Minutes of a meeting of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee held at Council Offices, Guildhall, Northampton Borough Council, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday 16 July 2015 at 6.00 pm.

Present

Councillor Rebecca Breese
Councillor Alan Chantler
Councillor Michael Clarke
Councillor Stephen Clarke
Councillor Matthew Golby
Councillor Tim Hadland
Councillor Phil Larratt
Councillor Jonathan Nunn
Councillor John Townsend
Councillor Mike Warren

Substitute Members:

Councillor Deanna Eddon

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Andre Gonzalez de Savage
Councillor Colin Poole

Officers:

Colin Staves – Principal Spatial Planner, West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit
Kevin Lane – Head of Law & Governance/Monitoring Officer, South Northamptonshire Council
Louise Aston – Democratic & Elections Team Leader, South Northamptonshire Council

1 Apologies for Absence and Appointment of Substitutes

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Andre Gonzalez de Savage and Colin Poole. Councillor Deanna Eddon had been appointed substitute for Councillor Poole.

2 Appointment of Chair for the Municipal Year 2015/16

(The outgoing Chair, Councillor Breese, presided for the consideration of this matter and those preceding)

Councillor Townsend proposed that Councillor Chantler be appointed Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the municipal year 2015/16. Councillor Warren seconded the proposal.
Councillor Larratt subsequently proposed that Councillor Hadland be appointed Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the municipal year 2015/16. Councillor Nunn seconded the proposal.

The proposals were put to the vote. The result of the vote was 6 votes for Councillor Chantler and 5 votes for Councillor Hadland.

Resolved

That Councillor Alan Chantler be appointed Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the municipal year 2015/16.

At this point Councillors Golby, Hadland, Larratt and Nunn left the meeting.

3 Appointment of Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2015/16

Councillor Warren proposed that Councillor Stephen Clarke be appointed Vice-Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the municipal year 2015/16. Councillor Eddon seconded the proposal.

Resolved

That Councillor Stephen Clarke be appointed Vice-Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee for the municipal year 2015/16.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 December 2014

Councillor Stephen Clarke asked that the minutes were amended to include Mandy Anderson’s job title of Accountant. The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 December 2014 were agreed with the above amendment as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 Matters of Urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

7 Public Participation (if any)

Mr Patrick Cross, Chair of Whitehills and Spring Park Residents Association (WASPRA) addressed the Committee and asked the following questions:

1. What amendments have been made to the section on Northampton North of Whitehills and as a main respondent to the Inspectors hearings, why have we not been consulted nor notified regarding these changes?
2. Do you agree with this statistic of 55%? If not, what is your calculation in your plans?

3. Will the existing Joint Planning Unit Committee or a newly structured joint working party keep up the necessary momentum for an effective orbital road system around our Town, completed before mass house building as recently suggested by Councillor Jim Harker? We know Highways are championing this project, but will individuals from each member Council be involved?

The Chairman proposed that to attempt to answer the questions Mr Cross had raised at the meeting was not practical and indicated that a written response would be sent within 10 working days on or before 30 July 2015. The written response would subsequently be published on the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit’s website and will be distributed to members with the agenda for the next meeting. Councillor Stephen Clarke seconded the proposal.

Resolved

1) That a written response be sent within 10 working days i.e. on or before 30 July 2015.

2) That the written response would subsequently be published on the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit’s website and will be distributed with the minutes of the agenda for the next meeting.

Priorities and Work Programme for the West Northamptonshire Partnership

The Principal Spatial Planner submitted a report that sought to identify priorities for the partnership of the Local Planning Authorities in West Northamptonshire following on from the adoption of the Joint Core Strategy, and to develop a partnership work programme including an investigation of alternative models of partnership working. The current joint Local Development Scheme (LDS) was last adopted in 2012 and all present agreed it was out of date and no longer fit for purpose. Three options to rectify this were considered:

**Option 1 – review the existing Joint LDS** this would be approved by the Joint Committee. However Counsel advises that this option does not reflect the proper interpretation of the Order and it is not appropriate for the Joint Committee to approve an LDS which relates to the production of Local Plans which are not prepared jointly.

**Option 2 – replace the existing Joint LDS with individual LDS for each of the partner Councils.** This would entail the preparation of three LDS documents to be approved by the partner Councils, they could include a common section relating to joint working and the compliance with the ‘duty to co-operate’. Counsel’s advice is that this would not be consistent with the objectives on the Order and in Counsels view would not be a lawful exercise of the duty to revise the LDS. If partner Councils are of the view that the strategic planning of the area no longer requires a joint approach with reliance instead being placed on the duty to cooperate, then the proper course of action would be to seek a revocation of the Order.
Option 3 – a hybrid option - if the partnership decides that it wishes to prepare some plans jointly then it could retain the Joint LDS for these plans. Plans which are to be prepared solely by the constituent authorities could then be included in their own LDS documents. Counsels’ advice is this is compliant with the interpretation of the Order and is a lawful approach.

During discussions it was noted that the absence of Northampton Borough members was unfortunate as there is still a lot of cross border work to be done, and that until a clear steer from Secretary of State is received, the work of the committee should continue. It was agreed that lines of communication will remain open with Northampton Borough members in order to secure their participation in effective partnership working.

Resolved

That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee:

1) Authorises the partnerships officers to examine alternative methods of joint working having regard to the National Planning policy Framework and the duty to cooperate, specifically with regards to the ending of the current statutory joint arrangements;

2) Confirms that the proposed West Northamptonshire Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Allocations Local Plan will not be taken forward as a joint Local Plan and that issues relating to accommodation needs for Travellers will be addressed by partner Councils in their own Local Plans;

3) Confirms that the proposed Northampton Related Development Area Local Plan will be replaced by a Part 2 Local Plan prepared by Northampton Borough Council covering the Borough area only;

4) Confirms the other priorities for the partnership as set out in paragraphs 4.20 to 4.23 of the Priorities and Work Programme for the West Northamptonshire Partnership report;

5) Requests that a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Joint Committee setting out the findings of the work undertaken in respect of recommendation (1) above and recommending a clear way forward for the partnership.

The meeting closed at 6.58 pm

Chair:

Date: