and numerous picturesque villages. Outside the towns the rural landscapes are unified by recurring landscape elements and features including hedgerows, historic houses, designed parklands, woodland, water bodies, waterways and agricultural land.

The area contains a significant range of natural and built assets including biodiversity habitats, sites, green infrastructure networks, archaeology and other heritage assets. Many of these are important at an international or national level and are protected through legislation or formal designation, whilst others are more locally important and need protecting through local plans.

This section of the document seeks to build an understanding of the broad natural and historic environment issues that affect the wider area.

**Landscape character** - West Northamptonshire's landscape is influenced by the unique combination of natural and man-made features found in the area, for example the underlying geology, biodiversity, agricultural landscapes, buildings, structures and transport connections. A Landscape Character Assessment which was undertaken in 2008 for the county and informed the JCS is still relevant. More detailed work has been done to support the emerging Part 2 Local Plans which will also provide useful evidence for the WNSP. {INSERT LINKS}

The urban landscape of Northampton derives from its geography and historic development, resulting in a predominantly urban area containing a strong network of green and blue infrastructure, historic parks, amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural landscapes including nature reserves, river and canal corridors.

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As predominantly rural districts, Daventry and South Northamptonshire both contained a longstanding Special Landscape Area (SLA) designation and in order to support a continuation of the designation in their Part 2 Plans, detailed studies were undertaken in both districts. The proposed areas of SLA represent “valued landscapes” as set out in the NPPF and are areas that demonstrate particularly special qualities that lift them out of the ordinary. Providing the SLAs are accepted by the inspectors of the respective examinations it is proposed to carry the designation through to the WNSP.

Parts of the existing SLAs are of particularly high landscape quality and may justify potential designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Initial discussions are taking place with Natural England and adjoining local authorities to see if AONB designation would be feasible.

**Biodiversity** - Increasing pressures are being placed on natural habitats, occurring as a result of new development, the wider impacts of climate change and shared water resources and the introduction of non-native species. Across West Northamptonshire there are a range of sites which are designated for their biodiversity or geodiversity value. Some are recognised as being of importance at an international or national level, e.g. Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), while others are valued as being of more local significance e.g. Local Geological Sites (LGeS) and protected road verges. Some designations receive statutory protection (under specific existing legislation) whilst other sites particularly those designated at a local level receive less protection e.g. Local Wildlife Sites, potential wildlife sites and pocket parks. Within the plan area there are a number of designations ranging from International to National, Regional and Local level.

**Biodiversity offsetting and net gain** – The NPPF indicates that planning policies should minimise impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Biodiversity offsetting is a system used predominantly by planning authorities and developers to fully compensate for biodiversity impacts associated with economic development, through the planning process. In some circumstances, biodiversity offsets are designed to result in an overall biodiversity gain. Offsetting is generally considered the final stage in a mitigation hierarchy, whereby predicted biodiversity impacts must first be avoided, minimised and reversed by developers, before any remaining impacts are offset. The mitigation hierarchy serves to meet the environmental policy principle of "No Net Loss" of biodiversity alongside development.

Biodiversity net gain is an approach which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand; for instance a species poor grassland or agricultural land is replaced by a species-rich specific type of grassland/meadow and protective hedges that functions at the same time as part of a local GI system at the same site

**Green infrastructure-** Green Infrastructure (GI) is a network comprising the broadest range of multi-functional green spaces, their connections and other

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environmental features including but not limited to parks, private green spaces, woodlands, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed grounds, rivers and canals and their banks, roads and rail corridors, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards<sup>2</sup>. GI is an asset that enables the environment to support and maintain ecological processes whilst sustaining land, air and water resources and is important within and beyond urban areas.

The JCS defines the sub-regional and local green infrastructure corridors in West Northamptonshire. The sub-regional green infrastructure corridors are the corridors that provide the link between the major areas of population within Northamptonshire and beyond into neighbouring counties. The function of these corridors is to connect areas of natural heritage, green space, biodiversity or other environmental interest. Local green infrastructure corridors provide links between the sub-regional corridors. It is expected that the WNSP will need to review the extent and function of these GI corridors.

**Climate change resilience** – The planning system has a key role to play in supporting the transition to a low carbon future and in mitigating the impacts of climate change. The WNSP can help to shape places which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience, encourage the reuse of existing resources and support renewable and low carbon energy. Climate change resilience is likely to be a key cross-cutting theme that runs through the Plan’s strategy and policies.

