

Comments

Event: North Northamptonshire Local Plan - Scoping Consultation

Consultee Name: Mrs Sian Coughlan

Consultee Organisation: Middleton Parish Council

Consultee Position: Chair

Consultee Email: sian_coughlan@hotmail.com

Consultation point: Question 1

Your Response:

Middleton Parish Council (MPC) feels that it is important to take into account strategic developments in adjoining local authority areas. In particular, planned large scale housing projects, expansion to the logistics and distribution sector and future transport infrastructure projects should be considered. These could impact significantly on North Northamptonshire, so the local plan needs to be seen in the context of planned development in neighbouring areas.

Strategic insights from neighbouring authorities can help inform NNC's Local Plan therefore Council officers should review these proactively to support collaboration and avoid missed opportunities.

Middleton is located close to the Rutland and Leicestershire boundaries.

Consultation point: Question 2

Your Response:

MPC supports the existing spatial strategy whereby growth is focused on the urban areas, growth towns and larger villages. However, it is also important that the plan supports the sustainability of smaller rural communities and settlements. MPC would like to see greater emphasis on protecting the beautiful open countryside in our rural areas and preserving the character of local settlements. The plan needs to emphasise protection of the natural environment and should consider how to derive economic value from the area's natural capital assets.

Consultation point: Question 3

Your Response:

A SWOT analysis is beyond the scope of a small Parish Council. MPC feels that other consultees are better placed to respond to this question.

Consultation point: Question 4

Your Response:

MPC believes that KPIs should be set at each stage to measure outcomes appropriately, however other consultees may be better placed to respond to this question.

Consultation point: Question 5

Your Response:

MPC is happy with the proposed plan period

Consultation point: Question 6

Your Response:

Yes MPC supports the spatial strategy approach.

Consultation point: Question 7

Your Response:

MPC supports the proposed settlement hierarchy, including the identification of key villages.

MPC notes that Middleton has been placed in the 'Village' category and agrees with this classification. Middleton has extremely limited services for residents. Any proposed development to meet local needs should focus on infill as stated in the document.

It is not appropriate for MPC to comment on how other settlements have been categorised.

Consultation point: Question 8

Your Response:

The methodology seems sensible

Consultation point: Question 9

Your Response:

MPC has considered the supporting background paper on applying settlement boundaries. We favour option A which proposes having clearly defined settlement boundary lines on a map. This appears to provide clarity, openness and consistency which we feel is beneficial. We agree with the advantages outlined in the paper. We note that one of the disadvantages described is that this approach is resource intensive. However, perhaps the resource problem should be viewed as a short-term issue that once overcome would provide defined boundaries providing greater clarity for the future – thereby saving resources in the longer term.

Option B 'The criteria-based approach' seems vague to us and leaves small settlements, such as Middleton, potentially vulnerable to development on the fringes. From the evidence provided in the background paper is not entirely clear how the criteria-based approach would work in practice.

Therefore, on the evidence provided, we do not support the proposal that the criteria-based approach is applied to Villages such as Middleton. It seems that this approach to Villages is driven by resource constraints rather than what is in the best interest of the residents living in the Village communities.

Consultation point: Question 10

Your Response:

This is clearly a very important specialist area. Whilst as a small parish council we do not have expertise in this area we would like to see New homes and large warehouses built to meet strong environmental and energy-efficiency standards including solar, bio fuel and wind power.

The Council should work with developers and other key stakeholders to secure a sustainable future. Warehouse roofs should be considered for solar panels, and new homes should be required to include energy-efficient design, solar power, and air source heat pumps.

Ignoring climate change and continuing to build without regard for the environment would be irresponsible.

Consultation point: Question 11

Your Response:

Provisionally Yes – but don't set plans or impose targets that are unrealistic – close liaison & co-operation with developers is essential to keep any proposals achievable and cost effective prior to implementation. Plan affordable housing development in line with scale and availability of local services.

Consultation point: Question 12

Your Response:

Access improvements signage & effective traffic management to ease traffic flow.

