

## PLANNING COMMUNITIES EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL Monday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Kettering Energy Park: Draft Masterplan Document</b>
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### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. To inform Members of the development of a Draft Masterplan Document for Kettering Energy Park, including consistency with Joint Core Strategy Policy 26, and to seek endorsement for consultation (Appendix A). This report also asks that Members consider the next steps in progressing the Masterplan to consultation.

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) recognises green industries as a sectoral priority to support economic growth in North Northamptonshire<sup>1</sup> and for the role they have in securing resilience to climate change and long-term energy security. It also recognises the need for North Northamptonshire to become more self-reliant and resilient, with the generation of a significant proportion of its own energy requirements from renewable sources identified as a key factor in achieving these aims.
- 2.2. To help facilitate these aims, JCS Policy 26 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) outlines that proposals for sensitively located development will be supported subject to it being demonstrated these meet a number of specific criteria (see Appendix B).

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<sup>1</sup> JCS Policy 22: Delivering Economic Prosperity

- 2.3. As part of the strategic aims outlined at para 2.1 above, the JCS also outlines the potential for the co-location of renewable and low carbon technologies at “Energy Parks”, with these considered to have the greatest potential in locations where energy generators are:
- (a) already in operation, the necessary infrastructure exists or can be provided;
  - (b) are close to existing or proposed major users of energy and
  - (c) where adverse impacts of development can be satisfactorily mitigated.
- 2.4 In this regard, the JCS considers that Kettering Energy Park (also referred to as “Land at Burton Wold”) as the main area of opportunity for such future development due to the existing wind farm already in operation and existing consents for solar.
- 2.5 JCS Policy 26 goes on to provide the basis for interested parties to bring an Energy Park forward at Burton Wold. To do so it outlines that preparation of a comprehensive masterplan is required, prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders, which will:
- 1. Define development boundaries and also the renewable/low carbon technologies and land uses to be developed on the site;
  - 2. Make provision for a mix of complementary employment uses to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development;
  - 3. Demonstrate how the proposal will contribute towards meeting the energy needs of existing and planned development, including East Kettering SUE, strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14 and employment uses associated with the site;
  - 4. Create a model for zero carbon energy through the installation of exemplary energy efficiency standards in buildings which use energy produced on-site in their operation.
- 2.6. Building upon the provisions outlined above, First Renewable Developments Ltd are promoting an Energy Park at Burton Wold through a Draft Masterplan Document which outlines a potential future for the site. In response, this report provides an overview of the Draft Masterplan Document and how it relates to local planning policy. Members are asked to endorse the Draft Masterplan Document ahead of a formal 7- week consultation to be undertaken by First Renewable Developments. Responses to this consultation will be reported back to this Panel, along with proposed amendments, before being considered for approval by the Council’s Strategic Planning Committee. Once approved, the Masterplan will be used to inform future planning applications for the site.
- 2.7. If approved by the Council, the Draft Masterplan Document will confirm the Council’s support for the vision for consultation it sets out but will not pre-judge the consideration of detailed matters at the planning application stage, including the proposed mix of employment uses.

### **3. Recommendation**

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- 3.1. That Members of the Planning Communities Executive Advisory Panel:
- a) Note and endorse the policy-based review undertaken of the Draft Masterplan Document in how it meets the policy requirements of the JCS; and
  - b) Endorse that the Draft Masterplan Document be provided for public consultation.

Reason for recommendations:

- 3.2. Member feedback on the Draft Masterplan Document will provide the site promoters direction on whether to undertake a 7-week consultation with a view to progressing these proposals towards a future planning application which will be submitted to the Council for its consideration.

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1. Within Policy 26 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), Land at Burton Wold is identified as a suitable location for an Energy Park to add to the range of renewable energy technologies already present<sup>2</sup> and serve as a decentralised energy network which will link the on-site energy production to existing and new development. In order to determine the precise extent and mix of uses at this location, Policy 26 requires interested parties to produce a comprehensive Masterplan which has been prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority. In doing so, it is expected this Masterplan can demonstrate compliance with the following (JCS Policy 26) criteria:

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<sup>2</sup> As outlined within the JCS, at this time, these technologies included x19 wind turbines (with a generation capacity ranging from 1.6MW to 2MW each) alongside consent for two solar photovoltaic farms with a cumulative generating capacity of 30.5 MW.

