

## Lucy Staves

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**From:** Steve Miller <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 10 June 2016 08:31  
**To:** Planning Policy  
**Subject:** Northampton Town Plan - Green Party Responses  
**Attachments:** Town Plan Consultation Green Party Comments v1.0.pdf

Good Morning,

In response to the request for feedback on the local plan, I have prepared the attached document on behalf of the Northamptonshire Green Party, and would like this to be considered for feedback.

Please could you confirm receipt and let me know if there are any issues with the document.

Kind Regards

Steve Miller  
Secretary - Northamptonshire Green Party



## **NORTHAMPTON LOCAL PLAN (PART 2) AND PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN**

### **Issues Consultation Paper**

### **Comments of Northamptonshire Green Party**

#### **1. Climate Change Q19**

The biggest source of energy waste is that for inefficient space heating of buildings. In 2009 about 16% of the UK's green house gas emissions were due to space heating. Since the energy inefficiency of British buildings is notorious and since the best buildings use 9% less energy than average ones, we could make major savings by improving our stock of buildings. The local plan should specify that all new build Council & Social Housing stock is required to have Solar panels installed for heating of water.

For all houses going into planning now and built under Building Regs 2013, the Council should insist upon them achieving the energy equivalent of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. This means councils can require a **19% Dwelling Emission Rate improvement above the building regulations**.

#### **2. Better Health/Well being**

The Local plan should treat better health and well being as an important planning issue. It is a pity that none of the questions posed in the consultation bear on this matter. Poor health is not only damaging to the individual, it is a loss to society and a cost to the NHS. Most climate change mitigation policies have large health benefits. For instance:-

- When we walk and cycle more and take more physical exercise we enjoy the better health and fitness that follows.
- Stopping the burning of fossil fuels, especially coal, will cut bad health due to air pollution. Reduction in fossil fuels, especially diesel transport will also improve air quality. Poor air quality is estimated to cost 44,750 - 52,500 lives per year in the UK, with the numbers in Northampton being substantially above the national average.
- Reducing inequality will reduce obesity, drug abuse, mental illness and infant mortality.

#### **3. Housing Q 1,2,3,4,5,6**

There is a housing crisis in Northampton and it a very important Local Plan issue. However, we must be careful not to assume that if we just build lots of houses we will sort it out. In Northampton we have heard this simplistic argument for years and yet the problems persist and our plans do not connect with the growing numbers of people who are left behind. Through the development plan process, we should start to get to the root of the affordability problem rather than simply putting all the emphasis on numbers of new dwellings.

The crisis has unfolded over decades. Relative to other prices, house prices have gone up five fold since 1955. In less than 20 years the price of houses has doubled relative to incomes. House price inflation averaged 11 per cent between 1997 and 2007 and prices have never fallen back to an affordable level relative to incomes in spite of the recession.

The Local Plan should take a lead in promoting policies that would break a forty year consensus against social housing. We should find ways of substantially increasing the social housing budget so that we could build enough housing within a generation to meet all the needs and refurbish and improve homes and estates. An initiative to tackle housing affordability, through the Local Plan, would also aim to democratise council housing and housing associations and encourage people to start housing co-operatives, which are a mainstream type of housing in places like Canada and Scandinavia. The Local Plan objective should be to assert the basic principle that everybody has a right to affordable, secure and comfortable accommodation.

The Local Plan should acknowledge that new homes in Northampton have a reputation for being small and pokey, with no storage space and gloomy rooms. These pokey homes are often ridiculously expensive and the estate agents terms of 'luxury apartments' and 'executive homes' have just become ironic cliches in Northampton. The housing situation gets even worse when these new homes are proposed with very low levels of affordable housing. The council sets its own requirements, but they are supposed to ensure that a decent number of the new homes are offered on social rents and other schemes that are supposed to be more affordable than the open market. The Local Plan could work out how many people can't afford the open market and set the requirement so that the equivalent number of homes are 'affordable'. It is true that the very latest planning legislation makes the job harder by requiring only market price 'starter homes' to social rented dwellings from developers. Nevertheless, if we do not understand what the requirement for social housing is in the town, we are never going to find a way. The Local Plan should start this planning debate.

The Local Plan should encourage more compact communities where cycling, walking and public transport are the norm, not cars. The approach of the Local Plan to housing should be quite simple: houses aren't just assets to speculate on, they aren't boxes that people will enjoy no matter how unattractive and they shouldn't be demolished without regard to the people who live in them. We undoubtedly have a big housing problem in Northampton but it isn't going to end if we just intone 'build more houses'.

