

# Delivering Sustainable Communities in West Northamptonshire

**WNDC Corporate Plan** 2008 to 2011



**WNDC**  
[www.wndc.org.uk](http://www.wndc.org.uk)

## Foreword from the Chairman and Chief Executive

The Board and staff of West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) are proud and privileged to be a part of an organisation responsible for ensuring that sustainable growth helps to transform West Northamptonshire.

At WNDC our vision is bold and inspirational, supporting the transformation of Northampton from market town to a prosperous and dynamic regional city, with Daventry and Towcester becoming distinctive market towns.

In the last three years we have made substantial progress.

### Succeeding...

Since 2005 we have created the environment for growth through infrastructure investment; working with partners; putting a strong in-house planning function together and establishing the strategies, standards and resource mechanisms to make decisions about new communities, invest in infrastructure and improve economic performance for the benefit of all.

We have made real and visible progress and have invested almost £30m of Government's Growth Area Fund in key West Northamptonshire projects over the past two years; including over £7m to ensure Northampton has some of the best flood defences in the UK; over £6.7m to lever £100m private sector investment in Daventry Town Centre; over £1m towards the regeneration of Towcester town centre and over £6m committed to Northampton Town centre.

At the beginning of 2007 the Planning Service went live and an unprecedented number of major planning applications were submitted. We now have around 28,000 homes in live planning applications and so far have granted permissions for over 1,700 homes across key residential sites including 450 homes at the former British Timken works that are now under construction.

### Meeting the challenge head on...

In this Corporate Plan we have set ourselves significant challenges and objectives to deliver for West Northamptonshire. We have the drive, ambition, creativity and innovation to achieve our goals.

During the Corporate Plan period we will determine a significant number of planning applications that, subject to approval, will meet our targets and will help tackle the availability of affordable housing for local people; contribute significantly to the national need for more houses; offer opportunities to our partners in the construction industry; enable investment in the infrastructure that is required and provide the building blocks for new communities to flourish, integrated with our existing towns and neighbourhoods.

We are committed to bring forward significant regeneration projects that make the best use of 'brownfield' land, including Northampton Castle Station and the Avon, Nunn Mills, Ransome Road area of Northampton.

We now have a clear picture of the infrastructure that is needed and the expertise to deliver it. So during the Corporate Plan period infrastructure delivery will be a high priority.

We are confident that this Corporate Plan for 2008 to 2011 provides a clear framework within which WNDC can work with all its partners to make West Northamptonshire a place to be proud of.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Keith Barwell".

**Keith Barwell**  
Chairman



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Hayes".

**Mike Hayes CBE**  
Chief Executive

## Executive Summary

As part of the Sustainable Communities and Growth Agenda, WNDC was established to:

- **Deliver sustainable growth, and infrastructure that enables this sustainable growth, in the three West Northamptonshire towns of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester**

The level of housing growth for West Northamptonshire is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8). During this Corporate Planning Period, WNDC's main role in delivering growth is by determining planning applications. Where necessary to ensure development sites come forward, WNDC may also acquire land, compulsorily if necessary, provide enabling infrastructure work or work with other public sector agencies to ensure that infrastructure is forthcoming.

- **Ensure that new development meets the Government's design quality and environmental standards and is integrated into existing communities**

The Government has high aspirations for design quality and environmental standards for new housing. During this Corporate Planning period, WNDC will publish Planning Principles 2008 to set out what this means for West Northamptonshire, and work with developers to ensure the standards are met. We will also use our infrastructure delivery and land acquisition powers to support the delivery of quality standards.

The integration of new housing with existing communities is a key aim of the sustainable communities agenda. During this Corporate Planning period, WNDC will use its development control powers and its infrastructure delivery and land acquisition powers to support this integration.

- **Ensure that new development is supported by appropriate jobs, infrastructure and town centre regeneration**

The delivery of jobs, infrastructure and town centre regeneration is an integral part of the growth of West Northamptonshire. During this Corporate Planning period WNDC will work with the relevant lead public sector bodies to enable delivery. This will include preparing an overarching infrastructure strategy, ensuring funding is in place to deliver the infrastructure and working with other public sector bodies to ensure their funding mechanisms support sustainable growth in West Northamptonshire.





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# 1 Introduction & Background

1. As part of the Sustainable Communities programme, WNDC was set up by Government in December 2004. Our mission is to promote and deliver sustainable growth and regeneration in Northampton, Daventry and Towcester. During the last Corporate Planning period we developed a Vision of what successful development of that Mission would mean in practice.

## WNDC's Vision

Northampton will be transformed into a prosperous and dynamic regional city, with a growing knowledge economy. Daventry and Towcester will become distinctive market towns. West Northamptonshire will be better connected to regional, national and international markets, capitalising on its position at the centre of England.

2. In our Prospectus ("Realising the Opportunity", December 2005), we identified ten areas where action would be required from the public sector to deliver our mission. These were:

- Improving and diversifying the economic base
- Transforming the town centres
- Providing a greater number and range of well-designed, eco-friendly and diverse housing
- Establishing a more recognisable sense of place and identity
- Improving connectivity
- Creating inclusive communities
- Developing high quality skills
- Achieving quality in the natural and built environment
- Helping West Northamptonshire's rural communities
- Improving the management and environmental aspects and resources

3. Within these ten areas, three key actions fall to WNDC. These are:

- Delivering sustainable growth and infrastructure that enables housing growth
- Ensuring new development meets design and environmental quality standards and is integrated with existing communities
- Ensuring new development is supported by appropriate infrastructure, employment and town centre regeneration

4. In this Corporate Plan, which covers the period from April 2008 to March 2011, we set out how we will use our main powers – development control, land acquisition, infrastructure delivery – and policy and communications – to deliver our remit. This will involve setting high standards and taking bold decisions to see these standards are met. This will include acquiring land, compulsorily if necessary. Our proposed actions are shown in Table 1 on the next page.

5. This Corporate Plan sets out for Government, our stakeholders and the people of West Northamptonshire what outcomes and outputs our action will deliver. Achieving these Key Deliverables is the basis for our strategic planning.

6. The Corporate Plan also sets out for our staff what we are aiming to achieve and how they will contribute to that. In order to track these achievements we have established a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These provide the basis for evaluating team and individual delivery plans and performance. They constitute our operational plan.

7. The Corporate Plan has four main parts:

- Part 1 sets out how we will deliver sustainable growth
- Part 2 sets out how we will ensure new development meets quality standards
- Part 3 sets out how we will ensure supporting infrastructure is provided
- Part 4 sets out how we will organise internally to enable delivery

8. More detailed information on the implementation of year one of the Corporate Plan will be contained in WNDC's Business Plan for 2008/09.

9. Every five years each Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) is subject to a Financial, Management and Policy Review (FMPR). The purpose of such reviews is to assist in the improvement and modernisation of public services by providing external scrutiny of the organisation and performance of bodies providing key public services. WNDC's FMPR is due to take place in December 2009, part-way through this Corporate Plan period. It is expected that the FMPR will be conducted in two stages in line with Cabinet Office guidance. Stage 1 looks at issues of strategic importance in relation to WNDC's role, status and functions. Stage 2 is a more detailed efficiency study. It is expected that the FMPR will consider whether any changes in WNDC's boundaries and planning powers would enable us to add greater value. This Corporate Plan does not assume changes will be made but notes where they might be beneficial.

Table 1 Summary of WNDC activity between April 2008 and March 2011

|   | Development Control   | Land and Infrastructure   | Policy & Communications   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Delivering sustainable growth</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining planning applications</li> <li>• Undertaking infrastructure capacity studies</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquiring land, compulsorily if necessary</li> <li>• Providing enabling infrastructure</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with public sector agencies to ensure housing sites can come forward</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Ensuring new development meets design and environmental standards and are integrated with existing communities</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting standards.</li> <li>• Delivering standards through planning permissions</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that wherever possible new infrastructure is available to both new and existing communities</li> <li>• Ensuring that new infrastructure, such as roads, do not act as a barrier between new and existing communities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with local authorities and other infrastructure providers to ensure their plans support the integration of new and existing communities</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supporting sustainable development with jobs and infrastructure</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiating planning contributions</li> <li>• Developing and implementing a standardised charging system for planning contributions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing an overarching infrastructure strategy</li> <li>• Delivering infrastructure directly through GAF and planning contributions</li> <li>• Putting infrastructure funding packages together</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobbying other public sector bodies to ensure their funding mechanisms support sustainable growth</li> </ul>   |



## 2 Delivering Sustainable Growth

**2.1** West Northamptonshire is part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area. The level of housing growth for West Northamptonshire through to 2021 is set out in five year blocks in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8). This represents the most up-to-date “Development Plan” for the area. The current RSS8 trajectory requires the delivery of 47,400 housing numbers in West Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2021 – a programme estimated to be worth around £7bn.

**2.2** Over 12,250 new housing units were completed in West Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2007, slightly exceeding the target set out in RSS8. Between 2008/09 to 2010/11 just under 7,000 further units are required. A downturn in completions is expected in both 2008 and 2009, but if the expected major development sites come forward as forecast towards the end of the Corporate Plan period, this target could still be met. As set out in Fig.1 below, the overall trajectory therefore remains on target<sup>1</sup>.

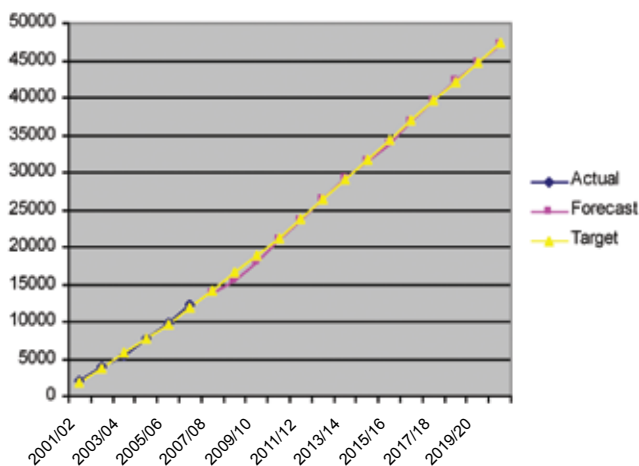


Fig.1: West Northamptonshire Housing Trajectory to 2021

**2.3** A review of RSS8 is underway and the panel report into the examination of the Plan was published in November 2007. The review of RSS8 will address the results of the successful legal challenge to the Northampton Implementation Area housing figures<sup>2</sup>, and extend the plan period through to 2026.

**2.4** Historically, the strong local demand for housing and the availability of willing landowners and builders meant that the delivery of housing rested on the supply of land with planning permission. In the short term, the supply of land with planning permission for housing within Northampton, Daventry and Towcester will largely be determined by WNDC as the development control authority for strategic planning applications. This makes the determination of strategic planning applications WNDC’s main role in the delivery of housing. At the current time we have major applications containing around 28,000 planning applications awaiting determination. The current slowdown in the housing market will have some effect in the short-term, but is unlikely to

affect the longer term underlying upward trend in prices. If the supply of housing sites starts to dry up, WNDC will look to use its land acquisition and direct development powers to ensure the trajectory remains on course. However, this is likely to slow down delivery and the timing of the deliverables in this document may need to be revisited.

### Development Control Powers

WNDC is the development control authority for “strategic” planning applications in West Northamptonshire. All housing sites of 50 units or more or 1 hectare or more fall to WNDC to determine, except in Northampton Town Centre where all applications fall to WNDC.

**2.5** WNDC planning decisions will always be made on planning grounds.

We aim to ensure that key issues are identified through early pre-application discussions, appropriate public consultation by the developer and, on major applications, dialogue after submission of an application. In addition, we will work jointly with partners on the preparation of statutory and non-statutory strategies and masterplans to help provide clear guidance on the approach to developers and infrastructure providers.

**2.6** The absence of a local planning context for significant proportions of the growth means there is currently no clear, published strategy outlining both the most sustainable pattern for development and the infrastructure requirements from growth. This makes it harder for the potential developers to demonstrate how their individual planning applications are delivering the right development, and for WNDC to be clear around the role of its wider regeneration powers in securing such delivery.

**2.7** In the absence of a local planning context, WNDC will look to undertake studies to determine infrastructure constraints to growth. This enables us to assess whether individual applications constitute appropriate development. During 2007/08, WNDC developed an infrastructure strategy for Daventry which sought to clarify current and future infrastructure requirements and the effect that specific growth proposals have on those requirements. This strategy will help WNDC assign weight to the determination of the infrastructure implications of the current planning applications.

<sup>1</sup> Delivery of the trajectory in the latter part of the target period, will be dependent on local authorities allocating new housing sites within the Northampton Implementation Area.

<sup>2</sup> This will have the effect of raising the target to 48,900 units by 2021.

**2.8** Where infrastructure is required to enable development, WNDC will use the funding we receive direct from Government to enable housing sites to come forward. In the last Corporate Plan period we funded the construction of Flood Attenuation Schemes in Northampton that will unlock the regeneration of key brownfield sites and deliver 2,000 new homes. Where appropriate, WNDC would look to reclaim this money from s106 contributions.

## Land acquisition and infrastructure delivery powers

WNDC has wide ranging powers to acquire land and ensure infrastructure delivery. These powers are set out in the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. Our compulsory acquisition powers are subject to guidance issued as Appendix D of ODPM Circular 06/2004

**2.9** The Local Development Framework process is expected to identify further development sites on the edge of Northampton to deliver growth into the future. A number of these sites will be in the “Northampton Implementation Area (NIA)” outside WNDC’s boundaries. As WNDC’s development control powers do not extend beyond our boundaries, we currently have no statutory role in the delivery of this future growth. The scale of growth and proposals already in development suggest that the local planning authorities who are likely to receive major planning applications in the NIA will face considerable challenges in determining these applications. WNDC will explore with the local planning authorities whether there is any scope for us to support them in dealing with these applications. WNDC could only be actively involved in the determination of planning permissions for these developments, if the FMPR proposed an extension to our boundaries and planning powers.

