A meeting of the West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee will be held at the Council Offices, Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry, NN11 4FP on Tuesday 20 October 2015 at 6.00 pm

Agenda

1 Apologies for Absence and Appointment of Substitutes
   A voting member unable to attend any meeting of the joint committee shall inform the chair of the joint committee in writing as soon as practicable and in any event not later than 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place.

2 Declarations of Interest
   Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any items under consideration on this agenda.

3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)
   To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2015.

4 Matters of Urgency
   To consider any items of urgent business previously agreed with the Chairman.

5 Public Participation (if any)

6 Future Partnership Working (Pages 5 - 26)
   Report of Principal Spatial Planner

   Purpose
   To consider proposals for new partnership working arrangements to replace the existing Joint Strategic Planning Committee in the event that the Secretary of State makes an Order revoking the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008 (“the Order”).

   Recommendation
That the Committee resolves:

(1) That the Committee writes, and invites the partner Local Planning Authorities to write, formally to the Secretary of State to request the revocation of the Order pursuant to section 31(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and

(2) That, in the event that the Secretary of State revokes the Order, the Committee supports its replacement by a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board supported by a Memorandum of Cooperation as set out in Section 4 and Appendix 1.

7 West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit: Financial Outturn 2014/15 (Pages 27 - 28)

Report of Principal Spatial Planner (JPU) and Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer (SNC)

Purpose of the Report

To update the Committee on the financial out turn of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit’s budget for financial year 2014/15.

Recommendations

(1) To note the out turn for financial year 2014/15; which indicates a busy year for the Partnership including the adoption of the Joint Core Strategy.

(2) To note that £175,000 is carried forward to financial year 2015/16 to enable the continuation of the Partnership’s work programme as this amount is “committed expenditure” as set out in paragraph 36 of the Fifth Schedule of the Legal Agreement between partners.

8 Proposed Joint Planning Unit Budget: Financial Year 2016/17 (Pages 29 - 30)

Report of Principal Spatial Planner (JPU) and Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer (SNC)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to enable initial consideration to be given to a proposed budget for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit for the financial year 2016/17. This budget should be approved prior to 31 October 2015 to accord with requirements set out in paragraph 5 of the fifth schedule of the agreement between the partner Councils.

The report looks at a proposed base budget for 2016/17 reflecting the priorities for the partnership which have been agreed by the Joint Committee on 16 July. It should be acknowledged that further changes may be required having regard to the outcome of the review of joint working arrangements that the Joint Committee has authorised.
Recommendations

(1) That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee approve the 2016/17 base budget of £206,000 so that it may be forwarded on to partner Councils for their ratification.

Sue Smith
Chief Executive

Queries Regarding this Agenda
If you have any queries about this agenda please contact Louise Aston, Democratic and Elections, democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk, 01295 221601

Apologies for Absence
(as set out in the Rules for the Conduct of Meetings and Proceedings of the Joint Committee)
A voting member unable to attend any meeting of the joint committee shall inform the chair of the joint committee in writing as soon as practicable and in any event not later than 24 hours before the meeting is due to take place.

Where the chair receives notification in accordance with the above
(a) the voting member giving the notification shall be deemed not to be a member of the joint committee for the whole of the meeting to which the notification relates; and
(b) the voting member’s substitute may attend the meeting; and
(c) the voting member’s substitute shall be deemed to be a voting member of the joint committee for the whole of that meeting

Access to Meetings
If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named above, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

In Case of Fire
Please read the Fire Instructions before the meeting starts. If the fire alarm sounds the Democratic Services Officer will ensure that attendees leave the building immediately and gather in the assembly area.
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South Northamptonshire Council

West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

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 – Prinicipal 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.

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.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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.

Matters of Urgency

There were no matters of urgency.

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.

8 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 Counsell’s 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:
West Northamptonshire
Joint Strategic Planning Committee

20 October 2015

Future Partnership Working

Report of Principal Spatial Planner

1. Purpose
1.1 To consider proposals for new partnership working arrangements to replace the existing Joint Strategic Planning Committee in the event that the Secretary of State makes an Order revoking the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008 ("the Order").

2. Recommendation
2.1 That the Committee resolves:

   (1) That the Committee writes, and invites the partner Local Planning Authorities to write, formally to the Secretary of State to request the revocation of the Order pursuant to section 31(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and

   (2) That, in the event that the Secretary of State revokes the Order, the Committee supports its replacement by a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board supported by a Memorandum of Cooperation as set out in Section 4 and Appendix 1 below.

3. Background
3.1 Partnership working between the partner Local Planning Authorities is currently underpinned by the Order and a legal agreement signed in March 2010 which superseded an earlier Memorandum of Intent (April 2009).

3.2 At the meeting on 16 July 2015 the Joint Strategic Planning Committee authorised the partnership’s officers to examine alternative methods of joint working having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the duty to cooperate with regards to ending the current statutory joint arrangement.

3.3 The reasons for reviewing the existing partnership arrangements are twofold. Firstly the Order predates the NPPF and its guidance on Local Plans and planning strategically across local authority boundaries, in particular NPPF para 153 which indicates that each local planning authority should produce a Local Plan for its area. Thus a joint Committee is not an appropriate vehicle to produce such plans. In addition, some individual partner authorities have recently agreed their own Local Development Schemes for their chosen local plans. Secondly the geographical
scope of the partnership is no longer fit for purpose in that it excludes other neighbouring Councils, particularly the Borough of Wellingborough, which have strong relationships with the Northampton Housing Market Area.

3.4 It is recognised that the future development needs of Northampton and the requirement to cooperate on the delivery of unmet needs, including the supporting infrastructure will remain the key driver for partnership working. Local Planning Authorities are required by law through the Duty to Cooperate to ‘engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis’ on planning matters that impact on more than one local planning area. The duty is amplified in the NPPF which sets out the key strategic priorities that should be addressed jointly.

3.5 Any future partnership arrangements need to support the partner Local Planning Authorities in meeting the Duty to Cooperate and enable the effective consideration of strategic planning priorities, such as the need for homes and jobs, where these cross local authority boundaries.

3.6 Following the introduction of the Duty to Cooperate and the publication of the NPPF a number of models of joint working have been established or modified across the country. Specific consideration has been given to the following examples:

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough** – Approach includes a Memorandum of Co-operation and a Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Member Group;

- **Derby Housing Market Area** – Comprising Derby City Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, South Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council. Approach includes an HMA Co-ordination Group at officer level and a Joint Advisory Board comprised of members and officers. This arrangement has secured the preparation of a joint evidence base and aligned timetables for Local Plan preparation.

- **Greater Nottingham** – Approach includes a Joint Planning Advisory Board to advise on the preparation of coordinated and aligned Local Plans through to examination and adoption;

- **Coastal West Sussex & Greater Brighton** – Approach includes a Strategic Planning Board to identify and manage spatial planning issues that impact on more than one local planning area and to ensure the integration of strategic spatial and investment priorities across the area; and

- **Oxfordshire** – Approach includes the Oxfordshire Growth Board (which is constituted as a statutory executive committee under the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000). The Board facilitates collaboration between local authorities on economic development, strategic planning and growth. The Oxfordshire authorities have also agreed a Statement of Cooperation which covers a range of issues including the process for meeting objectively assessed housing need.

3.7 Following consideration of these different models by the Business Sub-Group on 22 September 2015, the preferred approach is to establish a Joint Planning and

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1 Localism Act 2011 section 110
2 See NPPF para 156
Infrastructure Board to replace the Joint Strategic Planning Committee, with clear terms of reference, supported by a Memorandum of Cooperation. The four current Partner Local Planning Authorities including the County Council would continue to be included as full members of the partnership. It is also suggested that options to extend the scope of the partnership should be explored to ensure effective consideration of strategic planning and infrastructure issues across a wider area.

3.8 Details of the proposed joint working arrangements, including the proposed Officer level structure are set out in section 4. These proposals have benefitted from independent scrutiny in the form of critical friend support provided by Catriona Riddell of POS Enterprises (POSe). The POSe advice provides assurance that the proposed Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board is capable of providing effective partnership working arrangements to meet the requirements of the NPPF and Duty to Cooperate. A copy of the POSe report is attached as Appendix 3.

4. Proposed Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board

4.1 The preferred option of the Business Sub-Group is to establish a Joint Member Level Board which would have an advisory function rather than direct responsibility for plan making. It is envisaged that the Board would be comprised of elected Members of the following local planning authorities:
   - Daventry District Council;
   - Northampton Borough Council;
   - Northamptonshire County Council; and
   - South Northamptonshire Council.

4.2 In addition it is recommended that early discussions should take place with the Borough Council of Wellingborough to explore the potential for their involvement as full members of the Board. It should be noted that there would also be scope to invite other local authorities and agencies to act as observers as and when required.

4.3 The purpose of the Board would be to:
   - Identify and manage spatial planning issues that affect more than one local planning authority area;
   - Support better coordination of development and investment strategies across the area including the delivery of strategic infrastructure; and
   - Ensure that that the Duty to Cooperate is actively addressed.

4.4 The joint working arrangements would be underpinned by a Memorandum of Cooperation (a draft is attached as Appendix 1), and the work of the board would be defined by clear terms of reference (a draft is also included in Appendix 1).

4.5 An appropriate Officer structure would be required to support the work of the Board. It is envisaged that this could be provided by a modified version of the existing West Northamptonshire Programme Board. The Joint Planning Unit, in its restructured form, could also continue to act as the secretariat for the Board.

4.6 This model of joint working follows closely the approach adopted in Coastal West Sussex and Brighton and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In the case of Coastal West Sussex and Brighton the Strategic Planning Board has produced a Local
Strategic Statement (LSS). The LSS sets out long term strategic objectives for the period 2013-2031 and the spatial priorities for delivering these in the short to medium term to support regeneration, provide homes and jobs, and protect the high quality environment.

4.7 In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough a Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Member Group is supported by a Joint Strategic Planning Unit. These joint working arrangements are supporting the local planning authorities in addressing the duty to cooperate. To date the partnership has:

- Developed a consistent evidence base to assess the demand for homes and jobs across the area;
- Produced a Memorandum of Cooperation;
- Produced a Strategic Spatial Priorities Document; and
- Completed a Sustainable Development Strategy Review.

4.8 In both cases joint working has enabled the development of a shared vision for a wider area, agreed spatial/strategic objectives, and a set of spatial priorities to achieve the vision and objectives. The approach respects the principles of localism and each local authority remains responsible for the preparation of its own Local Plan.

4.9 The partnership would clearly be able to develop this model to support its own circumstances. Based on the consideration which has already been given by the partnership to priorities it is suggested that the following would be the key work areas for the Board:

- Development of a shared strategic evidence base, such as Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, to inform future Local Plans;
- Coordination of investment strategies and infrastructure delivery including the ongoing monitoring, review and updating of Infrastructure Delivery Plans.
- A joint information and monitoring function including the production of a Joint Authorities Monitoring Report; and
- To support the local planning authorities in coordinating and recording all relevant activity relating to the Duty to Cooperate;

4.10 The short term priority for each of the partner Councils is to progress their own Part 2 Local Plans within the framework set by the adopted Joint Core Strategy. However in the medium term the partnership will need to consider how it will review and or replace the Joint Core Strategy. One option which the Advisory Board model would facilitate is for the preparation of a non-statutory document such as the Local Strategic Statement prepared for Brighton and Coastal West Sussex. This would guide the Local Planning Authorities in the preparation of Local Plans for their areas, but would not be prescriptive in terms of setting levels or locations for development.

