



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	NORTHAMPTON LOCAL PLAN PART 2 PROPOSED SUBMISSION
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC / PRIVATE

Cabinet Meeting Date:	3 rd April 2019
Key Decision:	YES
Within Policy:	YES
Policy Document:	YES
Service Area:	Planning
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor James Hill
Ward(s)	All wards

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Proposed Submission version of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 to Cabinet for consideration.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Part 2, Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended.
- 2.2 That the Head of Planning be given delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to make minor non-material spelling, formatting, mapping and other amendments to the consultation documents where they do not alter the intent of the plan.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The purpose of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 (NLP2) is to set out the planning policy framework for the Borough to 2029. The NLP2 will be in conformity with the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (WNJCS), which was adopted in 2014. The policies of the WNJCS, which are generally of a strategic nature, will continue to apply to Northampton after the NLP2 is adopted. It is for this reason that the Local Plan Part 2 will only cover the period to 2029 and not the more usual 15 years from adoption.
- 3.1.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy sets out the strategic-level policies for the Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire Council areas, most notably allocating Sustainable Urban Extensions and setting out policies on employment, the distribution of retail, transport strategy, tourism and the built and natural environment. Core Strategy Policy S3 requires that about 18,870 net additional dwellings be provided in Northampton Borough from 2011 to 2029.
- 3.1.3 When it is adopted, NLP2 will replace all of the saved policies from the Northampton Local Plan, 1997 and replace the Northampton Central area Action Plan, 2013.
- 3.1.4 Once the NLP2 is submitted to the Secretary of State, it will be subject to an examination in public by an independent inspector to consider whether it has met the legal tests for its preparation and whether it meets the tests of soundness (set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)).
- 3.1.5 The legal tests relating to its preparation are:
- In accordance with the Local Development Scheme;
 - Whether the consultation has been in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and national consultation regulations;
 - Whether it has been subject to sustainability appraisal; and
 - Whether the duty to co-operate has been met.
- 3.1.5 Several rounds of consultation have already taken place relating to the preparation of the Local Plan, as follows:
- a) Issues consultation, May / June 2016 – this formal public consultation sought views on the scope and key issues the Local Plan Part 2 should address. Alongside this, consultation took place on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and Statement of Community Involvement and the Land Availability Assessment call for sites and its methodology.
 - b) Options consultation, September / November 2016 – this second stage of public consultation sought opinions on the vision and objectives for the plan and a number of other matters for which options were presented.

- c) Sites consultation, October / November 2017 – gathered views on the potential future uses of sites. Sites were rated as to whether or not they could be considered for inclusion in the Local Plan Part 2.

3.1.6 The examination in public will focus on whether or not the Local Plan meets the tests of soundness set out in paragraph 35 of the NPPF as follows:

- Positively prepared – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs, and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with NPPF policies.

3.1.7 The content of the Local Plan has been informed by an extensive evidence base which has been kept up to date and reviewed in the light of representations to previous consultations. The evidence base can be viewed at https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200205/planning_for_the_future/1739/

3.1.8 The plan must also be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The purpose of this is to appraise the social, economic and environmental effects of the plan and to consider choices made in comparison to reasonable alternatives. This does not mean that the most sustainable option has to be selected as long as there are valid planning reasons to select an alternative option. The Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment have both been carried out for the Council by independent consultants to ensure impartiality.

3.1.9 The Council has worked with neighbouring councils and the County Council during the preparation of this plan in accordance with the duty to co-operate.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The Proposed Submission Local Plan Part 2 has fourteen chapters.

3.2.2 Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the local plan (including its relationship to the WNJCS) and the processes involved in its preparation. Northampton Now sets out a description of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of the borough and the consultation that has informed this plan and the challenges and opportunities Northampton faces. The Vision and Borough Objectives attempt to address these challenges and have been

informed by previous consultation on the Local Plan and the evidence base supporting the plan.

- 3.2.3 The Sustainable Development chapter incorporates Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, which is an important overarching policy. The NPPF sets a requirement to consider development proposals in a positive way and states that all Local Plans must incorporate a presumption in favour of sustainable development. WNJCS Policy SA addresses this for West Northamptonshire and the Local Plan policy is much the same, having the effect that sustainable development proposals will be approved and developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area can be secured. It makes it clear that planning applications which accord with Local Plan policies will be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.2.4 Chapter 5 of the Local Plan is about securing high quality development and includes policies on:
- placemaking, which is about making sure development is attractive, locally distinctive, protects the natural environment and heritage assets and encourages healthy lifestyles.
 - High quality design
 - Amenity and layout
 - Sustainable construction
 - Flood risk and water management
- 3.2.5 Chapter 6 is about the regeneration of the borough. The main focus is on the central area of the town, placing the continued vitality of the town centre at the heart of the regeneration strategy and making policy provisions for Greyfriars, Castle Station, Four Waterside, St Peter's Way, Ransome Road and the University of Northampton Waterside Campus. It also contains a supportive policy for hotel growth particularly in the town centre and Enterprise Zone.
- 3.2.6 Chapter 7 of the Local Plan sets out details about housing delivery and allocates 81 new sites for new housing. These sites have been selected following a rigorous approach covering 17 criteria, with the involvement of landowners, developers and key stakeholders to ensure that they are deliverable in an acceptable way within the plan period.
- 3.2.7 Sufficient capacity has been identified to meet the WNJCS requirement for the provision of 18,870 dwellings in Northampton from 2011 to 2029. However, it should be noted that the housing trajectory set out in the Local Plan is different from the proposed housing delivery trajectory set out in Appendix 3 of the WNJCS. The delivery rates envisaged in the Core Strategy for Northampton in this period are very high – for example 1,544 dwellings in 2018/19 and 1,278 dwellings in 2022/23. In practice, housing completion rates in Northampton have been slower than the rates set out in the Core Strategy and are predicted to continue in the same way for the first few years of the plan period. Completions in sustainable urban extensions, in particular, are running at lower rates than were expected. Taking this evidence into account, and following legal advice on this matter, the Local Plan contains a housing delivery trajectory that differs from the proposed housing delivery trajectory set

out in the WNJCS by setting lower figures for the first five years, with higher rates of delivery in later years of the plan period. More detail on this is set out in the Housing Technical Paper attached at Appendix C.