**Flood risk and the water cycle** - Flood risk and water quality are significant concerns for West Northamptonshire. The area’s rivers and their tributaries as well as the canal network and reservoirs are prominent features of the landscape and important to wider biodiversity and leisure networks. Yet due to these water bodies and historic patterns of development there are a number of areas which are at risk of flooding. In addition to fluvial flooding there is also an increased risk of surface water flooding following periods of heavy rainfall, more intense storms and/ or where wastewater drainage is ineffective. The impact of development on water quality and the need to maintain adequate supplies of water are likely to become increasingly significant issues

The existing JCS and the emerging Part 2 Local Plans have been informed by extensive evidence including Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and the Water Cycle Strategy. It is expected that this evidence will need to be updated to inform the WNSP

**Historic environment** -The historic environment of the plan area is one of its most valued assets and there is a positive relationship between heritage, health and wellbeing, civic pride and community cohesion. Heritage also delivers significant economic benefits as a driver for tourism and many of the historic houses and parklands in the plan area are significant tourist destinations. The canal network comprising the Grand Union and Oxford Canals, is both a

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<sup>2</sup> see: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

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heritage asset and major leisure attraction in the area. Heritage assets include buildings and structures, parks and gardens, battlefields and archaeological remains.

Heritage assets can be designated or non-designated. Designated assets are designated under statute and some such as listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments benefit from statutory protection and require specific statutory duties to be exercised or tests to be applied when assessing the impact of a development on them. They may also be subject to a separate heritage consent regime. Other designated assets such as registered battlefields and historic parks and gardens do not have statutory protection although they are a material planning consideration. Across West Northamptonshire there are more than 100 conservation areas, in excess of 1800 listed buildings and around 100 scheduled monuments.

Many other assets make the area distinctive but because they are not designated, they are at risk of change or loss. Non-designated heritage assets are identified by the local planning authority and all three authorities are in the process of compiling a 'local list' of non-designated assets, which means that despite not having the same level of protection, their significance will be considered in planning decisions.

Each of the Part 2 Plans contain policies that deal with both designated and non-designated assets, therefore the WNSP needs to focus on strategic heritage issues.

### **Key Principles for the Natural and Built Environment**

- Landscape character and valued landscapes should be fully considered in assessing proposals for growth to ensure that the character and quality of landscapes is protected and where possible enhanced
- Development should maintain or enhance existing designated sites and assets which support biodiversity with the objective of delivering overall net gains for biodiversity.
- Green Infrastructure Networks should be conserved, managed and enhanced. Development proposals should seek to incorporate existing GI corridors and where possible create new corridors.
- Climate change resilience will be a cross-cutting theme that is 'built in' to the plan's policies and proposals.
- New development will be located and designed to minimise the risk of flooding, protect water quality and maximise water efficiency.
- The historic environment and heritage assets should be preserved, and where possible enhanced in recognition of their role in providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

#### **Consultation Questions:**

8. Have we identified the right key principles to conserve and enhance the built and natural environment?
9. Are there any built and natural environment issues that we have missed?

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### Housing

Ensuring the right number and type of houses are delivered across West Northamptonshire are clearly important issues for the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan to address.

**How much Housing Do We Need To Plan For?** - To establish how much housing we need to plan for a number of components need to be looked at, specifically future local housing need, any uplift for contingencies, a further uplift to deliver the aspirations of the Arc and the need to provide for any un-met need from Neighbouring authorities, and also factoring in any existing supply. These are discussed in turn below.

#### *Local Housing Need*

In terms of the overall scale of housing growth that the plan needs to provide for, the 2019 NPPF identifies that to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing needs assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance-unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. The table below shows the Local Housing Needs (LHN) figures for each LPA in West Northamptonshire (using the 2014 based household projections) and shows that an annualised requirement of 2,201 dwellings. This is lower than the current JCS requirement which, if calculated on an annualised basis, is 2,324 dwellings. It is intended that the LHN figure would replace the JCS trajectory figures from the base date of this plan – i.e. they would be introduced from 2019.

