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## **Foreword** *(to be updated following adoption)*

*Introduction by Cllr David Brackenbury (Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration)*

*This plan sets out a vision for East Northamptonshire, building on the proposals and land use allocations as set out in the Joint Core Strategy. The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 includes significant proposals such as the Rushden East sustainable urban extension and a new garden community at Tresham in the north of the district. It seeks to add local value through its policies which reflect the distinctive characteristics and attractiveness of the area.*

*The plan supports the growth and diversification of business opportunities across the district, recognising the need to ensure its market towns remain as thriving and competitive centres by providing a range of services and facilities for their local communities as well as encouraging town centre regeneration schemes to encourage future redevelopment opportunities.*

*As the growth town for the area, Rushden will provide the majority of new housing and employment development during the plan period. This will help deliver future housing and employment needs, supported by infrastructure and services including transport, retail and leisure, to help ensure a sustainable, high quality environment.*

*Much of the district is rural, interspersed with villages and market towns. It is bisected in a north/south direction by the Nene Valley, a focus for blue and green infrastructure that provides a significant natural asset which enhances the district. The Plan aims to ensure those rural communities have the ability to meet local needs, as well as providing opportunities to improve local connections, create local employment prospects and develop the visitor offer.*

*To meet the needs of the wider community, the plan seeks to provide a range of housing types including for the older population who may be looking quality housing for downsizing or meeting a specialist need through care and extra care provision. The plan recognises the need to provide for aspirational choice and the variety of demand and need across the district, from predominantly smaller properties in the rural north to larger properties in the south. It also considers those who wish to be more proactive in designing the type of home they wish for through exciting opportunities such as custom build.*

*This plan also recognises the importance of the area's natural and built assets and includes a number of policies that seek to enhance and protect its distinctive green spaces as well as meeting the challenge of sensitively designed development. In drafting this plan, we have engaged with many different organisations and we are now asking for your views on what the plan says and whether you think it needs to include any further proposals for addressing the area's future needs.*

## 1.0 Introduction

### Layout of the Local Plan Part 2

- 1.1 The Local Plan Part 2 is a statutory development plan document covering the former district of East Northamptonshire. While this Plan is self-contained, it should be read in conjunction with the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (the Local Plan Part 1; referred to as the “Joint Core Strategy” in the document)<sup>1</sup>, Neighbourhood Plans and national policies. This document contains appropriate planning policies for the growth and regeneration of the district up to 2031. It is proposed that this will present a vision of the EastNorthamptonshire Area of North Northamptonshire Council through the objectives and policies which will set out what and how much development should take place and the sites and strategies required to meet this target growth.
- 1.2 The Plan consists of the following key elements:
- **Sections 1.0-3.0 – Introduction, Area Portrait, and Vision and Outcomes (introductory sections)** – sets the scene in terms of the evidence base and the context of higher level national or Joint Core Strategy policies; outlines key reasons and factors that entail the need for suitable local policies; and sets out Plan-level Vision and Outcomes to be achieved;
  - **Section 4.0 – Spatial Development Strategy** – provides additional strategic and spatial policy direction for the area , over and above the overarching spatial policy framework set out in the Joint Core Strategy;
  - **Sections 5.0-6.0 – Natural and Social Capital** – sets out additional policies for the protection and enhancement of natural, heritage, cultural and community assets;
  - **Sections 7.0-9.0 – Economy and Housing** – sets out proactive policies and proposals for delivering economic growth and the housing requirements for the remainder of the Plan period (to 2031);
  - **Section 10.0 – Town Centre Strategies** – sets out detailed policies and proposals for the re-imagination of existing urban areas;
  - **Section 11.0 – Monitoring and Implementation** – each policy is supported by relevant indicators and targets, which will be reviewed annually through the North Northamptonshire Authorities’ Monitoring Report (AMR);
  - **Appendices** – glossary and other supporting evidence and information for the Plan.
- 1.3 The Plan includes the following details of policy guidance:

Policy type(s)	Relevant section heading(s)
Spatial policies	Spatial Development Strategy; Natural Capital; Town Centre Strategies
Development management policies	Spatial Development Strategy; Natural Capital; Social Capital; Housing Delivery
Site specific policies	Economic Prosperity

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/adopted-north-northamptonshire-joint-core-strategy-2011-2031/>

Policy type(s)	Relevant section heading(s)
Development land allocations	Economic Prosperity; Housing Delivery; Delivering Sustainable Urban Extensions; Town Strategies

- 1.4 Footnotes are used to provide references to related assessments, studies and policy documents, in order to show how policies have developed from an evidence base and are in accordance with other relevant policies and strategies.

### Policies Map

- 1.5 Under the legislation (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>2</sup>) and associated regulations, the Policies Map is classified as a separate document to the Local Plan Part 2. The legislation and national guidance set out the requirements for the Policies Map; namely that it must be reproduced from, or based on, an Ordnance Survey map, and must be cartographically clear. It forms a critical tool in explaining and understanding specific policies and proposals in the Plan.
- 1.6 Draft illustrative diagram maps and map extracts are included within this document where appropriate in order to provide additional clarity.

### Pre-Submission Draft Plan consultation

- 1.7 The Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Part 2 was approved by the former East Northamptonshire Council's Planning Policy Committee on 27 January 2021. This represented the published Local Plan Part 2, which the former Council submitted to the then Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government in March 2021 for public examination by an independently appointed Planning Inspector.
- 1.8 The Plan was subject to a 6-weeks consultation, in accordance with Regulations 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended<sup>3</sup>, prior to assessment by the appointed Planning Inspector in accordance with four criteria set out below, to establish that the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the relevant legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is 'sound'; i.e. :
- a) **Positively prepared** – consistent with relevant strategic policies for the area [i.e. the Local Plan Part 1; the [North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031](#), adopted July 2016];
  - b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
  - c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period; and
  - d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF).

- 1.9 The consultation took place from 5 February – 19 March 2021.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/767/contents>



## The Local Plan Part 2

### Purpose of the Plan

- 1.10 The Local Plan Part 2 will help guide future planning decisions in the East Northamptonshire area of North Northamptonshire for the period of 2011 to 2031. It contains policies that the Council will use to assess development proposals, together with the Joint Core Strategy (adopted 2016).
- 1.11 The Local Plan Part 2 replaces all of the extant saved policies from the former East Northamptonshire District Local Plan<sup>4</sup> (adopted 1996) and the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan<sup>5</sup> (adopted 2011).

**Figure 1: Preparation of the Local Plan – key milestones**

Stage	Dates
Decision made to prepare new district-wide Local Plan Part 2	11 April 2016
Formal commencement/ consultation on the scope of Plan/ call for sites, including issues/ options consultation (Regulation 18)	January – March 2017
Topic/ theme based Member workshops	May – October 2017
Area focused (town centre/ urban area and rural area) Member workshops	November 2017 – January 2018
Town and Parish Council workshops	February – April 2018
Draft Plan consultation	November 2018 – February 2019
Additional sites/ focused changes consultations	February – March 2020; and October – November 2020
Publication of pre-submission draft Plan and consultation (Regulation 19)	February – March 2021
Submission of Plan (Regulation 22)	March 2021
Examination of Plan (Regulation 24)	April – May 2022
Proposed Modifications Consultation	March – April 2023
Receipt of Inspectors Report (Regulation 25)	July 2023
Adoption of Plan (Regulation 26)	December 2023

### Context for the Plan

- 1.12 The Plan has been prepared taking into account the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 15-37 of the NPPF set out the approach which should be taken in respect of plan-making; the NPPF requires that plans should “be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”. The NPPF (paragraph 8) specifies the three objectives of sustainable development:

- Economic – including supporting economic growth, innovation and productivity;
- Social – including housing delivery and wellbeing (quality of life); and

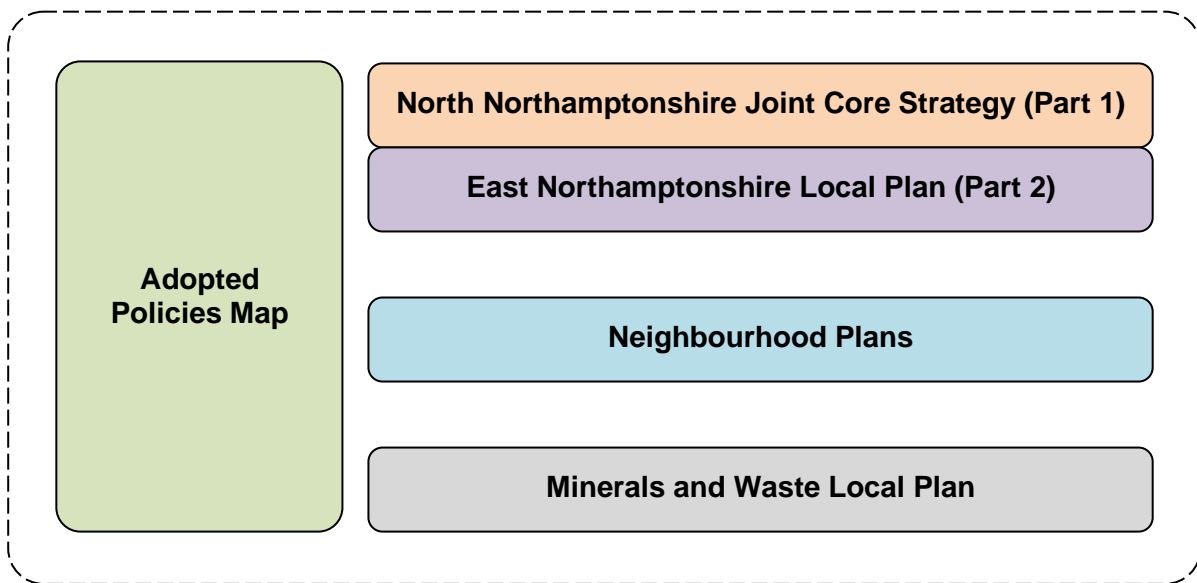
<sup>4</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200197/1996\\_district\\_local\\_plan/1676/1996\\_district\\_local\\_plan](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200197/1996_district_local_plan/1676/1996_district_local_plan)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/rnotp>

- Environmental – including conservation and enhancement of the natural (i.e. biodiversity and/ or ecological networks), built and historic environment.

1.13 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (the Local Plan Part 1) deals with strategic issues across Kettering, Corby, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire. It allocates strategic sites and sets out the overall spatial strategy, the required level of growth and the distribution of growth. It also includes both strategic and development management policies. This Plan supplements the Joint Core Strategy and provides greater local detail to issues relevant to the former district area of East Northamptonshire, where this is necessary to add value to these overarching strategic Local Plan policies.

**Figure 2: Plan Making – North Northamptonshire Framework**



1.14 The Localism Act 2011<sup>6</sup> allows local communities to make Neighbourhood Plans in order to shape growth and development in their area. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with strategic policies of the Local Plan and once “made” will form part of the statutory development plan for the area.

1.15 Neighbourhood Plans by definition, are non-strategic in scope. For Neighbourhood Plans to work effectively, policies should add local value and distinctiveness to the higher level policies of the Local Plan. The Local Plan Part 2 contains a mixture of strategic and non-strategic policies. This Plan has been written so as to minimise any potential for conflict between non-strategic Local Plan and extant Neighbourhood Plan policies; as in decision making “made” Neighbourhood Plan policies have parity with Local Plan policy making in terms of weightings in decision making<sup>7</sup>.

1.16 For locations where no Neighbourhood Plan has been “made” or is in preparation, this Plan provides the additional spatial policy framework, covering themes and topics that go beyond the scope of strategic (Joint Core Strategy) policies. This Plan also provides an

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents>

<sup>7</sup> Appendix 1 sets out, for each Plan policy, relevant Local Plan Outcomes (section 3.0), related Joint Core Strategy policies and whether the policy is strategic or non-strategic

enhanced policy framework, to allow future Neighbourhood Plans to set parish/ Neighbourhood Area level non-strategic and/ or site specific policies.

### **Soundness Tests**

- 1.17 Paragraph 35 of the NPPF sets out the criteria against which the independent planning inspector has assessed this Plan to determine whether it has been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is 'sound'. Further details about the tests of 'soundness' (positively prepared; justified; effective, and consistent with national policy) are set out in full at paragraph 1.8, above.
- 1.18 Alongside complying with the four soundness tests, the Plan has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, so as to fulfil statutory requirements. Throughout the Plan preparation process, the former Council worked closely with specific consultation bodies to deliver a sound Local Plan. These statutory consultees have also worked closely with the Council to guide the process, with reference to matters such as flood risk management (Environment Agency); cultural heritage (Historic England); protection of designated biodiversity assets (Natural England), and to inform any potential cross boundary issues (neighbouring local authorities).

### **Duty to Cooperate**

- 1.19 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'Duty to Cooperate' as an amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The 'Duty to Cooperate' places a legal duty on local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with regard to the preparation of development plan documents to ensure that cross boundary planning matters have been taken into account.
- 1.20 The Council worked closely with other local authorities and partners in the North Northamptonshire area through the existing joint working arrangement. This joint arrangement had operated since 2004/5 and was formalised by way of secondary legislation (SI 2005 No. 1552<sup>8</sup>). The preparation of the Joint Core Strategy (strategic policies) was led by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU); a partnership of Corby Borough Council, East Northamptonshire Council, Kettering Borough Council, the Borough Council of Wellingborough and Northamptonshire County Council. These authorities merged into a single unitary authority for the North Northamptonshire area on 1 April 2021 forming the Unitary council of North Northamptonshire. The 'Duty to Cooperate' relates predominantly to strategic Local Plan policies which, in the main, are addressed through the Joint Core Strategy. This Plan falls within this framework, although continuous engagement with the North Northamptonshire partner authorities together with other national statutory bodies formed an integral part of the Plan-making process.
- 1.21 The statutory Duty to Cooperate, while predominantly a function of strategic Local Plan policies (i.e. the Joint Core Strategy), was nevertheless still a requirement for this Plan. One way that the Council ensured compliance with the Duty to Cooperate was through the preparation of Statements of Common Ground. These are prepared in conjunction with neighbouring/ interested local authorities and/ or other prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies (statutory consultees; including national bodies such as Government departments

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/1552/contents/made>

and other organisations such as Local Enterprise Partnerships) where appropriate, to support the Examination of the Plan.

### **Community engagement**

- 1.22 As shown in Figure 1 (above), the preparation of the Local Plan follows a number of key milestones, which entail continuous public consultation/ community engagement. The statutory Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017) was followed by a series of stakeholder workshop events with elected representatives and Town/ Parish Councils (2017-2018).
- 1.23 The subsequent consultation upon the 1<sup>st</sup> draft version of the Local Plan (November 2018 – February 2019) allowed for a full range of feedback (including additional evidence) from both statutory consultation bodies and the wider public. This consultation, which was in addition to the statutory milestones, enabled all stakeholders to respond to draft policies. This allowed policies to be further refined and developed prior to the formal publication and submission of the Plan.
- 1.24 Full details about these consultations are set out in the statutory Statement of Consultation; also known as the “Regulation 22” Statement. This is included within the suite of supporting submission Local Plan documents and also includes additional information regarding the Duty to Cooperate.

### **Evidence Base**

- 1.25 Paragraphs 31-33 of the NPPF required that the preparation of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence which is adequate, proportionate, focused on supporting and justifying the policies and takes into account relevant market signals.
- 1.26 This Plan is accompanied by background papers which provide additional supporting detail and evidence for the policies. These are available to view on the Council’s website:  
[https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200190/annual\\_monitoring\\_report/68/evidence\\_base\\_and\\_monitoring](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200190/annual_monitoring_report/68/evidence_base_and_monitoring)
- 1.27 Evidence is available at many different levels, ranging between Ward, District, North Northamptonshire or data collected at a sub-regional/ regional level. In utilising the evidence base, it is important to understand the broader context for the Plan. This includes spatial policies that are already in force through the Joint Core Strategy and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, adopted July 2017<sup>9</sup>.
- 1.28 The published evidence base that underpins this Plan takes many forms. These may be broader, more strategic documents; notably the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), updated February 2020<sup>10</sup> and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), September

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy/Pages/update-of-the-adopted-minerals-and-waste-local-plan.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200190/annual\\_monitoring\\_report/68/evidence\\_base\\_and\\_monitoring/9](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200190/annual_monitoring_report/68/evidence_base_and_monitoring/9)

2017<sup>11</sup>. The SFRA provides an overarching District-level assessment of published (secondary) flood data to establish whether new development can be allocated outside high and medium flood risk areas. The IDP guides the development of new infrastructure to support new developments, both community (e.g. education) and physical (e.g. transport or utilities).

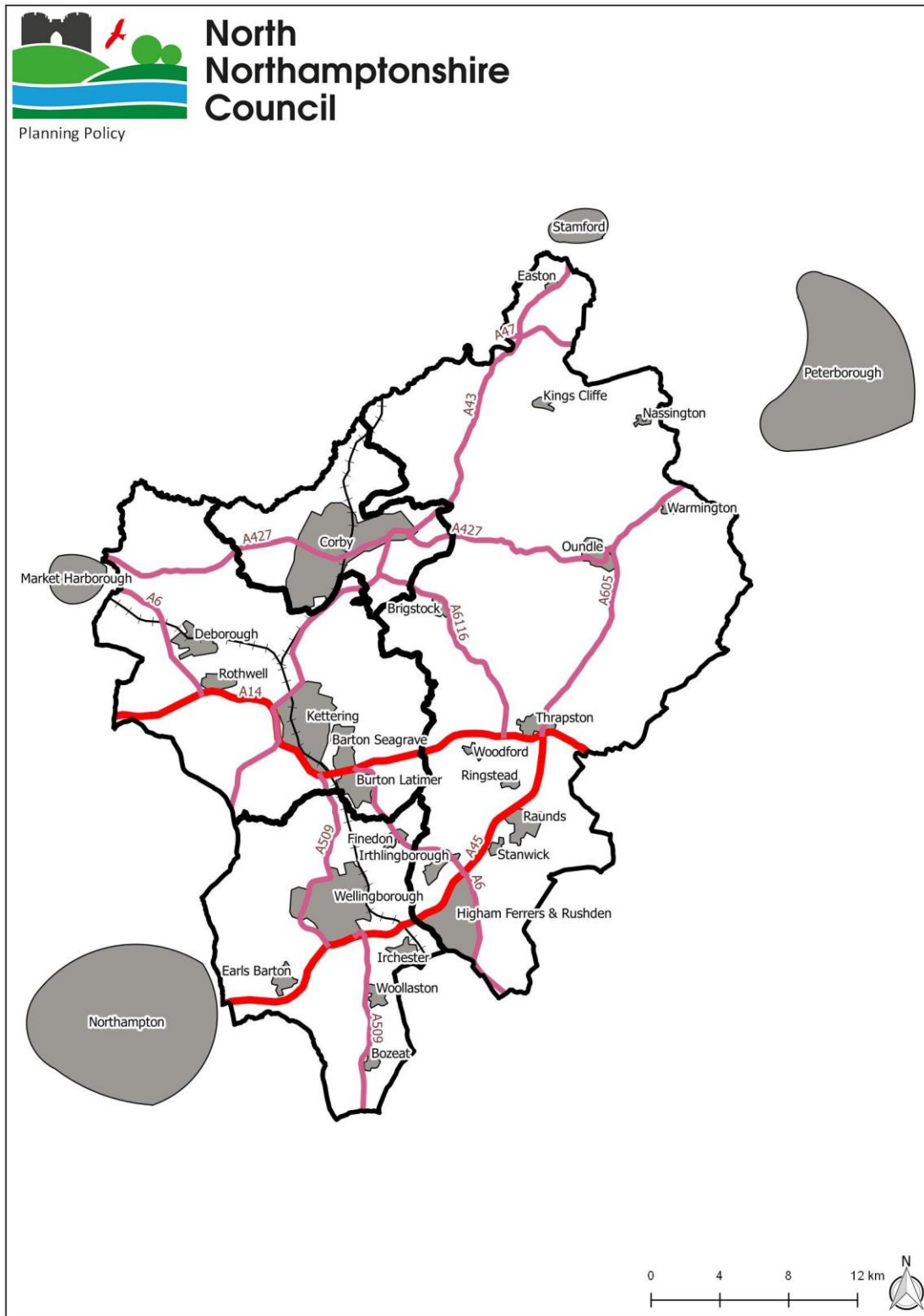
- 1.29 The 2017 North Northamptonshire IDP is supplemented by the updated East Northamptonshire Local Infrastructure Plan (LIP), January 2021<sup>12</sup>. In combination, the IDP and LIP provide a comprehensive and up to date resource detailing infrastructure delivery priorities for the remaining duration of the Plan period. Other evidence regarding infrastructure needs and priorities may take the form of bespoke assessments/ studies to support individual sections of the Plan or policies; e.g. Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (April 2017) or background papers.
- 1.30 Details of evidence base documents (with a hyperlink, where available) are shown as footnotes on each page. This information is included to ensure that the Plan policies and strategy are justified; i.e. that these fulfil the 2<sup>nd</sup> soundness test (that is, being based on proportionate evidence).
- 1.31 The scope and contents of this plan are directed by the Joint Core Strategy, adopted July 2016, and broader contextual information is set out in the spatial context map at Figure 3 (below). This includes strategic land use designations, which are shown on the Policies Map. Further spatial/ site specific information derived from this Plan will be added to the Policies Map upon adoption.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-infrastructure-delivery-plan/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12114/east\\_northamptonshire\\_local\\_infrastructure\\_plan](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12114/east_northamptonshire_local_infrastructure_plan)

**Figure 3: East Northamptonshire: Spatial context**



**Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

1.32 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal for each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation, to promote sustainable development and ensure the Plan contributes to environmental, economic and social objectives. The UK Government signed up to European Directive 2001/42/EC when a member of the European

Community/ Union, incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment into domestic legislation. This is incorporated into the wider Sustainability Appraisal process, to assess the potential effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

- 1.33 The process for undertaking Sustainability Appraisal is set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SI 2004 No 1633<sup>13</sup>) and requires consideration of “all reasonable alternatives”. The Council’s consultants AECOM undertook the Sustainability Appraisal<sup>14</sup> on behalf of the former East Northamptonshire Council, in parallel with the preparation of this Plan.
- 1.34 A Sustainability Appraisal is undertaken in parallel with the plan-making process. Several of the statutory consultation bodies provide detailed guidance, which supplements the Planning Practice Guidance<sup>15</sup>; e.g. Historic England<sup>16</sup>.
- 1.35 In accordance with NPPF Section 2, criteria to include physical limitations or problems such as access, infrastructure, ground conditions, flood risk, pollution and contamination are assessed. Potential impacts are considered, including the effect upon landscapes, biodiversity, conservation and environmental/amenity impacts. Accessibility, links and frequency of public transport to include intra-urban transport should be given significant weighting.
- 1.36 Whilst it is inevitable that new development would have some impact upon the existing built form, any assessment should consider the overall impact of any development, to include any potential mitigation that a site can deliver.
- 1.37 Other factors to be considered are public footpath connections, accessibility to footpaths and cycleways as well as the potential for enhancement of such facilities as part of any development.

### **Habitat Regulations Assessment**

- 1.38 A Habitat Regulations Assessment is required under the European Directive 92/43/EEC (which the UK Government incorporated into domestic legislation when a member) to assess the impacts of implementing a policy on European (Natura 2000) Sites, to determine whether it would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA)/ Ramsar site, which lies within the district between Irthlingborough and Thorpe Waterville, was confirmed in April 2011.
- 1.39 This Plan will be subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017<sup>17</sup>. The HRA was undertaken by AECOM on behalf of the former East Northamptonshire Council, in parallel with the preparation of the Plan. Natural England and the Wildlife Trust have been engaged throughout the plan-making process with regards to the HRA process. The HRA report

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/1633/contents/made>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12096/sustainability\\_appraisal\\_report](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12096/sustainability_appraisal_report)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

<sup>16</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/strategic-environ-assessment-sustainability-appraisal-historic-environment/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents>

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will be submitted alongside the Plan, within the suite of supporting submission documents.

- 1.40 Areas of land located beyond the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site may also be important ecologically in supporting populations for which the SPA has been designated, these areas are defined as Functionally Linked Land (FLL). In the case of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, Natural England has advised that land beyond designated SPA/ Ramsar sites may provide foraging habitats for protected wintering bird species such as lapwing and golden plover. FLL has been considered through the HRA undertaken to support the Plan.
- 1.41 Policy 4 of the JCS and the Special Protection Area SPD set out requirements where development would have an effect on the SPA to ensure that such development would have no significant effect on the SPA. The Special Protection Area SPD includes a Mitigation Strategy. The JCS Policies Map identifies two zones, one within a 3km buffer of the SPA and one within a 4km buffer of the SPA. Within the 3km buffer zone the SPA a Mitigation Strategy applies. For larger greenfield developments of 2ha or more, the Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 3.41) requires that within the 4km buffer these should be subject to site specific wintering bird surveys to determine if sites have a role as functionally linked land. The effectiveness and extent of the SPA buffer zones will need to be addressed through a review of the JCS, to ensure that a sustainable approach to future development proposals is agreed.
- 1.42 Natural England has raised concerns regarding the impacts of air quality and pollution upon the SPA/ Ramsar site. The local planning authority shares these concerns and since July 2020 the Council has required air quality assessments submitted in support of planning applications/ proposals, which are to be prepared in line with the East Midlands Air Quality Network (EMAQN) guidance.
- 1.43 Sites within the 3km buffer zone are bound by the Mitigation Strategy; whereby financial contributions to mitigate the adverse impacts of development upon the SPA/Ramsar site will be sought in accordance with the Addendum to the SPA Supplementary Planning Document: Mitigation Strategy. In line with the SPD requirements, consultation is required by Natural England in advance of submitting a planning application. As part of that consultation, further mitigation may be needed in exceptional circumstances and where Natural England advise. If a bespoke process is required, then a project level Appropriate Assessment will be required to accompany a planning application.
- 1.44 Within the 3km and 4km zones and potentially beyond, in order to comply with HRA legislation, development may need to be supported by bespoke assessments such as wintering bird surveys. To fulfil the precautionary principle, at Natural England's direction, the requirements for an appropriate assessment are set out below.



In submitting a planning application, the applicant will be required to provide evidence that the development will not result in a Likely Significant Effect upon the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site. To achieve this, surveys will be required to determine habitats and current use of the site to determine if it does support a significant population of qualifying species. Where habitats are suitable, non-breeding bird surveys will be required to determine if the site and neighbouring land constitute a significant area of supporting habitat.

Surveys should be required to be undertaken during autumn, winter and spring and at more than one year of survey data may be needed (to be agreed in consultation with the local planning authority and Natural England). If habitat within the site is identified to support significant populations of designated bird features avoidance measures and mitigation will be required, such as the creation of replacement habitat nearby, and the planning application will likely need to be supported by a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that the development does not result in adverse effects on integrity

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 1.45 An Equality Impact Assessment is required under the Equality Act 2010, to determine that the Council has had due regard to its duty to consider the equality impact of any proposed policies. The Plan has been subject to Equalities Impact Assessment Screening<sup>18</sup>, but only positive and/ or neutral impacts for protected or vulnerable groups were identified through this process.

### **Health Impact Assessment**

- 1.46 Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are a requirement, as outlined in paragraph 91 of the NPPF, to ensure that planning policies and decisions aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs. This could be through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling. Policies should provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs. Planning policies and decisions should take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.
- 1.47 Health and wellbeing is addressed further in the National Planning Guidance on Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities. This identifies that planners should engage with local health partners to help achieve healthier new developments and deliver the appropriate healthcare facilities to meet the needs of the residents of new developments. Undertaking a HIA, in relation to a development proposal, can help judge the likely health impacts of that proposal and help ensure any positive health impacts are achieved and negative health impacts minimised. To assist the process, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (NNJPDU) has produced a toolkit<sup>19</sup>, which has been utilised to prepare the HIA for this Plan.

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12089/equalities\\_impact\\_assessment](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12089/equalities_impact_assessment)

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.nnj pdu.org.uk/publications/northamptonshire-rapid-hia-for-planning-tool/>

## Local Plan Viability

- 1.48 National policy (NPPF paragraphs 16 and 76) requires plan-making to be underpinned by robust viability evidence, as fundamental to ensuring successful implementation of Local Plan policies. It is required that these should reflect the recommendation approach in the Planning Practice Guide<sup>20</sup>, utilising standardised inputs.
- 1.49 Accordingly, in September 2019, BNP Paribas was appointed to undertake a viability assessment of the Plan. This analysis was systematically undertaken for each draft Local Plan policy prior to the statutory consultation for the published Plan (January – March 2021). The Viability Assessment<sup>21</sup> was finalised in January 2021 and was submitted with the Plan as part of the evidence base.

## Delivery, monitoring and review

- 1.50 Implementation of this Plan will be undertaken in accordance with the Monitoring and Implementation Framework (section 11.0). Each policy is supported by a monitoring objective, indicator and target, in order to assess its effectiveness.
- 1.51 The Plan will be monitored on an annual basis through the Authorities' Monitoring Report (AMR). The latest published AMR<sup>22</sup> at the stage of Plan drafting was for the 2018-19 monitoring year. The following measures may trigger a review of the Plan:
- Changes to national policies and/ or legislation;
  - Evidence that policies are not working as intended; or
  - New information or evidence becomes available which renders a policy out of date.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/viability>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11982/east\\_northamptonshire\\_local\\_plan\\_viability\\_assessment\\_bnp\\_paribas\\_july\\_2020](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11982/east_northamptonshire_local_plan_viability_assessment_bnp_paribas_july_2020)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-authorities-monitoring-report-18-19/>

## 2.0 Area Portrait

### Introduction – Background to the Plan area

- 2.1 The Local Plan Part 2 covers the whole of the former district of East Northamptonshire. It provides additional district/sub-district level policy detail to support the overarching spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire set out in the Local Plan Part 1; the Joint Core Strategy, adopted in July 2016.
- 2.2 The Plan area contains contrasting rural and urban aspects. The Area Portrait provides background contextual information for the Plan. These concepts are developed further; through the Vision and Outcomes (section 3.0), and the Spatial Development Strategy (section 4.0), before providing more detailed thematic and site specific policies which make up the remainder of this document.
- 2.3 This Area Portrait provides background information for each of the six towns within the district, starting with the designated Growth Town (Rushden) and then considering the other five Market Towns (Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston). Each of these designated Market Towns has its own character and functional role; each facing its own challenges, with a need to maintain a prosperous local economy and also maintain key heritage assets (e.g. pubs, tourism) as attractions for visitors. These distinctive characteristics are recognised through this Plan.
- 2.4 These towns have all undergone significant population growth (Table 1, below) with an overall 20% increase occurring in the urban areas over the previous 15 years (2001-2016). Proportionally, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough and Thrapston have seen the highest levels of growth (30% or more). It should be noted that there has been significant growth in the population in Raunds since the 2016 estimate, due to residential urban extensions to the north, north-east and south of the town.

