
JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Meeting held: 25th July 2019
at Kettering Borough Council

Present: Councillor Mike Tebbutt (Kettering) (Chair)
Councillor Ray Beeby (Corby)
Councillor David Brackenbury (East Northamptonshire)
Councillor Jon-Paul Carr (Wellingborough)
Councillor Martin Griffiths (Wellingborough)
Councillor David Jenney (East Northamptonshire)
Councillor Matt Keane (Corby)
Councillor Andy Mercer (Northamptonshire County Council)
Councillor Andrew Scarborough (Wellingborough)
Councillor Mick Scrimshaw (Kettering)
Councillor Malcolm Waters (Northamptonshire County Council)

Also Present: Andrew Longley (North Northamptonshire Joint Planning
and Delivery Unit (NNJPDU)
Simon James (NNJPDU)
Samuel Humphries (NNJPDU)
Julie Thomas (Borough Council of Wellingborough)
Anne Ireson (Kettering Borough Council)

Prior to the commencement of the meeting tribute was paid to former Joint Planning Committee member, Councillor Mary Butcher of Corby Borough Council, who had sadly died on 4th July. A minute's silence was held in memory of Councillor Butcher.

01/19 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Jan Smith and seconded by Councillor Andrew Mercer, and subsequently

RESOLVED that Councillor Mike Tebbutt be elected Chair of the Joint Planning Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

Action

02/19 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

It was proposed by Councillor Matt Keane and seconded by Councillor David Brackenbury, and subsequently

RESOLVED that Councillor Anthony Dady be appointed Chair of the Joint Planning Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

03/19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anthony Dady (Corby) and Steven North (East Northamptonshire).

04/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

05/19 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

06/19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Committee noted that, in relation to expressions of caution voiced at the last meeting regarding the scale of delivery and the language used in relation to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, this had now been taken into account and wording amended.

The North Northamptonshire Investment Framework had been considered and agreed by the Joint Delivery Committee at its last meeting on 6th June. The document had now been submitted to the government as potential infrastructure priorities within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

In response to a question asked at the last meeting around costings for the A45 Stanwick-Thrapston link, it was confirmed that the NNIF was based on the costings in the pro-forma provided by Highways England.

A date for the proposed study tour during the autumn would be circulated as soon as possible.

Councillor Martin Griffiths reported that, together with the Leader of Kettering Borough Council, he had met Kit Malthouse the Housing Minister with regard to the potential for a growth and infrastructure deal. This had received positive feedback, with it being commented by the Minister that work carried out in North Northants was recognised at a high level. It was felt that it may be advantageous for an approach to be made to the new ministerial team following the recent change of national administration.

07/19

REVIEW OF THE NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY

A report was submitted which considered the need to update the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the potential timetable for doing so.

National planning guidance required that local authorities must review their Local Plans every five years and a decision needed to be made by the Committee as to whether the Joint Core Strategy should be updated and reasons for the decision given. In April 2018 the Joint Planning Committee had agreed that a light-touch review should be undertaken in 2019/20 to take account of the visions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc if a growth deal was on the table. However, since that time, proposals for a North Northamptonshire Unitary authority had now been confirmed and it was felt the Joint Core Strategy did not need to undergo an immediate update. In future, a new North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan would be developed. It was now felt that the plan period for this should be extended by 10 years to 2041.

During debate the following points were made:-

- Significant opportunities existed for North Northamptonshire but overarching meetings of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc authorities meant that Buckinghamshire authorities, such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale, were competing with Northamptonshire for funding. It was felt that it would be advantageous for all four North Northamptonshire authorities to be represented at Arc meetings, where it should be pointed out that North Northamptonshire had projects that were ready to start, which was not the case for West Northamptonshire.
- The MCHLG had promised more money in the autumn Spending Review, but all funding was now required to go through the Local Enterprise Partnership, which would have to put in a bid.

