



Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan

**A consultation paper on the issues to be considered
and the planning context**

Daventry District Council

October 2012

Foreword

This document represents the first stage in the preparation of the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan. This Local Plan will eventually supplement the policies and proposals in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and will cover the period up to 2026.

However at this stage in the preparation process there are no specific policies or proposals being put forward. These will be contained in the draft Local Plan, which will be the subject of further public consultation next year.

The purpose of this paper is to provide an early opportunity for the local community and other stakeholders to comment on the issues to be considered in the Local Plan and influence how these might be addressed.

Of particular interest will be the need to place villages within a rural settlement hierarchy to support the retention and provision of local services and facilities. What factors need to be considered?

In addition the Local Plan must distribute the agreed rural housing provision identified in the Joint Core Strategy across the District - which is likely to be in the order of 1,355 dwellings from 2011 to 2026. How should this be allocated?

The Local Plan needs to put forward policies to support the rural economy and protect our natural and historic environment.

Aside from the rural areas the Local Plan must also seek to regenerate Daventry town and deliver the planned residential growth.

I therefore urge you to take this opportunity to comment on the issues raised in this paper and I look forward to reading your response.

Councillor Kay Driver
Strategic Planning and Strategic Health Portfolio Holder
Daventry District Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This consultation paper is the first stage in the preparation of the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan for Daventry District. The Local Plan will supplement the policies and proposals in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. Like the Core Strategy, it will cover the period up to 2026.
 - 1.2 However this paper does not suggest specific policies or proposals to be included within the Local Plan. These will not be prepared until the next stage in the process when there will be public consultation on the draft Local Plan. .
 - 1.3 The purpose of this paper is therefore to outline the issues the Local Plan needs to address and to provide an early opportunity for the local community and various stakeholders to influence how this is done.
 - 1.4 All comments received on this issues paper will therefore help inform the preparation of the draft Local Plan, which will be published for public consultation purposes in Spring 2013.
 - 1.5 The paper is divided into the following sections:
 - Section 2 looks at the wider planning context from the national to local level, and explains the implications for the Local Plan. This is important background information as it restricts what the Local Plan can and cannot do
 - Section 3 introduces the Local Plan in terms of its coverage and scope, as well as the proposed timetable for plan preparation
 - Section 4 looks at the issues for Daventry town including the planned residential growth and regeneration of the central area
 - Section 5 examines the issues for the rural settlements, including the establishment of a rural settlement hierarchy and the need to distribute the rural housing allocation
 - Section 6 highlights the issues affecting the wider countryside including the need to protect the landscape, important ecological sites and historic features.
 - Section 7 briefly explains the public consultation process and deadline for comments.
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2. Planning Context

- 2.1 The Local Plan will not exist in isolation. When preparing it regard has to be had to the content of other planning documents. These provide the context for the Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (known as the 'Framework') was published by the Government in March 2012 and replaced various national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance.
- 2.3 The Framework states that the Government continues to support a plan-led system with an emphasis on local plans. The Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. It also points out that local plans must be consistent with the principles and policies set out in the Framework, including the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 2.4 To deliver sustainable development the Framework has the following aims:
- Build a strong, competitive economy
 - Ensure the vitality of town centres
 - Support a prosperous rural economy
 - Promote sustainable transport
 - Support high quality communications infrastructure
 - Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes
 - Require good design
 - Promote healthy communities
 - Meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 - Conserve and enhance the natural environment
 - Conserve and enhance the historic environment
- 2.5 The Framework will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications, especially where there is no up-to-date Local Plan in place.
- 2.6 The Framework states that Local Plans should be aspirational but realistic. They should address the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change. They should also set out the opportunities for development and clear policies on what will or will not be permitted and where. Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the plan.
- 2.7 Furthermore the Framework encourages early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses. It says that a wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area.

A copy of the Framework is available on the Communities and Local Government website using the following link:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>

East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy

- 2.8 The East Midlands Regional Plan was published in March 2009. It set out the long-term strategic planning and transport policy framework for the region. It identifies the overall scale of development for the East Midlands and each local authority area and is legally a 'Regional Strategy'.
- 2.9 However, the Government has announced that it intends to revoke Regional Strategies. Once revoked they will no longer form part of the statutory Development Plan or indeed the strategic planning context for this Local Plan. Until that time, however, or the law is changed, all Local Plans have to be in 'general conformity' with the Regional Strategy for their area.

A copy of the Regional Spatial Strategy is available using the following link:
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100528142817/http://www.gos.gov.uk/goem/planning/regional-planning/?a=42496>

West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

- 2.10 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) provides a planning framework for the West Northamptonshire area, which includes Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Council. It sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the whole of the area for the period up to 2026, and includes strategic policies for steering and shaping development. It identifies locations for strategic new housing and employment and details the infrastructure (such as transport improvements, schools, open space and community facilities) required to support this development.
- 2.11 In recent months there has been a number of significant reforms to the planning system as a consequence of the provisions in the Localism Act 2011 and the introduction of the Framework. Similarly, as a consequence of the Government's proposed revocation of the Regional Strategy, the amount of development now proposed in the Joint Core Strategy is significantly reduced from that proposed in earlier versions of the document.
- 2.12 Within this context the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee has issued proposed changes to the Pre-Submission version of the Joint Core Strategy. The Proposed changes were published in August for public consultation. Submission of the Joint Core Strategy to the Secretary of State is anticipated in December 2012. Following the examination in public it is envisaged that the Joint Core Strategy will eventually be adopted in October 2013.
- 2.13 The District will then have an up-to-date plan in place as required by the Framework. However the Joint Core Strategy is a broad strategic planning document and in some instances it requires further elaboration. For this reason the Local Development Scheme¹ produced for West Northamptonshire includes the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan.

¹ A list of Local Plans to be produced for an area.

- 2.14 More details about the policies and proposals in the Joint Core Strategy are outlined in the appropriate sections of this paper.

More information about the Joint Core Strategy is available on the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit's website using the following link:
<http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/connect.ti/website/view?objectId=2737424>

Daventry District Local Plan (adopted June 1997)

- 2.15 The current Development Plan includes saved policies from the Daventry District Local Plan (LP), which was adopted in 1997. It sets out the Council's policies and proposals for guiding the development and use of land in the District.
- 2.16 Proposals for development are currently assessed against these saved policies. The Framework states that the weight to be attached to these policies depends on the degree of consistency with the Framework. It encourages the preparation of up-to-date Local Plans. They will therefore gradually be replaced over time by policies within the Joint Core Strategy, the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan and other emerging planning policy documents.

A copy of the saved policies can be viewed on the District Council's website using the following link:

<http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/local-plan/>

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.17 The Localism Act has introduced three types of neighbourhood planning:
- Neighbourhood Development Plan, which is a plan making power allowing local communities to shape development in their own area
 - Neighbourhood Development Order, whereby a local community can grant planning permission for certain types of development in a defined area
 - Community Right to Build Order, which is a type of Neighbourhood Development Order and allows a local community to bring forward small developments for housing, business or community facilities.
- 2.18 When preparing the Local Plan the Council must have regard to any Neighbourhood Development Plans. However the Framework states that Neighbourhood Development Plans should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. They should plan positively, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of any local plans. Whilst such neighbourhood plans can therefore influence local development, they must still be in general conformity with the policies and proposals in the Joint Core Strategy and this Local Plan. Bodies therefore need to work together to produce complementary neighbourhood and local plans.
- 2.19 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 set out the statutory process an organisation must follow when preparing a

neighbourhood plan. They are quite onerous and include gathering evidence, public consultation, examination by an independent third party and a local referendum. It may therefore be more expedient and just as effective for such bodies to work with the District Council in the preparation of this Local Plan.

- 2.20 At time of writing there have been applications for neighbourhood areas in Moulton, Spratton, Creaton and Brixworth.

More information on neighbourhood planning can be seen on the Communities and Local Government website using the following link:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/neighbourhoodplanningvanguards/>

Daventry 2040 Masterplan

- 2.21 This document provides a conceptual framework for the town's development. It paints a vision of a town with a population of 40,000 that is self-sufficient, has an integrated transport system, and a new university. The District Council adopted the plan in July 2012.