**Table 2 Local Housing Need for Plan Period**

	JCS Housing Requirement (Annualised)	Local Housing Need per Annum	Local Housing Need over plan period 2019 - 2041
Northampton (inc NRDA)	1582	1333	29326
Daventry	388	372	8184
South Northamptonshire	351	516	11352
West Northamptonshire	2321	2221	48862

The methodology suggests that LHN is suitable for projections over a ten year period, however this plan will look to 2041, a 22 year period from the base date of April 2019. One issue is to explore if there is any reason, why the household formation rate would vary to any extent beyond the first ten years and what review mechanisms the plan might need to include to respond to any changes.

As the table above shows, the LHN figure to 2041 is **48,862** dwellings across West Northamptonshire

#### *Uplift For contingencies*

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The LHN figure provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area. It is important to consider whether an uplift should be applied to the LHN to provide additional flexibility and contingency to account for any delivery issues that may arise. Two potential contingency options are set out below;

- LHN + 10% - 53700 dwellings
- LHN + 20% - 58600 dwellings

In considering the level of uplift, regard has to be had to the detriment that could be caused by high levels of contingencies e.g. the need for significant additional infrastructure, market saturation etc.

### *Oxford-Cambridge Arc*

Government has clear ambitions to promote growth across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. Practice Guidance suggests that it would be appropriate to plan for housing in excess of the LHN figure where growth strategies for the area exist that are likely to be deliverable, for example where funding is in place to promote and facilitate additional growth. Government's ambitions for the Arc include up to one million high quality new homes by 2050. Achievement of this ambition would require a step change in housing delivery at levels substantially in excess of LHN. The West Northamptonshire partner authorities are in discussions with Government about the potential support that could be available, for example infrastructure funding, to facilitate increased levels of growth to match their aspirations for the Arc. A potential Arc-related growth scenario would be to plan for LHN +10% for 2019-29 and then apply a further uplift of 40% to LHN from 2029 to 41. This results in a requirement for 61700 dwellings.

### *Taking into account the existing supply*

To establish what provision the plan needs to make it is important to look at existing housing supply. A housing background paper has been produced that sets out the position for each local authority in more detail in respect of the existing supply however given that this period will run from 2019 to 2041 there is clearly a significant level of provision already anticipated to come forward in the existing JCS, specifically the allocated SUE's and also additional site allocations within the emerging Part 2 Local Plans. Across West Northamptonshire as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 existing supply amounts to about **38500** dwellings.

This supply has been applied to the different scenarios discussed above and summarised in Table 3.

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**Table 3 – New Housing Provision**

Scenario	Approximate Requirement to 2041	Supply to 2041	Residual Requirement to 2041
Local Housing Need	48900 dwellings	38500	10400
Local Housing Need + 10%	53700 dwellings	38500	15200
Local Housing Need + 20%	58600 dwellings	38500	20100
Arc-related Growth	61700 dwellings	38500	23200

In determining the most appropriate level of housing it will be important to factor in the outcomes of further work regarding specific housing needs (including affordable housing) and the relationship with the economy of the area, mindful of the need to try and balance housing and job growth.

Importantly the 5 year housing land supply would be monitored against the LHN figures, either on a plan wide basis or policy area basis. Any uplift would be for contingencies only, and would not be included in the calculation.

In addition the NPPF indicates that any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for. The West Northamptonshire councils will work with adjoining authorities to establish if any unmet need should be provided for in this plan although this has not been indicated through the local plans that have either progressed or are currently progressing through the process.

### Consultation Questions:

10. Is the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 an appropriate base date for the housing requirement?
11. Having regard to the scenarios presented above what level of housing growth should the plan be seeking to accommodate? If you support a level of housing that differs from LHN please explain how you think that would be justified?
12. Would the Government's ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc justify a level of housing growth significantly in excess of LHN?

**How to diversify the Market?** - A number of the Sustainable Urban Extensions allocated in the JCS have not progressed as quickly as expected. The issue of delivery, particularly on larger sites, is not an issue solely affecting West Northamptonshire but is a nationwide issue. This has been recognised in the Letwin review (October 2018) which identifies a series of possible measures to seek to improve build-out rates, including diversifying the housing offer on strategic sites through different tenures and house types including ensuring

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sufficient plots for self-build/custom- build housing. This will be an important issue for this plan to address.

### Consultation Question:

13. What measures could the plan include to diversify the offer on strategic sites, or otherwise increase the rate of housing delivery?

