

## PLANNING POLICY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL 9 December 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Simon James – Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery)</b> <a href="mailto:simon.james@northnorthants.gov.uk">simon.james@northnorthants.gov.uk</a>
<b>Relevant Executive Member</b>	<b>Councillor David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration</b>

### List of Appendices

#### **Appendix A – Draft scope of NN Strategic Plan (March 2021)**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

---

- 1.1. For the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel (PPEAP) to provide feedback on the draft scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (NNSP) that was previously endorsed by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and recommended to North Northamptonshire Council for inclusion in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme.

##### **2. Executive Summary**

---

- 2.1 The NNSP will be a key statutory document for North Northamptonshire Council (NNC). It will cover the whole Council area. The Plan will review and where appropriate replace the policies that address the strategic priorities for the area. The Strategic Plan will be supported by a combination of area-based or topic-based plans, and which could include reviews and updates of the Part 2 Local Plans.
- 2.2 The Joint Planning Committee (JPC) considered the draft scope of the NNSP at its 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 meeting, before endorsing the draft scope and potential timetable, and recommended this to NNC for inclusion in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme. It is important that North Northamptonshire Council have ownership of the NNSP from the start of the process. Feedback on the draft scope is sought from members of this Executive Advisory Panel to ensure that the Council owns and shapes the plan from the start.

##### **3. Recommendation**

---

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel note the content of the draft scope and provide any feedback to help shape the development of the Scope & Issues consultation document.

### Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.2 To ensure that the Council owns and shapes the Strategic Plan from the start.

## **4. Report Background**

---

- 4.1 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in July 2016. It is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for North Northamptonshire, providing the big picture for development across North Northamptonshire in the period 2011-2031 and ensuring that an up-to-date decision-making and investment framework is in place. It is being taken forward in more detail by the Part 2 Local Plans (of which the Council is advanced in developing a suite of adopted plans) and Neighbourhood Plans where these have been or are being produced.
- 4.2 To meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>1</sup> (NPPF), at its 25<sup>th</sup> July 2019 meeting, the former JPC considered a report on the JCS review. The conclusion of the report was that the JCS did not require an immediate update, but that this should be kept under review, particularly in relation to progress on the Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework (ASF). It was agreed that the new plan should be referred to as the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (NNSP) and should cover the period 2020-2041, with the spatial vision potentially extending to 2050 to align with the Arc. A provisional timetable for updating the JCS was included within the report.
- 4.3 At the last meeting of the JPC on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021, a “handover” report provided members with an update on strategic issues and made recommendations to the Council on how strategic planning should be taken forward. This report discussed the national and sub-regional context, including the implications of the Arc Spatial Framework, and the scope and timetable of the NNSP. The report also proposed changing the statutory plan period to 2021-2041 from that previously agreed. The JPC endorsed the draft scope of the NNSP and potential timetable and recommended this to the Council for inclusion in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme, which will need to be published to outline the programme of development plan preparation. The [minutes](#) of this JPC meeting were reported to this Executive Advisory Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The potential timetable for the NNSP has been updated in the report on the Planning Policy work programme elsewhere on this agenda.
- 4.4 The Strategic Plan will be a key statutory document for the Council. It will form the strategic part 1 Local Plan for North Northamptonshire, to be supported by a combination of area-based or topic-based plans, which could include reviews and updates of the Part 2 Local Plans. Feedback on the draft scope is sought from members of this Panel to ensure that the Council owns and shapes the plan from the start.

---

<sup>1</sup> That policies in local plans and spatial development strategies should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary.

## 5. Issues and Choices

---

### *Scope of the North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan*

- 5.1 The scope of the Strategic Plan will focus on strategic matters which will, as a minimum, meet the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, to have a plan that addresses the strategic priorities for the area. The Plan will help to deliver the priorities set out in other Council plans and strategies and will respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. It will inform and be influenced by the development of the Arc Spatial Framework. The Strategic Plan will take forward the priorities for the Council set out in its Corporate Plan and provide the spatial dimension to it.
- 5.2 The rationale for the scope of the Strategic Plan was set out at paras 4.1-4.5 of the report to the Joint Planning Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 (Item 7). The draft scope of the Strategic Plan is provided at [Appendix A](#). It is important that the Council has ownership of the Strategic Plan from the start of the process. Member feedback is sought on the proposed scope and to identify any additional issues that should potentially be included. Officers have reviewed the scope and additional issues that have arisen since March 2021. It is considered that the scope of the Strategic Plan could provide greater emphasis on 'levelling up' and health & wellbeing and this will be incorporated into the consultation document.
- 5.3 Officers are currently drafting a consultation document on the scope and issues, which it is anticipated to be reported to the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel in February 2022. The document has been informed by feedback from the last Joint Planning Committee meeting, existing and emerging evidence, monitoring and the Corporate Plan. Feedback from the Panel will also inform the consultation document in advance of future public consultation.

### *Timetable for North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan*

- 5.4 The draft timetable endorsed by the Joint Planning Committee included consultation on scope and issues (Regulation 18) in Autumn/Winter 2021 with adoption in Summer 2024. Officers have revised the timetable for the Strategic Plan as part of the work programme which will be incorporated into the Local Development Scheme. It is considered that the Strategic Plan is well placed to influence and respond to key stages of the Arc Spatial Framework (reported to the [23rd September 2021](#) meeting of this Panel) and respond to any government planning reforms as they arise.
- 5.5 It will be important to keep the proposed timetable for the Strategic Plan under review. Changes which may impact on the timetable such as the availability of resources, the progress of the Arc Spatial Framework and associated evidence base; and the timetable and extent of any national planning reforms will continue to be monitored. Notwithstanding this, it is important to progress the Strategic Plan in a timely fashion. The first anticipated review will be following the analysis of feedback from the consultation on the scope of the plan and any key issues arising from the initial evidence base.

## *Background work and evidence base*

- 5.6 It is also prudent to update members on background work that is being undertaken to inform the Strategic Plan and the evidence base that will inform future policy.
- 5.7 The Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) and further evidence for the Special Protection Area (SPA) (Visitor Access study and Bird Disturbance study) will shortly be procured and consultancy briefs are being produced in relation to Climate Change and retail/town centres. The evidence base will be developed as the plan is progressed and will also utilise evidence commissioned for the Arc Spatial Framework.
- 5.8 It is expected that the formal 'Call for Sites' (CFS) will be launched in the week commencing 6<sup>th</sup> December, allowing interested parties to submit potential sites for consideration through the Strategic Plan and other relevant workstreams (such as registers of brownfield sites). It has been decided to consult on the site assessment methodology and methodology for the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) alongside the Call for Sites. This initial work, whilst resulting in a short delay from the intended launch in Summer 2021, should have several benefits including allowing easier analysis of sites moving forward and ensuring the HELAA is as robust as possible.

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

---

### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 Sufficient resources will be needed to progress the Strategic Plan. An interim staffing structure is currently in place to commence work on the Plan. A permanent structure is under review, the outcome of this could affect the timetable of the Plan. The current anticipated budget necessary to commence work is allocated within the Council's budget.
- 6.1.2 The evidence base required to support the drafting of the Plan will require a number of studies, some of which will require external consultancy and specialist legal advice. The Plan itself will also require the Council to enter into a contract with the Planning Inspectorate to examine the Plan. Whilst it is difficult to anticipate the full costs of producing a plan, a work programme will be developed to forecast charges, particularly around the time of the Examination.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 The Strategic Plan will review and where appropriate replace the policies that address the strategic priorities for the area. When formally adopted, the Strategic Plan will form part of the Development Plan for North Northamptonshire to guide development alongside Part 2 Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.
- 6.2.2 The preparation of the Strategic Plan will need to comply with legal and regulation requirements set out in Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

## 6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report. The main risks in preparing the Strategic Plan are:

- Maintaining progress to ensure that key stages are met to enable the Plan to proceed as efficiently as possible to Examination and adoption.
- Ensuring the availability of resources to allow the preparation process to proceed in line with the Local Development Scheme.
- Significant changes to national policy and sub-regional guidance.
- Ensure that the Strategic Plan satisfies the tests of soundness, namely that that the Plan has been positively prepared is justified, effective and is consistent with national policy

6.3.2 To help monitor ongoing progress, and to help inform decision making a comprehensive risk register and project plan will be prepared and maintained as part of this project

## 6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 Consultation will be undertaken on the scope & issues and other key stages of the Strategic Plan in accordance with statutory requirements, including the Statement of Community Involvement

## 6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny

6.5.1 The draft scope will be used to gain feedback from Members of this Executive Advisory Panel. There is no identified need for wider consideration by scrutiny.

## 6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 The approach to climate change will be fundamental to the development of the Strategic Plan and is set out within the draft scope.

## 6.7 Community Impact

6.7.1 The draft scope seeks to ensure that existing and new communities in North Northamptonshire see real benefits from development. Consultation on the Strategic Plan as it progresses, and the evidence base to inform it, will inform the approach and how benefits can be maximised.

## 7. Background Papers

---

7.1 EAP Planning Policy 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 [Report on Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc](#) (Report Item 4)

7.2 [Minutes of the last meeting of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021](#)

7.3 [North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee Report of 2 March 2021 regarding Strategic Planning in North Northamptonshire](#) (Report Item 7)

7.4 [North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee Report of 25 July 2019 regarding the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review](#) (Report Item 6)

7.5 [North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031](#), adopted July 2016