More information on the Masterplan can be viewed on the District Council's website using the following link:
<http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/planning-policy/daventry-masterplan/>

3. The Scope and Nature of the Local Plan

Coverage

- 3.1 The Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan will cover the entire District with the exception of the Northampton Related Development Area, which has been identified in the Joint Core Strategy to specifically meet the housing needs of Northampton. The proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions within this area will be dealt with through the associated masterplans.
- 3.2 One of the aims of this paper is to set out the scope of the Local Plan. In considering this a balance has to be struck between the desire to produce a comprehensive set of policies, and the pressing need to have the document in place at the earliest opportunity in order to deal with future development pressures – especially as these may intensify even further if the economy improves.
- 3.3 The need for such a document is exacerbated by the current residential development pressures arising across the District in places such as Brixworth, Moulton and Long Buckby – largely due to the absence of a ‘five-year land supply’ for housing. Nevertheless it could be early 2015 before this Local Plan is eventually adopted because of the various stages required by the statutory process.
- 3.4 Clearly the broader the scope, the longer the document will take to produce. It is important to note that the document cannot have the level of detail previously included in the Daventry District Local Plan (1997).
- 3.5 The scope of the document is therefore proposed to be as follows:
- The establishment of a rural settlement hierarchy to support the retention and provision of local services and facilities
 - To distribute the agreed rural housing provision identified in the Joint Core Strategy across the District. The rural settlement hierarchy will inform the scale of residential development acceptable within each category. However settlements within a particular category may still have differing levels of development to reflect their individual circumstances. If appropriate, new allocations will be identified to meet the need for market and affordable housing.
 - To support employment and the rural economy including policies to support the provision of local services, agricultural diversification, building conversions and rural tourism.
 - Policies to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, areas of ‘Local Green Space’ may be identified within settlements.
 - Policies dealing with sustainable development and climate change
 - Further policies for Daventry town including the possible regeneration of certain neighbourhoods or industrial estates, support for new economic activity and potential gateway features along transport corridors.

Statutory context

- 3.6 The Local Plan will be prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 build on the statutory framework in the 2004 Act in relation to the preparation and adoption by local planning authorities of development plan documents (which are called 'local plans' in the Regulations).
- 3.7 Once it is adopted it will become a statutory planning document that will supplement the strategic policies and proposals in the Joint Core Strategy and form part of the statutory Development Plan for the area. The Development Plan is the starting point in the consideration of planning applications for the development and use of land. Once adopted policies in the Local Plan will therefore have significant weight when assessing planning applications in the future.
- 3.8 In addition, the Framework provides that Local Plans in preparation have some weight in decision-making. This will depend on how far they have progressed, whether they comply with the Framework, and if there has been significant objections. The emerging Local Plan could therefore be of some assistance in decision-making even before it is adopted.

The Plan Period

- 3.9 The Local Plan will cover the plan period up to 2026.

Evidence base

- 3.10 The Framework stresses that local planning authorities should ensure that a local plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Similarly it states that they should include assessments of housing, employment and other uses that take full account of relevant market and economic signals.
- 3.11 The evidence base will be developed from existing studies and documents, District Council data, County Council data and census information. In particular, the evidence base will be expanded, updated and aligned with the evidence base developed by the West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit in the preparation of the Joint Core Strategy. Additional studies may be undertaken if and when required.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.12 The preparation of local plans has to include an accompanying sustainability appraisal. This should consider all the likely significant effects of the Local Plan on various environmental, economic and social factors. If the Local Plan is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, the sustainability appraisal must also meet the legal requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

- 3.13 This process will begin with a scoping report at the initial stages of the local plan preparation. The final sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment report has to eventually be submitted with the local plan to the Secretary of State for examination in public.
- 3.14 There is a requirement that the sustainability appraisal/strategic environmental assessment be undertaken at arm's length to the formulation of policy and direction in the local plan. The District Council are therefore in the process of appointing a consultant with specialist knowledge in this area to support preparation of the Local Plan.

Timetable

- 3.15 The proposed timetable is summarised below.

