

**Report of the Chief Executive****DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT PLANNING DELIVERY COMMITTEE AND UNIT****1 Purpose of report**

To propose that the council works with Kettering, Corby and East Northamptonshire Councils to create a new Joint Delivery Unit and to bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government for specific capacity funding to facilitate the work of this unit.

**2 Executive summary**

This report sets out details of a proposal to form a Joint Delivery Unit to complement the existing Joint Planning Unit which will work to deliver all four sustainable urban extensions in North Northamptonshire.

**3 Appendices**

Appendix A – Functions of a Garden Community Joint Committee.

Appendix B – Functions of a Joint Delivery Unit.

Appendix C – Timetable.

**4 Proposed action:**

It is proposed that the committee **RESOLVES:**

- (a) to approve in principle the establishment of a Joint Delivery Committee to support the potential of the area as a garden community and the creation of a Joint Delivery Unit to support that committee.
- (b) to delegate agreement to the finalisation of terms of reference for the Joint Committee and Delivery Unit to the Chief Executive in consultation with the chairman of the Resources Committee.
- (c) to appoint members to the Joint Committee at the annual council meeting on 19 May 2015.

**5 Background**

- 5.1 In summer 2014, the government invited expressions of interest in the creation of new “garden cities” throughout the UK. The logic of the initiative is to generate new housing, of a high quality and sustainable character, which will improve the quality of housing in the UK, whilst also addressing the acute under supply that currently exists. It picks up on the original garden city movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and some of the objectives of previous eco-town proposals. The implication of the offer was that government support for major new housing might be focused on designated garden cities in future.

- 5.2 Wellingborough's two large urban extensions at Stanton Cross and Wellingborough North and other consented developments in Corby and Kettering East might fit well with this concept. Given that, we have worked with the three other local authorities and relevant developers in discussions with government ministers and civil servants about designating the North Northants area as a garden community, or a series of linked garden communities.
- 5.3 These discussions, which included senior officers and council leaders, led to an expression of interest being submitted in October 2014, which comprised an "ask" from a consortium of developers with interests in the four urban extensions together with a proposition prepared for the four local authorities in North Northamptonshire. The proposition described an "offer" in terms of the scale and nature of development the local authorities were prepared to deliver. This offer and ask were developed with a wider consortium of agencies, including the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), both Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), North Northamptonshire Development Company (NNDC), the Joint Planning Unit and the County Council.
- 5.4 The offer and ask were predicated upon:
- a description of the proposal as garden communities, not a garden city,
  - the speeded up delivery of almost 17,000 houses in urban extensions already consented throughout North Northants,
  - the government forward funding crucial infrastructure throughout the area in order to realise the early delivery of housing,
  - retaining the principles of high quality, sustainable development which the area signed up to originally over 10 years ago,
  - the management of growth being firmly held in the hands of the local authorities that had consented it and not those of a development corporation, or any other external delivery vehicle.
- 5.5 The 16,700 houses include 6,100 in Wellingborough, which comprise 3,100 at Stanton Cross and 3,000 at Wellingborough North together with 5,100 at Prior's Hall, Corby and 5,500 at Kettering East.
- 5.6 To date, the government has designated a garden city in Ebbsfleet in Kent and a garden town in Bicester in Oxfordshire. Both these areas were already identified as areas of intensive growth, and indicate that the government is willing to build on the experience and pre-disposition of localities with a history of delivering growth to achieve garden community outcomes.
- 5.7 For these reasons, there is some reason to be hopeful that the North Northamptonshire area could achieve garden community status. Discussions have been underway for some weeks about how delivery would be realised. Clearly, this area has a history of successful joint working with the Joint Planning Committee and Joint Planning Unit preparing the UK's first ever joint core strategy. There is a lot of capacity and experience already on which to build, at member and officer level.

- 5.8 The government has asked the local partners to work up joint delivery arrangements, as well as more fully describe how the various urban extensions in the north of the county complement each other and work together. The government has indicated that some funding is available to support the set up of joint delivery arrangements for each garden community. This report addresses progress in respect of the local delivery and governance arrangements.
- 5.9 It is proposed that a Joint Delivery Committee (JDC) is established for the North Northants area, covering the four districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. Although East Northamptonshire does not have a designated urban extension at the current time, it is possible that a site at Rushden East could in future be included under the garden communities umbrella.
- 5.10 The JDC would sit alongside, but be separate from the Joint Planning Committee (JPC), because they would have separate statutory responsibilities. The Joint Planning Committee provides for the whole of the area at a spatial planning level, whilst the Joint Delivery Committee would largely deal with the area of the designated urban extensions only. One is focused on planning and the other on delivery.
- 5.11 Membership would be appointees from the four district councils and from the county council, with observer status being provided for partner agencies such as the LEPs and the HCA. The joint committee would be accountable to the participating local authorities and, where appropriate in respect of funding, to the Department for Communities and Local Government or the HCA. Voting rights might be limited to those members who have consented urban extensions given that at the current time East Northants have no consented urban extensions. A first outline terms of reference has been drafted and is attached as appendix A.
- 5.12 For similar reasons to that set out for the creation of a joint committee, it is proposed that a JDU be established to sit alongside, but be separate from, the Joint Planning Unit. It is envisaged that this would comprise either/and secondees from the constituent local authority planning teams, or staff brought in using the capacity funding, together with a highways resource and some resource for communication and consultation purposes, together with the NNDC resource that remains in this part of the county. A draft remit for the unit is described in appendix B. The unit would be accountable to the joint committee for its delivery of agreed priorities and through the North Northants Chief Planning Officers Group for all day-to-day operations.

