

Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension

Masterplan Framework Document

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2023

1.0 Introduction

Planning Context

- 1.1 Rushden is experiencing significant expansion and development, it is identified as a growth town in the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031) (NNJCS).
- 1.2 Rushden East is one of the largest sustainable urban extensions (SUE) planned across North Northamptonshire. It aims to deliver around 2,700 new homes (of which approximately 1,600 are projected to be completed within the JCS plan period up to 2031) and provide a wide range of employment opportunities (which the Council expects will broadly match the number of homes in terms of jobs growth), together with supporting community facilities, greenspace and infrastructure within the next 15 years. The development of the SUE will make a significant contribution to the much-needed growth in housing and jobs at Rushden and Higham Ferrers.
- 1.3 The strategic allocation and the broad location for Rushden East is set out in the NNJCS (Policy 33), with delivery principles and site boundaries set out in the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (ENLPP2) (Policy EN33), which is progressing towards adoption.
- 1.4 The NNJCS was adopted in 2016 and covers the period from 2011 to 2031. Policy 33 is also supported by the Rushden East SUE Background Paper (updated January 2015).
- 1.5 The preparation of a Masterplan Framework Document is a requirement of Policy 33 of the NNJCS, as is the requirement to set out further delivery principles, including the site boundaries, through the ENLPP2, which will provide guidance and policy expectations for the delivery of the SUE.
- 1.6 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out a masterplan framework for the site's development, which amplifies the policy requirements for the SUE, primarily through Policy 33 of the NNJCS and Policy EN33 of the ENLPP2. The content of the SPD will aim to guide the more detailed aspects of the SUE's delivery. The document will set out guidance for informing planning applications and development management decisions. It will be supported by a range of infrastructure including new public transport connections, and a network of walking and cycling routes, complemented by an extensive green infrastructure and public spaces - including a new town park. As well as new schools, local amenities and community centres.
- 1.7 This proposal provides a unique opportunity to deliver high quality and much needed new homes and in turn establish a greater a sense of place. The development will complement the wider area and benefit from enhanced connections to the existing town centre.

- 1.8 In delivering this development proposal, it is recognised that the SUE forms a part of the Government's portfolio of new Garden Communities across the country, which provides the opportunity to reflect the characteristics of this initiative. The expectation is that it will be achieved through high quality building design and landscaping, which will include tree lined streets and an extensive network of open space and green corridors.
- 1.9 This SPD will also seek to integrate the neighbourhood into the existing community and look to address existing concerns, such as the character of the A6 road and ensure careful consideration is given to the relationship between the proposal and the existing urban and rural edges to the development.

The Masterplan Framework

- 1.10 It is not the job of this document to resolve all the detailed matters for the SUE; setting out a masterplan framework is one stage in the development process and the scheme will continue to evolve and respond as it moves closer to implementation. This masterplan framework provides a clear context for the evolution of the SUE rather than setting out the details of the development. It does this by focussing on the key strategic matters and structuring elements of the SUE, leaving scope for the developer to bring forward the details that will be addressed through future planning applications.
- 1.11 The Council has worked closely with the site promoters and developers with an interest in the land that makes up the SUE in advance of the preparation of this SPD and the main developer consortium has submitted a planning application for the area of land it controls within the SUE that is covered by this masterplan framework. Further applications may also come forward from other developers and landowners over time to complete the implementation of the development.
- 1.12 The preparation of the masterplan framework is very significant for the development of the SUE because Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy and Policy EN33 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan make it clear that in order to avoid piece-meal development, the preparation and agreement of a comprehensive masterplan is a prerequisite before any planning applications are granted permission. Therefore, any development proposals must be consistent with the masterplan framework and must not in any way prejudice the implementation of the whole development and any future growth.
- 1.13 This will be particularly important where adjacent parts of the SUE are to be delivered by different developers. Where this occurs, developers will be required to clearly demonstrate in their planning applications how infrastructure (utilities, roads, footways and cycle routes) connects across different ownerships, avoiding ransom situations that would prevent or delay the delivery of new homes and jobs.

- 1.14 Policy 33 also requires the masterplan to be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the Local Authority and it is the Council's intention to achieve this. The masterplan framework document has evolved through a series of consultation workshops and events and follows a public consultation period. It was also subject to public examination in April/May 2022 as part of the ENLPP2, the outcome of which has been to incorporate the main delivery principles into Policy EN33 and to produce a separate planning document to set out the more detailed delivery aspects of the SUE.
- 1.15 In addition to meeting relevant development plan policy, Policy 33 also requires that the SUE delivery is informed by a project level Habitats Regulation Assessment, and that the development proposal is required to meet a number of specific local economic, environmental and social requirements as set out in greater detail in this SPD.
- 1.16 Further to the wider relevant development plan policy requirements set out in both the NNJCS and the ENLPP2, such as Policy 30 (Housing mix and tenure) in the NNJCS (and including national policy expectations), which future planning applications will be expected to take into account, there is helpful advice provided in the ten objectives set out in the Rushden East Vision Statement leaflet which was approved by East Northamptonshire Council in 2017. This also indicates that the majority of the site is being promoted for development by a main development consortium which includes the Duchy of Lancaster, Barratt Homes and Taylor Wimpey.
- 1.17 In preparing the masterplan framework it was also recognised that neighbourhood plans have been prepared and formally 'made' for both Rushden and Higham Ferrers, and that these planning documents form part of the development plan for North Northamptonshire. Whilst the ENLPP2 provides the most up to date policy guidance for delivering the SUE, the contents of the made neighbourhood plans were taken into consideration in the drafting of Policy EN33.
- 1.18 In conclusion, this SPD provides the opportunity for the masterplan framework to set out clear policy requirements for the delivery of the SUE. It does this to ensure that any application for planning permission for the SUE will result in a sustainable and attractive development that meets the long-term aspirations for economic growth; offers a high quality of life for new and existing residents, and enhances the image of the town as a whole (Policy 33, North Northamptonshire JCS 2011–2031).

How to use this document

- 1.19 In order to ensure that there is a clear link between the policy requirements in the NNJCS and the ENLPP2 and the masterplan framework set out in this SPD, each section of this document begins by setting out relevant wording from the adopted

policy for the relevant topic. All references in italics are taken directly from policies 33 and EN33 and the explanatory text in the NNJCS and ENLPP2. This is augmented by the relevant objectives taken from the 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement.

- 1.20 Each section then sets out the main features of the masterplan framework in relation to these policies and identifies detailed delivery guidance, supported by a series of plans, diagrams and precedent images. The key policy principles for delivery are set out in ENLPP2 itself.
- 1.21 It is important for applicants to note that the diagrams referenced are set out to provide an example of how development could come forward based on the key principles set out in a way that would be acceptable to the Council. However, unless otherwise specified, alternative approaches will be considered provided that a clear rationale is provided and that it adheres to the specific policies and principles identified. Applicants are encouraged at the pre-application stage to agree with the Local Planning Authority which requirements are relevant to their proposal.

2.0 The Masterplan Framework

2.1 Form and disposition

2.1.1 Policy

Policy 33 identifies the broad location for the SUE, and Policy EN33 allocates the land for the Rushden East SUE and sets out the key delivery principles.

Policy 33 sets out the following requirements in terms of the overall form and disposition of the masterplan:

(10.31) It (the masterplan) will illustrate the form and disposition of the development and establish the strategy towards matters such as land use, transport and movement, access, sustainable construction standards, open space and design. It will consider infrastructure requirements in greater detail and any necessary matters of avoiding, mitigating or compensating for environmental impacts.

(10.29) A main street will run through the development linking the roundabouts at Newton Road and John Clark Way. The local centre, or neighbourhood centre(s), will be located at accessible intersections to capture passing trade and contain a mix of uses including consideration of siting of primary schools. New homes will provide for a balanced and mixed community including family housing, affordable homes and specialist homes for the older population.

(Policy 33) It will be a new distinctive neighbourhood with its own separate identity but well connected and integrated with the town as a whole.

(Policy 33 d) The opportunity for further development beyond the current scale of development through safeguarding land and access opportunities.

(P33 i) A clear physical separation from the villages of Caldecott, Chelveston and Newton Bromswold but with footpaths and cycle ways to connect them to the new area

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Planning applications will be required to be broadly consistent with the masterplan framework document (MFD) and the principles of the Government's Garden Communities initiative.

The area shown on the local plan policies map, and defined in figure 18 above, identifies the development boundaries for the delivery of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).

The MFD will provide a spatial development context for the delivery of the site to inform future planning applications and will ensure a comprehensive approach to

site delivery. Planning applications will be required to be broadly consistent with the MFD and the principles of the Government's Garden Communities initiative.

(4) Provide clear evidence that connections for all users can be facilitated between development parcels within the SUE and further demonstrate that connections to adjacent land beyond the SUE boundaries are not prejudiced by the proposed development of the SUE. This includes the recognition of the opportunity to transform the character of the A6, whilst seeking to deliver options which are practical and deliverable.

The SUE will be developed as a sustainable place providing a range of opportunities and services that support meeting local needs on a daily basis. The development proposal will need to ensure it can demonstrate good integration within the wider setting taking into account both the natural and built environment. It will maximise sustainable travel connections and provide convenient and attractive cycle and pedestrian connections so that the proposed development is integrated with the existing communities, facilities and services in the town centres of Rushden and Higham Ferrers.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 1: Create a comprehensive development which is well-connected by all modes of transport, is highly permeable within itself, and has good linkages to Rushden, Higham Ferrers and future growth sites beyond.

2.1.2 The Masterplan

- 2.1.3 The masterplan framework (figure 2.2) indicates the overall form and disposition of the proposed development and provides further detail to the broad concept shown in figure 1.1.

Land availability / SUE boundary

- 2.1.4 As shown in figure 2.1, the majority of the land that is understood to be available for development, and is under the control of the developer consortium, falls within the indicative Policy 33 broad location boundary. There is only one area to the south east that lies outside of the indicative boundary. This is primarily green space in the developer's proposals and has therefore been incorporated into the masterplan framework. Policy EN33 allocates the land for the Rushden East SUE, which is set out in figure 18 of ENLPP2.
- 2.1.5 There is land within the allocation for the SUE (identified on the masterplan framework as the grey land) that may not currently be available for redevelopment and is under a range of different ownerships. In order to create a

deliverable proposition, the masterplan framework allows for appropriate development to come forward in these areas at a future date, should it prove suitable and acceptable in planning terms.

- 2.1.6 The only exception to the above is where a pedestrian, cycle and vehicle connection through the site is required to connect across the A6 to Hayden Road and from there into Rushden town centre. If this important policy requirement is to be achieved, then sufficient land will need to be made available to facilitate this connection and detailed proposals will need to be brought forward by the applicants to identify the preferred route.

The two neighbourhood concept

- 2.1.7 As shown in figure 2.3, the masterplan framework concept is based on the provision of two mixed-use, sustainable neighbourhoods; one to the north containing the greater proportion of the employment uses, and a slightly larger neighbourhood to the south which is predominantly residential in character and is the location for the proposed secondary school.
- 2.1.8 The two neighbourhood approach recognises that, while it will be possible to enhance the connections between the SUE and Rushden and to improve the character of the A6 corridor, the existing settlement largely backs onto the western side of the A6, while the eastern interface with the SUE is, to a large extent, covered by the grey land.
- 2.1.9 Given this position, it will be difficult to fully integrate the site with the existing town and therefore important to establish new centres and facilities within the SUE, as well a unique identity. The concept also adopts a flexible approach to the timing and format of development within the grey land, only relying on a small part of this to form the essential links with the existing settlements.
- 2.1.10 The two neighbourhoods will each have their own local centre, which will be the focus for community activity and include a primary school and local services, as well as providing space for a range of employment opportunities.
- 2.1.11 The local centres are both located on the primary street, which runs through the SUE connecting the John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts and connecting the SUE back into the existing communities.
- 2.1.12 The landscape strategy (see section 2.2) for the site is central to the masterplan framework concept. This includes an east-west green corridor link that defines the two neighbourhoods in the middle of the site and provides a connection through the grey land and across the A6 on to Hayden Road. A wide central green corridor,

which follows the watercourse through the site on a broadly north-south axis, also forms a major structuring element at the centre of both neighbourhoods.

2.2 Environmental (green infrastructure)

2.2.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(Policy 33 e) A sensitively designed environment responding to the existing landscape character and features, including how the edge of the site is treated.

(Policy 33 f) A permeable and well-connected grid of streets and new links to connect with the wider Greenway network.

(Policy 33 g) Appropriate green space, and other mitigation measures as may be required to mitigate impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area. This should include the provision of a new and attractive destination open space. A project level Habitats Regulations Assessment.

(10.25) It will be necessary to consider the impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA), and to provide adequate alternative open space on-site to mitigate an increase in visitor impacts. Account will need to be taken of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document and of the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Supplementary Planning document.

(Policy 33 h) Green spaces with the imaginative use of water to both manage drainage and make them more attractive.

(10.27) There will be high quality 'destination' open space on site as well as other natural and formal green spaces and there will also be new green infrastructure connections to the wider Greenway network. The existing landscape character and built, historic and natural environment assets within and surrounding the site will inform the nature of the built development, including the treatment of the edges to sensitively manage the change from town to country and avoid coalescence with the villages of Caldecott, Chelveston and Newton Bromswold.

(10.30) Sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water and existing watercourses should be accommodated in the development of the site. Other site-specific constraints will need to be addressed in order for development to take place. Examples may include noise attenuation measures necessary as a consequence of the proximity to the A6 and contamination issues such as the scrapyards to the south of Alexandra Road.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

A network of green corridors and public open spaces, including a central green corridor, within and around the SUE, and landscaped edges.

A comprehensive enhancement of the A6 corridor between the John Clark Way and the Newton Road, including the provision of a planting strip with additional landscaping to safeguard the future widening of the A6. Built development would be expected to either front or be located side-onto the A6 corridor.

The retention of existing hedgerows and provision of formal street tree planting, particularly on higher order streets.

Appropriate environmental and landscape measures to be incorporated into the design and construction of any proposals for large scale distribution units to ensure they are properly mitigated.

Sensitive landscape treatment of the aircraft crash site.

Environmental improvements on the approaches to the A6 bridge, including the surfacing and gradient of the footway, provision of lighting, along with improvements to the structure itself.

An urban form that responds to the wider context and character of Rushden.

A range of development with higher densities focussed around the two local centres.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) of approximately 21 hectares, supported by a Habitats Regulations Assessment

A Sustainable Urban Drainage System.

High standards of resource and energy efficiency, and reduction in carbon emissions in accordance with the requirements of Policies 9 and 33 of the Adopted Joint Core Strategy.

Viewing corridors of the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St Mary's Higham Ferrers into the detailed design and masterplanning of the SUE

The preparation and agreement of Design Codes to guide planning applications for the SUE.

A design brief, which will be prepared for the grey land to ensure a cohesive approach to development.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 5: Incorporate high-quality, connected green infrastructure of various types and characters, including tree-lined streets that link different parts of the neighbourhood.

Objective 6: Include a large new park that can accommodate events and activities, help enhance health and wellbeing, support biodiversity and cater for wildlife.

2.2.2 The Masterplan

2.2.3 Figure 2.4 shows the green infrastructure strategy incorporated within the masterplan framework.

A network of green corridors

- 2.2.4 The masterplan framework is structured around a series of green corridors and public open spaces that incorporate a strategic network of dedicated footpaths and cycle paths. This will ensure that residents will be provided with attractive, convenient and safe routes for both recreation and movement between key destinations.
- 2.2.5 One of the most important green spaces within the masterplan framework is the central green corridor, which follows the alignment of the existing watercourse running through the SUE and will not only provide a key movement corridor, but also provide drainage for the site (discussed further later in this section) and establish an attractive setting for the adjacent development.
- 2.2.6 As shown in figure 2.4, there is a Second World War aircraft crash site located within the central green corridor, immediately north of the southern local centre. Developers will need to carry out the relevant archaeological investigations in order to determine the precise area affected by the crash and ensure that it is not affected by built development. A sensitive landscape treatment will need to be provided at the site, potentially including a symbol of remembrance of some form.

