

## **Examination of the Northampton Local Plan Part 2 2011 – 2029**

### **Inspectors:**

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### **Agenda - Hearing Day 4. Tuesday 30 November 2021 0930**

Introduction and Inspectors' Opening Announcements

#### **Matter 5: Development Management Policies**

**Issue: Are the individual policies clear, justified and consistent with national policy, and will they be effective?**

Please note. The topic order may vary from that listed below with matters participants wanting to speak to possibly brought forward.

#### **A. Sustainable Development**

##### **Policy 1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

111. Does Policy 1 serve a clear purpose, and does it unnecessarily duplicate the policy for the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the Framework?

#### **B. Quality of New Development**

##### **Policy 2 Placemaking**

112. Does the Policy need to be modified to take account of the revised Framework published on 20 July 2021?

113. Is the Policy clearly written and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? What is meant by 'easily accessible facilities' and 'providing easy access to those facilities nearby' in bullet point 2? Would the Policy be effective in this regard?

### **Policy 3 Design**

- 114. Is Policy 3 clearly written and unambiguous so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals. For example, what is meant by in a 'sustainable fashion'?
- 115. Is the requirement in Policy 3 for developments to achieve the 'Building for Life' certification, proportionate and justified, especially when applied to smaller sites? Should the Policy refer to the current version, 'Building for a Healthy Life' accreditation?
- 116. Does the Policy need to be modified to take account of the revised Framework published on 20 July 2021?

### **Policy 5 Carbon reduction, community energy networks, sustainable design and construction and water use**

- 117. What is the justification for the Policy requirement for the tighter water efficiency standards in new dwellings?
- 118. Is Policy 5 clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals in the requirement for sustainable construction methods?

### **Policy 6 Health and wellbeing**

- 119. What is required in a rapid or more substantial Health Impact Assessments, would these be applied proportionately, and are the proposed development thresholds justified?
- 120. Why do the thresholds apply only to residential development?
- 121. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 7 Flood risk and water management**

- 122. Is Policy 7 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals by requiring compliance with relevant guidance for flood risk management and standards for surface water, produced by the Lead Local Flood Authority and Anglian Water, guidance which is not part of the development plan for the area?
- 123. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

## **C. Northampton Regeneration Strategy**

### **Policy 11 Managing hotel growth**

- 124. Is Policy 11 consistent with the sequential test for planning applications for main town centre uses as set out in the Framework?

### **Policy 12 Development of main town centre uses**

- 125. Is Policy 12 consistent with the sequential test for planning applications for main town centre uses as set out in the Framework?

## **D. Economy**

### **Policy 17 Safeguarding existing employment sites**

126. In the context of national policy on making effective use of land as set out in chapter 11 of the Framework, what is the justification for safeguarding all existing employment sites?
127. Why is the requirement for the marketing of employment sites set out over a range of 6 – 12 months. Is this clear and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?
128. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 18 Supporting new employment developments and schemes outside of safeguarded sites**

129. Is the approach to new employment development consistent with WNJCS Policies S7 and S8 and is it justified?
130. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

## **E. Hierarchy of Centres, Retail and Community Services**

### **Policy 19 New retail developments and retail impact assessment**

131. What is the justification for the levels of convenience and comparison retail floorspace proposed, is the evidence base up to date in this regard, why are these levels expressed as ranges, and are these consistent with the WNJCS?
132. What is the justification for the 500 square metre threshold for the application of the sequential test?
133. Does this Policy need to be modified to take account of the changes to the Use Classes Order which came into effect in September 2020 and the revised Framework published on 20 July 2021?
134. Why is the requirement for the period of vacancy and marketing of property expressed over a range of 12 - 18 months? Is this clear and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?
135. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 20 Hot food takeaways**

136. Is the first part of the policy relating to health and wellbeing clear and unambiguous so it is evident how a decision maker should react to a development proposal?
137. What is the specific evidence relating to Northampton to justify the 400 metre restriction on new hot food takeaways school entrances?

### **Policy 21 Residential development on upper floors**

138. Does the policy serve a clear purpose and is it clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals?

139. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 23 Sports facilities and playing pitches**

140. Is the Policy consistent with national policy for open space and recreation as set out in paragraphs 98 and 99 of the Framework, would it be effective and is it justified? Is it necessary to duplicate national policy in the first part of the policy?

141. Is Policy 23 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals by requiring contributions in line with the recommendations of 'Sports facilities for West Northamptonshire' which is not part of the development plan for the area?

### **Policy 24 Community facilities**

142. What is meant by 'sustainable location' in the first sentence of the Policy and is the Policy clearly written and would it be effective in this regard?

