



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Planning Policy Committee – 28 March 2011

### Core Strategy Issues Paper

#### Purpose of report

This report is presented for members' consideration and comment.

#### Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Draft response to consultation

Appendix 2: Areas where the new plan can have influence

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Issues Paper provides a basis upon which local communities can participate in strategic plan making for the North Northamptonshire area. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is now under review for several reasons including: the economic recession; consequent delays in providing infrastructure; the need to extend the time frame of the plan to 2031; and the need to boost job creation so that growth can be balanced by employment.
- 1.2 The aim of the review is not to change the plan wholesale but it is recognised it needs to deal more with local needs and local ambitions for change, including those for East Northamptonshire. The Joint Planning Unit (JPU) made a start on the review last year with technical work and focused discussion groups regarding rural areas and market towns. These are particularly relevant for East Northamptonshire and help redress the balance away from the focus on strategies more appropriate for the larger towns.
- 1.3 The plan provides a vision for the area and to guide the overall approach and priorities. The key themes of the vision are:
  - Self reliance – making sure choices are available in jobs, goods and services and the area becomes more prosperous
  - Green living – creating an environment and way of life that is more resilient to the effects of global influences, such as climate change and the oil-based economy
  - Strengthening the area's special mixed urban and rural character – the towns and villages set in attractive countryside give the area variety and increase the opportunities for self reliance and green living.
- 1.4 The JPU has produced an issues document 'Have your say on how our places should be planned'. The document contains a number of questions inviting local planning authorities, businesses and local residents to comment on the future shaping of the JCS. Draft responses to the series of questions in the issues document are attached at Appendix 1. Appendix 2 provides a list of issues, which members are requested to consider and prioritise.

The consultation closes on 28 March 2011, however the JPU has agreed a one day extension to enable this committee to agree and submit its response. Members should be aware that this is an important consultation to be involved in as comments made will help shape future versions of the plan. In addition, ENC officers and members will continue to be involved in the development of future versions of the plan.

- 1.5 Members may also be aware that officers and members have attended a number of place shaping events held over the last couple of years that have helped shape this document. It is clear that many of the comments have already influenced the Core Strategy Review. The document now provides an important opportunity for residents and those not able to attend those earlier “place shaping” events to have their say. The questions contained within the document are primarily directed to local residents enabling them to comment directly on the place in which they live, rather than being directed towards councils. A response has therefore not been provided for all questions.
- 1.6 A number of consultation events has also been held across North Northamptonshire during February and March 2011 to help people understand the JCS review process and to discuss local issues of importance. Within East Northamptonshire events have been held at Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rushden and Thrapston and ENC officers have assisted with these.
- 1.7 The Issues Paper can be viewed at:  
<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Issues%20Paper%20web%20version.pdf>  
 and hard copies have also been circulated to all members.
- 1.8 The JPU is seeking to encourage comments from members of the public on the plan by providing for views to be made using alternatives to the more traditional methods of email and post, for example by using the Place Shaping website [www.atyourplace.org](http://www.atyourplace.org); Facebook; Twitter; and uploading thoughts on to You Tube.
- 1.9 The stages of the Joint Core Strategy are:
- |                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Issues Consultation              | February and March 2011 |
| Preferred Options Consultation   | July and August 2011    |
| Proposed Submission Consultation | Early 2012              |
| Submission to Secretary of State | Spring 2012             |
| Examination                      | Summer 2012             |
| Adoption                         | Late 2012               |

## **2.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 2.1 No Equalities Impact Assessment is required.

## **3.0 Legal Implications**

- 3.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

## **4.0 Risk Management**

- 4.1 There are no identified risks arising from this consultation. The key risk from an East Northamptonshire perspective is that the views of residents and this council on the future development of this area is not appropriately reflected in the final Core Strategy. By encouraging local residents to respond to this consultation (as noted in paragraph 1.6) and corporate response, as prompted by this paper, the JPU will mitigate this risk. Further engagement by officers and councillors, particularly those on the Joint Planning Committee, will continue to reduce this risk.

## **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the proposals.

## **6.0 Corporate Outcomes**

- 6.1 The Issues Paper will support priority outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan; including specifically:

- Meeting housing needs
- Strengthened strategic partnerships
- Improved market towns
- High quality built environment.