The edges of the development

- 2.2.7 Careful consideration in any development proposals will need to be given to the relationship between the SUE and the existing urban and rural edges.
- 2.2.8 The response to the interface with the A6 will need to be more urban in character and address issues including noise, the potential widening of the A6 and the orientation of development. The overall aspiration is to change the character of the A6 by slowing traffic, making crossing easier and safer and introducing tree planting. Further guidance on this is provided in Section 2.3.
- 2.2.9 The eastern edge of the SUE will front onto open countryside so a more rural character will be appropriate in this location. As shown in the framework masterplan, the existing hedgerow is retained along the eastern edge of the SUE site with residential development set back from this behind a strategic green

corridor to achieve an appropriate transition between the development and the open fields.

- 2.2.10 Careful consideration will need to be given in development proposals to the location of any possible future expansion and how this might impact the character of the edges and the location of possible connections.

Hayden Road green corridor link

- 2.2.11 In addition to the central green corridor, the masterplan framework provides a direct green connection linking the SUE with the crossing to Hayden Road.
- 2.2.12 The location of this link is shown in the masterplan framework and a diagram showing a possible configuration is shown in figure 2.7. The link incorporates a dedicated footpath and cycle path as well as formal tree planting and will form a broad, safe and attractive route for all users.
- 2.2.13 The green corridor link also incorporates a secondary road that provides an important vehicular connection between the A6 and the SUE via the grey land to the south. A link through the northern grey land will be beneficial but is not essential to the viability of the SUE and could come forward at a later stage.
- 2.2.14 The provision of the green corridor link through to Hayden Road is essential to ensure that the SUE is well-connected to the existing Rushden town centre. Obviously, this will work the other way too with the existing residents in Rushden being able to access the SUE and its new facilities. The link is a critical component of the masterplan framework and is a key policy requirement that will help to deliver integration between the existing built up areas and the SUE.
- 2.2.15 Whilst it will be the responsibility of the developers to identify the land required for this route and to implement the construction of the link to Hayden Road, the Council will consider reasonable requests for support from the developers where this important route can only be secured by compulsory acquisition.
- 2.2.16 Further details on the treatment of the remainder of the grey land are provided in Section 2.7.

Tree-lined streets

- 2.2.17 Formal street tree planting within the development framework should be primarily located along the main routes, including the primary street running through the SUE, helping to create an attractive and legible environment. Figures 2.28 to 2.33 in Section 2.3 show how the treatment of the primary street, including tree planting, should vary in response to the character of the SUE that it is passing through. Developers will also be encouraged to extend street tree planting to

lower-order streets to help reinforce the Garden Community character of the development.

- 2.2.18 A key requirement for securing tree-lined streets will be evidence of formal agreement with utility providers and the highways authority to the method of installing and maintaining trees. Details, including a tree pit design to contain root growth should feature in the design code. Developers will be expected to discuss and agree appropriate species and planting sizes with the Local Planning Authority prior to an application being formally submitted.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

- 2.2.19 The masterplan framework acknowledges the significance and sensitivity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) and therefore incorporates a site for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace to meet the high quality 'destination' open space required by Policy 33.
- 2.2.20 This significant open space amenity is located in the south of the SUE, close to the main local centre and secondary school. The SANG parkland area will be predominantly a naturally landscaped environment with a range of habitat types, including small areas of woodland.
- 2.2.21 The area needs to be large enough to provide an attractive destination for walking and informal recreational and leisure activities, including dog walking, and should be in the region of 21ha in size. The SANG parkland itself will be accessible on foot by SUE residents, but there should also be car parking facilities to make it more attractive to other visitors and help to take visitor pressure off the SPA. Developers will need to clearly set out a strategy for how the SANG parkland area is to be maintained and managed long term.

A new Town Park

- 2.2.22 The 2017 Vision proposed a new town park for the SUE in addition to the SANG requirement. In line with Council standards (Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy by KKP (2017)), and based on the development of 2,500 new homes, this will need to be approximately 3.6ha.
- 2.2.23 The masterplan identifies three potential options for a new town park:
- A linear park, including space for play, along the street that connects the Newton Road roundabout with the southern local centre. This would create a distinctive and attractive entrance to the scheme and demonstrate the project's Garden Community credentials. It would also mean that the new park can be built early in the first phases of development and demonstrate the commitment to quality for the whole of the SUE.

- A linear park along the interface between the SANG and the adjacent residential development in the southern neighbourhood.
 - A more compact park within the central green corridor, immediately west of the southern local centre. Although this would be a formal park, it would need to reflect the character of the green corridor.
- 2.2.24 Alternative locations for the town park will be considered, but these will need to be justified by the applicant and demonstrate the following key principles:
- An accessible and prominent location;
 - Well-defined and surveilled by adjacent development; and
 - Can come forward in the early phases of the SUE, preferably the first phase.
- 2.2.25 Whichever location option is taken forward, it will be necessary to establish a high standard, contemporary community asset to be enjoyed by residents of the SUE, Rushden and Higham Ferrers, as well as visitors. Consideration will be given to putting the commission out to competition in order to achieve this.
- 2.2.26 As with other community assets in the SUE, arrangements for onward management should be clearly set out by the applicant.

Play spaces and formal sports

- 2.2.27 As shown in figure 2.3, the masterplan framework provides a series of play spaces in strategic locations around the SUE to ensure sufficient accessibility for residents. Provision of play spaces will need to meet the type, quantum and accessibility standards for new development set out within Council guidance (Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy by KKP, 2017).
- 2.2.28 The main area of formal sports provision is located in the southern neighbourhood, adjacent to the secondary school site and will need to include sports pitches. Good connections will need to be provided with the rest of the SUE and to the wider Rushden community. The area provided will need to meet the accessibility and quantum standards for new development set out within Council guidance (Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy by KKP, 2017).

Cemetery

- 2.2.29 The masterplan includes a requirement for a new cemetery with associated car parking, which is intended to serve Rushden and Higham Ferrers. Developers will need to agree the area of this with North Northamptonshire Council. The site is to be located away from the main areas of housing and sports activities and will offer a place for quiet reflection and respect. The masterplan framework identifies an area adjacent to the new SANG parkland that would be suitable. The developers

will need to provide an access road to the site and all relevant services should be provided to the site in the first phase of development. Proposals for its onward management should be clearly set out by the applicant.

Allotments

2.2.30 In line with Council standards (Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy by KKP, 2017) and based on the development of 2,500 new homes, the SUE will need to provide a total of 2.0ha of allotments. There will need to be at least two allotment sites at the SUE; one in the northern neighbourhood and one in the southern neighbourhood to make sure they are accessible to all residents. The masterplan framework identifies two areas that would be suitable. Proposals for the management and maintenance of these allotment sites should be clearly set out by the applicant.

Drainage

2.2.31 Development proposals will need to demonstrate how the opportunity has been taken to use sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to meet the drainage requirements of the SUE whilst creating an attractive environment and encouraging biodiversity. As shown in figure 2.15, the masterplan framework provides a wide green corridor adjacent to the existing watercourse running through the SUE and the opportunity should be taken to use this space to incorporate the main drainage provision in a way which enhances the setting of the corridor.

2.2.32 Consideration will also need to be given to the drainage strategy for the A6 should this be widened in the future to form a dual carriageway. Figure 2.15 shows indicative locations for drainage basins which could be provided on the areas of lower ground east of the A6 as part of this strategy.

2.2.33 Drainage proposals will need to take in account the Lead Local Flood Authority advice, which indicates that all watercourses and ditches across the site need to be protected with no works within 9m without flood defence consent.

2.3 Economic (access and movement)

2.3.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(P33 b) Good connections by all modes across the A6 to the rest of Rushden and to Higham Ferrers, in particular the town centres and other key service and employment destinations.

(10.20) Whilst the A6 bypass currently forms a significant barrier between the proposed urban extension and Rushden and Higham Ferrers, a range of solutions will be examined in order to create a development which is permeable and well-connected to the adjacent urban areas and the facilities these offer.

(10.22) The A6 bypass creates a physical barrier between the SUE and Rushden and Higham Ferrers town centres and means that gaining east-west connections with these on foot and by cycle will need to be addressed.

(10.22) In order to improve connectivity to create a sustainable development, the character of the road would need to change, and the implications of this impact on the surrounding highway network will need to be tested.

(10.23) A transport and movement strategy will be required to demonstrate how connectivity will be achieved. This will include details of how residents will access key services and employment destinations by public transport, building on existing services including the hopper bus service funded by the Rushden and Higham Ferrers town councils.

(10.23) Development east of the A6 would require a bus service looping through the site.