143. Is there a missing word after 'community' in the second sentence of the Policy?

### **Policy 25 Childcare provision**

144. What is meant by 'sustainable locations' in the first bullet point of the Policy, is the Policy clearly written and would it be effective in this regard?

### **Policy 26 Sites for burial space**

145. Is the policy consistent with the Framework in regard to net gains to biodiversity?

## **F. Built and Natural Environment**

### **Policy 27 Sustaining and enhancing existing, and supporting the creation of, Northampton's green infrastructure**

146. What is the justification for the 15 dwellings threshold for all housing developments? Why does a threshold apply only to housing developments?

147. Is the policy consistent with paragraph 174 of the Framework in regard to net gains for biodiversity?

148. Would the Policy be effective in regard to 'Blue Infrastructure'?

### **Policy 28 Providing open spaces**

149. What is the justification for the planning standards for new developments set out in Policy 28?

150. Is the designation of the open spaces defined on the Policies Map justified?

151. Given the findings of the HRA and to be effective, should the Policy refer to the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) requirements?

### **Policy 29 Supporting and enhancing biodiversity**

- 152. Is the Policy consistent with national policy for the natural environment as set out in the Framework or in accordance with the Habitats Regulations, and would it be effective?
- 153. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 30 Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area**

- 154. Is the Policy consistent with national policy for the natural environment as set out in the Framework or in accordance with the Habitats Regulations, and would it be effective?
- 155. Would Policy 30 be effective in protecting the Habitats Site without a suitable mitigation strategy in place, and is it consistent with the findings of the HRA?
- 156. Is this Policy clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals?
- 157. Are the references to water abstraction and foul drainage discharges justified when these fall under different legislative/regulatory processes to those set out in the Planning Acts?
- 158. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 31 Protection and enhancement of designated and non-designated heritage assets**

- 159. Is Policy 31 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals by requiring consistency with guidance from Historic England and heritage best practice which are not part of the development plan for the area?

## **G. Movement**

### **Air quality**

- 160. Given the presence of the Air Quality Management Areas, how has the Plan sought to sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, consistent with WNJCS Policy BN9 and national policy as per paragraph 186 of the Framework?

### **Policy 32 Designing sustainable transport and travel**

- 161. Is the first paragraph of Policy 32 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals in terms of the mitigation of transport effects of development, and is the Policy consistent with national policy for planning conditions and obligations as per paragraphs 56 to 58 of the Framework?
- 162. Are the travel plan requirements consistent with paragraph 113 of the Framework?
- 163. Is the reference to Policy 34 in the final bullet point necessary?
- 164. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 33 Highway network and safety**

165. Is the Policy wording in bullet point one consistent with paragraph 113 of the Framework, and is the duplication of the travel plan requirements necessary?

### **Policy 34 Transport schemes and mitigation**

166. What is the robust evidence for the safeguarding of the former Northampton to Market Harborough railway line for future transport, and how is this critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development as per paragraph 106 c) of the Framework?
167. Is the future transport use of the former railway line consistent with national policy to protect and enhance biodiversity as set out in paragraph 174 of the Framework?
168. What is the justification for the net zero emissions target for 2030?
169. Is Policy 34 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals by requiring consistency with the Northampton Low Emission Strategy 2017 which is not part of the development plan for the area?
170. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

### **Policy 35 Parking standards**

171. Is Policy 35 clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals by requiring consistency with the Parking Standards SPD which is not part of the development plan for the area?
172. Does the Policy serve a clear purpose and is it clearly written, consistent with paragraph 107 of the Framework in regard to parking standards and the provision of Electric Vehicle charging points?

## **H. Infrastructure**

### **Policy 37 Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions**

173. Is the second sentence of the first paragraph of the Policy necessary, given the scope of Policy 36?
174. Is the Policy clearly written and unambiguous, so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals in terms of the mitigation of transport effects of development, and is the Policy consistent with national policy for planning conditions and obligations as per paragraphs 56 to 58 of the Framework?
175. What is the evidence that the infrastructure requirements arising from the development proposed in the Plan have been adequately assessed and considered in the viability assessment for the Plan? Is it intended that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be prepared for the Part 2 Plan?
176. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

## **Table 12 implementation and monitoring framework**

177. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

## **Appendix G Primary Education**

178. Are the proposed main modifications necessary for soundness?

## **Close of hearings**

### **Participants**

West Northamptonshire Council

Home Builders Federation

Lichfields for Duncan Investments

West Hunsbury Parish Council