

## **Daventry District Council**

### **Settlements and Countryside Local Plan.**

**Examination June 2019.**

#### **Opening Statement**



On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome the inspector and all those attending the examination.

After many months of hard work, it is pleasing that we have now reached the hearing part of the examination stage.

This is of course a Part 2 plan, the key strategic decisions about overall strategy and levels of development have been determined in the Part 1 plan, the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (WNJCS) adopted in December 2014, after it was found to be sound, with modifications, against the 2012 NPPF. This plan seeks to complement that plan, not duplicate any part of it, and in some cases it performs a role that was explicitly set out for it in the WNJCS e.g. the Settlement Hierarchy. In one case, HO9, it includes a policy which is intended to supersede a policy in the WNJCS (H6) because of revised government guidance relating to gypsies and travellers.

The WNJCS is in the early stages of a review, as indicated in the Council's response to Matter 1, that review is too early in its preparation to have any bearing on this plan, other than it is helpful for all to know that it is underway. By way of an update from when we submitted our response to the Matters, an Issues Paper was considered by the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Infrastructure Board at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June, and will now be considered by the three authorities before being published for consultation.

The plan has been prepared by a team of officers whose details are set out in appendix A. The team will be variously attending the sessions over the two sitting weeks. We have legal support and advice from Mr Rob Jameson, a specialist Town and Country Planning solicitor with particular experience in Local Plan examinations for Local Planning Authorities. Mr Jameson will be in attendance every sitting day. Tomorrow we expect to be supported by our colleague from the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (he is assisting your colleague at the South Northamptonshire examination today), and as appropriate will also be supported by colleagues from the County Council. The Council will also be supported by specialist consultants for a small number of the sessions. We are all looking forward to assisting you during the course of this examination.

Officers are grateful to our Members, who have provided invaluable input into the Plan's preparation through the Local Plan Steering Group which has met on a regular basis during the Plan's production. The plan is consistent with Council's Corporate Strategic Plan (2017-20) which has a vision of 'Developing a Better District' which it seeks to achieve through various objectives including building the housing people need, developing Daventry town, and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

You may well be aware that the Council is currently subject to a proposal from central government for unitary status. Recently it has been announced that, subject to Parliamentary approval, a West Northamptonshire Unitary Council will be formed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. It is the intention that this plan will be adopted well in advance of vesting day therefore this is not a problem for the plan being adopted by DDC and becoming part of the development plan; it will of course then have the same status for the new unitary council.

The plan will form part of a suite of plans. The development plan, consisting of the WNJCS and this plan, when adopted, together with 14 made neighbourhood plans, potentially increasing to 15 with a referendum taking place on the last sitting day of the examination. In addition the Council keeps up to date a range of other policy tools including a program of conservation areas reviews and new designations, and various housing policies and strategies.

Throughout the preparation of the plan the Council has worked closely with its neighbours, particularly those in West Northamptonshire, with whom it meets and works regularly in a variety of forums. There are no Duty to Co-operate matters before this examination from duty to co-operate bodies.

The Council has undertaken several stages of consultation, each one of which has helped to shape the plan. As indicated in response to Matter 1 the consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the plan production process has followed the adopted Local Development Scheme. Careful consideration of the comments raised at proposed submission, has led to some minor modifications being identified. In addition, in response to the Inspector's questions some further minor modifications and some potential main modifications have been identified. Whilst we acknowledge that Minor Modifications are matters for the Council to deal with, we would ask the Inspector to look at these to determine if he thinks any of them ought to be Main Modifications. Indeed, based upon our legal advice, some matters that we had previously identified as Minor Modifications are now identified as potential main modifications. This is all documented in PSD12 and the schedule of potential main modifications, reference PMM.

Clearly the plan content rightly covers a wide range of planning matters, but we know that government has a particular focus on housing. So I will say a few words about this in openings, but that does not mean the many other policy areas, economic, heritage, landscape etc. are any less important.

The housing requirement is set out in the Part 1 plan, and as you have indicated in your guidance note and MIQ's, it is not for this plan to re-examine the figures. The five year supply is calculated for the Daventry District outside of the Northampton Related Development Area, and a separate calculation for the NRDA, which covers Northampton Borough and the adjoining parts of DDC and SNC where the urban extensions to meet Northampton's needs are located.

Outside of the NRDA in Daventry District, as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, there is a healthy 6.8 year supply of housing land. The figure for the NRDA as at 1<sup>st</sup> April this year has not yet been published, but is expected to be below 5 years.

The WNCJS requirement includes a component for the rural areas of the District, and you will see from our submissions that this requirement has been exceeded already, with some ten years of the plan still to run. For Daventry town, the WNCJS requirement meant that the Part 2 plan would have to make further allocations. Given the slippage at Daventry North East, a major allocation in the WNCJS, from the timetable envisaged when the plan was adopted in 2014, the need for further provision in this Part 2 plan has arisen. The plan therefore provides for some new allocations at the town to meet all of this requirement, with some contingency.

To conclude the Council considers that the plan provides a sound and positive set of policies to complement those in the WNCJS and is consistent with the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework.

We welcome this examination.

Richard Wood, Local Strategy Manager

Daventry District Council

## **Appendix A**

### DDC Officers:

Richard Wood	DipURP MRTPI	Local Strategy Manager
Tom James	BA Hons MSc MRTPI	Principal Policy Officer (Planning)
Jane Parry	BSc Hons MRTPI	Senior Policy Officer (Planning)
Mags Howe	BA (Hons) DIP TP MRTPI	Senior Policy Officer (Planning)
Catherine Day	FdSc	Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
Rhian Morgan	MA	Heritage Policy Officer

### Legal Support/Advice:

Rob Jameson, LLB, Solicitor	Consultant Solicitor, Attwaters, Jameson and Hill.
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## Appendix 2

**Consultant Support** – supporting staff are expected to be as follows (subject to change):

<u>Matter 1</u> : Legal Compliance and the Duty to Co-operate	Emma Jones BSC Geography MSc EIA MIEMA C. Env Ramboll
<u>Matter 2</u> : Spatial Strategy	
<u>Matter 3</u> : Delivering the housing requirement over the plan period Week 2	Russell Porter, Porter PE
<u>Matter 4</u> : Employment and Economy	
<u>Matter 5</u> : Built and Natural Environment	Tim Johns BA Hons MA LD CMLI, The Environment Partnership
<u>Matter 6</u> : Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	Steve Jarman, BSC City and Regional Planning, DipTP, Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Leadership Opinion Research Services
<u>Matter 7</u> : Transport	
<u>Matter 8</u> : Community and Wellbeing	
<u>Matter 9</u> : Monitoring	

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