(10.28) The development will be well connected to adjacent urban areas, especially the centres for pedestrians and cyclists and by public transport and car. Where Hayden Road meets the A6, there will be a central access opportunity to the town. The character and the environment of the A6 will be significantly changed between and in the vicinity of Newton Road and John Clarke Way to ensure a well-connected and high-quality environment for people living at Rushden East whilst enabling relevant development and commercial opportunities such as a neighbourhood centre.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Provide clear evidence that connections for all users can be facilitated between development parcels within the SUE and further demonstrate that connections to adjacent land beyond the SUE boundaries are not prejudiced by the proposed development of the SUE. This includes the recognition of the opportunity to transform the character of the A6, whilst seeking to deliver options which are practical and deliverable.

Crossings of the A6 at the John Clark and Newton Way Roundabouts and to Hayden Road, Rushden, are designed to incorporate the following key principles:

- Traffic signals provided to control vehicular traffic and allow for safe pedestrian and cycle movement;*
- Crossings at-grade to ensure maximum accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists;*
- Change in surface material to ensure that user priority is clear and that the crossing is legible for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers;*

- *Minimum pedestrian crossing width of 8m to allow comfortable and safe movement for pedestrians.*

Provision of a central green corridor link through the SUE to Hayden Road in broad accordance with the location shown on Figure 2.2 of the MFD and incorporating a dedicated footpath and cycle path, as well as formal tree planting.

Provision of high quality, attractive and safe off-site connections for non-motorised and motorised users (including improvements to existing, as well as providing opportunities for new, bridge connections) between the SUE and the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers, and to the villages of Caldecott, Chelveston and Newton Bromswold.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 7: Incorporate the A6 Liberty Way with the aim of changing its character, reducing speed and improving connectivity.

2.3.2 The Masterplan

- 2.3.3 Figure 2.16 shows the access and movement strategy incorporated within the masterplan framework.

Transport and movement strategy

- 2.3.4 A key requirement from any developer will be the preparation and submission of a Transport and Movement Strategy that demonstrates that the proposed development can be adequately serviced to enable all traffic movements, including safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle movements. The strategy will need to address all of the following issues.

Connecting the SUE with Rushden and Higham Ferrers / the A6 as a barrier

- 2.3.5 As is clearly set out in the policy documents, the A6 creates a significant barrier between the existing communities of Rushden and Higham Ferrers and the proposed SUE. The masterplan framework recognises this issue and the opportunity to transform the character of the A6, whilst seeking to deliver options which are practical, deliverable and agreed with the Highways Authority.
- 2.3.6 The masterplan framework provides three new links across the A6 to facilitate effective movement between the existing communities and the SUE. Whilst greater integration could potentially be achieved through additional connections across the A6, the reality is that beyond the locations of the proposed connections, the existing urban edge to Rushden is largely impermeable. The

integration sought by the policy will therefore rely on the quality of the three new connections provided.

- 2.3.7 The three 'super crossings' will provide a generous amount of space for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A6 within a safe and attractive environment and provide a clear signal to drivers that there is an area where pedestrians have priority.
- 2.3.8 In order to be effective, it is essential that that the pedestrian links are traffic light controlled and 'at grade'. The three crossings will undoubtedly have an impact on the flow of traffic along the A6 in this area and clearly such a proposal will need to be agreed with the highway authority, including any resulting review of speed restrictions.

Super crossings

- 2.3.9 In order to ensure that safe and convenient access is provided between the SUE and the existing settlements of Rushden and Higham Ferrers, three 'super crossings' of the A6 are provided by the masterplan framework.
- 2.3.10 The key principles incorporated within the 'super crossings' are:
- Traffic signals provided to control vehicular traffic and allow for safe pedestrian and cycle movement;
 - Crossings at-grade to ensure maximum accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - Change in road surface material and/or colour on the approach to the crossings to ensure drivers are aware of the change in priority;
 - Change in surface material on the crossing itself to ensure that the change in user priority is clear and that the crossing is legible for pedestrians and cyclists; and
 - Minimum pedestrian crossing width of 8m to allow comfortable and safe movement for pedestrians.

John Clark Way and Newton Road crossings

- 2.3.11 Two of the three new A6 'super crossings' are provided at the John Clark Way roundabout at the northern end of the site and at the Newton Road roundabout at the southern end.
- 2.3.12 Figures 2.17 and 2.18 show how the two roundabouts could be improved to provide an uninterrupted (separated) footpath and cycle path around the edge of the junction, extending existing footpaths and providing new ones where

necessary. The alignment of these paths would follow a more legible circle around the roundabout, rather than be determined by the form of the carriageway and bell mouths.

- 2.3.13 To ensure safe movement for pedestrians and cyclists between all areas of the SUE and the existing town, it is proposed that traffic signal controls are introduced on all arms of both roundabouts, with the exception of the north- western arm of the John Clark Way roundabout, which currently serves a private access.
- 2.3.14 Changes in surface treatments at crossing points (and on the approaches to the roundabout along the A6) will help to indicate to drivers that there is a change in user priority at the junction and encourage safe driving.
- 2.3.15 Figure 2.19 shows a possible arrangement for a ‘super crossing’ over the A6 on the southern arm of the John Clark Way roundabout.
- 2.3.16 A similar approach could be taken to the ‘super crossing’ on the northern arm of the Newton Road roundabout. Clearly this arrangement, or any alternative approach to the crossing of the A6 justified by applicants will need to be agreed with the highway authority.

Hayden road crossing

- 2.3.17 The third new connection across the A6 is aligned with Hayden Road. As shown in figures 2.21 to 2.23, this masterplan framework document sets out three possible arrangements for this junction as follows:
- A staggered junction, with pedestrian and cycle access only to Hayden Road;
 - A staggered junction, with pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to Hayden Road; and
 - A roundabout with pedestrian and cycle access to Hayden Road and the potential for a vehicular link to Hayden Road in the future.
- 2.3.18 The design (scale, width and use of materials) and use of traffic signal controls for all three arrangements would ensure that a safe, attractive and legible route is established for pedestrians and cyclists, extending the green corridor link through the grey land as set out in Section 2.2.

Existing pedestrian bridge and new bridge provision

- 2.3.19 The existing pedestrian bridge crossing, which connects into Ennerdale Road on the western side of the A6, will remain a convenient option for some users so there is an opportunity to improve the approaches to it, along with environmental and lighting improvements to the footway and the structure itself. If the A6 is

widened in the future to form a dual carriageway the bridge will also need to be extended to accommodate this. In addition to the A6 crossings referred to above, there exists the opportunity for new bridges to span across the A6 and provide connectivity between the SUE and the two towns. For example, one such opportunity is the permitted housing development on the opposite side of the A6 on land East of the Ferrers School (planning permission 18/01648/OUT) which safeguards land for the 'landing' of a bridge to connect the SUE with Higham Ferrers and the nearby Greenway and public footpath UK2. The feasibility of bridge crossings should be explored primarily through the opportunity of pursuing external grant assistance to determine the extent to which they can enhance connectivity of the SUE.

Improving the character and appearance of the A6 corridor

- 2.3.20 As well as securing the connectivity between the existing town and the SUE, the policy requires that the character of the A6 itself changes. As described above, the creation of three at-grade crossings will inevitably have the effect of slowing down the traffic on the A6 in these locations. There may also be an opportunity for the speed limit to be reviewed for those sections between the traffic lights.
- 2.3.21 However, changing the character of the A6 in this location is about much more than influencing the behaviour of drivers and other users; the physical appearance of the road adjacent to the SUE also needs to be transformed.
- 2.3.22 As already indicated, until there is a definitive decision to the contrary, any development to the east of the A6 will need to provide a landscaped strip of land to enable the potential future widening of this stretch of the A6 to make a dual carriageway. Any future decision on widening the A6 will be subject to a cost-benefit analysis and, if the three 'super crossings' are installed and are regularly used, then this could have an impact on the perceived traffic flow benefits of widening along this relatively short stretch.
- 2.3.23 With the development of the SUE to the east of the A6, the character along the A6 will undoubtedly change over time. A challenge for developers will be to secure improvements to the character and appearance of the road and the experience of drivers along it whilst having limited control and influence of the land immediately adjacent to the A6. Undoubtedly the experience of travelling along this stretch of the A6 is formed by what happens on both sides of the road.
- 2.3.24 Figures 2.24 and 2.25 show the proposed approach to the treatment of the A6 corridor adjacent to the Consortium land and adjacent to the grey land.
- 2.3.25 The existing boundary to the west of the A6 consists primarily of vegetation. Whilst there is obvious scope to improve the character and appearance of the eastern edge of the A6, the overall effect of this on the road corridor will be

limited if nothing can be done to the western edge at the same time. Therefore, the masterplan framework proposes that a new planting scheme, including significant tree planting proposals, is drawn up for the whole A6 corridor between the two roundabouts to provide some continuity and consistency of visual treatment. As shown in figures 2.21 to 2.23, this includes more formal tree planting arrangements approaching the three main A6 crossings.