**What type of housing Do We Need to Plan for?** - Further to establishing overall housing requirements the 2019 NPPF indicates that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies and this work will be undertaken to inform the production of this plan. This work has been undertaken for the part 2 local plans<sup>3</sup> and will need to be updated particularly to inform the following;

- The level of affordable housing that needs to be provided for, including what threshold should be applied.
- What specific needs for specialist accommodation are there mindful of the age profile of the area and that existing evidence showing that the increase in people aged 65+ represents 50% of the overall population growth.

Evidence undertaken across West Northamptonshire against the existing OAN indicated a need for an increased proportion of smaller properties (2 and 3 beds).

### Consultation Question:

14. Are there any particular types of specialist housing that you feel should be increased in supply, do you have any evidence to support this?

### How do we ensure the houses are of good quality and fit for purpose? -

To ensure that West Northamptonshire continues to be an attractive place to live the quality of housing is important. The government acknowledged this through introducing the following optional national standards;

- Accessibility and wheelchair housing standards
- Water efficiency standards
- Internal space standards

The Part 2 local plans are respectively seeking to apply the optional national standards to varying levels and therefore it is not considered that this is an issue for this plan to address. However it will be important to ensure the plan secures high quality design across the area and any evidence undertaken looking at specific housing needs will need to consider how these standards should be apply moving forward.

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<sup>3</sup> West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Housing Market Evidence 2017 available from <http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=2759856>

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### Consultation Question:

15. Are there any other housing issues the plan needs to address that have not been identified?

### Economic Growth

West Northamptonshire is well placed in terms of infrastructure due to its links with a number of major strategic routes including the A43, A34, A5, A14, M40 and M1. It also benefits from a number of existing high profile employers and tourist facilities. The area has particular strengths in logistics centred at the motorway junctions on the M1, food and drink and the visitor economy.

West Northamptonshire falls within the SEMLEP local enterprise area. SEMLEP are preparing a Local Industrial Strategy, which looks at the wider ambitions of the Arc, clusters, logistics hubs of excellence and innovative transport technologies. The WNSP will need to take account of the emerging proposals in the Local Industrial Strategy.

West Northamptonshire's economy has grown in recent years with a large number of jobs being delivered, although the provision of employment floorspace has generally been lower than anticipated in the JCS. Between 2008 and 2017 approximately 19,000 net additional jobs have been created. This jobs growth has occurred across a wide variety of sectors. It is considered that the Strategy needs to encourage growth in a planned way which meets the needs of our residents, adds value to the area and supports the key sectors of High Performance Technology, Logistics, Food and Drink and the Visitor Economy.

The WNSP will need to balance the number of jobs in relation to housing and infrastructure provision, as well as regenerating the area, attracting high skilled employers and supporting existing retail centre. Evidence on economic development needs is being commissioned, and this work will provide an objective assessment of the employment land / floorspace needs over the plan period. It will also consider the number of jobs that need to be created to support the anticipated growth in population.

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It is considered that any allocations should be located in sustainable and accessible locations where land permits it, or at existing well serviced facilities.

**Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges:** Central Government are currently considering two major development proposals in South Northamptonshire, for major rail freight infrastructure proposals, known as Rail Central and Northampton Gateway. The sites are located to the west of the M1 close to junctions 15 and 15A. Collectively these proposals could deliver in excess of 1.2 million sqm of warehousing and ancillary floorspace and could generate around 15,000 directly employed jobs. Should one or both of these applications go ahead, they could have a significant impact on the labour force, infrastructure and the demand for housing. The Plan may have to respond to these impacts once the outcome of the application process is known although the sites will be of a scale that would inevitably draw in some workforce from outside of West Northamptonshire.

A range of spatial options will be considered e.g. focussing development on existing transport hubs, such as rail connections, planned growth areas and corridors, or focussing on existing urban areas.

In addition to new employment areas the plan may also consider the role of existing employment areas, where still appropriate, controlling use class changes within these areas. In the urban areas there may be opportunities for more efficient use of land as well as expansion of existing employment hubs may be considered necessary. The plan may consider focusing allocations on existing use classes, or may focus more generally recognising the need to provide flexibility within the classes.

The plan area has a number of existing strategic employment sites such as the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal, Silverstone Circuit and the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone. The importance of sites such as these in supporting the economic success of the area should be recognised in the plan.

The Government's ambitions for the 'Oxford-Cambridge Arc' in 2019, include maximising the economic potential of the area to become an economic asset of international standing. A key issue for the WNSP is whether the plan should promote more economic growth than required to meet local need as a response to the opportunities presented by the Arc.