- 3.2.8 On the basis of the findings of the West Northamptonshire Housing Market Evidence, it has not been necessary to change the stipulation of WNJCS Policy that, for developments of 15 or more dwellings, the proportion of affordable housing should be 35%, so there is no new policy on this in the Local Plan Part 2. There is a policy on the type and mix of housing which includes stipulations about the mix of dwelling types, as well as self-build and custom-build housing and specialist housing.
- 3.2.9 Regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation, Policy 14 includes the revised threshold, as set out in the Northampton study of Housing in Multiple Occupation Policy, 2018, for the consideration of changes of use from Use Class C3 dwellinghouses to Use Class C4 houses in multiple occupation, where the permitted development rights have been removed by Article 4 Directions.
- 3.2.10 Policies to safeguard existing employment sites and support new employment developments and schemes are set out in Chapter 8.
- 3.2.11 Policies about new retail development and retail impact assessment are set out in Chapter 9 – Centres, Services and Facilities. This reflects advice contained in the Retail and Leisure Study, 2018. In this section, there are also policies on proposals for new community facilities, childcare provision and sites for burial space.
- 3.2.12 Policies for the protection and enhancement of environmental assets including green infrastructure, open spaces, biodiversity and heritage assets are set out in Chapter 10.
- 3.2.13 Sustainable transport, highway safety and parking standards are the subject of policies in Chapter 11.
- 3.2.14 Policy 32, in Chapter 12 deals with infrastructure delivery and contributions.
- 3.2.15 Site specific allocations and policies for major new developments that necessitate detailed development parameters are set out in the Site Specific Allocations and Policies chapter (Chapter 13), alongside a list of the 96 development allocations.
- 3.2.16 The final chapter of the plan explains how the Council will go about monitoring the implementation of the plan.
- 3.2.17 A Sustainability Appraisal has informed the preparation of this Local Plan Part 2. Reasonable alternatives to the policies and sites have been assessed during the preparation of the plan and these have informed its formulation.
- 3.2.18 Subject to the approval of the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Part 2 for public consultation, it is proposed that consultation commences on 1st May 2019 for a six week period closing on 14th June 2019.

3.3 Choices (Options)

Option 1: Agree to the recommendation

- 3.3.1 If Cabinet approves the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Part 2, Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal for publication, the Council will be able to go out to public consultation for six weeks from 1st May. This should then make it possible to achieve other milestones in the preparation of the plan with a view to submitting it to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government by November 2019.

Option 2: Do not agree the recommendation

- 3.3.2 Cabinet could defer or decide not to approve the Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan Part 2, Policies Map and Sustainability Appraisal for publication. To take either course of action would run the risk that the date for adoption of the Local Plan Part 2 would slip back. To do this would mean that the Council would continue to have planning policies that are becoming increasingly outdated, making it increasingly difficult to manage development effectively.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 The Local Plan Part 2 will review and update the Local Plan Saved Policies and the Central Area Action Plan. An up-to-date plan will provide greater certainty and allow policies at the local level to address local issues and be fully compliant with up-to-date requirements. Planning applications will be determined in accordance with the development plan, including the Local Plan Part 2, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies in an emerging plan have increasing weight the further they progress through the process, particularly if they have not received any objections.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 Sufficient resources have been incorporated into the budget for 2019/20 to cover the remaining stages of plan preparation.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 The Local Plan is a statutory document and has to be prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended; the Town and Country Planning Act (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended, The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004; and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

4.4 Equality and Health

- 4.4.1 An equalities impact assessment has been carried out. None of the policies in the document went beyond the screening stage as no unjustified negative impacts were identified.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 Cabinet Advisory Group have been regularly briefed and had the opportunity to comment throughout the plan preparation process. Feedback from members of the public, businesses, agents, developers, other local authorities and community groups during previous public consultation, and since, has been taken into account in the formulation of the Proposed Submission Plan.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 The Local Plan Part 2 will help to guide all development across Northampton, achieving economic, environmental and social benefits. In terms of the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Local Plan Part 2 will help to deliver a stronger economy by:

- Having a Local Plan that helps Northampton to grow and prosper
- Containing policies to address the strategy for the town centre, provision of charging points for electric vehicles and securing quality development that makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 4.6.2 It will also help to deliver resilient communities by facilitating the delivery of new and better homes, including affordable homes.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 There are no other implications arising directly from the proposals in this report.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, December 2014, West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
<http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=2737424>

Northampton Central Area Action Plan, January 2013, Northampton Borough Council
https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200205/planning_for_the_future/1748/central_area_action_plan_caap

Northampton Local Plan, 1997, Northampton Borough Council
https://www.northampton.gov.uk/info/200205/planning_for_the_future/1746/

Appendix A – Northampton Local Plan Part 2 – Proposed Submission, January 2019

Appendix B – Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2, January 2019, LUC

Appendix C – Northampton Local Part 2 – Housing Technical Paper, March 2019

Appendix D – Local Plan Policies Map and Central Area Inset Plan

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The results of this consultation will be fed into the Submission version of the Northampton Local Part 2, which will be put before Cabinet for approval for submission to the Secretary of State in due course.

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