- 2.3.26 Once a landscaping scheme is agreed it can be implemented on the western side whilst implementation on the eastern side is likely to be more incremental as land comes forward for development.
- 2.3.27 The treatment of the eastern side of the A6 will vary depending on ground levels and land ownership. In the north, between the John Clark Way roundabout and the pedestrian link to Hayden Road, there is an opportunity to provide a strong built frontage set behind an access road and strategic north-south strategic footpath and cycle path (see figure 2.24). This will ensure that the SUE does not turn its back on the A6 and will help to achieve acceptable noise levels within back gardens.
- 2.3.28 A belt of vegetation is provided between the footpath / cycle path and the existing A6 to accommodate the potential dualling of the A6 if required and with sufficient width to retain a minimum landscape strip of 5m. The set back of buildings from the existing A6 required to avoid any potential noise issues if it were dualled will need to be determined by the applicants and details of any noise attenuation measures required provided.
- 2.3.29 To the south of the Hayden Road link it is likely that the building line will not be quite as formal/ strong due to the grey land. These plots may come forward more incrementally and are likely to be larger, with tree planting etc. However, in the long-term it should still be possible to achieve the same broad configuration as along the northern interface with the A6, with development either fronting or siding onto an access road, strategic footpath and cycle path and landscape strip of minimum 5m width.
- 2.3.30 The masterplan makes no proposals for the carriageway itself; the expectation is that except for the area of the three pedestrian super crossings, the carriageway would broadly retain its existing dimensions and materials.

The street network within the SUE

- 2.3.31 As shown in figure 2.16, the masterplan framework provides a primary street that connects the John Clark Way roundabout in the north with the Newton Road roundabout in the south and incorporates the two local centres. In addition to taking vehicles, this will incorporate generous footways and cycle lanes, tree planting and on-street parking. The configuration of these elements should

respond to the nature of the context in different areas of the site and figures 2.29 to 2.33 shows five possible treatment 'types'. The primary street will form the primary route for bus services that serve the SUE and can connect it to Rushden, Rushden Lakes, Wellingborough railway station and the wider area.

- 2.3.32 As shown in figure 2.16, a secondary street connects with the primary street at the northern and southern ends of the site and also provides an important connection with the Hayden Road crossing. It will be necessary to use a compulsory purchase order to acquire some of the plots in the southern half of the grey land to provide this link. The link through the northern grey land will be beneficial but is not essential to the accessibility strategy for the SUE and could come forward at a later stage.
- 2.3.33 All adopted roads within the masterplan framework will need to have a minimum carriageway width of 5.5m to avoid the need for vehicles to park on verges and/or pavements.

Footpaths and cycle paths within the SUE

- 2.3.34 As set out in Section 2.2, in addition to the hierarchy of streets, a legible and accessible network of dedicated footpath and cycle paths are provided within the green corridors to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can move safely and conveniently within the SUE.

Connecting to the villages to the east

- 2.3.35 Pedestrian and cycle connections to the villages of Caldecott, Chelveston and Newton Bromswold to the east of the SUE will need to be attractive and safe, particularly where the routes are shared with vehicles. Policy 33 states that pedestrian and cycle routes between these villages and the SUE should be enhanced or created and it will be for developers to demonstrate how this will be done.

Parking

- 2.3.36 Applicants will need to give careful consideration to the parking strategy to ensure that it is both practical and helps to reinforce the garden community character. A mix of approaches will be required to achieve this, including on-plot, on-street and small parking clusters/courtyards. As set out above, on-street parking will be provided within the primary street, as well as within the lower order streets, and will need to be carefully integrated to ensure that it does not dominate the street scene. The parking strategy should be consistent with the Countywide Parking SPD

and incorporate visitor parking. The maximum size for rear parking courts will be 10 spaces as specified in the Planning Out Crime SPD.

2.4 Economic (housing)

2.4.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(Policy 33 a) Around 2,000- 2,500 homes including affordable homes and homes for the older population.

(Policy 33 c) A mix of employment opportunities that will make a significant contribution to delivering an enhanced balance between new homes and jobs in Rushden, including offices and industrial premises as well as local centre, small-scale business space and dwellings suitable for home working or business start-ups.

(10.26) A range of different job opportunities will be available through dedicated business, a local centre and opportunities for working and starting business at home.

(10.29) New homes will provide for a balanced and mixed community including family housing, affordable homes and specialist homes for the older population.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Provision of a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures (including specialist housing provision and home working/larger homes) to accord with housing policies EN29-EN32, and Policy 30 of the Adopted Joint Core Strategy, together with relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 3: Offer different types of homes for all, including affordable and starter homes, homes for older people, larger executive homes and opportunities for custom and self-build homes.

2.4.2 The Masterplan

- 2.4.3 Figure 2.34 shows the residential provision within the masterplan framework.
- 2.4.4 As previously indicated, the SUE will provide at least 2,500 new homes. This will form a significant amount of the housing growth for Rushden and it is important that each phase of the development consists of an appropriate mix of new homes.
- 2.4.5 The Council and the developer consortium have jointly commissioned a report to assess the housing need for the SUE. The report by Opinion Research Services (ORS) was published in 2020 and will be used to inform the Council's housing requirements for the SUE, including details of the proportion and type of affordable housing to be provided.
- 2.4.6 The SUE is also expected to provide a significant number of new jobs and, in addition to the purpose-built employment space, the policy anticipates that there should be new homes in the SUE that support home working and business start-ups.

Affordable housing

- 2.4.7 The provision of affordable homes must be consistent with the Council's current policy requirements and the Rushden East Housing Study Report by Opinion Research Services (ORS) dated 2020 and jointly commissioned by the Council and the Developer Consortium. They should be indistinguishable from the homes for sale in terms of their design, appearance and materials. Policy 30 in the JCS sets a target for 20% of the new homes in the SUE to be affordable up to March 2026 after which there will be a viability review to determine the amount of affordable homes for future phases. The viability model should be index linked to ensure that inflation is accounted for.

Scheme viability appraisals

- 2.4.8 The promoters of the development should share their high-level viability appraisals with the Council at an early stage in order to demonstrate that the development is policy compliant, particularly in the provision of affordable homes.

Mix of type and tenure of new homes

- 2.4.9 In addition to the provision of a policy compliant level of affordable homes, each neighbourhood will need to contain an appropriate mix of larger executive homes, homes for older people including Extra Care, and plots for custom build and self-build homes. The Letwin report (an Independent Review of Build Out: Draft Analysis, Rt Hon Oliver Letwin, June 2018) identified the need for large sites such as this one to provide a wider range of types and tenure of new homes to increase

take up rates and to not only meet more diverse local demand, but also to assist with the pace of housing delivery.

- 2.4.10 Applicants will be expected to agree the mix of housing types and tenures with the Local Planning Authority through the Section 106 or other appropriate legal agreement associated with an outline consent prior to the formal submission of a Reserved Matters application for an individual phase.

Custom and self-build housing

- 2.4.11 Policy 30 of the JCS also requires development in the SUE to provide serviced plots for individual and community custom build developments and applicants will be required to set out details of where the serviced plots are and the process by which custom builders can acquire them.
- 2.4.12 In addition to this, as set out in Section 2.7, it may be appropriate to provide further custom and self-build opportunities within parts of the grey land. These are likely to come forward incrementally and have plot dimensions suited to a more bespoke response.
- 2.4.13 There are a wide number of ways in which custom and self-build plots can be made available and any developer will be expected to clearly describe the process by which they propose to make these homes available through any planning application.

Standards for sustainable construction

- 2.4.14 To ensure that the new buildings in the SUE are as energy efficient as possible, the Council will require any developer to set out from the outset, what benchmark for sustainable construction they intend to use for the new homes and other buildings (JCS Policy 9).