## 7.0 Recommendation

7.1 The committee is recommended to consider the Issues Paper and approve the proposed response (*Reason – to support the development of the strategic planning framework for North Northamptonshire and therefore have a positive impact on environmental, social and economic issues*).

<b>Legal</b>	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004				
	Other considerations:				
<b>Background Papers:</b> None					
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> Karen Britton – Planning Policy and Conservation Manager Extn: 2142 kbritton@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
<b>Date:</b> 7 March 2011					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

## Questions

Members are reminded that, as stated in the Committee report, the Issues consultation document '*Have your say on how our places should be planned*' provides an important opportunity for residents and those not able to attend the earlier "place shaping" events to have their say on the future shaping of the Core Strategy Review. It is therefore evident that some of the questions posed in the document are aimed at local residents, businesses and community groups and have not been answered or included below for this reason.

In addition, some questions have been grouped where they address a common theme, or to avoid repetition in the Council's proposed response.

### **What People Have Already Told Us?**

#### **Which parts of towns should be prioritised for change or regeneration?**

These should be highlighted through each Local Authority's Development Plan Documents etc and/or through any masterplans and parish plans that have been prepared by, or with, the local community.

### **New Homes and Population Growth**

#### **Where are there opportunities for development?**

#### **Are we right to scale back the housing targets for North Northamptonshire?**

#### **Would you support additional housing being built...?**

Within East Northamptonshire, opportunities for planned development exist in the District's towns. There is also capacity for some growth in villages, in order to improve their sustainability. There may also be opportunities for the consideration of a new settlement.

The current economic climate would suggest that the scaling back of housing targets is sensible at this stage.

Additional housing is likely to be supported where it can be demonstrated that it delivers necessary jobs, services and infrastructure.

#### **If so, what benefits would you want this to bring to your neighbourhood?**

#### **If not, what if anything, would make additional housing acceptable?**

New housing growth must be supported by the provision of well planned infrastructure, services and employment opportunities. This is vital to the future of the area.

### **Services and Facilities**

#### **What infrastructure is needed in your area?**

#### **If there is limited money to go around for infrastructure, what are your priorities?**

**Why are these your priorities and do you think they will change over the years covered by the plan?**

This should involve the strengthening of existing infrastructure and development of new infrastructure. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan should provide a basis for ascertaining what infrastructure is needed and what the priorities are and this should be regularly reviewed and updated.

### **Employment**

**What sort of jobs are needed in your town or village and where should employment sites be located?**

**How can we best meet the needs of local businesses and provide room for them to grow?**

**What practical measures can be taken to ensure that the rural areas are competitive and effective locations for business?**

**Where should warehousing development be allowed and under what conditions?**

**Should the new plan identify key sites for large employment developments that are more than local importance?**

There are various documents and strategies that will act as a useful evidence base/background information to assist in formulating the economic policies, for example the Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment (SELA) and ENC's Economic Development Strategy 2009-12, to name just two.

The Core Strategy should identify key sites of employment for more than local importance. It should also set out broad criteria for warehouse development. As a general principle, these should be in sustainable locations i.e locations well-connected to the rail or road network, with good access for the local workforce and minimising landscape and environmental impact.

Policies need to embrace rural diversification and enable access to appropriate infrastructure, such as high speed broadband.

### **Countryside and Villages**

**How can we encourage more working from home, community hubs and mobile services, so there is less need to travel to the towns for jobs and services?**

As mentioned above, high speed broadband needs to be available. In addition, consideration also needs to be given to developing policies which support more diverse uses for existing community facilities.

**Do the countryside and villages need to attract more people to live, work and visit to ensure a prosperous future?**

**What sort of housing and employment growth is needed?**

**Have village boundaries limited development and what effect has this had on communities – are boundaries necessary at all?**

Yes, as highlighted above, ENC is supportive of growth in rural areas where it makes them more sustainable. ENC's own Development Plan Documents should identify those villages most appropriate for growth.

