

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan

Proposed Main Modifications to the
Joint Core Strategy Pre-Submission
Version, as amended by Proposed
Changes (as submitted)

A Guide

January 2014

1. What is the Joint Planning Unit?

- 1.1 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. 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.

2. What is the Joint Core Strategy?

- 2.1 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides a planning framework for the West Northamptonshire area up to 2029. 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.

3. What stage have we reached?

- 3.1 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. In addition planning policy at the national level has changed with the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012. The Government's intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) was heralded in May 2010 and full revocation of the RSS covering the East Midlands came into force on 12th April 2013.
- 3.2 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 amount of development proposed in the Pre-Submission JCS was reduced from that proposed in the Emergent JCS.
- 3.3 Following its formal stage of consultation all the representations received to the Pre-Submission JCS were fully considered. In the light of these representations and changes to national planning policy the Joint Strategic Planning Committee recommended that further changes be made to the Pre-Submission Joint Core Strategy. These 'Proposed Changes' did not go to the heart of the plan but were considered necessary to ensure the Strategy is sound. The vast majority of the changes were simply to factually update the plan or to correct minor drafting errors and these were termed 'minor changes'. A smaller number of more important changes were termed 'significant changes'.
- 3.4 Following further consultation on the Proposed Changes the Joint Strategic Planning Committee resolved to formally submit the Plan for independent

public examination on the 20th of December 2012. An independent Planning Inspector, Mr Nigel Payne was appointed to examine the Plan and a series of public hearings were held in April and May 2013. In the light of evidence considered and discussed at the Hearings the Inspector asked the Joint Planning Unit to undertake the following further work:

- To undertake a fresh assessment of the objectively assessed housing needs in the area over the plan period and beyond;
- To prepare a Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/ SEA) Addendum to address acknowledged shortcomings in the work to date; and
- To assess whether further modifications were required to the JCS in the light of the evidence presented at the Hearings and the outcomes of the additional work.

More information can be found in the Programme Officer's Note published after the hearings, which can be found at: <http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=10024357>

3.5 This additional work has now been completed and the Joint Planning Unit is undertaking a further consultation that concentrates on three key elements:

1) The Proposed Main Modifications: Significant changes to the JCS that are needed to ensure that the Plan is found "Sound" and "Legally Compliant" by the Inspector.

2) The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Addendum Report and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Addendum Report: The SA Addendum assesses the sustainability effects of the Proposed Main Modifications and considers all reasonable alternative sites for strategic development in and around the four main towns in West Northamptonshire. The HRA assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Main Modifications on Rutland Water Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar site.

3) Objectively Assessed Housing and Jobs Need: An objective assessment of housing needs in the plan area up to 2026, 2029 and 2031, and the implications for the number of jobs required. The results of the assessment for both housing and jobs needs are set out in the Technical Paper on Objectively Assessed Housing Needs V2 (December 2013)

4. Your chance to respond

4.1 The Proposed Main Modifications and the other documents listed in paragraph 3.5 above are published for representations to be made for a period of six weeks. Representations should be focused on the 3 key elements described in para. 3.5 and the specific modifications proposed. They should not revisit existing policies in the JCS which are not subject to proposed modifications. Representations on this stage of the plan making

process must be made on the grounds of “soundness” or “legal compliance” in order to be considered. The six week period for representations relating to the Proposed Main Modifications will be between 14th January and the 25th of February 2014.

5. What happens next?

- 5.1 After the representations period on the Proposed Main Modifications has closed the Joint Planning Unit (JPU) will then forward the results of consultation to the Programme Officer for the Inspector’s attention in order for resumed Examination hearings to take place. The Inspector will take all the documents into account together with the supporting evidence base and will resume the public Examination into the JCS between 18 and 20 March 2014. The JCS is then likely to be adopted later in 2014.

6. The Proposed Main Modifications

- 6.1 The Proposed Main Modifications to the JCS comprise significant changes to the JCS that are considered necessary to ensure that the Plan is found “Sound” and “Legally Compliant” by the Inspector. In preparing the Proposed Modifications full regard has been given to the evidence already considered at the Examination hearings and to the outcomes of the additional work undertaken following the initial Examination hearings. This section provides a summary of the key changes covered in the Proposed Main Modifications.

The Spatial Strategy

- 6.2 The fundamental Spatial Strategy remains unchanged, but it has been necessary to update the section to include revised housing and employment figures which reflect the objective assessment of housing needs and the proposed change of the end date of the Plan period from 2026 to 2029. It is now proposed that the Strategy makes provision for around 59,000 new homes between 2001 and 2029. This is a substantial reduction from the former East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requirement of 62,125 to 2026. Indeed over 18,000 new homes have already been built in the plan period up to 31st March 2013. Also, planning permission is in place for a further 9,700 homes. Therefore, the Strategy is planning for a further 31,300 homes to be granted planning permission and be built before the end of the extended plan period in 2029. The Strategy also, in-parallel, makes provision for a minimum net increase of some 28,500 jobs between 2008 and 2029 across the Plan area and aims to maintain a broad balance between homes and jobs over time.
- 6.3 The hierarchy of towns and centres, together with the distribution of development between these places is unaltered in the Strategy. This includes maximising the use of land and buildings within existing urban areas and by developing new Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs). Proposed Main Modifications to the SUEs are set out in more detail in paragraph 6.14 below.