5. Conclusion / Next Steps

5.1 If the Joint Committee supports the Advisory Board model then the following actions need to be progressed:
• Initial discussions with representatives of Borough Council of Wellingborough regarding their potential involvement in the new partnership arrangement;
• The partner Councils will need to seek appropriate authorisation to write to the Secretary of State requesting the revocation of the Joint Committee Order; and
• Subject to the agreement of each of the partner Councils, then it is suggested that a joint letter be prepared to be signed by appropriate representatives of the Joint Committee and each of the partner Councils.

5.2 In the event of revocation of the Order the Partner Local Planning Authorities would also need to complete the memorandum of cooperation, finalise the terms of reference of the Board and appoint to it. It would also be necessary to apply the provisions of clause 10 of the 2010 legal agreement, relevant extracts from which are at Appendix 2. For practical purposes it is envisaged that the legal agreement will be terminated by mutual agreement and replaced by the proposed memorandum of cooperation.

Colin Staves
Principal Spatial Planner
West Northamptonshire JPU
MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION


INTRODUCTION

This memorandum establishes a framework for cooperation between the above named local planning authorities with respect to strategic planning and development issues that raise cross borough/district council boundary matters affecting them. The establishment of a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board is central to this framework.

PARTIES TO THE MEMORANDUM

This Memorandum is signed by the following Local Planning Authorities:

- Daventry District Council
- Northampton Borough Council
- Northamptonshire County Council
- South Northamptonshire Council
- [Others as appropriate]

LIMITATIONS

The Local Planning Authorities recognise that there will not always be full agreement with respect to all of the strategic planning issues in respect of which they seek to cooperate. For the avoidance of doubt this Memorandum is not intended to be legally binding and will not restrict the discretion of any of the local planning authorities in the exercise of any of their statutory powers and duties.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD

This Memorandum supports the establishment of a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board, which will be supported by an Officer level Programme Board, and professional and technical support provided by a Joint Planning Unit. Detailed Terms of Reference for the Board are set out in Appendix A.

OBJECTIVES

This Memorandum confirms the intention of the signatory councils via their relevant officers and the Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board to achieve the following broad objectives:

- To secure a broad but consistent approach to strategic planning and development across the (West Northamptonshire) area;
• To identify and manage spatial planning issues that impact on more than one local planning area within the (West Northamptonshire) area;
• To ensure that the Local Plans and other development policies prepared by each local planning authority are, where appropriate, informed by the views of other local planning authorities across the (West Northamptonshire) area;
• To support better coordination of development and investment strategies across the area including the delivery of strategic infrastructure; and
• To ensure that the Duty to Cooperate is actively addressed.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board will:
• Develop and implement a programme for jointly addressing strategic planning and development issues;
• Monitor the preparation of Local Plans across the area and the implementation of adopted planning policies through the preparation of a Joint Authorities Monitoring Report;
• Support the local planning authorities in coordinating and recording all relevant activity relating to the Duty to Cooperate;
• Monitoring, review and update Infrastructure Delivery Plans;
• Prepare, maintain and update a Strategic Spatial Priorities document to support the development of a coherent and comprehensive development strategy across the (West Northamptonshire) area; and
• Maintain liaison with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and support the implementation of agreed Strategic Economic Plans to achieve sustainable growth.

TIMESCALE AND REVIEW

[Include a statement about timescale for the MOC e.g. 5 years with review after 2 years]

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

[Statement of intent required on shared funding for Joint Planning arrangements i.e. who are the funding partners and what is the proportion. Also who will be the accountable local authority]

SIGNATURES:

To be signed relevant Members/Officers of each Council
APPENDIX 1

(WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE) JOINT PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Area covered by the Board

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure issues covering more than one of the following local planning authority areas:
Daventry District Council
Northampton Borough Council
South Northamptonshire Council
[Other(s) as appropriate]

Scope of the Board

- Identify and manage spatial planning issues that affect more than one local planning authority area;
- Support better coordination of development and investment strategies across the area including the delivery of strategic infrastructure;
- Ensure that the Duty to Cooperate is actively addressed;
- Development of a shared strategic evidence base, such as Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment, to inform future Local Plans;
- A joint information and monitoring function including the production of a Joint Authorities Monitoring Report;
- To support the local planning authorities in coordinating and recording all relevant activity relating to the Duty to Cooperate; and
- Ongoing monitoring, review and updating of Infrastructure Delivery Plans.

Status of the Board

The Board has no decision making powers and cannot bind any of the participating local planning authorities in any way. [Decision required on whether meetings will be held in public/private]

Membership

The Board shall have equal representation from each of the partner Councils comprising x elected members for each.

Observers

The Board may invite Members of other Local Authorities and organisations to attend as observers.

Appointment of Members

Each LPA to appoint Members to the Board in accordance with their own constitution. Appointments should include the relevant Portfolio holder with responsibility for Planning.
Meetings

To be held quarterly with the ability of the Chair to both cancel scheduled meetings if there is insufficient business to conduct and call special meetings should issues arise between scheduled meetings?

Venue and Administration

[Rotating venues – Democratic Services support to be provided by the local authority of the Chair from time to time]

Chairmanship

[To rotate annually by convention]

Technical Support

Programme Board – Senior Officers with lead responsibility for Planning from each LPA.
Joint Planning Unit – as per restructure.
Appendix 2

Relevant extracts from 2010 legal agreement

10.1 If the Secretary of State revokes the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2008, the PLPAs shall meet as soon as reasonably practicable after such revocation to consider whether the JPU should continue notwithstanding such revocation and in that event what the workload of the JPU shall be and what modifications (if any) shall be made to this Agreement. If any of the PLPAs wishes following such meeting no longer to service and support the JPU, then that PLPA shall serve three months written notice to that effect on each of the other PLPAs and upon expiry of such written notice that PLPA will cease to have any future obligations or rights under this Agreement but without prejudice to any obligations or rights of that PLPA, which have accrued prior to the expiry of such written notice or which are expressly or by implication provided in this Agreement to come into effect or to continue after the withdrawal of that PLPA from this Agreement.

10.2 In the event of a PLPA or PLPAs serving notice under clause 10.1, this Agreement shall continue in full force and effect in relation to the other PLPAs with such modifications as are necessary as a result of the withdrawal of the withdrawing PLPA or PLPAs or agreed between the non-withdrawing PLPAs unless there is less than two PLPAs which have not served notice under clause 10.1 in which case this Agreement shall terminate on the expiry of the last notice served under clause 10.1.
POS Enterprises Ltd is the operational arm of the Planning Officers Society.
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Registered in England No 6708161
Advice on Alternative Joint Planning Models
West Northamptonshire Authorities

1 Background and Context for the Review

1.1 The West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (the Committee) is a local planning partnership established under Section 29 of the 2004 Act and underpinned by a statutory order (2008) and legal agreement (2010). The Committee, comprising Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, South Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire County Council, is responsible for preparing a joint local plan for the area, and adopted the West Northamptonshire Core Strategy in December 2014.

1.2 The Committee’s focus is now on delivery with the local authorities all preparing their individual site allocations documents, with a commitment to complete these within the next 2 years. Although there is no immediate plan to review the Core Strategy, there is a recognition that it will need to be updated in the not too distant future, particularly to manage the growth of Northampton.

1.3 On the 16 July the Committee agreed that the context within which the current statutory arrangements were established had changed due to the introduction of the new NPPF planning based system in 2012 and the Duty to Cooperate. They also concluded that the geography for the joint arrangements had changed as the Borough of Wellingborough (which is not part of the current arrangements) was part of the functional area given its potential future role in supporting the growth of Northampton.

1.4 The Committee has therefore asked officers to explore other models of planning partnerships, particularly those that have evolved under the NPPF, with a view to asking the Secretary of State to revoke the current Statutory Order and replace the Committee with a Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board. The purpose of the new voluntary Board would be to:

- Identify and manage spatial planning issues that affect more than one local planning authority area;
- Support better coordination of development and investment strategies across the area including the delivery of strategic infrastructure; and
- Ensure that that the Duty to Cooperate is actively addressed.

1.5 The Board’s work would be underpinned by clear terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding.

1.6 POS Enterprises has been asked to provide advice on how the new models of voluntary planning arrangements are working elsewhere and any lessons learnt so far, and more specifically, whether this model offers the West Northamptonshire Authorities a viable alternative to the current statutory arrangements.
2 Alternative Joint Planning Models

2.1 Since the demise of regional planning and the introduction of NPPF and the Duty to Cooperate, three different approaches to joint working on planning have been used by local authorities, particularly in relation to strategic planning matters. These are:

- Statutory joint local plans
- Aligned plans/policies
- Non-statutory strategic planning frameworks

2.2 The first two were established under the 2004 Act and have been used by a number of other authorities, particularly in the Midlands. ‘Aligned’ plans (as in Greater Nottingham - http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/article/5770/Local-Plan) are similar but instead of one plan, the authorities work together to ensure that their individual plans have complementary strategic policies in each, and are underpinned by a shared evidence base. In most cases, the aligned policies are tested together through a joint examination process, although this does depend on individual plans being prepared on a similar timetable.

2.3 However, both joint and aligned core strategies were introduced largely in response to the previous system where strategic issues, including the identification of growth areas and housing provision, were determined through the regional strategy. With the exception of London, which still has a regional plan, and Greater Manchester, which is developing a statutory regional plan similar to London, strategic issues are now the responsibility of individual local planning authorities. This has generated a new and less formal approach to joint planning through voluntary partnerships, with the main purpose being to develop and implement shared strategic planning priorities.

2.4 A number of different models are emerging, all with varied approaches to governance and working arrangements. At one end of the spectrum, some planning partnerships are working to develop a shared strategic evidence base for their individual local plans e.g. the Kent Authorities have worked together to develop a strategic infrastructure framework, and the Oxfordshire Authorities have prepared a countywide assessment of housing needs (the Berkshire Authorities have also just started this process) and are also working jointly on a review of the Green Belt.

2.5 Increasingly, however, groups of authorities are coming together to establish more formal arrangements to manage their shared priorities, with a commitment to prepare strategic planning frameworks within which their local plans can be developed. This approach is most common in the city-regions (e.g. Birmingham and Bristol) but is also being used increasingly in two-tier areas to help align the spatial priorities of local plans with the wider county council responsibilities for infrastructure delivery. Some examples are Dorset, Leicestershire, Suffolk and Surrey.

2.6 The two most advanced strategic planning partnerships since 2012 are in Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton, and in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In both cases there was an early recognition of the significant challenges the authorities faced in meeting their
assessed housing needs, particularly in the cities of Brighton and Cambridge, and in delivering their strategic infrastructure and economic growth ambitions. There was also a desire to plan long term on a ‘functional’ geography, albeit an increasingly complicated geography, with the introduction of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and City Deals (and more recently the devolution bids). The advice to West Northamptonshire Authorities is therefore based on the lessons drawn from the experience of these two partnerships.