**Table 1 Population Data**

Settlements	Population (2001 Census)	Population (2011 Census)	Population (2016 estimate)	Population increase (2001-16)	% increase (2001-16)
Rushden	25,849	29,272	30,282	4,433	17.1%
Higham Ferrers	6,086	8,083	8,410	2,324	38.2%
Irthlingborough	7,033	8,535	9,112	2,079	29.6%
Oundle	5,345	5,735	6,177	832	15.6%
Raunds	8,275	8,641	8,809	534	6.5%
Thrapston	4,855	6,239	6,361	1,506	31.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57,443</b>	<b>66,505</b>	<b>69,151</b>	<b>11,708</b>	<b>20.4%</b>

- 2.5 The Plan sets out similar information for the rural areas, recognising the contrasting geographical characteristics within the district. It also notes the implications of Neighbourhood Plans which have been “made” (adopted) since 2016.

## Urban areas

### Rushden: Growth Town

- 2.6 Rushden, once described as an ‘appendage’ to Higham (*Kelly’s Trade Directory, 1854*), underwent a dramatic expansion and industrialisation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A once rural village was turned in to a thriving centre for the boot and shoe industry. Many buildings, including former factories, social clubs, chapels, churches and housing, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, survive and are a strong reminder of the town’s heritage. A number of buildings predate the boot and shoe boom, which glimpse the former landscape setting; these can most noticeably be seen in Rushden Hall, as well as St Mary’s Church and a number of buildings along the High Street.
- 2.7 Rushden today, whilst being the most southern town within the district, is very much the urban hub of the predominantly urban southern part of the district. It is by far the largest town within the district and has seen substantial population growth over the past 15 years, from just below 26,000 (25,849; 2001 Census) to over 30,000 (30,282; 2016 estimate). The town is flanked by a number of industrial sites to the east and west, whilst more recent housing developments have expanded the town to the south and east.
- 2.8 Rushden is designated as a Growth Town in the Joint Core Strategy (2011-2031), and is expected to undertake a significant amount of development over the Plan period. The wider town contains a mix of existing leisure facilities, businesses and services as well as forthcoming leisure, retail and business opportunities. The most notable of these include Rushden Lakes (opened in 2017, extended in 2019) and the proposed mixed use development of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension, adjoining the eastern side of the town. The growth for this area is anticipated to provide for greater investment and value within Rushden.

### Rushden Neighbourhood Plan (made June 2018)

- 2.9 The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan contains a range of detailed non-strategic policies for the town and its hinterland. These policies form part of the development plan for the area, sitting alongside this Plan. They include smaller housing site allocations within the main urban area of Rushden, detailed development management policies and site specific designations such as open spaces and town centres. The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan provides a detailed policy framework for the town. It includes a number of housing land allocations within the urban area, which should deliver around 560 dwellings towards the Joint Core Strategy housing requirement for the town.

### Rushden East Masterplan Framework (2020)

- 2.10 Development of the Rushden East sustainable urban extension has been a commitment since the adoption of the Joint Core Strategy in July 2016 (Policy 33). This is a new proposal including at least 2,500 dwellings and associated jobs and facilities, reflecting the status of Rushden as a Growth Town. Policy EN29 identifies the broad location for this SUE, together with the key issues and development principles that need to be addressed as this is taken forward through master-planning.
- 2.11 An overarching vision for Rushden East was agreed by East Northamptonshire Council on 17 July 2017. Following on from this, the former Council prepared a draft Rushden

East Masterplan Framework Document (MFD). This was published in January 2020, for consultation during February – March 2020, and it was then determined that the MFD should be incorporated into the Local Plan Part 2 (Planning Policy Committee, 21 September 2020, Item 5). Following the examination of the Plan it was agreed that the MFD would be taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document supporting Policy EN29. An updated position in respect of the MFD is provided in paragraph 9.8.

### **Higham Ferrers**

- 2.12 Higham Ferrers, the home of some of East Northamptonshire’s oldest buildings, benefits from a vibrant and attractive historic core. The architecture of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, its prominent spire and the group of buildings that surround the churchyard (all Grade I Listed Buildings), add a certain theatrical zeal to the sense of place, with many positive and landmark buildings in and adjacent to the town centre and College Street (Chichele College and The Green Dragon, for instance).
- 2.13 Over the years Higham has had its fair share of notable residents and visitors. It is the birth place of Henry Chichele (Archbishop of Canterbury 1414 – 1443 and the founder of All Souls College Oxford) who established Higham Ferrers School in 1422. The Duchy of Lancaster is a key landowner in and around the town, acknowledging the town’s Royal connections.
- 2.14 Higham Ferrers is the historic market town for the south of the district, having been granted a market charter in 1251. Proportionally it has undergone the largest population growth (over 38%) of the six towns within the district during the previous 15 years (2001-16); from just over 6,000 (6,086; 2001 Census) to just over 8,400 (8,410; 2016 estimate).
- 2.15 To the north of Higham, new housing developments have led to an extended settlement away from its historic core. This has resulted in a closer physical link to Irthlingborough, although physically separated by the A45/ A6 Chowns Mill roundabout and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Irthlingborough viaduct, over the River Nene.

### **Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan (made April 2016)**

- 2.16 The Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan was the first in the district to be “made” (adopted). This sets out a range of site specific proposals and designations, including the town centre, local green space, main employment areas, proposed Greenway extensions and provides a strategic housing land allocation of 300 dwellings to the east of Ferrers School.

### **Irthlingborough**

- 2.17 Irthlingborough is separated from the other southern urban centres of Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds by the River Nene. It was historically involved in the iron and gravel mining industry and much of the surrounding landscape is shaped by this historic activity. The growth of the town during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was, in part, shaped by the extensive mine workings between Irthlingborough and Finedon, which present ongoing issues of ground stability to the west of the town. The Church of St Peter, with its distinctive lantern tower, dominates the sky line and holds dominion over the north side of the Nene Valley.
- 2.18 Whilst Irthlingborough has a historic association with excavation and the landscape is well related to this, much like the other towns in the south of the district, industrialisation

due to the boot and shoe industry resulted in a quick expansion from a farming community to a town. The boot and shoe trade developed from an aspect of the community in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to being fully established and a prominent aspect of the town's economy by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- 2.19 Irthlingborough has seen significant population growth (approximately 30%) over the previous 15 years (2001-16). The population has increased from just over 7,000 (7,033; 2001 Census) to just over 9,100 (9,112; 2016 estimate).
- 2.20 Most of the growth in Irthlingborough proposed over the next 15 years (i.e. during the remainder of the current Plan period), will be delivered through the proposed sustainable urban extension (700 dwellings and associated employment, services and infrastructure) to the west of the town. Approval was granted in 2014, although discussions continue around development contributions. This and other smaller commitments to the east (Attley Way) and west (Wellingborough Road), combined with recent developments at the former Sunseeker Caravan site (Finedon Road) and Crow Hill (to the north of the main urban area), have expanded and will continue to grow the town throughout the Plan period. Annual monitoring will indicate whether any further development land allocations are needed to meet the requirement for the town as set out in the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 29, Table 5).

### **Emerging Irthlingborough Neighbourhood Plan**

- 2.21 Irthlingborough Town Council applied to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan in 2014; the Neighbourhood Area designation was confirmed in December 2014. In February 2020 the Irthlingborough Neighbourhood Planning Group stated their intention to work towards Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning process during 2021, thereby re-engaging in the development of their plan.

### **Oundle**

- 2.22 Oundle is the main market town and service centre for the rural north of the district. It has functional relationships to other larger urban centres to the north and east, namely Stamford and Peterborough. The town of Oundle is located to the west of the River Nene, close to the river floodplain, situated to the south and east of the town.
- 2.23 Oundle has been settled since the Iron Age, having been a trading place and market centre for local farmers and craftsmen for at least 1,500 years. It also has significant ecclesiastical heritage; St Wilfrid set up a monastery in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, which was later replaced by the current St Peter's Church. The town underwent significant growth in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, such that it was then granted a market charter.
- 2.24 The town also has a longstanding academic heritage, with a grammar school first founded in 1465. Sir William Laxton, a former pupil, then founded Laxton Grammar School in 1556, which subsequently became Oundle School. These dual historic ecclesiastical and educational aspects of the town's history have combined to define the unique character of Oundle.
- 2.25 Oundle has seen some population growth during the past 15 years (2001-2016). The population has risen from just over 5,300 (5,345; 2001 Census) to nearly 6,200 (6,177; 2016 estimate) and further growth is anticipated during the remainder of the Plan period.

The population fluctuates during the year due to the presence of Oundle School, increasing by approximately 1000 students during term time.

- 2.26 Beyond the main built up area, adjacent to the River Nene, are a number of significant riparian landmarks. To the south of the town, Barnwell Country Park and the Oundle Marina retail and leisure redevelopment scheme (permitted in 2018) provide a significant opportunity to develop the town's tourist potential. Also in close proximity to the town, on the opposite bank of the River Nene, are landmark (currently vacant) heritage assets; the Riverside Hotel to the east and Barnwell Mill to the south. It will represent a key challenge for the planning system to bring these premises back into viable uses.

### **Raunds**

- 2.27 Raunds, whilst not as famous as Rushden for its boot and shoe industry history, had a boom period during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, developing from an agricultural community to a town by the early 1800s. Raunds and the surrounding area contain a number of ancient monuments as well as archaeological sites of international significance.
- 2.28 The town has particularly good road transport links; the A45 trunk road which links through to the A14, allowing easy access to the M1 and A6 to the west, and A1 to the east. As such, with Raunds being the first major settlement to the south of the A14 off the A45, the town acts as a passing gateway from the more rural northern part of the district to the urban centres in the south.
- 2.29 Today Raunds has a major strategic industrial/warehousing area to the north west of the main urban area (Warth Park). The initial development phase at Warth Park took place during the early 2000s, with major expansion (phase 2) having taken place since 2012. The town as a whole will continue to grow, with new developments already under construction to the north, north east and south of the town. These existing commitments are expected to be delivered over the remainder of the Plan period, by 2031.
- 2.30 In recent years population growth at Raunds has been limited. The population increased by 6.5% over 15 years (2001-2016), from just below 8,300 (8,275; 2001 Census) to just over 8,800 (8,809; 2016 estimate). Accelerated population growth is anticipated during the remainder of the Plan period, as the major urban extensions around the town are implemented.

### **Raunds Neighbourhood Plan (made November 2017)**

- 2.31 Raunds Neighbourhood Plan contains a range of detailed non-strategic policies for the town and its rural hinterland, many of which would otherwise be covered by this Plan. It does not allocate further development land allocations, as all of the required growth is already delivered, under construction or permitted. Instead, the Neighbourhood Plan focuses upon the re-imagining of the town centre and the retention of existing assets including employment areas, community facilities and open spaces.

### **Thrapston**

- 2.32 Thrapston is a historic market town, situated midway along the River Nene within the East Northamptonshire area. It was granted a market charter in 1205, soon after a bridge crossing the river was constructed between Thrapston and the neighbouring village of Islip on the opposite (west) bank of the river, (first recorded in 1224). The

current Nine Arches bridge is more recent, although it is likely that this was constructed as a replacement for the earlier bridge.

- 2.33 Thrapston is situated at a significant crossroad, between the Northampton – Peterborough road (A45/ A605), which follows the Nene Valley and the main east-west trunk road (now the A14) which connects east coast ports with the West Midlands conurbation (Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country). Since the 1980s it functioned as the administrative centre for East Northamptonshire Council, largely due to its central location within the district.
- 2.34 Thrapston has seen significant population growth (over 30%) since 2001. In this 15 year period, from 2001 to 2016, the population has increased from below 5,000 (4,855; 2001 Census), to nearly 6,400 (6,361; 2016 estimate). This is largely due to major new development at Lazy Acre, on the north east side of the urban area. Development to the south of the town is mostly complete, “filling the gap” between the older built-up/ urban area and the A14.
- 2.35 Despite the significant population increase and its situation on the main strategic road network, Thrapston retains its rural character, with agriculture remaining a significant sector of the local economy. Notably the town retains its cattle market, the sole remaining livestock market in the counties of Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. In common with Raunds, Thrapston is also host to a number of national logistics and distribution centres, due to its location on the strategic road network, particularly the east-west A14 and A45 trunk roads. In addition a number of businesses are located within the town, including local authority offices.

### **The rural area**

- 2.36 The district is subdivided by the A14, the main East Coast – Midlands Trunk Road. This divides East Northamptonshire between the more urban southern area and the predominantly rural northern parts of the district. Three distinctive rural sub-areas are noted:
- Nene Valley, including agricultural Claylands to the east of the River Nene;
  - Rockingham Forest – to the north west of the Nene Valley, south east of the Welland Valley and north of the A14, including the major tributaries of the River Nene (Harper’s Brook and Willow Brook); and
  - Rural hinterland for the predominantly urban southern area of the district, to the south of the A14 (also known as the Four Towns area).

### **Nene Valley**

- 2.37 The Nene Valley is the major feature which defines the whole of the district. It rises above (to the west of) Northampton and flows south west/ north east, entering the Wash at Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire. It is a major national waterway, with the vast majority of the area of the district situated within the River Nene catchment area.
- 2.38 The importance of the River Nene to the district has long been recognised (e.g. through the River Nene Regional Park). The Nene Valley Strategic Plan (October 2010) recognised the vast variety of functions of the River Nene and sought to bring environmental, leisure, tourism, economic, planning and land use matters into a single document. This was subsequently implemented through a number of more focused



projects, such as “Destination Nene Valley” (DNV), This is a new pathfinding partnership project, aiming to build on existing frameworks to better position and promote the Nene Valley and the Nene Valley Improvement Area (NIA), designated in 2011. It is supported by the NIA business Plan, which seeks to achieve a step-change in the mechanisms for delivering nature conservation, to create a resilient ecological network along the river valley.

- 2.39 All of the six towns within the district are situated on, or are in close proximity to, the River Nene. Historically, the river has been a major communications link. The River Nene is navigable for 88 miles, between Northampton and the Wash. It was approved for navigation under a 1724 Act of Parliament, with works to make the river navigable from Peterborough upstream to Northampton. Improvements to the river were progressively implemented between then and 1761.
- 2.40 A branch of the London and Birmingham Railway was later constructed along the Nene Valley between Blisworth and Peterborough, and opened in 1845. This functioned as a secondary railway link, although an important freight route for iron ore trains was eventually closed in the 1960s. The Nene Valley has also been a major arterial road route since Roman times. Much of the A45/ A605 road link within the district (connecting Milton Keynes, Northampton, Peterborough and East Anglia) follows the route of a former Roman road.
- 2.41 Within the district, a number of villages are situated on or are in close proximity to the River Nene. These are Ringstead, Denford, Islip, Thorpe Waterville, Aldwincle, Wadenhoe, Pilton, Lilford, Ashton, Cotterstock, Tansor, Fotheringhay, Warmington, Nassington and Yarwell. These villages also host a number of historic assets, including notable Buildings at Risk (Ashton Mill and Lilford Hall) and the nationally significant historic monument of Fotheringhay Castle.
- 2.42 The Claylands to the east of the Nene Valley also include a number of nationally important sites of historic interest. In 2010, the Ashton Estate (with Ashton Wold) was designated a Grade II Park and Garden under the Register of Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 for its special historic interest, having been developed by the Rothschild family as a model agricultural estate in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Other important features to the east of the Nene Valley include Barnwell Castle, first built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and subsequently used as a Royalist arsenal in the Civil War. The landscape of the Claylands is defined by its open character, extensive views and intensive agricultural economy.
- 2.43 Overall, the Nene Valley and Claylands to the east include a number of significant heritage assets, some of national importance (e.g. Fotheringhay Castle, Ashton Estate). To the south (upstream) of Thorpe Waterville, much of the Nene Valley is covered by the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site, an internationally important habitat for migrating winter birds. The Plan, with reference to the various Nene Valley strategies, should accommodate the (sometimes) competing roles of tourism, heritage and the natural environment.