Key Stages/ Actions	Timescale
Formal commencement of preparation, consulting statutory bodies on the scope of sustainability appraisal	September 2012
Initial consultation with local community	October to December 2012
Publication of Proposed Pre-Submission Draft and period for representations	March 2013
Publication of Proposed changes to Pre-Submission version (if required)	October 2013
Submission of Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal to Secretary of State	April 2014
Examination in Public	July 2014
Receipt of Inspector's report	November 2014
Adoption	February 2015

4. Daventry Town

Background

- 4.1 Daventry was a relatively small market town until the 1960s when it was identified as a location for overspill development from Birmingham. As a consequence, the population grew from about 4,000 in 1950 to around 25,000 today.
- 4.2 As Daventry is located within a natural landscape bowl surrounded by a series of hills. It is still a relatively compact town. It retains its historic core, much of which benefits from conservation area designation and includes many listed buildings. The surrounding neighbourhoods largely comprise housing development built in the second half of the 20th century.
- 4.3 Commercial activities are mainly located in a small number of industrial estates located to the north-west and south-east of the town.
- 4.4 The transport infrastructure within the town provides a relatively high capacity road network that makes travelling by car the most convenient mode of travel for most trips. Public transport usage within Daventry is very low. Walking is the main alternative means of transport, with a small amount of cycling.
- 4.5 The main strategic green spaces are Daventry County Park, the Northern Valley Park to the north, and Borough Hill Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Recent developments

- 4.6 Improvements have been undertaken in the central area to support the further growth of the town. Abbey Retail Park, located off South Way, was completed in 2009. It provides additional retail floorspace (bulky goods and DIY), car parking and a Working Men's Club.
- 4.7 The 'iCon' building was completed in 2011. This innovative building is an exemplar of energy efficient and sustainable construction. It provides 60 business incubator units, a conference centre and a 300-seat theatre, exhibition space and meeting rooms.
- 4.8 The proposed redevelopment of a site north of High Street will replace the existing library and provide shops and other town centre uses. In 2011 planning applications were also submitted for Daventry's WaterSpace proposals - a mixed use project including residential, office and leisure uses set around water basins connected to the Grand Union Canal to the north.
- 4.9 The University Technical College for New Technologies received planning permission for a site just north of the current town centre in 2012 and will open in September 2013. It will cater for 600 14-19 year olds specializing in technology-based education drawn from a sub-regional catchment.

Existing policies and proposals

- 4.10 The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy aims to create a sustainable town of 40,000 population. Specific proposals include:
- housing development at Middlemore and Monksmoor
 - a Sustainable Urban Extension to the north east of the town comprising 4,000 dwellings (2,000 of which will be beyond the plan period)
 - retaining existing employment areas and encouraging their regeneration and renewal
 - new employment provision in the town centre, Monksmoor and as part of the Sustainable Urban Extension
 - community regeneration in Southbrook
 - additional retail space within the central area
 - provision of leisure and tourism development within the town centre including an extension to Daventry Country Park
 - the development of a green infrastructure network around the town including the canal corridor, proposed canal arm, and Daventry and Borough Hill Country Parks
 - major retail, office and leisure development within and adjoining the town centre
 - improved public transport systems
 - completion of the cycling network to connect residential areas the town centre, employment areas and Long Buckby railway station
 - improvements to public transport connections to Long Buckby rail station and improved facilities at the station.
- 4.11 Some of these proposals require further elaboration in this Local Plan.
- 4.12 A significant issue for Daventry and its growth aspirations is the capacity of the A45 to the east of the town to accommodate further traffic. Junction improvements at the A45/A5 Weedon crossroads are to be provided as a consequence of the approval of 1,000 homes at Monksmoor. Whilst this junction improvement will provide some limited further highway capacity for growth at Daventry additional to the development of the Monksmoor scheme and proposed town centre regeneration, further major development can only be brought forward once the A45 capacity issues are satisfactorily resolved.
- 4.13 The Daventry 2040 Masterplan is not a statutory plan, but builds on the Joint Core Strategy and takes a longer-term view. The key aspects are:
- New housing-led development to the north-east and south-east of Daventry, ensuring the creation of attractive gateways to the town, and within the existing urban area, including the regeneration of the Southbrook housing estate
 - Regeneration of the central area of the town for retail, office, civic/tourism, leisure and housing development
 - The creation of an 'EcoPark' science park
 - The regeneration of existing employment areas within the town, particularly The Marches and the western employment areas
 - Improvements to the A45 between Daventry and the M1
 - The creation of an Advanced Passenger Transport System network around the town and linking to the EcoPark and improved Long Buckby Multimodal Interchange (LBMI – at Long Buckby station)

- A connected network of public open and accessible greenspace including a new Canal Park, Boundary Park, and significant new tree planting around and to the north-west of the town
- The development of a new University from an initial base around the iCON Centre and Learning Quarter within the WaterSpace development.