## Figure 1: JCS Policy 26 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy): Kettering Energy Park

Land at Burton Wold is identified for an Energy Park to add to the range of renewable energy technologies already present. The development will serve as a decentralised energy network which will link the energy production to existing and new developments.

Proposals within the Energy Park should meet criteria a) to i) above and should also be in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan which will be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority;

This will:

1. Define development boundaries and also the renewable/low carbon technologies and land uses to be developed on the site;
2. Make provision for a mix of complimentary employment uses to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development;
3. Demonstrate how the proposal will contribute towards meeting the energy needs of existing and planned development, including East Kettering SUE, strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14 and employment uses associated with the site;
4. Create a model for zero carbon energy through the installation of exemplary energy efficiency standards in buildings which use energy produced on-site in their operation.

- 4.2. On the basis of the above policy requirements, this report will consider whether the Draft Masterplan Document meets the provisions of Policy with a view to securing endorsement of this EAP.
- 4.3. For the purposes of assessing the proposals within the Draft Masterplan Document, it is intended that this report does so by a review of the Masterplan relative to the requirements of Figure 1 above. Following such an approach is considered appropriate in order to ensure a thorough review is undertaken and to provide confidence that the EAP is endorsing a Draft Masterplan Document which has been fully tested. Doing so is a key milestone set in Policy 26. Not only can an approved Draft Masterplan Document inform future planning applications, it will provide the promoters with a valuable tool in attracting developers and employers to invest in the site and outline what is expected of proposals. The remainder of this section now addresses compliance with JCS Policy 26, as outlined.

## 5. Conformity with JCS Policy

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### Community and stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 As outlined, JCS Policy 26, in relation to proposals at Land at Burton Wold, it is made clear that a comprehensive masterplan is to be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority. It is considered that this requirement has been fulfilled by the promoters and landowners working closely with NNC and external stakeholders over the course of 2022 and into 2023 to develop the Draft Masterplan Document under review<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Including associated technical evidence which has informed its development

- 5.2 In response to this, in order to facilitate preparation of the masterplan, the Council engaged stakeholders, both internal and external to the organisation, to review and inform elements of the evidence base and ensure the impacts of development in this location are minimised. This has included officers covering Archaeology, Ecology and Highways, Place Services on landscape and heritage matters, the Wildlife Trust amongst others, all of whom have been able to shape the development of the masterplan through feedback.
- 5.3 This has included wider meetings held on November 18<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022 between the Council's expert advisors and consultants representing the promotion team to discuss and finalise a baseline Opportunities and Constraints document (available as Appendix C) which assessed the site's characteristics and identifies key issues that the development of an Energy Park would need to consider. A summary of comments received via this process are outlined within the promoter's consultation schedule included at Appendix D. The Council has separately followed up with relevant stakeholders for confirmation the Masterplan as drafted is robust from their technical perspective, and following their separate discussions with the promotion team, and this has been confirmed.
- 5.4 An initial round of consultation was undertaken by the promoters by way of introductory briefings held with local stakeholders. These comprised Burton Latimer Town Council (July 5<sup>th</sup> 2022), Finedon Town Council (July 13<sup>th</sup>), Cranford Parish Council (July 28<sup>th</sup>) and Woodford Parish Council (August 16<sup>th</sup>). The promotion team also presented to the Planning Policy EAP on October 24<sup>th</sup> 2022. At this meeting Members were taken through an initial draft Opportunities and Constraints document referred to above, including how masterplan boundaries have been defined (as required by JCS Policy 26), as well as more detail on next steps regarding future consultation exercises and finalising the masterplan. This was followed by the publication of a bespoke consultation website<sup>4</sup> which sought comments on initial proposals over the 4-week period between October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 28<sup>th</sup> 2022.
- 5.5 A schedule of feedback received as part of the consultations outlined at para 5.4 above, which also includes responses to this from the promoters, is available at Appendix D<sup>5</sup>. Within these responses the promoters also make clear how the Masterplan has either been amended as a result of specific feedback received or will be addressed through forthcoming planning applications. Of particular note, as part of this process, the masterplan was amended to make provision for additional public access (following a suggestion by Cranford Parish Council) and references the potential for a community fund (as suggested by both Burton Latimer, Cranford and Woodford Parish Councils).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ketteringenergypark.co.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> 69 comments were provided via consultations with the Town and Parish Councils outlined at para 5.4 above and an additional 28 comments were received in response to the website consultation held between October and November 2022.