### **Rockingham Forest and Welland Valley**

- 2.44 To the west of the River Nene, the largest geographical area of the rural part of the district is defined by the Rockingham Forest. This area was designated a royal hunting forest in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a role which continued until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this
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designation the area was not extensively forested; the name arose from its royal designation.

- 2.45 The Rockingham Forest is bisected by Harper’s Brook and Willow Brook, two main tributaries of the Nene, both of which flow west-east. The Rockingham Forest defines most of rural north part of the district, to the north of the A14 and west of the Nene Valley. It supports many rural communities but is closely connected to a number of urban areas; Oundle and Thrapston to the east, Corby to the west and Stamford to the north.
- 2.46 Within the heart of the forest itself are a small number of larger rural settlements, some of which function as service centres for a wider rural hinterland. The larger service villages within the Rockingham Forest include Brigstock, King’s Cliffe and Nassington. Easton on the Hill, just to the north of Rockingham Forest within the Welland Valley, has close functional relationships to the nearby urban centres of Stamford and Peterborough.
- 2.47 The River Welland forms a north western boundary to the Rockingham Forest. Villages such as Easton on the Hill and Collyweston are situated upon a prominent ridge which overlooks the Welland Valley. Other villages such as Duddington, Harringworth and Wakerley are defined by the Welland Valley. The Welland Valley Partnership has recently developed a vision<sup>23</sup> for the enhancement of the river valley, emphasising the resource that the river provides for the northernmost part of the district.
- 2.48 The Welland Valley is defined by a number of significant features. The Harringworth Viaduct is the longest in Britain, carrying the former Midland Railway’s Nottingham – Melton – Kettering loop line. It is also defined by a number of historic stone bridges (Collyweston, Duddington and Wakerley), together with the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ketton cement works (Rutland).
- 2.49 The Rockingham Forest and Welland Valley combine to define the largest parts of the rural area of the district. The role of the Rockingham Forest is already recognised in the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 21), which identifies its role in carbon storage through the Government’s Carbon Plan. The role of the Welland Valley as a defining feature for the northern part of the district should also be recognised; it is noted that the Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan provides some detailed local policy direction for Green Infrastructure enhancements along the Welland Valley.

### **Rural hinterland for the predominantly urban southern area**

- 2.50 Whilst the southern area (south of the A14) is made up of a far denser urban core than the northern part of the district, its rural hinterland is still an intrinsic feature of the southern part of the East Northamptonshire district. Several smaller settlements are situated in close proximity to the urban centres. These vary in size from the larger villages of Stanwick and Ringstead to the smaller picturesque rural parishes of Chelveston cum Caldecott, Great Addington, Little Addington, Hargrave and Newton Bromswold.
- 2.51 Stanwick and Ringstead both benefit from local facilities, typical of villages of their size (e.g. convenience store, post office, fast food takeaway and a pub). These primarily

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-welland-valley-partnership-enhancing-the-river-welland>

serve local needs, however travel out of these villages is necessary for other local amenities. The two villages benefit from their own primary schools. Stanwick also has a large recreation ground that adjoins the north eastern end of the village, which offers sporting provision. Just outside the village, west of the A45, is Stanwick Lakes, a large nature reserve with a visitor centre and walking, cycling and leisure opportunities. To the west of Ringstead is the Willy Watt Marina, a site for mooring boats, as well as providing camping opportunities.

2.52 Also within this southern area are the freestanding villages of Chelveston, Great Addington, Little Addington, Hargrave and Newton Bromswold. Chelveston cum Caldecott parish is divided into three separate settlements: Chelveston, Caldecott and Chelston Rise. Each village has its own distinctive character set within the rural heartland of the southern area. Whilst amenities are limited in these villages, their rural location and isolation is part of their charm and attraction to residents.

### **Rural area Neighbourhood Plans**

2.53 Several communities, led by Parish Councils, have taken advantage of the opportunities that Neighbourhood Plans offer, to develop distinctive local spatial visions and planning policies. The following rural area Neighbourhood Plans are “made” (adopted):

- Barnwell (February 2023)
- Barrowden and Wakerley (December 2019)
- Brigstock (January 2019)
- Chelveston cum Caldecott (July 2017)
- Glapthorn (July 2018);
- Hargrave (August 2022)
- King’s Cliffe (October 2019)
- Ringstead (August 2022)
- Stanwick (July 2017)
- Warmington (December 2019)

2.54 Elsewhere a number of Neighbourhood Plans have reached significant milestones and contain detailed site specific policies, including development land allocations and designations such as Local Green Space and settlement boundaries. This Plan should recognise and complement extant policies from made, and future, emerging Neighbourhood Plans.

## 3.0 Vision and Outcomes

- 3.1 The Plan's Vision and Outcomes were informed by the Council's Corporate Plan (2016-2019). The Corporate Plan, is normally reviewed every 3-4 years. As the North Northamptonshire Council was formed on 1 April 2021, it will be a priority for the new unitary authority to update the Corporate Plan to set future priorities.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan set out a vision for the former East Northamptonshire Council: "*Working with our communities to sustain a thriving district*". Underpinning this vision, the corporate priorities are:
- **Sustainable development** – recognising continuing demand for housing in the area, the need for growth and the benefits it can bring, particularly in helping to revitalise the town centres; supporting sensible levels of growth while preserving the character of our historic towns and villages;
  - **Regeneration and economic development** – securing improvements to the quality of the town centres, working with the private sector to bring investment into the area, reverse the decline of some towns and work with communities to achieve their aspirations for their local area;
  - **Financial stability** – control costs, provide value for money services and building effective partnerships; and
  - **Customer focused services** – improve the quality of information and services to maximise delivery of online services, while working closely with partners to recognise the needs of the most vulnerable communities.
- 3.3 It is noted that the priorities of sustainable development, and regeneration and economic development are particularly relevant to the Plan. The Local Plan Vision and Outcomes will recognise these key challenges and opportunities.

### The Vision

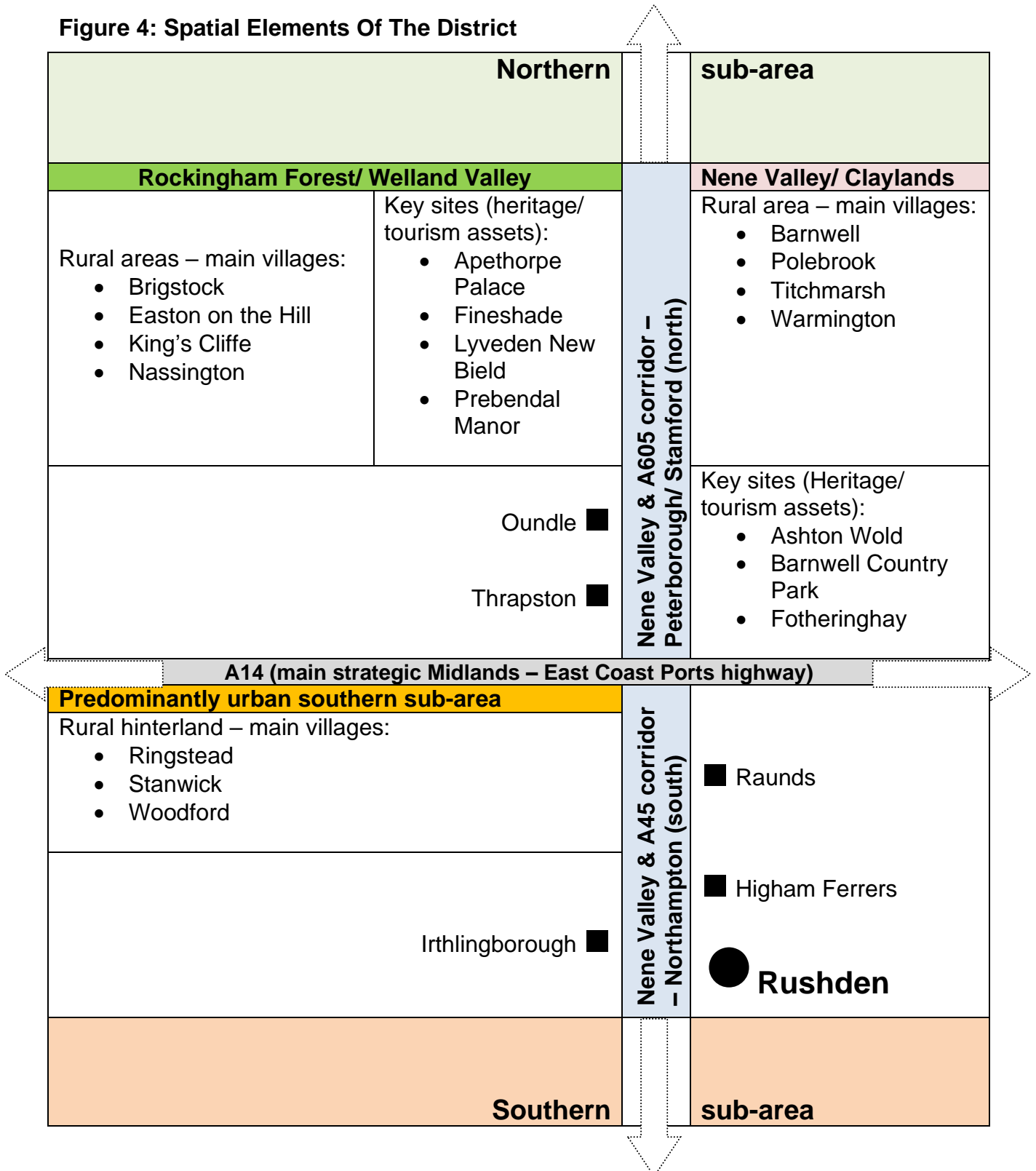
- 3.4 The Joint Core Strategy defines an overarching Vision, for the whole of the North Northamptonshire area. It also sets out an East Northamptonshire specific Vision.

East Northamptonshire will be the heartland of small and medium sized enterprises, based on regenerated and thriving market towns with an enhanced role for Rushden as the District's Growth Town. Implementation of the consented development at Rushden Lakes will have provided a new out of centre retail and leisure offer serving residents in the southern area of North Northamptonshire and delivering significant environmental benefits in the Nene Valley. Diverse, sustainable villages and a living, working countryside will provide the backdrop for tourism, creative industries and low carbon businesses to locate at the meeting point of the Nene Valley and Rockingham Forest.

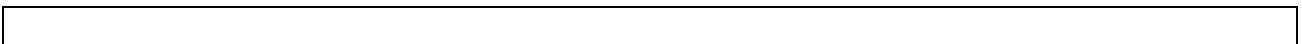
- 3.5 The Plan will aim to identify those aspects of the Joint Core Strategy Vision that should be developed further, and to develop the spatial elements of this vision. This should recognise the diverse aspects of the Plan area, with particular reference to the northern

and southern functional sub-areas (Joint Core Strategy, Figure 17). Figure 4 (below) identifies the key spatial elements that make up the East Northamptonshire area.

**Figure 4: Spatial Elements Of The District**



3.6 The Plan sets out three distinctive sub-area Visions which, together with the Vision of the Joint Core Strategy, will provide an overall spatial Vision for East Northamptonshire.



**Rockingham Forest/ Welland Valley:**

- A focus for managing climate change, delivering carbon storage through re-forestation, and balancing this through ecosystem services, delivering sustainable tourism, informal leisure and new carbon-efficient businesses.
- The function of Oundle and Thrapston as key service centres for Rockingham Forest and focal points for growth in the Forest; providing a buffer between the “green” (forest) and “blue” (River Nene), at the heart of the district.

**Nene Valley/ Claylands:**

- The Nene Valley defines the character of the six towns within the district, and as such will be a focal point for strategic developments and “blue” tourism, to deliver water based ecosystem services and overall enhancements to tourism and the wider economy.
- The Claylands will be a focus for the rural economy, specifically sustainable agricultural businesses, and reconciling this with the “blue” infrastructure function of the Nene Valley.

**Predominantly urban southern sub-area:**

- The focal point for strategic housing and employment growth within the district, with a particular focus upon the Rushden’s Growth Town status and the successful delivery of the Rushden East and Rushden Gateway developments.
- Successful implementation and integration of the already committed major developments at the Market Towns of Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough and Raunds.
- Reconciliation of the need to secure enhancements to the Nene Valley’s natural capital, while recognising the need to deliver the wider Local Plan growth agenda.

**Outcomes**

- 3.7 This Plan will recognise the 10 overarching outcomes of the Joint Core Strategy, setting out how these can be delivered within an East Northamptonshire context (Figure 5, below).