The visitor economy plays an increasingly important role in the area. There are a range of tourism facilities, such as Silverstone Race Track, the extensive canal network, county parks, historic houses, abbeys and museums. The plan will aim to support expansion and provision of such facilities where appropriate.

**Rural Economy-** The plan area covers over 190 villages and a large number of rural and small scale business, in terms of the rural economy. While part 2 Local Plans will cover more detailed policies on local employment, the WNSP should support diversification of rural businesses and the rural economy to help them to continue to thrive across West Northamptonshire.

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### Consultation Questions:

16. Have we identified the right issues in respect of economic growth or are there important issues that we have missed?
17. Should the plan promote higher levels of economic growth in response to the Government’s aspirations for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc?

**Retail** - West Northamptonshire consists of a number of town centres and including Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley as well as a number of smaller rural shopping villages and centres. It is considered that the plan should aim to regenerate retail centres and attract jobs to sustainable locations, while being adaptable and pragmatic to changes in the market and progressing trends.

The future of the ‘High Street’ continues to be a key strand of Government policy and the plan needs to acknowledge the changing role of town centres and the retail economy, by allowing a more flexible and pragmatic approach, supporting a diverse range of uses. While retail is still a major focus for town centres, it is recognised that other uses can complement this offer. It is therefore important to plan for a mix and offer that meets the needs of the area, supports businesses and conserves and enhances the historic character.

Monitoring of the retail policies in the existing JCS indicates that the level of new retail floorspace which has been provided in our town centres is lower than anticipated. Indeed there have been net losses of floorspace in both Northampton and Daventry in recent years. This WNSP may therefore need to take a different and more flexible approach in terms of the role of town centres and the uses they should support.

The evidence base for the WNSP which will look at retail floorspace as well as the jobs targets, considering the changes to the market and wider travelling patterns, this work will feed into future documents.

The previous Joint Core Strategy included a sequential approach, which ensured that in Northampton retail development was focused on the primary shopping area, outside of Northampton town centre, preference is centred on well-connected town centre sites first, then to local centres. Should the WNSP strategy take this same approach?

**Northampton:** There have been a number of recent developments which support the vitality of the central area years including the relocation of the University of Northampton to its new Waterside Campus, the development of a new railway station building and the University of Northampton’s Innovation Centre. Northampton Borough has recently carried out a retail assessment as

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part of their Part 2 plan work which recommends revised retail floorspace targets and recommends a more flexible approach to planning to support cultural activities and leisure alongside retail.

Northampton Town Centre is geographically the largest retail centre and is considered as a regional shopping centre. However footfall in the town centre has fallen in recent times and vacancy rates are higher than the national average. The Borough Council have established the Northampton Forward partnership with businesses and stakeholders which aims to revitalise the town centre. Funding has been secured from the government's Future High Street Fund and a consultation on the proposals for the town centre commenced in May. The WNSP will need to consider how the employment offer, retail and accessibility into the town centre can be improved.

**Daventry:** Daventry town is the other large town centre in West Northamptonshire and offers a variety of retail chains and independent shops. It is currently defined as a sub-regional town centre in the WNJCS. The WNSP will consider how Daventry town centre be protected and enhanced through safeguarding the main shopping areas, whilst also providing flexibility to consider appropriate diversification of the current offer and the ability to respond to market trends.

**South Northamptonshire** - The two main retail offers in South Northamptonshire district are Towcester and Brackley towns, which are identified as Rural Service Centres in the current JCS. The area also includes a number of small rural shopping villages and garden centre developments. Promoting retail within these smaller towns, while continuing to improve infrastructure, access and parking remain key challenges for these areas. The WNSP will consider what measures can be taken to improve the performance of these service centres.

### **Consultation Questions:**

18. Overall what do you consider our approach should be for retail and town centres?
19. How can we make our town centres more successful in the future?

### **Infrastructure**

**Transport** - West Northamptonshire is well connected to strategic transport infrastructure. The M1 motorway which provides a key strategic north-south corridor directly to the west of Northampton. Other important routes include the A45 and A43. The A45 is the main southerly access from Northampton to the M1 and also connects a number of Northamptonshire's main towns, the A45 is one of the busiest roads in the county. The A43 connects Northampton and other Northamptonshire towns to Oxford and a variety of other destinations.

Northampton is also connected to the West Coast Main Line rail network, which runs from London Euston to the West Midlands. Long Buckby, in Daventry

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District, has a station on the West Coast Main Line. Kings Sutton, in South Northamptonshire, has a station on the Cherwell Valley Line. A significant level of rail freight also passes through the county, with the location of the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), located to the North of Daventry.

The growth that is planned in the existing JCS is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP includes a number of key primary infrastructure projects have been identified to support the long term growth of the area.

For **Northampton** these include:

- The Northampton Growth Management Scheme (NGMS), which relates to a series of junction improvements on the A45 from the M1 junction 15 in the west to the Great Billing Interchange in the east.
- The Northampton North-West Relief Road, the first phase to the east of the A428 is expected to be delivered as part of the Kings Heath SUE and the highway authority will deliver the second phase which links to the A5199.
- Sandy Lane Relief Road to the west Northampton, which is expected will be delivered as part of the Norwood Farm / Upton Lodge SUEs.

For **South Northamptonshire** the Towcester Relief Road will support the development of the Towcester South SUE and forms part of the developer's plan. Provision of this road is required infrastructure to allow the development to go ahead and will also provide relief to the A5 through Towcester town centre bringing with it the potential to improve the environment and air quality.

For **Daventry** the Daventry Development Link (DDL), recently opened, provides a single carriageway bypass for Weedon, Flore and Upper Heyford on the A45 between Daventry and Junction 16 of the M1.

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**New Strategic Transport Infrastructure** – The assessment of growth options for West Northamptonshire will necessitate the consideration of opportunities to provide new strategic infrastructure connections. Two potential projects are set out below:

**Northampton Northern Orbital** – The County Council have proposed a new road will link the A5199 and Northampton North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road will also connect with the Moulton Park industrial estate. A final preferred route has not been chosen yet and delivery of the scheme is reliant on funding sources being secured. The Northern Orbital is not included in the existing JCS and the implementation of and funding for the route will in part depend on where development is located in the future.

**North – South Rail** - The re-opening the Market Harborough to Northampton line would provide the potential for a new national corridor. If pursued, this would link the Midland Main Line northwards – thereby including such places as Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield – and the West Coast Main Line southwards – thereby including such places as Milton Keynes, Watford and London. Creating a new set of efficient economic and social connections should have significant positive impacts nationally and for West Northamptonshire. The north-south rail scheme would complement proposals for East-West Rail which are a key element of the vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The route of the former railway is used as a 14 mile walking and cycling route known as the Brampton Valley Way. Compensatory provision would need to be considered if the rail scheme were to be implemented.

### **Consultation Questions:**

20. Should the plan consider the potential to deliver the Northampton Northern Orbital and North-South Rail as described above?
21. Are there other strategic transport infrastructure options which should be considered?

In order to achieve wider sustainability goals, and to meet the future travel needs of the area, it is recognised that a change in travel behaviour is required. Unsurprisingly given the rural nature of the area and the reliance on regional service centres, evidence from the 2011 Census shows that residents and workers within Daventry, South Northamptonshire and Northampton tend to commute further and have a higher car dependency than the national average. As a result of the high car dependency, public transport usage in terms of travel to work is below the national averages with rail significantly less. Walking and cycling to work are also both lower than the national averages.

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Two key projects to support the change in travel behaviour included the replacement of the Northampton Greyfriars Bus Station with a new bus interchange and a new railway station for Northampton. The new bus interchange was completed in 2013 and the new Castle Railway Station was opened in January 2015.

Daventry District Council has aspirations to improve the bus station facilities at Daventry to serve the existing and growing population. Details of whether this will be relocation or restructure of the existing site will be the subject of further investigation.

The proportion of cycling in Northamptonshire has historically been low and there is relatively little cycle culture, unlike in cities such as Cambridge, Oxford, York and Bristol. The cycle mode share for journeys to work in Northamptonshire is around 2%, compared to a figure of 8% in Bristol and 28% in Cambridge. The compact nature of the towns and in most cases relatively flat topography, presents significant potential to increase cycling trips within the major towns through addressing key missing links and junction treatment. In addition, there are opportunities, if sufficient funding became available, to develop inter-urban links between the main towns and from smaller outlying settlements.

Cycling and walking have the potential to help reduce health costs and wider economic losses associated with sedentary lifestyles by increasing physical activity, i/e/ prevention rather than cure. Helping to increase the number of walking trips rather than using the motor vehicle increases fitness levels and aids the environment by reducing congestion.

Traffic in our urban centre and areas near busy roads are affecting concentrations of air pollution that can have a significant impact on the health of the general population, with those having underlying health conditions being most at risk. There are two pollutants of greatest concern: nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and particulate matter (PM), which have an adverse effect on health and are mainly a problem because of vehicle exhaust emissions, with diesel exhaust emissions contributing most to the air pollution problem. There are currently 7 Air Quality Management Areas within Northampton, one in Towcester.

Department for Transport (DfT) figures show that over 100,000 plug-in vehicles were registered in the UK by mid-2017 as people are seeing the benefits of lower running costs and environmental benefits. Plug-in vehicles have zero exhaust emission capabilities and represent a significant opportunity for improving air quality.

In order to create change it is important that key organisations, including the Borough and County Council and other public sectors organisations who promote health and environmental improvements, lead by example. Public sector organisations operate fleets of vehicles and are significant employers in the area, generating thousands of business miles each year. These represent significant opportunities for influencing change, both within the public sector,

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but also beyond, including employees and the many private and voluntary sector organisations who engage with the public sector on a daily basis.

In addition to transport, there are several other types of infrastructure that are critical for growth, including: energy and utilities provision; social infrastructure (including schools, GP surgeries, leisure and community facilities) and mobile and digital infrastructure.

Business and housing growth cannot take place in isolation from the provision of energy and social infrastructure. Improvements in digital infrastructure open up opportunities for growth. The County Council and key partners have embarked on enabling a superfast broadband Northamptonshire initiative that aims to provide everyone in the county with access to improved services. Government set a national target of 95% superfast broadband coverage to be achieved by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The target relates to numbers of premises rather than geographical coverage. This national target was met. However, Northamptonshire has gone even better with coverage approaching 97%. It is also in the top ten areas in the UK for ultrafast broadband with 60% of premises able to access even faster speeds. This means that Northamptonshire is now one of the best counties in the UK for fast broadband.

In June 2018 the County Council agreed new targets for the Superfast Northamptonshire project. These targets are for at least 99% of premises in the county to be able to access superfast broadband and 65% ultrafast - both to be achieved by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. This will ensure that Northamptonshire is one of the best places (urban and rural) in the country for fast and reliable broadband connectivity. This will transform the way public services are delivered, help people to help themselves and reduce social exclusion, support enterprise and innovation, improve skills and educational attainment, and reduce carbon emissions.

With energy, there is a lack of strategic alignment between utilities companies and local authorities, with the former having shorter planning horizons than the latter, and a regulatory focus upon current – rather than future – demand. As a result, it is difficult to develop plans with confidence that the necessary infrastructure will be integrated into delivery programmes at the appropriate time. There are several examples within the region of developments that have been delayed because connections cannot be made in a timely manner, and/or because there is insufficient power to deal with the step changes in growth being proposed.

Western Power Distribution (WPD) covers the growth areas of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley. Recently energy supply demand has reduced from that anticipated. This is due to the recent economic down-turn and the general shift from manufacturing, requiring a high energy demand, to warehousing and service industries which have a lower energy usage. In addition sustainable energy generation through wind power, photo voltaic units (PVUs) and biomass generation has supported the general supply.

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In relation to energy Northampton will require works in the medium term to increase its supply. This will be at cost to the provider and phased in to support demand. There are no power supply issues for Daventry which presently has spare capacity for growth and for Towcester the catalyst to electricity supply upgrade is the Towcester South SUE.

Water Infrastructure. For planned growth (such as SUEs) local reinforcements will be required and are provided for through the normal requisition process whereby the developer pays Anglian Water Service (AWS) to provide the necessary pipes and connections. The requisition process is triggered by development, and is therefore entirely dependent on the timing of the individual developments. There is therefore no risk of these connections not being provided when growth goes ahead.

As a key part of the delivery of the Joint Core Strategy 2014 the capacity for the waste water treatment infrastructure to serve the growth identified is a requirement for development to occur. The Northampton Drainage Action Plan (DAP) modelling shows there is capacity within the major trunk sewer to serve the planned SUEs.

**Health infrastructure.** In the region, there are several examples of housing developments where a GP surgery site has been available for a number of years but no surgery has been delivered. This has significant negative impacts upon both the new and existing communities affected, as well as undermining support for additional residential development. As with utilities, the planning horizons for housing and health need to be better aligned.

Improvements to, or provision of, new healthcare facilities can sometimes be funded through capital programmes, however this funding is limited. Developer contributions will be expected to support healthcare facilities in response to the needs of a development. The Healthcare Infrastructure Schedule indicates that there is good provision across the urban areas where housing growth is anticipated.

### **Key principles**

- Bus Infrastructure: Improvements to waiting facilities, provision of real-time information, bus timetable information, secure cycle parking, rural bus hubs and Park and Ride
- Bus Services: High quality end-to-end service linking Northampton with major towns e.g. Bicester and Oxford
- Inter-urban public transport improvements linking the major towns within West Northamptonshire to the surrounding areas
- Promote the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV) in line with the Northampton Electric Vehicle Plan
- Promote modal shift away from cars to sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling
- Encourage development at the most accessible locations
- Promote travel planning - to encourage more people to choose sustainable transport modes by providing high quality information about the choices that are available for each journey.

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- Having access to superfast broadband across Northamptonshire
- To reduce the need to travel, shorten travel distances and make sustainable travel a priority across West Northamptonshire by maximising the use of alternative travel modes.
- Combat congestion in the main towns and town centres, reduce carbon emissions
- Address social exclusion for those in both rural and urban areas who do not have access to a private car.
- To support the regeneration of town centres through planned growth and infrastructure delivery.
- Reduced Environmental Impact: Improve air quality and reduced noise

### **Key Objectives**

1. Deliver the infrastructure needed to achieve the level of growth outline in the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.
2. Improve transport links across the region, promote modal shift away from cars to sustainable transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling. To improve health and wellbeing and combat environmental impact of motor vehicles.
3. Improve digital infrastructure to support commercial growth and investment within the region.
4. Ensure new development in urban areas effectively supports and links new and existing communities physically and socially, to achieve social cohesion and address the areas of deprivation.

### **Consultation Questions**

22. Do you think that the key principles and objectives for infrastructure identified above are appropriate?

23. Are there any other principles and objectives you would like to see added

### **Process and Next Steps**

#### **How to comment**

Comments on the WNSP Issues can be made from **Monday 5th August to Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019**. Your views are important and will help shape the next stage of the plan.

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You can make comments in a number of different ways, although the best way is likely to be online. Our consultation website has an interactive version of this document which you can use to submit your comments [INSERT WEBLINK]

If you would prefer to send us your written comments you can download a comment form from the website and return it by email or post to the following addresses:

Email: westnorthantsjpu@northampton.gov.uk

Post: West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit  
The Guildhall  
St Giles Square  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

All the comments received will be carefully considered and used to inform the next stage of the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan. Details of the comments received will be publicly available, but no personal information will be published. If you are not currently on our consultation database and would like to be kept informed then please email: westnorthantsjpu@northampton.gov.uk

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

The WNSP will be informed by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which will consider ways in which the plan can contribute to improvements in environmental, social and economic conditions. The SA will also identify and mitigate any potential adverse effects that the plan may have.

An initial SA Scoping Report has been prepared and is available for comment alongside this Issues documents. Details of the SA and how to comment on it are available on our website [INSERT WEBLINK]

### **Next Steps**

The next stage in the plan preparation will be to develop range of potential spatial options to meet the level of growth that we are planning for across West Northamptonshire. We are aiming to carry out a consultation on Spatial Options in [INSERT DATE]. The type of options we will be considering include:

- **urban intensification** – redevelopment and re-use of brownfield sites in our existing urban areas. Consideration of well-designed higher density development close to transport hubs
- **urban extension** – further sustainable urban extensions to our main urban areas
- **new settlements** – the potential for freestanding new settlements in the form of garden towns and/or villages

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- **corridor based growth** – the potential to focus growth alongside infrastructure improvements along key transport corridors either existing or proposed
- **employment focus** – the potential to focus residential development alongside existing or proposed strategic employment areas to reduce commuting and provide the opportunity for people to live and work in the same location.
- **dispersed options** – such as the sustainable expansion of smaller settlements where these are well linked to existing or proposed infrastructure.

The development and consideration of spatial options will need to take account of a range of influences such as the plans of neighbouring Councils and the outcome of the proposals for the Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges which are being considered through the National Infrastructure Planning process.

To help inform the development of spatial options we are undertaking a call for sites. At this stage we are primarily interested in sites which are strategic in scale. If you have any suggestions for strategic locations for new development please submit these through our 'call for sites', details of which are available on the website: [INSERT WEBLINK]