Sustainable Development

- 6.4 The overall aim of the Proposed Main Modifications to the Strategy is to deliver sustainable development. This aim continues and is supported by the Proposed Main Modifications which ensure that the policy framework is robust and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 6.5 A new policy has been proposed as part of the Proposed Modifications, Policy SA deals with sustainable development. This Policy reflects the NPPF and ensures that partner councils will take a positive approach in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.6 The Proposed Main Modifications include amendments to Policies S3, S4, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9 and S10. Regarding Policy S3, figures have been revised to reflect the objectively assessed housing needs. Policy S4 has been updated to reflect the outcome of this objectively assessed housing needs work for the Northampton Related Development Area. Policy S5 has also been updated to reflect the resulting modified spatial distribution of development across the SUEs, and in terms of the delivery of the new housing and jobs that are needed in the extended plan period to 2029. Policy S7 has been updated to include the updated jobs needs up to 2029. Policies S8, S9 and S10 have all been adjusted to reflect the NPPF.

Economic Advantage

- 6.7 A central and enduring theme of this section is to secure the economic stability and prosperity of the Plan area through enabling a plentiful and varied range of job opportunities to be made available.
- 6.8 The Proposed Main Modifications make provision for 28,500 new jobs, increased from 19,000 in the submitted Plan, a 9,500 increase. Employment policies relating to Northampton and Daventry continue to focus on regeneration, renewal and job growth. Policy E1 has been further strengthened in that it now provides greater flexibility in the range and type of employment generating uses that can be considered within existing employment areas.
- 6.9 It is proposed to add a new policy to allocate a new strategic employment site near Northampton at Junction 16 of the M1 to meet the employment needs of Northampton in the extended plan period to 2029. This site will provide a range and mix of employment opportunities to ensure the site responds to and satisfies the needs of an expanding town through this plan period.

Housing

- 6.10 The Proposed Main Modifications to this section reflect the updated housing need emerging from the objectively assessed housing needs work. Policy H1 is updated and now incorporates the provisions of Policy H4, which it is

proposed to delete. Policy H7 has been updated in the light of up to date needs evidence.

Built and Natural Environment

- 6.11 This section still contains a range of policies covering topics such as biodiversity, green infrastructure, landscape, heritage assets, water, pollution control and ground stability. Policy BN3, relating to woodlands, has been strengthened to conform to the NPPF.
- 6.12 It is proposed to modify Policy BN5 in order to clarify the approach to be taken to landscape, particularly landscape sensitivity.
- 6.13 Both Policies BN7 and BN7A relating to Flood Risk, Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Management are to be strengthened.

Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs)

- 6.14 A key tenet of the Strategy is to deliver new development that is needed in the form of SUEs. In the submitted Plan there were eleven SUEs across the Plan area: seven at Northampton; two at Brackley; and one each at Towcester and Daventry. There are detailed Proposed Main Modifications to some of these SUEs as follows.

Northampton:

- Northampton North SUE: increased by 1,500 dwellings to a total of 3,500 with 10 hectares of employment land for local employment opportunities.
- Northampton West SUE: increased by 1,050 dwellings to a total of 2,550.
- Northampton South of Brackmills SUE: increased by 300 dwellings to a total of 1,300 dwellings and make provision for an additional green corridor on the eastern boundary of the site.
- Northampton Norwood Farm / Upton Lodge SUE: formerly a planning commitment which it is now proposed to allocate as an SUE. The total capacity of the SUE is proposed to be 3,500 dwellings: an increase of 1,000 dwellings on the former planning commitment. The SUE will also provide local employment opportunities.
- The other four SUEs around Northampton remain as in the submitted Joint Core Strategy.

Daventry:

- Daventry North East SUE: Policy wording amended to reflect the Plan period extension but no change to the overall amount of development proposed.

Towcester:

- Towcester South SUE: Policy wording amended to reflect the Plan period extension but no change to the overall amount of development proposed. It is proposed to incorporate a reference to the need to improve the A43 junctions and remove the reference to the need for a new secondary school to serve the needs of the site.

Brackley:

- Brackley East SUE: Policy wording amended to enable a more flexible range of employment generating uses. A reference to the need to improve the A43 junctions is also incorporated.
- Brackley North SUE: A reference to the need to improve the A43 junctions is incorporated.

Rural Areas

- 6.15 Proposed Main Modifications to Policy R1 will provide opportunities for additional housing and employment to be sensitively provided across rural areas at a scale that serves their specific needs and supports the retention and future provision of local services and facilities.

7. Where to view the documents relating to the “Proposed Main Modifications Consultation”

On-line

- View and download the Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Joint Core Strategy and the other consultation documents at: <http://ldfconsultation.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/consult.ti>

Libraries

- Copies of the Schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Joint Core Strategy and the other consultation documents 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

8. When and how to make your representations

There is a formal six week period for representations which opens on Tuesday 14th January 2014 and closes on the 25th of February 2014.

Representations should only relate to matters of legal compliance or soundness and should ONLY relate to the four elements which comprise the “Proposed Main Modifications Consultation” as follows:

- a) Proposed Main Modifications - Significant changes to the Pre-Submission Version of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1), as amended, to ensure the Plan is found “sound” and “legally compliant” by the Inspector
- b) The Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (v2)
- c) The Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report
- d) The Habitats Regulations Assessment Addendum Report

Any representations should also 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 Joint Core Strategy and Proposed Modifications can be viewed.

Representations can be made on-line at:

<http://ldfconsultation.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/consult.ti> 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
- **Fax:** 01604 838543