The table below outlines the key housing deliverables that WNDC are aiming to achieve over the Corporate Plan period.

Table 2 Key Housing Deliverables<sup>3</sup>

|  | 2008/09           | 2009/10          | 2010/11        | Total             |
|--|-------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>No. of outline residential planning permissions (affordable units)</b>                  | 11,600<br>(3,850) | 8,734<br>(3,947) | 1,712<br>(560) | 22,046<br>(8,357) |
| <b>No. of reserved matters residential planning permissions (affordable units)</b>         | 1,045<br>(314)    | 1,719<br>(516)   | 2,505<br>(752) | 5,269<br>(1,582)  |
| <b>No. of housing starts - with planning permissions from WNDC (affordable units)</b>      | 935<br>(280)      | 844<br>(253)     | 1,050<br>(315) | 2,829<br>(848)    |
| <b>No. of housing completions - with planning permissions from WNDC (affordable units)</b> | 801<br>(240)      | 935<br>(280)     | 844<br>(253)   | 2,580<br>(773)    |
| <b>No. of housing units enabled by WNDC’s Growth Fund<sup>4</sup></b>                      | 653               | 2,803            | 4,109          | 7,565             |

<sup>3</sup> To avoid double-counting these deliverables should not be added together to give a total figure. The first four deliverables are steps that must be followed along a pathway that leads to a completion, whilst housing units enabled through the Growth Fund will largely be a sub-set of the housing units given planning permission, etc by WNDC.

<sup>4</sup> These are forecast deliverables from the use of the Growth Fund during the Corporate Plan period and are not in-year outputs.

## 3 Meeting Quality Standards

**3.1** As part of the Sustainable Communities agenda, the Government has placed great importance on the need for new development to:

- Be well designed
- Have minimal impact on the environment
- Integrate with existing communities

**3.2** During the last Corporate Plan period, WNDC consulted on proposals for meeting these quality standards through the planning process in “Planning Principles 2007 – A consultation draft”. Our objective was to encourage developers to submit planning applications that reflected emerging national, regional and local planning policy to provide the best possible social, economic and environmental benefits for the site and the surrounding area. During 2008, WNDC will publish a final version of Planning Principles.

**3.3** WNDC’s approach to infrastructure delivery will also help achieve these quality standards. This includes insisting on design and environmental standards for infrastructure projects funded by WNDC, acquiring land to enable social infrastructure to be accessed by both existing and new communities, and designing physical infrastructure, such as roads, to act as links between communities and not blockages.

### Design

**3.4** WNDC has already begun to embed the provision of quality design into its decision-making framework for planning applications. For larger projects, WNDC expects design and access statements to be submitted with planning applications to clearly explain how the communities living around a site have been involved in identifying and setting out the design objectives for that site. For major developments (500 units or above), WNDC is using its planning powers to secure design coding and masterplanning. This provides a clear process to ensure proposals meet consistent quality levels.

**3.5** All developments of a significant scale or impact will be subject to a design review. This will usually be undertaken by national or regional review bodies such as CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) and OPUN (Architecture and the Built Environment for the East Midlands). The Home Builders Federation, alongside CABE, have developed an assessment framework that provides a structured way of assessing and comparing design quality. The “Building for Life” scheme has two standards, Gold and Silver. WNDC’s requirement is that no new residential development over 50 units achieves a rating below Silver.



## Environmental standards

**3.6** The Government has introduced a “Sustainable Code for Homes”. The aim of the code is to increase the environmental sustainability of homes and give homeowners better information about the running costs of their homes. The Code sets sustainability standards that can be applied to all homes. There are six levels of the Code. At each level there are minimum energy efficiency/carbon emissions and water efficiency standards. The minimum energy/carbon standards for Code Level 1 are those found in the minimum mandatory standards set in Building Regulations.

**3.7** We acknowledge that an expectation for all housing development to come forward delivering “zero carbon” standards overnight is unrealistic. In line with Government proposals set out in “Building a Greener Future – Towards Zero Carbon Development” we are going to follow the principles below:

- All residential planning applications submitted from April 2008 will be assessed against the Code
- Wherever possible we will require developers to demonstrate how they are meeting the highest level of the Code that the site allows for residential units to be delivered pre-2010. Through our “standardised charge” we may look to incentivise the delivery of the highest levels of sustainability.
- WNDP will seek to ensure all new developments meet the Government’s targets for achieving Code compliance from 2010. These are:
  - Any residential units to be delivered 2010-2012 must meet Code level 3 as a minimum
  - Any residential units to be delivered 2013-2015 must meet Code level 4 as a minimum
  - Post 2016 all units must be “zero carbon” and meet Code level 6 as a minimum

**3.8** For the time being the environmental performance of non-residential buildings is set through BREEAM standards. These classifications range from Excellent to Very Good, and Good. In line with the requirement for Code compliance on residential units, WNDP will seek to secure BREEAM performance of not less than Very Good for all new non-residential development.

## Integration of new and existing communities

**3.9** To be successful sustainable growth needs to be integrated with existing communities. During this Corporate Planning period WNDP will work through the planning process to ensure new development delivers this objective. Where necessary we will use our land acquisition powers to enable this integration. The delivery of infrastructure will be key to achieving this objective. WNDP will look to ensure new facilities are accessible and, that physical infrastructure, such as roads, does not create barriers between communities.

## Integration in Northampton North West

Dallington Heath is allocated in the existing Northampton Borough Council Local Plan for mixed use development. A planning application has been submitted to WNDP for 3, 500 new homes. During the last Corporate Planning period, WNDP worked with partners to develop a regeneration framework that will provide benefits for the wider area around Dallington Heath, including the neighbouring area of King’s Heath. During this Corporate Planning period, WNDP will work to ensure these benefits are delivered.

The table below outlines the quality and design deliverables that WNDP are aiming to achieve over the Corporate Plan period.

**Table 3 Key Quality Deliverables**

|   |
|---|
| Building for Life Silver Standard achieved on 100% of developments over 50 units    |
| Code Level 3 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2010 |
| Code Level 4 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2013 |
| Code Level 6 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2016 |
| BREEAM Very Good achieved on 100% of non-residential development                    |

## 4 Providing Supporting Infrastructure

**4.1** WNDC is tasked with ensuring sustainable growth is supported by appropriate levels of jobs and infrastructure, such as town centres, utility services, community facilities and transport. Funding for this infrastructure comes from developer contributions, utility providers and Government funding. During 2008 WNDC will consult on an overarching infrastructure schedule and a standardised charging system for developer contributions.

