

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan

Proposed Changes to
Pre-Submission Version

A Guide

July 2012



What is the Joint Planning Unit?

The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) provides a strategic planning policy service for the areas of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Council. Northamptonshire County Council is also part of the partnership. The Councils are working together to prepare a plan for the future of West Northamptonshire. The JPU is directed by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee made up of elected members from across West Northamptonshire partner authorities.

What is the Joint Core Strategy?

The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides a planning framework for the West Northamptonshire area up to 2026. It sets out the long term vision and objectives for the whole of the area and includes strategic policies for steering and shaping development. It identifies locations for strategic new housing and employment and details the infrastructure (such as transport improvements, schools, open space and community facilities) required to support this development. It also defines where development will be limited.

What stage have we reached?

In summer 2009 we consulted on an Emergent JCS. It represented our current thinking at the time. Since then the economic landscape has changed and the JPU has had to respond to this in order that the plan we produce can be delivered within the timeframe to 2026. In addition national planning policy making has also changed with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The Government's intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies was heralded in May 2010 and full revocation of the RSS covering the East Midlands is anticipated in Summer/ Autumn 2012.

All of the feedback on the Emergent JCS consultation was used to inform the policy direction and proposed development areas detailed in the next version of the JCS, known as the 'Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy'. The Pre-Submission JCS was subject to a formal stage of consultation in February and March 2011. The Pre-Submission carries forward the vision of sustainable, well designed, accessible development to serve our population, and that the need for infrastructure to be provided alongside this development is paramount. The amount of development proposed in the Pre-Submission JCS is significantly reduced from that proposed in the Emergent JCS. The Pre-Submission JCS replaces the Emergent JCS.

Following its formal stage of consultation all the representations received to the Pre-Submission JCS have been fully considered. In the light of these representations and changes to national planning policy the Joint Strategic Planning Committee has recommended further changes be made to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy in response to these representations. These 'Proposed Changes' do not go to the heart of the plan but are considered necessary to ensure the Strategy is sound. The vast majority of the changes are simply to factually update the plan or to correct minor drafting errors and these are termed minor changes. Some are however more important although they still do not change the overall strategy or the direction of the plan, these are termed significant changes.

This guide aims to give you an overview of the significant Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS.

Your chance to respond

The Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS, both significant and minor, are published for representations to be made and this is a formal stage in the progress of the plan. It is not a compulsory stage however the partnership considers it is appropriate to make some changes to the plan and to consult on these. Responses to the changes must relate to legal compliance or 'soundness' of the JCS. Details of how you can view the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS and how to respond to the consultation are given at the end of this guide.

What happens next?

After the representations period on the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS has closed the Joint Planning Unit will then report the results of consultation back to the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and seek their approval to proceed to submit the plan to the Government. The following documents taken together constitute the JCS submission plan:

- The Pre-Submission version of the JCS;
- The responses to consultation on the Pre-Submission JCS;
- The Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS (the subject of this consultation); and
- The responses to the consultation on the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS.

Following submission of the JCS an independent Inspector will be appointed to examine the soundness of the plan. The Inspector will take all these documents into account together with the supporting evidence base and hold a Public Examination into the JCS which is likely to take place in Spring 2013. The JCS is then likely to be adopted in Autumn 2013.

What do the Proposed Changes say?

The Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy sets out a vision for the West Northamptonshire area in 2026. This vision and the spatial strategy that underpins it is unchanged.

The Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission are divided into Minor and Significant Proposed Changes. Minor changes are those which, for example, correct typographical errors or update factual information. The following paragraphs set out the Significant Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy, however it is recommended that the full list of changes is reviewed for a comprehensive understanding.

A new Objective 16

The Proposed Changes identify an additional objective to the JCS. Objective 16 refers to the need to conserve and where possible enhance important heritage assets. Whilst heritage is mentioned in Objective 15 it was considered that the importance of heritage assets and the need for their protection should be more fully recognised in an additional and separate objective.

The Spatial Strategy

The Spatial Strategy remains unchanged other than minor rewording to update the section and to update the housing, retail floorspace capacity and employment figures it contains. Revised housing figures take account of new planning consents since the Pre-Submission version was first published which reduces the remaining housing requirement from 21,370 homes to 19,810 homes. The job numbers are increased from 16,000 to 19,000 (as explained under the heading Economic Advantage below). Retail floorspace capacity is reduced largely due to a reduction in available spending, although the Grosvenor Centre redevelopment remains unchanged and is a key element for delivery within the plan.

