

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT DELIVERY COMMITTEE		Item 8	Page 1
Councils Affected	All	Date: 12 th August 2015	
Report Title	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To engender a discussion about approaches to community engagement in respect of the growth agenda in North Northamptonshire.

2. INFORMATION

2.1 The terms of reference give the Joint Committee an important role in securing and maintaining Ownership and commitment, in particular:

- *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.*

2.2 The first two bullet points are covered elsewhere. The report at item 9 of this agenda proposes the establishment of a stakeholder/partners group and the brief for the preparation of the Delivery Plan requires the output of the work to be “...a succinct and inspiring Delivery Plan document that can be used to inform the work programmes and resources of the JDU and its partners (including developers) and as a basis for securing ongoing commitment and investment from public and private sector agencies.” The consultants will present their report to the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

2.3 This report focuses on community engagement. It outlines practice across the four authorities and seeks views on whether the Joint Committee wishes to:

- a) implement a consistent ‘North Northamptonshire’ approach to community engagement; or
- b) focus on supporting existing district initiatives, which vary significantly in their scope.

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- 2.4 The capacity bid includes a figure of £24,000 for community engagement, separate from any effort or expenditure on stakeholder involvement (see separate report).

Current engagement activity

- 2.5 Some activities are mandatory, such as consultation on development plans and planning applications. Local Planning Authorities are required to set out how they will carry out these requirements in a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Joint Planning Committee and the four partner LPAs have adopted a North Northamptonshire SCI (see Appendix "F"). This sets out only general requirements and, as set out below, the extent to which the LPAs go above and beyond these in relation to the Sustainable Urban Extensions varies significantly.

Kettering

Attached to the papers as Appendix "G" is a copy of the latest edition of the East Kettering newsletter, circulated to about 15000 households in Kettering and nearby villages. It was initially thought that this could be replicated elsewhere if so desired. KBC also set up a Liaison Forum, populated by Borough and County Councillors, local parish councils, interest and community groups, and attended by developers and local public agencies, to communicate and consult on aspects of the development as it progressed. This in turn had been partly based on a similar group set up when the Mawsley new village was being built.

Corby, East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough

Corby, East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough will give a verbal update on engagement activity at the meeting.

Discussion

- 2.6 The JDU could carry out or commission further research to assist the Joint Committee in meeting its terms of reference "*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*". This would identify best practice both within and beyond North Northamptonshire and identify how both the existing and new communities can be engaged most effectively in creating "*...successful, safe, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where residents are actively involved in shaping the places where they live*" (Outcome 1 of the JCS – *Empowered and Proactive Communities*).

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2.7 In the meantime, there is a clear need to continue to provide information on the progress of the SUEs and to consult on specific proposals. The review of existing arrangements set out above indicates a diversity of approaches. Members' views are sought on whether the JDU should be used to develop a consistent, high quality approach to information and consultation on the SUEs, using newsletters and operating a consultative forum for each of the SUEs (at which Joint Committee Members could play a key role). Alternatively, the capacity fund could be used to support existing initiatives by the individual councils.