



Item 3

**North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee Meeting (NNJPC)**

**Minutes: 7 November 2017 (Meeting held in public)**

**The Council Chamber, Kettering Borough Council**

Present for all or part of the meeting:-

Councillor David Brackenbury	East Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Mary Butcher	Corby Borough Council
Councillor Jon Paul Carr	Borough Council of Wellingborough
Councillor Anthony Dady	Corby Borough Council
Councillor David Jenney (Chairman)	East Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Isabel McNab	Corby Borough Council
Councillor Steven North	East Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Andrew Scarborough	Borough Council of Wellingborough
Councillor Mick Scrimshaw	Kettering Borough Council
Councillor Jan Smith	Kettering Borough Council
Councillor Michael Tebbutt	Kettering Borough Council
Councillor Malcolm Waters	Northamptonshire County Council

Also present:

Terry Begley	Principal Planner, Corby Borough Council
Barbel Gale	Democracy Officer, NCC (Minutes)
Simon James	Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU
Andrew Longley	Head of the NNJPDU
Paul Woods	Senior Planner, NNJPDU

16/17 Apologies and non-attendance

Apologies were received from the following members:

- Councillor Julie Brookfield, Northamptonshire County Council
- Councillor Martin Griffiths, Borough Council of Wellingborough
- Councillor Dr Andy Mercer, Northamptonshire County Council

17/17 Declarations of interest by Councillors

Item	Councillor	Type	Nature
All	Carr	Discloseable non-pecuniary interest.	Chairman of the Committee considering the Local Plan.

18/17 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017

**RESOLVED that: the minutes of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee meeting held in public on 14 September 2017 were agreed.**



19/17 Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Implementation

At the invitation of the Chairman the Senior Planner, NNJPDU introduced the report, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and made the following points:

***Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough Publication Plan:***

- The 6 week consultation on the Part 2 Local Plan for the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) had commenced and stated that it complemented the JCS adding local detail to strategic policies;
- A couple of the key elements to the Plan were that it recognised that the JCS gave the opportunity for the Plan to provide detailed rural settlement hierarchy and did so by identifying restraint villages as being areas where development would be severely restricted;
- The Plan also proposed that the town centre would be reinvigorated through the mixed use development of 3 specific sites that arose over the lifetime of the plan; and
- The Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU) would continue to support the Borough Council of Wellingborough through the submission and examination process.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- It was clarified that the consultation had now closed and the BCW has not received a large number of comments.
- In terms of the Duty to Cooperate, nothing had been received from Daventry District Council or Northampton Borough Council. South Northamptonshire Council raised concerns regarding their boundary but nothing of any significance;
- Comments raised by Sywell Aerodrome seeking protection of the site from new housing;
- Sport England raised concerns regarding sports provision;
- Concerns raised regarding the nature and range of employment land proposed;
- In response to a query it was explained that restraint villages were main conservation areas, where development would be limited;
- Some of the responses received were regarding the 'Sustainable Urban Extensions' (SUE's) not delivering quickly enough;
- Clarification was sought regarding the meaning of conservation area, was it that you could not build in that area or was it that the builds needed to keep to a particular standard; and
- In clarification it was explained that the meaning of conservation area was that development was allowed but respect must be given to the character and style used within that conservation area.
- It was felt that the Plan had been well received overall with few interventions necessary;



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***Brownfield Registers:***

The Senior Planner, NNJPDU explained that the Government requires all local authorities to prepare and publish a Brownfield Register by 31 December 2017. North Northamptonshire's Councils were Pilot authorities to aid the development of this policy area and published a Pilot Brownfield Register in September 2016. To ensure this new deadline is met, the intention is to review the Pilot register and ensure it conforms to the latest legislation and guidance and have a list of Part 1 sites in place. The focus for subsequent reviews will be the ongoing maintenance of the Part 1 list and development of a Part 2 list, should the local planning authorities require.

Pursuant to this item no discussion points were raised.