Emergency services – Fire & Police – ensure sufficient resources

Public Health Services Schools & Leisure space & facilities

Broadband roll-out to villages and rural areas

Rail – Sufficient parking (Corby)

Plan and co-ordinate development and implementation of infrastructure to be scaled and implemented in proportion to existing and proposed housing developments

Consultation point: Question 13

Your Response:

Access improvements, signage and effective traffic management to ease traffic flow

Consultation point: Question 14

Your Response:

No - unless and until detailed plans for development proposals no area should be allocated for housing review.

Consultation point: Question 15

Your Response:

Depends on the extent of the specific development plans.

Consultation point: Question 16

Your Response:

Unless the local planners are prepared to lift or reduce planning restrictions & process in favour of new housing development or are prepared to undertake the delivery of new housing on their own account, the speed of implementation should be left to prevailing economic & market forces. Builders will build if there is demand.

Consultation point: Question 17

Your Response:

As Q16 answer

Consultation point: Question 18

Your Response:

Affordable housing only remains affordable if controlled or restricted for the intended groups – i.e. if council owned.

Consultation point: Question 19

Your Response:

In this case, availability should be linked to the same criteria as affordable housing and planners need to ensure availability based on known or anticipated necessity.

Consultation point: Question 20

Your Response:

We do not consider the GTAA fit for purpose and do not believe its options should be relied on to assess pitch deliverability over the next 20 years; please see the separate document. The requirement for a further 93 (plus 3 undetermined) pitches over the next five years appears excessive. In our view, accepting the 2026 ORS GTAA would create significant challenges for NNC over the next five years and beyond, as the figures are unjustified and undeliverable. NNC should therefore consider rejecting this report and using alternative statistical calculation methods to complete the GTAA.

Any supporting files:

Notes for GTAA Local Plan consultation 02.docx

Consultation point: Question 21

Your Response:

NNC should continue to identify land that could be acquired or allocated for additional Gypsy and Traveller sites. The provision of suitable, planned sites may help reduce instances of unauthorised development on privately owned land and limit the establishment of unlawful caravan sites for commercial purposes, such as Oakley Park.

Resources currently spent by NNC on legal fees, court costs, and appeals following the establishment of unauthorised sites could be used more effectively through the proactive identification and allocation of suitable land for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

NNC should review the number of existing unused pitches and sites occupied by non-Gypsy and Traveller households. Current figures in the 2026 GTAA indicate that nine pitches are vacant or used for storage, 27 are occupied by non-Travellers, and 24 have planning permission but have not yet been developed. If these pitches were brought into appropriate use, they could make a significant contribution towards meeting a revised and more realistic requirement.

Please see the attached document for commentary on the GTAA and additional information that should be considered in relation to Gypsy and Traveller sites. In our view, the 2026 GTAA is not achievable.

Any supporting files:

Notes for GTAA Local Plan consultation 02.docx

Consultation point: Question 22

Your Response:

This is a specialist area, as a small parish council, we are not well placed to comment on this.

However, we are keen to encourage enterprise and small new business start-ups within the existing footprint of our village. We have recently supported a proposal from a local resident to set up a small coffee roasting business by converting a stable block.

Consultation point: Question 23

Your Response:

NA for a small rural Parish Council to comment - other consultees will be better placed to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 24

Your Response:

We would like the local plan to encourage new business start-ups in rural areas as well as in the urban areas and growth towns. Where possible they should use existing buildings to maintain the local character of the area.

Consultation point: Question 25

Your Response:

This is a specialist area. As a small Parish Council we are not well placed to comment on this.

Consultation point: Question 26

Your Response:

This is a specialist area. As a small Parish Council we are not well placed to comment on this.

Consultation point: Question 27

Your Response:

NA for a small Parish Council to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 28

Your Response:

NA for a small Parish Council to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 29

Your Response:

NA for a small Parish Council to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 30

Your Response:

NA for a small Parish Council to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 31

Your Response:

NA for a small Parish Council to comment on this point

Consultation point: Question 32

Your Response:

Middleton is an attractive Welland Valley village. MPC would like to see high quality design that preserves the character of our village. Design guidelines should encourage new development that is in keeping with the existing character of the village and surrounding countryside

We support NNC's design policy. Design and landscape proposals should:

- be sustainable and inclusive;
- respond appropriately to key environmental conditions; and
- ensure biodiversity net gain in all design and landscape projects.

