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CORBY TRAIN TO ARRIVE IN 2008

DfT gives Corby to London rail link green light

On June 22nd the Department for Transport announced that after 17 years without a train service Corby is to be included in the new East Midlands rail franchise beginning in November 2007. This decision paves the way for the construction of a new train station in Corby and the operation of a direct hourly service to London St Pancras.

Commenting on the announcement, Bob Lane, Chief Executive of NNDC, said:

"This is fantastic news for everyone who lives and works in Corby today and tomorrow. The station will ensure Corby is a destination in its own right and will drive the town's future vitality as well as the viability of new commercial investment. To deliver this key objective of the Regeneration Framework is an outstanding achievement and I would like to thank everyone who has backed the Corby rail campaign".

North Northants Development Company and English Partnerships submitted a planning application for the new station to Corby Borough Council just six weeks after the DfT announcement was made. Members of the public will be able to examine the plans at NNDC offices at 1 Exchange Court, Cottingham Road, Corby until Friday 24th August 2007.

The new train station, which is to be built at Station Road adjacent to the site of the old station, will not only be the focus of a new integrated transport network for Corby but also unlock an estimated £200m of further commercial investment in the area, creating more than 1,200 retail and office jobs. A new, high-quality business zone incorporating town centre living is earmarked for land surrounding the station itself. North Northants Development Company will continue to co-ordinate the delivery of the new station ahead of an anticipated opening in December 2008.

For more details go to page 7 and visit <http://www.nndev.co.uk>



Artist's impression of the new station

SPECIAL FEATURE: MKSM influences Government ahead of CSR07

Crucial policy papers recently issued by Government clearly recognise several of the key messages and recommendations made by MKSM partners in their joint submission on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) consultation and the Cross-Cutting Review of Infrastructure to Support Housing Growth, including:

- The introduction of joint PSAs shared by the key delivery departments to ensure a coordinated approach to delivery and programming across government. CLG will lead on a new cross-government PSA on housing supply.
- LAAs and MAAs providing a central focus for performance contracts and funding programmes between government and local authorities and their partners.
- Funding programmes extended to 3 years to provide for greater flexibility, certainty and to enhance delivery planning, with a government commitment to explore the potential for even longer term programmes.
- Examination of innovative and flexible financing mechanisms to bring forward infrastructure to support growth at an early stage.
- A commitment to double Growth Area Funding by 2010/11 and an additional £300m commitment to the Community Infrastructure Fund.
- Agreement to consider alternatives to the proposed Planning Gain Supplement (although this remains the Government current preferred option).

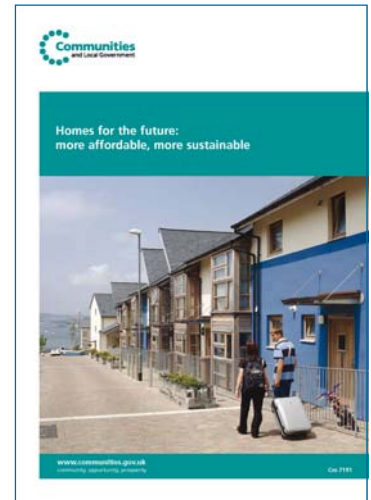
July 2007 saw a flurry of activity by Government with the publication of a number of key policy and consultation papers including:

- the Housing Green Paper - Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable (Government Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)); and
- the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (HM Treasury, Government Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (DBERR) & CLG);

In June, the Government also announced proposals to set up a new homes agency (currently referred to as Communities England). This will join up the delivery of housing and regeneration, bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the Housing Corporation, and a range of work carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government, including delivery in the areas of decent homes, housing market renewal, housing PFI, housing growth and urban regeneration. The consultation closes on 11th September. Details can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1150232>

Housing Green Paper

In the Housing Green Paper, the Government set out new targets to increase the supply of housing and affordable housing (inc. social housing, shared ownership and shared equity). It aims to deliver **2 million new homes by 2016 and a further 1 million by 2020 (a target of 240,000 per year)**. £8bn will be invested in affordable homes over the next 3 years resulting in **70,000 additional affordable homes by 2011**, continuing the decent homes programme and helping first time buyers.



It announced its commitment to **double Growth Area Funding (GAF3) by 2010/11** to support infrastructure delivery in the 4 major Growth Areas in the South East (including MKSM) and the 29 new Growth Points already established. The MKSM submission called for an increased commitment and for an extended funding period. The latter has been increased from 2 to 3 years. However, competition for this funding will also be open to additional growth points expected to deliver 50,000 of the new homes target (potentially across 15 growth points) and new proposals for 5 'Eco-towns' delivering 25-100,000 new homes to the highest design quality within communities capable of reaching zero carbon standards.

