

## **Pre Submission Draft Local Plan – summary booklet**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This booklet provides a summary of the key policies and preferred approaches outlined in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2. The Council is keen for your views to help shape the Submission version scheduled for publication in spring 2018. Details of where to view the full consultation document and how to get involved are on page 12 on this booklet.

#### **WHAT IS THE LOCAL PLAN?**

This is the Part 2 Local Plan for South Northamptonshire District. It covers the period from 2011-2029.

The Local Plan Part 2 will sit alongside the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (WNJCS) that was adopted in December 2014 as well as adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

The WNJCS provides a long term vision for the area with an overall framework in which more detailed plans will be drawn up and decisions made. The WNJCS includes the agreed development strategy, the agreed scale of development and strategic allocations for housing, leisure and employment development and a series of Development Management Policies.

It provides a strategic framework to guide the preparation of the Part 2 Local Plan that will provide more detailed planning policies and possible non-strategic site allocations.

We have previously sought your views on the issues that the plan should cover, and then what options are available to address these issues within the plan.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE PLAN**

The WNJCS requires or recommends that the Local Plan Part 2 include policies and proposals on key issues which include:

- Allocation of employment land below the 40ha strategic threshold should be considered positively during the preparation of Part 2 Local Plans
- Mechanisms for achieving improvements in the provision of open space, sport, recreation and cultural facilities
- Advice relating to the consideration of biodiversity in the development management process
- Mechanisms to protect heritage assets, including non-designated assets will be strengthened through policies
- The allocation of settlements within a hierarchy
- The Part 2 Local Plan will ensure that the scale of development is proportionate to the scale of each village within the hierarchy

Once the Local Plan Part 2 has been adopted it will replace the remaining saved policies in the South Northamptonshire Local Plan 1997.

The Plan is based on and supported by data, background papers and other evidence bases. This includes:

- Sustainability Appraisal (2017)
- Settlement boundary reviews (2017)
- Settlement hierarchy review (2016)
- A Review of Special Landscape Areas (2017)
- Housing Market Evidence base (2017)
- Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2017)

## **2. VISION AND OBJECTIVES**

The 'Vision' is a strong spatial and strategic statement which establishes the priorities for the new Local Plan. It informs the key objectives and policies to help guide development and planning decisions up to 2029.

*The Vision for South Northamptonshire is:*

*In 2029 South Northamptonshire will continue to be an attractive and successful place where people want to live, work and visit. The challenges of an ageing population will be being addressed and younger age groups attracted and retained creating balanced and sustainable communities. Development will have taken place in a sustainable manner supported by the necessary infrastructure and with minimal effect on the environment and important landscapes.*

*In 2029 the District will have retained its local character and distinctiveness. The identity and unique natural assets and built heritage of South Northamptonshire will be valued, protected and enhanced, enabling people to access and enjoy them.*

*In 2029 there will be a diverse, high quality accessible housing offer which provides choice and meets the needs of all our community, including housing for older people and vulnerable people including those with specialist needs as well as affordable housing and smaller market dwellings for first time buyers and young families*

*In 2029 there will continue to be strong business growth on a range of employment sites supporting businesses of all sizes that will have delivered a diverse economy in South Northamptonshire. The District will be renowned for motor sport and high performance engineering specialisms centred on Silverstone, together with a growing food and drink and tourism sector*

*In 2029 Brackley and Towcester will continue to prosper providing services, facilities and employment opportunities for the wider rural area with a distinctive character and where important local heritage and environmental assets have been protected and enhanced.*

*In 2029 the vitality of the rural areas will be maintained or enhanced with villages set in attractive, open countryside. In 2029, where need is identified there will be a wider choice of homes to meet locally identified needs and appropriately scaled local employment opportunities as well as local services to meet the identified needs of the local population. This will be delivered in a sustainable way that ensures the continued identity of individual settlements and avoids coalescence.*

To deliver the Vision the Local Plan Part 2 has been shaped around 10 key objectives.

