

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 21 October 2008

PRESENT: Councillor Woods (Chair); Councillors Amos, Barnes, Church, Clarke, Gonzalez de Savage, Hollis, Melling, Over, Smith, Townsend and P. D. Varnsvery.

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Managing Director of Daventry District Council called for nominations for the appointment of a Chairman.

Councillor Barnes proposed and Councillor Amos seconded "That Councillor Woods be appointed Chairman of the Joint Committee."

RESOLVED: That Councillor Woods be appointed Chairman of the Joint Committee.

The Chairman commented that the Joint Committee was a formal partnership between Daventry, South Northamptonshire, Northampton and Northamptonshire councils working together with the WNDC and others (as observers) to produce a vision for the towns, villages and rural areas that form West Northamptonshire. The Joint Committee would also work with the public and other public sector bodies and its primary work would be in relation to spatial planning. The Joint Committee was not a development control or enforcement authority with these roles remaining with either the WNDC or the individual Councils forming the partnership.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman called for nominations for the appointment of a Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Barnes proposed and Councillor Smith seconded "That Councillor Millar be appointed Vice-Chairman."

RESOLVED: That Councillor Millar be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman with the consent of the Joint Committee moved this item up to this point in the meeting.

Councillors Barnes, Church, Smith and Woods declared a Personal Interest in item 3 "Appointment of Observers" insofar as the discussion related to the Appointment of an Observer from WNDC as they were Board members of that organisation.

4. APPOINTMENT OF OBSERVERS

(i) West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

Councillor Church proposed and Councillor Barnes seconded "That David Dickinson be appointed Observer from the WNDC".

(ii) WELLINGBOROUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Councillor Church proposed and Councillor Townsend seconded "That Councillor Bass be appointed Observer from Wellingborough Borough Council".

(iii) LABOUR PARTY

Councillor Church proposed and Councillor P D Varnsvery seconded "That Councillor Davies be appointed Observer from the Labour Party".

RESOLVED: That Mr. D Dickinson, Councillor Bass and Councillor Davies be appointed as Observers on the Joint Committee.

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillor Millar.

6. ROLE AND POSITION STATEMENT OF THE WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Managing Director for Daventry District Council submitted a report that outlined the role of the Joint Committee as a new local planning authority for plan making and to inform residents and the business community in particular. He noted that the item concerning the Local Development Scheme later on the agenda described what the Joint Committee would do and also referred to the additional resources required to review the Local Development Scheme and to create a post of Head of Joint Planning. The Managing Director confirmed that the Joint Committee was not a development control or enforcement authority and referred to the need for good communication with the public to explain the Joint Committee's role. He also referred to a public information sheet, copies of which had been circulated.

The Joint Committee discussed the report noting that its role would be critical in securing the right infrastructure for growth in its broadest sense and for growth to be relevant to each settlement; to create a Northampton that attracted more people, to reinvigorate Daventry and Towcester but also to protect rural areas and villages.

It was noted that the scale of growth over the next thirty years placed a great responsibility upon the Joint Committee, especially as the decisions to be made had to be right first time.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and that the Joint Committee publicises its role on progress via media releases and the Joint Planning website at key stages of its work programme.

7. GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The Corporate Services Manager for South Northamptonshire Council submitted a report and commented upon the precedence of the Statutory Instrument which set up the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee, the Memorandum of Intent and the proposed Supplementary Procedural Rules that had been based upon South Northamptonshire Council's Procedural Rules as the Accountable Body for the Joint Committee.

He particularly highlighted the need for the Joint Committee's opinion upon a two hour guillotine mechanism for the length of meetings; public participation rights; the need for a Chairman's casting vote; Overview & Scrutiny arrangements and a process for handling the Joint Committee's minutes within each of the participating Councils' internal mechanisms. He also made brief reference to budgetary matters and ethics.

The Joint Committee discussed the report.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the terms of reference for the Joint Committee set out in the report be adopted.
 - (2) That Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1572 "The West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008" be noted.
 - (3) That the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Memorandum of Intent be endorsed.
 - (4) That the Supplementary Procedural Rules be adopted subject to the following changes:
 - (a) There be a two hour guillotine on the length of meetings subject to the Committee's discretion to extend the length of meetings.
 - (b) That in respect of public participation rights these be extended to allow public addresses upon any substantive agenda item and that registrations to speak be accepted by any of the participating Councils and forwarded to the Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire District Council who would co-ordinate them.
 - (c) That in respect of a Chairman's casting vote this be as set out at paragraph 6.2 of the Supplementary Procedure Rules.
 - (d) That in respect of Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements each participating Council be able to scrutinise the work of the Joint Committee as they see fit but that where practicable a collaborative approach be encouraged.
 - (e) That the minutes of the Joint Committee be submitted to each participating Council's executive meetings and Full Council meeting.