### Jobs

**4.2** West Northamptonshire's geographical location on the edge of the Midlands and the Greater South East makes it attractive to business. The area performs well on employment numbers. On current trends there will be between 50,000 and 60,000 net new jobs in West Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2021. However, West Northamptonshire performs less well on the type of jobs attracted. It has a less diverse economic base than the UK as a whole and faces a significant challenge to raise productivity levels.

**4.3** The organisation responsible for promoting West Northamptonshire's economy is NEL (Northamptonshire Enterprise Ltd) - the economic development vehicle for Northamptonshire as a whole. During this Corporate Planning period WNDC will support NEL's work by:

- Providing capital funding for NEL-led projects
- Determining planning applications for commercial use
- Making land available for commercial sites through the use of our funding, infrastructure delivery and land acquisition powers
- Promoting West Northamptonshire to potential inward investors

### Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (IDS) and Standardised Charging System

The Infrastructure Delivery Strategy (IDS) will set out answers to the key questions associated with the sustainable growth and regeneration of West Northamptonshire:

- What infrastructure is likely to be required?
- When is it likely to be required?
- How much will it cost?
- How will it be paid for?
- Who is responsible for delivering it?
- Who is responsible for maintaining it?

Consultation on the first draft of the IDS is scheduled for the middle of 2008.

One of the key issues for the IDS is how the contribution of new development to infrastructure is calculated. WNDC is proposing to adopt a standardised charging system approach based on the models already adopted in Milton Keynes and London Thames Gateway. Consultation on the standardised charge is scheduled for Spring 2008.

Table 4 Key Commercial Deliverables

|   | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 <sup>5</sup> | Total   |
|---|---------|---------|----------------------|---------|
| <b>Commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) given planning permission</b>                        | 219,734 | 196,304 | 82,058               | 498,096 |
| <b>Commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) given reserved matters planning permissions</b>      | 65,326  | 66,139  | 36,360               | 167,825 |
| <b>Commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) started (with planning permission from WNDC)</b>     | 53,758  | 77,456  | 65,342               | 196,556 |
| <b>Commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) completions (with planning permission from WNDC)</b> | 26,743  | 38,065  | 72,965               | 137,774 |
| <b>Commercial floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>) created by WNDC's Growth Fund</b>                    | 8,637   | 37,045  | 54,318               | 100,000 |
| <b>No. of jobs created by WNDC's Growth Fund</b>  | 157     | 672     | 985                  | 1,813   |

<sup>5</sup> At the current time there is insufficient information on the nature and types of commercial planning applications for 2010/11. Detailed targets will be set in the 2010/11 Business Plan.

## Town centres

- 4.4** The three West Northamptonshire towns of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester all have long histories as centres of trade and commerce. RSS8 reflects national planning policy in looking to promote the vitality and viability of existing retail centres by focussing new investment within city, town and district centres. Planning policy provides for this focus through the application of a sequential test.
- 4.5** The three district councils (Northampton, Daventry and South Northants) play the lead role for the public sector in promoting their town centres. During this Corporate Planning period WNDC will support them by:
- Determining strategic planning applications for town centre development
  - Making development land available through the use of our funding, infrastructure delivery and land acquisition powers
- 4.6** During the last Corporate Plan period, WNDC committed itself to delivering improvements to the quality of all three town centres. In Northampton we worked with the County Council to develop and deliver the first phase of improvements in the public realm. This project is investing £3.6m in the streetscape at Black Lion Hill, Marefair and Gold Street. We also invested £1.4m into the redevelopment of the Royal & Derngate Theatres, the development of 82 Derngate to enhance the offer of the Rennie Mackintosh designed house at 78 Derngate and the conversion of space at the Fishmarket into an arts gallery. We provided £6.7m for land acquisitions and highway improvements in Daventry, and £2.6m for the redevelopment of the Moat Lane site.

## Utilities

- 4.7** Growth will increase the call on power, water and waste management services. Although, as set out in Part 2 of this document, WNDC's sustainability requirements are designed to ensure major housing developments minimise their impact on these services additional utility provision will be required. These services are normally funded and delivered in two ways. Utilities required to directly support new development are requisitioned and paid for by developers. The utility companies can also invest their own resources to maintain and upgrade their assets. These investments are approved by the relevant utility regulator as the cost of financing these investments is normally passed on to the customer.
- 4.8** The absence of an up to date local spatial planning framework makes utility planning more difficult. In the medium term this will be addressed by the local authorities in the Local Development Framework. They are currently leading on an integrated Water Cycle Strategy and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for West Northamptonshire.
- 4.9** During the last Corporate Plan period, WNDC invested significant funding in the delivery of strategic flood mitigation in Northampton. This included £10.8m on Phase 4 of the Northampton Brownfield which in addition to delivering the second phase of flood attenuation at Upton, secured infrastructure at south-west Sixfields, and gateway access at Ransome Road and Bedford Road; and £7.4m on the Northampton Flood Mitigation Works, which delivered the final phase of the strategic flood attenuation scheme for the town at Upton.

## Community

- 4.10** Community infrastructure is required to support population growth and deliver a better quality of life. It includes multi-use community buildings, higher and further education facilities, schools, health centres and hospitals, libraries, policing and emergency services, sport, culture and leisure, green spaces, public and open space, public realm improvements and public art.
- 4.11** For all major planning applications, a programme for delivering community infrastructure will be set out within the s106 legal agreement. This will either be negotiated by WNDC, as a conventional s106 agreement, or agreed under a standardised charging system. While the development sector contributes to community infrastructure through planning obligations, the vast majority of funding will come from Government Departments and their regional and local agencies. In the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR2007), the Treasury recognised the importance of the role all Government Departments play in delivering sustainable growth and introduced a cross-Departmental Public Service Agreement (PSA20). This commits spending departments, collectively responsible for transport, environment, rural affairs, education, health, culture & leisure, crime & emergency services, and welfare benefits, to a range of specific actions to ensure their policies and spending support growth areas such as West Northamptonshire.
- 4.12** Local service providers will be primarily responsible for attracting additional funds and resources from Whitehall for growth, and for planning and delivering any infrastructure that is required. During this Corporate Planning period, WNDC will support their work by making an element of match funding available from planning obligations and Growth Funding. WNDC will also monitor how Government Departments discharge their PSA20 responsibilities to ensure West Northamptonshire receives the support it requires through its planning decisions and associated s106 agreements.
- 4.13** In the last Corporate Planning period, WNDC supported a number of community infrastructure projects. This included an £800,000 investment at King's Park to enhance the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs conference centre facilities and community-based youth development programme, and a £250,000 investment in CCTV in Northampton Town Centre.

