

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 July 2012 at Daventry

PRESENT: Councillor Tim Hadland (Chair); Councillor Kay Driver (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Jim Bass, Rebecca Breese, Mary Clarke, Stephen Clarke,
Deanna Eddon, Matthew Golby, Mike Hallam and Chris Over

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Joy Capstick, Penny Flavell, David Mackintosh and Ken Melling and County Councillors Andre Gonzalez de Savage and Ben Smith.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2012 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Joint Committee noted the new arrangements for interests brought about by the Localism Act 2011 and implemented from 1 July 2012. On this occasion Members did not have any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests to declare.

Councillor Tim Hadland declared a personal interest in item 7- Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy in so far as the discussion might refer to a site in Brackley that he was advising a client on.

Councillor Mary Clarke declared a personal interest in item 7- Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy in so far as the discussion might refer to SEMLEP of which she was a member.

4. MATTERS OF URGENCY

The Chair was of the opinion that the following items be discussed as Matters of Urgency due to the undue delay if consideration of them were deferred:

APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor Stephen Clarke proposed and Councillor Chris Over seconded "That Councillor Tim Hadland be appointed Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the following year." Upon affirmation of the meeting Councillor Hadland was appointed Chair.

Councillor Tim Hadland thanked Councillor Mary Clarke, as the outgoing Chair, for her chairmanship of the Joint Committee over the past year during the uncertainties caused by the passage of the Localism Act through Parliament and the wait for the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework.

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Councillor Deanna Eddon proposed and Councillor Chris Over seconded "That Councillor Kay Driver be appointed Deputy Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the following year." Upon affirmation of the meeting Councillor Driver was appointed Deputy Chair.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (IF ANY)

Mr Ken Waller, Chair of Harlestone Parish Council, referred to his presentation, copies of which had been circulated and to further information in support of it that had also been circulated. The Parish Council and residents had overwhelmingly objected to the proposal for a Northampton West SUE. The Parish Council and residents had made the following comments:

- that the site plan was inaccurate and misleading to a material degree in that the Sandy Lane North by-pass had been omitted from it;
- the sensitivity study assessment identified this part of the landscape as being of low to medium sensitivity whereas the area was one of historical and natural beauty with 50 listed buildings in Upper and Lower Harlestone and Harlestone Firs nearby;
- high volumes of traffic and the existing high bunding on Sandy Lane would increase the sense of separation of the SUE from the urban area;
- the Northern Outer Orbital Route would be impossible to cross safely on foot;
- the Sandy Lane Outer Orbital Route should constitute the outer edge of urban development; and
- the proposal could not be regarded as a preferred or suitable Sustainable Urban Extension as it would create a disconnected development in a rural area; all three boundaries to the West, North and East opened onto open countryside; and the outer orbital route to the South boundary separated the urban development by 200 metres.

The Parish Council and residents believed that the proposal for the Northampton West SUE was ill conceived, non-compliant, was not sequential or contiguous. Therefore, it was not sound or in their view a preferred SUE that meet the aims and objectives of the Joint Core Strategy.

However, as an alternative, the Parish Council and residents proposed firstly the Gateway Scheme in Harlestone Parish- 200 homes inside the Eastern extension of the outer orbital route towards Dallington Grange plus additional land west of the A428 providing a further 40 homes, 240 homes in total for Daventry District and secondly 1500 homes for Daventry District in a proposed Northampton North/Moulton SUE sited south west of Moulton and stretching west and to the north of the Moulton Park industrial estate to Kingsthorpe, north east of Holly Lodge Drive. It was believed that the proposed SUE would link contiguously with existing urban developments in Kingsthorpe, Parklands, Moulton Leys and Moulton; provide funding for a northern orbital route thereby alleviating traffic congestion between Moulton and Kingsthorpe; would encourage residents to be more dependent on Northampton for employment, shopping and public transport; and was compliant with and better serves the aims and objectives of the Joint Core Strategy.

The Chairman thanked Mr Waller and advised that the matter would be addressed as part of Item 7 as necessary.

6. WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING UNIT FINANCIAL OUT- TURN 2011/12

The Head of Finance (SNC) submitted a report that updated the Joint Committee on the financial out turn of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit's budget for financial year 2011-12.

RESOLVED: 1. That the out turn for financial year 2011-12; which illustrates an active

and dynamic year for the West Northamptonshire JPU be noted.

2. That £557,000 be carried forward to the financial year 2012-13 to enable the Joint Core Strategy work programme to remain on track and on target, as this amount is “committed expenditure” as set out in paragraph 36 of the Fifth Schedule of the Legal Agreement between partners.

7. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PRE- SUBMISSION WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY

The Chair commented that the Joint Core Strategy was needed to guide development and infrastructure in West Northamptonshire in order to deliver development in a planned and sustainable way. Without it development would become developer led and the presumption in the National Planning Policy Framework of allowable sustainable development would be without local direction. It was a critical step in the process for the documents before the Joint Committee to be issued for representations. As programmed the representations received would be reported to the Joint Committee in November for the Committee’s consideration and to approve the Joint Core Strategy for Submission for Public Examination. The Submission would take place in December 2012. Examination by an Independent Planning Inspector was expected in the Spring of 2013 with adoption following that Autumn. The Chair reminded members that this meeting was about agreeing proposed changes and noted that any previous representations would go forward to the Planning Inspector.

The Head of the JPU submitted a report that sought approval for the publication of the proposed changes to the Pre Submission version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report for the statutory period of six weeks (and one day) of public consultation the extra day being to allow for the Bank Holiday that fell within the consultation/representation period- in accordance with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local planning) (England) Regulations 2012; approval of the officer responses to the representations received to the February 2011 version of the West Northamptonshire Pre Submission Joint Core Strategy set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and approval for the Communication and Consultation Strategy to support the Proposed Changes to the Pre Submission version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy set out in Appendix 3 of the report. The Head of the JPU noted that Recommendation 3 of the report should be amended to read “That the Head of the JPU in consultation with the Chair be authorised to.....” and circulated an erratum of corrections made to the Schedule of Minor Proposed Changes set out in Appendix 5 of the Pre-Submission Version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and also a copy of the corrected Schedule of Minor Proposed Changes set out in Appendix 5 concerning Saved Local Plan Policies to be Replaced by Joint Core Strategy Policies also part of Appendix 5. The representation period would run from 14 August to 26 September 2012, together with an additional two week advance publicity to take account of this coinciding with the summer holiday period.

The Head of the JPU in referring to the comments made by Mr Waller commented that the Gateway Scheme in Harlestone Parish had already been included in the housing numbers. The feasibility of a SUE at Northampton South of Moulton as proposed by Mr Waller had been considered at previous stages of the Joint Core Strategy’s preparation but other options were preferred. Pages 796-798 of the report provided more detail.

The Head of the JPU noted that all of the proposed changes had been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, a Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Equalities Impact Assessment. The Head of the JPU elaborated upon the summary of proposed changes set out on pages 7 to 11 of the report. In answer to questions officers of the JPU commented that:

- More employment was needed over the plan period to reflect higher unemployment figures, later retirement ages, larger households and the effect of the Enterprise Zone in Northampton;
- It was acknowledged that currently, and although energy efficient homes were highly desirable, developers appeared to be less enthusiastic due to viability issues. Emerging work from the Government recognises these issues and this was reflected in the proposed changes to the Joint Core Strategy. Discussions were taking place with Government as to what might be considered as allowable measures, including off site provision to get round the viability problem.;
- In respect of water and sewerage, discussions had taken place with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water in order to understand the water requirements. The Water Cycle Study had concluded that although development would have an effect there was a sufficient water supply throughout the plan period. Developments would need to be water efficient: the proposed changes to the Joint Core Strategy reflected this;
- The Joint Core Strategy recognised the need for some green field development whilst maximising previously developed land (“brown field”) opportunities;
- That a review of the availability of employment land would be published as part of the Evidence Base. There was an adequate supply of employment land over the plan period;
- Work on CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) was running alongside the Joint Core Strategy. The JPU was working with partner Councils to create a joint framework but each Council would retain sovereignty over their own CIL;
- Funding for highway improvements could be sourced from CIL funds. The JPU were co-operating with the North Northamptonshire JPU on road improvements and other infrastructure issues that would affect both areas;
- The County Council had been consulted on all the proposed changes and had recognised the efforts made to accommodate their views, for example, in respect of improvements to the A43;
- That on page 423 of the report the deletion of the reference to land in Aylesbury Vale district area as part of the advanced technology park be reconfirmed with them; and
- That a map would be included showing the Northampton Enterprise Zone.

- RESOLVED:**
1. That approval be given to the publication of the proposed changes to the Pre Submission version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report for the statutory six weeks and one day (to take account of the Bank Holiday) representation period in accordance with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to run from 14 August to 26 September 2012, together with an additional two week advance publicity period to take account of this coinciding with the summer holiday period.
 2. That approval be given to the officer responses to the representations received to the February 2011 version of the West Northamptonshire Pre Submission Joint Core Strategy set out in Appendix 2 of the report.
 3. That the Head of the JPU in consultation with the Chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee be authorised to make any editorial changes required to the Proposed Changes to the Pre Submission version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4. That approval be given for the Communication and Consultation Strategy to support the Proposed Changes to the Pre Submission version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy set out in Appendix 3 of the report.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their work to get the Pre-Submission Version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy to its current stage in the process.

The meeting concluded at 19:08 hours.