<p><b>Objective 1</b></p> <p>To facilitate economic growth encouraging investment and job creation, aligning training with employers' requirements to get more local people into work and reduce levels of unemployment.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2</b></p> <p>To deliver appropriate new employment opportunities in both the urban and rural areas, including home-based working and extended employment areas, facilitated by high-speed broadband.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3</b></p> <p>To facilitate tourism and leisure related growth creating a distinct offer within South Northamptonshire.</p>	<p><b>Objective 4</b></p> <p>To provide a range of new housing, of high quality environmental and design standards, including those relating to designing out crime, to meet the needs of all sections of our existing population, including affordable, housing for the younger generation and housing for older persons, vulnerable people and those with specialist housing needs.</p>
<p><b>Objective 5</b></p> <p>To ensure that appropriately scaled new development to meet locally identified needs is located on</p>	<p><b>Objective 6</b></p> <p>To ensure good quality and a broad range of services that are accessible to all, and to</p>

<p>suitable sites in sustainable locations that can be served by sustainable transport measures.</p>	<p>promote the vitality and viability of our two town centres.</p>
<p><b>Objective 7</b></p> <p>To work with partners to ensure that new development is supported by the necessary provision of/improvements to infrastructure to minimise the impact of development and support sustainable communities.</p>	<p><b>Objective 8</b></p> <p>To ensure the sustainability of rural communities by retaining important community services and ensuring a diverse and resilient rural economy.</p>
<p><b>Objective 9</b></p> <p>To protect and enhance the tranquillity and natural and built environment in South Northamptonshire through high quality design that is respectful to heritage assets, biodiversity and the environmental character of the locality and surrounding landscapes.</p>	<p><b>Objective 10</b></p> <p>To protect the setting and separate identity of settlements by avoiding their coalescence and retaining the openness and character of the land around existing settlements.</p>

### 3. REVIEW OF SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

A settlement confine boundary defines the extent of a settlement's existing or proposed main built-up area, and is a tool that is used to direct the application of policies within this local plan. The following criteria have been used to define the extent of the settlement confine boundaries where appropriate.

- Existing commitments by virtue of an extant planning permission, for residential or employment development on the fringes of settlements;
- The presence of clearly defined physical features such as walls, fences, hedgerows, roads, streams;
- The inclusion of schools, halls, large houses and other buildings which stand in extensive grounds would depend on their relationship to the overall fabric of the settlement. In some cases, their relative isolation caused by their spacious setting would justify total exclusion, whereas in other cases, the building itself could be included within the Settlement Confine Boundary but the curtilage excluded;
- Residential curtilages exclude paddocks, orchards, land used for recreational purposes and similar uses and land separated from the main curtilage by a physical boundary and
- Open areas including formal and informal recreation space, which contribute to the character or setting of a settlement, are excluded either to safeguard their use or to maintain their contribution to the wider landscape setting.

Maps identifying the proposed revised village confine boundaries can be located on the Council's website [www.southnorthants/planningpolicy](http://www.southnorthants/planningpolicy)

#### 4. EMERGING DRAFT POLICIES

Policies in the Pre-submission Draft Local Plan Part 2 help to guide development decisions and contribute towards delivering the Vision. This section provides an overview of the key areas covered and the proposed policy directions.

- **Building Sustainable Communities** sets out the main factors that will need to be considered in ensuring sustainable design of new development.
- **The Spatial Strategy** for South Northamptonshire District sets out a settlement hierarchy for the District;
- **Housing** sets out policies to guide residential development;
- **The Economy** sets out policies to guide employment development;
- **Connections** sets out policies on transport infrastructure;
- **Heritage** sets out policies on the historic environment;
- **Gypsy, travellers and travelling show people** sets out a policy on how the needs of these specific groups will be met;
- **Town centre and retailing** sets out policies on how town centre and retail development will be managed;
- **The Natural environment** sets out how the natural environment will be protected.

#### BUILDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Spatial Strategy of the WNJCS sets out the principles of sustainable development.

The WNJCS states that some of the main factors that will need to be considered in ensuring sustainable design of new development include the layout and orientation of built development, appropriate densities, and the need to create attractive, usable and durable places, including high quality and inclusive design of development, open spaces and green infrastructure that support community health and well-being.

The Draft Building Sustainable Development policies propose:

- Support development that is well designed and does not create unacceptable impacts and compliments character and setting
- Incorporates sustainable design and encourages sustainable construction methods
- Require developments to contribute towards infrastructure provision
- Provide safe and inclusive environments which maximises personal wellbeing and safety
- Support the provision or enhancement of key community facilities

## THE SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Spatial Strategy sets out the overall approach towards providing for new homes, jobs, infrastructure and community facilities over the plan period.

The strategic approach to development across the plan area will be to:

- Concentrate development in the Market Towns (Towcester and Brackley); and
- Provide modest development within the villages, of an appropriate scale where opportunities exist to meet locally defined objective housing needs.