**Figure 5 – Local Plan Outcomes**

Local Plan outcomes	Links to corporate outcomes
<p><b>1. Empowered and proactive communities</b> The Plan sets out a framework for place shaping, focusing on the issues that matter to local communities and providing a context within which community led planning initiatives can flourish and prosper. It seeks to create successful, safe, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where residents are actively involved in shaping the places where they live.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – sustainable, clean, healthy, safe</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> <li>• Knowledge of our customers and communities</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Adaptability to future climate change</b> The Plan will create more sustainable places that are naturally resilient to future climate change. Carbon footprints will be minimised and sustainable transport choice will be improved. Low carbon growth will be delivered through policies that seek the highest viable standards for energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable construction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – sustainable, clean, healthy</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> <li>• Effective management</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Distinctive environments that enhance and respect local character and enhance biodiversity</b> The Plan sets out a framework for retaining the area’s distinctiveness, by maintaining and enhancing landscape and townscape character. It promotes an integrated approach to biodiversity management and a net gain in Green Infrastructure, strengthening links between the countryside and the towns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – sustainable, clean, healthy</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Excellent services and facilities easily accessed by local communities and businesses</b> The Plan establishes the priorities for future public and private investment and collaboration. It will help to secure provision of the infrastructure, services and facilities needed to sustain and enhance communities and support new development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – prosperous, sustainable, clean, healthy, safe</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> <li>• Effective management</li> <li>• Knowledge of our customers and communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. A sustainable balance between local jobs and workers and a more diverse economy</b> The Plan provides for the workplaces, jobs, skills and sites to help build a more diverse, dynamic and self-reliant economy; one which is not overly dependent on in or out commuting. Higher skilled jobs will be facilitated through improved further education provision and enterprise and innovation will be enabled through next generation digital connectivity. Provision will be made to capitalise upon existing sectoral strengths in creating a stronger, greener economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – prosperous, sustainable</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> <li>• Effective management</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Transformed connectivity</b> The Plan seeks transformed connectivity at all levels. It sets out measures to enhance Neighbourhood Connectivity, establishes the requirement for inter urban transport links and for improvements to the strategic road network and main-line rail connections. It identifies the growth locations that will provide connections to and support the longer-term opportunity for the Northamptonshire Arc Rapid Transit network.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – prosperous, sustainable</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. More walkable places and an excellent choice of ways to travel</b> The Plan identifies the actions needed in order to make walking the first choice of transport to local services and jobs including increasing connectivity to and from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – sustainable, healthy</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> </ul>

<p>new development and the countryside and centres and ensuring that developments allow movement through them. It makes the links to the Local Transport Plan for the county, which identifies improvements to public transport, cycling networks and travel information that will encourage a shift away from car use in the towns and increase transport choice in the rural area.</p>	
<p><b>8. Vibrant, well connected towns and a productive countryside</b>  The Plan proposes sustainable urban-focused development and a proactive approach to meeting rural needs, supporting greater self-reliance for the area as a whole. The network of settlements will be strengthened through transformed public transport services within the north-south urban spine and out to the market towns in the east, with demand responsive services in the rural areas. Superfast broadband will support rural businesses, enable more working from home and assist the development of local food and fuel supply chains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – prosperous, sustainable</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. Stronger, more self-reliant towns with thriving centres</b>  The Plan proposes the regeneration of town centres and of older parts of towns; will help to maximise the use of brownfield land for new development and inspire community confidence in the need for positive change. Implementation of the consented Rushden Lakes development will provide an additional retail and leisure focus serving the southern area, complementing Rushden and Wellingborough town centre, which will diversify and strengthen their convenience retail provision and cultural offers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – prosperous, sustainable</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>10. Enhanced quality of life for all residents</b>  The Plan identifies the quality and mix of housing needed to meet the full, objectively assessed needs of the housing market area, ensuring that a sufficient proportion is affordable and accessible to all. It supports initiatives that build stable, safe, healthy and strong communities, which means respecting cultural diversity and distinctiveness; planning new development to help reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime; promoting well-being and health; ensuring that development is of local character; and supporting area based renewal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good quality of life – sustainable, clean, healthy, safe</li> <li>• Effective partnership working</li> <li>• Effective management</li> <li>• Knowledge of our customers and communities</li> </ul>

## Presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 3.8 The “presumption in favour of sustainable development” is a national planning policy requirement, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It should therefore underpin the planning system at all levels and has been taken into account in preparing this Plan.



- 3.9 The Joint Core Strategy has sought to define this within the context of North Northamptonshire (Policy 1).
- 3.10 The Development Plan must be read as a whole, and planning applications will be determined in accordance with the Development Plan.

## 4.0 Spatial Development Strategy

- 4.1 The Joint Core Strategy sets out the overarching role that the urban and rural areas within North Northamptonshire will have in delivering the overall Local Plan vision. In order to provide a more detailed, local direction for the district, this Plan sets out a bespoke local spatial strategy for the Plan area; this will complement that set out in the Joint Core Strategy.
- 4.2 Joint Core Strategy Table 1 and Policy 11 define the overall spatial role for the urban and rural areas. Table 2 (below) explains settlement roles for the Plan area, applying Joint Core Strategy Table 1 within the context of this Plan.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Role</b>
Growth Towns	Rushden	To provide the focus for major co-ordinated regeneration and growth in employment, housing, retail and higher order facilities.
Market Towns	Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston	To provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland.  Higham Ferrers to provide a more localised convenience and service role, with growth pressures directed to the adjoining Growth Towns.
Villages	Villages other than settlements of a dispersed form, which may be designated as open countryside, outside the formal settlement hierarchy	To provide community infrastructure and services to meet day to day needs of residents and businesses in the rural areas. Focal points for development to meet locally identified needs, unless those needs can be met more sustainably at a nearby larger settlement.
Open countryside		A living, working countryside providing the green setting for the network of settlements and supporting the area's self-reliance and resilience through food production; leisure and tourism; biodiversity resources; renewable energy; flood risk management and carbon capture.

- 4.3 Significant strategic commitments such as Rushden East, Irthlingborough West and future development phases around Rushden Lakes (e.g. Rushden Gateway) will be delivered in accordance with approved masterplans, as required by relevant policies in the Joint Core Strategy (e.g. policies 33 and 35), or in accordance with extant planning permissions. Later development phases of major committed sites at Raunds and Thrapston will continue to be delivered in line with approved plans.
- 4.4 Aside from for the six urban areas, the Joint Core Strategy does not define specific spatial development strategies for individual settlements. For this Plan to provide a distinctive local vision, it is necessary to set out a more specific local approach for the district.

## Spatial approach for the urban areas

- 4.5 As indicated above, the Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) sets out specific spatial development strategies for each of the six East Northamptonshire area towns. This recognises that:
- **Rushden**, as the Growth Town, is the major focus for new development;
  - **Irthlingborough and Raunds** were the focus for growth in the previous (2008) Core Strategy, and the emphasis of the current Joint Core Strategy is the regeneration of these two Market Towns and their local service role;
  - **Higham Ferrers**, due to its proximity and relationship with Rushden (its larger neighbour and designated Growth Town), has a localised service role, with local growth pressures directed to Rushden;
  - **Oundle** is regarded as having a successful town centre (Joint Core Strategy Table 1), so the focus for this Plan should be to consolidate and enhance the role of the town;
  - **Thrapston** was a focus for regeneration through for the previous Local Plan (2008 Core Strategy and 2011 RNOTP), while the current Joint Core Strategy emphasises its local service role and ongoing regeneration.
- 4.6 Policy 29 (Table 5) of the Joint Core Strategy distributes housing requirements with reference to the overall spatial strategy (Policy 11), constraints and/ or existing commitments. A large portion of the overall North Northamptonshire development requirement is already committed (i.e. under construction or having extant planning permission), largely a reflection of the strategy for growth set out in the previous (2008) Core Spatial Strategy. Table 3 (below) demonstrates the percentages of the Joint Core Strategy requirement for the six urban areas (7,580 dwellings, 2011-2031) allocated to each town.

**Table 3 Distribution of housing requirements (urban areas)**

(extracted from Joint Core Strategy/ JCS Table 5)	Settlements	Local Plan housing requirement (2011-31)	Percentage of total JCS requirement
Growth Town	Rushden	3,285	43.3%
Market Towns	Higham Ferrers	560	7.4%
	Irthlingborough	1,350	17.8%
	Raunds	1,060	14.0%
	Thrapston	680	9.0%
	Oundle	645	8.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>7,580</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 4.7 Policy 11 of the Joint Core Strategy provides a distinction between the overall development strategy for the urban areas (Policy 11(1)) and rural areas (Policy 11(2)). This Plan acknowledges this differentiation, through proposing clear settlement boundary criteria, the aim of which is to provide a distinction between the urban areas and the surrounding rural hinterland.

## Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site Mitigation Strategy

- 4.8 The potential impacts of the planned levels of housing growth upon the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits (UNVGP) SPA/ Ramsar site are recognised in the Joint Core Strategy. Natural England highlighted the potential cumulative impacts of visitor pressures upon the SPA/ Ramsar site from residential development within 3km of the designated sites. Policy 4(d) sets out the range of mitigation measures, including effective monitoring, that will be necessary to fulfil the requirements of the updated (2017) Habitat Regulations.
- 4.9 To this end, the SPA Mitigation Strategy was adopted as an addendum to the UNVGP SPA Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in November 2016. The SPA SPD provides a legal mechanism by which a per-dwelling Mitigation Strategy payment is required within the 3km SPA/ Ramsar site buffer zone. Since the adoption of the Mitigation Strategy, Natural England has emphasised the need to establish an effective mechanism for monitoring how this has been working (Joint Core Strategy Policy 4(d)(iv)). This review will focus upon the effectiveness of mitigation measures as these are implemented.

### Spatial approach for the rural areas

- 4.10 The Joint Core Strategy sets out a generic spatial development strategy for all established villages, focussing upon development that meets a locally identified need. It must be recognised however, that rural settlements within the Plan area vary greatly in character, function and role. The Plan will therefore give recognition to the variety of settlements throughout the rural areas.
- 4.11 Assessments of rural settlements beyond the main urban areas are summarised in the rural Settlement Hierarchy Background Paper (BP1)<sup>24</sup>, with more detailed analysis set out in the Rural Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper<sup>25</sup>. This process has revealed four distinct rural settlement typologies:
- Large freestanding villages
  - Small freestanding villages
  - Urban outliers
  - Rural outliers
- 4.12 The Plan seeks to enhance the rural spatial strategy set out in Policy 11(2) of the Joint Core Strategy by identifying a more detailed settlement hierarchy, based on local evidence, to guide planning decisions and Neighbourhood Plan progression. The Plan therefore seeks to set out a clearly distinctive and local application of the Joint Core Strategy approach to the different typologies of rural settlement, as set out in Table 4 (below).

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<sup>24</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12120/background\\_paper\\_1\\_-\\_settlement\\_hierarchy](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12120/background_paper_1_-_settlement_hierarchy)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/5048/technical\\_paper\\_rural\\_settlement\\_hierarchy\\_january\\_2021](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/5048/technical_paper_rural_settlement_hierarchy_january_2021)

<b>Table 4: Functional roles for rural settlements</b>		
<b>Category/ settlement</b>	<b>Roles include:</b>	<b>Generic characteristics</b>
<b>Large freestanding villages:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brigstock</li> <li>• Easton on the Hill</li> <li>• King's Cliffe</li> <li>• Nassington</li> <li>• Ringstead</li> <li>• Stanwick</li> <li>• Warmington</li> <li>• Woodford</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focal points for community infrastructure and services within the locality;</li> <li>• Local services and facilities may serve a cluster or network of rural settlements;</li> <li>• Emphasis upon development to meet locally occurring needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population &gt;1000;</li> <li>• Local services and facilities – primary school, pub, Post Office, convenience retailer;</li> <li>• Defined by rural Parish, but serving a localised network of rural villages.</li> </ul>
<b>Small freestanding villages:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most villages (Listed in Table 5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community infrastructure and facilities;</li> <li>• Emphasis upon smaller scale locally significant development opportunities where these are necessary to fulfil a defined local need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population &lt;1000;</li> <li>• Limited local services and facilities – 1-2 local services e.g. primary school, pub etc</li> <li>• Generally defined by rural Parish, with a Church of England Parish Church.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban outliers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crow Hill (Irthlingborough)</li> <li>• Elmington/ Laxton Drive (Oundle)</li> <li>• Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road (Rushden)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited community infrastructure and facilities;</li> <li>• Specific character areas – emphasis upon small scale managed infill development within the existing built form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban/ suburban character;</li> <li>• Development management in accordance with an appropriate bespoke criteria-based policy;</li> <li>• May be regarded as part of a larger/ main urban area, or functional communities in their own right.</li> </ul>
<b>Restraint villages/ rural outliers (Open Countryside):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armston</li> <li>• Ashton</li> <li>• Wigsthorpe</li> <li>• Wakerley</li> <li>• Various other groups of outlying buildings, or hamlets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few/ no community infrastructure and facilities;</li> <li>• Small groups of properties serving 1-2 rural businesses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clusters of rural properties in open countryside locations, or special historic conservation interest (Ashton);</li> <li>• Close functional relationship to a larger village (Wakerley);</li> <li>• Development management in accordance with Open Countryside policies; or</li> <li>• Are normally regarded as part of a wider network of rural communities, rather than freestanding settlements.</li> </ul>

4.13 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 5) sets out an overall rural housing requirement for 820 dwellings for East Northamptonshire. This district-wide requirement is expected to be delivered through small scale infill development, 'rural exceptions' schemes and/ or Neighbourhood Plan allocations. It should be noted that the overall requirement should be distributed across approximately 50 villages within the district, so the numbers of units anticipated to be delivered to individual villages is likely to be modest and could expect to be accommodated without the need for specific strategic site allocations being proposed in the Plan.

### **Large freestanding villages**

4.14 The eight largest freestanding villages within the district are significantly larger than other villages located in East Northamptonshire. These are identified as large villages; each

having a substantive range of services and facilities. In many cases these serve a wider local cluster or network of rural settlements and may have the capacity to accommodate additional local growth, where, for example, promoted through neighbourhood planning.

### Small freestanding villages

- 4.15 The majority of villages throughout the district are small freestanding communities. In most cases these are long established communities, normally centred upon a (Church of England) Parish Church or historic core. Neighbourhood Plans may seek to promote growth as a way to sustain or improve local services. Otherwise, development will be limited to small scale infill developments and/ or ‘rural exceptions’ affordable housing schemes.

### Functional relationships between freestanding villages and nearby urban areas

- 4.16 Some of the larger freestanding villages, including three of the designated large villages (Easton on the Hill, Ringstead and Stanwick), together with others such as Glapthorn and Islip, have a close functional relationship with a nearby urban area. This is recognised in the Joint Core Strategy, which states that: “*Development in the rural areas will be limited to that required to support a prosperous rural economy or to meet a locally arising need, which cannot be met more sustainably at a nearby larger settlement*”.

Village	Nearby urban area
Easton on the Hill	Stamford
Ringstead	Raunds
Stanwick	Raunds
Glapthorn	Oundle
Islip	Thrapston

- 4.17 In these circumstances, the need to direct development to the nearby urban area is therefore explicitly recognised in the adopted spatial strategy and reflected in the “made” Neighbourhood Plans for Glapthorn and Stanwick, both of which recognise this issue and set policies to avoid coalescence with the adjoining urban area.
- 4.18 Of all the freestanding villages in these circumstances, Islip is the most physically and functionally connected to a larger urban centre (Thrapston). Nevertheless, Islip is separated from Thrapston by a physical boundary (River Nene), but it is clearly a self contained community with a range of services and facilities appropriate to a village of its size and population.

### Urban outliers

- 4.19 Urban outliers are built up areas with urban or suburban elements that are physically separated from the main built up areas of their respective towns, but are not historically considered freestanding communities or settlements. Three urban outliers have been identified within the district:
- Crow Hill (Irthlingborough)
  - Elmington/ Laxton Drive (Ashton Parish/ Oundle) and
  - Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road ribbon development (Rushden)

- 4.20 **Crow Hill** – Crow Hill has a predominantly urban/ suburban character. As such this area is regarded as “urban”, for the purposes of applying the spatial development strategy. It is part of the main urban area and is therefore covered by Policy EN1(1) (below) and Policy 11(1) of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 4.21 **Elmington/ Laxton Drive** – The Elmington/ Laxton Drive area, which is located within the parish of Ashton, includes both rural and suburban parts. It is physically separated from Oundle by the River Nene and overall is considered to be predominantly rural in character. It does not, however, have the necessary characteristics for a functional settlement, so is accordingly considered to be “open countryside”. Therefore, Policy EN1(3) and Policy 11(2) of the Joint Core Strategy will apply.
- 4.22 **Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road** – The Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road ribbon development is a significant area of suburban character to the south-east of the main built up area of Rushden. The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan defines the area as part of Rushden’s rural hinterland, setting out a specific spatial strategy in Policy H1. Therefore, Policy H1 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Policy 11(2) of the Joint Core Strategy will apply.