(1) Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton

2.7 The Coastal West Sussex & Greater Brighton (CWS&GB) Strategic Planning Board was established in 2012 in response to two studies. The first was a joint assessment of housing needs across the area, in line with NPPF requirements, which clearly indicated that in the longer term there would be a significant shortfall. The second was an assessment of infrastructure and employment land which highlighted the need for strategic governance arrangements to deliver the priority developments through the local plans.

2.8 The Board initially included the LPAs of Adur, Arun, Brighton & Hove, Chichester, Worthing, as well as the South Downs National Park and West Sussex County Council, but was expanded to include Lewes in 2013 and Horsham and Mid Sussex in 2015. The change in strategic geography and the consequential change in Board membership, reflected the recognition that these areas were part of the functional sub-region. The Board’s remit is to:

- Identify and manage spatial planning issues that impact on more than one local planning area within CWS and Greater Brighton.

- Support better integration and alignment of strategic spatial and investment priorities ensuring there is a clear and defined route through the statutory planning process.

2.9 Its first task was therefore to prepare a new strategic planning framework for the area (Local Strategic Statement) that sets out a common ambition for sustainable growth which could be delivered through shared long term strategic objectives (2013-31) and short to medium term (2013-2020) spatial priorities. The LSS would then inform all the relevant local plans as well as other strategic delivery priorities, such as the LEP’s growth plan/growth deal and the County Council’s transport priorities.

2.10 Although many of the member authorities had a history of working together (most are West Sussex Authorities), this was a new partnership working on a new geography to address some very challenging issues. Key to the success of the Board therefore, was a shared ambition to deliver long term sustainable growth and a clear commitment to working together through a Memorandum of Understanding that was agreed by all councils involved. To get political buy-in from all authorities, it was also critical that the Board acted in an advisory capacity, with each individual authority retaining its own sovereignty and decision-making responsibilities.

2.11 Each authority is represented by their relevant Portfolio Holder, although in some cases they have chosen to be represented by the Leader (the choice is theirs to make). The work of the Board is supported by a Planning Officer Group and when necessary, by external support,
and is steered by a lead Director. There is currently no shared resource with funding to support the work agreed on a case by case basis. Although the work is currently manageable, there is a tendency sometimes for joint work to be seen as additional and not necessarily ‘part of the day job’ and for a loss in momentum between projects. Discussions are therefore underway to consider whether the work should be supported by a shared resource.

2.12 As the partnership has matured, the Board has increased its profile and continues to work closely with the two local economic partnerships (including the Board responsible for the Greater Brighton City Deal) and the LEP. It still relies on voluntary consensus around the shared ambition delivered through the LSS, which has provided a valuable building block for the LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan and the subsequent Growth Deal with Government.

2.13 The arrangements have also provided important evidence to support the Duty to Cooperate as part of local plan preparation. In May 2015, the Local Plan Inspector for the Chichester Local Plan concluded that “It is evident that the plan has been developed through joint working with LPAs in the CWS & GB area”. As a result of the Board’s success, the authorities were rewarded with a national (RTPI) award in 2014 and is a Planning Advisory Service case study on strategic planning.

2.14 The Board is now ‘refreshing’ the LSS in response to the ongoing implementation of the City Deal, work on infrastructure being carried out by the two county councils (East and West Sussex), the work of the LEP on strategic economic priorities and the devolution proposals that have been submitted recently to Government. It is also beginning to prepare new evidence which will inform a full review to consider long term growth options. Not all local plans have yet made it through their examinations but there is steady progress with the LSS and the authorities’ ongoing commitment to joint working playing an important role in this.

2.15 Further information on the Board (including its MoU and terms of reference) and the LSS are available on the CWS Partnership’s web site (http://www.coastalwestsussex.org.uk/cws-in-partnership/cws-strategic-planning-board/).

(2) Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Memorandum of Cooperation

2.16 The Cambridgeshire Authorities and Peterborough City Council have a long established history of working together on planning which has served them well as they moved from one planning system to another. A key part of their success is the fact that they are still working to deliver the legacy of the structure plan which has endured through the regional planning period and into the NPPF based system. As with the CWS & GB Authorities, there is also an accepted need for growth, as long as this is planned growth.

2.17 In 2012 the authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough agreed a Joint Statement on the development strategy for the area and started to develop a common evidence base to support this and the local plans. A new dedicated ‘cross party’ group was established to steer the work on behalf of the authorities – the Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Members Group which meets as the work dictates. This was supported at a corporate level by the Public Service Board, which includes all the LA Chief Executives as well as other public
2.18 The purpose of the joint arrangements was to:

- Manage and influence issues across administrative boundaries, focusing on the local plans but including the LEP’s economic evidence base and strategy and other housing and transport strategies.
- Deliver spatial and infrastructure priorities across the area, underpinned by a shared evidence base (e.g. an assessment of housing needs across the area);
- Coordinate local plan reviews;
- Provide a neutral space for discussion and mediation between the authorities.

The joint work was based on the principles that it would focus on strategic issues and that it would respect the sovereignty of local plans and other local strategies.

2.19 This resulted in the production of a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2013 which sets out an agreed vision, a set of objectives for long term growth (2031), including an overall housing target and distribution. The MoC provides a strategic framework within which the local plans are being prepared and has been used to successfully take these through examination and demonstrate the Duty to Cooperate.

