

**Wicken Parish Council**  
**Response to Spatial Options Consultation 24th December 2021**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
Q1 Is this vision appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire up to 2050	The document does not cover all of the options that should be considered and lacks any true visionary element. See Question 30.
Q2 Are the 'Green and Clean' spatial Objectives 1 to 4 appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire.	The wording of these options, particularly Objective 1, are weak and ineffectual because it does not provide proof of how these commitments will be met.
Q8 Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Northampton, as the principal urban area, as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire.	Northampton already has 55% of the population in West Northamptonshire and holds the best transport connections in the county. The town's desire to become a city would be enhanced by accepting additional population growth to bring it nearer to 300,000
Q23 Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Brackley and Towcester, as rural service centres, as part of the spatial strategy for west Northamptonshire.	The comments in Q25 and Q30 are relevant in respect of not creating dormitory communities for more distant employment locations because local ones do not exist.
Q25 Do you agree that spatial option 4b - Towcester South and Racecourse – has the potential to deliver residential development?	The concern is that any new development on that site would create even greater problems on an already overcrowded A5 southbound toward Milton Keynes.
Q26 Do you agree that new settlements have a potential role in delivering growth as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire.	Any new settlement would need to be situated sufficiently far from other communities so that they are not overwhelmed. Patterns of employment and behaviours need to be radically altered to meet climate change challenges before 2030. The paper lacks any deep analysis of these factors. The need for new settlements is therefore questionable.
Q28. Do you agree that spatial option 5b – Growth at Milton Keynes North West/Old Stratford- has the potential to support a new settlement?	<p>Any suggestion of such scale of housing requires providing all the necessary infrastructure before any expansion can begin.</p> <p>Therefore, the area identified for a potential new settlement is unsuitable for all of the following reasons.</p> <p>A new settlement implies that the area will already have or will acquire before completion all parts of the infrastructure for it to integrate into the surrounding communities.</p> <p>A new settlement of this size (larger than Towcester at 9,252 in 2011 and Brackley at 13,018 in the same year) would force coalescence with neighbouring towns and villages removing their identity.</p>

	<p>The new settlement is likely to become a commuter community for Milton Keynes thus increasing carbon emissions from residents trying to access it.</p> <p>Based on ONS statistics the 6,055 houses would on average accommodate 14,532 new people driving demand on local services.</p> <p>This site is within the scope of the MK 2050 vision which recommends a mass transit system running up toward Potterspurty. If this occurs then it should be operational before a commitment to further housing in this area.</p> <p>Currently, the nearest railway stations are 3.3 and 5.3 miles away neither with direct public transport services.</p> <p>The 6,055 houses would generate an additional 8,477 (ONS data) cars and vans which would place an excessive burden on the already overloaded road network at this junction.</p> <p>The additional cars plus the increased HGV activity would inevitably create extra rubber particulate pollution which could adversely affect the health of anyone living on this site.</p> <p>Based on similar developments elsewhere the new housing would require the building of one secondary school and three primary schools which would need to be in place before completion. Journeys to school need to be designed to be safe walking routes to combat climate change from vehicle emissions.</p> <p>The additional 14,532 would need an additional 7 GPs to meet service level standards which would need to be supported by their own infrastructure plus an extended community health workforce to provide cover. Milton Keynes Hospital has 553 beds but is already trying to meet the need for developments within the MK authority. New funding is expected under HIP 2 but is still in its very early stages. No large developments can be contemplated until this is confirmed to be in place before the housing completions.</p> <p>The number of residents on this site would constitute 96% of the projected population growth between 2020 and 2050 which means that any housing need elsewhere in the county would be ignored. There is no indication in the analysis that housing need is not evenly spread across West Northamptonshire.</p> <p>The proposed site has extremely poor transport connections which are already overstressed daily. The A508 and A5 become a default diversion route should the M1 be</p>
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	<p>experiencing problems. The A508 and A422 are used for vehicles moving between the M1 and M40.</p> <p>We have yet to see the impact of the rail freight terminal at Courteenhall which is predicted to generate 26,000 HGV movements per day, a proportion of which may access the A508 southbound and add to congestion at the Old Stratford roundabout.</p> <p>The business park proposed at Old Stratford is expected to have 24/7 distribution leading to higher HGV journeys in this location.</p> <p>The new settlement would require a focal centre if it is to thrive but the housing would be dissected by the A5 diminishing this possibility. Although there are some gaps between Deanshanger and the site as well as Potterspury and the housing, the overall effect will be one of coalescence losing the distinctiveness of local communities. The ancient village of Furtho with its Grade II 12<sup>th</sup> Century church would be overwhelmed. (see Objective 4 of Green and Clean Priority)</p> <p>Concerns have also been raised locally about the inadequacy of the local water and sewerage systems to cope, the frequency of power cuts in this area and the risk from flooding as shown on the GOV.UK mapping service for this location.</p> <p>The considerable increase in buildings would magnify the local sky glow thus harming the rural nature of surrounding communities.</p> <p>Unless evidence is provided of each issue being irrevocably resolved then this area should not be under consideration.</p>
<p>Q29 What approach do you think the WNSP should take in the rural areas, in particular the level of growth that may be appropriate and where that growth could be best accommodated?</p>	<p>The WNSP already recognises that rural areas have over-produced in terms of additional dwellings but that growth may need to slow significantly now that the “low hanging fruit” has been picked. The current identity of rural communities is based on their cultural heritage which should be preserved and celebrated.</p> <p>Rural communities may well become the future remote working hubs as digital connectivity is rolled out in these locations. The infrastructure needs become different when fewer individuals need to commute to a place of employment.</p>
<p>Q30 Are there any other spatial options that we should be considering?</p>	<p>The impact of climate change will force a re-assessment of the proximity of places of employment to the residential location of its workforce.</p>

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	<p>The reduction in journeys for those who cannot work remotely requires enhanced public transport integration but also a greater reliance on working within walking/cycling distance of one's home.</p> <p>The spatial options analysis should prefer locations with existing rail and other transport links.</p> <p>The analysis must also identify all sites which are brownfield and not already earmarked for residential development before any greenfield sites are selected. This has been confirmed by the Prime Minister as a preferred course of action.</p> <p>It would also be recommended that WNC pursue a policy of the majority of houses built being classified as "affordable" at the point of sale.</p>
Q 31 Other comments	<p>The projected population increase to 2050 is 57,288 in West Northamptonshire of which 15,106 is estimated to be within South Northamptonshire. Based on ONS statistics the overall number of new dwellings should only be 23,870 (2.4 per dwelling) and South Northamptonshire's housing need is 6,317.</p>