#### **4. Transport Q 10, 23, 24,25,26,**

On a spectrum: walk; cycle;:take the bus or train; freight, motorcycle, car, plane-the Local Plan should help to make it easier to do things at the 'walking' end of the spectrum in Northampton. This will encourage changes in the transport choices, benefiting health, the environment, the economy and (ultimately) the climate.

The Northampton Local Plan should:-

- Prioritise walking and cycling, making them safe, convenient and pleasant choices for local journeys
- Take a road danger reduction approach. slowing vehicle speeds to 20mph on all residential streets: on main roads, where people live, work and shop, making them more 'liveable' and safer.
- Reintroducing proper regulation of buses, with the council having responsibility to ensure a reliable and convenient public service.
- Use the Local Plan to encourage mixed development where shops, housing and business are closely co-located, creating active communities and reducing commuting. New developments should be well served by public transport, walking and cycle routes.

## Local Plan and Liveable Cities

All the NGOs tell us we need a shift in the way our towns and our transport systems are run:

- Campaign for Better Transport tell us: build roads and you get traffic (congestion, pollution, danger)-so don't.
- Living Streets will make a strong case for more time to cross the road, particularly for older people and children.
- Transport for All tell us we need inclusive streets, with accessible public transport and pavements.
- Roadpeace call for traffic justice, road danger reduction and more support for the families of road traffic victims.
- 20's Plenty For Us have been raising awareness of car dependency while focused on one issue-speed reduction.
- London Cycling Campaign have been game changing with their call for 'Space for Cycling, Dutch design standards and making space for people.

The World Health Organisation recently designated diesel particulates pollution as carcinogenic. This is a game changer, or at least it should be. We know that we have serious air pollution in parts of Northampton. This requires Low Emission Zones and viable alternatives to car use to be made available in the town. The Local plan should take this on board.

We need a Cycling Delivery Plan as part of the Local Plan. We could achieve a marvellous network of safe and convenient walking and cycling routes, which connect with places people want to go with integrated, affordable and efficient public transport systems that let people travel when and where they need to travel.

We could have massive improvements in public health, along with savings in NHS bills, and all it needs is for us to reduce our dependence on private motor vehicles and develop networks-with integration for both walking and cycling trips but also for buses and trains for longer journeys. The Local Plan, with a plan period up to 2030, should guide us.

### **5. Environment-Incineration/Waste strategy Q.**

The Local Plan should discourage the incineration of waste, including the gasification and/or pyrolysis of recyclable materials. Incinerators release a variety of chemicals and fine particles. The chemicals include lead, cadmium and mercury, which are not destroyed by incineration, and dioxins, which, like fine particles, are created in the burning process. The metals are poisonous. Dioxins are extremely toxic. According to the World Health Organisation, they 'can cause reproductive and developmental problems, damage the immune system, interfere with hormones and also cause cancer'. We would therefore expect more illness near to incinerators and that is what has been found.

- Between 1974 and 1987, cancer was twice as common in children living near UK incinerators as in children living further away<sup>1</sup>
- A study of data in Trieste, Italy 1996 found lung cancer deaths close to an incinerator to be nearly seven times higher than elsewhere<sup>2</sup>

These plants suppress recycling rates, waste resources which could still be recovered and recycled and release chemicals, metals, toxins and furans into the air. These technologies are not proven and have no place within an urban environment. The council should with partners invest in increasing its recycling rate.

## 6. Bio-Diversity Q 13,14,15,16,17,18, 22

The Local Plan should not see nature, climate action, biodiversity and wildlife protection as an optional 'nice to have'; something to look at once the economy is 'back on track'. We should understand that if we do not tackle these interlinked problems then the economic outcome will be catastrophic.

It should be a requirement of the Borough Council to encourage businesses to understand how they can meet sustainability objectives and help contribute to the well-being of Northampton.

### References :

1 – Cancer Incidence near municipal solid waste incinerators in Great Britain, P Elliott et al, published in British Journal of Cancer, 1996

2 - Air Pollution and Lung Cancer in Trieste, Italy: Spatial Analysis of Risk as a Function of Distance from Sources, A Biggeri et al, published in Environmental Health Perspectives, 1996.

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