2.20 The joint work relies heavily on the support given by the individual authorities but also benefits from the ‘light touch’ support provided by the Joint Strategic Planning Unit (JSPU). The JSPU’s role was to lead on the production of the MoC, coordinate the technical work to support local plans and provide impartial advice to the member authorities. Since agreement on the MoC, the JPSU’s role has been to support delivery of the strategic priorities, the preparation of a transport strategy, and to support the local authorities as they take their plans through examination.

3 Key Learning points from CWS&GB and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

3.1 There are a number of important lessons that can be drawn from both examples which will help inform the decision of the West Northamptonshire Authorities. Some offer clear benefits to working jointly on a voluntary basis, but others demonstrate the value of the current statutory system. The key lessons are set out below.

Meeting the requirements of the NPPF and Duty to Cooperate

3.2 Both examples demonstrate that the new generation voluntary strategic planning partnerships are being used effectively to manage growth across functional areas, provided they focus on strategic planning matters, leaving more detailed issues to the individual LPAs. All of the new frameworks being developed aim to address issues such as overall housing need (and distribution if possible), economic priorities, particularly how these link to key sectors, and infrastructure priorities, providing a valuable context for local plans.

3.3 It is also clear that the joint working arrangements have put all the authorities in a strong position to meet the Duty to Cooperate, demonstrating that the work is ongoing, with momentum behind it, and there continues to be strong political commitment to the partnerships.
3.4 However, the frameworks are non-statutory and each local authority therefore has to go through a separate examination process, with the shared strategic objectives re-tested every time. Not only is this a less efficient approach to increasingly limited resources, it has also resulted in different approaches being applied by the individual planning inspectors. In future this may become less of an issue as authorities begin the next round of plan reviews and make a concerted effort to develop a common evidence base, and align both plan-making timetables and plan time-frames.

3.5 There has also been some discussion at government level about the future role of such frameworks and how they can help address some of the current problems with the system. For example, the District Council Network (supported by the LGA, County Councils’ Network and the Planning Officers’ Society) has submitted proposals to the Government which would allow a staged examination process - [http://districtcouncils.info/files/2014/09/District-Councils-Network-Our-Priorities-for-Improving-the-Planning-System.pdf](http://districtcouncils.info/files/2014/09/District-Councils-Network-Our-Priorities-for-Improving-the-Planning-System.pdf)

_A flexible solution to changing circumstances and context_

3.6 The single biggest advantage to having a non-statutory approach to joint planning is its flexibility. When the new planning system was introduced in 2012, it offered local authorities the opportunity to devise an approach that was locally driven to address their own needs, in a way they felt would be most appropriate, both in terms of the governance arrangements and the approach to strategic planning. In both CWS&GB and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, this has allowed the authorities to develop a high level framework that respects the principle of subsidiarity and the individual sovereignty of each partner. In CWS&GB, the LSS is more broad brush, covering issues around housing, employment land, infrastructure and natural resources. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the MoC is more focused on housing provision and distribution, although this is set within a clear long term spatial framework.

3.7 A more flexible approach to joint planning has also enabled the local authorities to be responsive to changing circumstances, which has been a necessity over the last three years as the new planning system bedded down and the strategic landscape changed with the introduction of LEPs and City Deals. A locally driven, flexible approach to strategic planning will also put the local authorities in a strong position to respond to the recent proposals for devolution in these areas.

3.9 Possibly of most relevance to the West Northamptonshire Authorities, a flexible approach to joint working in CWS&GB has allowed the local authorities to change the geography to help the authorities to plan for a more sensible ‘functional’ area. Both the change in geography covered and the consequential change in Board membership was done through a single meeting of the Board and did not need any more formal process.

_Aligning spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities_

3.9 Although the core purpose of the joint planning arrangements is to provide a strategic planning context for local plans, they have also been instrumental in helping to align the long term spatial priorities for the areas with the investment decisions of local authorities and others, such as the LEPs. As the partnerships have matured, they have been in a position to influence other public bodies such as Highways England and the Homes and Communities
Agency. Although this has been challenging with the individual local plans all progressing at different speeds, it is likely to be easier with the next round of plans as they are developed on similar timetables.

**Delivering a more effective plan-making system**

3.10 The three clear ambitions behind the Government’s approach to planning in 2012 were to help stimulate long term sustainable growth, to provide a system that allowed a locally driven approach, and to speed up the plan-making process. The joint strategic planning arrangements being developed in response to this tick all three boxes. Both frameworks were prepared on very quick timescales; the CWS&GB Local Strategic Statement took one year from start to finish with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough MoC being completed on a similar timescale. Obviously the individual local plans still have to meet the statutory process requirements but the shared evidence base and advisory role of the partnerships have arguably helped them progress as fast as they could. This could be aided further by the refinements to the system proposed by DCN, as referred to in Paragraph 3.5.

3.11 However, it has been necessary to manage expectations in terms of the speed within which any joint work can be done. The resources dedicated to the work have had a clear impact on how quickly the frameworks can be delivered (and the evidence base developed), and unlike a joint statutory plan, decisions have to be taken through each individual authority’s committee cycle, rather than through one committee process.

**Ensuring corporate and political ownership**

3.12 Given the significant role the strategic frameworks will have in aligning spatial priorities with wider local authority priorities, a core principle within the arrangements in both CWS &GB and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was the need to ensure that the corporate leadership was involved. This was also vital in relation to agreeing resources to support the joint work, given that it was being done on a voluntary basis. Corporate buy-in was achieved through holding workshops specifically for Leaders and CXs, making sure that the frameworks (and the MoUs underpinning them) are signed off at full council, having effective communications protocols, and in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s case, through the involvement of the Public Services Board.

