



# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 September 2023

Report Title	West Northamptonshire Local Plan
Report Author	Alan Munn Team Leader Planning Policy Planning Policy and Specialist Services

### Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

West S151	Martin Henry Executive Director, Finance	Email from James Smith 29/08
Director	Stuart Timmiss Executive Director: Place, Economy & Environment	Email recd 30/08
Legal	Theresa Boyd Solicitor	Email sent recd 30/08
Communications	Becky Hutson Head of Communications	Email recd 29/08

### List of Appendices

N/A

#### 1. Purpose of Report

---

To update on the process for preparing the next stage of the West Northamptonshire Local Plan.

#### 2. Executive Summary

---

2.1 The West Northamptonshire Local Plan (WNLP) will be a single local plan for West Northamptonshire and guide development in the area up to 2041.

- 2.3 The next stage in the preparation of the WNLP is a draft plan consultation. Details of the technical work supporting the plan, needed to inform the next consultation, together with those of further member engagement are provided in section 5 below.

### **3. Recommendations**

---

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) Considers the process for the preparation of the draft plan for public consultation.

### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

---

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Council to produce a development plan for the area. The West Northamptonshire Local Plan will form the development plan for the area alongside the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and made (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans. It is appropriate for the Committee to consider the process for the preparation of the WNLP.

### **5. Report Background**

---

- 5.1 On 21 June a report was presented to Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considering the process for preparing the next stage of the West Northamptonshire Local Plan, specifically in respect of member engagement. This report provides an update on the preparation of the plan.
- 5.2 25 April 2023 the Council's Planning Policy Committee approved an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) for West Northamptonshire. This updated LDS sets out a programme for the preparation of a single local plan to be referred to as the West Northamptonshire Local Plan (WNLP). When adopted, the WNLP will replace the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (WNJCS) and the Part 2 Local Plans for the former Daventry District, Northampton Borough, and South Northamptonshire District. It is intended that the WNLP will guide development across West Northamptonshire over a period of at least 15 years from adoption. The plan period is currently expected to extend up to 2041, as agreed by the Planning Policy Committee at its meeting in June 2022.
- 5.3 A central element of the WNLP will be the Council's spatial vision for the area which sets out the ambition for our economy, our communities, and our environment. It effectively sets out what sort of place we want West Northamptonshire to be at the end of the plan period and will include place-based visions for Northampton, Daventry, Brackley, Towcester and our rural areas. The delivery of the vision will be underpinned by a set of spatial objectives.
- 5.4 We have previously consulted on a draft spatial vision and a set of 16 spatial objectives which reflect the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. The current draft vision and objectives were considered by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June.
- 5.5 The next stage in the preparation of the WNLP will be the publication of a draft plan for public consultation. It is expected that in addition to our vision and objectives, the draft plan will include draft planning policies, and draft site allocations to meet the housing and economic needs of the area. In addition, work is progressing in respect of the settlement hierarchy and settlement confines which will also form part of the consultation.

- 5.6 In preparation for the draft plan consultation, we have started on a process of member engagement to ensure that members have an appropriate opportunity to give their views and shape the draft policies and proposals prior to its consideration by the Planning Policy Committee and the following public consultation.
- 5.7 Most recently a member workshop was held in the Council Chamber at the Forum, on 3 May. At this workshop members were asked to consider the proposed vision, and to review our existing planning policies in terms of what works well, what doesn't work well and where we have gaps that the new plan could fill. The feedback from this workshop has been captured and circulated to all members. Members who were not able to attend were given the opportunity to add their comments to those recorded at the workshop.
- 5.8 Prior to the member workshop we had provided briefings on the new Local Plan for leading members (in January) and all members (in March). A member briefing on Housing and Planning was held on 17 May, which included information regarding the new Local Plan.
- 5.9 There are two key pieces of technical work which are nearing completion and will which inform the preparation of the draft plan. Firstly, there is an update to the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA). This update will take account of the revised plan period, the latest data available from the 2021 census, and recent evidence on the demand for strategic logistics development. Secondly, we are undertaking a high-level sustainability appraisal of broad spatial options. This is looking at the sustainability merits of different spatial approaches to meeting the development needs of the area. Furthermore work has been commissioned exploring the brownfield opportunities in the districts principal settlements (Brackley, Daventry, Northampton and Towcester), the contribution they can make to meeting the needs identified in the HENA and the role that regeneration could have in place shaping and delivering the vision and objectives of the plan.
- 5.10 Related to the completion of this technical work we are planning at least two member workshops:
- Workshop 1: Housing and Economic Needs – To review the findings of the HENA update and determine the scale and type of housing and economic growth that the WNLP should be planning to accommodate.
- Workshop 2: Spatial Choices – Informed by the sustainability appraisal, a discussion on the different spatial options the Council should consider in order to meet the development needs identified in the HENA.
- 5.9 The timing of these workshops is not yet finalised, but discussions with the Portfolio Holder for Planning are ongoing and it is anticipated that sessions will commence in October.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

---

- 6.1 The Committee are asked to consider the update on plan progression and the proposals for the plan's progression and member engagement in section 5 above.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

---

### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 It is currently anticipated that the costs of producing the WNLP can all be met from existing resources. If further funding was required this would be the subject of a separate report.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 The preparation of the development plan is a statutory requirement and the process for plan preparation is prescribed by the relevant regulations.

### **7.3 Risk**

7.3.1 Failure to engage members in the process would put at risk the successful adoption of the plan.

### **7.4 Consultation and Communication**

7.4.1 The requirements for consultation and communication on the WNLP are set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. A consultation and communication strategy will be prepared, in collaboration with the Communications team, in advance of the next consultation.

### **7.5 Climate Impact**

7.5.1 The WNLP will include policies to address climate change that will contribute to the Council's ambitions in this respect.

### **7.6 Community Impact**

7.6.1 The consultation and communication strategy will ensure that our communities are given ample opportunity to be involved in the draft plan consultation.

## **8. Background Papers**

---

None