***Self-Build and Custom Build Register:***

The Head of the NNJPDU made the following points:

- There were lots of interesting ideas and examples shown at the 'Right to Build' Expo held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017;
- The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placed a duty on local authorities to have a register of people who were interested in self-build or custom build project in their area;
- These 'Right to Build demand registers' would enable Councils to demonstrate the demand;
- The JPDU was working with the Right to Build Task Force to promote custom and self-build housing with a view that consideration should also be given to smaller sites; and
- It was recommended that the Right to Build demand registers should be published on the new JPDU website.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- The conference held was very clear and informative;
- Congratulations was given to the Head of the JPDU and his team for the excellent work they had done in this area;
- It was felt 8% of housing would be delivered by this means going forward however it would not remove all of the housing issues;
- It was felt that having a split level register was very important;
- It was felt that there needed to be monitoring of the registers to ensure deliverability;
- It was queried if a similar event could be held in the future to allow public attendance. In response it was explained that the Expo was a technical session seeking to highlight the potential of this area to relevant parties with a view to opening up their sites to this source of housing. Attendees included Neighbourhood Planning Groups, Councillors, site developers, agents and officers. It was clarified that the Expo was not suitable for a member of the public who was considering doing a self-build to attend. However a putting on a session around the publication of registers and demand could be considered if felt appropriate;



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- Custom and Self-Build housing not the solution to UK housing problems but this area may play its part;
- Graven Hill (Oxon) and Almere (Netherlands) cited as examples where such developments are being progressed;
- It was felt that a different, retrospective approach was needed for already identified sites rather than looking a new sites;
- It was clarified that you could not retrospectively require self-build sections to be added to sites however it could be considered alongside existing developments;
- It was felt that this provided more opportunities in relations to SUE's delivering smaller units with an option for different plots of housing rather than all being the same;
- This area provides potential for SME's and smaller builders in the towns and villages to deliver these sites. Would require a collective approach across the area. The Brownfield Register (and a small sites register?) could provide opportunities for delivery in this area;
- It was queried if parish councils understood about the opportunity this housing sector provides, particularly for younger and older people, and if not felt that they should be informed;
- Parish Councils should be directly contacted to gauge whether they own any land which could be developed for Self and Custom Build housing;
- It was queried if there was any funding available to help fund infrastructure to make this more successful;
- It was clarified that some funding was available from the Homes and Communities Agency however local authorities could not apply for the matched funding it had done through a development; and
- It was felt that there was a need to encourage small scale developers to see the development opportunities available across North Northants and upskill the construction workforce, where possible.

**RESOLVED: That the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee:**

- 1. Confirmed that the Publication Plan for the Borough of Wellingborough was in conformity with the JCS;**
- 2. Endorsed the approach to Brownfield Registers; and**
- 3. Noted the update in relation to Self and Custom Build Registers.**

20/17 North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Councillor Smith left the meeting during this item.

At the invitation of the Chairman the Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU introduced the report, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and made the following points:



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- It was noted that extensive work had been undertaken on the Place Shaping SPD which included member workshops on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017;
- A key area of work fundamental to the SPD had involved seeking to resolve outstanding issues with NCC Highways;
- Clarification of the County's position in relation to SuDS and other street design matters was welcomed, and was clear there was more flexibility going forward, the SPD would be refined to take forward the measures identified in the briefing note and would be drafted in such a way as to avoid mixed messages by directly referring back to the Manual for Streets allowing applicants, LPA's and NCC to use the SPD to determine the appropriate street design on a case by case basis;
- A graphic designer had been appointed and an initial 'house style' for the document had been developed, an example of the 'designed up' section was shown in appendix B and the document would be designed as a web document, so each section would be split into PDF's, so they could be split up and used as people navigated through the website;
- The timetable for completion of the SPD was that it would be submitted to the Joint Planning Committee to endorse it for consultation on 30 January 2018, consultation would take place between February and March 2018, the Joint Committee would endorse the final SPD in May 2018 with the partner LPA's adopting it in May 2018; and
- The revised timetable would allow further opportunities for engagement with Members and other stakeholders should it be required to build on the work already undertaken which had helped to refine and strengthen the SPD.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- It was suggested that the final SPD was submitted to the Joint Committee in early May 2018 to ensure that existing members can adopt the document and lessen the learning curve for future members ahead of the changing of committee memberships at the respective Councils;
- The uniqueness of the SPA in East Northamptonshire and Borough of Wellingborough was raised. It was queried if additional weight could be made to this in the biodiversity and landscape sections. In response it was explained that the version submitted in September 2017 placed a lot of emphasis on green infrastructure and landscape but further additions could be considered;
- It was clarified by Natural England that a further habitat assessment was not required;
- It was queried if the document should define the appropriate species for trees planted in streets. In response it was explained that guidance on this subject could be provided in the SPD dependent upon the location they are to be planted at;
- It was clarified that officers at East Northamptonshire Council had been contributing to the document;
- Consideration to drainage and run-off would become very important going forward as developments were completed;



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- Regarding parking, it was noted that car ownership would grow however it was unclear how future growth was accounted for and there was a need for this to be correct; and
- Concerns raised on the widths of footpaths being constructed in new build developments. It was felt that footpaths needed to be wider and this point should be included in the document, however it was also felt that a request for wider roads should also be included, because if the roads were wide enough for vehicles to pass parked vehicles then the footpaths would not be impeded.

