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To: Planning Policy
Subject: Response to Local Plan consultation
Attachments: NBC Local PPlan consultation.docx

Please find attached my responses to the consultation on the Local Plan

Best wishes,

Morag Ballantyne

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Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) and Partial Review of the Central Area Action Plan

Issues Paper

Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)

Question 1 – What are the main issues relating to housing delivery, mix and affordability which the Local Plan (Part 2) should consider? The Local Plan (Part 2) will not be reviewing the number of new homes that is

already identified in the adopted Joint Core Strategy.

A mix of houses, as identified in the Central Area Plan, is required, including affordable starter homes and family homes. Affordable Starter homes, multiple occupancy and flats will help to retain graduates, post degree, and encourage them to develop their careers in the area, and will be attractive to young people seeking to relocate.

More housing in the town centre, including work-live units, would contribute to a thriving culture. Work live units are potentially attractive to creative industries professionals – perhaps in refurbished shoe factories – and could be part of our inward investment offer.

Question 2 – Do you think that we need sites that can deliver new homes more quickly, in the short to medium term?

Question 3 - Do you think that we need a mix of market housing eg. family homes, housing for single households?

Question 4 - Do you think that we need a mix of affordable housing eg. affordable rent, social rent, shared ownership, Starter Homes?

Yes, as the university grows, there will be more demand for this type of housing. There is also demand from people with lower incomes who do not have the ability to buy.

Question 5 – Is there evidence to support the Local Plan (Part 2) introducing the optional national housing technical standards in relation to access and space standards?

Not able to comment

Question 6 – Is there evidence to support the Local Plan (Part 2) introducing the optional national housing technical standards in relation to water efficiency standards?

Question 7 – Are there particular sites that are not used currently for employment uses which you consider would be particularly suitable for new employment uses? The Local Plan (Part 2) will not be reviewing the jobs growth which is already set out in the adopted Joint Core Strategy.

We could encourage use of empty shoe factories for culture and creative industry work space. Creating a digital hub – either at Vulcan Works or in another space – would be a significant addition to the town centre and a point of difference. There is demand for this, as evidenced in a number of studies and reports in recent years.

Question 8 – Outside of the Enterprise Zone, are there any other existing employment areas where opportunities could be improved and vacancy rates could be addressed? If so, how could this be achieved?

. There is evidence of demand for artist studio space and more creative industry workspace, in addition to Vulcan Works, perhaps utilizing the first and second floors of empty shops, or vacant shoe factories

Question 9 – Do you think there are any areas within the Borough where certain types of employment development are generally acceptable but which

currently require planning permission, which could reasonably be dispensed with through the introduction of a Local Development Order?

Question 10 – Please provide details of any particular infrastructure issues in relation to new development which you think the Local Plan (Part 2) should address, if possible providing evidence?

Question 11 – How do we ensure a successful town centre in light of changes to shopping habits such as increased use of out of town retail and on-line shopping? The Local Plan (Part 2) will not be reviewing the retail growth which is set out in the adopted Joint Core Strategy.

. We need to rethink what a town centre could be – and Northampton could be at the forefront of that with a mix of destination and independent shopping, workplaces and culture. A town centre is more than retail – people increasingly want leisure and cultural experiences. St Giles Street is a great example of this and finding a way to extend this success to the rest of the town would be good. There are good models of creative industries/cultural businesses working with retail where offices and artist space co-exist – eg in Bristol and the Fab Lab and Maker Space models.

Question 12 - Are there areas where the location of betting shops and hot food takeaways should be restricted?

. Yes, around the cultural quarter

Question 13 – Is there a need for the Local Plan (Part 2) to include a locally specific policy to protect and enhance areas of biodiversity in addition to the policies in the NPPF and Joint Core Strategy?

Question 14 - Do you think there are priority areas where green infrastructure networks could be enhanced or extended?

Question 15 – Is there a need for the Local Plan (Part 2) to include a locally specific policy to protect and enhance heritage in addition to the policies on the historic environment in the NPPF and the Joint Core Strategy?

Question 16 - Should the Council review the list of locally listed assets of historical importance?

Question 17 - Do you think there are locally important landscapes which should be identified in the Local Plan (Part 2)?

Question 18 – How do we ensure that new development preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Borough and makes a positive contribution?

New development should be holistic in approach and consider the spaces between the buildings as well as the development itself. It should complement the vision and plans set out in the Central Action Plan and be forward looking. For example, creating walking and cycling routes that link the town as we develop is important.

New development should contribute to our existing business successes including culture and creative industries (CCI) and meet demand from this sector, which is the fastest growing in the county and nationally. High quality design and materials is essential to ensure that it is sympathetic with existing development.

The Market Square is ripe for some creative public realm development that

embraces its existing culture but improves the quality of the offer.

Question 19 – Is there a need for the Local Plan (Part 2) to include a locally specific policy to promote measures within new development to address climate change and renewable energy in addition to the policies in the Joint Core Strategy?

Yes, it is essential. We should look at sustainable transport options, including how to encourage greater use of electric vehicles. We need town centre charging points for residents and consumers & cultural audiences with electric cars. I cannot recharge currently when I am working in Northampton. There is potential to lead the way on town planning by being an sustainable vehicle town.

Similarly, all new development could and should address renewable energy and be built in an eco sustainable way.