Policy R1 of the WNJCS sets out a spatial strategy for the rural areas where development will be guided by a rural settlement hierarchy. A settlement hierarchy ranks settlements according to their size and their range of services and facilities. The WNJCS sets out a series of

criteria that forms the basis for this assessment as well as defining the 3 categories of settlement within which villages will be placed.

Policy – Settlement Hierarchy 1 (SH1) defines the settlement hierarchy and the associated broad approach to development in each instance.

- Primary service villages – Four villages have been identified as Primary service villages. These villages are the most sustainable villages in the rural areas.
- Secondary service villages – 50 villages are identified as Secondary Service villages. Whilst it is recognised that in these villages there is a need to meet local needs for housing and other economic or community purposes these villages generally have a more limited range of services and facilities.
- Other villages – 23 villages have been identified as Other Villages. These villages have an even more limited range of services and are more reliant on the services of larger centres for day to day needs.

## GENERAL HOUSING POLICIES

The context for the distribution of housing number across the District is the WNJCS. The figures in the WNJCS are based on the latest (at the time) interim 2011-based population and household projections.

Policy S3 of the WNJCS sets out the housing figures that it expects will be delivered within South Northamptonshire between 2011-2029. These are as follows:

Brackley Town: 2,160

Towcester town: 2.650

South Northants rural areas: 2,360

A number of policies have been drafted which will need to be taken into account when considering all proposals for residential development in the District.

The Draft Housing policies propose to:

- Ensure all new housing provides a mix of different types, tenure, size and costs of homes are provided to meet the varied needs of existing and future residents
- Require developments of 5 dwellings or more to contribute to the delivery of affordable homes
- The provision of high quality accessible homes
- Meet general, older persons and specialised housing need
- Require housing developments to contribute to the delivery of affordable homes
- Support the provision of single plot exceptions sites to meet local housing need
- Support proposals for Self build to meet an identified need
- Adopt a balanced approach to assessing applications involving the development of residential garden land.
- Ensure new residential development deliver high quality and environmentally sustainable living and incorporate well designed and located private outdoor amenity space of an appropriate type and amount.
- The uses of residential garden extensions and associated domestic uses

## **HOUSING IN THE RURAL AREA**

The Council has already met the rural requirement through completions since 2011 or through sites with a current planning permission. There is clearly no need for additional housing to be allocated in the rural areas to meet the overall strategic need as set out in the WNJCS. Despite this, the council acknowledges that this figure is not a maximum and that, in accordance with the NPPF, in some villages there is likely to be some need for additional market and affordable housing in the future to meet identified local needs.

Furthermore it is possible that this development may not all be able to be accommodated within the defined confines of a village.

Policy R1 of the WNJCS sets out the circumstances where further housing development will be permitted once the strategic requirement has been met. These exceptions form the basis of the policy approach in this Plan.

## **LOCALLY ASSESSED HOUSING NEEDS**

In accordance with the NPPF it is important that where local objectively assessed needs (LOAN) for housing are identified these should, where possible, be met. A LOAN will be identified through a robust Housing Need Assessment (HNA).

An application that includes the development of open market housing on sites outside the village confines, over and above those permissible under the Rural Exceptions Policy (H3), will need to be supported by a clear and robust justification quantifying the LOAN and the established local connection of those household in need in the particular town/parish that the proposal will deliver.

When assessing the acceptability and appropriateness of proposals for residential development outside the defined village confines, it will need to be demonstrated that alternative sites within the confines are not suitable or available and regard will be had to the extent to which the local community has been involved and the extent to which their view are reflected in submitted proposals.

It is intended that this Policy approach will be more effective to meet local needs, by adopting a robust but flexible approach to the release of land for housing development.

The Draft Local objectively Assessed Need policy proposes:

- Applications for housing development that include market housing will be permitted on suitable sites outside but adjoining the confines subject to criteria
- A clear objectively assessed local housing need for homes will need to be demonstrated prior to the submission of a planning application
- Development proposal would need to reflect the overall mix and type of dwellings defined in the housing need assessment

## **HOUSING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF NORTHAMPTON**

The WNJCS sets out the housing requirements for the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA). There are two separate issues that need to be considered in the preparation of this Local Plan. These are:

- The existing shortfall in the 5 year supply of housing land and
- The likely overall shortfall in provision of housing by the end of the plan period (2029)

The issue for South Northants is what this Local Plan can or should do to protect the District from the impact of the failure to deliver by the Borough in the short term. It is considered that the overall shortfall in the delivery across the Plan period will be considered as part of the review of the WNJCS.