The hierarchy of towns and centres and the distribution of the development between these places remains unaltered in the JCS. This includes maximising the use of land and buildings within the existing urban areas of the towns and by developing new Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs).

Sustainable Development

The overall aim of the Pre-Submission JCS is to deliver sustainable development and this aim continues and is supported by Proposed Changes which ensure the policy basis is robust and in line with the new National Planning Policy Framework. Proposed Changes include some rewording of the Pre-Submission JCS Policy on Sustainable Development Principles (Policy S10) including reference to development being designed to improve environmental performance, energy efficiency and adapt to a changing climate over its lifetime. A new policy entitled Low Carbon and Renewable Energy (Policy S11) is introduced via the Proposed Changes which requires major development to contribute to reductions in carbon emissions.

Connections

The Proposed Changes add further detail to the delivery of improvements to the A45 between Junction 15 of the M1 and the Great Billing Junction at Northampton. Reference is also made to A43 Kettering to Northampton Improvements at Policy C3 titled Strategic Connections.

Economic Advantage

A central and continuing theme for the JCS is to secure economic stability for the area and a range of job opportunities.

Since the consultation on the Pre-Submission JCS Northampton has been awarded an Enterprise Zone. The Northampton SEMLEP Waterside Enterprise Zone will support the regeneration of Northampton town and bring with it some 7,000 new jobs. Northampton University has recently announced its intention to explore the feasibility of moving to the Waterside area of Northampton. Due to this new focus of employment opportunities and potential for higher level education provision the Proposed Changes envisage the location of a Technology Realm within the

Enterprise Zone which will benefit from this synergy. Hence the reference to a Technology Realm located at Northampton North Sustainable Urban Extension will no longer be sustainable and the Proposed Changes take this into account.

The Proposed Changes make provision for 19,000 new jobs increasing the number of jobs by 3,000 from the figure stated in the Pre-Submission JCS version. This increase seeks to ensure a range of jobs are provided and to acknowledge that although Northamptonshire has remained reasonably resilient to the recent economic downturn, some jobs have been lost.

There is no change proposed to the need to protect existing employment sites and the town centres of Northampton and Daventry will continue to be the focus of regeneration, renewal and jobs growth. The strategic role of Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) and Silverstone Circuit is maintained within the JCS, and SUEs in all four of the West Northamptonshire towns will continue to provide for local employment opportunities.

Housing

The Proposed Changes to the housing section of the JCS reflect the updated housing numbers as in the Proposed Changes to the Spatial Strategy. Further Proposed Changes are made in relation to affordable housing requirements to take account of the Government's announcement of a new affordable rent model. This allows Registered Providers of affordable housing to charge rents on new build developments and relets. The Affordable Rent tenure has now been included within the definition of affordable housing set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has consequently been updated to reflect the Affordable Rent tenure.

Policy H2 of the JCS deals with the proportion of affordable housing required on development sites. Proposed Changes to this policy include the introduction of a revised percentage of affordable housing requirements for developments in rural and urban areas and revised requirements for affordable housing and site size thresholds to reflect the results of the updated SHMA.

Policy H3 refers to the provision of housing in rural areas as rural exceptions sites. Proposed Changes to this policy are as a consequence of the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages Local Planning Authorities to consider the provision of market housing where this would ensure the delivery of affordable housing to support rural exception schemes.

Built and Natural Environment

The Built and Natural Environment section of the JCS contains a range of policies covering topics such as biodiversity, green infrastructure, landscape, heritage assets, water, pollution and ground instability.

There are some significant Proposed Changes to policies within this chapter including changes to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area where further assessment has resulted in the definition of a defined protection zone shown on a new Figure 7 included within the JCS.

The Proposed Changes divide policy BN7 titled Flood Risk into two policies covering Flood Risk and a new policy BN7A titled Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Infrastructure. The new policy seeks to ensure new developments take full account of the need for an adequate water supply and waste water infrastructure and to ensure that as far as practicable water quality is protected or improved.