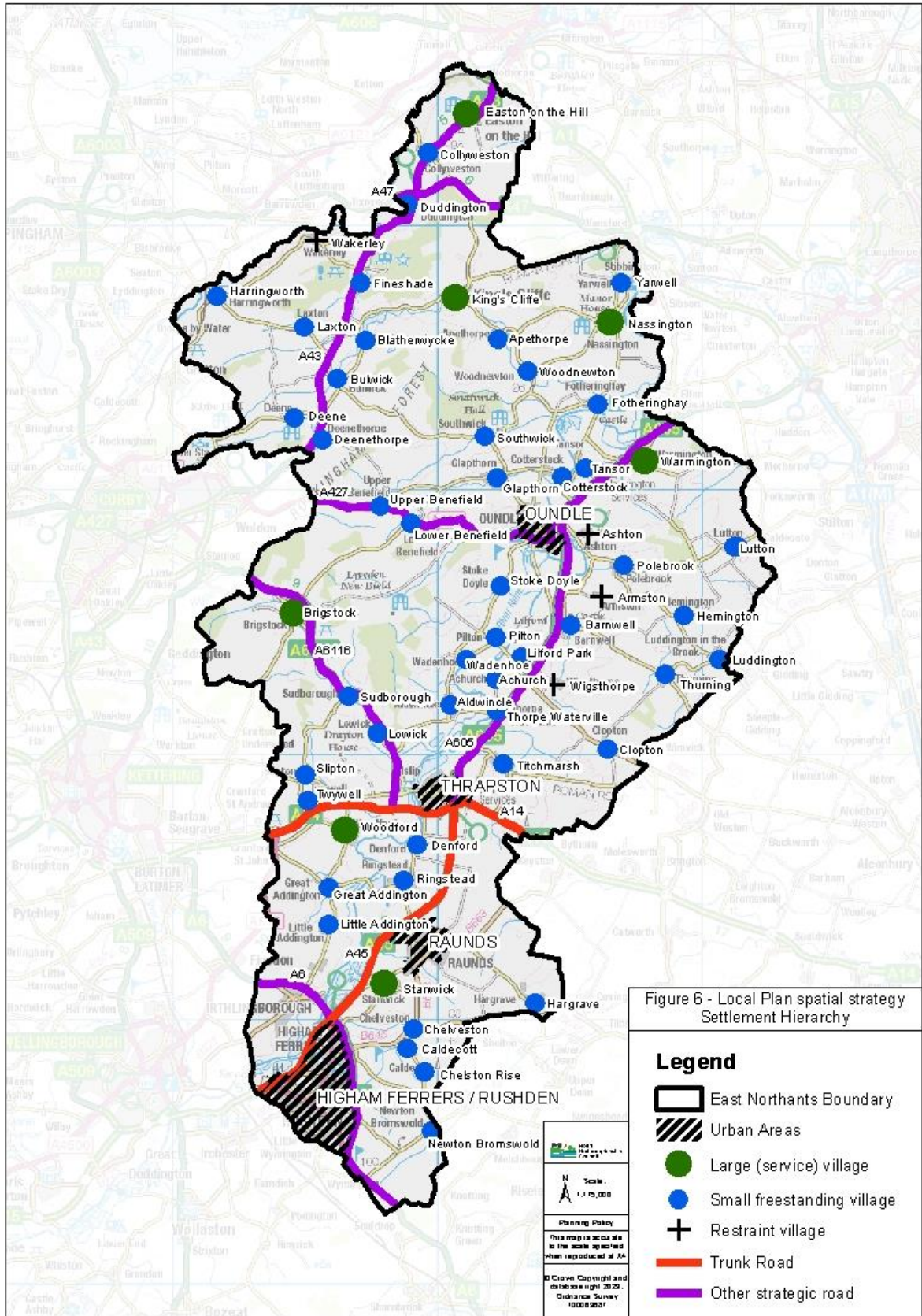
### **Restraint villages**

- 4.23 Four settlements are identified where policies of development restraint should be applied:
- Armston
  - Ashton
  - Wakerley and
  - Wigsthorpe
- 4.24 Armston and Wigsthorpe, while recognised as rural settlements within the settlement hierarchy, are hamlets of a size and rural character, such that open countryside policies will apply. For Wakerley, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan has assessed the character and built form of the village, but has concluded this to be unsuitable to accommodate further infill development.
- 4.25 The historic character of Ashton has undergone a detailed assessment through the Ashton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (July 2017). This found that the character and special interest of Ashton and the Ashton Wold rural outlier is highly sensitive and therefore its capacity for change in the form of new development is very limited. As such development opportunities are limited on account of their prevailing architectural character and spatial form, while most of the historic stock of ancillary buildings within the village has already been converted. Therefore, this historic character is of such sensitivity that the Plan should recognise this by way of a policy of development restraint, whereby open countryside policies (Policy EN1(3), below) should apply.
- 4.26 For the purposes of applying the spatial strategy through development management, the defined villages (large villages, small villages and restraint villages) are specified in Table 5 and Figure 6 (below).

<b>Table 5: Defined villages</b>		
<b>Large freestanding (service) villages</b>		
Brigstock	Nassington	Warmington
Easton on the Hill	Ringstead	Woodford
King's Cliffe	Stanwick	
<b>Small freestanding (other) villages</b>		
Achurch	Duddington	Newton Bromswold
Aldwinckle	Fineshade	Pilton
Apethorpe	Fotheringhay	Polebrook
Barnwell	Glapthorn	Slipton
Benefield (Lower and Upper)	Great Addington	Southwick
Blatherwycke	Hargrave	Stoke Doyle
Bulwick	Harringworth	Sudborough
Clopton	Hemington	Tansor
Caldecott	Islip	Thorpe Waterville
Chelston Rise	Laxton	Thurning
Chelveston	Lilford	Titchmarsh
Collyweston	Little Addington	Twywell
Cotterstock	Lowick	Wadenhoe
Deene	Luddington in the Brook	Woodnewton
Deenethorpe	Lutton	Yarwell
<b>Restraint villages</b>		
Armston	Wakerley	
Ashton	Wigsthorpe	



**Figure 6: Local Plan spatial strategy – settlement hierarchy**



## **Open countryside**

- 4.27 The open countryside includes many hamlets, agricultural complexes and other isolated groups of dwellings ('rural outliers'). Specifically, it also includes four defined villages – Armston, Ashton, Wakerley and Wigsthorpe – where policies of development restraint (i.e. open countryside policies) should be applied.
- 4.28 In practice this Plan regards the defined restraint villages and other rural outliers to be open countryside, where policies such as a general presumption against new build residential development should apply. However, where applicable, Neighbourhood Plans may provide the opportunity to adopt specific local spatial development strategies regarding the role of individual rural outliers or other groups of rural buildings in the open countryside, away from established settlements. Some Neighbourhood Plans have already taken a lead in this regard.
- 4.29 Policies EN1 and EN2 (below) explain how the spatial development strategy should apply. The policies provide additional district-level direction to support the development management process, or provide further strategic direction for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Policy EN1: Spatial development strategy**

**Development proposals will respect the network of settlements across the district, in accordance with the spatial roles set out in the Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) along with local considerations for assessing development proposals set out below and through Policy EN2 and the supporting text.**

**Settlements within the Plan area vary greatly in character, function and role. To provide greater clarity as to how the Spatial Strategy will be applied within East Northamptonshire, informed through Tables 4 and 5 of this Plan, the following approach will set out a context for development proposals:**

#### **1. Urban Areas**

- a) **Rushden – Rushden will be the focus for major development, as the designated Growth Town, concentrated upon the delivery of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension and land to the east of the A6/Bedford Road (Policy EN28).**
- b) **Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Raunds, Thrapston and Oundle Development will be focussed upon the major committed development sites at Irthlingborough (including Crow Hill), Raunds, and Thrapston. Development at Higham Ferrers will take place within the current built up area of the town with additional locally arising development needs directed towards Rushden. Development at Higham Ferrers will take place within the current built up area of the town with additional locally arising development needs directed towards Rushden. Further development at these towns will focus upon urban re-imagination, to support job creation, regeneration and to secure and enhance the local service base.**

**At Oundle, development proposals will seek to deliver the allocated sites to meet**

**the Joint Core Strategy requirements for the latter half of the Plan period (2021-2031), to enhance Oundle's role as the main service centre for the rural north of the District.**

## **2. Freestanding Villages**

**To help maintain and strengthen local services infill development opportunities within the existing built up areas as defined through Policy EN2 and the supporting text, or a made Neighbourhood Plan, will be supported. 'Rural exceptions' affordable housing schemes (Policy EN3) or other small-scale employment and community-based proposals will also be supported. Further development beyond the extent of the built-up area will be resisted, unless allocated through a Neighbourhood Plan.**

**Within the eight larger freestanding villages (Table 4) larger scale <sup>26</sup> development opportunities may be supported where it can be demonstrated that they are necessary to fulfil a defined local need <sup>27</sup> and meet the requirements of Policy EN2, together with the supporting text, as being considered as part of the built-up area, or a made Neighbourhood Plan.**

## **3. Open countryside and restraint villages**

**Development will be refused for new build residential development units in locations beyond the built-up area of the settlements identified in Table 5. Development proposals for rural diversification or the re-use or conversion of rural buildings will be supported where this in accordance with Policy 11 of the Joint Core Strategy.**

**The four restraint villages (Armston, Ashton, Wakerley and Wigsthorpe) together with other rural outliers, are defined as open countryside. Rural diversification or the re-use or conversion of rural buildings will be supported where this in accordance with Policy 13 Section 2 of the Joint Core Strategy the relevant policy guidance.**

## **Defining Built up Areas**

- 4.30 Managing development pressures around the periphery of settlements has long been a challenging issue for the planning system. The Joint Core Strategy recognises this, in particular through Policy 11 (Network of Urban and Rural Areas), which provides a clear distinction between urban areas and rural areas by setting specific urban (Policy 11(1)) and rural (Policy 11(2)) spatial strategies. It is the intention of this Plan to similarly provide a practical means to differentiate between the built up areas and their

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<sup>26</sup> Larger scale development proposals will need to take into account the guidance set out in Table 18 (Indicative rural housing need) of the Local Plan, as well as taking into account any development that has already been provided in a settlement within the plan period.

<sup>27</sup> Locally defined needs (as referred to in the larger freestanding villages section of the Plan above) are generally defined through mechanisms such as housing needs surveys or community plans. These sites may be delivered by way of Rural Exceptions housing, Neighbourhood Plan proposals or rural diversification schemes.

surrounding rural hinterlands. Different approaches to defining settlement boundaries (i.e. the extent of the built up area) have been extensively assessed. This analysis is summarised in the Settlement Boundaries Background Paper (BP2)<sup>28</sup>, with these potential alternative approaches initially considered at the Regulation 18 consultation stage and fed back to the Council accordingly (Planning Policy Committee, 3 April 2017, Item 5).<sup>29</sup>

### **Urban areas**

- 4.31 There has been no consistent district-wide policy approach to defining settlement boundaries in previous Local Plans. Linear boundaries were applied for Oundle and Thrapston, while a written definition was used for Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Raunds and Rushden.
- 4.32 However, it is recognised that more recently Neighbourhood Plans have considered different approaches to defining settlement boundaries:
- Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan includes a written boundary<sup>30</sup>, reflecting the clear physical limits to that urban area;
  - Raunds Neighbourhood Plan does not include an explicit urban/ rural distinction; and
  - Rushden's linear settlement boundary is defined through the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan and shown on the adopted Policies Map.
- 4.33 The Joint Core Strategy sets generic criteria for defining the built up areas of villages (paragraph 5.17):
- Vacant and under-developed land within the main built-up area;
  - Bounded by existing built curtilages on at least two sides, such as the filling in of a small gap in an otherwise substantially built up frontage.
- 4.34 These criteria could equally be applied for the urban areas. The default position for this Plan is that infill development will be generally supported within the urban areas. The development principles together with the supporting text to Policy EN2 provide more detailed criteria to support those in the Joint Core Strategy
- 4.35 The spatial development strategy (Table 2) sets out the settlement roles for the Plan area. The size of settlements ranges from the Growth Town of Rushden, as the largest settlement, down to the smaller rural settlements of defined villages such as Pilton and Newton Bromswold.
- 4.36 The spatial approach for the rural areas is further explained in section 4 and Policy EN1 above, with a list of the freestanding villages set out in Table 5. The smallest freestanding villages accommodate upwards of 20 dwellings and a built-up area is therefore defined by those settlements that comprises a cluster of 20 or more residential buildings and are identified in Table 5.

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<sup>28</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12103/background\\_paper\\_2\\_-\\_settlement\\_boundaries](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12103/background_paper_2_-_settlement_boundaries)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/760/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/760/planning_policy_committee)

<sup>30</sup> For Higham Ferrers, the Neighbourhood Plan (made April 2016) defines the built up area of Higham Ferrers as that part of the town bounded by the A6 and A45, and to the south by the built up area of Rushden

- 4.37 The definition of that built-up area is considered to include areas that have a closer relationship, in character and scale, to that cluster of buildings defining a settlement, than that of the surrounding countryside, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy para 5.17. This includes areas of land committed for development by way of an extant planning permission or development plan allocation adjoining the built-up area.
- 4.38 The extent of the built-up area excludes the following uses, unless they are wholly enclosed on all sides by built development forming part of the built up area:
- a) existing employment use, caravan sites, cemeteries, churchyards and leisure use including sport and recreation
  - b) freestanding built structures, including farmyards and associated agriculture buildings
  - c) open spaces and allotments
  - d) isolated properties or areas of ribbon development which are physically and visually detached from the main built form.

### **Policy EN2 Development Principles**

**Development proposals will be generally supported where they meet the following requirements/criteria:**

- (i) The site is allocated in the Local Plan or a made Neighbourhood Plan, or;**
- (ii) Infill development within a built-up area (as defined in the supporting text) or within a settlement boundary, where that is defined by a neighbourhood plan, will be supported where the site is:**
  - (a) well-related to the principal built-form of the settlement (existing or committed) and is not protected for any other use;**
  - (b) clearly distinct from the surrounding countryside, both physically and visually;**
  - (c) bounded by existing or committed development on at least two sides, which should be adjoined by a highway and such that developing it would not extend the built form away from a highway to create a “backland” form of development.**
- (iii) They would not harm the settlement’s character, form, or the surrounding countryside, including the need to avoid comprising key views, heritage assets and their settings, respect the importance of open, greenspace areas within the built up form of the settlement and seek to conserve special landscape designations; and**
- (iv) They would not be disproportionate to the settlement's size, form and range of facilities available.**

### **Freestanding villages**

- 4.39 The eight large freestanding villages (Table 4) differ significantly from other villages, in terms of their services and facilities. While predominantly rural in character, the larger villages include both urban and suburban character areas within their overall built form.
- 4.40 The other (small) villages (Table 5) tend to be more rural in character and built form than the eight large freestanding villages. However, in terms of their built form, virtually all villages incorporate transitional areas at the periphery, between the built up core and the rural hinterland (open countryside) beyond. This is recognised in the NPPF, which directs that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities, but isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided (paragraphs 79-80); i.e. setting a distinction between development in or adjacent to an established settlement and the open countryside beyond.
- 4.41 Previous policy applied tightly defined settlement boundary criteria in order to protect the character of the existing built up areas and restrict small scale infill development beyond the existing built up cores of most villages. These have been reviewed to accord with the more flexible Joint Core Strategy criteria.
- 4.42 At the freestanding villages, new residential infill development should occur within the existing built up areas, as defined by Policy EN2 and the supporting text. These criteria should be applied in managing future development proposals. They may also be utilised for Neighbourhood Plans, where it has been decided to designate settlement boundaries, as is the case for the “made” Brigstock, Chelveston cum Caldecott, Glapthorn, King’s Cliffe, Stanwick and Warmington Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Development at the periphery of settlements and rural exceptions housing**

- 4.43 The NPPF (paragraph 80) emphasises a need to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside. The settlement boundaries and/or criteria for the urban areas and rural settlements enable, for the purposes of development management, a distinction to be made between the predominantly built up core area (i.e. where small scale infill and windfall development would generally be appropriate) and areas of a more dispersed, rural character at the periphery of settlements.
- 4.44 The fringe areas around settlements often contain groups of operational or redundant agricultural buildings, small groups of dwellings (less than 10 units) physically separated from the main built up area, caravan sites or other leisure uses. There is not always a clear distinction between core built up areas and the open countryside although in many locations physical features do provide a clear differentiation. Other peripheral areas may have potential to accommodate rural exceptions housing or small scale rural businesses, in accordance with Joint Core Strategy Policies 13 and 25.
- 4.45 It is recognised that several Neighbourhood Plans already define linear settlement boundaries. It would not fulfil the spirit of the NPPF if settlement boundaries are regarded as equivalent in status to the Green Belt, beyond which there is general presumption against most new build development. Rather, they are a development management tool, to provide a distinction between the core built up area and more sensitive peripheral and gateway parts of a settlement. Policy EN3 (below) sets out how

development proposals beyond a defined settlement boundary (where this exists) should be assessed.

