

Joint Cabinet Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 29 June 2022 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.10pm.

Present:

Stratford-on-Avon District Council: Councillors Parry and Pemberton.
Warwick District Council: Councillors Cooke, Day and Hales.

Also Present: Councillor Milton (Chair of Warwick District Overview & Scrutiny Committee), Councillor Boad (Warwick District Liberal Democrat Group Observer), and Councillor Falp (Whitnash Residents' Association Group).

1. **Appointment of Chairman**

It was proposed by Councillor Cooke, seconded by Councillor Pemberton and

Resolved that Councillor Day be appointed as Chairman up to the next meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mangat (Warwick District Labour Group Observer).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

4. **South Warwickshire Local Plan – Settlement Analysis Evidence Report**

The Committee considered a report which sought endorsement of the Settlement Analysis Evidence Report which was prepared as part of the local plan evidence base to inform the preparation of the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

Settlements were identified for assessment on the basis that they fell within the first or second tier settlements in either the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy (Main Town and Main Rural Centres) or the Warwick District Local Plan (Urban Areas and Growth Villages) and were relevant to more than one of the growth scenarios set out in the Scoping and Call for Sites consultation. This approach enabled officers to focus on settlements already considered amongst the most sustainable in planning policy. In addition, a number of other settlements were identified for assessment on the basis that they were relevant to the rail corridor or socio-economic growth scenarios. In analysing feedback from the scoping consultation, the 'rail corridor' option was the option most cited as the preferred scenario (21%), with the fewest citing it as the least preferred (5%), and this contributed to the decision to focus on settlements within rail corridors. Whilst all of the other options (with the exception of 'dispersed', which was stated as the least preferred option by 36% of respondents) had reasonably balanced responses in terms of 'most preferred' and 'least preferred' options officers identified the socio-economic option for further analysis.

Kineton was selected due to its existing policy status, relative size and infrastructure provision, and South of Coventry because the city edge also forms a potentially sustainable location. There was potential for additional settlements to be assessed using the methodology set out in the report if the spatial strategy evolved to necessitate it.

For the purposes of this study only settlements within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Nature Beauty (AONB) were excluded from selection, all other settlements including those within the Green Belt were not excluded from assessment as it was considered important for the study to take a 'policy-off' approach at this stage in order to have the most use in informing future decision-making on growth options.

The evidence covered three main elements which were: connectivity evidence and analysis; accessibility evidence and analysis; and density mapping.

The methodology for the connectivity evidence and analysis element of the study was designed to consider the existing settlement structure, and the opportunities and constraints this might afford, to create growth which was well connected to the established town or village.

The Settlement Structure Analysis considered each settlement as it currently existed including a review of historic maps to get an impression of how the settlement had evolved over time, existing green and blue corridors, and railway lines along with route structure analysis using a colour coded approach to categorise different types of routes and help to establish how permeable and connected the street network was:

- Strategic long-distance highways.
- Primary streets.
- Thoroughfares.
- Loops.
- Cul de sacs.
- Cycle only routes.
- Bridleways.
- Footpath connections.

Using a combination of desk-based GIS analysis and site visits, the following key landform information was recorded for each of the settlements assessed:

- Notable gradients in and around the settlements.
- Areas at risk of flooding.
- Significant areas of Green Infrastructure.

Based on the analysis undertaken for parts above, further analysis of the relative connectivity of the 'edges' of each settlement was analysed and graded by dividing the settlement into edge segments and assessing each edge against a range of factors to identify a 'Connectivity Grade' between A (best connectivity) and E (poorest connectivity) which were colour coded between green (A) and red (E) on the maps. It enabled the comparison of different directions for potential growth around settlements, in terms of their ability to connect into the established 'structure' of the settlement, and the opportunities and constraints in this respect.

It was acknowledged that other constraints beyond the scope of this study might also impact on whether growth may or may not be appropriate in different directions from existing settlements (e.g. ecological or heritage designations, or infrastructure capacity) and this evidence was also gathered and layered up to provide a comprehensive picture.

The methodology was designed to identify those local services that were necessary to meet the day-to-day needs of residents within a 10-minute walk (800m).

The types of services necessary to meet day-to-day needs were identified for each of the settlements and broken down into a number of typologies:

- Retail, jobs and economy.
- Places to meet.
- Open space, leisure and recreation.
- Healthcare.
- Education.