## Transport

- 4.14** Growth will create additional demand to travel. Through our planning decisions, we need to secure local jobs and ensure that new employment is located so as to minimise long distance commuting. This minimises the impact of growth on the national trunk road network. Nevertheless, the use of local and strategic routes will increase as West Northamptonshire realises its role as a growing gateway economy. This will require additional transport infrastructure that supports social inclusion, minimises environmental damage and promotes economic development.
- 4.15** A significant level of funding for additional transport infrastructure comes from developers through planning obligations. However, the majority will come from the public sector, either through mainstream funding provided by the Department for Transport or from growth specific funding such as the Growth Fund and the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF). The County Council is the main conduit for transport funding and the main delivery agency. Following widespread consultation, they have adopted a "Transport Strategy for Growth" which sets out their infrastructure priorities. The main principle behind the strategy is that transport is not a means in itself, but a means to deliver other economic, social and environmental objectives more effectively. Although CIF will be the main funding source for transport related growth projects, WNDC will consider supporting transport projects in this Corporate Plan period with our Growth Funding.
- 4.16** In the first round of CIF, Northamptonshire County Council was allocated £20m to invest in three transport infrastructure projects in West Northamptonshire by March 2008:
- **Cross Valley Link Road** – This is a £9m project to unlock new development sites within the South West district, provides strategic flood management for Northampton as a whole, and connects the south west district and areas south of the town to the Weedon Road and future development at Upton Lodge and Upton.
  - **Sandy Lane Improvements North**<sup>6</sup> – This is a £7m project to deliver a high quality road with pedestrian and cycle facilities from the A428 through to the Sandy Lane Relief Road as part of the connection between existing communities and employment areas in the north and emerging development to the south and west of the town.
  - **Sandy Lane Relief Road** – This £4m project will assist in connecting areas to the south of the town and emerging development in the south west district with existing and future residential and employment areas in the north of the town.

<sup>6</sup> The delivery timetable for both Sandy Lane schemes has subsequently been extended by the Department for Transport to March 2009.

**4.17** To support the delivery of these targets, WNDC will be pursuing several major regeneration projects during the first year of the corporate plan period. These are likely to include:

#### Castle Station:

This project will enable the regeneration of Northampton's Castle Station to provide a new gateway to Northampton town centre. The revised master plan will identify opportunities to create a transport interchange hub for the town and enable the project to move forward into its first phase of development.

#### Northampton Public Realm:

There are already public realm improvements to Northampton town centre being seen, with £3.6 million being invested in the streetscape at Black Lion Hill, Marefair and Gold Street. This work will create an attractive environment for Northampton town centre, attract visitors and investors and improve the town for residents.

#### Avon Nunn Mills:

This project will transform the Avon, Nunn Mills and Ransome Road sites for mixed use development and create junction improvements at the Nunn Mills and Bedford Road. The project will become a strategic gateway to Northampton, providing housing opportunities at Northampton's Waterside.

#### Daventry iHub Building:

The iHub will be an example of sustainable construction and a significant gateway building for Daventry. The building will be the result of a collaboration between WNDC, The University of Northampton and Daventry District Council to build a top class information hub and office accommodation. WNDC will be leading on the procurement and construction of the building providing funding of £2 million towards the project.

Table 5 Key Infrastructure Deliverables

|   | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 <sup>7</sup> | Total |
|---|---------|---------|----------------------|-------|
| <b>Planning contributions secured (£m)</b>                    | 215     | 161     | 20                   | 396   |
| <b>Planning contributions invested in infrastructure (£m)</b> | 15      | 23      | 34                   | 72    |

Table 6 Growth Area Funding Allocation to Support Infrastructure Deliverables

| Growth Fund Allocation | Allocation 2008/09 | Indicative Allocation 2009/10 & 2010/11 | Total       |
|------------------------|--------------------|---|-------------|
| <b>Capital</b>         | £13,181,905        | £16,458,662                             | £29,640,568 |
| <b>Revenue</b>         | £200,000           | £280,000                                | £480,000    |
| <b>Total</b>           | £13,381,905        | £16,738,662                             | £30,120,568 |

## 5 Running the Business

### WNDC Board

- 5.1** WNDC is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by Communities and Local Government. WNDC's thirteen Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. All appointments are made on merit following open competition, in line with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Six of the appointees were nominated by local authorities: two by Northampton Borough Council, two by Northamptonshire County Council, and one each from Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire District Council.
- 5.2** Board members were appointed in March 2005 for an initial term of either two or three years. Appointments could then be renewed for a further three year period. Ten Board members were reappointed during the last Corporate Plan period. One each of the nominees from the Borough and County Councils have been replaced by new nominees from these bodies.
- 5.3** The Chairman, Keith Barwell, was appointed in January 2005 for an initial three year term. He was reappointed for a further six months in January 2008. We are currently recruiting a new Chairman to start work in July 2008.
- 5.4** In 2008/9 the board intend to set up two new committees to support WNDC's delivery agenda. The first will review progress on our key projects and planning applications. The second will focus on delivery improvements in corporate and organisational performance.

### WNDC Planning Committees

- 5.5** WNDC has set up Planning Committees for each of its three areas. The Board has delegated its powers to decide applications to these Committees. These Committees include Board members and representatives from the relevant local authority.
- 5.6** WNDC's Board has also delegated its powers for determining a defined range of applications to the Director of Planning and Development and his team. Details of the scheme of delegation can be found on WNDC's website.

Table 5 WNDC Board members

| Board member             | Nominating body (if applicable) | Term of Office |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Keith Barwell (Chair)    |                                 | June 2008      |
| John Weir (Deputy Chair) |                                 | March 2011     |
| Cllr Sandra Barnes       | South Northants Council         | March 2011     |
| Lee Barron               | Northampton Borough Council     | March 2010     |
| Mary Burrows             |                                 | March 2011     |
| Cllr Richard Church      | Northamptonshire County Council | March 2011     |
| David Dickinson          |                                 | March 2010     |
| John Farrow              |                                 | March 2010     |
| Cllr Chris Millar        | Daventry District Council       | March 2010     |
| Cllr Ben Smith           | Northamptonshire County Council | March 2010     |
| Ann Tate                 |                                 | March 2010     |
| Nick Thompson            |                                 | March 2011     |
| Cllr Tony Woods          | Northampton Borough Council     | March 2011     |

Table 6 WNDC Planning Committees

|                                       | Northampton                      | Daventry                   | Towcester            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>WNDC Board Members<sup>7</sup></b> | Ann Tate (Chair)                 | Cllr Sandra Barnes (Chair) | Mary Burrows (Chair) |
|                                       | Cllr Chris Millar (Deputy Chair) | John Weir (Deputy Chair)   | John Weir            |
|                                       | David Dickinson                  | Lee Barron                 | Nick Thompson        |
|                                       | Nick Thompson                    | Mary Burrows               | Lee Barron           |
|                                       | John Weir                        | Cllr Richard Church        | Cllr Tony Woods      |
| <b>Local Authority Councillors</b>    | Cllr Penelope Flavell            | Cllr Wendy Amos            | Cllr Stephen Clarke  |
|                                       | Cllr Jean Hawkins                | Cllr Ken Melling           | Cllr Diana Dallyn    |
|                                       | Cllr Brian Hoare                 | Cllr Daniel Cribbin        | Cllr Andrew Wilby    |
| <b>Local Authority Substitutes</b>    | Cllr Colin Lill                  | Cllr Kay Hemmings          | Cllr Rebecca Breese  |
|                                       | Vacancy                          | Vacancy                    | Vacancy              |
|                                       | Vacancy                          | Vacancy                    | Vacancy              |

<sup>7</sup> All WNDC Board Members are qualified as substitutes for WNDC Planning Committees subject to WNDC's policy approach which seeks to ensure that elected members do not normally sit on the Committee for the area they represent.