It is considered that it is important to include a policy approach in this Plan that provides a positive yet controlled approach towards additional housing within the District to contribute towards the short term under delivery in the NRDA. Failure to do this could result in speculative applications in towns or villages across the District that may be difficult to resist.

The Draft NRDA policies propose:

- A site must immediately adjoin the existing NRDA boundary. This excludes those sections of the boundary that border allocations in the WNJCS that are yet to be completed.
- Any proposal for delivery must be suitable and deliverable
- Any proposal must include a robust delivery trajectory setting out how many dwellings would be delivered within the next 5 year period;
- The Policy would only apply until the current shortfall in delivery is resolved or the review of the WNJCS is at an advanced stage

## THE ECONOMY

The Local Plan aims to support sustainable economic growth in the District. Increasing the economic competitiveness of South Northamptonshire is fundamental to providing employment opportunities. Improving the district's economic future requires more than land and infrastructure. It also requires consideration of how we manage and reduce the environmental impact of proposed development and to ensure it is of sufficient quality and in keeping with the landscape and existing character of the District.

The Draft Employment policies propose:

- Existing employment sites and land allocated for employment use should be retained for use, unless certain criteria are met
- Robust justification for loss or reduction of employment land
- Appropriate new employment development will be permitted on suitable sites within the confines of rural service centres, primary service, secondary villages and small villages.
- Suitable sites immediately adjoining the confines of the rural service centres, primary and secondary villages will be permitted where the proposal meets certain criteria
- Proposals for tourism and leisure development will be granted within settlement confine where it can be demonstrated certain criteria have been considered
- Support for development which relates to the operational needs of and/or expansion of all of the Districts higher, further and specialist education establishments
- Diversification of existing farm, agricultural estate or other land-based rural business will be permitted subject to certain criteria
- Horse related facilities and equestrian enterprises will be permitted subject to certain criteria



## POTENTIAL SITE ALLOCATIONS

Site Allocations are places that have the potential to deliver housing, employment and infrastructure. The draft Local Plan is only proposing to allocate a limited number of further employment land provision. This is to support the delivery of flexible supply of employment land and help strengthen the economy of the District. The draft Local Plan includes policies that identify the most appropriate uses, developer requirements and design principles for each. The proposed employment allocations are as follows:

Towcester Employment Allocations:

- Land at Bell Plantation, Towcester
- Leisure and Sports Village at Towcester racecourse
- Land of Woolgrowers Field, Towcester

Rural Area Allocations:

- Land at Shacks Barn, Whittlebury
- Land at Former Furtho Pit, Old Stratford / Cosgrove

The location of these sites are illustrated in the proposals maps in the full consultation document.

## CONNECTIONS

South Northamptonshire has always had excellent transport links, via the A5 and A43, the M1 and M40 to all parts of the UK. But despite excellent connections the district has pockets of isolated rural

populations for whom transport is a major concern, and for some is not available.

Traffic growth has seen a major impact on air quality in urban areas of the district, specifically Towcester town centre.

High car dependency means that improvements in traffic congestion, air quality and safety can only be achieved by the implementation of measures which encourage a modal shift to public transport or by reducing the need to travel, through more local employment and opportunities for “home” working.

Electric and low emission vehicles offer the possibility of making such trips more sustainable. It is therefore important for future development to be able to accommodate electric vehicles’ recharging facilities.

The Draft Connection policies propose:

- To help reduce private car dependence
- The provision of electrical charging point on new developments
- Safeguarding of the Chipping Warden relief road
- Encourages the improvement, enhancement and protection of the canal network

## HERITAGE

South Northamptonshire is a district rich in history with a rural and sparsely populated landscape that has remained largely unchanged for centuries.

This rich and interesting history has resulted in a varied and significant historic environment which includes many individual heritage assets which combine to create an attractive local identity and distinctive character.

National policy indicates that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

In 2016 Heritage Assets in South Northamptonshire included:

<b>Asset</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	39
Historic Parks and Gardens	7
Registered Battlefields	1
Listed Buildings	1,842
Conservation Areas	61

The Council recognises the importance of the district's heritage assets and sees conservation as the process of maintaining and managing change to them in a way that sustains their values and benefits and where appropriate enhances significance.

The Draft Heritage policies propose to:

- Ensure that the significance of the District's heritage is understood, recognised and preserved.
- Protect and enhance the District's heritage assets and historic environments
- The preservation and/or enhancement of the special historic landscape character and interest of historic parks and gardens
- Contribute to the preservation of Listed buildings
- Preserve or enhance those elements that make a positive contribution where development is proposed in conservation areas.

