



East Northamptonshire Local Plan FAQs

Oundle consultation event - 6 December 2018

Why are we preparing an East Northamptonshire Local Plan?

The East Northamptonshire (EN) Local Plan is needed to provide local planning policy direction for East Northamptonshire following the adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy in 2016. It is also required to meet any outstanding employment and housing requirements from that Plan. It is a statutory requirement to prepare an EN Local Plan, and to keep this up to date via a 4-5 yearly review cycle.

Is there an agreed timetable for preparing the EN Plan?

Yes, this is called a Local Development Scheme and is available on our website at:

www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/localdevelopmentscheme

The latest timetable for delivery was agreed in July 2018; this brought the proposed adoption of the EN Local Plan forward by a few months, to allow it to be completed before the potential for a new unitary council for North Northamptonshire coming into being in April 2020.

So what are the implications for Oundle?

The EN Local Plan needs to ensure that the strategic requirements set out in the Joint Core Strategy are met. At present there is a housing shortfall for Oundle of around 300 new dwellings up to 2031.

Can the Neighbourhood Plan make housing allocations?

Yes, however, like the EN Local Plan the allocations cannot be made in isolation. Proposals need to be in line with policy requirements set out in the Joint Core Strategy and national planning policy and practice guidance.

So why don't we leave it to the Neighbourhood Plan to deliver the new housing?

Oundle Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan group has been looking to do this since the process started 6 years ago. Unfortunately, progress has not been as quick as first hoped. The commitment to provide a district wide Local Plan providing planning policy direction is now running ahead of the Neighbourhood Plan. When examined in 2019 the EN Local Plan would fail if it did not make provision for housing allocations at Oundle to meet the identified housing shortfall.

Did East Northamptonshire Council acknowledge the Oundle Neighbourhood Plan before setting its timetable?

Yes, we worked closely with the Neighbourhood Plan group and provided advice and assistance. In 2017, we agreed to delay preparation of the EN Local Plan for six months to allow the Neighbourhood Plan to progress. Unfortunately, the Neighbourhood Plan did not develop as intended during that period.

Why are the housing proposals different in the two plans?

The locations proposed in the EN Local Plan are also proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan. The difference relates to the site areas, where the Council proposes larger sites to accommodate the required housing numbers. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plans seeks to allocate small sites which would not require allocation in a plan to allow the principle of development to be considered.

So what are the reasons for the difference in approach?

Site allocations are required to ensure the efficient use of land in line with government policy and guidance. The Neighbourhood Plan proposals include only partial development of each site and do not follow natural boundaries. ENC feels that such low density/partial development approaches would, in reality, be extremely difficult to defend when either Plan gets to examination. This was made clear through ENC's response to the Regulation 14 consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan earlier this year. This consultation will have to be re-run before the Neighbourhood Plan can proceed. The EN Local Plan seeks to consolidate development on three sites which would make a more efficient use of land available, allow for a more comprehensive approach to enable developer contributions, and provide more certainty on the sites being developed.

Is the EN Local Plan looking to allocate more housing than the Neighbourhood Plan?

No, both plans should be aiming to provide for around 300 new homes up to 2031. This figure, however, represents the minimum figure that could be delivered. The Neighbourhood Plan is proposing 312 and the EN Local Plan 300.

What happens if a planning application is submitted before either plan is completed?

It will need to be considered in light of the outstanding housing needs and the sustainability of the proposal, alongside national and local policy (the Joint Core Strategy). Applications will also need to mitigate impacts, for example in relation to highway requirements, and the impact the proposal will have on services and facilities.

If I wish to make clear my objection or support for the EN Local Plan what can I do?

You need to make a written representation either online at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/localplan2 or email planningpolicy@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk In addition, forms will be available to complete at the exhibition event.

How long do I have to do this?

The consultation period closes at 4.30pm on Monday, 17 December 2018.

What happens next?

After the close of the consultation, all representations will be taken into account. A report will be provided to the Planning Policy Committee in February 2019 to consider whether any additional changes are required to the EN Local Plan before it is prepared for pre-submission later in 2019.