## Structural arrangements

- 5.7** Since our establishment in December 2004, WNDC has developed an organisational structure that is competency focused, with teams that delivered development control, regeneration and infrastructure delivery, corporate, financial and other services.
- 5.8** However, as we move into delivery stage, Prince2 style “Delivery Teams” with a mix of skills, brought together for specific projects (such as a planning application, the delivery of a specific piece of infrastructure or the development and publication of a document) become better suited to the tasks in hand. The whole process is supported by the “Programme Management Office” as a centre of excellence in project development, monitoring and delivery.

## Key Performance Indicators

- 5.9** WNDC’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are aligned to the central role the successful delivery of projects has for the organisation. At project initiation stage, Senior Responsible Officers (SROs) sign up to deliver project outcomes and outputs with a given resource to an agreed timetable. They also identify the key risks to delivery. During the lifetime of the project, SROs report progress on a regular basis. However, should there be any variance (outside an agreed tolerance) on any of the KPIs (outcomes, budget, time and risk) an immediate exceptions report is made – together with a plan to bring the project back on schedule.
- 5.10** The Chief Executive will report progress on projects to a “Programme and Delivery” Committee to be established by the Board in the first quarter of 2008/09. This Committee will comprise seven Board members and be chaired by David Dickinson.

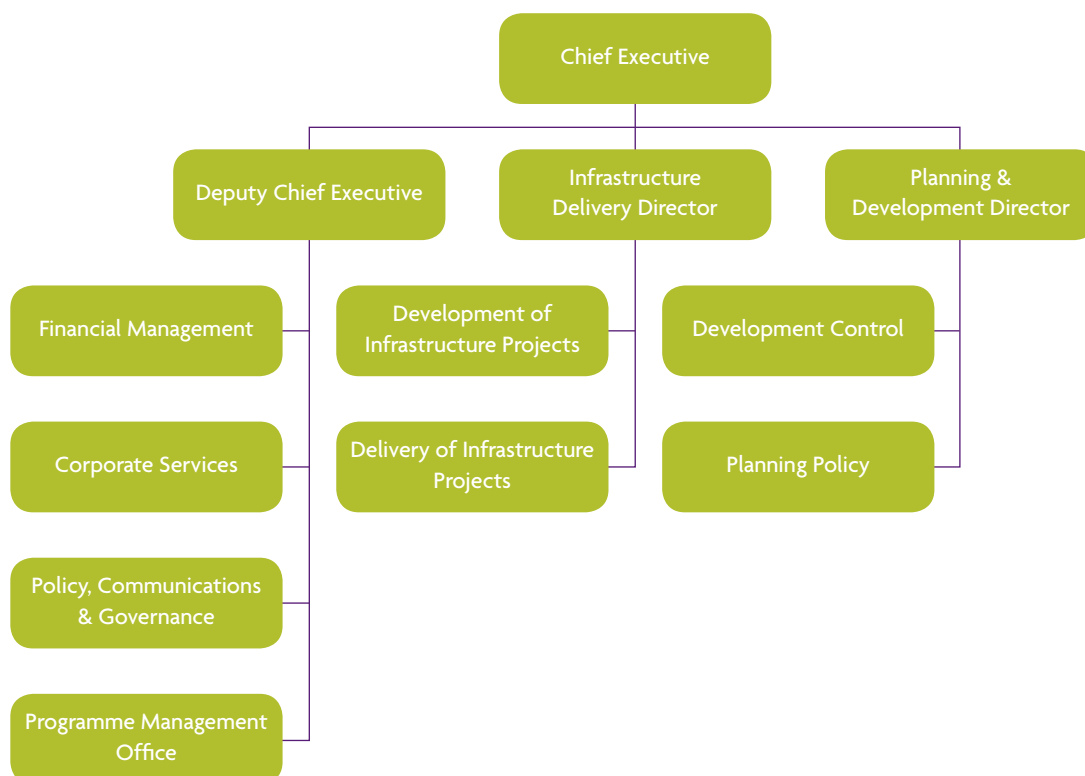


Fig.2: WNDC’s Organisational Structure

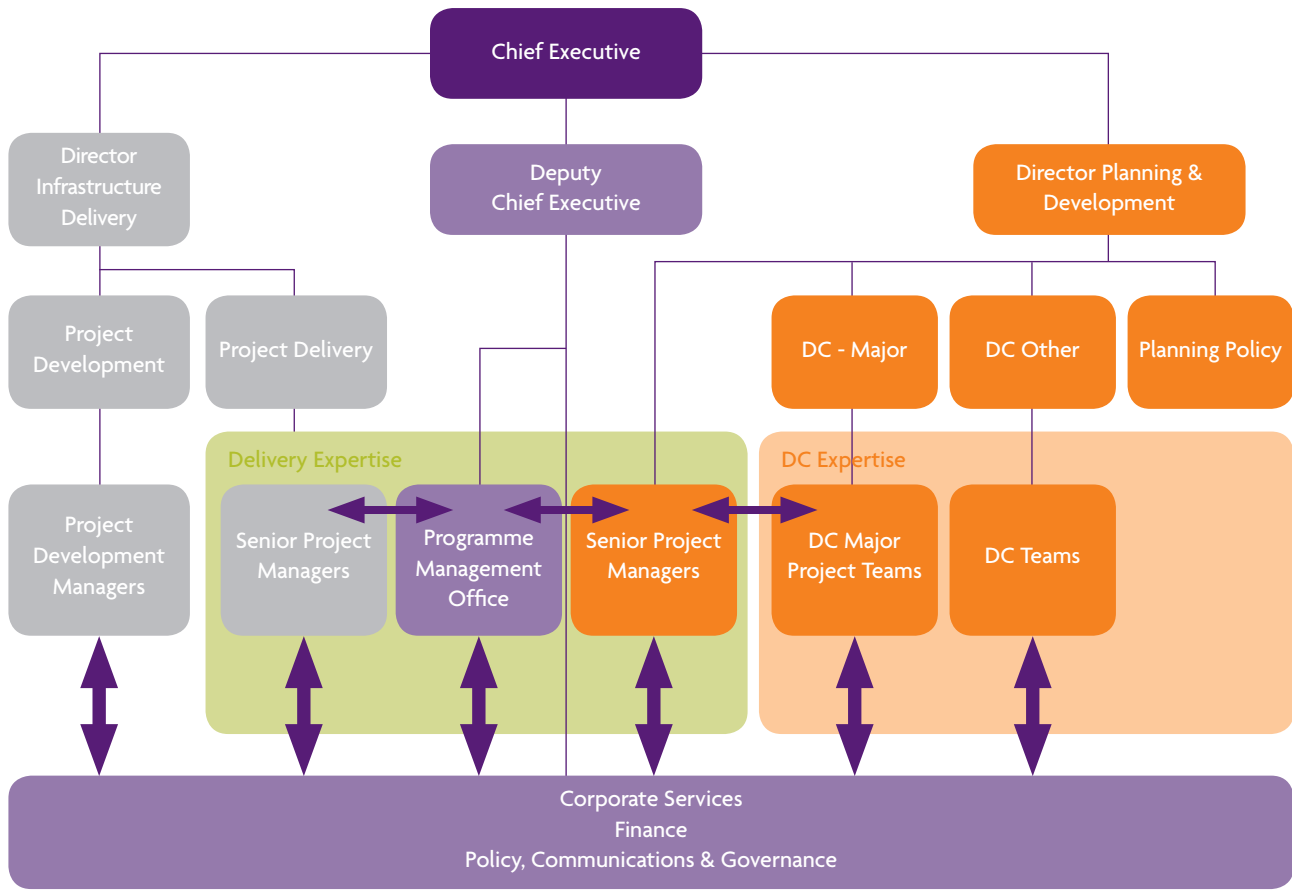


Fig.3: WND's Delivery Structure

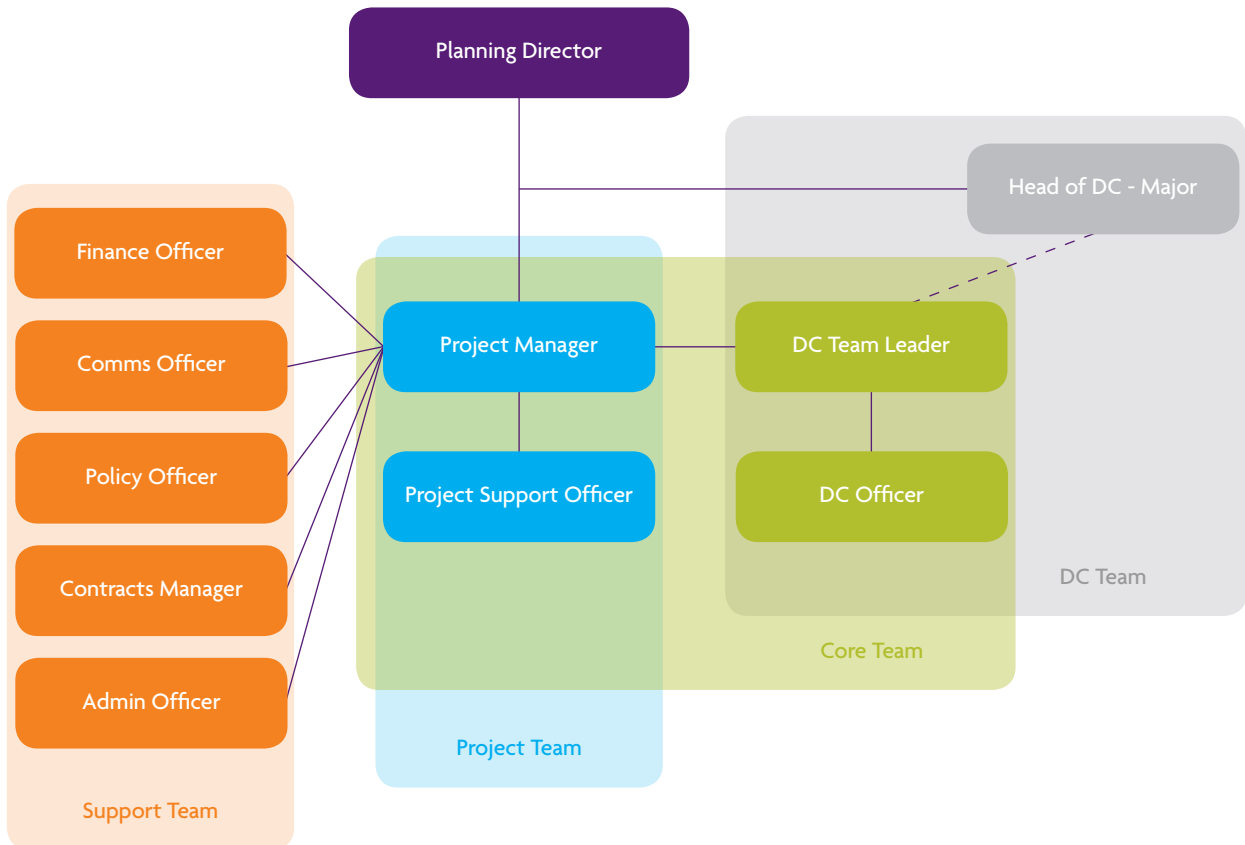


Fig.4: Typical Delivery Team Structure

## 6 Conclusions

**6.1** During the first half of this Corporate Planning period, WNDC will determine a significant number of planning applications that, subject to approval, will enable West Northamptonshire's housing trajectory to be met. In the second half of the Corporate Plan period, WNDC will focus more on the delivery of infrastructure that enables planning approvals to be turned into real houses on the ground.

**6.2** Throughout the Corporate Plan period, WNDC will work with developers to ensure delivery of the Government's aspirations on design quality, environmental performance and the integration of new housing with existing communities. We will also work with developers and public sector partners to enable the delivery of supporting infrastructure that makes new housing sustainable.