**RESOLVED: That the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee noted the progress on the Place Shaping Supplementary Planning Document and agreed the timetable set out at paragraph 4.3 of the main report on the understanding that the Joint Committee endorse the final SPD and Partner LPAs adopt the SPD by early May 2018.**

#### 21/17 Planning for the right homes in the right places

At the invitation of the Chairman the Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU introduced the report, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting, and made the following points:

- The report informed members of the proposed changes to national planning policy and to agree the response to the consultation;
- The Joint Committee agreed its response to the Housing White Paper (HWP) at its April 2017 meeting;
- Subject to the outcome of the consultation and the responses received to the HWP, the Government intended to publish a draft revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) early in 2018;
- The Government intended to allow a short period of time for further consultation on the text of the NPPF to make sure the working was clear, consistent and well understood, the ambition was to publish the revised NPPF in Spring 2018;
- Section 3 of the report outlined the relevant content of the consultation and set out comments and/or a proposed response, the responses took account of previous feedback to Government, notably to the HWP consultation and drew on reports already considered by the relevant committees at partner councils;
- The Government had published each LPA's housing need arising from the proposed methodology;
- The indicative housing need figures arising from the proposals for the North Northamptonshire authorities were not dissimilar to those in the JCS (over the 10 year period to 2026 North Northamptonshire's housing need requirement would increase by 630 dwellings overall);
- The provisions in the JCS left North Northamptonshire well placed to meet any increased housing needed; and
- The proposals also provided a potential way forward for those areas who worked jointly, outlining that the housing needed for those defined areas should be the sum of the local housing need for each LPA with the



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subsequent distribution of that across the plan area a decision for the relevant local authorities.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- East Northamptonshire Council felt that the baseline figures were wrong because they used information from a census from 5 years ago and didn't reflect growth to date. Considered that when assessing housing need more recent information should be used;
- It was queried what would happen if areas outside/adjacent to North Northants cannot meet their housing need requirements – would the area be under pressure to accept additional growth? In response it was explained that the JPDU had worked with adjoining areas through the development of the JCS to satisfy the Duty to Cooperate (as covered in the responses to Questions 6 – 8 of the Item 6 report); and
- It was clarified that this was standard methodology used to determine housing need and the JCS was correct in terms of numbers, the Joint Delivery Committee had asked for a paper on this subject and it will also consider if a central area is unable to deliver its need.

***Question 1: a) do you agree with the proposed standard approach to assessing local housing need? If not, what alternative approach or other factors should be considered?***

The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU made the following points:

- Regarding Question 1, part of the response included that it was considered likely however that some may consider the approach overly simplistic by not taking account of locally identified housing needs and placing too much reliance on demand based data;
- To implement the new approach, the consultation proposals outline that Government intended to make it clear in the revised NPPF that plans should be reviewed every 5 years;
- It also clarified that both the house price to earnings ratios and household projections were regularly updated, and the local housing need figure would not remain static throughout the plan preparation process albeit to provide stability authorities would be able to rely on evidence used to justify their local housing need for a period of 2 years from the date on which they submitted their plan; and
- The consultation set out that the final housing figure in the local plan or spatial development strategy might differ from the local housing need figure after taking account of issues raised during the examination, constraints and the duty to co-operate.

***Question 2: do you agree with the proposal that an assessment of local housing need should be able to be relied upon for a period of 2 years from the date a plan was submitted?***



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The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU made the following points:

- It was essential that the 2 year transitional arrangements related to the Examination process, not the timescale from which the housing needs could be considered up to date;
- They had concerns about the requirement to review Local Plans every 5 years;
- They had concerns that within a rigid timescale to review plans every 5 years, that there wouldn't be enough time for Part 2 Local Plans to be produced in advance of a review of the JCS; and
- The consultation set out the proposal to amend the NPPF so that having a robust method for assessing local housing need became part of the tests that plans were assessed against and to make clear that the use of the proposed standard method would be sufficient to satisfy the test.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- There is a hierarchy of Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans and if the JCS needs reviewing every 5 years there will be a lag and we will be in a constant state of review;
- It was felt that it was vital that plans were up to date however there was also a need to let the plans become established;
- A suggestion was made that a list containing details of where local authorities were with publication or review of their local plans would be welcomed;
- It was noted that some communities chose not to have neighbourhood plans due to the costs involved and the commitment needed from volunteers to produce them; and
- It was felt that it was vital that Part 2 Local Plans were included for the protection of areas without neighbourhood plans.