## **6 Legal powers**

- 6.1 A formal, parliamentary process will need to be undertaken to set up a joint delivery committee with functional statutory responsibilities, should it have any.
- 6.2 A timetable and process chart for setting up the joint arrangements is shown at appendix C.

**7 Financial and value for money implications**

The capacity funding which is available to the area will help pay for the new governance and delivery arrangements, and this will need to be properly secured as a pre-requisite to making progress.

**8 Implications for stronger and safer communities**

The development of our sustainable urban extensions, will provide a positive contribution to the growth and development of Wellingborough. Concentrating growth in the extensions will also help to protect our villages and rural areas from speculative developments.

**9 Implications for equalities**

None specified to this report.

**10 Author and contact officer**

John T Campbell, Chief Executive.

**11 Consultees**

Julie Thomas, Head of Planning and Local Development.

**12 Background papers**

Various pieces of correspondence held by the Head of Planning and Local Development and the Chief Executive.

## FUNCTIONS OF A GARDEN COMMUNITIES JOINT COMMITTEE

### Terms of Reference

#### *Overall scope*

To provide democratic oversight and partner support for the delivery of the following urban extensions and associated infrastructure, which make up the North Northamptonshire Garden Communities programme:-

	<b>Development</b>	<b>Number of homes</b>
Consented	Kettering East	5,500
	Priors Hall, Corby	5,100
	Stanton Cross, Wellingborough	3,100
	Wellingborough North	3,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16,700</b>
Potential	Corby West	4,000
	Rushden East (East Northants)	2,500
	Weldon Park (near Corby)	1,000
	Rothwell North (Kettering Borough)	1,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,500</b>

#### *Quality and stewardship*

To ensure that the development of the various urban extensions adheres to agreed delivery standards in terms of design, build quality, sustainability, security and inter-connectivity, in accordance with the principles of the garden cities initiative.

To ensure arrangements for long term stewardship for the communities are in place as they develop.

#### *Inter-connectivity and coherence*

To ensure that the various urban extensions are complementary to each other and the towns to which they are attached, work together as a coherent entity and serve to benefit the existing communities in which they are located.

#### *Ownership and commitment*

To ensure that the local authority partners maintain a shared vision for the urban extensions, and that this is fully understood by other public sector agencies, government departments, developers, service providers, contractors, local communities, residents and businesses.

To champion the garden communities concept within the area and beyond it.

To ensure long term community engagement is embedded in the development and delivery process and develop ways in which community ownership of land and assets can be enabled.

#### *Infrastructure*

To support sustainable energy provision and facilities, sustainable highway and transport solutions, strategic green infrastructure, sustainable and low impact utility provision and integrated employment, education, health and community facilities within and beyond developments.

To consider how to overcome any blockages to the timely delivery of development.

To secure appropriate levels of developer contributions towards infrastructure.

To be creative about drawing in resources and capacity from other sources to ensure a greater level of infrastructure is available than relying on developer contributions alone.

#### *Financial accountability*

To be accountable for the allocation of dedicated public funds for infrastructure projects and to ensure their effective management and utilisation.

To be accountable for the effective use of capacity funds to ensure that delivery takes place without delays.

#### *Liaison*

To be the statutory body with which government and other partners liaise.

### **FUNCTIONS OF A JOINT DELIVERY UNIT (JDU)**

To support the functioning of the Joint Committee, and provide advice and support to its members.

To progress planning applications, through to local authority planning committees, in respect of all those urban extensions detailed within the terms of reference of the joint committee, (including for infrastructure which is off site but which is a function of the effective delivery of the SUE, or a consequence of an agreed developer contribution).

To negotiate S106 developer contributions and inform CIL policies from the urban extensions.

To ensure the smoothest possible delivery of infrastructure and local facilities to speed up the pace of development, including highway approval and adoption processes, utilities provision and adoption processes and engage private and public agencies to address needs and resolve problems.

To ensure that developers are supported, informed, and guided to deliver the highest quality developments that are possible, and challenged where appropriate to

To ensure residents, communities and businesses are engaged and informed about developments and that they have the opportunity to influence and shape developments and take ownership of solutions and facilities.

To support the creation of vehicles which embed community stewardship and/or ownership of land, facilities or assets.

To work in partnership with the North Northants local planning authorities and their Joint Planning Unit to ensure there is a coordinated approach to the delivery of development and planning policy creation across the North Northants sub-region.

### **Accountability**

The JDU will be accountable for resource use to the partner authorities, in the form of a body comprising chief planning officers for the five authorities, and to the joint committee for policy matters in the domain of elected members.

### **Structure**

To ensure the Unit is adequately resourced

- a) planning resources from constituent local authorities – existing and new

- b) highway and public transport resource from NCC
- c) development viability, negotiation and project management resource from NNDC
- d) community engagement resource (funded by S106 provisions)

Ensure supporting legal, finance and administrative support is available to committee and JDU.

Draw down specialist advice on conservation, green infrastructure and other topics from JPU or other specialist consultancies when required.

Ideally, co-location with Joint Planning Unit

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