

DAVENTRY DISTRICT SETTLEMENTS AND COUNTRYSIDE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

MATTER 2: SPATIAL STRATEGY

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF DAVIDSONS DEVELOPMENTS AND L&Q ESTATES

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

MATTER 2: Spatial Strategy

Issue 1

Whether the Plan is consistent with the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (JCS) and whether it has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and consistent with national policy in relation to the scale and distribution of development proposed.

Question 1

What is the context provided by the JCS in terms of the overall scale of development required? What are the specific requirements for housing, employment, town centres etc? Is the scale of development proposed in the plan consistent with this?

- 1.1 The adopted JCS Policy S3 requires Daventry District Council (DDC) to deliver 'about' 12,730 dwellings over the period 2011-2029. This is the housing delivery requirement for DDC which, when added to the two other LPA housing requirement figures (about 18,870 for Northampton Borough and about 11,020 for South Northants) provides the housing requirement figure to meet the objectively assessed housing needs for the Housing Market Area.
- 1.2 The NPPF at paragraph 47 is very clear that the Local Plan is required to meet the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area¹. Whilst Policy S3 then breaks down how it envisages these LPA amounts will be delivered, including about 9,600 dwellings in the NRDA parts of both Daventry and South Northants, it is incumbent upon this Plan that DDC demonstrate how it will deliver about 12,730 dwellings over the plan period.
- 1.3 The Part 2 Submission Draft Plan fails to have regard to the JCS Policy S3 requirement as it completely ignores the NRDA part of the plan area. There are no policies or supporting information that identifies how the DDC requirement of 12,730 dwellings will be met over the plan period. The Housing Trajectory at Appendix J purports a 1,559 dwelling surplus for the plan period compared to the JCS trajectory – but this excludes the NRDA. The submitted draft Part 2 Plan does not provide a trajectory of expected delivery from the NRDA part of DDC and thus it is not clear if the Part 2 Plan is meeting the JCS policy S3 requirement of 12,730 dwellings. What is known from the background papers is that

¹ NPPF (March 2012) paragraph 47

anticipated delivery from the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) in the NRDA part of DDC is significantly below what the JCS predicted.

- 1.4 As a consequence of the above, the scale of development proposed in the Part 2 Plan is NOT consistent with the JCS and the Plan does not demonstrate how housing needs are going to be met. The NPPF² state that to be positively prepared the plan should be “*based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities*”. The JCS has already identified that NBC cannot meet the housing needs of the town within its administrative boundary and that DDC will make provision for about 5,750 dwellings to meet Northampton’s needs (Policy S3).
- 1.5 The NRDA Background Paper (GEN03) claims that lack of delivery in the NRDA is a strategic matter “*beyond the scope of the Part 2 Plan*”. It is asserted that this cannot be the case as the housing requirement figure for DDC is clearly set out in the JCS at Policy S3 – about 12,730 dwellings. It is also asserted that reference to the Oxted Residential Ltd v Tandridge District Council case does not excuse DDC from ignoring delivery from the NRDA part of the District.
- 1.6 It is pertinent to note that the recently published consultation on the submission draft Northampton Local Plan Part 2 fails to consider delivery in the NRDA parts of DDC or SNC. This is unsurprising as those areas do not fall under the jurisdiction of Northampton Borough Council as LPA. Delivery from the NRDA parts of DDC are a key component of the JCS housing provision and it is the responsibility of DDC as the LPA for those areas to ensure delivery is made as a component of the Part 2 Plan.
- 1.7 The Plan as submitted fails the positively prepared soundness test as a result. The only remedy is for the Plan to be modified to demonstrate how it is meeting the full objectively assessed housing needs for the District.

² NPPF (March 2012) paragraph 182

Questions 2&3

2. *What is the overall spatial strategy for Daventry District and the approach of the JCS towards the distribution of development within Daventry Town, Rural Areas and the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA)? Is the Plan consistent with this?*

Is the principle of focusing growth and allocations at Daventry Town and the proposed settlement hierarchy as identified in the Plan consistent with the JCS?

- 2.1 The spatial strategy of the JCS is to concentrate development primarily in and adjoining the principal urban area of Northampton and for development of a lesser scale in and adjoining the sub-regional centre of Daventry Town (Policy S1).
- 2.2 Both the Daventry Town and the NRDA parts of Daventry's overall requirement will under-deliver without further allocations in the Part 2 Plan. The Council has only looked to Daventry Town to make up the shortfall that exists, but this ignores the shortfall in the NRDA.
- 2.3 To be found sound, it is necessary for the Plan to fully consider options for further growth in other locations to ensure the needs of Northampton will be met over the plan period. The Plan as submitted fails to have regard to the JCS spatial distribution Policy S1 of concentrating development in and adjoining Northampton.
- 2.4 Further land for housing development is likely to be required once a complete assessment has been made of housing delivery against the full JCS requirement of 12,730 dwellings and also having regard to Policy S1.

Question 5

5. *How does the Plan intend to "assist with the delivery of plan-led development to meet Northampton's needs where it is identified that this cannot be accommodated in the NRDA" as set out in Policy SP1. What is the current position in that respect?*

- 5.1 This element of submitted draft Policy SP1 purports to be positive but is alas ineffective for the reasons set out below. It is though first important to

understand the justification for this policy: that DDC acknowledge the allocated SUEs in the DDC part of the NRDA will not now deliver the housing numbers anticipated at the time the JCS was adopted. The Council thus accepts that measures need to be taken to increase housing delivery beyond what is now expected to be achieved from the NRDA SUEs, ostensibly to meet the housing needs of Northampton.

- 5.2 The policy statement that the Plan will “*assist with the delivery of plan-led development to meet Northampton’s needs where it is identified that this cannot be accommodated in the NRDA*” is of no benefit to improving housing delivery. The statement is predicated on delivery within the NRDA (ie the SUE plan allocations there) failing and therefore this policy statement can only relate to land outside of the NRDA ‘to meet Northampton’s needs’.
- 5.3 The NRDA Background Paper Version 1 (GEN03) at paragraph 4.7 confirms that reference to ‘assisting delivery of plan-led development’ is simply a commitment to review the JCS. DDC is therefore proposing to ignore the immediate housing needs of the population, as defined in the JCS through robust and accepted evidence on housing needs³, put it on the ‘too difficult’ pile and leave it for the new Strategic Plan to sort out at some point in the future. This ‘passing the buck’ approach is precisely what the NPPF seeks to avoid at paragraph 47.
- 5.4 The NRDA Background Paper Version 1 (GEN03) also presents a futile attempt to try and demonstrate that there are unlikely to be any acceptable locations to accommodate housing development on land within DDC along its boundary with NBC (from paragraph 4.8). The findings are however open to interpretation and do not rule out the potential acceptability of development here, particularly where a significant and urgent housing need undeniably exists. The evidence presented does not rule out the acceptability of a positive criteria-based policy.
- 5.5 As presently worded, criterion B of Policy SP1 clearly fails the positively prepared, justified and effective soundness tests. Whilst it is helpful for the Council to acknowledge delivery problems in the NRDA part of the District, the Part 2 Plan must be far more pro-active and effective in ensuring this can be remedied in order for the Plan to be found sound.
- 5.6 Two potential options to remedy this failing are:

³ See www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=2737904

1. To simply delete the words “plan-led” from Policy SP1 criterion B⁴; or
2. To delete criterion B from Policy SP1 and replace it with a criteria-based policy that positively sets out the circumstances and requirements for new proposals to come forward to meet any housing shortfall.

⁴ Consequential modifications would also be required to Policy SP1 criterion E