West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

Sustainability Appraisal Report

Appendix B: Results of the Issues and Options Appraisal

Prepared for:
West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit

Prepared by:
ENVIRON
Exeter, UK

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1 Introduction

This appendix summarises the results of the appraisal of the Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Discussion Paper. The figure below shows this stage of the plan making / appraisal process in relation to the overall process.

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<th>West Northamptonshire JCS Plan Making Process</th>
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<td>Issues and Options Discussion Paper (July 2007)</td>
<td>SA of issues and options undertaken between August - September 2007</td>
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<td>This stage of the plan making process Pre-Submission JCS Document (January 2011)</td>
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An appraisal of the Issues and Options Discussion Paper was undertaken during August and September 2007 and a report of the results of the appraisal was published in September 2007. These results are summarised below.

For full details of the results please see the original report, ENVIRON (September, 2007): West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal of the Issues and Options.

2 Results of the Appraisal

2.1 Draft Spatial Vision, Themes and Objectives

Overall, the vision and objectives were wide reaching in their coverage and set out how development and growth should progress in the area. Economic and social issues (especially concerning education, training and skills development) were well represented as were green infrastructure issues. However, there were two main areas that required strengthening particularly in relation to the sustainability of development. The vision should recognise that development could lead to increased levels of traffic in city centres and could
lead to raised air pollution levels, with associated health implications as well as traffic congestion problems. The vision does not mention climate change although adaptation is likely to be needed if growth is to be managed sustainably on the scale envisaged in the area.

2.2 West Northamptonshire Options

The assessment found that on the whole the options would be positive or have no significant effect on the SA objectives. However, due to the lack of clarity in the options, a number of recommendations were made regarding how the options would be developed. The main recommendations were:

- The provision of sustainable modes of transport should be considered a sustainable design feature and policies developed. Alternative transport should be part of the strategy;
- Eco friendly design should include development which includes the integration of ecological conditions and contributes to improvement in ecological connectivity in rural and urban areas; the integration of renewable energy and greener technologies; the integration of recycled materials used in building design and the reduction in wastes produced by development; and water efficiency technologies.

2.3 Northampton Implementation Area Options

The main recommendations were:

- All of the growth options are likely to result in an increase in motor vehicle use and congestion will negatively impact upon air quality. The location of most of the options, may increase out commuting;
- All the options are in proximity to areas of sensitive archaeology and cultural heritage areas;
- All of the proposed developments except the Southern extension are located within close proximity to areas of biodiversity value;
- The proposed intensification of employment at Brackmills in the South-Eastern, South-Eastern/Western and Southern extensions is likely to reduce travel distances to work and provide high density and high skill employment. The North-Eastern option although close to the proposed intensified University Arc, may lead to increased commuter journeys and increased congestion;
- A network of potential green corridors has been identified in all four of the growth options, which will provide linking green space in an urban area. However all of the options are located within or close to sensitive landscapes;
- Areas of the North – Eastern Extension are relatively deprived. Development within this area without appropriate provision of key services may lead to further deprivation but may provide an opportunity to regenerate the area;
- All of the growth options are located in areas of ground water vulnerability and contain areas identified to be at risk from flooding.
2.4 Daventry Options

The main issues identified include:

- All growth options may mean an increase in motor vehicle trips and therefore an effect on air quality;
- D08 and D011 are both located in sensitive archaeology and cultural heritage areas and are located in or within close proximity to sensitive landscapes;
- D09 and D010 are both located within close proximity of sensitive biodiversity, flora and fauna areas, where potential growth from development could have an affect on the ecological connectivity of habitats;
- D09 is located within close proximity to a crime deprivation area and is in the top 20% most deprived nationally. Therefore regeneration of the area may help to improve the deprivation of the area;
- D08, D09 and D010 are located in vulnerable areas, where development may affect ground water, and be at risk from flooding.