4.14 Within this planning context and longer term vision, the Local Plan needs to address a number of issues:

Issues for Daventry Town:

- In addition to the proposed Sustainable Urban Extension in the north east of the town, should residential development in the south east of the town be brought forward as proposed in the Daventry Masterplan 2040 at this time?
- What sort of community regeneration should occur at Southbrook?
- How can the existing employment areas be regenerated and renewed?
- What sort of new employment provision should be provided in the town centre, Monksmoor and within the Sustainable Urban Extension?
- How can the provision of leisure and tourism facilities be improved within the town centre?
- How can retail provision be improved within the central area?
- Do more high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation need to be provided to improve the health and well-being of the local community?
- What should be incorporated in the proposed extension to Daventry Country Park?
- How can the green spaces in and around the town be linked together to provide a more effective network for recreational, amenity and ecological purposes?
- Should significant new tree planting be undertaken within the town such as the provision of a community forest to upgrade the landscape and provide opportunities for recreation and wildlife?
- Should there be more naturalistic planting around the town such as wildflower meadows along road verges to encourage biodiversity?
- What can be done to improve the use of public transport?
- What features should be incorporated in a cycling network that connects residential areas to the town centre, employment areas and Long Buckby railway station?
- What would enable more use to be made of Long Buckby rail station?
- Should gateway features and public art be encouraged along transport corridors and at key strategic points around the town, including the public realm within the central area?
- How can the town build on the environmental credentials of the iCon and the proposed EcoPark?

4.15 The above list is probably not comprehensive and there may be other issues that need to be addressed in the Local Plan. The response form therefore provides an opportunity to add other issues that need to be included.

5. The Rural Settlements

Background

- 5.1 Most of Daventry District is fairly rural in nature with a dispersed network of villages and hamlets of varying size. The communities living in these rural settlements account for about three quarters of the District's overall population.
- 5.2 The manual for Design Codes produced by West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (2009) points out that villages in this area are usually one of two types of settlement, following either a linear or circular form. Linear villages tend to spread along a main street with houses on either side of the road. Examples quoted include Overstone, Farthingstone and Norton. Other villages in the area depict a compact circular form. For instance the village centre would often be located at crossroads, often marked by a village green and other community facilities such as a local pub, shop, post office or café. Villages adopting this form include Flore and Preston Capes.
- 5.3 Despite their attractiveness nature and historic interest, the Joint Core Strategy points out that some of the residents living in these villages face a number of difficulties. These include:
- access to services and facilities, especially for the young, old and economically disadvantaged
 - the loss of basic services and employment opportunities in villages leading to the concern that they are becoming 'commuter dormitories'
 - high property prices and the lack of affordable housing to meet local needs, which means that young people and families cannot afford to live in rural communities
 - the challenge of distance and isolation from key services such as health provision
 - in places, a perception of excessive anti-social behaviour and an associated fear of crime
 - isolated pockets of deprivation compounded by issues such as the lack of public transport.
- 5.4 As a consequence it is increasingly being recognised that there is a need to encourage a more sustainable and holistic approach to regenerating rural communities. In addition to the availability of physical local services and facilities other factors need to be considered. These include the provision of affordable housing, better ICT facilities and improved public transport.

Recent developments

- 5.5 With a few exceptions, there has been relatively little residential development within villages over the last 10 years. In part this has been caused by economic circumstances. However in the last twelve months there have been a number of planning applications for residential development in places such as Brixworth, Moulton and Long Buckby. Whilst some of these applications have been approved, many of them have been refused and gone to appeal.

