



Item No.

6

Joint Strategic Planning Committee

Joint Planning Unit

Date: 21 October 2008

Report Title	Role and Position Statement of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee
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1. Recommendations:

That it be **RESOLVED:**

That the Joint Committee publicises its role and progress via media releases and the Joint Planning Unit website at key stages of its work programme.

2. Summary:

There is need to outline the role of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee ("the Joint Committee") as a new local planning authority for plan-making, to inform residents and the business community in particular. It is also appropriate to inform the community of how work to date will be used and supplemented, under the new Joint Committee arrangements, to ensure plans for balancing development and environment needs are promptly adopted. Communication of the Joint Committee's progress on plan-making is recommended at all key stages.

3. Background:

Parliamentary Order established the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee on 25 July 2008. Statutorily, the Joint Committee is a new and separate local planning authority for plan-making purposes. West Northamptonshire covers the areas of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire councils.

Membership of the Joint Committee is established in the Order. Voting members have been appointed from elected councillors of Daventry District (3), Northampton Borough (4), Northamptonshire County (2) and South Northamptonshire (3) councils – twelve councillors in total. Other, non-voting, members can be co-opted by the Joint Committee itself as and when necessary, and non-voting observers can also be appointed. From the outset, the planning authorities of Wellingborough Borough Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation will be observers.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU), made up of officers of the voting

councils, serves the Joint Committee.

The Joint Committee is responsible for the production of a joint Local Development Scheme and consequent Local Development Documents (LDDs) for west Northamptonshire in a coordinated manner across council areas.

Such plans (Development Plan Documents – DPDs – and Supplementary Planning Documents – SPDs) are produced under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and will comprise the Local Development Framework.

4. Options:

The current approved Joint Local Development Scheme (March 2007), mutually adopted by the same councils, identified the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy DPD, the Northampton Implementation Area DPD, the West Northamptonshire Rural Areas DPD and the West Northamptonshire Development Control Policies DPD in particular for joint production. This Scheme was adopted before the Joint Committee was established.

With the creation of the Joint Committee, the Order requires production of a revised Joint Local Development Scheme by 25th October 2008. This first task of the Joint Committee is subject of a separate item on the agenda and allows the Joint Committee to continue production of key plans. The Scheme will particularly identify continued production of the overarching Core Strategy, but one that is far more embracing than originally conceived based on latest national guidance and practice.

Prior to establishment of the Joint Committee, a shadow Joint Steering Group and the Joint Planning Unit concentrated on preparing the overarching Core Strategy. That preparatory work will be used and supplemented as appropriate, so that the submission of the enhanced Core Strategy can be made to the Secretary of State as per the new Local Development Scheme. The Joint Committee will be keen for prompt production of robust evidence to ensure time is not lost.

The Core Strategy will set out the broad principles for sustainable development, economic regeneration and management of the environment. Particular issues are infrastructure provision, broad areas and directions of development growth, regeneration for Northampton, Daventry and Towcester centres, and appropriate protection of villages.

With the need to put plans in place sooner rather than later, the Joint Planning Unit is planned to be supplemented by the creation of a new permanent post of Head of Joint Planning, similarly jointly appointed and funded by the voting councils. This will help increase the capacity to deliver the Core Strategy and other DPDs/SPDs in the Local Development Scheme. There is also proposed interim support to ensure the Core Strategy production keeps to the revised timetable.

The Joint Committee is not a planning authority for any other planning purposes in west Northamptonshire such as development control or planning enforcement. Such functions remain with Daventry District, Northampton Borough, Northamptonshire County and South Northamptonshire councils and, in specified cases, with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation.

It is considered best to proactively inform the community of the role and priorities of the new Joint Committee. Rather than react to enquiries, such a strategy for communication would be deployed at all significant stages of the Joint Committee's work programme – starting with the business of its inaugural meeting.

5. Consultees:

External:	None
Internal:	None

6. Representations:

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7. Conclusions:

With a new plan-making authority, the Joint Committee is recommended to proactively inform the wider community of its role and progress, particularly via the media and the JPU website.

8. Legal Implications:

Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1572 establishes the Joint Committee via the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Part 2, s. 29-31.

Procedure rules for the Joint Committee will be as per the Parliamentary Order, as supplemented by the Committee's own procedures via the associated Memorandum of Intent and any Standing Orders. (This is subject of a separate report on the agenda).

9. Background Papers:

West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008 (S.I. 2008 No. 1572).
Joint Local Development Scheme March 2007: Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, South Northamptonshire Council.

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