The drawing of boundaries is not a necessity. ENC would instead support a criteria-based approach to make boundary decisions, which would enable planning decisions to be made on a site-by-site basis. Other local development documents and town/village design statements etc could also provide supplementary information to assist in this process.

**Could villages work in clusters to share jobs, services and new housing opportunities – how and where would this work?**

This could work in terms of providing a cluster around a Rural Service Centre, for example, as currently provided for within the current Core Spatial Strategy. However, to work effectively, transport infrastructure, including public transport and parking provision also needs to be improved.

**How should we define ‘organic growth’ – does it mean up to 10% growth in the number of houses every ten years? What impact would this have?**

This is difficult to define, as different settlements will vary in character and therefore their ability to accommodate growth. A blanket figure/approach is not felt to be appropriate, but this could potentially be further investigated on a cluster or settlement basis.

**Do you support the development of new villages? Please say where you think there is an opportunity for this?**

Yes, this is an option, which the JPU should investigate.

As highlighted in the Issues Paper, Deenethorpe Airfield is being promoted by the landowner. The JPU, in partnership with ENC and Corby BC, need to consider the feasibility of this potential location.

**Town Centres**

**What else would you like to see in your town centre and what would make you visit more often, or for longer?**

The JPU should refer to existing and emerging Masterplans and Parish Plans.

**Market Towns and The Role of Rushden**

**Where is regeneration needed most in these towns and how can it be achieved?**

As outlined previously, the JPU should consider the existing plans etc for these areas, for example Rushden and Raunds Masterplans.

**Should Rushden play a bigger role in the new plan and how will this relate to change at Wellingborough?**

**Should Rushden grow, and, if so, in which direction?**

ENC are committed to the regeneration and enhancement of Rushden. The JPU should consider background research already undertaken/ongoing by the ENC Planning Policy and Conservation Team to assist in this respect.

**How can market towns be improved as service centres for the surrounding villages?**

Market towns need to be improved by providing the necessary infrastructure alongside new employment and housing. Improvements to transport provision also need to be made to enable access from rural areas into market towns.

### **Climate Change and Green Infrastructure**

**Looking at the bullet point list of actions (*page 18 of the document or Appendix 2 of this committee report*), which would you prioritise, and are there any missing?**

Members are requested to consider Appendix 2 and highlight which they feel should be given priority.

**How can your priority actions be taken forward and who needs to be involved?**

No further comments at this stage – this should be discussed as the Plan develops.

**Should there be a coordinated overall approach, for instance a ‘carbon fund’ paid into by local developers and businesses, to help pay for things like the ‘Rockingham Forest for Life’ project?**

A significant area of East Northamptonshire would fall within the proposed project area and it is sensible that this is coordinated, with the expectation that developers should contribute towards it. Development of such a Forest could provide opportunities compatible with the ENC Tourism Strategy and for rural diversification.

**Which neighbourhoods need more green space, or better links to it?**

The JPU should refer to ENC’s Open Space SPD (Consultation Draft) and the accompanying PPG17 evidence base for information on this.

The Core Strategy could also provide policies which deal with the imminent Special Protection Area designation and how it relates to existing communities i.e. areas for protection or where access could be encouraged.

### **Additional comment:**

#### **Tourism and Leisure**

This is a strategic issue that cuts across other topics. The JPU should develop policies which can enhance existing facilities and develop new opportunities. The JPU should refer to ENC’s Tourism Strategy 2010-15.

**Areas where the new Plan can have influence:**

- better standards for existing buildings (insulation, heating, water use) as over 80% of the existing housing stock is expected to still be standing in 2050
- higher energy standards for new development, both housing and businesses
- finding locations for new 'renewable energy' developments – wind, biomass, waste etc
- built in 'adaptation' measures such as 'green roofs' and more tree planting in new developments
- in towns – bigger gardens, more public parks and green routes, river restoration (taking rivers back out of culverts)
- greater focus on local food and fuel production by communities and businesses
- large scale tree planting along main roads and in the wider countryside
- more attractive, safer and easier to use routes for walking and cycling within and between towns and for leisure use in the countryside
- public transport that is better joined up, faster and runs more often, both within and between towns and in the rural area
- more services and jobs provided locally, reducing people's need to travel