

Appendices



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Item No.

8

Report Title

West Northamptonshire Emergent Joint Core Strategy

## CABINET REPORT

**AGENDA STATUS:**

**PUBLIC**

**Cabinet Meeting Date:**

15<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**Key Decision:**

No

**Listed on Forward Plan:**

No

**Within Policy:**

Yes

**Policy Document:**

Yes

**Directorate:**

Planning and Regeneration

<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Richard Church
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All Wards

## **1. Purpose**

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- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the recent decision of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee (JSPC) in respect of the Emergent Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for West Northamptonshire. To seek Cabinet approval to the process by which this Council considers the Emergent Joint Core Strategy and agrees its formal response as a consultee.

## **2. Recommendations**

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- 2.1 Cabinet are asked to note the decision of the JSPC on the 6<sup>th</sup> July and to agree, in principle, to provide a formal Council response through the consultation process.
- 2.2 Cabinet are asked to consider the options for agreeing such a formal response to the Joint Core Strategy and directing the way forward.

## **3. Issues and Choices**

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### **3.1 Report Background**

- 3.1.1 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) will be the long term strategic plan for the development of West Northamptonshire (WN) (Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire Councils) – it deals with the big picture of what will happen in the future. It is a “spatial” policy document, which means it deals with places and the activities that happen within them.
- 3.1.2 Preparation of a JCS is a legal requirement and the partner authorities of Northampton Borough, Daventry District, South Northamptonshire and Northamptonshire County Council have been required by Government to produce a JCS for their collective areas. The partner authorities are working in close co-operation with West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) – a key body in the delivery of development and infrastructure.
- 3.1.3 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee, through Officer support from the Joint Planning Unit, has been progressing work on the Emergent Joint Core Strategy, which is a fundamental step towards approving a Joint Core Strategy. Members’ workshops, Members’ briefings, the

Officer Charette and the responses from the Issues and Options and Regulation 25 Consultations have been incorporated into and have influenced the thinking and strategic approach set out in the current document.

- 3.1.4 Informed through previous consultations and the collection of a wide ranging evidence base, the publication of an Emergent Joint Core Strategy is a further stage in the process. **It is not a done deal and is not the final strategy.** It does outline well developed current thinking towards delivering strategic levels of growth in West Northamptonshire.
- 3.1.5 The Emergent JCS explains how the important choices for WN are being informed; sets out the preferred directions for strategic growth, particularly around Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley; the pivotal importance of retail investment to town centre regeneration; the essential need to deliver necessary infrastructure enabled by the preferred locations for growth and the policy approach to sustaining our rural communities and countryside character.
- 3.1.6 A fundamental principle, both for Members and Consultees, is that if there are specific areas identified for growth that are not favoured, then suitable alternatives, which can equally meet the strategic objectives and vision, and be in general conformity with the East Midlands Plan (RSS 8) must be found. It is not an option to say “no” to the principle of growth as established by the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) and RSS 8.
- 3.1.7 Following the decision of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee to agree to the publication of the Emergent Joint Core Strategy for the purposes of public consultation, a six week formal public consultation will commence in late July and will continue into the first weeks of September. It is unfortunate that this consultation must take place over the summer period, but this is necessary to allow the strict timetable set out in the Government approved Local Development Scheme to be met. There will be further opportunities to make representations at the pre-submission stage.
- 3.1.8 Northampton Borough will want to respond formally to the approach and direction of the Emergent JCS and Cabinet will need to agree the process to enable this to happen.

### **Options**

- 3.1.9 Although the option of not responding to the emergent JCS consultation is available to Cabinet, such inaction may be considered damaging to the Council’s reputation and leadership role. The positive option of responding to the consultation is therefore recommended.
- 3.1.10 There are three principal options to consider in respect of the process by which a formal response is agreed by Cabinet/Council.

- a) To receive a detailed report on the Emergent JCS at Cabinet on August 5<sup>th</sup> (or some later date) by which time Cabinet (and other Members of Council) will have had time to consider the document and be better placed to form a view.
- b) To refer the consultation document to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for immediate scrutiny and to receive a report back to Cabinet in early September to agree a formal response.
- c) To refer the consultation document to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for immediate scrutiny and to receive a report back to Council in early September to agree a formal response.

#### **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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##### **4.1 Policy**

- 4.1.1 The JCS being the long term strategic plan for West Northamptonshire can be considered the single most important policy document which will shape the future of Northampton and West Northamptonshire. The Joint Core Strategy will consolidate Northampton as the economic, commercial and cultural heart of the County and re-assert its position as County Town and aspiring City.
- 4.1.2 The JCS will shape our policy approach to key service areas such as Planning, Housing, Regeneration, Environment, Transportation and Climate Change. Its pivotal role and influence should not be underestimated.

##### **4.2 Resources and Risk**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Depending upon the response process selected by Cabinet, there could be staff capacity implications for the Joint Planning Unit and Planning Officers.

##### **4.3 Legal**

- 4.3.1 The JSPC has the statutory and executive decision role on behalf of the four constituent authorities in respect of plan/policy making through the Local Development Framework process, and will be the democratic body that finally approves the JCS.
- 4.3.2 Northampton Borough as with the other partner authorities are consultees in the process only.

##### **4.4 Equality**

- 4.4.1 This report in itself has no impact on Equalities and Diversity. The JCS itself and its consultation process will be the subject of an Equalities Risk Impact Assessment.

- 4.4.2 The Emergent Joint Core Strategy which will now be amended as required by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee before formal consultation can be viewed at [www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org](http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org); a copy will be placed in the Members' Room and any Member who would like a hard copy has been invited to contact the JPU who will provide a copy. A substantial technical evidence base has already been proposed which underpins the Emergent Strategy and this can be viewed on the above JPU website.

#### **4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)**

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, Councillors R. Church and T. Wood, Scrutiny Officer and Councillor Simpson.

#### **4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes**

The Joint Core Strategy will contribute to and facilitate a broad range of priorities and corporate objectives, and provides a framework for other strategies.

The formation and delivery of the Joint Core Strategy is through a formal partnership with the four constituent Councils.

### **5. Background Papers**

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- 5.1 Emergent Joint Core Strategy for West Northamptonshire.  
JSPC Report and Minute – 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009,

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