***Question 3: do you agree that we should amend national planning policy so that a sound plan should identify local housing need using a clear and justified method?***

The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU made the following points:

- This approach was supported, it should be clear in the guidance that representations seeking to challenge a LPA that used the standard methodology contribute to delays in the examination process;
- It needed to be clear in the NPPF/NPPG that where a Part 1 Local Plan had been adopted within 5 years that housing numbers should not be able to be challenged in Part 2 Local Plans;
- The Government proposed to amend planning guidance so that where a plan was based on an assessment of local housing need in excess of that which the standard method would provide, Planning Inspectors were advised to work on the assumption that the approach adopted was sound unless there were compelling reasons to indicate otherwise; and



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- The consultation set out that there should be very limited grounds for adopting an alternative method which resulted in a lower need than the proposed approach.

At this point the Committee agreed that the response to each question would be agreed unless further discussions were required.

**Question 10: a) do you have suggestions on how to streamline the process for identifying the housing need for individual groups and what evidence could be used to help plan to meet the needs of particular groups? b) do you agree that the current definition of older people within the NPPF is still fit-for-purpose?**

It was queried what was meant by individual groups. The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU explained that it was about ensuring that the needs of particular groups could be disaggregated when identifying housing needs.

**Question 11: a) should a local plan set out the housing need for designated neighbourhood planning areas and parished areas within the area? b) do you agree with the proposal for a formula-based approach to apportion housing need to neighbourhood plan bodies in circumstances where the local plan cannot be relied on as a basis for calculating housing need?**

It was understood that the Local Plan groups would work with local authorities to get the figures for the housing need however no timeframe had been confirmed. The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU explained that they had tried to pitch the response at a strategic level whilst recognising what had been done previously. It was noted that there was a need to link the response provided in section 3.60 of the main report to sections 3.19 and 3.20 to provide further clarification.

**Question 13: in reviewing guidance on testing plans and policies for viability, what amendments could be made to improve current practice?**

It was felt that the shortfall in affordable homes was due to a loophole within the legislation and Section 106 agreements had been gone back on. It was felt that in some areas some were failing to meet the level of affordable housing required. It was queried what the JPDU's view was around the viability of this. There was a need to ensure at the original planning stage that each LPA examined viability properly to ensure that the claims were not allowed through. The Planning Policy Manager, NNJPDU explained that if consideration was given to viability there was a need to ensure that the proposal could not be re-challenged. A query was raised as to whether or not viability should be considered in the NPPF at all.

**Question 18: a) do you agree that a further 20% fee increase should be applied to those local planning authorities who were delivering the home their communities need? What should be the criteria to measure this? b) Do you think there were more appropriate circumstances when a local planning authority should be able to charge the further 20%? If so, do you have views**



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***on how these circumstances could work in practice? c) should any additional fee increase be applied nationally once all local planning authorities meet the required criteria, or only to individual authorities who meet them? d) Are there any other issues we should consider in developing a framework for this additional fee increase?***

In response to a query about if the individual authorities had responded to this, it was explained that the Chief Planning officer's views had been included in the proposed response. It was queried why a local planning authority should respond to demonstrate that they were meeting the required 20%, it was an unnecessary step in the process.

The response listed in paragraph 3.83 '*LPA's could be required to demonstrate that the additional 20% being re-invested into planning department, or other services that directly contribute to accelerating housing delivery*' it was agreed that this paragraph would be removed before submission.

**RESOLVED:** That the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee:

- **Agreed that a list of the progress of all of the North Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plans would be provided to members;**
- **Agreed the response to the 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' consultation as set out in the report with the following amendments:**
  - **Question 2 – The Committee expressed that it was vital to ensure that Local Plans were up to date but agreed that caution should be exercised around having a rigid timescale for this;**
  - **Question 11 – Where the response discusses that the 'JCS identified a housing need figure for the four largest villages, it would clarify in the response that those were in Wellingborough;**
  - **Question 18 d) – The response listed in paragraph 3.83 '*LPA's could be required to demonstrate that the additional 20% being re-invested into planning department, or other services that directly contribute to accelerating housing delivery*' would be removed before submission.**

#### 22/17 Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.05pm.

Signed:

Date: