

Date: 02 October 2013

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Representations to the North Northamptonshire
Non-Statutory consultation August 2013**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

1. Background

- 1.1 The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit are conducting a Non-Statutory Consultation on a range of issues relating to their on-going Joint Core Strategy First Review. This is pending the decision of the Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities on the Rushden Lakes leisure and retail proposal following the “call-in” of the planning application. The intention is to consult on matters which are not affected by the Rushden Lakes decision so that the Plan can proceed as quickly as possible once the Rushden Lakes decision is known (currently expected in Jan 2014).
- 1.2 The consultation is running until 5:00 pm on 11th October, and covers the following topics:
 - Consultation on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites;
 - Urban Structure Study;
 - Interim Housing Policy Statement; and
 - A revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.3 Full details of the consultation, including all supporting papers can be found on the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit website at <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/consultations/detail.asp?id=13> .
- 1.4 The Joint Planning Unit (on behalf of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee) has been consulted as a neighbouring strategic planning authority.
- 1.5 Previously the JPU, on behalf of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, has not make formal comments on neighbouring authorities plans, other than to note the plan. However, in view of the new Duty to Co-operate, it may be more relevant for the Committee to formally comment on this and other similar consultations that are likely to arise in the future.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Committee note this report and confirm:-

- that there are no objections to any of the strategic housing and employment sites referred to in the document relating to the period up to 2031, which are considered broadly consistent with the submitted Spatial Strategy for West Northamptonshire;
- there are no objections to the Interim Housing Policy Statement;
- the principles of the Urban Structure Study are supported;
- no comments are made in respect of the Revised Statement of Community Involvement; and
- that work on potential future directions of growth around Northampton will be undertaken, as necessary, in partnership with colleagues in the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit.

3. NNJPU – Consultation on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites

3.1 The consultation provides the opportunity to comment on:

- Whether the proposed strategic housing and employment sites are the most appropriate or whether there are better alternatives;
- Draft policies and key principles for several strategic sites; and
- The broad location and draft policy for a sustainable urban extension at Rushden East.

3.2 Table 1 below sets out the strategic sites or broad locations which are not currently committed, either through planning permission or allocation in the approved Joint Core Strategy.

| Table 1 - Strategic sites or broad locations that are not yet committed | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Site | Proposed use | Proposed status | Background Paper page no |
| Corby | | | |
| Cockerell Rd | Employment | allocation | 50 |
| West Corby | Mixed use sustainable urban extension | allocation | 39 |
| Rockingham Enterprise Area ¹ | Employment | allocation | 52 |
| East Northamptonshire | | | |
| Rushden – Nene Valley Farm | Employment | allocation | 93 |
| Rushden – Rushden East | Mixed use sustainable urban extension | broad location | Not included |
| Kettering | | | |
| South Kettering (A14 jcn 9) | Employment | allocation or broad location - to be determined | 119 |
| A14 jcn 10/A6, Burton Latimer | Employment | allocation | 96 |
| Rothwell North | Mixed use sustainable urban extension | allocation | 59 |

¹ Rockingham Enterprise Area incorporates land in both Corby Borough and East Northamptonshire District

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----|
| North Kettering | Employment | allocation | 116 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----|

- 3.3 The consultation asks if the methodology used to assess these sites is appropriate; is the information up-to-date and the assessment correct; and are the listed sites the most appropriate.
- 3.4 There are draft site specific policy for the sites shown in Table 2 below²:

| Table 2 – Draft policy and key principles | | |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Site | Page | Ref |
| A14 junction 10, Burton Latimer | 5 | A |
| Cockerell Road, Corby | 8 | B |
| West Corby Sustainable Urban Extension | 11 | C |
| Nene Valley Farm, Rushden | 16 | D |
| Kettering North | 20 | E |
| Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension | 25 | F |

- 3.5 The reasons for excluding the remaining sites in Table 1 are provided in the document, and the reasons given are considered reasonable.
- 3.6 The Committee should note the very significant amount of employment use being promoted in Table 1, mainly along the A14 corridor, but also at Rushden close to the proposed Rushden Lakes retail proposal. There are no additional sites currently being promoted through this consultation in Wellingborough.

4 The Urban Structure Study (2013)

- 4.1 The Study looks at the Issues, opportunities and constraints of all the major settlements in North Northamptonshire. In respect of Wellingborough the Report notes that “Scope for additional development is limited to the south due to flood plain, environmental constraints and severance caused by the A45”.
- 4.2 The document looks at the characteristics of each town and also at the potential broad areas of growth. The draft conclusion in respect of Wellingborough is that the best integration would be through the development of sites to the north and east of the town, and it notes that WBC resolved to grant planning permission for 200,000 m² of B1/B2 and B8 uses (subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement) for the Appleby Lodge site to the west of Wellingborough. Kettering, on the other hand, is considered to be heavily constrained by the major roads around it which makes integration with the existing fabric of the town difficult.

² The references relate to the original document

5 Interim Housing Policy Statement (August 2013)

- 5.1 The purpose of this Policy Statement is essentially to respond to the under provision of housing completions required in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy due, in part, to the recent and on-going recession. The Joint Committee is inviting comments on this policy before it is finalised and adopted by the Joint Committee and partner authorities as a material planning consideration.
- 5.2 The document notes that the Policy proposed no change to the spatial distribution of the housing required, but requires it to be delivered over a longer time period. It specifically notes that Wellingborough is unable to identify a 5 year land supply, and the consultation is intended to address this in a properly planned manner whilst also asking what additional sites could be brought forward for 2014-2019.
- 5.3 Like West Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire has been delivering considerably less than 50% of the housing required by its JCS since 2006-2007. North Northamptonshire now consider that the housing targets are undeliverable given current market conditions and are out of date in view of the revocation of the Regional Plan and the latest Department of Communities and Local Government Household Projections.
- 5.4 Figure 3 in the North Northants report suggests that the housing requirements for the period 2011-2021 should be 17,832 compared to the 31,255 required by the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This compares to the actual delivery of an average of 15,200 homes in the past two decades. The evidence provided suggests that this lower number will continue to provide for some immigration to the area, and will not therefore put additional pressure on West Northamptonshire.
- 5.5 The Wellingborough requirement for 2014-2019 is estimated to be 2,736 dwellings. When a 20% allowance is added to reflect under-delivery this becomes 3,283 dwellings, compared to an identified supply of 3,068. Appendix 2 of the Draft Background Paper on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites (published alongside this consultation, see link to NNJPU website on page one above) sets out a schedule of small and medium sites which could meet the identified shortfall.
- 5.6 Overall, there are no particular issues which arise from the Interim Housing Policy Statement so far as West Northamptonshire is concerned.

6 Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 6.1 There are no issues in the SCI document so far as West Northamptonshire is concerned.

7 Comments Recommended by Officers

- 7.1 Your officers note the big increase in the amount of additional employment land being promoted, but do not consider that this is a cause for concern for West Northamptonshire, and therefore recommend no objections.
- 7.2 The principles of the Urban Structure Study are supported.
- 7.3 The contents of the Interim Housing Policy Study are noted, and in particular that the lower housing number recommended will still continue to provide for in-migration to the area, and will not therefore add additional pressure to the West Northamptonshire partner council areas. It is therefore recommended that there should be no objections to this proposed policy statement.
- 7.4 Your officers consider that the SCI is a matter for the North Northamptonshire partners and therefore recommend that no comment is made on this issue.

Dave Hemmett
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