3.13 It is also important to have political ownership of the shared priorities i.e. those that have been developed ‘in the interests of the greater good’, not just those that impact on individual authorities. Obviously, as with most planning partnerships, the key challenge from this perspective has been around developing a robust response to meeting housing needs. Although this has not been easy in either case, a common evidence base, a space for mediation provided by the joint governance structures, and a shared desire to get local plans in place, have all played a valuable part in helping the authorities reach consensus around this issue. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the joint SPU’s impartial advice has also played an important role in helping the authorities come to a decision.

**Testing, Transparency and Communications**

3.14 The new strategic planning frameworks are not subject to the same level of scrutiny as local plans as the assumption is that public consultation and testing process (e.g. examination)
will be carried out as part of the statutory plan-making process. However, there is still a need to ensure that there is buy-in from key stakeholders in the area, to ensure that the strategic priorities can be delivered through the local plans. Each partnership has addressed this differently but in both cases it has been important to involve strategic stakeholders in the preparation of the frameworks. This has been done mainly through workshops and focused consultation processes.

3.15 Sustainability Appraisals (SA) are also an important part of the testing process of local plans. As the frameworks are non-statutory, there is no requirement to carry out an SA. However, in both cases a high level SA has been undertaken to give more credibility to the frameworks but also to support the local plan work, particularly when considering different spatial options.

3.16 In terms of transparency, again different approaches have been taken. In CWS&GB, the Board’s meetings are closed to the public but a note of the meeting is publically available. In Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’s case, the meetings were initially closed but an early decision was taken to make them public, with workshops used to consider issues where a level of confidentiality was needed. Both models again demonstrate the value of having a flexible approach to partnership working as relationships mature, trust is developed and circumstances change.

4. Conclusions

4.1 It is clear from the two case studies that a voluntary partnership can meet both the requirements of NPPF and the Duty to Cooperate and offer a reasonable alternative model for the West Northamptonshire Authorities. The two biggest advantages of voluntary as opposed to statutory arrangements, are that they offer real flexibility to the partners, ensuring that they can respond relatively quickly to changing circumstances; and they provide a mechanism for aligning strategic spatial, economic and infrastructure priorities, beyond the statutory planning system.

4.2 The downside, however, is that there is no current mechanism under the voluntary system to test and validate the higher level strategic planning framework in advance of the individual local plan examination process. This may change in future under the Government’s proposals to introduce measures to speed up plan-making, particularly if they take on board the proposals put forward by the District Council’s Network for a staged examination process (refer to Paragraph 3.5).

4.3 Although all post NPPF voluntary planning partnerships are still evolving, should the authorities decide to move forward to a voluntary arrangement, there are some clear points of ‘good practice’ or ground-rules emerging which will help inform the establishment of the new Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board:

1. **Ensure political accountability and leadership**

Given the politically contentious issues that have to be addressed, any joint planning work must be steered by the elected representatives who are accountable for the decisions,
especially where it impacts on a statutory duty such as local plans. Hand in hand with accountability goes leadership which is essential if some very difficult political and often technically challenging decisions are to be made in the interests of greater good.

New governance structures should therefore be underpinned by clear terms of reference and a memorandum of understanding, which set out the purpose of the joint arrangements, the issues that will be addressed, how the relationship with individual authorities will be managed and what the expectations are around any advice given. The draft West Northamptonshire MoU and ToR provide a good basis for the Board’s work but should be kept under review, particularly in the first year of operation, as the new arrangements are implemented.

A useful addition to the draft MoU would be to include a communications protocol which will help to ensure consistency in relation to how the joint work is reported, both externally and within the member authorities. This should also set out how the work of the Board is to be shared publicly (in the interests of transparency) with reference to this should also be included in the ToR (see 4 below).

2. Corporate ownership

Planning matters impact on every aspect of a local authority’s role with the local plan setting the long term priorities for investment. Strategic planning, if done properly, is the mechanism in which to develop a robust framework for integrating the shared objectives around spatial, infrastructure and economic priorities. Ownership at the highest level in local authorities at both the political and officer level is a critical success factor, helping to build confidence with both partners and the local communities, and to ensure a commitment to resources.

Although there is unlikely to be the resources for all Chief Executives to be directly involved, each authority should have a senior officer (preferably from the strategic management team) responsible for the steering their authority’s contribution to the joint work. They should be responsible, alongside the lead Member, for providing regular briefings on the work of the partnership to the leadership team.

3. Clear and agreed objectives for work programme

Any voluntary planning partnership needs to have a clear and agreed agenda to ensure that it does not stray onto matters that are more appropriately dealt with by others or through other routes (e.g. local planning issues that impact only on the individual local planning authority) and to keep the work programme focused and on track. This will also ensure that the right people and organisations are involved and provide clarity in terms of their contribution to the partnership. Although objectives need to be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and delivery of the work programme, this is best done through formal (annual) reviews.

It is equally important to set out at the start what is not part of the joint working arrangements. This is particularly the case when agreeing what is genuinely ‘strategic’ and needs to be addressed on a shared basis and what is a more local issue, impacting on just
one authority. This will also help keep the strategic planning framework and its priorities focused as there is always a risk of this becoming ‘all things to all men’.

4. **Transparent decision-making**

As with all aspects of decisions made in the public’s interest, there is a need for transparent governance in joint planning arrangements. However, this often conflicts with the need to have space for honest and often very difficult political discussions and negotiations. Any arrangements will therefore have to provide for both ‘visible information’ and room for the necessary, challenging conversations that are part of partnership working. This should be addressed in the terms of reference.