Government also announced a further **£300m Community Infrastructure Fund** to support transport and the promise of an improved methodology to better capture the economic benefits that new housing growth generates for inclusion in a **New Approach to Appraisal** system which will prioritise transport funding from 2008.

The Housing Green Paper also announced that although the **Planning Gain Supplement (PGS)** remains the Government's preferred option for maximising the planning gain for local communities to invest in key infrastructure, **if better alternatives come forward it will be prepared to defer the proposed Planning Gain Supplement Bill**. The Government will be holding further discussions with stakeholders prior to the Pre-Budget Report. The MKSM submission has helped to inform the alternatives to PGS now being considered and partners will continue to seek to influence the outcome.

Local leadership is identified as key to ensuring that housing is at the heart of the local authority place-shaping role. A **new Housing and Planning Delivery Grant** will direct extra resources to councils who are delivering high levels of housing and to councils who have identified at least 5 years worth of sites ready for development. Greener homes are to be delivered through the strengthening of building regulations to ensure that **all new homes will be zero carbon by 2016**.

Government's consultation on the Housing Green Paper closes on 15th October 2007. The document is available on the Communities website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1511890>.

SPECIAL FEATURE: MKSM influences Government ahead of CSR07

Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)

The SNR introduces a number of fundamental proposals and reforms which broadly fall under four areas:

- to empower all local authorities to promote economic development and neighbourhood renewal;
- to support local authorities to work together at the sub-regional level;
- to strengthen the regional level; and
- to reform central government's relations with regions and localities.

MKSM partners should be pleased to see that a number of the proposals have clearly been informed by the evidence based and solution focused MKSM submission to CSR07 and the cross cutting review. These include proposals to:

- Set out new procedures to ensure mainstream programmes provide proper support for high growth areas. Using the CSR07 performance management framework to move towards a more coordinated cross government approach to housing growth through shared Public Service Agreements (PSAs), ensuring that housing growth is a priority for the key government infrastructure departments. [CLG will lead on the new cross-government PSA on housing supply.](#)
- All delivery departments will have joint responsibility for achieving PSAs through a [joint delivery agreement](#). A new local government performance framework will be linked directly to the national PSAs and indicators.
- Provide for [Local Area Agreements](#) (LAAs) (and potentially Multi Area Agreements (MAAs)) to form the central (outcome focused) delivery agreement between central and local government and its partners, with coordinated delivery supported by a 'duty to cooperate'.
- Develop proposals for [MAAs](#) to allow groups of local authorities to agree collective targets for economic development (including across regional boundaries) enabling them to pool funding streams to achieve collective outcomes and target priorities. The first MAAs are expected to be in place by June 2008, similar to LAA timescales.
- Recognising that government, national agencies, and regional bodies need to give [greater certainty and flexibility over funding, with more long term funding](#) and a focus on outcomes rather than detailed performance targets. This includes considering whether MAA partnerships could expect funding certainty over a period of more than 3 years (as called for in the MKSM submission).
- Moving to a [programme-based approach to funding](#) (rather than project based approach) including for the management of the RDAs single programme budget.
- The potential for [flexible and innovative financing mechanisms](#) to finance infrastructure required to support growth and regeneration at early stages of development. Progress will be reported in the Pre-Budget Report. Northamptonshire County Council is working with MKSM and local partners to examine the potential for 'banker' mechanisms, following up recommendations in the MSKM CSR07 submission.
- The [reform of the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive](#) scheme (LABGI) to ensure there is a clear focus and incentive for local authorities to support economic growth.

SPECIAL FEATURE: MKSM influences Government ahead of CSR07

Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR) contd.

Other proposals announced in the SNR include:

- Requiring a **single Regional Strategy (RS)** to be prepared for each region with the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) having executive responsibility for their preparation. The single RS will embrace the RDAs current Regional Economic Strategies and the Regional Assemblies (RAs) Regional Spatial Strategies. **RAs will be dissolved.**
- **Local authorities will have a key role in proposing a vision for their area** and in drawing up proposals to feed into the single RS, drawing upon their Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. They will also endorse the final draft RS before its submission to Government, and will be responsible for effective scrutiny of RDA performance.
- RDAs to play a more strategic role, **delegating responsibility for funding to local authorities and sub-regions** where possible (subject to local capacity)
- A **second and expanded Regional Funding Allocation** exercise will be undertaken in the CSR period to include the RDA single pot, regional housing funds, a broader transport allocation and potentially European Regional Development Fund and the regeneration aspects of the new homes agency.
- Each region will be given a **single overarching economic growth objective** under which a simplified outcome and growth focused framework will be defined.
- A **Member of Parliament will be appointed for each region.** Gillian Merron (MP for Lincoln) has been appointed to represent the East Midlands (www.gillianmerron.labour.co.uk)
- Providing the opportunity for groups of authorities to **establish statutory sub-regional arrangements to pool resources** on a permanent basis for economic development policy areas beyond transport.
- Local authorities are to have greater flexibilities and incentives to promote economic growth, including proposals for a statutory duty for upper tier authorities to carry out **economic assessments of their areas**; and reforming the local authority performance framework so that it includes a **clear focus on economic development and neighbourhood renewal**, with funds for the latter to be concentrated on the most deprived areas.
- Government is considering how to **improve the allocation of funding for transport** so that it is better targeted at tackling constraints to economic growth.
- **Funding for most 14-19 year olds education and skills** will be moved to upper tier authorities.

The SNR is available for download from the DBERR website at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/regional/sub-national-review/page40430.html>

Recent Changes to Government Departments

The **Department for Children, Schools and Families** (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk>) is responsible for improving the focus on all aspects of policy affecting children and young people. It takes on pre-19 education policy responsibilities from DfES.

The **Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills** (<http://www.dius.gov.uk>) brings together functions from the former Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), including responsibilities for science and innovation, with further and higher education and skills, previously part of DfES.

The **Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform** (<http://www.dberr.gov.uk>) brings together functions from DTI, including responsibilities for productivity, business relations, energy, competition and consumers, with the Better Regulation Executive, previously part of the Cabinet Office. It leads on making sustainable improvements in the economic performance of the regions.



PLANNING

WNDC CONSIDER URBAN EXTENSION APPLICATIONS

The following planning applications for major urban extensions have been submitted to WNDC in the last few months. No decisions have been made on any of them and consultation is ongoing.

Upton Lodge, Northampton

Application S/2006/1654/W registered 8 December 2006. Includes: 2,600 dwellings, a local centre, a primary school, park and ride, a country park, 4.5 hectares of employment land.

Dallington Grange, Northampton

Application 07/0008/OUTWNN registered 10 January 2007. Includes: 3,500 dwellings, a local centre, 10 hectares of employment land, 2 primary schools, open space.

Princess Marina, Northampton

Application 07/0004/OUTWNN registered 4 April 2007. Includes: 550 dwellings, 8000 sq m of employment land.

Church Fields, Daventry

Application 07/0001/OUTWND registered 8 March 2007. Includes: 4,000 dwellings, a local centre, employment land, 3 primary schools, secondary school, extension to Daventry Country Park

Danetree, Daventry

Application 07/0096/OUTWND registered 19 March 2007. Includes: 5,150 dwellings, a village centre, 15.65 hectares employment land, 3 primary school, a secondary school and open space.

For further information visit: <http://www.wndc.co.uk/planning/>



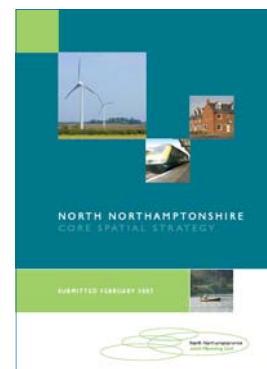
North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy Submitted February 2007

An independent public examination into representations made on the submitted Core Spatial Strategy is expected to begin on Tuesday 23rd October 2007 with Eric Searle DipTP FRTPI FBEng MCIM as the Inspector. Mr Searle's binding report following the examination will form the basis of the adopted CSS document.

Nick Leigh has been appointed as the Programme Officer to organise the public examination programme and all other administrative aspects relating to the examination process (a guide to the process can be found on the JPU website: www.nnjpu.org.uk). Any queries relating to the examination process and communications with the Inspector are to be made through him.

The Pre-Examination Meeting (PEM) represents an important stage in the examination process. This was held on Wednesday 4th July at the Holiday Inn, Corby.

Further papers relating to the examination process, including the preliminary and subsequent Programme and Timetable, the note of the Pre-Examination Meeting, details of the Examination Library documents and any further guidance notes will be added to the JPU website as they become available.



Consultation on 'Strategic' Site Allocation Representations Plan

In response to the submitted Core Spatial Strategy a number of developers/landowners have promoted specific sites or locations for development. The JPU has consulted on the 'strategic' site allocation representations between Thursday 17th May and 27th June.

Further information can be found at www.nnjpu.org.uk.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The LDS is a public statement setting out which documents will make up the Local Development Framework (LDF) and when they will be produced over a three year period. The North Northamptonshire LDS was the first document to be produced by the Joint Planning Unit as part of the new LDF. It sets out the Local Development Documents that will be produced jointly and by the individual Councils and the timetable for their production, including consultation.

The revised LDS covering the period from April 2007 to April 2010 has been approved by the Secretary of State and was brought into effect at the Joint Planning Committee held on the 7th June 2007. The LDS can be viewed on www.nnjpu.org.uk



Planning for a Sustainable Future: White Paper



The Planning for a Sustainable Future White Paper proposes reforms to the way in which decisions are made about nationally significant infrastructure projects, including energy, waste, water and transport, in order to respond to the challenges of economic globalisation and climate change. It also proposes further reforms to the Town and Country Planning system, further to the recent changes that sought to make it more efficient and more responsive.

The public is invited to respond to a range of questions about the proposals, which can be found in Annex A of the White Paper, by 17th August 2007.

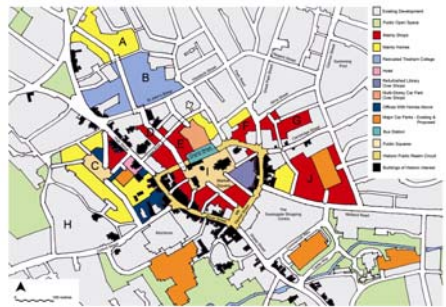
For further details visit: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510503>

PLANNING

WELLINGBOROUGH UPDATE

Town Centre Area Action Plan

The Borough Council of Wellingborough has recently consulted on 'examples' for the regeneration of the whole of the Town Centre of Wellingborough. This is part of the process of producing the "Town Centre Area Action Plan" (AAP) which is part of the "Local Development Framework" (LDF). The need for a new plan is driven by several issues, the foremost being the housing growth of the town as part of the Government's Growth Area policies.



Option A



Option B



Option C

The Town Centre AAP needs to follow on from the Core Spatial Strategy and other strategies. This not only refers to housing numbers, but also to the amount of shops needed – a minimum 15,000 sqm of new retail up to 2021 (e.g. shops, financial and professional services, restaurants, cafes, take-aways, etc). There will also be a need to find space for a further 22,000 - 26,000 sqm of retail in the period 2021 to 2031. The drive from the housing growth will eventually see the town population increase by 20,000 between 2001 and 2021 and further growth to 2031. There are serious competition issues from other town centres and Wellingborough currently loses 50% of all retail spend to other towns.

It is clear from all the consultation undertaken to date that people understand and expect major changes in the town centre to happen, and that if successful, these changes will help keep the town centre healthy, active, commercially viable and prevent its decline. The Consultation responses received are currently being summarised and considered to inform the next part of this consultation which is the Preferred Options consultation which is due to take place in October 2007. Further information on the Town Centre Area Action Plan can be found at www.wellingborough.gov.uk/towncentreaap

Park Farm Way

In February 2007 a Workshop was held to draw up a Concept Statement for a site at Park Farm Way, Wellingborough. This statement identifies Development Principles and Site Assets:-

- Elevated site, prominent from the main road with long views across the town and surrounding countryside including to church spire
- Stream with trees forming a linear park, with high bio-diversity value. Scope for more varied and active recreational use and creation of new habitat
- Established hedge with trees across the site, aligned with the public footpath
- Good access to road network with options for connecting to existing housing
- Sainsbury's as a focus for new facilities, including possible new primary school
- Opportunities to integrate the new development with the existing community

High Street Development Site

A Development Brief was adopted by the Borough Council of Wellingborough in July 2006 to provide clear design and land use planning guidance for the future redevelopment of this brownfield site. This would improve its vitality and viability to help meet the requirements of 21st century sustainable living. It is envisaged that this will be achieved through increasing the quality, range and intensity of uses on the site, and its connections to the town centre.



The Council has been awarded £1.5 million from Communities and Local Government (CLG) to fund the purchase and demolition of buildings on the High Street site. A number of properties have been purchased and demolition will soon start on properties in Orchard Terrace and the old Box Factory on West Street. The Council is currently seeking information on who owns land, properties or has access rights within this area in order to take forward a Compulsory Purchase Order within this area.



RESOURCES

Housing Market Assessments

Strategic Housing Market Assessments are currently nearing completion in both North and West Northamptonshire. Housing Market Assessments are a study into the requirements for all tenures and types of dwellings in an area, using a robust evidence base to inform policy formulation. The methodology followed is set out in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Practice Guidance recently issued by CLG and in PPS3.

In North Northamptonshire, consultants Fordhams issued a draft report in January. This report was subject to a three week technical consultation period to which all stakeholders were invited to respond. The results of this consultation have been used to shape the final report which can be found at: <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/documents/docdetail.asp?docid=725>. For further information contact Martin Field: martin.field@corby.gov.uk

In West Northamptonshire, consultants DTZ ran a couple of focus groups in March which looked at housing issues affecting the in-migrant community and elderly people in more detail. The findings of the focus groups are being fed into the final report which will also be available soon. For further information contact John Hier: jhier@daventrydc.gov.uk

Draft Regional Housing Investment Strategy 2008/11

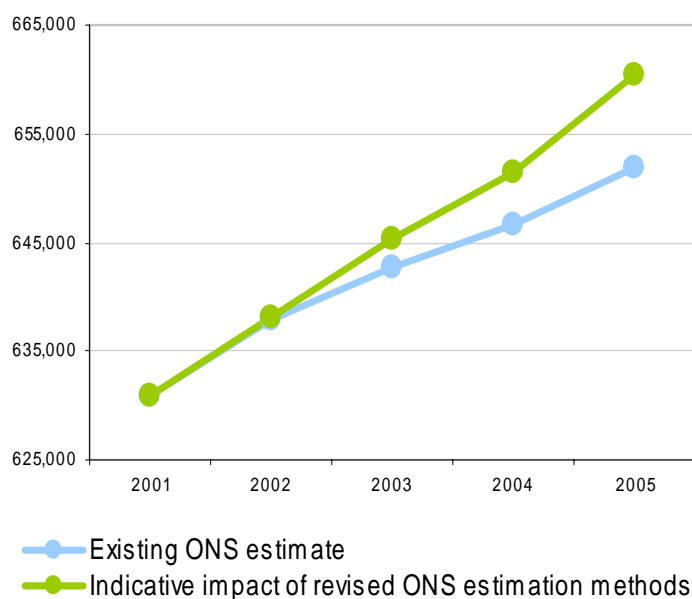
The East Midlands Regional Assembly is responsible for the distribution of the single housing pot. The Regional Housing Investment Strategy 2008/11 will be used to allocate funds across the region and between different priority areas, including investment in new homes and addressing the decent homes standards in existing homes.

Until the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review are released, the overall size of the housing pot is not known. However, based upon funding in 2006/08, it is possible that a fund exceeding £380m will be available across the region. It is therefore essential to continue to make a strong case to maximise the funding available to Northamptonshire to ensure that the aims of the growth agenda are met. With a large number of planning applications currently in the pipeline, it is likely that increased targets in the SHMA will begin to be implemented, resulting in increased provision of affordable dwellings, and therefore, notwithstanding the need to secure provision through negotiated section 106 agreements, an increased need for grant funding. It is essential that funding is maximised as the delivery phase is implemented.

Northamptonshire County Council, working in partnership with NNDC and WNDL submitted a consultation response which seeks to maximise the funding available to the county to ensure an enhanced supply of affordable dwellings.

Further information is available from: www.emra.gov.uk

EXTRA 8,700 PEOPLE FOUND IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



Northamptonshire's latest population estimate is expected to rise by 8,700 when the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revise population estimates made since 2001 later this year using an improved estimation method. It is anticipated that this increase will be reflected to some extent in sub-national population projections, which will also be revised, and that it will have a positive effect on funding allocations dependent on these data.

Provisional revisions released by the ONS appear to confirm suspicions that recent population estimates for Northamptonshire have been too low. The new method, which focuses on improving international migration estimates, is expected to increase the latest estimates for all parts of the county with the greatest rise in Northampton (2,700).

NCC has written to the ONS welcoming these changes as a step towards more accurate estimates but also urging it to address the need for population projections that are fit for purpose in Growth Areas like Northamptonshire. The current trend-based projection approach is severely limited in Growth Areas because it fails to account for policy driven growth. NCC has called for a meeting with the ONS, CLG and other key agencies to discuss this problem.

For more details contact Kieran Palmer: kpalmer@northamptonshire.gov.uk and go to: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14834>

£4m windfall for Northamptonshire projects

In March this year, CLG announced 2006/07 'quickspend' funding for the following projects in Northamptonshire:

- Northampton Flood Alleviation Land Acquisition (EP led): £3.0m
- Kettering Town Centre Land Acquisition: £500,000
- RNRP Green Infrastructure North & West: £191,500
- Rothwell Montsaye Community College Upgrading of Pool & Sports Hall including wider community use: £177,000
- Naseby Battlefield Visitor Interpretation Facilities: £80,000
- RNRP Lings Wood / Fox Covert: £23,600

This was an excellent result for the county, which in total received £4million of the £10million available nationally. Rothwell Montsaye Community College also set a precedent as the first schools project to receive GAF.

For further information, please contact Martin Potts: martin.potts@goem.gsi.gov.uk

DELIVERY

IRB INCREASES CAPACITY AND AGREES NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The MKSM Inter-Regional Board, chaired by Baroness Andrews met again in London on 7th of June. IRB partners considered a range of issues including an update on the significant progress made by IRB partners in developing and implementing CSR07 proposals, identification of the outstanding delivery issues affecting growth and a detailed consideration of growth issues facing the emergency services.

Improvements to the capacity and governance arrangements of the IRB were also established. Not least, partners agreed to the recruitment of an MKSM Director to further develop the role, visibility and government engagement of the IRB and its responsibility to deliver on the strategic challenges for the MKSM growth area and to drive the five sub group (transport and planning, funding, health, economy and skills and environment and quality of life) work programmes in the coming period.

The appointment of an MKSM Director will mark a key step forward in implementing the growth agenda. This high-level post will act on behalf of IRB partners to provide strong and visible leadership and act to raise the profile of the MKSM sub-region. It will build capacity and increase confidence through the development of a cohesive and robust approach to delivery, improving communication, cohesion and clarity to ensure that growth and investment potential is maximised. Recruitment is underway and it is hoped that the post will be filled in the Autumn.

On governance, the IRB agreed to a number of key principles, including that of a new IRB Executive, consisting of 1 local authority (to be nominated by the MKSM local authorities) one LDV (to be chosen by the LDVs), one senior government office representative (Jane Todd, Regional Director of GOEM) and the chair of the five sub groups delivering on the IRB work programme (Danny Brennan, chair of the transportation and planning group and Director, Community Leadership, Northamptonshire County Council) which would provide regular guidance and liaison on behalf of the Board.

The Director will be accountable to the Executive on behalf of the IRB, with novel or contentious matters referred to the IRB. Line management will lie with the host organisation (Northamptonshire County Council), and by agreement, reflect the direction of the Executive and IRB.

STRATEGIC TRANSPORT BOARD AGREES FIRST PRIORITY

A new Strategic Transport Board held its first meeting on 29th June at Kettering. Councillor Jim Harker, Leader of Northamptonshire, chaired the meeting as the host authority. This builds on earlier work between the five Local Transport Authorities to agree a set of shared priorities for inclusion in their second Local Transport Plans for 2006/07-2010/11.

The Transport Board will complement the work of the Inter Regional Board. It includes the Leader or Portfolio Holder for Transport from each of the five Transport Authorities, as well as board level representation/senior executive officers from the Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies, English Partnerships, Highways Agency, Network Rail, Government Offices and Department for Transport. It was also agreed at the first meeting that a representative of the LDVs in MKSM would also sit on the STB.

The Transport Board agreed that its number one priority is to produce a business plan for transport investment in MKSM. Pivotal to this is work on a prioritisation framework for strategic transport projects and interventions. This will enable the Transport Board to develop a robust list of priorities to support growth and sustainable communities based on agreed objectives. In turn this will enable it to make an effective case on behalf of MKSM for future investment through the Regional Funding Allocations process and other funding streams.

This work, which is being undertaken by MRC McLean Hazel, was seen by all involved as an extremely positive step forward and strongly welcomed.

Progress on the business plan and prioritisation work will be reported to the next meeting of STB on 26th September in Luton.

DELIVERY



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND SPACES

Conference and workshop event, Pera, Melton Mowbray - 24th April 2007

150 delegates including environmental professionals and planners from across the East Midlands region saw the formal launch of

- Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands - a public benefit mapping project
- Launch of a Green Infrastructure Network (GIN) for the region.
- The programme launch of a series of regional seminars for planners and developers to raise awareness about Green Infrastructure (GI).

The day included several key note speeches including a presentation on the wider global environmental issues and interactions of the private sector with the environment by David Middleton, Chief Executive of the UK Business Council for Sustainable Development. Opportunities for funding and case studies on exemplar Green Space initiatives were also presented with discussions throughout the day focussed on GI in both urban and rural areas and how GI can contribute to the achievement of objectives in the Integrated Regional Strategy.

Views on how the GIN network can move forward were also discussed in detail and a database of stakeholders now exists which will form the basis of the GIN for the coordinated delivery of GI across the region. Information from the day will be posted on the RNRP website shortly.

For further information contact:

River Nene Regional Park, c/o Northamptonshire County Council, PO Box 221, First Floor, John Dryden House, 8-10 The Lakes, Northampton, NN4 7DE

T: 01604 237648 E: nrp@northamptonshire.gov.uk W: <http://www.rnrp.org>



£1m eco-centre opens at Fineshade Wood

Top Lodge, an innovative £1m eco-centre has been officially opened. Local and natural materials and renewable energy systems have been used to develop former 18th century barns at Fineshade Wood into the Top Lodge recreation and information complex, which also features one of the largest reed bed sewage systems in the country. The centre offers visitors the chance to find out more about the local environment, see wildlife close up and learn about local crafts and the woodland's heritage.

Top Lodge has been built by the Forestry Commission and partners including Rockingham Forest Craft Guild and the RSPB, with support from RNRP who received £0.95m GAF funding for the project last year.

Rockingham Forest Manager Kevin Stannard said:

"Woodlands offer a brilliant green and safe space for people to enjoy and Top Lodge will help us deliver our commitment to get more people out, active and benefiting from the fresh air, offering them space to run, walk and let off energy".

Top Lodge is signposted from the A43, 9 miles northeast of Corby.

NEL STRENGTHENS SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

David Wright has been appointed as the first Chief Executive of Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd. David is former Chief Executive of the Derbyshire Partnership and joins NEL with an enormous amount of experience and success in economic development.

Terry Hughes, previously at Northamptonshire Partnership and latterly at NEL, has now joined NNDC. Terry's role has been taken by Sajeeda Hajat, who has joined NEL on secondment from emda. Sajeeda has been working closely with NEL on the Northamptonshire agenda and she brings a wealth of experience in handling all Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership matters. Sajeeda is based in the NEL offices at Enterprise House, Northampton and all matters previously related to Terry should now be directed to her.

This strengthening of the senior management team will ensure NEL is equipped to meet the many challenges that lie ahead in achieving its economic development objectives within the growth agenda for Northamptonshire.

For more information about NEL go to: <http://www.letyourselfgrow.com/>

DELIVERY

Willow Place taking shape



Willow Place developer Land Securities and main contractor HBG Construction celebrated the completion of a major milestone in the construction programme with a traditional topping out ceremony on 28th March. On completion in October this year, the £35 million Willow Place scheme will provide two new large stores, a café and 20 smaller shop units. Retailers who have already signed up to the scheme include TK Maxx, New Look, Burton, Dorothy Perkins, Evans, WH Smith and Superdrug and more are at an advanced stage of negotiation. Plans are already being prepared for possible later phases of the scheme which could see a multiplex cinema, bowling alley, supermarket, increased parking provision and more retail units in the town centre.

More information on the project can be found at www.willowplace.co.uk.

Corby Place Marketing campaign wins award

“More room to breath”, “More time to relax” and “More for your money” – this is what Corby has to offer and this was recognised at the Property Marketing Awards in March, when NNDC won the award for the “Best Public Sector Campaign”. The campaign was launched last year and targets Londoners, particularly first time buyers, young professionals and expanding families with a series of adverts offering more in Corby. The campaign is part of NNDC’s long-term strategy for the successful regeneration of Corby. Find more at www.moreincorby.co.uk.

NorthNorthants Development Company

One year on, NNDC goes from strength to strength

With the recent announcement of the passenger rail service to London, NNDC’s second year of operation has kicked off with a positive start. In May 2006, the company responsible for delivering the growth plans for North Northamptonshire was launched. Since then, it has been busily working with partners to ensure that development is on track and on time and has to date achieved the following:

- Work is progressing on the £60m investment in civic space and facilities at Parkland Gateway
- A43 Corby link road has been given the go-ahead
- Work has started on the new £30m academy for Corby
- Work has started on the masterplans for Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire town centres

NNDC continues to strive hard and face the challenges ahead, but with successes such as its award for the www.moreincorby.co.uk campaign, it can only get better.

New operators promise rail improvements

STAGECOACH GROUP



The Department for Transport have announced that Stagecoach Midland Rail Limited (part of the Stagecoach Group) has been awarded the East Midlands franchise and will replace the current Midland Main Line service run by National Express.

The new franchise will include a link to Corby once the new station is built, which will operate as an extension of an additional service that will run between Kettering and London hourly throughout the day. This new service will mean Kettering and Wellingborough should be served by three trains an hour to London, with two heading north to Leicester and beyond.

A new company will also be operating services for Northampton and Long Buckby. London Midland (a subsidiary of Govia) has been awarded the West Midlands franchise, taking over from the current operators Silverlink.

Improvements in services are also included in the West Midlands franchise with a new service to run from London to Crewe via Northampton and Long Buckby. This reinstates a through service from Long Buckby to London. In addition, on completion of the West Coast Main Line upgrade in 2008, two trains per hour between Northampton and Birmingham will be reinstated throughout the day.

Both London Midland and Stagecoach Midland have included plans for upgrading of stations, as well as providing new car parking spaces and a commitment to introduce new “smartcard” technology by 2010. However, prices may increase by up to 3% per annum above inflation between London and Northampton, with a similar increase possible on services to North Northamptonshire.

Both franchises will begin on 11th November 2007 and will run until 2015.

More information can be found at:
<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?>

DELIVERY

CULTURE UPDATE



Milton Keynes &
South Midlands
Culture Partnership

Placing Culture

Creative Industries in Northampton

A survey has been jointly commissioned by Arts Council England (East Midlands, East of England and South East) to map the creative industries sector across MKSM.

