



- 2.1 NNC is consulting on the first stage of the review of the Core Strategy that was adopted in 2016. This Council has been invited to respond to the consultation.

### 3. Recommendation

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- 3.1 It is recommended that Planning Policy Committee:
- a) Agrees the suggested response to the consultation from North Northamptonshire Council as set out in paragraph 5.8.

### 4. Reason for Recommendations

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- 4.1 To ensure that the Council responds to the consultation from the neighbouring North Northamptonshire Council.

### 5. Report Background

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- 5.1 North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) has launched a consultation on the Scope and Issues that the new strategic plan for its area will need to address and is seeking views on whether or not they have identified the right issues.
- 5.2 The existing Core Strategy covers the period 2011 to 2031 and was adopted in 2016. Given the need to review plans every five years the council is now preparing a new plan, which will cover the period to 2041.
- 5.3 The Strategic Plan will focus on strategic matters which will, as a minimum, need to meet the requirement, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The plan will also help 3.0to deliver the priorities set out in other NNC plans and strategies, notably the Corporate Plan.
- 5.4 NNC has identified the following strategic priorities for the area that it expects to be within the scope of the plan, and states that these may be refined subject to any changes to national and sub-regional guidance and in response to consultation feedback:
- **The spatial vision for North Northamptonshire** – extended to 2050 to reflect the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework (ASF) and meet the requirements of the NPPF.
  - **The approach to climate change** – setting the framework for the local response to the climate emergency, building on existing initiatives and setting priorities to deliver net zero carbon.
  - **The approach to Levelling Up** – setting the framework for the local response to addressing inequalities and setting priorities to level up.
  - **The spatial strategy for the distribution of development** – including the roles of settlements and the distribution of housing, employment, retail, leisure, and other commercial development. Cooperation will be needed with adjoining authorities and other relevant agencies to ensure cross boundary issues, including options for the longer-term growth of Northampton, Bedford and Peterborough are considered.
  - **The housing requirement** – the number of new homes to be provided across North Northamptonshire and the distribution of these. Within this context, the size, type, and

tenure of housing needed for different groups will be identified, including addressing the proportion of the overall housing requirement that should be provided as affordable and planning for the needs of an ageing population.

- **Economic growth** – an economic vision to strengthen and diversify the economy of North Northamptonshire, taking account of existing sectoral strengths, opportunities provided by the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and implications of Covid-19, including changes to working patterns. An overall jobs target for North Northamptonshire, distribution of this and identification of new employment land capable of meeting a wide variety of needs.
- **Town Centres** - updated policy guidance and strategy for town centres and retail development taking account of the impact of policy changes and social/economic implications including Covid-19. This will focus on reimagining and redesigning town centres to support regeneration and economic recovery from Covid-19 including opportunities for town centres to become community service hubs with increased leisure and residential space.
- **Strategic Development Locations and Opportunities** – strategic sites that are key to the delivery of the spatial strategy will be identified in the plan. The location of these sites will be a key consideration in the context of climate-change related risks and ensuring future development contributes towards a reduction in carbon emissions. The plan will define clear development principles for these areas. These will provide the basis for design codes/frameworks.
- **Infrastructure** – key infrastructure projects that are required to deliver the strategy such as strategic transport schemes including active travel, utility networks, community facilities, health, emergency services infrastructure and site-specific requirements.
- **Place-making/sustainable development** – key principles to ensure high quality development that is sustainable and supports local communities. The design and future sustainability of development will be a key consideration in the approach to climate change and the Strategic Plan will set out a stronger approach to integrating land-use and transport considerations. This will include a review and refresh of the Protecting Assets policies in the JCS to ensure they are locally distinctive with increased emphasis on health and wellbeing. It may be necessary to harmonise the approach to open space/sports provision across North Northamptonshire and the broad criteria for the delivery of these.
- **Natural and Historic Environment** – key principles and measures to achieve environmental net gain including the protection, restoration, and enhancement of natural, and historic assets. This will include natural capital benefits such as flood protection, recreation and improved water and air quality as well as ensuring appropriate measures for internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and priority habitats or protected species. The Strategic Plan will seek to maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of nature and accessibility to it. Opportunities to enhance the green and blue infrastructure network within North Northamptonshire and maximise its wider benefits and opportunities will be set out. The spatial strategy and place-making approach will be influenced by the importance of the natural and historic environment including the role they play in creating local distinctiveness.

5.5 As noted above, the plan is required to meet the housing need over the plan period. Using the current LHN approach the consultation document identifies a requirement for 35,680 houses. Existing commitments amount to 35,308 houses leaving a requirement for just 372 dwellings. However, all plans need to provide some level of contingency to provide for unexpected delays in delivery on some sites, and therefore the Council will need to determine what level of contingency should be provided for in the next stage of the plan.

5.6 The timetable for the next stages of the plan making process is identified as follows:

- Options Consultation – November 2022
- Draft Plan Consultation – June 2023
- Publication Plan Consultation – November 2023
- Examination – September 2024
- Adoption – September 2025

5.6 The closing date for this consultation was 23<sup>rd</sup> May. This is the first available committee to consider the Council's response. Officers at NNC are aware of this and are content to accept a late response. Following the resolution of this committee, the response will be submitted.

5.7 The plan is at an early stage and nothing in the documentation has been identified as a cause for concern. The scope of the plan is similar to the scope of the plan for West Northamptonshire, nothing has been identified as missing.

5.8 It is suggested that the following response be made to North Northamptonshire Council:

West Northamptonshire Council is pleased to have been consulted on the first stage of the plan and:

- welcomes the progress being made by NNC in reviewing its Core Strategy
- invites further dialogue from NNC as its plan progresses, particularly if it intends to include any proposals in the plan that would impact on the West Northamptonshire area.
- Confirms that it does not have any concerns about the content of the Scope and Issues document

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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6.1 The Council could decide to provide a different response to that included in paragraph 5.8, or choose not to respond at all. However, the Council is required to comply with the duty to co-operate and, whilst no duty to co-operate matters have been identified, it seems sensible that a response be made.

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

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## 7.1 **Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## 7.2 **Legal**

7.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## 7.3 **Risk**

7.3.1 There are no risks arising from the recommendations in this report.

## 7.4 **Consultation**

7.4.1 No implications.

## 7.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 Not applicable

## 7.6 **Climate Impact**

7.6.1 There are no climate change impacts arising specifically from this report. The consultation document identifies climate change as an area that the plan will need to deal with.

## 7.7 **Community Impact**

7.7.1 There are no community impacts arising specifically from this report.

## 7.8 **Communications**

7.8.1 None directly arising from this report.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 'Scope and Issues' consultation for the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.