Strategic Planning Issues

1. Purpose of Report

To note and welcome progress being made on the preparation of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan, and to consider the suggested response.

2. Advice

| That it be RESOLVED: | 1. That the progress being made on the preparation of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan be welcomed. |
| | 2. That it be confirmed that this Council is satisfied that the Duty to Co-operate has been complied with. |
| | 3. That it be confirmed that this Council does not raise any issues about the plan meeting the tests of soundness. |

3. Introduction

South Northamptonshire’s most recent Local Plan was adopted in 1997. Following adoption of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) in December 2014, work has progressed on preparing a part 2 local plan for the whole District.

An issues and Options consultation was undertaken in spring of 2016. A response to the plan was approved by Strategy Group in May 2016. A draft plan was then published for consultation in autumn 2017. A response to that plan was approved by Strategy Group in October 2017. The Proposed Submission Plan has now been published. A copy of the plan can be seen at:

4. Information

4.1 Plan Content

4.1.1 Overview

Following last year’s pre-submission consultation, South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) has produced a revised plan for consultation at the proposed submission stage. This is the same stage that DDC’s plan has reached. The plan includes policies on a wide range of matters as summarised below.

4.1.2 Vision and objectives

The plan sets out a vision for the District to 2029 and then a series of objectives to achieve that vision.

4.1.3 Spatial Strategy for South Northamptonshire District

These policies propose a settlement hierarchy for the District. Development would be concentrated at Towcester and Brackley, with modest development within the villages of an appropriate scale.

4.1.4 Housing

This section provides policies to guide residential development. The rural housing requirement in the District has already been met. The draft policies allow for further market and affordable housing where there is an identified local need.

The housing requirement for Brackley and Towcester can be met from existing commitments and capacity in the urban area without the need for any further allocations.

4.1.5 The economy

This section outlines policies to guide employment development. The plan includes policies to protect existing employment areas and make new allocations.

4.1.6 Other sections

The plan contains sections on connections; heritage; Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people; town centre and retailing; and the natural environment. These each contain the type of content which would be expected.

4.2 Assessment of the Plan and suggested response

The plan has been developed within the context of the WNJCS. There is nothing in the plan which would give rise to any concern for Daventry District.

The previous version of the plan included a policy which allowed for development related to the Northampton Related Development Area subject to it meeting specified
criteria. This Council objected to that policy because it felt that it would lead to piecemeal development which would be contrary to the WNJCS and could undermine delivery of the sustainable urban extensions. SNC has not included this policy in the Proposed Submission Version of its plan. Therefore there are no remaining polices which are considered to be of concern to this Council.

Following consideration of comments on this version of the plan, SNC will submit its plan for examination. At that stage of the plan making process, an independent inspector will assess if it has complied with the legal and procedural requirements and if the plan is sound (as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework).

As part of the legal requirement SNC, along with all other Councils, has a duty to co-operate with other relevant Councils during the preparation of the plan. Throughout this period there has been a good level of dialogue between SNC and this Council. It is considered that this duty has been complied with by SNC. This includes resolving the NRDA policy issue referred to above.

There are no other policy concerns with the plan. Therefore, it is suggested that this Council confirms that it is satisfied, as far as it is concerned, that the tests of soundness have been complied with.

4.3 Statement of Common Ground

The recently published revised NPPF introduced a requirement for local authorities to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working through Statements of Common Ground (SoCG). South Northamptonshire Council, liaising with this Council, has produced a SoCG. This reflects the fact that it is no longer pursuing the previous policy approach for the NRDA, and that, consequently this Council is content with the plan.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial – Responding to the consultation would not of itself have any financial implications.

5.2 Personnel – Responding to consultations of this nature, and working co-operatively with nearby local authorities, is planned for as part of normal workloads.

5.3 Legal/Constitutional – The Council has a duty (the “duty to co-operate”) under Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to “engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis” on various matters, including strategic matters in the preparation of local plans. To some extent this cooperation has already taken place at Officer and Member level through the production of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy in particular the former Joint Strategic Planning Committee and allied arrangements. This will continue under the successor arrangements (the Planning & Infrastructure Board). However, it is still important to respond to formal consultations such as this one.

5.4 Environmental – In accordance with the NPPF local plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development.
The plan would also be subject to strategic environmental assessment as part of the sustainability appraisal required by European Union and UK law, respectively. No issues have been identified which would materially adversely affect Daventry District.

5.5 Policy – Given the nature of the issues, the proposed response does not greatly engage with Community Strategy or Corporate Strategic Plan themes. It is, however, consistent with the ‘Efficient and Effective Council’ objective of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

5.6 ICT – Responding to the consultation would not require any new or modified Council ICT.

5.7 Crime and Disorder – Nothing has been identified in the SNC consultation document which suggests it would cause, or indeed improve, crime or disorder in Daventry District.

5.8 Human Rights – Nothing has been identified in the SNC consultation document which suggests it would adversely affect any of the Convention rights.

5.9 Equalities – Nothing has been identified in the SNC consultation document which seems likely to unlawfully discriminate against people with any of the protected characteristics.

6. Conclusions

South Northamptonshire Council has progressed its part 2 plan, and this progress should be noted and welcomed. The content of the plan does not give any rise to concern for the Daventry District, and it is considered that the Duty to Co-operate and tests of soundness have been complied with.

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Background papers:
None

Previous minutes:
SG 12th October 2017
SG 26th May 2016

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