SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN PART 2

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL
DAVENTRY DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

RELATING TO THE SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN PART 2

SEPTEMBER 2018
1 Context

1.1 SNC has produced a proposed submission Local Plan (The Plan) which will be submitted under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 following publication in October – November 2018. The Submission Draft Plan was approved by the Council’s Planning Policy and Regeneration Committee for publication on September 19th 2018. Following the close of the period of representations (publication), responses will be collated and will be submitted along with the Plan and supporting documents including this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for examination by an independent planning inspector.

1.2 The West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee adopted the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) on 15 December 2014 (WNJCS). The adopted Joint Core Strategy covers the administrative areas of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire District.

1.3 The Joint Core Strategy was considered by an independent Inspector as part of Public Examination with hearings held in April/ May 2013 and March 2014. The Inspector's Report was received on 2 October 2014 and concluded that the Plan was "sound", subject to Main Modifications. The Adopted Joint Core Strategy incorporates the Modifications recommended by the Inspector.

1.4 The Joint Core Strategy sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of the West Northamptonshire area for the plan period up to 2029, and includes strategic policies to steer and shape development.

2 The Local Plan Part 2

2.1 The South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 builds on the Joint Core Strategy and includes a detailed and wide variety of policies to guide the decision making process for future planning applications across the district. This has included key consultation stages for issues in January 2014, Options, April - June 2016 and Preferred Options consultation in September 2017 with Regulation 22 submission proposed for January 2019, examination in public following in Summer 2019 and a proposed adoption date of November 2019.

2.2 The following parts of the current or previous version of the Part 2 Plan require particular consideration in the context of this memorandum of
Spatial Strategy for South Northamptonshire District

2.3 These policies in the Local Plan Part 2 propose a settlement hierarchy for the District. This has been prepared in accordance with the framework set out in R1 of the WNJCS. Development will be concentrated at Towcester and Brackley, with modest development of an appropriate scale within the villages.

Housing

2.4 This section of the Local Plan Part 2 provides policies to guide residential development. The strategic housing requirement for South Northamptonshire (excluding the Northampton Related Development Area) has already been met through completions or permissions granted.

2.5 The policy approach is also in accordance with the NPPF 2018.

2.6 The Part 2 Plan is proposing a number of housing policies to enable delivery in the rural areas including:

- Traditional rural exception sites (which seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. This policy also allows a proportion of market dwellings if they are essential to enable the delivery of the affordable housing.)

- Single plot exception sites

- Starter Homes exception sites (on underused or unviable industrial and commercial land)

- Self Build and Custom Build sites

2.7 The Plan explains that if a local community wants to meet their local housing needs and needs of the wider district this can be accommodated through the neighbourhood plan process. This could result in an overall scale of housing development across the District that is higher than the requirement set out in the WNJCS.

The Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA)

2.8 The Pre Submission Draft Local Plan (September 2017) included a criteria based policy that would allow housing development on suitable sites adjoining the NRDA boundary until the WNJCS review was substantially completed or a 5 year housing land supply for the NRDA could be demonstrated. The Plan considered that this area was the most sustainable location for additional housing that may be needed to boost the supply of housing to meet the needs of Northampton. DDC, NBC and NCC raised objections to this policy approach as summarized below:
• A longer term look must be given to the actual shortfall as the issue is not a lack of supply, but a lack of delivery
• The Policy could lead to piecemeal development and undermine delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions within the NRDA
• The policy does not provide sufficient clarification as to where development brought forward under the NRDA policy could be located and the scale of proposals that would be deemed suitable, which could lead to issues around infrastructure and services
• There should be sufficient land within the Borough to deliver its requirement of 18,870 houses by 2029
• If further development is necessary, appropriate sites should be identified in sustainable locations where they can be adequately supported by infrastructure.

2.9 There were also concerns expressed in responses to the Draft Plan about the impact of any development on the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (Natural England).

2.10 This Policy has been deleted from the Plan. The main reasons for this are:

• As drafted, the NRDA Policy appropriately guided development to the most optimal locations which would be considered acceptable. Effectively, it ruled out all areas to the west of the M1 and areas in Harpole and Kislingbury parishes where there are undeveloped Sustainable Urban extensions.

• There remain significant concerns about the impact of development to the east of the M1 on highways, and infrastructure provision as well potential impacts on the Upper Nene Special Protection Area.

• It remains unclear as to the scale of development that the Policy could realistically deliver within the short lifespan of the policy. The review of the Part 1 Plan will commence in 2018 and it is considered that this is the most appropriate mechanism to consider the future growth needs of Northampton in a comprehensive way.

The Natural and Historic Environment

2.11 This section acknowledges the value and significance of the district’s natural environment and sets out a variety of policies to ensure that it is properly understood and protected moving forward. In recognition that some areas of the district are of even greater landscape value the Plan identifies and designates a number of areas as Special Landscape Areas and presents policies for the protection and enhancement of those areas. It also identifies a number of local green infrastructure corridors. These follow the routes of now disused railway lines that cross the district and the Grand Union canal and are recognised as being an important leisure and environmental resource. Although some of these landscape designations adjoin the administrative boundaries with NBC and DDC these are local
landscape designations and do not raise strategic cross boundary issues.

3. Area of Agreement

3.1 Following constructive, active and on-going engagement and discussions between the Councils under the Duty to Cooperate, as contained in s.33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, regarding the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 the Councils agree that:

a. The Submission Draft South Northamptonshire Local Plan sets out a series of locally derived policies and proposals that do not conflict with the spatial strategy set out in the WNJCS nor raise any significant cross border planning issues or other strategic matters with Daventry District, Northampton Borough or Northamptonshire County Council which need to be addressed through the Duty to Cooperate;

b. The Councils further agree that they will continue to work cooperatively in relation to any strategic cross border planning issues which may arise from the review of the WNJCS and in relation to the determination and implementation of sites relating to the NRDA allocated in the current adopted WNJCS;

c. This MoU is not a legally binding agreement but a document setting out the current position on strategic issues in relation to the Duty to Co-operate on the South Northamptonshire Local Plan and identifies areas of agreement/outcomes resulting from that cooperation.

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