Infrastructure

A major concern of local communities is to ensure that facilities and services are provided to meet future growth. A key requirement of the JCS is to secure appropriate levels of funding to ensure that supporting infrastructure is provided at an appropriate level and in a timescale where it is able to support development from the outset. The Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission JCS update the information in relation to known infrastructure requirements and a new Appendix 4 Infrastructure Requirements to the JCS is included. This updates detailed information in relation to the Key Primary Infrastructure Projects included at Table 7 of the JCS.

Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs)

The JCS approach to locating new development continues the concept of Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs). These are located around Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley and will accommodate the housing needs of each area. There are however some detailed Proposed Changes to the land use requirements for some of the SUEs as set out below:

- The Technology Realm is relocated from Northampton North SUE to the Northampton SEMLEP Waterside Enterprise Zone (as described above).
- Northampton Kings Heath SUE (known as Dallington Grange) is reduced from 3,500 dwellings to 3,000 dwellings in recognition of some site constraints including archaeology and ecology.
- Daventry North East SUE (also known as Churchfields) will deliver around 2,000 dwellings to 2026 instead of 2,500 dwellings although the overall development remains at 4,000 dwellings. The slower delivery of houses in the period to 2026 is anticipated due to the slowing of the economy and house building rates generally that are anticipated in the early part of the plan period.
- Towcester South SUE will still deliver 1,500 dwellings in the period to 2026 but the overall size of the SUE will be reduced by 300 dwellings to 3,000 in recognition of prevailing market conditions.
- Brackley East SUE is reduced by 30 dwellings to 350 dwellings to reflect the most up to date detailed information on the development of the site.

There are also some Proposed Changes that apply to all SUEs for example reference to Park and Ride provision is deleted from all SUEs. Northamptonshire County Council as highway authority considers that even on the busiest corridors delivering Park and Ride within the period to 2026 will be unlikely and a viable business case for establishing a Park and Ride bus service has not been established from any of the identified SUEs.

Proposed Changes also provide for a greater degree of flexibility in relation to the retail provision at new Local Centres within the SUEs. However, these will still be subject to impact assessment over 1000 sqm.

The Rural Areas

Much of West Northamptonshire is rural in nature with a dispersed network of almost 190 villages and hamlets. The rural communities account for approximately one-third of West Northamptonshire's population. In Daventry and South Northamptonshire districts the percentage of people living in rural communities is as high as 75%.

Policy R1 of the Rural Areas section refers to the Spatial Strategy for the Rural Areas. Proposed Changes to this policy seek to clarify the scale of growth that is required in the rural areas and to provide greater flexibility for local decision making in recognition of the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans in the Localism Act.

The Proposed Changes specify that within the rural area of Daventry District an additional 1,355 dwellings will be built and that South Northamptonshire's rural area should deliver an additional 1,790 dwellings over the remaining years of the plan period. They also enable the local authorities, in consultation with their local communities, to determine a settlement hierarchy for the rural area and the scale of development that will be accommodated by individual settlements.

Where to view the Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy

On-line

- View and download the Schedules of Significant and Minor Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy and for reference a copy of the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy with all the Proposed Changes (both the Significant and Minor) as tracked changes at:
<http://ldfconsultation.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org>

Libraries

- Copies of the Schedules of Significant and Minor Proposed Changes to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy are available for viewing in all the local public libraries across West Northamptonshire area and in adjoining areas. Locations and opening times are available on our website:
www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org

Council Offices

- Visit the Council Offices at :
 - Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry NN11 4FP
 - Northampton Borough Council, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton NN1 1DE
 - Northamptonshire County Council, County Hall, Northampton NN1 1AS
 - South Northamptonshire Council, Springfields, Towcester NN12 6AE

When and how to make your representations

This is a formal period for representations to be made which closes at:

5pm on Wednesday 26th September 2012

Representations should only relate to matters of legal compliance or soundness and should ONLY relate to the Proposed Changes and not to unchanged parts of the JCS and specify what changes should be made in order to make the plan legally compliant/ sound. All representations should be made using the Representations Form. The forms and guidance notes on how to make a representation are available on our website and at the places where the JCS and Proposed Changes can be viewed.

Representations can be made on-line at:

<http://ldfconsultation.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org> or in writing.

Should you require any help please contact us by:

- **Email:** westnorthantsjpu@northampton.gov.uk
- **Tel:** 01604 837838
- **Post:** West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE
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