

2. STRATEGY / POLICY ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Defining reasonable alternatives

The Council has fulfilled its obligations to identify strategy / policy alternatives through issuing issues and options documents. In early 2016, the Council produced the Local Plan (Part 2a) for Daventry District, Issues and Options Consultation paper (formal Regulation 18 consultation).

It was through this process that the Council identified alternatives for those issues that the Local Plan can significantly influence. Identifying and testing alternatives as part of the Local Plan is not a straightforward process and it is theoretically possible to construct a very extensive range of alternative options. A large number of nuanced alternative options, each with minor variations (or in areas where the Local Plan cannot significantly influence decision making) do not best serve planning or sustainability requirements. Planning practice has shown that outlining a set of clear and meaningful alternatives (that address the areas that the plan can significantly influence) ensures a logical decision making process and a more sustainable plan outcome.

Once the issues and options had been identified by the Council these were then assessed for their sustainability effects (where possible). The information presented by the Council in the Issues and Options Consultation Paper was a mix of issues, options, general approaches, technical assessments and general questions to consultees. Therefore, it was not possible or useful to assess the effects of every element of the Issues and Options Consultation Paper. A screening exercise was carried out to ascertain which issues and options were possible to assess and this screening exercise also considered where the SA could add value to the decision making process. This screening exercise is shown in Appendix 1 of the following report: Ramboll Environ (March, 2016): Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2a) For Daventry. SA of the Issues and Options.

Please also note that an assessment was carried out of approaches that could be used to meet the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople. Daventry District Council had planned to produce a separate Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan (to be called Local Plan Part 2B) and the Council produced an Issues and Options paper early in 2016. The latest evidence available at the time showed an unmet need for 18 residential pitches, an emergency stopping place plus provision for travelling showpeople. Ramboll Environ assessed some of the options in this paper and produced an assessment report entitled Ramboll Environ (February, 2016): Daventry District SA of the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan (Part 2b) Issues and Options. However, in order to ensure the evidence base was up to date for this part 2 plan the Council commissioned an updated version of the evidence base in 2016 to take account of revised Government guidance. The updated study identified that there is a need for one additional pitch. However, since May 2016 a further three pitches have been granted planning permission and these permissions have been implemented. Therefore, the need has been met and the Council will therefore need to treat applications on a case by case basis however mindful that the justification for additional pitches will be increasingly limited. Due to this reason the Council are no longer planning on producing a separate Gypsy, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan and have incorporated a policy and criteria into the Part 2 Plan.

Regarding the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA), the decision was taken by the Council that it was not reasonable to test alternatives for delivery to meet the needs of the Northampton. It is not within the scope of the Part 2 Plan to plan for development that meets the needs of Northampton (outside the SUEs that have already been allocated). If the current strategy taken in the Part 1 plan is no longer felt to be the correct approach, then the testing of reasonable alternatives needs to be done

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within the review of Part 1 Plan (The West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Plan) on a strategic cross boundary basis looking at all reasonable alternatives including both sites and strategy. This has been the Council's approach from the beginning of the Local Plan Part 2 process.

Taking into account all of these considerations Table 2.1 sets out the reasons for selecting the alternatives tested and also explains which preferred approach has been selected for inclusion in the Local Plan.