Residential character

- 2.4.15 The proposed distribution of residential character areas is shown in figure 2.34. Further details on residential character are set out in section 2.7.

2.5 Economic (employment)

2.5.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(P33 c) A mix of employment opportunities that will make a significant contribution to delivering an enhanced balance between new homes and jobs in Rushden, including offices and industrial premises as well as local centre, small-scale business space and dwellings suitable for home working or business start-ups.

(10.26) Providing new jobs will be just as important as new homes to help redress the balance of jobs to homes in Rushden as a whole. The SUE will need to support job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation. A range of different job opportunities will be available through dedicated business, a local centre and opportunities for working and starting business at home. It will meet the day to day community needs of residents on site but also contribute to enhancing adjacent urban areas.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Ensuring the delivery of the employment land, located on the northern part of the site, that aims to achieve parity between rates overall quantum of new housing occupations and job creation, as set out in Joint Core Strategy Policy 33 criterion c.

Providing opportunities for small-businesses and those driving enterprise and innovation.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 2: Provide a mixed-use development which offers a good balance of jobs, homes and local facilities that can be accessed by all.

Objective 4: provide a mix of employment opportunities to expand the local economy with the aim of matching the number of new jobs created to the number of new homes built.

2.5.2 The Masterplan

2.5.3 Figure 2.35 shows the distribution of employment within the masterplan framework.

2.5.4 It is clear from the policy requirements that the SUE should provide a mixed-use development where the number of new jobs created broadly matches the number of new homes built. A key requirement of this masterplan framework document is to identify the scale and location of these employment uses.

Major enterprise site and employment clusters

2.5.5 This masterplan framework proposes that there will be a major employment site for enterprise and innovation space at the northern end of the site. There is an

opportunity in this location for new businesses to establish themselves within a high quality, landscaped environment with high sustainability standards, excellent facilities and good connections to the rest of the northern neighbourhood centre.

- 2.5.6 This site should contain some elements of other uses consistent with the objective of achieving a mixed-use development. The design of the employment uses should also be carefully considered to ensure that they relate well to other adjacent uses and specifically seek to retain the views to the church spire in Higham Ferrers as shown in figure 2.37.
- 2.5.7 The Council requires a mix of employment opportunities to be provided, that will make a significant contribution to delivering an enhanced balance between new homes and jobs. Large units/buildings are defined in Policy 24 (footnote 88 – page 118) of the NNJCS as having a floor area over 9,300 sqm (100,000 sq. ft.)”.
- 2.5.8 In addition to this primary employment location there will be other, smaller scale employment clusters on the primary street in and around the two neighbourhood centres. There is also an existing area of employment located at the southern end of the site, north of the Newton Road roundabout. If this site comes forward for redevelopment it will need to be consistent with the guidance set out in the grey land development brief currently being prepared by the Council.

Mixed-use neighbourhoods

- 2.5.9 The two local centres will provide schools, local shops, health facilities, community uses and employment space in attractive mixed- use developments. Developers will need to provide details of the mix of uses to illustrate how these will work together and how they will be delivered, including a timetable for their implementation.

Job creation rate

- 2.5.10 It will be important for the evolution of the new neighbourhoods that the rate of construction for the buildings to house the new jobs keeps pace with the construction and occupation of the new homes. To achieve this there will be appropriate thresholds and triggers agreed between the Council and the developers and set out in the Section 106 or other relevant legal agreement.
- 2.5.11 In order to understand what type of jobs are likely to be provided in the new development any outline applications will need to indicate the location and size of

buildings and provide a clear description of the types of businesses and the number of jobs that will be created.

- 2.5.12 There will be a requirement where relevant at each Reserved Matters Application stage for any applicant to incorporate further details of the proposed employment space that will form part of that phase of development.

Home working

- 2.5.13 One of the changes in the way people are being employed is flexibility in their location. Many employers now require/allow their employees to work from home or at least remotely from their main office base, and some may look to start up a business from their home. Therefore, any applicant will need to consider the implications of this trend on the design and layout of homes and small-scale employment space and explicitly explain their proposals in any planning application.
- 2.5.14 Whilst the roads within the SUE will be designed to accommodate large service vehicles, those employment uses that are likely to generate significant commercial traffic will best be located away from the main residential areas, relatively close to the two existing roundabouts on the A6.

Interim or temporary uses

- 2.5.15 As described above, the timing of the delivery of employment space may be subject to external factors such as the overall performance of the economy or particular sectors within the economy. The masterplan framework therefore proposes that employment land is made available for interim or 'meanwhile' uses that could bring economic activity into the neighbourhoods as soon as possible.
- 2.5.16 Land that is earmarked for future employment space should be made available by the landowners for a fixed period of time. This will enable small businesses and markets to occupy the sites for the benefit of the new residents, bringing services to their neighbourhood before the shops and employment buildings are built.
- 2.5.17 There is a role here for the Council and others to work with the developers to arrange how such uses would be managed. If successful, this approach could create local business start-ups, enable local businesses to become established and create long-term job opportunities.

2.6 Social (schools and community facilities)

2.6.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(Policy 33 k) Green spaces and community facilities including two new primary schools, primary health care, new community centre, land for a new cemetery and other local community facilities such as allotments.

(Policy 33 l) Land reserved for a new secondary school.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Provision of two local neighbourhood centres, incorporating 2 primary schools and land reserved for a secondary school, local shops, health facilities, community uses and employment space to be provided in broad locations serving the northern and southern areas of the SUE, along with a programme for delivery relative to the phased delivery of housing.

Provision for legal agreements to ensure infrastructure provided by one developer is shared, on an equitable basis, with all developers reliant upon that infrastructure to deliver their parts of the SUE, to ensure a comprehensive development of the SUE.

Provision of a new Town Park (of approximately 3.6ha).

Provision of formal, and informal open space, and sports pitches (including ancillary facilities) in accordance with guidance contained in the Council's KKP Open space and Playing Pitch Strategy 2017.

Provision of a Cemetery (approximately 2ha) with access, parking and relevant supporting infrastructure.

Provision of allotments in the northern and southern neighbourhoods (approximately 2.20ha).

Prepare and agree a delivery strategy (including onward adoption and management arrangements) for all education, energy, drainage, community, social, health infrastructure, SANG provision and associated public realm (including off-site and on-site roads, cycle routes and paths).

2.6.2 The Masterplan

Green spaces

- 2.6.3 The SUE is to be a mixed-use development that not only provides a range of homes and jobs, but also provides the key components of the social infrastructure that communities need. The preceding sections have already set out how the masterplan framework will provide a range of green spaces for the active use and enjoyment by the new community.
- 2.6.4 As shown in figure 2.38, allotments are provided in the northern and southern neighbourhoods of the SUE so that they are accessible to as large a number of residents as possible. Land for a new cemetery and associated parking is also identified at the southern end of the SUE adjacent to the SANG parkland. Details of these uses are set out earlier in this document.

Education and community

- 2.6.5 As shown in figure 2.38, the masterplan framework locates the primary education and community facilities in and around the two new local centres, supporting their mixed-use functions.
- 2.6.2 There will be a primary school in each of the local centres, while the primary health care facilities (e.g. surgery, pharmacy and dental services) and a new community centre are likely to be located in the southern local centre. The proposed secondary school and its associated playing fields are located to the south of the southern local centre, adjacent to the proposed SANG parkland.
- 2.6.7 The timing of the delivery of these social and community facilities will be important factors in the creation of community at the SUE and it is therefore essential that clear triggers for these facilities, particularly the schools, are provided.
- 2.6.8 Evidence from other locations, such as Cranbrook near Exeter and Alconbury Weald near Huntingdon, suggests that the early delivery of a new school can help to drive sales of family homes and help to create a sense of community amongst new residents from the earliest occupations. Therefore, developers are encouraged to provide the schools and other community facilities as early in the development process as is feasible and appropriate triggers for this will be incorporated into the relevant legal agreements.

2.7 Urban form, character, and identity

2.7.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(Policy 33) It will be a new distinctive neighbourhood with its own separate identity but well connected and integrated with the town as a whole.

(10.24) The spire of St Mary’s church in Higham Ferrers can be seen from the A6, and views continue eastwards of the A6. Further assessment of how development may impact on the setting of the church and other heritage assets should be undertaken, including an assessment of the archaeological potential of the broad location.

