SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

Your chance to make a difference

TOWCESTER – THE ISSUES
The South Northamptonshire Local Plan is a framework that will guide decisions made by the local planning authority on a range of issues that affect everyone who lives and works in the district. It will include proposals for housing and other forms of development, including employment and contain policies aimed at improving town centres and the rural economy and other important services and facilities, as well as those aimed at enhancing and protecting our heritage and local environment.

As our urban and rural communities grow and develop, change is inevitable. The Local Plan will help us to manage that change in a positive way, for the benefit of everyone. It will enable us to develop sustainable village communities, build prosperous towns and support a strong and flexible rural economy. At its heart is the desire to create a stronger future for the district, while protecting what we have at the present and preserving what’s special about the past.

The Plan must adhere to criteria contained in a number of national and local planning policies, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS). The existing Local Plan, which must be reviewed and kept up to date, was adopted in 1997. Shaping the future of the district up to 2029, South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) is working to adopt the new Plan in 2015.

Cllr Mary Clarke
Leader of South Northamptonshire Council

Cllr Rebecca Breese
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment, South Northamptonshire Council
HAVE YOUR SAY
To ensure that the Plan accurately reflects the aspirations and wishes of all, SNC is carrying out a comprehensive consultation with the local community. This is a unique opportunity to have your say about the things that matter most to you. You can influence the outcome of the Plan by responding to the issues set out in the consultation documents and by letting us know if there are any other issues that have not been specifically identified but that you consider to be important. By taking part, you can help to improve the quality of life where you live and work.

KEY STEPS

PHASE 1 – THE ISSUES, WINTER 2013/14
Consultation to establish the scope of the Plan, including the issues to be addressed, the criteria and methodology that should be used in future planning decisions.

PHASE 2 – THE OPTIONS, SUMMER/AUTUMN 2014
SNC will put forward options for how to deal with the issues raised. Based on responses from the community, SNC will set out the preferred options in a draft Plan.

PHASE 3 – EXAMINATION, WINTER 2014/15
The preferred options will be submitted in a final Plan to the Secretary of State.

PHASE 4 – ADOPTED, SUMMER/AUTUMN 2015
The Local Plan will formally be adopted.

Everyone has an opportunity to influence the outcome of the Local Plan.
TOWCESTER

Towcester is the oldest town in Northamptonshire. While a very attractive market town, with a bustling town centre, it suffers badly from congestion and poor air quality caused by the busy A5, which runs through its middle. Many of the town’s population of 10,000 travel to larger centres such as Northampton, or Milton Keynes for work and non-food shopping.

There are specific visions and policies relating to Towcester in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS). This recognises that the town is an important service centre that should be supported to ensure it becomes more self-sufficient and continues to be a focus for services and facilities for surrounding villages. The JCS proposes major housing and employment developments to the south and west of the town, as well as the town centre. The Local Plan cannot re-visit these, or any other policies in the JCS but building on the Towcester Masterplan, it will seek to apply more detailed and locally distinctive policies for the town,
including improvements to the town centre and smaller, non-strategic housing and employment allocations.

**Towcester Masterplan**
The Local Plan will build on the Towcester Masterplan, which was adopted by South Northants Council on 17 March 2011. Providing a framework for the development of the town over the next 15 years, it sets out a vision of ways to make the town attractive to people as somewhere they want to live, work and visit.

The Masterplan contains proposals for how Towcester will be renewed and regenerated through sustainable and limited growth in housing, employment and by providing modern services and amenities. While protecting the town’s character as a market town, it aims to secure new modern facilities and infrastructure, including a relief road. It contains extensive proposals for improving the town centre and for new leisure, education, social and community facilities.

The Masterplan will help SNC to secure high quality development, related infrastructure and secure gains for the community when in discussions with developers and determining planning applications.
The Towcester Masterplan was adopted by South Northants Council on 17th March 2011 to provide a framework for the future development of the town.

The Towcester Masterplan sets out how the town will be renewed and regenerated over the next 15 years through limited growth in housing, employment and associated services in a way that is sustainable. The Masterplan aims to maintain Towcester as a Market Town, whilst securing new, modern facilities and infrastructure including a relief road. It contains extensive proposals for improving the town centre and sets out plans for new leisure, education, social and community facilities that the town needs to be successful.

The Masterplan aims to secure the integration of the existing town with the new development areas and strengthen the existing town as a place to live, work and visit. The plan identifies the most appropriate locations for new growth with the establishment of a clear boundary that gives certainty to how the town will grow in the future and avoids uncontrolled growth.

The adopted Towcester Masterplan includes the already completed Bury Mount and Watermeadows sites, the Moat Lane development scheme, the proposed Towcester South urban expansion, the proposed Jackson-Stopps Town Park and the Towcester racecourse to show how Towcester might provide new homes and new jobs. Alongside this new housing and employment the Masterplan sets priorities for improving town centre viability, movement, leisure and recreation, open space, education, health and community services.

The adopted Masterplan contains a short and long term action plan, specific information on site development and more details on the relief road proposals.

Now adopted, the Masterplan will assist the Council in discussions with developers in determining planning applications to secure high quality development, related infrastructure and secure gains for the community.

The Towcester Masterplan can be downloaded from http://apps.southnorthants.gov.uk/website/towcestermasterplan.htm
THE ISSUES

- In addition to agreed housing and employment developments, what other opportunities for housing, employment, or retail exist and what form should they take?
- How can public transport links be improved between Towcester and surrounding villages?
- What improvements should be made to the town’s leisure, tourism and shopping facilities?
- Should a mix of development be allowed in the town centre, such as residential, leisure, commercial, tourism and community uses?
- Would additional sports and recreation outdoor spaces benefit the community?
- Is more provision needed for allotments and cemetery space?
- Could more be done to welcome visitors to the town with signage, art, or other features on main routes?
- Do walking, cycling and car routes into and within the town, or parking need to be increased or improved?

WHAT NEXT?

The consultation process for The Issues stage is taking place from 28 October 2013 to 24 January 2014.

All responses to the consultation documents must be returned by 24 January at the latest. Responses cannot be accepted after this date.

- Collect a copy of the documents from SNC’s offices at Springfields, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 6AE, or telephone 01327 322267.
- Copies are also available from your town council clerk.
MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

SNC will be carrying out a number of consultations at key stages during the preparation of the Local Plan. For further information, please contact Andy D’Arcy, or a member of his team at SNC. You can also inform Towcester Town Council of your views as it will be submitting its own response to the Local Plan to SNC.

Send all comments in writing to:
Andy D’Arcy,
Lead Officer (Planning Policy),
South Northamptonshire Council,
Springfields, Towcester,
Northamptonshire NN12 6AE

Or by email to:
planning.policy@southnorthants.gov.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION

For further information about relevant national and local planning policy, go to:

The National Planning Policy Framework
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectid=2737424

Brackley Masterplan
http://apps.southnorthants.gov.uk/website/brackleymasterplan.htm

Towcester Masterplan
http://apps.southnorthants.gov.uk/website/towcestermasterplan.htm

South Northants District Tourism
http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/tourism.htm

South Northants Council Planning Policy
http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/Servicepage495.htm

South Northants Council Conservation Policy
http://www.southnorthants.gov.uk/688.htm

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