## TOWN CENTRES AND RETAILING

The WNJCS sets out the hierarchy of the town centres and sets out the town centre boundaries for Brackley and Towcester.

As well as retail shops, the District's two town centres are host to a variety of activities. These include leisure activities such as restaurants and pubs; businesses such as banks and estate agents and residential use. It is recognised that the town centres are at the heart of the community and the Council will plan accordingly to support their viability and vitality.

In accordance with the NPPF this Plan sets out the primary shopping frontage areas for Brackley and Towcester. Primary Shopping Areas are characterised by the highest proportion of Use Class A1 shop uses in the town centres. The attraction of the town centres for shoppers is particularly influenced by retaining the overall and predominant retail character and a critical mass of shops is important in sustaining ongoing vitality. In order to protect the vitality and viability of the town centres as a whole, it is necessary to protect the retail uses in this Frontage, particularly A1(shops).

The Draft Retail policies propose to:

- Promote a town centre first approach to help support the vitality and viability of town centres
- Ensure that retailing remains the main function in the Primary Shopping areas.
- Require robust evidence where loss of A1 retail (shops) is proposed

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

South Northamptonshire's environment is key to its identity and widely valued by our residents, visitors and businesses.

This attractive and distinctive landscape helps to raise both the overall quality of the environment and the quality of people's lives and it also represents an important ecological resource.

In recognition that some areas of the district are of even greater landscape value Northamptonshire County Council designated a number of Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) across the district. As part of the Local Plan Part 2 the Council has completed a review of the landscape of the district. This work resulted in 7 areas being identified as SLAs. These can be shown on the Proposals Map in the full consultation document.

Trees and hedgerows are important natural features which can define landscape character and contribute to the quality and enjoyment of the environment. They can have great nature conservation, amenity, recreational and environmental value.

The Draft Natural Environment policies propose to:

- The protection and enhancement of all landscapes in the district
- Development proposals should be informed and be sympathetic to the distinctive landscape areas
- Provide protection and integration of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows for their wildlife, landscape and/or amenity value
- Conserve and enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure

## 5. HAVE YOUR SAY

To view and comment on the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan, the document can be found through the planning policy pages at [www.southnorthants.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

We are consulting from 4 September 2017 to 10 November 2017.

Reference printed hard copies of the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2 will be available for viewing in libraries across the District:

- The Forum, Towcester
- Brackley Library
- Middleton Cheney Library
- Roade Library
- Deanshanger Library

Representations on the draft Plan must be made in writing. Our preference for comments on the draft Local Plan is via the link below and using consultation portal. However if you are unable to use this portal, comments can also be made in the following ways:

- Online: [www.southnorthants.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/planningpolicy)
- Email: [LocalPlanConsultation@southnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:LocalPlanConsultation@southnorthants.gov.uk)
- Post:

Planning Policy Team  
Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2 consultation  
South Northamptonshire Council  
The Forum  
Moat Lane

Towcester  
NN12 6AD

All consultation responses must be received no later than 12 noon on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and should:

- Specify which part of the plan you are commenting on
- Set out how you think the draft plan should be changed, including revisions to policies or maps

Any comments received cannot be treated as confidential as the Council is obliged to make representations available for public inspection.

If you would like to be kept informed about the new Local Plan, please sign up to our mailing list at [LocalPlanConsultation@southnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:LocalPlanConsultation@southnorthants.gov.uk)

### CONSULTATION EXHIBITIONS

Date	Time	Venue
27 <sup>th</sup> September	4-8	Bugbrooke Village Hall
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	4-8	Towcester The Forum
4 <sup>th</sup> October	2-6	Brackley Library
10 <sup>th</sup> October	4-8	Roade Village Hall
12 <sup>th</sup> October	4-8	Deanshanger Community Centre

### NEXT STEPS

The Pre-Submission draft Local Plan Part 2 is not a final Local Plan. Following this consultation period your feedback will be recorded and where appropriate the comments will help to prepare a 'Proposed

Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2'. This will involve a further formal public consultation before the plan is submitted to Government for examination by an independent Inspector.

This process is illustrated below:

Proposed Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2	Spring 2018
Submission Local Plan	May 2018
Local Plan Examination in Public	July 2018
Local Plan Adoption	November 2018

A more detailed timetable can be viewed at:  
[www.southnorthants.gov.uk/8467.htm](http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/8467.htm)