- 5.6 In summary, it is considered that up until this point, the promoters have undertaken the required level of consultation with the local community and stakeholders on the proposals and can demonstrate how feedback has shaped development of the Draft Masterplan Document to date to the effect that this element of JCS Policy 26 has been fulfilled. Notwithstanding this, however, should the Draft Masterplan Document be agreed for further consultation involving a broader range of stakeholders and local residents, groups and organisations, it is expected that any additional feedback received shall continue to be taken on board by the promoters through amendments to the final Masterplan and in the preparation of future planning applications for the site.
- 5.7 The next element of this report will discuss how the Draft Masterplan Document responds to each of the criteria relating to Kettering Energy Park contained within Joint Core Strategy Policy 26.

Criterion 1: Define development boundaries and also the renewable/low carbon technologies and land uses to be developed on the site

- 5.8 As outlined at paragraph 8.33 of the Joint Core Strategy, the co-location of renewable and low carbon technologies in “Energy Park” developments have the potential to strengthen the development of green industries in North Northamptonshire and support a sustainable and stable supply of energy. Paragraph 8.34 further clarifies that the potential for such developments is greatest in locations where energy generators are already in operation; the necessary infrastructure exists or can be provided; they are close to existing or proposed major users of energy; and where adverse impacts of development can be satisfactorily mitigated, with Kettering Energy Park (locally referred to as “Land at Burton Wold”) considered the main area of opportunity in this regard.
- 5.9 As outlined earlier in this report, Land at Burton Wold denotes the location of two operational wind farms comprising 19 wind turbines (which have a theoretical generating capacity of 36 MVA). These wind farms are supplemented by an (as yet) unimplemented consent for a solar farm which could generate an additional 40 MVA on site. These renewable energy sources are augmented by an agreement with the network operator to import 40MW and export up to 65 MW of supply via the overhead power lines which cross the site and enable a 132kv grid connection to be made. This baseline position provides the context from which the Draft Masterplan Document, and land use/proposals within, has been developed by First Renewable Developments Ltd.
- 5.10 Section 14 of the Draft Masterplan Document explicitly covers off the definition of site development boundaries (as required by JCS Policy 26). Not only does this cover the extent of the development area, it also outlines proposed land use by typology within, including areas for energy infrastructure, employment development and landscape buffers.
- 5.11 Sections 15 (Development Zones) and 16 (Proposed Uses) of the Masterplan address the Policy requirement to define the renewable/low carbon

technologies and land uses to be developed on the site. Section 15 makes clear that x2 zones are proposed which will serve as the focus for new employment activity on site (Employment Zones North and South) and details that Use Classes E (Research and Development, Light Industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Warehousing/ Logistics) are proposed across both areas, with different scales of development proposed between each<sup>6</sup>. Section 15 also provides further detail on new energy infrastructure required to facilitate the new uses proposed on site. Alongside the consented solar farms this includes a new point of connection adjacent to the existing overhead power lines to allow the import and export of energy from the grid. It also makes clear that any new connection is to be supplemented by batteries which will enable any surplus energy to be stored on site, smoothing flows across the Grid and concurrently increasing both resilience and energy security. The potential for hydrogen related energy infrastructure at the site is also highlighted in this section albeit this is a less developed proposition.

- 5.12 Section 15 of Draft Masterplan Document also introduces proposals for a Future Technology Centre and Hydroponics area for advanced agriculture as well as outlining a location for a Biodiversity Net Gain receptor site. The Future Technology Centre is proposed as a gateway to the site and location for development which aligns with technological advancement and the transition to a low carbon economy. Here a maximum floorspace of c.15,000 m<sup>2</sup> is proposed where uses such as EV charging facilities or office, research and development, light industrial uses including potential laboratory spaces would be appropriate.
- 5.13 The Hydroponics area covers 47 hectares and would effectively comprise of specialist glasshouses which provide a growing environment where heat, light and nutrient provision is closely monitored and controlled dependent on the crop being grown. The Masterplan outlines this is a beneficial approach for a number of reasons including the extension of growing seasons, less reliance on imports, more efficient use of water, greater crop yields. Section 16 highlights the potential for hydroponic systems to be powered by the onsite renewables in combination with a business which generates excess heat<sup>7</sup>, such as manufacturing or cold storage uses.
- 5.14 On the basis of the above analysis, it is considered that the Masterplan proposals for the energy park address this element of JCS Policy 26 in terms of outlining potential technologies and land uses. However, it is important to reemphasise the lack of detail regarding the scale of potential cold stores (B8 warehousing) associated with the Hydroponics area, which, without details of potential floorspace, may downplay the overall scale of B8 development at the site. This means that the analysis of on-site B8 at para's 5.17– 5.21 below, which is flagged as potentially significant and contrary to the provisions of Policy 26, could be greater.