- By the time the next Core Strategy was adopted, rules for government funding may have been rewritten. North Northamptonshire should therefore develop a wish-list looking further forward than the next 20-25 year timeframe so that when opportunities arose, it would be ready to present a case to the government for funding. An example was given in relation to the use of cash and smartphones which had resulted in a change in dynamics and basic structure in only 11 years.
- All funding options should be investigated, not just those available through Local Enterprise Partnerships, whilst progressing individual local plans and ensuring North Northamptonshire punched above its weight in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, otherwise housing would be delivered with no supporting benefits and infrastructure.
- There was a need to ensure that the work of the Joint Planning Committee and Joint Delivery Committee was co-ordinated and members of all North Northamptonshire authorities should be asked to communicate a single message to Whitehall and the new government in order to gain momentum in bringing infrastructure and benefits to a key strategic part of the country.
- Train times from North Northamptonshire into London were poor and needed to be addressed before 2021. Concern about train times had also been expressed by counties both to the north and south of Northamptonshire.
- Concern was expressed that if the JCS review was delayed, there should be assurances given that there would not be a return to speculative planning applications, although it was noted that the report contained a reference to housing delivery and encouraging brownfield sites to be put forward through the Future Place Programme. SUEs were still progressing.
- There was a need to consider different types of development, for example dementia villages, as well as space planning and energy efficiency. Members felt that in some respects, North Northamptonshire was ahead of the government on issues such as space standards. If a growth deal was successful, some money also needed to be used to support existing residents of North Northamptonshire.
- There should be some focus on projects that could be delivered in North Northamptonshire without central

government funding, as the government did not always fund housing that had already been promised funding.

Members commended the work of both the Joint Planning Committee and the Joint Delivery Committee and it was agreed that the partial cross-over in membership and the support of officers through the Joint Planning and Delivery Unit, guided by Chief Executives and Leaders of the individual authorities, ensured consistency. Although it was acknowledged that there was a need to work across boundaries, participation in the Arc was on the basis of North Northamptonshire being a distinct delivery unit as it was working to a different timeline to West Northamptonshire.

Members commended the continuing work on projects such as Tresham Garden Village, housing standards and environmental benefits. It was noted that this work would be replicated in other SUEs. It was felt there was a need to revisit housing standards, not only in relation to energy but in terms of room size, exemplar and imaginative plots and future growth.

An update was then given on progress in relation to Local Plans in North Northamptonshire and it was noted that the recently published planning practice guidance clarifies the status of Local Plans going forward into the new unitary authority. Within five years of its creation, the new unitary authority would need to prepare a new plan.

During further discussion, members agreed that all four individual Local Plans were in advanced stages of development, working in conformity with National Planning Policy Guidance. It was felt it would be wiser to progress various Part 2 Local Plans utilising local knowledge, provided this was in accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance and the Part 1 Joint Core Strategy. Part 2 Plans will be extant for 5 years post inception of Unitary Authority. Para 74 of plan-making guidance (PPG) to be circulated.

In conclusion to the debate, members commented that there was a need to encourage smaller developers, which tended to deliver high quality properties. This would also support smaller companies in the Construction industry. An example of such support was suggested in that a rule could be introduced that required Council Tax to be payable after three years on land that had been granted planning permission but not yet developed. It was noted that government guidance on opportunities to encourage smaller house builders was awaited following the Letwin review as well as addressing the issue of land banking.

RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) be not updated at the present time for the reasons set out in the report and in the comments made during debate at the meeting;
- (ii) the need for updating the JCS be kept under review, particularly in relation to progress on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework and discussions relating to growth-related funding;
- (iii) when an update of the JCS commenced, it should be referred to as the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan and should cover the period 2020-2041, with the spatial vision potentially extending to 2050 to align with the Arc;
- (iv) the Joint Planning and Delivery Unit continue to input to the Arc proposals and undertake background technical work so that the North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority could progress quickly with its Strategic Plan in 2021; and
- (v) the provisional timetable as set out in the report guide future work, recognising that this may need to be revised should there be a change in circumstances.

08/19 ADOPTION OF REVISED NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A report was submitted which provided an overview of the comments received in response to the consultation and sought adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for North Northamptonshire in relation to plans prepared by the Joint Planning Committee.

It was noted that the consultation period had commenced on 2nd May and ended on 13th June, with a schedule of comments made set out in an appendix to the report. Changes made were summarised at the meeting.

The Chair requested that revised copies of the document be circulated to members of the Joint Planning Committee once any amendments had been made and typographical errors had been corrected. Additionally, it was noted that the document should be formally adopted by individual local authorities through individual work programmes.

Andrew Longley

RESOLVED that the responses to the representations set out in Appendix 1 to the report and the changes made to the Statement of Community Involvement set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved; and

- (ii) the 2019 Statement of Community Involvement be adopted in relation to jointly prepared documents and it be recommended that partner local planning authorities adopt it in relation to their responsibilities.

09/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Provisional dates and venues for the next two meetings were suggested.

30th January 2020 at East Northants Council was confirmed.

It was noted that the date for the next meeting in October 2019 would be confirmed as soon as possible, with the meeting taking place at the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

Anne Ireson

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm)

Signed
Chair

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