Question 20 – Should we review and incorporate existing Interim Planning Policy Guidance (eg. Affordable Housing, Houses in Multiple Occupation, etc) into the Local Plan (Part 2)?

No comment, _____

Question 21 - Are there any other issues that the Local Plan (Part 2) needs to consider?

.No comment .

Central Area Action Plan

Question 22 - Flood Risk and Drainage (Policy 5) - is this policy still appropriate and up to date in relation to the Drainage Plan Part 1?

Unable to comment

Question 23 - Inner Ring Road (Policy 6) - is the

proposal for the Inner Ring Road still appropriate and up-to-date?

Question 24 - Safeguarded Public Transport Route (Policy 8) – is the proposal for a public transport / cycling / walking route still appropriate and up-to-date?

Unable to comment fully, but discussions with colleagues who are cyclists would indicate that cycling routes are inadequate.

Question 25 - Pedestrian and Cycling Movement Network (Policy 9) – should this policy be updated to link to the County Council’s Smart Corridors initiative? Are the identified routes into and across the town centre still up-to-date?

This would seem like a good idea to encourage both cycle to work and leisure cycling.

Question 26 - Parking (Policy 10) – should the Council identify more car parks within the town centre and if so, where should they be?

There seems to be reasonably good provision, except at the hospital but there has been some effort to address this with the new upper level visitor carpark.

Question 27 - Improving the Retail Offer (Policy 13) – this policy needs to be updated due to changes in Government policy such as the extension of permitted development rights. Do secondary frontages still need to be identified?

Making improvements to retail frontages has been a great

success on St Giles Street, enabling retailers to retain individual character while still creating a smart and coherent look. The frontages in other parts of town could do with some of the same treatment: eg frontages in some of the town centre along Gold Street, Bridge St, Abington St and Wellingborough Road are scruffy, gaudy and do not create the appearance of a lively town centre with the ability to attract the residents of the borough, people working in town or attract visitors from out of town.

Question 28 - Meeting Retail Capacity (Policy 14) – do we need a more up-to-date retail capacity study to ensure that this policy is up-to-date?

The Made in Northampton pop up shop in St Giles Street was a successful example of an independent retail offer with products from artists, artisans and creative industries, created and made in the town and county. There was high demand from consumers and it was a destination shop, attracting people into the town centre. There is potential to make provision for local high quality artists and craft people to have access to a retail space. There could be the opportunity to create spaces with multiple, smaller retail units.

Question 29 - Office and Business Uses (Policy 15) – this policy needs to be revised due to changes in Government policy. Should we identify land for new offices within the town centre? How should the Council seek to safeguard existing office space, especially in light of recent and proposed Government changes regarding permitted development rights?

Question 30 – Do any of the site specific policies need updating? Please indicate which policies and provide details if possible (Policies 18-35).

Question 31 - Please provide details of any other policies in the Central Area Action Plan which you consider the Council should reassess to ensure that they are up-to-date, if possible providing evidence.

We need some creative planning and a plan for empty spaces. There have been a few initiatives – Collective Collaborations and the University at Grosvenor Centre, Made in Northampton and now Screen Northants, but these are still ad hoc and difficult to negotiate and organize. Landlords need to be persuaded to take on non retail tenants – see the Meanwhile Spaces model.

With the university coming into town, there could be an opportunity to create spaces for making and selling, able to be used by students alongside culture and Creative Industries, to show collections and host exhibitions. For example, there is demand form Maker Space and Fab Lab drop in space – for example a space with hot desks, a café and a practical tools like a kiln, lathe or a short run production facility. This will attract CCI professionals and growing businesses into the town centre.

There has been some discussion in our sector about the potential for the county to bid into the Capital of Culture for 2021. This is in very early stages, but could have some planning implications with new spaces or new public realm activity. The riverside development offers the opportunity to think creatively about our public realm , eg creative use of our parkland and the waterside area with some public realm works by artists creating the link from the Waterside to the town centre; Becketts Park as a sculpture park.

**Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

Consultation

When preparing a Local Plan, the Council is legally required

to undertake an environmental appraisal of its proposed plans and policies, as well as a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). There is a requirement to consider the social, economic and environmental impacts of these policies.

Question 32 - Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report?

Please identify the page, paragraph number(s), table or appendix within the Scoping Report to which each of your comments applies.

**Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)
Draft Statement Of Community Involvement**

Consultation

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the local community, businesses and other organisations with an interest in development in Northampton can get involved. It provides a framework for involving and informing community engagement in plan making as well as in determining planning applications.

Question 33 - Do you have any comments on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement?

Tim Haldland came to talk to the What Next? Northampton meeting (www.whatnextculture.co.uk) which prompted a number of our culture and creative industries businesses to respond to this consultation. Until then, many were unaware of it, even although this is a very important process. Without that, many would have been unaware and it does require quite a commitment to wade through lengthy documents. For the next stage, more documents or content on line which lays out the issues in a more digestible format would be good.

The issues document mentions a Survey Monkey link which was not present and typing onto the PDF form was difficult.

Our culture and creative industries sector is keen to be engaged further with the Local Plan; we are delighted that culture is one of the drivers for the Northampton Alive project and look forward to working ever more closely with NBC to create a thriving town and borough.