(10.29) The site itself will include a connected grid of streets, fronted by buildings, reminiscent of the urban structure of the Victorian and Edwardian streets in the town.

(10.31) It (the masterplan) will illustrate the form and disposition of the development and establish the strategy towards matters such as land use, transport and movement, access, sustainable construction standards, open space and design. It will include design principles that could be used to help guide future detailed design or adopted as a design code.

Policy EN33 sets out the following overarching requirements:

Provision of a Primary tier ‘loop’ Street through the SUE (to accommodate a service bus route) connecting the John Clark Way roundabout in the north with the Newton Road roundabout in the south and via the two neighbourhood local centres.

Provision of a Secondary tier Street connecting with the Primary Street at the northern and southern ends of the SUE and the Hayden Road crossing and green corridor link in the centre.

Provision of a hierarchy of streets and a legible and accessible network of dedicated footpaths and cycle paths.

2.7.2 The Masterplan

2.7.3 In addition to the key design principles identified in the sections above, it is important that developers give careful consideration to the urban form, character and identity of the SUE to ensure the creation of a high quality environment with a strong sense of place.

2.7.4 It is not the intention within this masterplan framework document to fix any of the detailed design aspects of the SUE. However, there are a number of important high level design principles which proposals will need to respond to.

Urban context

2.7.5 The development of the SUE provides an opportunity to create an exciting new place, with its own identity and character. However, the setting of the site on the edge of Rushden, which has a distinctive history and identity, offers a number of

important opportunities for responding to context to help establish this. These opportunities include the following characteristics (see figures 2.39 to 2.46):

- Local centres offset from main route intersections;
- Deep and narrow plots with rear access lanes in settlement centres;
- Gridded perimeter block structures; and
- Taller / larger buildings located on street corners.

St Mary's Church spire

2.7.6 The spire of St Mary's Church in Higham Ferrers can be seen from a number of strategic locations within and around the town, including locations at the northern end of the SUE site. As shown in the masterplan framework, developers should therefore give careful consideration in any proposals for the northern local centre and the enterprise and innovation site as to how key strategic views to the church can be retained to provide interest and enhance legibility.

Perimeter blocks

2.7.7 The main form of development should respect the principles of perimeter block development where there is a clear and unambiguous distinction between the public fronts of buildings and the private backs. There will be circumstances where the sides of buildings will front onto streets and paths, but in most cases it will not be acceptable for the backs of buildings to face onto any part of the public realm.

Residential character

2.7.8 As shown in figure 2.34, the masterplan framework indicates where residential development will be more formal/urban in character and where it will be more rural/informal.

2.7.9 The higher density more urban character residential development is located in and around the two local centres, as well as closer to the existing town (and the associated facilities) to optimise accessibility. Development in these areas should be based on more formal, rectilinear block layouts and feature a higher percentage of apartments and terraces than in the rural character areas. They are also more likely to be appropriate locations for responding to some of the existing characteristics of Rushden and Higham Ferrers identified above.

2.7.10 The lower density, more rural character residential development is located around the peripheries of the SUE where it will help to provide an appropriate transition to the adjacent countryside. Development within the grey land is also likely to be

of lower density due to the existing plot pattern and the likely incremental development of the site. The approach to this land is covered below.

Development within the grey land area

- 2.7.11 As previously referred to in Section 2.2 the area of previously used land in multiple ownerships at Alexandra Road, referred to in this document as the grey land, will need its own design principles.
- 2.7.12 It is located centrally to the SUE and, given the mixed ownership status and large size of the plots located in the southern grey land parcels, there is an opportunity to create a distinct neighbourhood there, focused around a new green corridor link through the centre of the SUE and across the A6 to Hayden Road.
- 2.7.13 The character of this area is likely to be based on a mix of individually designed dwellings, including custom and self-build dwellings, with scope for significant planting, small- scale allotments and small-scale employment / community facilities.
- 2.7.14 To ensure it is developed in a cohesive way, a separate development brief will be prepared for the grey land. Any planning applications for development on this land will also be subject to Section 106 Agreements which will be prepared on a pro rata basis when compared to the main Section 106 Agreement for the site.

The design of the local centres

- 2.7.15 Whilst many good examples exist of recently developed new housing schemes, there are fewer examples of good quality, mixed-use local centres. In preparing proposals for submission as part of planning applications for the SUE, particular attention will need to be paid to the form and layout of the two local centres.
- 2.7.16 As part of any planning submission that includes one or both centres, there should be a detailed plan for the local centre that shows what activities and uses are contained in the individual buildings, where the parking and servicing is going to be, and how these non- residential uses dovetail with the adjacent homes and gardens.

Design codes and design specification

- 2.7.17 The preparation and approval of design codes are likely to be a condition of any outline planning consent and it will be helpful for the developers to identify areas of focus that will be covered by the code. There will also be a need for the Council

to identify what type of code will be most appropriate e.g. public realm, architecture, masterplan etc.

2.8 Environmental (energy and sustainability)

2.8.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(Policy 33 j) An energy strategy to ensure that the highest viable amount of heat and energy used within the development is generated on-site from renewable or low-carbon sources.

(10.31) Sustainable construction standards.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 8: Minimise energy requirements and promote walking and cycling.

2.8.2 The Masterplan

The move towards renewable sources of energy and heat

- 2.8.3 The Government has signalled its intention not to support new residential developments beyond 2025 being heated by mains gas. Therefore, all new development proposals for the SUE must provide a comprehensive energy strategy, including clear proposals for how the development will be powered and heated. This strategy should also include proposals for the use of high standards of sustainable construction which can contribute towards the reduction in demand for heating.

Energy strategy

- 2.8.4 The development of around 2,500 new homes, along with the creation of a similar number of jobs, creates an opportunity for a more sustainable approach to energy and heating on the site and the energy strategy provided should fully explore this. The policy in the JCS is not prescriptive about how this is to be achieved. However,

it will be phase 1 that sets the tone for the kind of scheme that this is and it will be important that it demonstrates a move beyond the 'business as usual' model.

- 2.8.5 Rushden East is conceptualised as a Sustainable Urban Extension, as well as a garden community. Its sustainability credentials must be credible if the development is to be successful.

Exploring renewable sources of energy

- 2.8.6 The nearby Chelveston Renewable Energy Park, approximately 4km to the east of the SUE site, provides one obvious opportunity to explore the use of renewable energy to heat the homes and other buildings in the new neighbourhoods. The Council will encourage a dialogue between the parties to explore whether there are opportunities for the SUE to take advantage of the locally produced renewable energy.
- 2.8.7 This is no longer the preserve of specialist developers; some of our largest volume house builders, including Barratt Homes and Taylor Wimpey have developed schemes elsewhere in the country that use neighbourhood heat networks. At present, local heat schemes rely on a network of underground pipes, but technology is rapidly changing and the key requirement of the developers here will be to ensure that any system that is adopted by the main developers can be used across land ownership boundaries to ensure convenience for users in the future.
- 2.8.8 The developers will be encouraged to identify suitable emerging technologies to be used at the SUE and to identify delivery partners who will be responsible for designing and implementing the development-wide Energy Strategy.

Sustainable construction standards

- 2.8.9 All homes will be expected to meet the standards detailed in JCS Policy 9, Sustainable buildings which states that:
- 2.8.10 *Development should incorporate measures to ensure high standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions. All residential development should incorporate measures to limit use to no more than 105 litres/person/day and external water use of no more than 5 litres/person/day or alternative national standard applying to areas of water stress.*
- 2.8.11 *Design and access statements must demonstrate how sustainable design principles have been addressed. In particular:*
- 1) *Subject to economic viability, developments of 1000+ square metres of non-residential floorspace should, as a minimum meet BREEAM very good or equivalent nationally recognised standards.*

- 2) *The layout and design of sites, buildings and associated landscaping should: a. maximise the use of passive solar design to address heating and cooling; and b. where technically feasible, enable access to or provision of decentralised energy networks, or safeguard future opportunities to do so without major disruption.*

Waste management and recycling

- 2.8.12 Developers will need to liaise at an early stage with the Council to ensure that effective provision is made in the scheme for waste management and recycling, ensuring that all new homes are accessible for refuse vehicle collections and that the layout provides all properties with easy access to rear gardens to enable storage in them.