The consultants undertaking the project are NMP, who are a research, analysis and strategic consultancy specialising in the technology, digital media and creative industries. The first part of the work by NMP will be to look at updating what we already have in Northants through the data collected by 'Creative Connections', and create a more in depth profile including the needs and value of the sector to the economy in the county.

Enterprises in the thriving creative and cultural sector within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands area have been encouraged to complete a short online survey to influence government investment into the growth area and in depth interviews will be carried out with a sample of 15 practitioners and 15 support service providers. Initial research has identified in excess of 5,000 creative enterprises operating in the area, ranging from sole traders to large companies.

This piece of work is vital in terms of understanding the potential here, so as to enable the appropriate development and support of a healthy sector in Northants. It is also hoped that this audit will provide those businesses with a chance to work across the MKSM growth area where gaps and opportunities are highlighted, by leveraging funds to support this sector. The project is due for completion by November 2007.

For further details contact: s.haider@culturesoutheast.org.uk

Northampton Fish Market Transformed

April saw the launch of the new 'Fishmarket' in the centre of town. The former fish market has been transformed into a signature arts centre and contemporary gallery run by the Northampton Arts Collective (NAC).



Former Fish Market



Fish Market Gallery

Through the gallery, NAC aims to recognise and support the wealth of creative talent in Northamptonshire and the surrounding growth area. Their objectives are to:

- create a focus for the arts community
- match niche arts with niche audiences
- help improve the cultural profile of the town making it a better place to live, work and visit
- work with local agencies to develop an inspired vision for the arts in Northampton and County

To find out more about the Gallery and its latest exhibition by James Jessop & Harry Pye, visit the website on: <http://www.northamptonarts.org/fishmarket/>

DELIVERY

Bus journeys increase by more than one million

Provisional figures released by Northamptonshire County Council show that the number of bus journeys made in Northamptonshire increased by more than one million last year.

The figures show that bus passengers made over 19 million journeys on public transport in the county in 2006/07, an increase of 1,164,377 on the previous year. The figures also represent an increase of 3.5 million journeys, or a 22.6 per cent increase, since 2003/04 and the fourth consecutive annual increase in bus passenger numbers.

Transport chiefs at the county council believe the increasing use of public transport is a direct result of improvements to bus services and facilities as well as initiatives to help regular bus users, like the Northampton Buzz card scheme and concessionary bus fare scheme for pensioners.

Councillor Bob Seery, cabinet member for roads and transport, said:

“Bus patronage in Northamptonshire has been rising steadily in recent years and I’m delighted to see that the general public is increasingly seeing bus travel as a viable alternative to the car.

“Increasing the use of public transport is a crucial element of our environmental and transport policies, so naturally I’m delighted that these provisional figures are pointing to such a profound increase in journeys.

“Our commitment to real improvements for bus users will continue this year with the launch of a number of exciting new developments including projects such as the provision of evening and Sunday bus services on more routes as well as night buses.

“Work has started on the provision of bus stop information showing all operators’ services at bus stops in Northampton and this will be completed over the next few months. In addition, we’ll be launching a text messaging service providing times for next buses direct to mobile phones.”

For more transport information go to: http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/transport_home.htm



MKSM Police report predicts future requirements for Growth Areas

The three Police authorities within the MKSM sub-region have published a report addressing the impact that rising numbers of people, buildings and activity will have on their ability to provide high quality policing and protective services. This suggests that there could be a £ 39.95m additional workforce budgetary requirement over the period 2006-2031 for Northamptonshire Police.

The full report and an executive summary can be found at:

<http://www.northamptonshireobservatory.org.uk/publications/document.asp?documentid=879>



Hazel Blears appointed as new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

As part of Gordon Brown’s Cabinet reshuffle Hazel Blears will take over from Ruth Kelly at CLG. Yvette Cooper remains as Minister for Housing and Baroness Andrews will also retain her position.

For full details of the new ministerial team go to: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1165633>

The successful communication of news and progress on projects and activities within the Northamptonshire growth areas relies on your contributions to the e-bulletin. Thanks to all who contributed to this edition.

If you have any news for the next e-bulletin please contact Kieran Palmer: kpalmer@northamptonshire.gov.uk. Please let us know in advance if you anticipate any major news on key developments or significant milestones which you would like to highlight as a special feature. For any other enquiries, please contact Ian Achurch: iachurch@northamptonshire.gov.uk.

All issues of the e-bulletin can be found on the Northamptonshire County Council website:

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Environment/MKSM/ebulletin.htm>

Issue 15 of the e-bulletin will be circulated in Autumn 2007.

Prepared on behalf of partners by Northamptonshire County Council, June 2007.