Call for Sites: Guidance Note

What is the Call for Sites?

The 'Call for Sites' is an early opportunity for individuals and organisations to suggest sites within South Northamptonshire for development. The site suggestions received by us will be used to inform the preparation of the Settlements and Development Management Local Plan. It is important to note that this call for sites exercise will not in itself determine whether a site should be allocated for development.

The Council will also consider sites contained in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The SHLAA provides information on a range of potential housing sites, covering both Greenfield and previously developed land and gives an indication of how dwelling requirements could potentially be met within the District. The SHLAA is designed to identify larger sites. It has therefore assessed sites with a capacity for a minimum of 10 dwellings or sites of a minimum of 0.25 hectares.

In addition to the sites in the SHLAA the Council has already compiled a number of sites that have been promoted as suitable for development. Several of these requests date back a number of years. Therefore as part of this ‘call for sites’ exercise we will be contacting those people directly to understand if they still wish for their sites to be considered.

As well as sites for possible development the Council is also interested in receiving representations for minor ‘tidying up’ changes to village confines. The Council considers that confines need wherever possible to be understandable on the ground and based on strong physical features including property boundaries, roads or natural landscape features such as watercourses. For example this may be to include back gardens or other areas of land within the confines for a village even if the owner is not considering development. Further information on this is contained in the village confine paper that forms part of this consultation exercise.

When will the call for sites take place?

The call for sites and consultation on the Site Assessment Methodology will take place between the 28th October 2013 and the 24th January 2014. All submissions should be received by the Council by 5pm on the 24th January 2014.

How should I respond to the call for sites?

The Council would like to hear from you if you wish to submit a site or premises to be considered for development or minor change to a confine
boundary in the District. Sites do not necessarily need to be in your ownership and you can propose a mix of uses on one site.

There is no minimum or maximum site size. Each site being put forward should be accompanied by a complete call for site response form and a location plan illustrating a clear site boundary.

Please be aware that if you are submitting your form via email you will need to send an electronic copy of a location plan (a scanned copy will suffice). Due to Ordnance Survey licensing restrictions the Council is unable to provide blank plans for this exercise.

The Local Plan

The South Northamptonshire Settlements and Development Management Policies Local Plan will cover the entire District with the exception of the Northampton Related Development Area, which has been identified in the Joint Core Strategy to specifically meet the housing needs of Northampton. The proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions within this area will be dealt with through the associated masterplans.

What will the Local Plan do?

The Local Plan will help to shape the South Northamptonshire District for the period up to at least 2026. It will sit alongside the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy which sets out the strategic policies for the District, for example setting out overall housing and employment numbers and strategic site allocations for urban extensions at Towcester and Brackley as well as on the edge of Northampton, and at Silverstone Circuit. The Local Plan will set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted. It will replace the current Local Plan which was adopted in 1997.

The Local Plan will include a number of detailed policies to guide the decision making process for future planning applications across South Northamptonshire (excluding those parts within the Northampton Related Development Area). It will cover all the areas that are not the subject of strategic policies, for example the rural settlements, the open countryside and the remainder of Towcester and Brackley where there are not urban extensions. In particular the Plan will consider:

- The establishment of a rural settlement hierarchy to support the retention and the enhancement of local services and facilities.
- The establishment of an agreed policy approach towards the scale and location of new development (ie to continue the current policy of town and village confines or not).
- To distribute the agreed rural housing provision identified in the Joint Core Strategy across the District. The rural settlement hierarchy will inform the scale of residential development acceptable within each category. However settlements within a particular category may still have differing levels of development to reflect their individual circumstances. If
appropriate, new allocations will be identified to meet the need for market and affordable housing.

- To support employment and the rural economy including policies to support the provision of local services, agricultural diversification, building conversions and rural tourism.
- To protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, which states for example that areas of ‘Local Green Space’ may be identified within settlements.
- To support the regeneration and improvement of Towcester and Brackley town centres through the development of town centre strategies.
- To provide policies for development, delivery management and use of land & buildings & regeneration to guide decisions on planning applications.

Publication of Call for Sites submissions

All of the submissions received by the Council will be published and will be considered against the objectives of the Local Plan and overall spatial strategy as set out in the Core Strategy and other evidence, including national planning policy.

Please note, that by publishing details of a site no decision has been taken to allocate these sites. The publication of any site does not indicate that it will be allocated in the plan or successfully obtain permission for development.

The next step in the formulation of the Allocations of Land and Site Development Policies DPD will be the publication of an Options consultation document following the publication of the Core Strategy. This will include those suggested sites considered appropriate for further consideration. This will be the subject of further public consultation.

A substantial amount of community engagement and consultation will be carried out during the production of the Local Plan. The document will be tested by a Sustainability Appraisal, and will go through an Independent Examination before it is adopted.

How do I respond to the Call for Sites and how much evidence should I provide?

If you want a site (or sites) within the District to be considered for development or wish for confine boundaries to be changed, we want to hear from you. Sites need not necessarily be in your ownership and could be developed for a wide range of uses. For each site being put forward, a Call for Sites suggestion form should be completed and accompanied by a map showing a clear site boundary.

Please do not include any information other than that requested. Extensive supporting material and other documents are not needed and will not be considered at this stage. Further information may be required as the selection process continues but we will contact you if this is necessary.
My site has been submitted to the Council for consideration previously; do I need to do this again?

To ensure we have the most up to date information on the availability and deliverability of sites, and because this is now a wider Call for Sites for all types of land uses, it is recommended that you complete a new form.

What will happen to the information I submit?

The information we receive will be mapped and entered into a database and will be used to inform the preparation of the Allocations of Land and Site Development DPD.

How can I find out which sites have been suggested?

We will publish a schedule of the sites put forward, and the uses suggested for them. When this has been completed it will be available to view on the Council’s website.

How will suggested sites be assessed?

An objective assessment of the site suggested will be carried out. This will include site survey work and may lead to a further request for information. A range of sustainability criteria will be developed in order to filter or sieve out those sites that do not deliver the aims and objectives of the Core Strategy, or that are inconsistent with the overall spatial strategy.

The most appropriate and deliverable sites will be taken forward in the Local Plan Options Consultation Document and comments on these sites will be invited later in the year. We will consider how to carry out the assessment before publishing the assessment methodology and this may involve further consultation with stakeholders in the form of a consultation/workshop event.

Will all sites suggested for development be included in the Local Plan?

All proposals will be considered, but it is unlikely that all sites put forward will be included in the Local Plan Options consultation document. The reasons why sites are not included will be fully explained.

Will there be opportunities for future involvement?

Yes. You will have the opportunity to have your say when we publish the Local Plan Options Consultation Document for stakeholder and community consultation. Further details of the consultation will be made available in due course.

Comments received at these events, along with formal written comments, will help shape the Preferred Options version of the Local Plan.

Who should I contact for further information?

If you require any further information please contact the Planning Policy team on:
Telephone: 01327 322267
Email: planning.policy@southnorthants.gov.uk
Post: Planning Policy Team, South Northamptonshire, Springfields, Towcester, Northamptonshire, NN12 6AE