

**WNC Officer answers to questions raised by Parish Councils at the Planning Policy Briefing
27/02/24**

Question	WNC Officer Answer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Servent - Wootton PC Is the emerging plan intended to replace the JCS? • Jeff Servent - Wootton PC Will the Local Plan Pt 2 still be relevant once this plan is adopted? 	<p>Once adopted, the West Northamptonshire Local Plan will replace the Joint Core Strategy and the three Part 2 Local Plans.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff Servent - Wootton PC How does this emerging plan inform a developers application now? 	<p>The emerging Local Plan is capable of being a material consideration in determining planning applications. The weight given to the emerging plan will increase as the plan moves through the formal stages of preparation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gerir What road standard construction will apply to each Village hierarchy? Since currently developments have been allowed where proper foundations for access roads have not been constructed? 	<p>The Local Plan will not set standards for road construction. Any new roads would be considered by the Council's highways department to ensure the appropriate technical standards are met.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angela Blisworth Parish Council Would you be able to provide a little more guidance as to what information you require in the 'aspiration' part of the survey? 	<p>There are three questions in this section to guide you. You could tell us about particular development needs, about access to services and facilities or anything else that is important to your Parish.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gerir How does a Housing Need survey apply to 'Exceptions' sites and please can you explain the standard required for a Housing Need Survey to be statistically valid and thus legal? 	<p>A housing needs survey would be prepared as evidence to support a planning application for housing proposed on an exceptions site. In some cases it may be appropriate for an exceptions scheme to serve a cluster of well related villages.</p> <p>Housing Need Surveys are used to assess the specific housing needs of residents and people with strong connections to an area, such as those working locally. A survey looks at both affordable and open market housing need along with the types and tenure of homes residents require.</p> <p>The Council can undertake surveys on applicant's behalf either internally or in conjunction with an approved independent partner. Applicants are permitted to commission their own Housing Need Assessment independently of the Council however if the Council is not satisfied that the</p>

	<p>Assessment is impartial, robust and reliable, the results may carry little or no weight in the planning decision making process. Housing Officers are preparing a WNC Housing Need Survey methodology for developers who want to undertake their own survey.</p> <p>WNC officers will help to ensure the survey is advertised widely and will work with Parish Councils to reach as many residents as possible. An acceptable survey response rate is between 5% and 30%.</p> <p>A housing needs survey is not a legal document.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Hughes Crick Parish Council If we have a neighbourhood plan it should be reviewed when the new local plan is made see https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/reviewing-neighbourhood-development-plan 	<p>There is no requirement to review a NDP once it is made, but it is recommended that NDPs are monitored and consideration should be given to new or changed local or national planning policy.</p> <p>https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning/reviewing-neighbourhood-development-plan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jenny Evans, Cosgrove If an area has been designated an employment zone, will it automatically continue to be an employment zone going forward? 	<p>Proposed designations for the new local plan will be available to view when it is published. Committee Papers are due to be published w/c 4th March and the formal consultation on the Local Plan will take place for 8 weeks in April/May.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom Mitchell-Brixworth Parish Council I understand the NPPF is being updated, do we know when this will be available 	<p>An updated NPPF was published on 20th December 2023 and can be viewed here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2</p> <p>Further reviews are expected, but we do not have a timetable for this at present.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gary Moss How is the building of a proposed 6000 houses around Moulton taken in the needs of the village? 	<p>Any proposed new allocations in the new local plan will be available to view when it is published. Committee Papers are due to be published w/c 4th March and the formal consultation on the Local Plan will take place for 8 weeks in April/May.</p> <p>Proposed strategic allocations in the Local Plan are to contribute to meeting the needs of the WN area following the Government's Standard Methodology to calculate need. The location of proposed strategic allocations follows a site selection methodology and sustainability appraisal.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angela Blisworth Parish Council <p>With regard to the rural exception sites - is this something you are planning to tighten (as it seems, as Roade PC stated, that it is being used as a loop hole which means that rural areas do not actually get affordable housing).</p>	<p>Paragraph 82 of the NPPF requires us to consider whether allowing some market housing would help deliver rural exceptions sites for affordable housing. The NPPF definition of affordable housing is linked in the glossary below.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angela Blisworth Parish Council <p>I am concerned that your methodology is flawed because it does not give enough weight to the traffic nightmare that many small villages have to deal with due to increased development. Particularly when Kier Highways repeatedly tells us, they do not have funds to repair roads, introduce traffic calming or deal with repairs required for footways.</p>	<p>The purpose of engaging with Parishes at this time is to seek input into a new methodology for the rural settlement hierarchy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daryl Basford Hannington PC <p>Can Alan advise when the Planning Department will resolve the many issues regarding access to Planning documents and supporting papers</p>	<p>Please clarify which planning documents you are having issues accessing</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daryl Basford Hannington PC <p>When will a robust Planning enforcement system be in place?</p>	<p>With the formation of the Unitary Authority, planning enforcement has been radically transformed almost doubling the staff within the team. The team now comprises of a Head of the Service with two Principal Enforcement Officers underneath who together oversee the actions of the four other Officers within the team. This increase in staffing has now allowed for a streamlined and efficient enforcement process to be developed. Initial enquires are now all submitted online and gathered in one central place where they are then allocated by the Principal Officers on a case by case, daily basis to be investigated in a timely manner by one of the four Officers. More complicated or contentious cases can then be triaged by the Principal Officers and progressed to formal action where necessary. In accordance with the adopted Local Enforcement Plan (link below), formal action is always the last resort and as such the robustness or otherwise of this service cannot be measured on the number of notices that are served alone. A measure of the success of the enforcement process is taken from a combination of factors, not least the amount of cases that are either closed through voluntary action or those for which a planning application is submitted to seek regularisation.</p>

	<p>Local Enforcement Plan: https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/planning-applications-and-enforcement/planning-enforcement</p> <p>The two Principal Enforcement Officers have been visiting Parish Councils by invitation to explain the new system and to take on board any comments/discussion about moving on long-standing cases. This is something that we are promoting and would welcome approaches from other Parishes.</p> <p>Please contact James Willoughby, Head of Enforcement and Monitoring for further information: james.willoughby@westnorthants.gov.uk</p>
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Glossary

Administrative boundary	Denotes the extent of the area under the control of an administrative body (e.g. a Parish Council)
Affordable housing	The full NPPF definition of affordable housing can be viewed here .
Green space / Open Space	Refers to a range designated and non-designated areas of land such as (but not limited to): parks, formal gardens, sports pitches, natural and semi-natural spaces.
Housing needs assessment	An assessment undertaken by an applicant at a local level to establish housing need which will include primary sources of information consistent with a housing needs survey. Ideally the methodology should be agreed in advance with the Council.
Local Green Space	A designation that provides special protection against development for green spaces of particular importance to local communities. Land has to meet criteria specified in the NPPF to be so designated in a local plan or neighbourhood plan.
Local Plan	A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.
Rural Exceptions Site	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be acceptable for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Settlement confines	Settlement confines apply a criteria-based assessment to define a boundary between a settlement's main built-up extent and the surrounding open countryside.
Settlement Hierarchy	A way of categorising settlements based on factors such as the range of services and facilities they provide.

Settlement Hierarchy definitions included in adopted development plan documents

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

Policy R1 and paragraph 16.12

Primary Service Villages - Have the highest level of services and facilities within the rural area to meet the day to day needs of residents including those from surrounding settlements. These settlements are the most appropriate for accommodating local housing and employment needs and would be the focus for service provision in the rural areas;

Secondary Service Villages - These settlements have a more limited range of services, but still provide scope to meet some local needs for housing, employment and service provision;

Other villages - These villages have an even more limited range of services and are more reliant on the services of larger centres for day to day needs. The scope for development within these villages is likely to be limited to windfall infill development, although some housing to provide for local needs may be suitable.

Daventry Part 2 Local Plan

Policy RA1

Primary Service Villages

The Primary Service Villages perform a crucial role in helping to provide an important range of services and facilities and access to employment opportunities to meet the day to day needs of the local communities which they serve.

Policy RA2

Secondary Service Villages

The Secondary Service Villages perform an important role in helping to provide some services and facilities for the local communities which they serve.

Policy RA3

Other Villages

The Other Villages perform a predominantly local role in providing a limited number of services and facilities for their residents.

South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan

Policy SS1 and paragraph 3.2.4 – 3.2.5

Primary Service Villages - these villages have the highest levels of services and facilities

Secondary Service Villages - these villages have a more limited range of services, but still provide scope to meet some local needs for housing, employment and service provision. Secondary

Villages are split into two categories. This reflects their respective level of services and proximity to other higher order settlements.

Other Villages - these villages have an even more limited range of services and are more reliant on the services of larger centres for day to day needs. (For the purposes of this Plan 'Other villages' are termed '**Small villages**')