3.0 Delivery Strategy

3.1 Policy

Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy sets out the following requirements:

(10.32) The Master Plan will also include a delivery strategy to identify how and when the development will be implemented; any matters to be resolved such as land assembly and preparation; infrastructure requirements and delivery; development phasing to ensure that where possible, housing provision is linked to the development of land for employment; and the likely need for development contributions taking into consideration the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Regulations. It will also identify the likely need for public sector intervention, by which agency and when.

The 2017 Rushden East Vision Statement states:

Objective 9: Provide appropriate infrastructure including high-quality broadband and adequate parking.

3.2 The Masterplan

Delivery strategy

3.2.1 As part of any planning submission, developers will be required to prepare and submit a delivery strategy that sets out details of how the development will be implemented. This will need to address the following questions:

- How and when the development will be implemented; who will do what?
- What matters need to be resolved such as land assembly; what land is already controlled and what is the developer's strategy for securing control over land currently outside the developer's control?
- What are the infrastructure requirements; who is going to install the infrastructure and when is it going to be in place?
- In what sequence will the development be constructed and why?
- Can the developer confirm that the new houses and jobs will broadly come forward together over the plan period?
- When will the delivery of community and social uses such as the schools, health facilities, community centre, shops, cemetery, allotments, public spaces, sports facilities and SANG take place and what are the triggers for the delivery of these items?

- What development contributions should the scheme make towards key infrastructure requirements? The developers should share their initial viability calculations with the Council.
- Is any public sector intervention required and, if so, by which agency and when?
- What are the management and maintenance proposals for the scheme; is there a management company to manage common land and deal with other management issues?

Garden Community ethos

3.2.2 This development is coming forward under the banner of the Government's Garden Communities programme and therefore the scheme will need to respond to the characteristics and principles of Garden Communities. These principles are set out in the following section.

Land for the development

3.2.3 In order to have certainty of delivery of the agreed masterplan, it is essential that there is clarity on the availability of land to implement the scheme. The developers will need to identify the land required to deliver the masterplan and include a commentary on the status of the land. Policy EN33 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 allocates the land for the Rushden East SUE.

3.2.4 The Council recognises that there may be land required for the development of the SUE that is not currently controlled by the developers and the Council may signal its intention to directly intervene to support the land assembly in such situations.

3.2.5 A separate land assembly strategy is being developed by the Council, including exploring the need for the Council to consider using its compulsory purchase powers, where appropriate, to ensure the satisfactory development of the scheme.

3.2.6 Given Rushden's status as a Growth Town in the NNJCS, it is expected that there may be future development pressures to consider further expansion of the urban area to the east and south of the Rushden East SUE, and potentially in other areas. Such proposals may come forward either as part of the plan-led system, which is through the review of the NNJCS, or as speculative planning applications responding to government housing growth and delivery policy. The Local Planning Authority will handle such proposals in the appropriate manner with regard to national and local planning policies and all other material considerations.

Phasing of development

- 3.2.7 Figure 3.2 identifies the area of the SUE likely to be completed by the end of the current NNJCS Plan period (2031) with the rest of the SUE being completed by around 2045 (based on estimated build-out rates of 150 homes per year).
- 3.2.8 The developers will need to identify the likely sequence of development, particularly the new homes and jobs, across the whole masterplan area with specific detail around the delivery of the first phase. The phasing proposals will include the delivery of new homes for sale and for other affordable tenures, as well as all of the non-residential uses such as the social infrastructure and employment. The phasing plan should identify the likely size of parcels to be released and how many homes there will be in each phase, including the broad housing mix. Reference to the increased diversity of housing mix set out in the Letwin Report will be relevant here.
- 3.2.9 It will be particularly helpful for the developers to clearly set out what residents can expect to be in place within, say, the first five years following the grant of a planning permission. For example, how many homes, how many affordable homes, what community facilities, what employment space, schools and green spaces will be in place. This will demonstrate that this is a development of new, connected neighbourhoods not just a housing estate.

Infrastructure delivery

- 3.2.10 The developers should set out the sequence for delivery of the key elements of infrastructure; both the hard infrastructure such as roads and energy, and the social infrastructure such as schools, health and sports facilities.
- 3.2.11 The developers should also clearly identify who will be responsible for implementing and funding these key infrastructure items. It is likely that there will need to be some flexibility to enable new technology to be accommodated into future phases.
- 3.2.12 For each of the following there should be a commentary on when this infrastructure will be delivered, how it is to be funded and who will be responsible for delivering it.
- Roads, cycle routes and footways
 - Structural landscaping and green infrastructure, including sustainable urban drainage and SANG
 - Renewable energy and heating, electric car charging etc.
 - Schools
 - Health facilities

- Sports and leisure
- Community building/ village hall space

Indicative viability appraisal

3.12.13 It is important that the overall masterplan is subject to a high level and indicative economic viability appraisal to test the deliverability of a policy compliant scheme. This is to avoid the outline planning application stage being the first point at which viability is tested and to improve the likelihood of a scheme coming forward that, for example, is able to deliver the policy compliant level of affordable homes alongside all of the infrastructure requirements. The developers should share this development appraisal with the Council at an early stage.

3.12.14 It will also be important to be able to identify the scale and need for development contributions from the scheme to deliver the necessary infrastructure and community facilities.

3.12.15 It is possible that public sector bodies, such as Homes England or the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP), may have a role to play by investing directly in land or infrastructure in the development if a clear case can be made that such investment would help to overcome barriers to development or accelerate housing delivery.

Project governance

3.12.16 A Project Board was previously set up during the administration of East Northamptonshire Council for overseeing the delivery this scheme, the membership of which included Council Officers and elected Members, and, as appropriate, representation from the developer consortium. The Project Board was disbanded following the creation of the North Northamptonshire Unitary Council, though its work continues to be reflected in the context of this SPD.

3.12.17 The scale of the proposal suggests that a separate delivery vehicle for the development may not be required. It is possible that the different development partners, including key developers and the public sector can work together collaboratively. However, if the relationships between all of the different delivery agencies become complicated then there may be a need to consider some form of delivery vehicle to oversee the scheme's implementation.

Onward management and stewardship

3.12.18 Engagement by the new residents in the onward management of the new neighbourhoods is likely to generate a sense of ownership in the scheme and be

sustainable in the long term. Such an approach would also be consistent with the Garden Community principles that underpin the overall development. To support this approach, the developers are invited to adopt a tiered approach to onward management by first offering the ownership and management of assets to the Councils, particularly the Town or Parish Councils. If these Councils decide not to take on an asset, then the asset would be managed by some form of formally constituted management arrangement such as a Residents Trust.

3.12.19 It will be essential that any community asset taken on for management has a clearly defined source of income to enable the costs of onward management to be met. This may be in the form of a cash dowry or some form of guaranteed income stream to ensure that that the community assets can be cared for in perpetuity.

3.12.20 The developer will be expected to set out for each community asset: who provides the land for it and who will build or implement it; who will own it in the long term; who it will be maintained and managed by; and finally, where the funds will come from to cover the management and maintenance costs in perpetuity. The developers provide this information with their proposals when a planning application is submitted.

4.0 Garden Communities

4.1.1 *In August 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government set out its list of qualities that any scheme that comes forward through its Garden Communities initiative will be expected to reflect. Rushden East forms part of the portfolio of Garden Community projects in Northamptonshire being supported by the government and therefore any scheme for the SUE should be consistent with these qualities:*

4.1.2 *High quality place-making is what makes garden communities exemplars of large new developments. Although we are not imposing a particular set of development principles on local areas, we do expect proposals to demonstrate how they will meet and embed the key qualities below:*

a) Clear identity

– a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, including at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.

b) Sustainable scale

– built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a day to day basis, with the capacity for future growth to meet the evolving housing and economic needs of the local area.

c) Well-designed places

– with vibrant mixed use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.

d) Great homes

– offer a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life.

e) Strong local vision and engagement

– designed and executed with the engagement and involvement of the existing local community, and future residents and businesses. This should include consideration of how the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected.

f) Transport

– integrated, forward looking and accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.

g) Healthy places

- designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health & wellbeing priorities and strategies.

h) Green space

- generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental gains such as biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital.

i) Legacy and stewardship arrangements

- should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.

j) Future proofed

- designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures.