

Old Stratford Parish Council

West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan

Question 1:

Is this vision appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire up to 2050?

Answer:

NO

Comments:

The Spatial Options document claims to be a visionary document, unfortunately, it fails to provide any vision for the new Authority of West Northamptonshire. This is a new Authority and this would have been a great opportunity to produce a document of what the new Council wishes for the new combined area which comprises of the former council areas of Daventry, South Northants and Northampton. When reading this document you get **NO** sense of how the new Council wishes to leverage its position within the middle of the Country, grow its local economy or what the population target will be, where does local industry sit within the area and what role does the area play in the key challenges facing the nation as a whole. All of this could have been set out in an exciting and informative way, unfortunately this document falls short of this.

The new Council suggested that it bid for Northampton to have city status, again this document does **NOT** recognise this ambition. There are no planning objectives to support the city of Northampton should this bid be successful. This demonstrates a lack of clarity and little real strategy with an all-encompassing vision more in keeping with discrete ideas that do **NOT** link or interact, any vision would address this.

The Spatial Vision states that by 2025 West Northamptonshire will have played a leading role in the success of the Ox-Cam Arc but does **NOT** set out how or what that success will look like *and the Governments response on the Arc is not due to be published until mid 2022.*

The Council wants significant growth from high value sectors but does **NOT** set out what these sectors are.

Health outcomes are said to be improved, again this spurious concept does **NOT** have any measures of success, targets or examples as to what a resident may expect in the coming decades, without these measurable indices how can the Council be sure what it is planning for will be fit for purpose.

The Vision document needs to be refreshed to have something that is resident focused, exciting, defines the place of West Northamptonshire and its role locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Question 2:

Are the Green and Clean spatial objectives 1 to 4 appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire?

NO

Many of the spatial objectives are legal requirements; unfortunately there is nothing as to how these objectives and legal requirements will be achieved.

Many of these objectives need to be strengthened if the Council are serious about climate change and carbon neutral ambitions.

As a set of policy objectives they are suitably vague to be able to be argued to fit practically any situation.

It is somewhat concerning that proposals set out later in the document breach these same objectives.

In order to be credible the set of policy objectives on climate change **MUST** have a roadmap to net zero giving clear outline stages and deliverables – “promoting” and “encouraging” are no longer sufficient to achieve the carbon goals of UK plc

The desire to conserve natural habitats, protect landscapes and conserve heritage appears to have been completely abandoned in the proposals to build 6000 houses in the Old Stratford vicinity on greenfield land.

Question 3:

Are the Improved Life Chances spatial objectives 5 to 7 appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire?

NO

All schools should be walking distance of all **NEW** homes.

All health facilities should be available from day one and **NOT**, as is at present, years after the developments have started.

Infrastructure and development needs to state that this **MUST** be in place and enhanced **PRIOR** to any expansion or new settlements being developed.

Question 4:

Are the Connected Communities spatial objectives 8 and 9 appropriate for guiding development growth in West Northamptonshire?

NO

Objective 9 **MUST** also apply to anywhere that there is a proposed extension to an existing settlement and **NOT** just urban areas.

Question 5:

Are the Thriving Villages and Towns spatial objectives 10 to 12 appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire?

NO

Whilst the objectives are commendable, it is felt that they somewhat state the obvious as no Council would wish for low quality design and build and where high crime opportunities are prevalent. The vision and objectives should set targets and give residents success and failure measures by which any good policy can be judged objectively.

Question 6:

Are the economic development spatial objectives 13 to 16 appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire?

NO

It is felt that the Plan could be more explicit in naming some of the target industries.

It is clear that Logistics and High Performance Engineering, (which centres on Motor Sport) are some of the key industries to retain and attract but this needs to be made **MUCH** clearer.

Question 7:

Do you agree that the findings of the HENA reflect the housing and/or economic needs of West Northamptonshire?

NO

This vision does not set out what the target population West Northamptonshire wishes to see by 2050. Without this the Public are asked to trust the Council that it has calculated the nationally required housing numbers in the correct way.

As there is now one Council and given that West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy has been in existence for a number of years it is somewhat disappointing that there is **NO** common standard method across the whole area.

Question 8:

Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Northampton, as the principle urban area, as part of the special strategy for West Northamptonshire

YES

As referred to in Question 1, the new Council suggested that it bid for Northampton to have city status, again this document does **NOT** recognise this ambition. There are no planning objectives to support the city of Northampton should this bid be successful. This demonstrates a lack of clarity and little real strategy with an all-encompassing vision more in

keeping with discrete ideas that do **NOT** link or interact, any vision would address this. There are also a number of special options in and around Northampton that could achieve this

Question 14:

Do you agree that special option 1f – South of M1 Junction 15 – has the potential to deliver employment development

YES

In effect brownfield land with good transit links unlike other proposals nearby without suitable transit links, or in rural areas which impact on rural villages

Question 23:

Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Brackley and Towcester, as rural services centres, as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire

YES

But whatever the right improvements required to facilitate such developments, lessons must be learnt from existing experiences, that roads need to be built before any new housing and not allow significant housing to be developed before road infrastructure, this is an example of poor planning.

Question 25:

Do you agree that special option 4b – Towcester South and Racecourse Expansion – has the potential to deliver residential development?

NO

This is historic registered parkland and would be difficult to develop and would further impact on the A5 towards Old Stratford and the local roads.

Question 26

Do you agree that new settlement have a potential role in delivering growth as part of the special strategy for West Northamptonshire?

NO

Whilst there may be some potential in theory, but the work of the plan advisers has yet to be completed and the current proposals are confusing. To make a decision on any new settlements at this stage without the plans conclusions appears folly. There is also the reminder that the Arc conclusions are not due to be published until mid 2022 at the earliest

Question 27:

Do you agree that spatial option 5a – growth at Long Buckby – has the potential to support a new settlement

YES

This is a better option, given its location and existing road and rail links, rather than the site NW of Milton Keynes and is more aligned to Objective 8.

Question 28:

Do you agree that spatial option 5b – Growth at Milton Keynes West / Old Stratford – has the potential to support a new settlement?

NO

It is very disappointing that West Northamptonshire Council stated that their primary reason for considering this site was because a neighbouring authority (Milton Keynes) has instructed the Council to do so. As when viewing the Milton Keynes 2050 Vision a major development was mentioned in that document in an adjoining authority.

It would appear that the site would be for dormitory housing serving the needs of Milton Keynes. It would **NOT** meet the objective 8 on connections, objective 6 on safety and objective 12 on protecting rural communities.

Without a West Northamptonshire Council policy on new settlements it is impossible to assess and judge this proposed site, however, any new settlement **MUST NOT** allow the existing villages and communities to coalesce into one very large conurbation. This proposed new settlement would allow Deanshanger, Old Stratford, Potterspury, Cosgrove and Yardley Gobion to merge into a large conurbation.

The scale of such a proposal would be disproportionate to anything in the local vicinity. A 6000 home development would be massively out of scale to the small rural village way of life in this part of South Northamptonshire.

Already there is a massive pressure on the local infrastructure, especially the A5 / A508 / A422 roundabout at Old Stratford. Recently Highway England did some pinch point work in an attempt to improve traffic flow, this work has made **NO** difference and arguably has made it worse on some arms of the roundabout, notably the A5 Old Stratford bound area. To consider this site would require a new solution for the roundabout to allow either an under or over pass or possibly even both for all A5 traffic.

This new settlement would be bound by the A508 on one side and then dissected by the A5 on the other. Any such proposal should at least state if the A5 would be realigned to act as a new route to prevent coalescence with Deanshanger and to bypass Potterspury.

The whole of the A5 would need to be upgraded to allow for the traffic expansion at this end and potentially adding to the traffic from the second Towcester Expansion as per the Spatial Option 4b.

West Northamptonshire Council will be aware that the site at Old Stratford allocated in the South Northants Local Plan Part 2, AL5 will shortly be brought forward for Warehousing. The principal of development is said to be established.

This development will add further pressure on the A5 / A508 roundabout and will also impact on the proposed site now being discussed. It is well known that the land adjacent to AL5 is being promoted in the SHLAA and any additional development in Cosgrove would see a continuous ribbon development from the A5 to the Grand Union Canal. The cumulative effect of all this on the existing and any potential new communities needs to be carefully considered.

This site appears to be promoted on the Milton Keynes MK2050 ideas of a mass transit system.

Whilst it may be argued that should Milton Keynes expand then some of these benefits may extend into South Northants area but it is premature to bring forward this site at this time. It is predicted on the delivery of the Milton Keynes Mass Transport System for which there are **NO** serious plans and no foundations have been laid to put this into fruition.

This site being the extreme North West edge of any such scheme will be decades away.

If this site was allocated and developed in the plan period it would be a car only site and again contrary to the **Spatial Objective 1 on climate change**.

Whilst Option 5b refers to Grade 2 LB at Furtho It makes no mention of the Grade 1 Listed Church and Tithe Barn at Passenham along with other Grade 2 listed buildings, also the Conservation Area in Old Stratford and Grade 2* River Bridge over the River Great Ouse.

Grassroots Administration:

Should any such new settlement to be constructed, who would be responsible for its grassroots administration as the new settlement would encompass five parishes?

Surface Water Runoff:

With any such large development and vast areas of hard standing large amounts of surface water would accumulate from this site. It would be imagined that this water be collected in large attenuation ponds, which would allow the water to dissipate at a slower rate. These ponds would have to drain to the local water courses, i.e. dog's mouth brook. This high volume of water generated from this site would generate flood conditions as this brook enters the River Great Ouse at Old Stratford. If large attenuation ponds are to be used then lifesaving systems need to be put in place.

Numerous recent localised flooding events would mean the implications of backing up and flooding at Stony Stratford and Deanshanger as a result of the additional surface water should be modelled and assessed in conjunction with those affected.

Education:

As define under national statistics it is estimated that each household potentially could have two children per house.

With an extra “**potentially**” **14,000 children**. Where would they be educated? Currently the schools in Deanshanger, Old Stratford, Potterspury and Yardley Gobion are at or near to capacity. The only school which may have capacity is Cosgrove but with an extra 20 pupils this would also be at capacity. Milton Keynes schooling, especially secondary, is also over capacity – adding further questions for their need to encourage expansion into the neighbouring authority areas.

Bus services for older children would be needed to transport them to school, unless junior and senior schools were to be constructed within the new settlement at the outset.

Sewage disposal:

With the large increase in homes there inevitably will be high volumes of effluent waste, currently the sewage system that takes waste from the five parishes effected by this new development is taken by a system that was installed in the late forties early fifties. It is pumped to **Cotton Valley Sewage Treatment Works in Milton Keynes**. This new development would increase the sewage volume considerably and with the current rate of expansion of Milton Keynes it is doubtful that Cotton Valley would be able cope with such a large housing development.

Public Transport:

Currently public transport in the area where this new settlement may possibly be located, has little or no sustainable public transport. With the removal of bus subsidies and any existing service having to be self-financing it has been very difficult to maintain a public transport system. The current bus service does **NOT** provide a sufficient service so that residents of this new settlement can gain access to national rail network systems as the timetable does **NOT** connect with trains. As stated earlier in this questionnaire this new settlement would be a car only settlement which is contrary **to the Spatial Objective 1 on Climate Change**.

OPTION 29:

What approach do you think the WNSP should take to development in rural areas, in particular the level of growth that may be appropriate and where that growth could be best accommodated?

Great care is required to ensure local infrastructure can cope with any new development.

Derek M Everett PSLCC

Clerk

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Chairman