

# **WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Summary of the outcomes of the co-operation undertaken in respect of the preparation of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 prior to submission**

**June 2021**

## **Introduction**

1. This paper sets out a summary of the outcomes of co-operation undertaken under the Duty to Co-operate in respect of the preparation of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 prior to its submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021. A brief outline of how the duty to co-operate was discharged up to the date of submission if the Plan is set out in the Statement of Compliance submitted with the Plan.

## **Local Authority Co-operation**

2. Since the setting up of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU) in 2006 with the purpose of producing the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, joint working has been a feature of planning policy across the areas formerly administered by Daventry District Council (DDC), Northampton Borough Council (NBC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC). Liaison on Local Plan Part 2 matters has routinely taken place through various regular joint officer meetings including the following:
  - West Northamptonshire Policy Managers – superseded by West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan Programme Board, which had progress on Part 2 Local Plans as a standing agenda item;
  - West Northamptonshire Planning and Housing – a liaison meeting of planning policy and strategic housing officers
  - West Northamptonshire Transport Officers Steering Group – a liaison meeting involving planning officers from DDC, NBC, SNC, WNJPU, Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) as well as transport professionals from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC), Highways England and the Department for Transport. Local Plans are a standing item on the agenda for these meetings.
3. Northampton Borough Council also engaged more widely with nearby local planning authorities through six-monthly Northamptonshire Policy Officers meetings involving WNJPU, North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU) and the six other former district and borough councils in Northamptonshire.
4. Co-operation between the local authorities in the West Northamptonshire area has resulted in the preparation and publication of the following joint evidence base documents:

- West Northamptonshire Housing Market Evidence, ORS, September 2017<sup>1</sup> - commissioned by the WNJPU to support the preparation of Part 2 Local Plans for NBC, DDC and SNC, the report provided evidence on the need for affordable housing and matters including type and mix of housing, housing market signals and drivers, starter homes, the private rented sector and student accommodation.
- West Northamptonshire Travellers' Accommodation Needs Study, ORS, January 2017<sup>2</sup> - commissioned by the WNJPU, this evidence provided a robust assessment of current and future need for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in the three former local authority areas constituting West Northamptonshire. It provided update evidence for the three councils allowing them to make appropriate provision in their Part 2 Local Plans.
- West Northamptonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Part 1, March 2019<sup>3</sup> – commissioned by the WNJPU and produced by NCC as Lead Local Flood Authority, this evidence made a number of recommendations that have helped to inform Part 2 Local Plans in West Northamptonshire. At the time of writing the SFRA, NBC had yet to decide which sites would be allocated in the Northampton Local Plan Part 2, so site specific analysis for the Northampton area was not included in this document. Stakeholders engaged during the production of the SFRA included, NBC, DDC, SNC, NCC Highways, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the Canal and Rivers Trust.
- West Northamptonshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategies, 2017/18<sup>4</sup>. Jointly commissioned by NBC on behalf of NBC, DDC and SNC, these pieces of evidence to a consistent approach to producing strategies for built facilities for sport, playing pitches and open spaces (including parks and gardens, amenity green space, provision for children's play and young people and allotments), taking account the inter-relationships between the three former councils' areas, in particular the Northampton Related Development Area.

5. All four of these documents have informed policies in the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 including Policy 7 – Flood risk and water management, Policy 13

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<sup>1</sup> West Northamptonshire Housing Market Evidence, ORS, September 2017 [Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\) & Viability Assessment - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit \(inconsult.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> West Northamptonshire Travellers' Accommodation Needs Study, January 2017 [Housing - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit \(inconsult.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> West Northamptonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Part 1, Northamptonshire County Council, March 2019 [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit - West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit \(inconsult.uk\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> West Northamptonshire Open Space Sport and Recreation Strategies, Nortoft Partnerships, 2017 / 18

– Residential and other residential-led allocations, Policy 14 – Type and mix of housing, Policy 16 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople, Policy 23 – Sports facilities and playing pitches, Policy 28 – Providing open spaces and Policy 38 – Development allocations.

6. The under-delivery of housing in the Northampton Related Development Area against the delivery trajectory set out in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy was an ongoing cause for concern for DDC, NBC and SNC. Much of the identified under-delivery has been the result of slower rates of housing completions in the sustainable urban extensions than anticipated. Short-term housing supply is constrained by the Core Strategy's heavy reliance on large SUEs for substantially meeting Northampton's housing needs. NBC researched alternative sites exhaustively through its Call for Sites and Land Availability Assessments, but there were no other sources of supply that could address the shortfall. It is for this reason that the Local Plan Part 2 revises the housing delivery trajectory set out in the Core Strategy. In signing the joint statement of common ground, DDC, SNC and NCC agreed to this approach.

#### **Co-operation with other organisations**

7. The outcomes of duty-to-co-operate discussions, in terms of impacts on Local Plan policy formulation until production of the submission version, with bodies including Natural England, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, Northamptonshire County Council Ecology and Historic England are set out in the Statement of Compliance to the Duty to Co-operate submitted with the Plan.
8. The statement of common ground between Northampton Borough Council and Anglian Water signed in December 2020 shows how discussions have influenced:
  - Policy 5 regarding water efficiency
  - Policy 30 regarding water abstraction and foul drainage in relation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site
  - Policy 7 and the need to provide up to date guidance for developers on flood prevention
  - Policies 39 and 41 regarding the safeguarding of land for water infrastructure
9. Further feedback from Anglian Water has resulted in a number of proposed main modifications to the Plan – MMOD3, MMOD33, MMOD36, MMOD37, MMOD38, MMOD43, MMOD44 and MMOD49.

10. In the statement of common ground between Northampton Borough Council and Historic England, proposed modifications to the Plan were agreed. These proposed modifications are MMOD33, MMOD46 and MMOD47.
11. The statement of common ground between Northampton Borough Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water addresses the issue of water supply and quality in relation to the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar site. Its principal outcome has been in the formulation of Policy 5 regarding the incorporation of water re-use and recycling and rainwater and stormwater harvesting into new developments wherever feasible.
12. Further feedback from the Environment Agency and Anglian Water has resulted in a number of proposed main modifications to the Plan – MMOD14, MMOD15, MMOD20, MMOD21 and MMOD22.