

**West
Northamptonshire
Joint Core
Strategy – Found
Sound**

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 182

Prepared by
DLP Planning Ltd

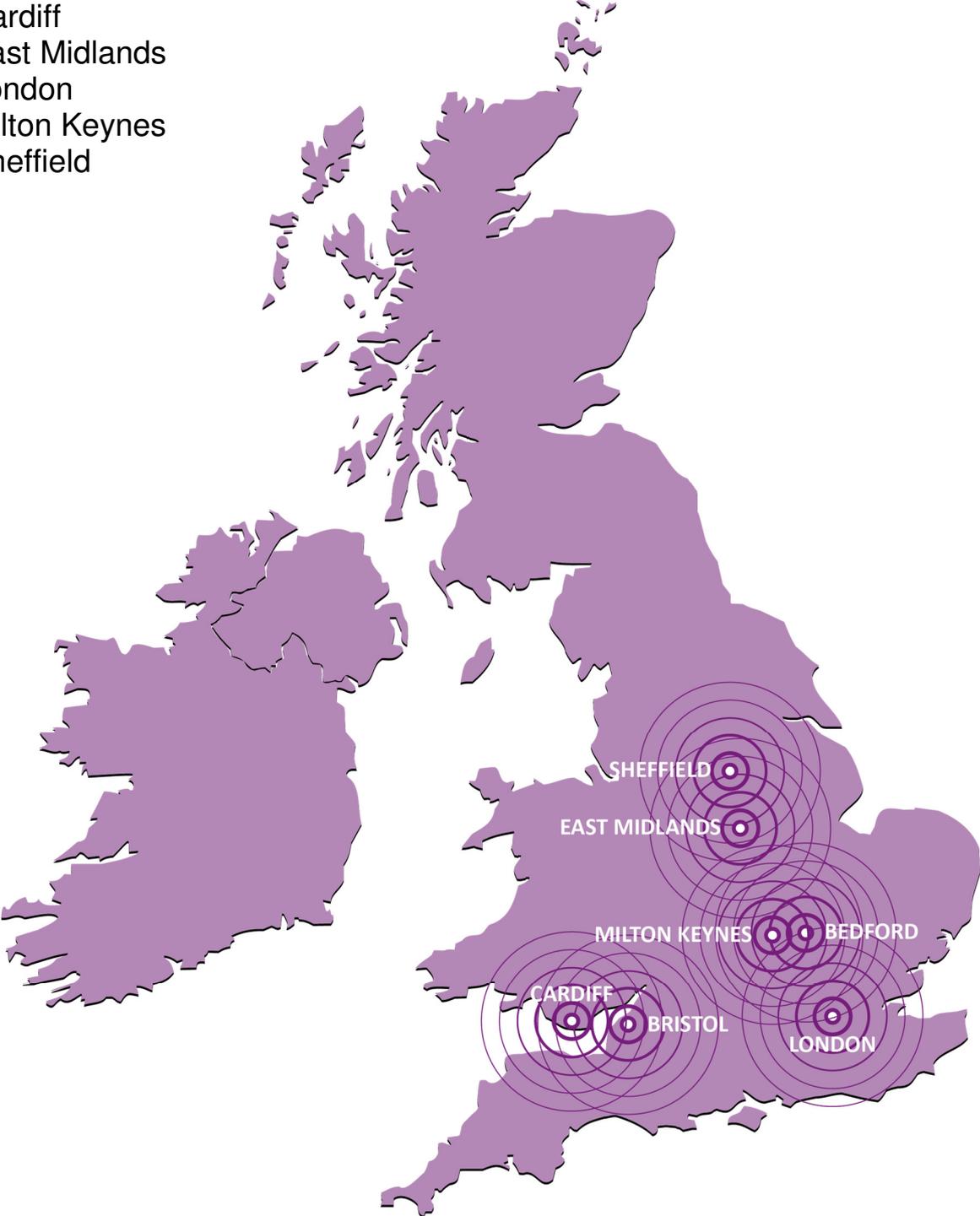
October 2014

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West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Found Sound

An Inspector appointed to examine a Local Plan for West Northamptonshire issued his final report on 2nd October 2014 finding the development plan document sound, subject to modifications.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan Part 1 (WNJCS), prepared by West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (WNJPU), sets out a joint vision and objectives for Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils' up to 2029, including strategic policies for steering and shaping development. The plan principally focusses development on the four main towns of Brackley, Daventry, Northampton and Towcester.

The plan was initially submitted to the Secretary of State in Schedules containing a number of both major and changes as well as a schedule of minor changes was published for a consultation between 31st July 2012 and 26th September 2012. These changes were made to reflect representations made in the first round of consultation as well as the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework).

The draft plan was then submitted for Examination on 31st December 2012. An Inspector was appointed and the first round of Hearings were held on 16th April 2013 and 1st May 2013. As a result of these Hearings the Inspector advised that the strategy's housing figures be revised, to take into account the latest ONS household projection figures. The Inspector also requested that the Council's produce Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) Addendum Report to remedy acknowledged shortcomings. The Hearings then resumed on 18th - 21st March 2014.

The Inspector's final report was issued on the 2nd October, finding the plan sound, subject to a series of modifications, which the JPU has now to choose whether or not to accept. The key main modifications suggested by the Inspector can be summarised as follows:

- Extend the end of the plan period from 2026 to 2029.
- The Inspector found that the housing target of 2,000 dwellings per year (2001-2026) included in the plan initially submitted by the JPU related to an out of date evidence base, and did not represent the full objectively assessed, local needs for new housing, as required by the Framework. Additional work subsequently commissioned by the JPU and accepted by the Inspector demonstrated a more appropriate target of 2,367 net new dwellings per annum (2011-2029).
- As a result of this increased target, the Inspector recommended that an additional Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) be included at Northampton Norwood Farm/Upton Lodge to deliver in the region of 3,500 dwellings, 2 primary schools, plus local retail and employment facilities.
- Extend the size and total housing expected from three of already identified Sustainable Urban Extensions to help meet new targets and improve chances of delivery.
- Rural Area Policies are amended to provide suitable guidance to the Part 2 Local Plans without being overly restrictive, so all percentages and references to maximum housing figures have been omitted.
- An increase in the minimum number of jobs required, to ensure a balance between housing and employment, from 16,000 jobs (2010-2026) in the submitted plan, to 28,500 jobs (2008-2029).
- The allocation of land east of Junction 16 of the M1 as a Strategic Employment Site, equivalent to approximately 42ha which will deliver a mix of B2 (General Industry) and B8 (Storage or Distribution) uses.

The final modification listed above was successfully achieved by DLP Planning, acting on behalf of a local land promotion company during the examination process.

The plan initially submitted by WNJPU made no provision for any employment allocation at M1 Junction 16, however, following a series of detailed representations and attendance at examination, DLP successfully promoted the site, convincing both the WNJPU and Inspector that it is a suitable and sustainable site for some form of employment growth and would help make the plan sound. This was achieved despite strong opposition from promoters of competing sites at both Junctions 15 and 15a of the M1.

A larger allocation for some 171ha was initially put forward for consideration, and whilst the site was not recommended for allocation in full, the final allocation of some 42ha in Policy E8 represents a significant success for our client.

The Inspector considered the balance of housing between Northampton and other towns to be appropriate, as is the balance between SUEs and the rural areas. He rejected a more dispersed pattern of new housing growth. However, the text is also modified to accurately reflect the role of Neighbourhood Plans in relation to the JCS and Part 2 Local Plans.

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