

# View Response

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## West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan - Issues Consultation Response Form

The local planning authorities in West Northamptonshire i.e. Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils with support from Northamptonshire County Council, have agreed to prepare a new Strategic Plan for the area. This will replace the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and will cover the period 2019-2041, although the Vision may look further ahead.

The Issues Consultation is the first stage in preparing the new Plan, no decisions have been made yet and the purpose of the document is to raise awareness and stimulate debate.

The Issues Consultation document is arranged in themed sections with associated questions, which are set out below. The questions should be read in conjunction with the Issues Consultation document. Please note that you don't have to answer every question.

## Vision and Objectives

See pages 6-9 of the Issues Consultation Document

1.

Is this vision still appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire and can it be extended up to 2050?

YES

Vision for rural areas is still appropriate. However, our village, Deanshanger, is already struggling to retain its distinctiveness and character due to a huge influx of new housing eroding our once beautiful landscape. We would love the opportunity to support leisure and tourism but have no waterway, country house and park or woodland to encourage people to visit.

2.

Are changes to the vision needed having regard to spatial options and the emerging proposals for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc?

YES

Given that one of the main and emerging factors impacting the WNSP is the government's ambition for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, the vision should confirm that it will respond to this but reiterate in the strongest possible terms that it will expect to receive appropriate levels of central government growth funding to allow it to do so. Housing growth within West Northants to facilitate economic growth and infrastructure development outside of the West Northants area should not be our vision.

3.

Are there any other changes you would like to see to the vision?

YES

In the vision and objectives – final point Our rural areas

The vision relating to rural areas should include the need to ensure that vital public services are available locally (including doctors) and that the vision will deliver the infrastructure rural communities need including subsidised public transport, road networks that reflect existing and planned development need, digital connectivity and utilities.

We would also like to see a requirement put in place for services to be in place at the earliest stage of development and not at the end.

4.

Are the spatial objectives still the most appropriate ones for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire? What changes or other objectives would you like to see?

NO

Current objective 11 on housing should be reiterated – housing development should focus on the most sustainable location of Northampton supported by the towns of Daventry, Towcester, Brackley and limit development in rural areas to where this is to provide for local needs and support local services. However, we should challenge that affordable housing is available for the young adults who have spent their whole life in Deanshanger having an opportunity to rent or buy at a selective precured rate. As above it needs to be affordable and preference given to the younger generation who have proven links to the village inclusive of family still living in the village

Objective 12 Protecting and Supporting Rural Communities should include the right to high quality public subsidised transport and service provision such as libraries and

health services including a doctor's surgery and a doctor in Deanshanger, the planners should also consider the development of a hospital this side of Northamptonshire to cope with the growth, the two hospitals are now not fit to serve our ever-growing population.

We also need to look at resources from the Police, Fire and ambulance services, waiting hours for an emergency response because we are on the outskirts of Northamptonshire is not right, we pay the same amount as other areas in Northamptonshire and should have the same cover given our ever-growing population.

There is no mention made on sustainability of resources i.e. rainwater harvesting, solar energy, wind energy, recycling etc.

5.

Is a plan-period of 2019-2041 appropriate or should it be extended up to 2050 to match the Government's aspirations for the Arc?

No, it should be extended up to 2050

## Key Principles for Place-making and Sustainable Communities

See pages 9 and 10 of the Issues Consultation Document

6.

Do you feel that the key principles identified will create sustainable communities?

The key principle that housing will be located in sustainable locations should be reconfirmed but also implemented. The need for this to be linked to access to good public transport should have the caveat of 'wherever possible', removed and health should be added to the list (i.e. employment, education, retail, health and other services).

How do you suggest our village, Deanshanger will become a sustainable location? We are not easily connected to industry for walking or cycling to be sustainable by the average person. We have no industry in our village nor our neighbouring villages. And this year our bus service has been heavily reduced and only service links to MK. NB the current bus service between Oxford and Cambridge travels regularly along A422 but doesn't stop anywhere in South Northants.

We have nothing to offer to the Arc. Roads currently can't cope, there are no transport links, no High Street retail, no Drs, no bank.

We currently have poor coverage by emergency services as police and fire have moved further away and been shrunk and potentially have left our area vulnerable.

7.

Are there any other place making principles that need to be considered?

NO

## Natural and Built Environment

See pages 10-13 of the Issues Consultation Document

8.

Have we identified the right key principles to conserve and enhance the built and natural environment?

There is no mention made on sustainability of resources i.e. rainwater harvesting, solar energy, wind energy, recycling etc.

9.

Are there any built and natural environment issues that we have missed?

Our village neighbourhood is home to species including Red Kites, Buzzards, Sparrow hawks, squirrels, bats, owls, newts. Huge building works will negatively affect their habitat.

There should also be mandatory requirements for Solar panels and rainwater harvesting.

## Housing

See pages 14 and 17 of the Issues Consultation Document

10.

Is the 1st April 2019 an appropriate base date for the housing requirement?

NO the report is based on 2014 figures, a more up to date base is required

11.

Having regard to the scenarios presented what level of housing growth should the plan be seeking to accommodate? If you support a level of housing that differs from LHN please explain how you think that would be justified?

Would support the South Northamptonshire LHN provided that a portion of these houses are used for social housing not affordable housing.

12.

Would the Government's ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc justify a level of housing growth significantly in excess of LHN?

NO

Although the WNSP should reflect the Oxford-Cambridge arc, to significantly increase proposed housing growth in line with government ambition is not justified. Without any assurances of economic or infrastructure growth funds from government the vision should not increase its housing growth targets. Supplementary/parallel figures could be developed that link to anticipated inward government growth funding and provided if necessary but these would be subject to realisation of proposed projects.

13.

What measures could the plan include to diversify the offer on strategic sites, or otherwise increase the rate of housing delivery?

Ensure all brown field sites are used, look to convert empty office space into flats/apartments. Compulsory purchase orders on empty homes.

Incentives need to be given for developers to look at these sites more favourably.

Planning permission should be more stringent with reduced length of time a developer has to develop the land so that places are not left in a mess for some years.

## 14.

Are there any particular types of specialist housing that you feel should be increased in supply, do you have any evidence to support this?

Currently the target for affordable housing in new developments is 40% at least 50% of this figure should be for social housing. The bank of mum and dad has fast become a big "lender" in the housing market but not everyone has this to fall back on therefore affordable housing is not affordable for many.

Affordable housing should be given preference to those with connections to the particular area they are being built i.e. Deanshanger residents get to live in the area they grew up in and remain close to family.

New builds should reflect the local characteristics of the local community particularly in rural communities so they complement and blend in.

## 15.

Are there any other housing issues the plan needs to address that have not been identified?

As well as social housing there should be more apartments 1-2 bedroom. Starter homes 1-2 bedrooms, bungalows as we have a growing aging population and even a retirement village with a combination of flats and bungalows.

## Economic Growth

See pages 17-20 of the Issues Consultation Document

16.

Have we identified the right issues in respect of economic growth or are there important issues that we have missed?

There needs to be more thought and a robust strategy to support rural economy.

Incentives should be given to encourage business into rural locations not just in rural industries but small business in other areas as well.

Deanshanger is already a dormitory for Milton Keynes and we do not want to become a larger one for Oxford & Cambridge. Only a few handfuls of local residents, work locally the remainder have to seek work elsewhere and with poor public transport links, there is also major issues with our road systems.

17.

Should the plan promote higher levels of economic growth in response to the Government's aspirations for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc?

YES

But in the expectation that central government will invest in the growing economy for West Northamptonshire. Sensitive and suitable growth for each particular area not a one size fits all plan.

18.

Overall what do you consider our approach should be for retail and town centres?