**6.3** During the Corporate Planning period WNDC expects to deliver the outputs recorded below:

Table 7 WNDC's Key Deliverables

|                       |  | 2008/09            | 2009/10          | 2010/11        | Total             |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| <b>Housing</b>        | No. of outline residential planning permissions (affordable)                             | 11,600<br>( 3,850) | 8,734<br>(3,947) | 1,712<br>(560) | 22,046<br>(8,357) |
|                       | No. of reserved matters residential planning permissions (affordable)                    | 1,045<br>(314)     | 1,719<br>(516)   | 2,505<br>(752) | 5,269<br>(1,582)  |
|                       | No. of housing starts - with planning permissions from WNDC (affordable)                 | 935<br>(280)       | 844<br>(253)     | 1,050<br>(315) | 2,829<br>(848)    |
|                       | No. of housing completions - with planning permissions from WNDC (affordable)            | 801<br>(240)       | 935<br>(280)     | 844<br>(253)   | 2,580<br>(773)    |
|                       | No. of housing units enabled by WNDC's Growth Fund                                       | 653                | 2,803            | 4,109          | 7,565             |
| <b>Commercial</b>     | Commercial floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> ) given planning permission                        | 219,734            | 196,304          | 82,058         | 498,096           |
|                       | Commercial floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> ) given reserved matters planning permissions      | 65,326             | 66,139           | 36,360         | 167,825           |
|                       | Commercial floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> ) started (with planning permission from WNDC)     | 53,758             | 77,456           | 65,342         | 196,556           |
|                       | Commercial floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> ) completions (with planning permission from WNDC) | 26,743             | 38,065           | 72,966         | 137,774           |
|                       | Commercial floorspace (m <sup>2</sup> ) created by WNDC's Growth Fund                    | 8,637              | 37,045           | 54,318         | 100,000           |
|                       | No. of jobs created by WNDC's Growth Fund  | 157                | 672              | 984            | 1,813             |
| <b>Infrastructure</b> | Planning contributions secured (£m)  | 215                | 161              | 20             | 396               |
|                       | Planning contributions invested in infrastructure (£m)                                   | 15                 | 23               | 34             | 72                |
| <b>Quality</b>        | Building for Life Silver Standard achieved on 100% of developments over 50 units         |                    |                  |                |                   |
|                       | Code Level 3 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2010      |                    |                  |                |                   |
|                       | Code Level 4 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2013      |                    |                  |                |                   |
|                       | Code Level 6 achieved on 100% of residential developments to be delivered post-2016      |                    |                  |                |                   |
|                       | BREEAM Very Good achieved on 100% of non-residential development                         |                    |                  |                |                   |

# Budget

Annex

## Annex Budget

- 1 WNDC's proposed budget for 2008/11 enables us to deliver the outputs set out in this Corporate Plan. It has been prepared using the principles of activity based costing. This enables us to accurately identify what resources deliver in terms of both infrastructure and development control projects.
- 2 Infrastructure delivery costs allow for the planning, development and delivery of projects. Development Control costs relate to individual planning applications and have been broken down into their constituent stages of pre-application, determination, approval of reserve matters and monitoring.
- 3 Individual project costs have then been assigned to one of eight location areas included in our delivery programme. The assignment of costs in this way enables us to identify the resource required to bring a particular development location forward. Corporate costs have been identified separately.
- 4 There are three sources of funding for the budget. The largest proportion is grant-in-aid provided by our sponsor Department, Communities and Local Government. This includes support for our general running costs and for our development control service. The other two sources of funding are planning fees and the recharge of staff time to projects.  
  
Grant in Aid from Communities and Local Government for the Corporate Plan for 2008/09 contains a performance element. Confirmed grant is £3.1m with a further £900,000 available subject to performance against targets in-year.  
  
Grant in Aid for 2009/10 and 2010/11 is indicative and will be confirmed annually in line with parliamentary procedures.

### WNDC - Budget 2008/2011

| Description  | Total Budget 08/09<br>£k | Total Budget 09/10<br>£k | Total Budget 10/11<br>£k |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Northampton Town Centre</b>                     | 1,277                    | 1,404                    | 1,675                    |
| <b>Northampton North - Dallington/ Kings Heath</b> | 315                      | 245                      | 208                      |
| <b>Northampton South West</b>                      | 427                      | 332                      | 290                      |
| <b>Northampton Waterside</b>                       | 771                      | 608                      | 700                      |
| <b>Northampton Other</b>                           | 136                      | 81                       | 51                       |
| <b>Daventry</b>                                    | 743                      | 504                      | 555                      |
| <b>Towcester</b>                                   | 308                      | 207                      | 171                      |
|  | <b>3,977</b>             | <b>3,381</b>             | <b>3,650</b>             |
| <b>Corporate</b>                                   | 1,540                    | 1,617                    | 1,700                    |
| <b>Contingency</b>                                 | 430                      | 452                      | ,0                       |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                | <b>5,947</b>             | <b>5,450</b>             | <b>5,350</b>             |
| <b>Funded by:</b>                                  |                          |                          |                          |
| GIA  | 4,000                    | 4,000                    | 4,000                    |
| GAF3 PM Recharge                                   | 817                      | 500                      | 500                      |
| DC Planning income                                 | 1,130                    | 950                      | 850                      |
|  | <b>5,947</b>             | <b>5,450</b>             | <b>5,350</b>             |
| <b>Breakdown by Activity:</b>                      |                          |                          |                          |
| Planning Applications                              | 2,336                    | 1,619                    | 1,432                    |
| Regeneration Projects                              | 1,642                    | 1,763                    | 2,218                    |
| Corporate  | 1,540                    | 1,617                    | 1,700                    |
| Contingency  | 430                      | 452                      | 0                        |
|  | <b>5,947</b>             | <b>5,450</b>             | <b>5,350</b>             |

# Audit & Risk

Annex

## Annex Audit & Risk

### Accounting Officer

**1** The Chief Executive Officer is appointed Accounting Officer for WNDC by the Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer of Communities and Local Government. In this role, the Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring propriety in WNDC's actions, achieving value for money in line with the framework specified by the Department in WNDC's Financial Memorandum and Management Statement, and managing risk. The board have established an Audit and Risk Committee to work with the Chief Executive on matters of propriety and a Corporate Performance Committee has been established to provide advice and support to the Chief Executive on the effectiveness of the corporate and organisation arrangements in place to support the delivery programme. There are five members of the Corporate Performance Committee - Nick Thompson (Chair), Ann Tate, David Dickinson, Cllr Richard Church and Cllr Chris Millar.

### Audit

**2** WNDC's internal auditing function is provided by Communities and Local Government's Internal Audit Service. The Comptroller and Auditor General (National Audit Office) is appointed by statute to externally audit WNDC, and reports to Parliament on the truth and fairness of the financial statements in the annual accounts and the regularity of income and expenditure. The Comptroller and Auditor general also has statutory powers to report on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which WNDC has used its resources.

**3** The Board has established an Audit and Risk Committee. The Committee advises the Accounting Officer and the WNDC Board on the adequacy of the Corporation's risk management and internal control arrangements. The Committee carries out its work by testing and challenging the assurances which are available to the Accounting Officer, the way in which these assurances are developed and the management priorities and approaches on which these assurances are premised. The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by Cllr Chris Millar and its members are Mary Burrows and David Dickinson<sup>8</sup>. Representatives from our internal and external auditors and our sponsor department attend meetings of the Committee.

### Risk Management

**4** WNDC's approach to risk management is set out in our risk management policy. We have sought to embed best practice within the organisation to empower staff to be innovative and take well-managed risks where this would support the organisation's objectives.

- Strategic level risks are managed by the Executive Team of Chief Executive and Directors. They review these risks on a regular basis and take appropriate action when required.
- Day to day organisational and operational risks are managed by a Management Board of senior managers. These risks are also reviewed on a regular basis.
- Delivery risks are identified for each project, and the Senior Responsible Officer ensures each project has a risk register which is regularly reviewed.

<sup>8</sup> David Dickinson will step down from the Audit and Risk Committee in 2008 to focus on his new role as Chair of the Programme and Delivery Committee.



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