- 5.6 A key-determining factor is the absence of a 'five-year land supply' for housing in the District, which is an important consideration when determining planning applications.
- 5.7 The latest Five Year Land supply report only identifies a 2.03 years supply in the District as at 1 April 2012. This is largely because of the accumulated shortfall since 2001 that gets carried forward each year. The District Council would need to increase the deliverable supply by around 2,500 dwellings to achieve the 5 year target originally set by the Regional Spatial Strategy. However when the Regional Spatial Strategy is eventually revoked by the Government the land supply calculation can be reworked against figures proposed in the Joint Core Strategy. This will then probably indicate a 5 year land supply. Nevertheless in the interim the District is vulnerable to development pressures arising in potentially the wrong locations, and even fairly minor changes to development activity could cause the 5 year supply to be lost.

Existing policies and proposals

- 5.8 Whilst much of the Joint Core Strategy focuses on the growth and regeneration of Daventry town, it also recognises that there are key issues in the surrounding rural area that needs to be addressed.
- 5.9 The Joint Core Strategy identifies a need for 1,355 dwellings within the rural areas between April 2011 and March 2026. This figure excludes sites on the periphery of Northampton that have been identified in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy to meet the housing needs of the town. However the Core Strategy does not propose site allocations or any other policies to suggest where these 1,355 dwellings should be located in the rural areas. That is one of the purposes of this Local Plan. Furthermore any dwellings granted planning permission since April 2011 (possibly on appeal) can be deducted from the 1,355 dwellings required thereby reducing the overall target.
- 5.10 Similarly it is important to stress that individual villages have not yet been assessed and placed in the settlement hierarchy. Further detailed work is therefore now required in the Local Plan to look at various factors such as the services and facilities accessible in each locality, the local need, and environmental constraints, and the aspirations of the local community. Only after such research is undertaken can a hierarchy be established and individual settlements placed within it to indicate their role and future levels of housing and potentially other development.
- 5.11 The basis for this further work is Policy R1 in the Joint Core Strategy. This identifies the categories in the rural settlement hierarchy with indicative figures for future levels of housing development. From a base date of 2011 it suggests that:
- Primary Service Villages can have up to 12% of the existing dwelling stock
 - Secondary Service Villages can have up to 7% of the existing dwelling stock
 - Other Villages can have up to 5 dwellings

- Small Settlements/Hamlets are restricted to affordable housing only.
- 5.12 In both urban and rural locations one of the objectives of the Joint Core Strategy is to provide a range of housing to ensure all residents have access to a home that they can afford and that meets their needs. Policy H2 states that affordable housing will be provided as a proportion of the total number of dwellings to be delivered on individual sites. In Daventry Town the proportion of affordable housing on new developments will be 25% on sites of 5 or more dwellings. In the rural areas this will increase to 40% of affordable housing on sites of 5 or more dwellings.
- 5.13 In all cases the percentage requirements identified above are subject to the assessment of viability on a site-by-site basis. In exceptional circumstances, off site provision and/ or commuted payments in lieu of on site provision may be supported where this would offer an equivalent or enhanced provision of affordable housing.
- 5.14 The Joint Core Strategy seeks to sustain and enhance the rural economy by creating or safeguarding jobs and businesses. It also points out that accessibility to jobs and services is a key issue facing the rural areas. Transport is essential for most rural residents to access the services and facilities they need.

Issues for the Rural Settlements:

- How can villages be more sustainable in the future and maintain their vitality?
- How do we ensure the protection and provision of services and facilities to meet the needs of rural communities?
- What factors should be taken into account when determining the settlement hierarchy?
- Should the Local Plan adopt a cluster approach grouping settlements together that can share services and facilities and have good access to one another?
- Should the Local Plan encourage the provision and use of shared space in community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and in other buildings providing services and facilities?
- Given the need to provide 1,355 dwellings in the rural area of Daventry District between 2011 and 2026, where should these be located?
- Should the Local Plan guide development to within the existing confines of the village, or would it be better to accommodate limited development on the periphery?
- How can the Local Plan address the need for significantly more affordable homes?
- Apart from affordable housing, what sort of housing is required in the rural settlements in terms of size and type?
- How can the Local Plan support the local economy and create jobs within rural settlements?
- Are there important pockets of local green space within or around the village that need additional protection because of their local significance in terms of their beauty, historical importance, recreational value, tranquility or wildlife contribution?

- Does the Local Plan need to identify the need to review existing Conservation Areas and consider further designations
- Are there specific issues for a village that could usefully be addressed in an annex to the Local Plan, thereby avoiding the need for a separate Neighbourhood Development Plan process?

5.15 The above list is probably not comprehensive and there may be other issues that need to be addressed in the Local Plan. The response form therefore provides an opportunity to add other issues that need to be included.

6. The Wider Countryside

- 5.16 The countryside in the District largely comprises an attractive and gently rolling landscape. Much of this is productive farmland. Settlements are often prominent with church spires clearly visible in the landscape.

Existing policies and proposals

- 5.17 The Joint Core Strategy does not have specific policies that solely apply to the countryside, but incorporates wider policies to protect and enhance the built and natural environment. It thereby includes policies that:
- recognise the importance of green infrastructure corridors
 - protect sites of ecological importance
 - encourage the enhancement of existing woodland
 - protect heritage assets
 - steer development such that it minimises flood risk and addresses any pollution issues.
- 5.18 However the policies in the Joint Core Strategy are general in nature and not always site specific. For instance it does categorise the landscape in descriptive terms but does not define attractive areas in the same way that Special Landscape Areas were defined in the Daventry District Local Plan (1997).
- 5.19 In the last three years a number of applications for wind turbines have been received, and determined both by the District Council and on appeal. Over 30 turbines in excess of 100 metres tall have been granted planning permission and are now starting to appear in the landscape around the District.
- 5.20 Policy S11 of the proposed changes to the Joint Core Strategy deals with low carbon and renewable energy. In addition the District Council published interim guidelines for assessing proposals for wind turbines in March 2011 following a period of public consultation. The Interim Guidelines do not provide additional policy – they are intended to provide clarification on the issues to be considered when assessing proposals for wind turbines. The Guidelines are currently being refreshed in the light of the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework and proposed revocation of the Regional Strategy.

Issues for the wider countryside:

- How can the Local Plan support jobs and prosperity in the wider countryside?
- Should the Local Plan encourage the conversion of existing buildings or support the provision of new buildings to support the local economy?
- Should the Local Plan promote rural tourism and leisure developments?
- How can public transport in rural areas best be improved?
- What factors should the Local Plan consider when considering the expansion of electronic communications networks in the countryside, such as telecommunications and high speed broadband?

- Are there any special circumstances when the Local Plan should support proposals for isolated homes in the countryside?
- Should the Local Plan seek to enhance the public rights of way network?
- How can the Local Plan reconcile concerns about wind turbines with the Framework's requirement that the UK should meet its energy requirements from renewable and low carbon sources?
- How should the Local Plan define and protect valued landscapes?
- Should the Local Plan protect areas of 'tranquillity' which are relatively undisturbed by noise or regarded for their recreational and amenity value?
- What criteria should the Local Plan identify when considering proposals for development affecting wildlife?
- What sort of factors should the Local Plan identify to positively encourage the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment?

5.21 The above list is probably not comprehensive and there may be other issues that need to be addressed in the Local Plan. The response form therefore provides an opportunity to add other issues that need to be included.

7. The Public Consultation Period

- 7.1 All comments received on this issues paper will therefore help inform the preparation of the draft Local Plan. A response form is available, which consultees are requested to use. This outlines specific questions based on the issues identified in this paper.

Comments in writing using the form provided should be forwarded to Robert Keith, Local Strategy Service, Daventry District Council, Lodge Road, Daventry, Northamptonshire, NN11 4FP.

Alternatively e-mail planningpolicy@daventrydc.gov.uk

The response form is available at:
<http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk/living/planning-policy/>

Response forms should be returned by 4.30pm on Friday 30 November 2012 at the latest, and cannot be accepted after this time.

- 7.2 All the comments will be reported to the District Council's Steering Group, which is overseeing the preparation of the Local Plan.
- 7.3 They will also be reported to the District Council's Strategy Group.
- 7.4 This consultation exercise will then inform preparation of the draft Local Plan. It is intended that this be published in Spring 2013. There will then follow a further period of public consultation.
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