- Free parking up to 3 hours to encourage people to come into town centres
- Reduce business rates
- Pedestrianised areas to encourage safe browsing and café culture
- Stop planning for out of town developments

19.

How can we make our town centres more successful in the future?

Invest and create areas people want to come to. Small unique units mixed with larger retailers.

Better public transport links for rural communities to be able to get to the town centres.

## Infrastructure

See pages 20-25 of the Issues Consultation Document

20.

Should the plan consider the potential to deliver the Northampton Northern Orbital and North-South Rail as described above?

YES

Both are needed for Northamptonshire to flourish

21.

Are there other strategic transport infrastructure options which should be considered?

The increase in housing that has already taken place in many rural areas (e.g. in Deanshanger has not been supported by the required transport infrastructure developments and has been exacerbated by the reduction in subsidised public transport). As a result, residents face traffic jams and increased congestion already. Roads must be integral to any planned future growth.

The A5, A508 and the A422 Roundabout is a major bottle neck with huge tail backs at rush hours and should be properly addressed to cater for existing users never mind future growth plans.

Parish Councils should be engaged and fully consulted at all stages of development of the WNSP including the supplementary Infrastructure Plan and Economic Assessment update.

A5 to A43 should also be looked at as this also causes major delays.

Cross border development should be looked at more closely, currently due to a high level of development in Buckingham just across the border from Northamptonshire more demand has been put on the road system in South Northamptonshire.

22.

Do you think that the key principles and objectives for infrastructure identified above are appropriate?

YES

However, what is the likelihood of these actually being implemented? We have seen little evidence in our area of these objectives being implemented in the past.

Rural areas have been neglected in this area to date so we have no real confidence that the principles and objectives will be delivered for us.

The town centres will benefit from this rather than rural areas.

23.

Are there any other principles and objectives you would like to see added?

YES

Health, serious consideration should be put into opening a new hospital and dedicated smaller local doctors' surgeries for rural areas.

We also need to look at resources from the Police, Fire and ambulance services, waiting hours for an emergency response because we are on the outskirts of Northamptonshire is not right, we pay the same amount as other areas in Northamptonshire and should have the same cover given our ever-growing population.

There is no mention made on sustainability of resources i.e. rainwater harvesting, solar energy, wind energy, recycling etc.

## Next Steps

See page 25 of the Issues Consultation Document

### 24.

At this stage are there any other spatial options that should be considered?

YES

Green Spaces. If green fields surrounding villages are built on, we will have no natural and open spaces, we should encourage plans to develop space for our kids' young adults and the population, maybe a skate park a walking and nature trail, further safe bike access away and to rural areas.

New highways should either be dual carriageways or have the capacity to upgrade to dual carriageways in the future for the anticipated growth in traffic.

Resources from the Police, Fire and ambulance services- waiting times are appalling and again rural areas suffer from the relocation of emergency services.

In addition, local views specific to Deanshanger.

We are working hard to bring a sense of community and identity to our ever-changing village. More houses will change the already fragile balance we are working with, and not for the better. We will be the size of a town with no character and no facilities.

With the planned growth we are close to becoming a town without the benefits of a town.

If Deanshanger was to expand it would be yet another village which would succumb to the urban sprawl and it would no longer be a quiet, peaceful, rural community it is now and the quality of life would deteriorate.

This area is renowned for its quality of life and people seem to live for longer in this

community than in nearby towns. It would be a pity to witness the downward spiral of lifestyle and quality of life being ruined and downtrodden.

The village is already struggling with the volume of traffic that either starts and finishes with the village, or passes through from the surrounding roads as a short cut.

The roads are in appalling condition and need to be upgraded.

The present infrastructure has difficulty coping, the amenities and services would have to be improved, i.e. more shops & small businesses. A new School and pre-school facilities would have to be built along with extra bus services for the elderly & people who can't afford to run cars.

The village has already lost so much of its beautiful green surroundings, the reason why many of us live here, without building more houses for people that often use them as hotels and do not involve themselves with the true village.