Consultation point: Question 33

Your Response:

Design guides, design codes, and masterplans should be applied to all major developments. Planners should also assess smaller schemes as they are submitted and prior to approval, to ensure they meet the criteria set out in Question 32.

Consultation point: Question 34

Your Response:

All major developments should benefit from design review panels / design tools to ensure they meet criteria set in out in answer to Q32.

Consultation point: Question 35

Your Response:

MPC supports the approach set out to seek strategic, efficient and sustainable allocation and management of land to meet economic, environmental and social objectives. In particular, we support the development of brownfield sites and improving the quality of existing infill sites. Wherever possible, priority should be given to redeveloping existing sites rather than developing greenfield sites which result in the loss of agricultural land. MPC feels that any future development in Middleton should be of an appropriate size, scale and density to preserve the existing character of the village. As a small settlement, it would be inappropriate to allocate any additional sites for development and any new development should be infill only.

Consultation point: Question 36

Your Response:

No expertise in this area

Consultation point: Question 37

Your Response:

Detailed assessment based on actual need and demand should be considered prior to implementation to ensure that funds are not wasted on needless projects.

Consultation point: Question 38

Your Response:

Regular scheduled maintenance of road networks to ensure standards are maintained and not left until deterioration requires major works and disruption.

Consultation point: Question 39

Your Response:

Parking requirements should be incorporated in all plans for new developments and extensions of existing locations for access to public services (including rail), commercial and residential to reduce and relieve the need for road side parking.

Consultation point: Question 40

Your Response:

As far as possible, future infrastructure should plan to incorporate and facilitate the various modes of sustainable transport on new projects or when existing infrastructure is rebuilt.

Consultation point: Question 41

Your Response:

Yes happy with NNC proposals

Consultation point: Question 42

Your Response:

No further comment.

Consultation point: Question 43

Your Response:

No further comment

Consultation point: Question 44

Your Response:

Generally, yes, but any proposed approach must incorporate affordability as well as sustainability.

Consultation point: Question 45

Your Response:

Prioritise use of systems – assuming solar, wind or biofuels - that can be practically installed and operated in or on new or existing infrastructure and buildings, to avoid utilising green spaces or agricultural land

Consultation point: Question 46

Your Response:

Overall position

In general, yes. However, North Northamptonshire Council must take account of local flash flooding incidents that have already damaged homes in our area and surrounding villages.

Existing infrastructure

Alongside new sustainable development, existing road networks and drainage systems should be regularly assessed, maintained, and improved. This is essential to reduce the repeated impact of heavy rainfall on residents and their homes.

Maintenance and mitigation

Working with the Environment Agency to ensure key landowners/tenant farmers maintain ditches and gullies is key. Where appropriate, new balancing ponds could also help reduce flood risk in Middleton.

Consultation point: Question 47

Your Response:

MPC is not in a position to comment on this

Consultation point: Question 48

Your Response:

Access to greenspace should be a priority in the plan along with improving biodiversity. MPC feels strongly that existing greenspace and biodiversity should be protected. We are concerned about a recent loss of biodiversity in our area resulting from the unlawful developments at Oakley Park.

New developments in NNC must include appropriate provision for greenspace providing

environmental, health and social benefits for residents

Consultation point: Question 49

Your Response:

MPC doesn't have the expertise to comment on this

Consultation point: Question 50

Your Response:

MPC doesn't have the expertise to comment on this

Consultation point: Question 51

Your Response:

MPC doesn't have the expertise to comment on this

Consultation point: Question 52

Your Response:

MPC agrees that preserving the historic character of NNC settlements is important. We welcome the production of guiding principles to help in the production of local lists.

Consultation point: Question 53

Your Response:

MPC would like to see a high level of protection for the historic environment. We support the production of local lists of historical assets.

Consultation point: Question 54

Your Response:

Whilst covered in this scoping document and our earlier comments, the issues of particular importance to Middleton are:

Unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller Sites

Flood Mitigation

Infrastructure - the potential impact of Corby SUE on the surrounding network and Middleton Village in particular.

Protection of the natural environment in our surrounding area.

Consultation point: Question 55

Your Response:

No comment

Consultation point: Question 56

Your Response:

Regular consultations and presentations regarding key issues are important. Also insights from surveys conducted to be shared with all respondents.

Consultation point: Question 57

Your Response:

No this works for us.