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<sup>6</sup> The assessment of Criterion 2 of JCS Policy 26 in respect of Kettering Energy Park (overleaf) provides further detail on these zones.

<sup>7</sup> Section 18 (Sustainability) outlines that the Hydroponic uses will have limited demand for energy, with the inference being renewable energy produced on site.

- 5.15 Finally, as outlined, an area is proposed for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) located adjacent to the existing Cranford (geological) SSSI on site. This is included as a result of provisions within the Environment Act 2021 which will require all new planning permissions in England<sup>8</sup> to deliver at least 10% BNG from a (as yet unconfirmed) date in November 2023. The BNG area onsite proposes a minimum net gain of 10% but also flags this is to be bettered whenever possible.
- 5.16 Taken together, it is considered the Draft Masterplan Document meets the provisions of JCS Policy 26 in respect of criterion 1 (Define development boundaries and also the renewable and low carbon technologies and land uses to be developed on site).

Criterion 2: Make provision for a mix of complementary employment uses to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development

- 5.17 JCS Policy 26 does not define which employment uses are to be delivered at the Energy Park aside from outlining the need to make provision for research and development at criterion 2. However, as outlined previously, proposals for the site need to be worked up in consideration of existing facilities. The Draft Masterplan Document outlines that use classes B2 (General Industrial), B8 (Warehousing), and E (Research and Development, Light Industrial) are considered complementary development typologies on the basis these are able to make use of the renewable energy at the site, particularly where a high energy demand user is present to make use of the available energy.
- 5.18 At Section 16 of the Draft Masterplan Document (Proposed Uses), an “Employment Uses Energy Criteria” is set out which was prepared in conjunction with SEMLEP and NNC. These criteria were established to test and ensure that future onsite occupiers genuinely fulfil the policy requirements to have high energy demands or which are associated with the transition to a low carbon economy or society. These criteria cover, amongst other things, business operations which include automation of operations (e.g., manufacturing using robotic assistance/ automated processes, logistics and distribution operations using intelligent robotics, automated scanning and picking) and engineering, manufacturing, R&D or other operations linked to low/zero carbon sectors or the transition away from fossil fuel dependency. It is considered that if adopted, these criteria should provide a basis to secure uses on site which align with the requirements of JCS Policy 26 and the need to make provision for a mix of complementary employment uses to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development.
- 5.19 The requirements outlined above are translated in the Draft Masterplan Document through specific sections which provide detail on the type, scale, and location of development at the site. In Section 15 of the Draft Masterplan Document (Development Zones), detail is provided on the proposed development zones including the scale of development the promoters consider appropriate. These comprise a North and South Employment Zone. At Employment Zone North, appropriate uses are identified as Classes E

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<sup>8</sup> With a few exemptions



(research and development), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Warehousing/ Logistics). In this area a maximum floorspace of 235,000m<sup>2</sup><sup>9</sup> is identified. Additionally, a maximum anticipated building height of 30m from finished floor level is outlined.

- 5.20 At Employment Zone South appropriate uses are identified as Classes E (research and development, light industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Warehousing/ Logistics). In this area a maximum floorspace of c.140,000m<sup>2</sup> is identified<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, a maximum anticipated building height of 21m from finished floor level is outlined (subject to occupier requirements).
- 5.21 At Section 16 clarity is also provided on the potential weighting of uses on site relative to those development quantum's outlined at paragraphs 5.17-5.20 above. Here it is clarified that there has been considerable demand from B8 occupiers in recent years for larger sites which have a good power supply and the ability to reduce their carbon footprint during operation. In order to meet this demand, it is proposed within the Draft Masterplan Document, that c.70% of the proposed floorspace as outlined would likely be weighted towards B8 use. On this basis, the Draft Masterplan Document appears to constitute a predominantly strategic scale B8-led proposal, which, as drafted, is not considered to wholly comply with Policy 26 of the JCS which does not allocate the site for such uses<sup>[OBJ]</sup>.
- 5.22 As outlined at paragraphs 5.12 – 5.13 above, the Draft Masterplan Document also highlights the potential for cold stores associated with the Hydroponics area<sup>11</sup>, albeit no detail is provided on the potential scale of these. Cold Stores are flagged as appropriate here given the linkages to Hydroponics-derived food production and the potential to make use of on-site renewables to meet their high energy requirements. Notwithstanding this, however, if Cold Stores were to come forward this would represent further B8 development on site which would be in addition to the figures presented at paragraphs 5.17-5.20 above.
- 5.23 As part of outlining the economic benefits anticipated through the Energy Park proposals, Section 22 (Proposal Benefits) of the Draft Masterplan Document sets out that c.550 jobs will be directly supported through the construction stage of developing the site and 5,500 jobs during the operational phase. However, no detail is provided on the distribution of these jobs so it is not possible to determine how these are anticipated to come forward at this time. Notwithstanding this, however, the Draft Masterplan Document outlines that this project would bring an initial £512m investment (direct and indirect) to the area during the construction phase and provide £167m per annum into the local economy.
- 5.24 The Draft Masterplan Document also highlights the potential to secure a training and skills package, including through the construction and operational phases of future development on site (Section 21: Delivery) and outlines that

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<sup>9</sup> This figure excludes any provision for mezzanines.

<sup>10</sup> This figure excludes any provision for mezzanines.

<sup>11</sup> The Hydroponics area is flagged as 47ha in size within the Draft Masterplan Document

businesses locating to the site will be encouraged to offer skills and training opportunities for employees (Section 22: Proposal Benefits). These are proposed to be delivered as part of a future planning application and secured via Section 106 Agreement (Section 21: Delivery and Section 23: Response to Policy 26)

- 5.25 On review, although these proposals have been developed in the context of JCS Policy 26, if they were to proceed at the scale outlined above there could be implications for the development of the NNSP. Namely, if, as outlined by evidence accompanying the Draft Masterplan Document, new B8 floorspace at a range of 187,500m<sup>2</sup> – 273,000m<sup>2</sup> (50% or 70% of the overall floorspace proposed) were to come forward, this site alone would constitute a significant amount of new logistics floorspace in the context of wider need (which is being identified through the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment which will shortly be finalised), with a likely implication being that the need to identify additional logistics sites would be reduced across the area as the current proposals, would take up a significant amount of North Northamptonshire's future requirements<sup>12</sup>.
- 5.26 Of course it is recognised that North Northamptonshire, and the A14 corridor in particular, is an important location for logistics where demand for such development is very high. This was set out in the feedback to the Scope and Issues consultation reported to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Planning Policy EAP<sup>13</sup>. However, given Land at Burton Wold was not identified as a strategic site or for B8 development in the JCS, such uses at this location have never been tested, particularly relative to other sites allocated in the Joint Core Strategy. Indeed, in 2022 the Council undertook an authority-wide Call for Sites exercise as part of developing a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) and through which a number of alternative strategic-scale sites for B8-led development were put forward for assessment in the vicinity of the A14 corridor. If the current proposals were to proceed on the basis of the Draft Masterplan Document, they would take up a significant amount of North Northamptonshire's future logistics requirements and reduce the need for additional sites across the area. On this basis the proposed quantum of development represents a concern.
- 5.27 Notwithstanding these concerns, however, the Draft Masterplan Document does provide a justification for the site uses proposed in relation to the existing, and proposed forms of renewable energy, particularly where end users have a high energy demand<sup>14</sup> and which is a central determinant of meeting the requirements of this Policy. The Draft Masterplan Document is also considered to address the need to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development through making provision for the Future Technology Centre on site where proposed uses include potential laboratory spaces and

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<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the element of the site devoted to B8 use could be even higher if the Cold Stores associated with Hydroponics were to come forward (as outlined at paragraphs 5.13, 5.14 and 5.22 above).

<sup>13</sup> <https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s13539/PPEAP%2014-12-22%20Item%205%20-%20NNS%20Strategic%20Plan%20Scope%20and%20Issues%20response.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Examples flagged within Section 4 (Strategic Overview and Employment Need) are cold stores, data centres and operations that use robotic retrieval systems

research and development, amongst others, with these uses in particular flagged as providing potential capacity to businesses struggling to find space in areas of high demand such as Cambridge. Overall, it is considered the Draft Masterplan Document broadly covers off the requirements of criteria 2 of JCS Policy 26 as outlined, albeit there remains concerns as to the inclusion, and scale, of potential B8 operations within, for the reasons flagged above. On this basis it is essential that the Council retains the flexibility to assess future proposals through planning applications and consider these in the context of other sites and the emerging strategic plan. Notwithstanding this, Members may wish to consider amendments to the Masterplan document as a result of responses and new evidence presented through this consultation.

Criterion 3: Demonstrate how the proposal will contribute towards meeting the energy needs of existing and planned development, including East Kettering SUE, strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14 and employment uses associated with the site;

- 5.28 A renewable supply of energy already exists at Burton Wold by virtue of the wind turbines present, with this to be further supplemented by existing consents for the installation of 40MW of solar arrays. As outlined previously, 132kv power lines also cross the site with the intention that a new grid connection is made to these as part of the overall package of proposals. Cumulatively this infrastructure provides the opportunity for on-site occupiers to make use of renewables-derived energy (including from battery storage) and also direct connection to the national grid in the event back up energy is required (providing on site energy security). This baseline position, alongside the proximity of the site to the A14, is what has driven the proposals outlined in the Draft Masterplan Document.
- 5.29 As the Draft Masterplan Document makes clear, significant interest has been expressed in the site from a number of potential occupiers but it is the Council's understanding that there are no firm agreements in place as of yet. As a result, the Draft Masterplan Document seeks to retain flexibility throughout, with occupier requirements flagged as a central determinant as to the future scale and layout of buildings. Notwithstanding this, however, it is considered that the Draft Masterplan Document has sought to outline how the energy needs of planned development on site will be met throughout (in relation to the Use Classes outlined) through a combination of existing (wind) and planned (solar), on site renewables (including on new buildings), battery storage and proposed new grid connection. Energy efficiency is also flagged as a key factor in reducing on site energy requirements with the target that all new buildings on site will be BREEAM 'excellent' and have EPC ratings of 'A' to ensure they are energy and water efficient so that best use is made of energy (including that derived from on-site renewables).
- 5.30 In terms of how the proposals will contribute towards the needs of existing and planned development, including East Kettering SUE and strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14, the promoters have considered this issue at Section 23 (Response to Policy 26) of the Draft Masterplan Document and make clear that they consider the opportunity to make these linkages has been exhausted. Namely, it is concluded that to expand connectivity from the

site would not be viable on the basis of uncertainty regarding (a) the phasing of other development and the Energy Park (b) the loads needed from the Energy Park and (c) the distance of these other developments from the Energy Park is also a constraint in respect of land ownership and the capital costs needed to provide any connection.

- 5.31 At the time of developing the JCS, and inter alia, proposals for this site, both the Kettering East SUE and J10 of the A14 were relatively undeveloped and, had the Energy Park proposals been brought forward earlier, opportunities could have existed to make the required connections as sought by JCS Policy. However, since this time, both development areas have been under construction and are currently part occupied. Indeed, at Segro Park (Kettering Gateway - Junction 10 of the A14) <sup>15</sup> only one unit remains unoccupied before this site is completed. On this basis the Council is in general agreement with the promoters that the opportunity to link the Energy Park to the developments named in Policy has been exhausted.
- 5.32 Notwithstanding this, however, the Draft Masterplan Document flags throughout the potential for a Community Fund and this is an area where the proposals, if brought forward, could contribute towards meeting the energy needs of planned and existing development. Specifically, such a fund could be used to contribute to energy efficiency measures and reducing carbon emissions in the local area and, if secured, could contribute towards the wider objectives of this Policy criteria. At Section 21 of the Draft Masterplan Document (Delivery), it is outlined that any such fund would take the form of an annual financial contribution to local Towns and Parishes to support local initiatives and projects related to energy efficiency, sustainability and the move towards a low carbon society. Notwithstanding the issues raised in linking the on-site renewable energy to the development areas flagged in this Policy, the potential for a Community Fund is noted and could serve to address the issue of contributing towards meeting the energy needs of existing development. Given that development at Kettering East and J10 of the A14 has moved on in recent years, a proposed Community Fund may be considered a pragmatic answer to addressing the requirements of Policy, albeit this will still need to be secured via a future planning application.

Criterion 4: Create a model for zero carbon energy through the installation of exemplary energy efficiency standards in buildings which use energy produced on-site in their operation

- 5.33 Section 18 of the Draft Masterplan Document provides a summary of the proposals in relation to Sustainability. Within it is outlined that all new buildings on site will target BREEAM 'excellent' and have EPC ratings of 'A' to ensure they are energy and water efficient so that best use is made of the renewable energy available at the site. Additionally, it is proposed that solar PV will be included in the roof space of new buildings to further increase the amount of renewable energy generated at the site. If followed through as outlined, the promoters consider these approaches will minimise the energy required in the

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.sp-kg.co.uk/>

daily running of new premises on site and could facilitate future business activity to be 100% powered by the renewable energy created on site.

- 5.34 On the basis of high fabric efficiency, plus the provision of additional renewable technologies on site (both ground mounted and rooftop solar), it is considered that these proposals do represent a model which provides a pathway for zero carbon energy albeit the exact detail of this cannot be completely verified at this stage of development proposals (but is something which can be tested through the planning application stage). However, for this stage of development, there appears to be sufficient detail to suggest this Policy requirement can be met. In determining this, officers recommend that the final Masterplan should form part of the outline application as covered in Section 21 (Delivery) of the document.

## **6. Issues and Choices**

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- 6.0 This report has focussed on examining how the Draft Masterplan Document prepared for Kettering Energy Park aligns with JCS Policy and provides Members a basis upon which to decide whether to endorse the document ahead of the promoters undertaking a full consultation on the proposals for the site. Following this consultation (and consideration of the subsequent responses, and any amendments required to the document), the Council will consider whether it can be approved, and subsequently considered as a material consideration which will inform the preparation and consideration of planning applications for the site.
- 6.1 As outlined at paragraphs 5.1 - 5.6 above, through close liaison with stakeholders both internal and external to the Council, the opportunity has been taken to shape the Draft Masterplan Document and respond to any feedback or concerns raised (see Appendix D) and as a result there are no constraints with the proposals as drafted from a technical viewpoint. Furthermore, taken as a whole, the Draft Masterplan Document, appears to be in general conformity with the provisions of JCS Policy 26 albeit there is a future decision to be made whether the both inclusion of strategic-scale B8 (Warehousing/Logistics) development conforms with JCS Policy 26, which does not allocate the site for strategic employment purposes (and which the Draft Masterplan Document effectively seeks). Notwithstanding this, however, it is considered that this is an issue which can be addressed following feedback received to the next stage of public consultation which will help inform the future approach to proposed employment uses on site, In light of this, given some of the uncertainties/concerns raised on the scale and type of uses proposed at the site, it is important that whilst the Council may ultimately sign up to the Vision provided by the Masterplan, doing so does not pre-judge determination of applications or other considerations in preparing the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan.

## **7. Next Steps**

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- 7.1 If this Draft Masterplan Document is endorsed for consultation, it is envisaged that the Promoters intend to undertake a 7-week consultation on its content,

following which the document shall be amended as necessary subject to feedback received as part of this process. As reported to Planning Communities EAP on January 30th 2023, it is timetabled that an additional report on the responses to this consultation shall be taken to a future EAP. This was previously identified as July 19th but the intention is to now bring this forward to June 12th 2023. This report will present the responses to this consultation and propose any changes to the Masterplan as a result of responses received. Following consideration by the EAP, it is intended the document be forwarded to the appropriate committee for approval, following which it is understood the promoters shall submit planning applications to the Council, of which the Masterplan will form part, for its consideration.

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

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### **8.1. Resources, Financial and Transformation**

- 8.1.1. The costs associated with the preparation of the Masterplan have been borne by the scheme promoters. In terms of the Council's involvement, NNC officer time and specialist advice sourced by the Council, have been funded via a Planning Performance Agreement between the Council and First Renewables Ltd. The cost of material supplied electronically and in print for the proposed consultation will be accounted for within these same budgetary costs.
- 8.1.2. In terms of transformation, officers and Members have committed time and effort to inputting into the shaping of the Masterplan with the promoters. The benefit this has brought is that the product before Members today is thought to be of a far superior standard than it would otherwise have been if both the promoters and Council hadn't proactively supported work inputting into the product. The expectation is that this front-loaded and transparent approach to working will deliver social, environmental and economic benefits as a result.

### **8.2. Legal and Governance**

- 8.2.1. The Kettering Energy Park Masterplan, once approved, will satisfy the requirement for it as specified in Policy 26 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. It will also provide the promoters and developers of the site with a framework to firstly attract investors to the site and guide them in the preparation of planning applications for submission. The Masterplan will also form a material consideration in the assessment of applications by the Council's officers, and Members in determining applications at the site.
- 8.2.2. The Planning Communities EAP will provide governance in the further development of the Masterplan, after initially having received a presentation from the promoters during the process of developing the Draft Masterplan Document.