5. **Resources**

Ensuring the work of any partnership is properly resourced goes without saying but there are different ways of doing this. The most successful joint planning partnerships (whether statutory or non-statutory), have some form of shared, dedicated resource. The benefits of this are considered to be:

- More efficient use of resources (shared funding)
- Impartial advise - honest broker/challenge role
- Keeping the work programme on track/project management
- Allowing the (often very small) local authority teams to get on with other parts of the day job

The West Northamptonshire Authorities are intending to retain a joint resource provided by the JPU but this should be supplemented with a project protocol which sets out what is expected of local authority officers (and the Programme Board) to ensure that the work of the Board is not considered to be additional to the core work of individual authorities. There is likely to be a significant amount of new strategic evidence needed to support the Board’s work; this should be budgeted for at the beginning of each year, rather than requested from each member authority on a project by project basis which will allow a more flexible (and quicker) approach to procurement.

Catriona Riddell
Consultant, POS Enterprises
7 October 2015
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West Northamptonshire
Joint Strategic Planning Committee

20 October 2015

West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit: Financial Out Turn 2014/15

Report of Principal Spatial Planner (JPU) and Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer (SNC)

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To update the Committee on the financial out turn of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit’s budget for financial year 2014/15.

2. Recommendations

2.1 To note the out turn for financial year 2014/15; which indicates a busy year for the Partnership including the adoption of the Joint Core Strategy.

2.2 To note that £175,000 is carried forward to financial year 2015/16 to enable the continuation of the Partnership’s work programme as this amount is “committed expenditure” as set out in paragraph 36 of the Fifth Schedule of the Legal Agreement between partners.

3. Context

3.1 2014/15 was a busy year for the Joint Planning Unit and the budget available to the Unit has been used to best effect in order to ensure full value for money in terms of delivering the work programme. Key projects included the adoption of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) in December 2014, and the coordination of proposals for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on behalf of the partner Councils.

3.2 Financial monitoring reveals that:

- The total budget envelope for 2014/15 was £956k;
- at the end of March 2015 the actual expenditure was £634k;
- The budget that was unspent amounted to £323k;
- Of the unspent amount Business Sub Group approved a carry forward of £175k into 2015/16, as allowed for as “committed expenditure” in
paragraph 36 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Finance and Procurement Protocol; and

- The balance of the under spend of £147,531 is refunded to partner Councils (Northampton Borough Council £59,013, Daventry District Council £44,259, South Northamptonshire Council £44,259).

3.5 This approach has been endorsed by all partner authorities and also by the Business Sub Group at their meeting on 23 June 2015.

4. Future management of the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit Budget

4.1 All expenditure in 2015/16 will continue to be closely monitored by the Programme Board reporting to the Business Sub Group to ensure value for money for all the partner authorities.

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Title: Principal Spatial Planner (JPU)               Director of Resources
Date: October 2015                                  S151 Officer SNC

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Proposed JPU Budget: Financial Year 2016/17

Report of Principal Spatial Planner (JPU) and Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer (SNC)

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable initial consideration to be given to a proposed budget for the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit for the financial year 2016/17. This budget should be approved prior to 31 October 2015 to accord with requirements set out in paragraph 5 of the fifth schedule of the agreement between the partner Councils.

1.2 The report looks at a proposed base budget for 2016/17 reflecting the priorities for the partnership which have been agreed by the Joint Committee on 16 July. It should be acknowledged that further changes may be required having regard to the outcome of the review of joint working arrangements that the Joint Committee has authorised.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Joint Strategic Planning Committee approve the 2016/17 base budget of £206,000 so that it may be forwarded on to partner Councils for their ratification.

3. Context

Proposed 2016/17 Base Budget for progressing the agreed partnership priorities

3.1 The budget being proposed is to continue the priorities identified for the restructured Joint Planning Unit as agreed by the Joint Committee on 16 July. These priorities fall into four key work areas as follows:

- Information and monitoring function – including the preparation and publication of a Joint Authorities Monitoring Report on behalf of the partnership.

- Evidence base commissioning – joint evidence base work to support the preparation of Local Plans across the area.
• Duty to Co-operate – support to the partner Councils in coordinating and recording all relevant activity relating to the duty.

• Infrastructure Planning and Delivery – including the review and update of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

3.2 The budget proposal incorporates a 22% reduction on the base budget for 2015/16 which reflects the completion of work relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the deletion of the proposed Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan from the JPU work programme. This is offset (in part) by a modest increase to cover costs, including staff costs, which had been met by budget carry forwards in 2015/16. The aggregate contributions sought from partner Councils in 2016/17 are set out in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Proposed Partner Contributions to JPU Base Budget 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner Authority</th>
<th>2015/16 Budget</th>
<th>Change in contributions</th>
<th>2016/17 Proposed Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northampton Borough Council</td>
<td>106,000</td>
<td>(23,600)</td>
<td>82,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daventry District Council</td>
<td>79,500</td>
<td>(17,700)</td>
<td>61,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Northamptonshire Council</td>
<td>79,500</td>
<td>(17,700)</td>
<td>61,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>265,000</td>
<td>(59,000)</td>
<td>206,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The key expenditure headings for 2016/17, are set out in Table 2 below. Essentially staffing expenditure and operational resources remain unchanged. The evidence base budget is reduced, but is likely to be supplemented by a carry-over request. Duty to Cooperate is reduced by 2,500, but there is an increase of £2,500 for IDP/Monitoring which has not previously appeared as a separate line in the budget.

Table 2 – Expected Key Expenditure Headings from New Base Budget sought in 2016/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffing Expenditure</td>
<td>122,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Resources</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence Base</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty to Cooperate</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP / Monitoring</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expected Key Expenditure</td>
<td>206,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Name: Colin Staves               Martin Henry
Title: Principal Planning Officer (JPU)  Director of Resources & 
Date: October 2015                   S151 Officer, SNC

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