8. JPU BUDGET- RESOURCE COMMITMENT

The Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council reported that the Memorandum of Intent required a budget to be drawn up for the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) and agreed by the Joint Committee and this would be submitted to its next meeting. Some costs would be borne individually by authorities but the cost of the JPU and the joint planning documents would be split proportionately across the authorities, vis Northampton Borough Council one third, Daventry and South Northamptonshire Councils one quarter each and Northamptonshire County Council one sixth. The costs would need to be agreed by the Joint Committee and then individually by each authority. He referred to the following item on the agenda in respect of the review of the Local Development Scheme noting that some of the costs involved were mentioned in that report. All the authorities' Finance Officers had already met to discuss the issues.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

9. REVIEW OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

K Moore submitted a report noting an error on page 32 of the proposed Local Development Scheme in that the publication date should read November 2009. She circulated a key to the abbreviations and terms also to be used with the document. She noted that the scheme was the most important tool to guide the development of West Northamptonshire and for the Councils to set out their intent. K Moore noted that the deadline for submission of the scheme to the Secretary of State was 25 October and that the Secretary of State could intervene if not happy with the document or if it was not submitted on time. The Joint Committee was committed to providing resources and leadership to deliver the scheme. In answer to a question she commented that the scheme was deliverable if resources were made available to implement it. The document so far had Government Office support. The Committee discussed the report it being noted that the current economic situation would not affect the planning process and that the life of the plan, in reality, would probably comprise several economic cycles. It was noted that in respect of paragraph 13.12 of the Scheme that the new post of Head of Joint Planning would report to the Joint Committee. A Business Sub-Group would be created that would meet between the meetings of the Joint Committee and would comprise two members from each of the participating authorities. This paragraph should be redrafted in order to clarify this.

In respect of the covering report it was noted that on page 11 in the first paragraph the word "replacing" should be substituted by the word "reviewing".

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That, subject factual corrections and redrafting of paragraph 13.12, approval be given to the Local Development Scheme as attached for submission to the Government Office for the East Midlands by the deadline of 25 October 2008.
 - (2) That the urgent need to bring forward further resources to deliver the Local Development Scheme be noted.
 - (3) That the progress made to date and the next steps for the work of the Committee and the Joint Planning Unit be noted.

- (4) That approval be given to the establishment of a Business Sub-Group of the Joint Committee as described to monitor the LDS work programme and its resourcing.
- (5) That the Local Development Scheme be brought into effect following agreement by the Government Office for the East Midlands.

N.B. D Dickinson declared a personal interest in this item as a Director of Amicus Horizon Housing Association and of Guinness Peat insofar as the discussion related to the possible role of registered social landlords as developers.

10. EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLAN (REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY)- SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES CONSULTATION

C Berry, Principal Planning Officer with the JPU submitted a report that set out the changes to the East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) proposed by the Secretary of State and that had been published for consultation. She noted that because of the deadlines, the Joint Programme Board had agreed that Officer comments from the Joint Planning Unit be submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with a deadline of 17 October and that any changes to those comments as a result of the Joint Committee's views be forwarded to the Secretary of State after this meeting. She particularly drew attention to Policy 13; in terms of housing numbers for Daventry and South Northamptonshire no alteration had been suggested but for Northampton a minor increase of 25 dwellings over the period to 2026 was now proposed. In respect of paragraph 3.35 she noted that on 17 October 2008 the Regional Assembly had issued for consultation their proposed project plan for the partial review of the Regional Plan.

The Committee discussed the report it being noted that the planning period of 2006-11 was already almost halfway through and that given the current economic situation it appeared unlikely that the numbers of dwellings proposed would be reached. It was commented that the Secretary of State was unlikely to alter the programme but this should not detract from the validity of the comment. Concern was expressed that there needed to be the right compromise between urban sprawl and over concentration of development and that there should be no scope for new freestanding settlements.

RESOLVED: That the officer response to the proposed changes to the East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy) be amended by inclusion of the comments regarding the deliverability of housing number targets in the current economic climate expressed by the Joint Committee.

11. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Future meetings of the Committee on 16 December 2008 at South Northamptonshire Council and 17 February 2009 at Daventry District Council and in April 2009 (date to be confirmed) were noted.

12. MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

The meeting concluded at 20.14 hours