### **8.3. Relevant Policies and Plans**

- 8.3.1. Policy 26 (*Renewable and Low Carbon Energy*) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy provides the policy framework for new renewable energy generation for North Northamptonshire. The policy also

identifies Land at Burton Wold to serve as a decentralised energy network which will link energy production to existing and new development. It also identifies a series of criteria for proposals to be in accordance with within the Energy Park and requires the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan to be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders, (which is to be agreed by the Council). The Draft Masterplan Document has been prepared to meet this policy.

- 8.3.2. In terms of the Council's Corporate Plan, the proposals outlined through the Draft Masterplan Document has the potential for making a positive impact on two key commitments. Firstly, in terms of *Safe & thriving places* it meets the requirements to attract tourism, visitors and inward investment, working with local businesses and partners to support the creation of high-quality, better skilled jobs. For *Green, sustainable environment*, it demonstrates clear leadership on tackling environmental sustainability and work with communities and businesses to tackle climate change and improve air quality and promote sustainable, active travel. Embed low carbon technology, sustained and improved green infrastructure, and sustainable forms of transport for the future.

#### 8.4. Risk

- 8.4.1. The purpose of this report is for Members to review the content of the Draft Masterplan Document ,and other supporting information, and endorse them for public consultation. There is a risk that as a result of responses to the consultation, information emerges that bring about the need for minor or major change to the content of the Masterplan. However, officers will continue to work with the promoters and stakeholders to ensure that the information presented to Members is fair and balanced, and that suitable solutions are identified to permit agreement on a Masterplan which Members can approve, to secure a high-quality development for the area.
- 8.4.2. There are also risks that consultees don't respond within the timescale of the consultation. To negate this, however, the period of the consultation has been expanded to accommodate a busy period of bank holidays, and colleagues will engage with an urgency to ensure that the necessary information is provided to enable a full and proper response.

#### 8.5. Consultation

- 8.5.1. The proposed consultation period has been extended beyond the agreed Statement of Community Involvement period of 6 weeks, to account for the busy period of bank holidays. The consultation is planned to be launched as soon after this Executive Advisory Panel meeting as possible, hopefully Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March, and operate for 7 weeks until Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May. Information will be provided on the promoter's website, with a link to it from the Council's website. The Council's media and social media channels will be used to seek to ensure that residents and other stakeholders are made aware and directed to the relevant information which allows them to comment on the consultation material.

8.5.2. In addition, it is intended to arrange an in-person event at Burton Latimer Civic Centre on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to provide interested parties the opportunity discuss the Draft Masterplan and scheme proposal with the promoters and officers of the Council.

#### **8.6. Consideration by Scrutiny**

8.6.1. The papers haven't been considered by Scrutiny however, if requested then officers are prepared to prepare a set of papers for the group's consideration.

#### **8.7. Equality Implications**

8.7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment screening has not been prepared for this report but will be prepared in consultation with the Council's Equalities team upon publication. The results of this will be reported to Members.

#### **8.8. Climate Impact**

8.8.1. The Council, having declared a climate and environment emergency in June 2021, is committed to reducing its climate impact both within its own Council buildings and in working with businesses and the wider community to achieve net zero. It is considered that the Draft Masterplan Document is giving clarity and shape to the significance of the scheme proposed at Kettering Energy Park, with its focus on building on its renewable energy credentials and optimising the use of that energy, including high levels of energy efficiency on site. In addition, the broad range of initiatives to support zero carbon or low carbon efforts, and the sustainability of the proposed development is considered positive.

#### **8.9. Community Impact**

8.9.1. Consultation on the Draft Masterplan Document is hoped to draw out any points around the community impact of the Masterplan and the proposed development. The scheme is of significance, with the potential for bringing with it job opportunities, investment, environmental enhancement, and benefits in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain. It may however also bring about challenges albeit, the process of preparing this Masterplan has already helped shape and add community value to the proposal, and it is anticipated that the proposed consultation will further this, as will the process of considering planning applications.

#### **8.10. Crime and Disorder Impact**

8.10.1. The development will need to consider issues of crime and disorder. This is expected to form a part of submissions made to this consultation, and through the subsequent planning applications that follow.

### **9. Background Papers**

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9.1. [Minutes of Planning Policy EAP 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022](https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=162&MIId=862)  
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=162&MIId=862>