

CLASP submission West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit concerning the Joint Core Strategy

Background:

The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit <http://www.westnorthamptonshirejpu.org/>, is a combination of planning representatives from Daventry and South Northants District Council, Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire Borough Council established by Statute to deliver many thousands of new homes, employment areas and associated infrastructure throughout their area. The Unit through their Strategic Planning Committee are currently creating an Joint Core Strategy.

As a result of press reports and research by local historian and archaeologist Alan CLARK, a CLASP member co-opted to the Organising Committee, the Secretary of the Organising Committee, Dave Hayward made a 'three minute' statement to the WNJPU Committee on 6th July 2009. This statement both reflected CLASP's concerns at the lack of protection to the archaeological heritage of this area included in the emergent Strategy Document and the offer of liaison with CLASP to ensure the required standards within the Strategy Document are achieved . Alan Clark also made a presentation in his own right that fully complemented the CLASP statement.

The meeting was heavily attended by the public with a protest demonstration outside. CLASP was not and would not be involved in demonstrations of this nature. A brief interview was given to BBC Radio Northampton outlining our concerns.

After the meeting a representative of WNJPU proactively spoke to us and stated that they would be contacting us to establish a way forward in due course. There is now a six week public consultation period on this document, after due consideration CLASP will be making a formal written submission to this consultation.

The CLASP submission follows.

Submission by Community Landscape Archaeology Project

Good evening ladies and gentlemen, my name is David Hayward and I am here to represent CLASP, in full the Community Landscape Archaeology Project, a registered charity investigating the Archaeological Landscape of West Northamptonshire. Our geographical sphere of interest encompasses significant parts of the areas covered by the three District planning authorities that comprise your Committee, albeit principally but not exclusively the rural area. Our primary work at present is characterising the Romano British Landscape area roughly bounded by and including the Roman towns of Bannaventa near Daventry, Towcester and Duston/ Upton. We are currently investigating, one way or another, up to thirty-two sites in this area, we do not see this total as exhaustive. This does not include the archaeology of the prehistoric, post Roman, medieval and industrial eras that to all of the indications we have are as equally rich.

We are keen to ensure that your Strategy Document includes a vigorous structure to ensure that adequate provision is made for the proactive identification, investigation, recording and where appropriate conservation of our archaeological heritage. It is our view that this should be a primary principal when deciding the appropriateness of proposed development sites.

We would also hope that your Document included provision to ensure that this work was carried out in such a way that there was proper involvement by the commercial, academic and community archaeological spheres.

Consideration also needs to be given as to the long term archiving of the material located from these exploratory investigations.

CLASP would be prepared to provide the views and experience of the community archaeology sector when finalising your document. We have worked closely with WNDG on certain sites under their purview and have provided evidence to the current appeals at Daventry.

If it is of assistance to you please visit us at one of our current sites to understand more of what lays beneath the surface and could be lost if proper investigation is not undertaken.

I must say at present that your document appears silent on these issues.