2.5 South Northamptonshire, Towcester and Brackley Options

Options were assessed for South Northamptonshire as a whole and Towcester and Brackley. The results of this assessment are summarised below. The main issues identified include:

- Providing some growth in villages is likely to be positive in that it could help to make local services more viable;
- All of the growth options for Towcester and Brackley may result in an increase in motor vehicle trips, which could affect air quality. Some of the sites are also likely to increase out-commuting;
- In terms of Towcester, most of the options have no significant effect on archaeology and heritage. However, T02 is located within a Site of Archaeological Interest where any development may influence the archaeology and cultural heritage quality and value of the site. Option T03 is not specific on location of alternative growth areas. However it must be noted that growth to the East of Towcester should be limited due to the large area covered by Historic parks, Special Landscape areas, Conservation areas and numerous Sites of Archaeological Interest. None of the Brackley options are expected to have a significant effect on archaeology and cultural heritage.
- Three of the Brackley sites, B01 - B03; and one of the Towcester sites T01 affect County Wildlife Sites / SSSIs but the boundaries of the development sites could be changed to reflect this;
- Growth to the East of Towcester should be limited due to the large area of Priority Habitat designated under the UK BAP. In terms of Brackley, all of the options located within close proximity of either a CWS or SSSI. However, it is not envisaged that the development sites will have a direct impact on the viability of these sites;
- Growth options at Towcester and Brackley are in areas of vulnerable ground water, and risk of flooding in Towcester.
2.6 Silverstone Circuit Options

The main issues identified include:

- All of the proposed options may lead to increased use of motor vehicles to access the site and therefore affect air quality. Option SC04 may also increase noise pollution;
- Due to the location of a Site of Archaeological Interest in the centre of the track, all of the proposed development options are located within a potentially sensitive area. In addition, a designated Special Landscape Area (SLA) is located on the North, North East and Western perimeters of Silverstone circuit, which may be sensitive to any new growth from development;
- All of the proposed developments are located within close proximity of BAP priority habitats where potential growth from development could cause damage or loss to habitat and unless managed sensitively;
- All three options incorporate new employment opportunities which are covered by the South Northamptonshire skills base, therefore reducing the need to commute to work outside of the region and increasing South Northamptonshire’s competitiveness;
- Development would not be considered to be brownfield but any intensification of use on the site would make the best use of land.

2.7 Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) Options

The main issues identified include:

- All of the proposed options are expected to increase vehicle and train trips, therefore increasing carbon emissions. In addition, DIRFT is located within close proximity to a flood risk area. Development should take into consideration the risk of flooding caused by climate change;
- All of the options fully exploit the locational opportunity as the electrified west coast main line passes through DIRFT and provides direct freight access to the channel tunnel;
- The proposed developments are located within an area of ground water vulnerability, and within close proximity of a flood risk area.

2.8 Weedon Depot Options

The main issues identified include:

- Both options are likely to have an effect on air and noise pollution, through increased traffic flows;
- Both development options are located in an area that is sensitive in terms of ecology and archaeology / cultural heritage. However, development at the site can give an opportunity to make repairs to the buildings on the depot as they are currently in a bad condition;
- If development does go ahead the development should build in climate change adaptation measures. There is a prediction of increased winter flooding for the region and Weedon Depot is located in a flood risk area.
2.9 Rural Areas

The main issues identified include:

- RA01 may result in increased traffic flows and congestion on minor roads. Options RA02, 3 and 5 (if accompanied by the investment in public transport in RA04 might help to reduce car travel by helping to maintain local village services;

- All the options direct some development to rural areas. This should help to maintain some smaller village schools;

- RA01 is likely to lead to a more dispersed strategy meaning that development will be less able to provide compact communities which are of a sufficient size to support services. Options RA02, 3 and 5 (if accompanied by the investment in public transport in RA04) are more likely to provide that adequate populations to provide for services in key centres. It will also be easier to provide affordable housing because overall numbers will be larger taking individual developments over the affordable housing threshold.