Having identified the location of existing services and facilities within the settlements, the next step explored the extent of the area which was likely to fall within a 10-minute walk (800m) of each of the five categories of services as set out above. From this, it was possible to identify how many of the categories were within a 10-minute walk of each of the edge segments identified in the connectivity analysis. This helped to inform how accessible any growth in this location would potentially be. It was acknowledged that this analysis was focussed on existing infrastructure and did not take account of whether the quality/capacity of the infrastructure or the scope for new infrastructure to be provided as part of any new development. These aspects would need to be considered separately.

The appropriate density of new development needed to take into account a range of factors including the surrounding context and accessibility, along with the proposed building form and character of a particular site. More compact forms of development in certain locations could bring people together to support local services and make destinations easily accessible by walking or cycling thus reducing dependency upon the private car. Density considerations also had an important role to play in tackling climate change both in relation to reducing carbon emissions and in adaptation and mitigation.

This element of the settlement analysis mapped the different density ranges within the existing settlements using a coding structure recommended by the National Model Design Code³. This information would help guide assumptions in respect of appropriate densities of any new growth and identify potential capacity to inform the extent to which the various growth options would be able to deliver the necessary development need.

In terms of alternative options, the two available options were to endorse the Settlement Analysis evidence report as presented or to amend the methodology. Not endorsing the evidence report was not considered an option as Officers required some objective means of assessing existing settlements in order to assist in identifying potential locations for inclusion within the next Issues and Options consultation.

The Warwick District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and had provided the following comments. It was keen that Warwick District Council stayed close to housing demand numbers and interrogated them when they were published along with the requirements for infrastructure within the areas; wished to know when the budget shortfall would be addressed; and requested that information should be added to the report up front to provide clarity on:

- a. how the greenbelt is impacted (or not) by this report and when that will be addressed.
- b. the definition of a twenty-minute neighbourhood, with examples provided, for people to better understand the concept;
- c. densities and the impact these might have on future issues and options; and
- d. the distinction/difference between the Scoping and Call for Sites consultation results and the analysis done in this report and at what stage the results from both would come together.

The Warwick District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee also recommended to the Joint Cabinet Committee that the District Councils should engage with Town and Parish Councils earlier in the process to validate the findings for particular settlements.

Councillor Pemberton expressed thanks to the officers involved in writing this report, stating that he felt confident in the evidence base provided. Councillor Cooke echoed these sentiments, requesting that the expression of gratitude to officers be recorded in the minutes.

Following comments from Councillor Parry, the Warwick District Liberal Democrat Group Observer, and the Whitnash Residents' Association Group about the clarity of the report, Councillor Pemberton offered to work with Councillor Cooke and officers to help Town and Parish Councils comment on the analysis on settlements. He suggested that the timetable with anticipated dates and summaries (suggested by Councillor Parry) could also have keys included to help explain further.

In response to a question about the budget from WDC for this report, Councillor Hales reassured Members that the rest of the budget would be provided, but for now officers were still working on where the allocation would be coming from.

After suggestions from Councillor Pemberton about a joint Overview and Scrutiny committee, the Chair of the WDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised the importance of joint working but noted that this was being done by the Joint Cabinet meetings. He stated that he was elected to represent the interests of residents of Warwick District, and in order to do that properly the Scrutiny Committees needed to be kept separate.

Councillor Day stressed the importance of benefitting from the input of both Scrutiny Committee chairs at Joint Cabinet meetings but felt that the two Chairs should be trusted to bring their comments to Joint Cabinet individually. While there were things the two Councils had in common, there were other things that needed to be considered separately, and that could not be done with a Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Cooke then proposed that the recommendation from the WDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee be rejected and replaced with the following additional recommendation:

"That Parish and Town councils are given the opportunity to comment on the settlement analysis prior to the Issues and Options consultation; and the Heads of Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Place and Economy and Planning and Place, make any subsequent factual and consistency changes, and any changes, as appropriate, following consultation with Parish and Town councils, and ward members".

Councillor Cooke proposed the report as laid out, subject to the above additional recommendation proposed in the meeting.

Resolved that

- (1) the Settlement Analysis evidence report, the results of which will be used to inform the preparation of the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP), be endorsed; and
- (2) Parish and Town councils be given the opportunity to comment on the settlement analysis prior to the Issues and Options consultation; and the Heads of Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Place and Economy and Planning and Place, make any subsequent factual and consistency changes, and any changes, as appropriate, following consultation with Parish and Town councils, and ward members.

(The Portfolio Holders for this item were Councillor Pemberton & Councillor Cooke)

5. Dates of future meetings

The Committee decided that the next meetings would take place at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.00pm on the following dates:

- 21 September 2022.
- 3 November 2022.

6. Urgent Business

There were no urgent business items.

(The meeting ended at 7.12pm)

CHAIRMAN
7 December 2022