- 4.46 Policy EN3 enables a differentiation between built up areas and the countryside beyond to be clearly made. In particular, this has implications for the delivery of rural exceptions housing schemes. National policy includes explicit provision to bring forward rural exceptions sites where these provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs (NPPF paragraph 78).
- 4.47 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 13) provides an overarching rural exceptions housing policy, setting a strategic perspective on such development, which attempts to apply a policy that addresses all settlements across North Northamptonshire from large to small. East Northamptonshire is however, particularly rural in nature. The intention of the strategic policy is to meet local need where appropriate, recognising that the involvement of local communities is an essential prerequisite for the consideration of schemes to meet local housing need.
- 4.48 Strictly applied, Policy 13 of the Joint Core Strategy could exclude the potential for rural exception housing across the majority of settlements within the East Northamptonshire area, although it does recognise that there may be special circumstances when development is acceptable in the rural area, particularly where proposals meet identified need for affordable housing provision which is also supported locally. To explain how Policy 13 applies at a local level, Policy EN3 provides additional guidance for supporting proposals for rural exception housing schemes within the district.

### **Policy EN3: Development on the periphery of settlements**

**Beyond the extent of the built up area, as defined in the supporting text to Policy EN2 (or defined by a settlement boundary, within a made Neighbourhood Plan), new build residential development will not generally be supported. Proposals for rural diversification, the re-use or conversion of rural buildings, or rural exceptions housing schemes, will be supported.**

**In recognition of the rural nature of the district the following criteria will apply when assessing the suitability of settlements to provide for Rural Exceptions Housing on the periphery of settlements:**

- a) The proposed development would assist in supporting services in the settlement or in a cluster of nearby settlements,**
- b) Proposals will need to take into account the policy requirements set out in Policy 13 of the Joint Core Strategy, balanced against the need to assist in meeting a locally identified need for affordable housing provision and a desire for people to continue to live in their local community evidenced by a local needs housing survey.**

### **Replacement dwellings in the open countryside**

4.49 National policy seeks to limit the development of isolated new build dwellings in the countryside; it does however set out circumstances where such proposals may be acceptable. The replacement dwellings policy is intended to ensure that the new build dwelling is of a scale and form appropriate to its setting. It is important to ensure that replacement dwellings maintain, respect and/ or enhance their rural setting. Policy EN4 sets out the criteria against which provisions for replacement dwellings will be considered.

#### **Policy EN4: Replacement dwellings in the open countryside**

**Proposals for new build replacement dwellings in the countryside will be granted where they meet the following criteria:**

- a) The original dwelling has not been abandoned or allowed to fall into a state of dereliction and disrepair, so that any replacement would in effect be treated as a 'new dwelling' (a structural survey will be required where any signs of dereliction or disrepair is visible or the building has been unoccupied for some time);**
- b) The original dwelling is not a temporary or mobile structure;**
- c) The replacement dwelling is located within the site boundary of the original dwelling;**
- d) The replacement is of a size, scale and massing similar to the original dwelling, and the footprint and floor space should be a similar amount to the original dwelling;**
- e) Where an existing dwelling is considered too small for modern living standards,(to be assessed having regard the latest applicable national space standards) the floor space may be increased, to meet nationally described space standards, however this should not be to the detriment of the open countryside or character of the area; and**
- f) The design, materials and layout of the replacement dwelling should be sympathetic to the surrounding area by preserving and/ or enhancing the immediate setting and taking into account any wider impact of the development in its general location.**

**Conditions or unilateral undertakings will be used to ensure the demolition and removal of the existing dwelling is undertaken prior to the first occupation of the new dwelling or prior to construction of the new dwelling where more appropriate.**



## 5.0 Natural Capital

- 5.1 Natural capital is defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this natural capital that humans derive a wide range of benefits (or services), often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.
- 5.2 The importance of natural capital is recognised in Policy 1 of the Joint Core Strategy. This states that development should deliver improvements to “*the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area meeting the challenges of climate change and protecting and enhancing the provision of ecosystem services*”. In other words, to fulfil the presumption in favour of sustainable development, new development should ideally secure net environmental enhancement (i.e. overall gains in natural capital).
- 5.3 At a district level, natural capital as a concept normally relates to local areas, features or sites of biodiversity importance. Such green and/ or blue infrastructure is recognised in the Joint Core Strategy as being vital in maintaining the rural/ urban character of the Plan area (North Northamptonshire).
- 5.4 The Joint Core Strategy includes an extensive range of policies relating to the protection of existing assets; the natural and historic environment. Furthermore, it includes policies for delivering natural capital gains, through the Green Infrastructure framework. The Plan considers where further site specific policies will be required to deliver the benefits of development. All sites should meet the criteria outlined in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Policy 5 (Water Environment, Resources and Flood Risk Management) and Policy 10 (Provision of Infrastructure).

### Green Infrastructure

- 5.5 The NPPF describes Green Infrastructure as “*a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities*”. The Joint Core Strategy, although it predates the revised NPPF, also provides clear direction as to the role and function of GI to “*enhance and respect local character and enhance biodiversity*” (Outcome 3). This seeks effective delivery through “*an integrated approach to biodiversity and a net gain in Green Infrastructure, strengthening links between the countryside and the towns*”.
- 5.6 In 2014, Natural England produced a nationwide profile of National Character Areas (NCAs)<sup>31</sup>. These NCAs highlight the significant opportunities in each area and therefore provide a useful planning tool that can help deliver the maximum benefits for the natural environment. Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats and Species data is also a relevant consideration. This is available elsewhere via organisations such as Natural England and the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire and so is not identified on the Policies Map. East Northamptonshire is covered by the following NCAs:
- 88 – *Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands* – eastern periphery of the District; e.g. Ashton, Clopton, Hemington, Luddington, Luton, Thurning;

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

- 89 – *Northamptonshire Vales* – Nene Valley;
- 91 – *Yardley Whittlewood Ridge* – south eastern periphery of the District; e.g. Chelston Rise (Chelveston), Hargrave, Newton Bromswold, Avenue Road/ Newton Road area of Rushden;
- 92 – *Rockingham Forest* – Majority of the rural parts of the District, north of the A14.

5.7 Policies 19-21 of the Joint Core Strategy explain how GI should be delivered at the strategic level. These policies relate to the GI network across North Northamptonshire, and East Northamptonshire in particular:

- Sub-regional GI corridors e.g. Willow Brook, Harper’s Brook (Joint Core Strategy Figure 17/ Policy 19(b));
- Local GI corridors (Joint Core Strategy Figure 17/ Policy 19(c));
- Nene Valley (Policy 20); and
- Rockingham Forest (Policy 21).

5.8 Whilst specific GI routes are identified within the Joint Core Strategy (Figure 17), it is recognised that there is scope to identify local site specific proposals or linear connections in this Plan.

5.9 A spatial analysis of the GI resources in East Northamptonshire has been undertaken to identify the distribution of local GI corridors and assets within the district. The study revealed that the areas of the multi-functionality are predominantly located to the west of the River Nene (mainly within Rockingham Forest), with fewer opportunities located to the east of the river. Furthermore, several new GI corridors have been recommended based on the distribution of existing multifunctional GI assets. Much of the GI network has already been established in the south of the district, so more attention is now required to deliver an improved GI network in the north of the district.

5.10 As a result of the study, a local GI network comprised of existing and planned assets is proposed, to accord with the Joint Core Strategy and current Planning Practice Guidance. This study identifies priority local GI corridors (i.e. those which offer the greatest net benefit in terms of ecosystem services). GI can deliver a broad range of positive gains, including biodiversity conservation, water and flood management, and social (health and wellbeing). It is important to ensure that these wider GI benefits, continues to be delivered and enhanced.

5.11 There are a number of projects contained in made and emerging Neighbourhood Plans related to the regeneration and strengthening of the local GI, e.g. the made Barrowden and Wakerley and Brigstock Neighbourhood Plans, which relate to the Welland Valley and Harper’s Brook corridors respectively. Proposals for a strategic approach for GI provision around the periphery of Oundle, to create a circular cycle/ pedestrian network, are set out in the Oundle Cycle Network Study (June 2015<sup>32</sup>), which this Plan will support.

5.12 Where appropriate in terms of the scale of the development and its proximity to the GI network, developer contributions will be sought towards the protection and enhancement of the GI corridors within the district, including the Greenway. As this requirement may

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.oundle.gov.uk/uploads/oundle-cycle-network-study---sustrans---draft-2.pdf>

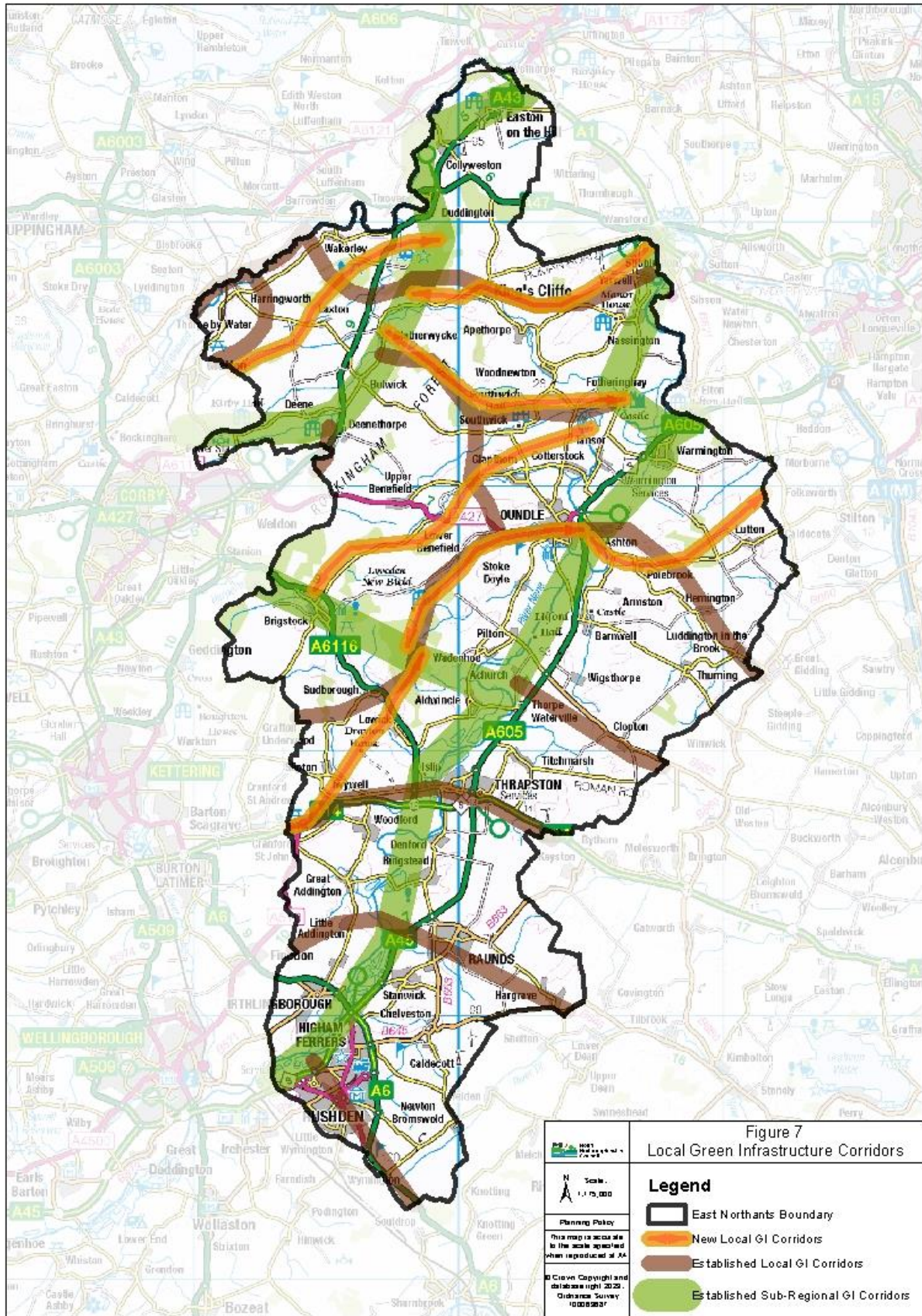
affect the viability of smaller developments a threshold of 10 or more dwellings; 0.5 ha or more for housing schemes; or more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> for commercial schemes, is set (Policy EN5, below) to enable developer contributions towards the local GI and Greenway. It is important to engage with key stakeholders at an early stage.

- 5.13 There are many ways that development can link in with the existing GI network. In addition to the GI corridors shown on the Policies Map there are maps available which identify the wider GI network in a location, for example the GI standards suite prepared by Natural England has a mapping tool where all GI can be seen. Developments should consider early in the design process where the local GI is located and how the development can link to it, both for people and wildlife benefit. There are various policies and guidance available on how good design can facilitate this.
- 5.14 When determining contributions towards GI, consideration needs to be given to the relationship between Policy EN5 and EN6. Contributions should reflect the scale and location of the site under consideration and should be proportionate. The relationship with Policy EN5, EN6 and EN8 also needs to be considered. GI and Open Space are clearly related with open spaces forming an integral part of the GI network. Opportunities to combine open space and green infrastructure schemes should be sought to optimise design and keep contributions proportionate. The Council will take care to avoid double counting between strategic and local green infrastructure and open space requirements when calculating contributions. A Supplementary Planning Document for Open Space and GI provision will be prepared to set out a step by step guide for calculating requirements.
- 5.15 The NPPF (paragraph 180) recognises the importance of ancient woodlands and veteran trees as a key element of maintaining the natural capital of the district. This is acknowledged through this Plan (Policy EN5, below). Trees, and the landscape they form part of, are key to the character of an area and significantly contribute to the environment. Best practice guidance for the protection of existing and the planting of new trees is provided through the Trees and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document, adopted June 2013<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?downloadID=1755&fileID=5019](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=1755&fileID=5019)

**Figure 7: Priority Green Infrastructure Corridors**



- 5.16** Policy EN5 ensures that the GI corridors across the district are protected and enhanced. It provides additional direction to support the delivery of GI as stipulated in Figure 17 and Policy 19 of the Joint Core Strategy. It is recognised that the delivery of enhancements to the priority GI corridors presents particular challenges; e.g. establishing connections across strategic roads or other physical barriers. In order to secure the long term management and maintenance of new public open spaces or other Green Infrastructure developers should work with the council to determine the most appropriate long term management and maintenance arrangements.

### **Policy EN5: Local Green Infrastructure corridors**

**Local Green Infrastructure corridors are identified on the Policies Map and Figure 7. These local corridors will be protected and enhanced through development proposals.**

**Development proposals will be expected to:**

- a) Ensure that, where opportunities exist, new development, including open space, is connected to the Local Green Infrastructure network, this includes the local GI corridors and the wider Green Infrastructure network;**
- b) Ensure, through the design and layout of schemes, the delivery of ecosystem services, through measures such as green roofs and walls, the protection of soils, plus new tree planting, including planting of new street trees, using native species;**
- c) Using developer contributions, and additional funding streams, where possible, to facilitate appropriate additions to, or improve the quality of, the existing and proposed Green Infrastructure network; and**
- d) Requiring sites of 10 dwellings or more (or 0.5ha or more) and commercial sites of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more to make on-site provision and/ or provide off-site contributions, to create connections to the defined Green Infrastructure corridors in accordance with the most up to date standards/ standards in the SPD.**

**Opportunities to create the following local Green Infrastructure corridors and incorporate them into the wider Green Infrastructure network will be supported:**

- i) Duddington – Gretton (via Wakerley Woods)**
- ii) King’s Cliffe – Wansford**
- iii) Blatherwycke – Fotheringhay**
- iv) Brigstock – Fotheringhay (via Glapthorn Cow Pasture and Lower Benefield)**
- v) Brigstock Country Park – Oundle**
- vi) Oundle – Great Gidding (via Ashton Wold)**
- vii) Aldwincle – Twywell (via Drayton House)**
- viii) Oundle circular cycle/ pedestrian network**

## The Greenway

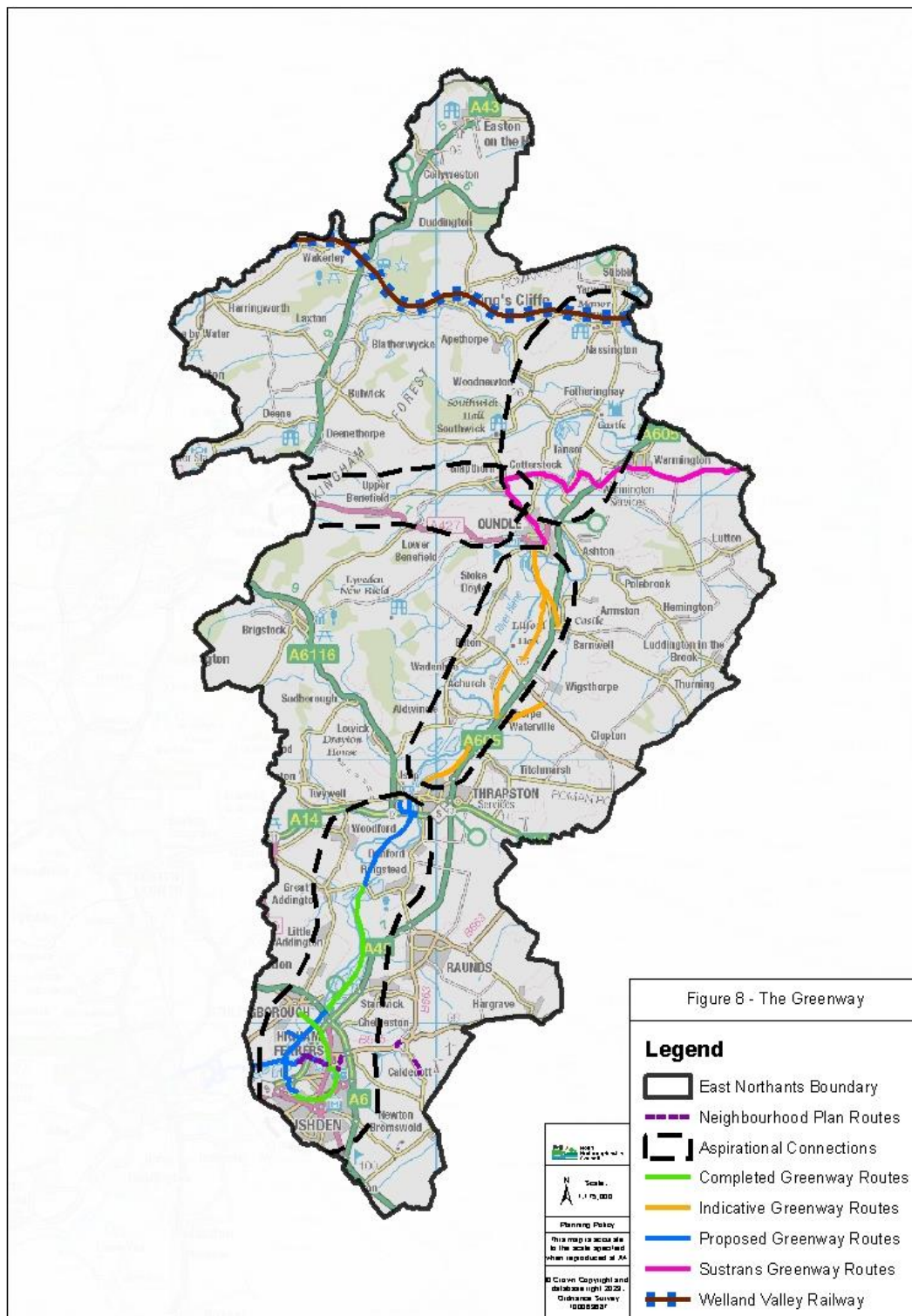
- 5.17 The Greenway is a central GI route that will, upon completion, run from Wellingborough railway station through East Northamptonshire, to Peterborough railway station. It will provide an alternative means of transport, predominantly for walkers cyclists and equestrian users where appropriate, and to provide opportunities for informal recreation. The Greenway is being developed in phases, some of which have been completed. Detailed proposals for future phases of the Greenway are set out in the Greenway Forward Plan 2019 to 2024<sup>34</sup>, particularly proposals to the north of Thrapston. Additionally, the 2015 Oundle Cycle Network Study puts forward specific proposals in/ around the Oundle Urban Area, which could be integrated with the Greenway proposals, to deliver a fully integrated network for the Nene Valley between Wellingborough and Peterborough. This Plan will recognise the importance of the Greenway project and the implication for development proposals throughout the district.
- 5.18 In terms of project specific delivery of the Plan's GI priorities, the Greenway should be regarded as the "jewel in the crown". Much of this long term GI project has already been delivered in the south of the district, with links between Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Stanwick, Raunds, Ringstead and Woodford. Previous Local Plans have sought to define linear routes on the Policies Map to denote proposals to extend the Greenway or other GI corridors. This has proven to be overly rigid and inflexible, so this Plan will look to define conceptual corridors (in a similar way to Figure 17 of the Joint Core Strategy) in place of proposed linear routes. The aim is that these can be delivered as separate projects or as part of other developments. The Greenway Vision identifies the following principal elements:
- Predominantly off-road connections between Wellingborough, Irthlingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Stanwick, Raunds, Ringstead, Woodford and Thrapston, Great Addington, Little Addington, Denford;
  - On and off-road routes, connecting Thrapston to Oundle;
  - On and off-road cycle network within and around the Oundle urban area, providing connectivity between the Thrapston (south) and Peterborough (north/ east) routes;
  - Connections to Peterborough 'Green Wheel' – on/ off road links between Oundle and Peterborough, including routes via Tansor and Warmington;
  - Indicative connection from Weldon, Deene, Deenethorpe and surrounding villages to Tresham Garden Village and on to Oundle;
  - Aspirational east-west off-road connection utilising the former Rugby – Market Harborough – Peterborough railway line.
- 5.19 The made Neighbourhood Plans for Barrowden and Wakerley, Chelveston cum Caldecott, Higham Ferrers, Raunds, Ringstead and Warmington; all include specific proposals for possible extensions and links to the Greenway, shown in Figure 8 (below).
- 5.20 Contributions towards The Greenway will need to be considered alongside the requirements of Policy EN5 and EN8 to ensure that requirements are proportionate and

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<sup>34</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7666/the\\_greenway\\_forward\\_plan\\_2018-22](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7666/the_greenway_forward_plan_2018-22)

take into account the scale and location of the development, and that no double counting of contributions is requested. Contributions towards the Greenway will be sought from development located in settlements where there is access to The Greenway or where there are opportunities to create or enhance connections to The Greenway. A Supplementary Planning Document for Open Space and GI provision will be prepared to set out a step by step guide for calculating requirements.

**Figure 8: The Greenway**



## **Policy EN6: The Greenway**

The Greenway routes, both existing and proposed, as identified on the Policies Map and Figure 8 comprise a priority Green Infrastructure project for the Council, requiring both investment and improvement to ensure its satisfactory delivery. This includes the aspirational connections, where opportunities will be explored within the areas delineated by the dashed lines on the Policies Map and Figure 8.

**Development should:**

- a. be designed to protect and enhance the Greenway, and to strengthen connections to the wider green infrastructure network within the District;
- b. protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings; and
- c. on residential developments of 10 or more dwellings (or sites more than 0.5ha) and commercial sites of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more which are located in settlements with access to The Greenway, or where there are opportunities to connect to The Greenway, contributions toward enhancement of The Greenway will be required in accordance with the most up to date standards set out in the SPD. Opportunities for the creation/ enhancement of connections to The Greenway will be required in line with Policy EN5.

The aim will be to provide fully integrated connections along the Nene Valley; linking Wellingborough, Peterborough and the Rockingham Forest. This will be achieved via development or through mechanisms such as developer contributions and additional funding streams where appropriate.

Future maintenance of the Greenway and especially the area that adjoins it should be secured. Developers should work with the Council to determine the most appropriate future maintenance arrangements.

### **Local Green Space**

- 5.21 Local Green Space (LGS) is designated as a national land use in the NPPF (paragraphs 101-103). In practice, the NPPF enables the designation of LGS through the Local Plan Part 2 and/ or Neighbourhood Plans. Designating land as LGS provides a level of protection against development in green areas that are of particular importance for local communities.
- 5.22 The designation of LGS may provide an opportunity to deliver enhanced protection for established biodiversity sites without statutory protection. For example, non-statutory local wildlife or local geological sites (also sometimes shortened to LGS) could be protected, where appropriate, as LGS.
- 5.23 The NPPF sets out specific criteria that would need to be met for land to be designated as LGS (paragraph 102). The LGS designation should only be used where the green space is:



- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in scale/ character and is not an extensive tract of land.

5.24 With reference to the third requirement, the NPPF does not define the threshold for what an ‘extensive’ tract of land is, although the intention is to ensure that the designation of LGS cannot be applied to indirectly introduce a new Green Belt. It is therefore for this Plan to establish what this means at a district level, through setting an enhanced local standard to explain how the terms “local in character” and “extensive tract of land” are to be applied, in cases where LGS designations are sought. These matters are assessed in the Local Green Space Background Paper (BP3)<sup>35</sup>.

5.25 Given that the designation of LGS is a specifically local and non-strategic matter, it is considered that Neighbourhood Plans represent the most appropriate mechanism for designating individual sites. Indeed, several “made” Neighbourhood Plans have already designated LGS sites, and these are already shown on the adopted policies map. As such, this Plan will not seek to designate individual LGS sites but will define an enhanced local interpretation of the NPPF criteria, as set out in Policy EN7 (below). In addition, increasing weight will be given to LGS sites designated in emerging Neighbourhood Plans, as they progress.

5.26 Local Green Space is also relevant to wider tourism, leisure and recreational activities and associated employment. As an example, Oundle is short of ‘in town’ greenspace but is characterised by access along the River Nene and Barnwell Country Park. This wider linkage is a critical element of the quality of life and the attraction of Oundle as a visitor or tourist destination. Improved ‘in town’ green infrastructure should enable enhanced access to these wider facilities.

### **Policy EN7: Designation of Local Green Space**

**In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework guidance, Local Green Space may be designated through Neighbourhood Plans, where it has been identified by the community and it fulfils the following criteria:**

- a) The site is closely related to the main built up area of the settlement it is intended to serve;**
- b) Where local value can be demonstrated, in terms of providing one or more of the following functions:**
  - i) Defining the setting of a built up area**
  - ii) Archaeological or historical interest, including tourism related activities**

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12104/background\\_paper\\_3\\_-\\_local\\_green\\_spaces](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12104/background_paper_3_-_local_green_spaces)

iii) Recreational importance

iv) Tranquillity, or

v) biodiversity;

vi) beauty; and

c) The gross area of the site should be proportionate to the existing main built up area of the settlement and not an extensive tract of land.

### Protection and enhancement of open space, sport and recreation

- 5.27 At a local level, public open spaces, sports pitches and recreation grounds all provide a valuable resource, linking natural capital and people. This enables people to access and benefit from GI, be it within new developments, linear corridors or country parks. This multi-functional role provides a good example of how ecosystem services function in practice.
- 5.28 The Joint Core Strategy includes a generic policy for the retention and enhancement of public open space, allotments, sports and recreation buildings and land (playing fields), identifying their role as a key community facility (Policy 7(d)). In 2015 the Council appointed Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP) to prepare an Open Space Study and Playing Pitch Strategy (April 2017)<sup>36</sup>. This updated the earlier (2006) Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, which informed the previous Local Plan and 2011 Open Space SPD. The latter contains detailed standards regarding development contributions for open space, sport and recreational facilities, which will be replaced by the standards in this Plan (Tables 6-8, below; derived from the KKP study, or any subsequent updates).
- 5.29 Evidence gathering for the 2017 KKP study was undertaken during 2015/2016 to provide a comprehensive analysis of open space and playing pitch provision in the district. The KKP study provides evidence for locally based policies and standards for each open space typology, to ensure open space requirements will be implemented for all new development, either by enhancing existing lower quality open space or by providing new open space to meet the additional need. Further information about how the KKP has informed this section of the Plan are set out in the Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure Background Paper (BP4)<sup>37</sup>.

### Open space

- 5.30 The KKP Open Space Assessment Report assesses the quality and value of existing open spaces, shown in Table 6 (below).

**Table 6: Open Space Assessment – Quality and Value Criteria**

**Quality Criteria**

**Value Criteria**

<sup>36</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/4484/open\\_space\\_and\\_playing\\_pitch\\_strategy](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/4484/open_space_and_playing_pitch_strategy)

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12105/background\\_paper\\_4\\_-\\_open\\_spaces](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12105/background_paper_4_-_open_spaces)

<b>Quality Criteria</b>	<b>Value Criteria</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of use</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structural and landscape benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social inclusion and health benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural and heritage benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Location value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amenity benefits and sense of place</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic benefits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups that the site meets the needs of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context of site in relation to other open spaces</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance and cleanliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated site (e.g. LNR, SSSI)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy, safe and secure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational programme in place</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic site</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed building or historical monument on site</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered 'friends of' group to the site</li> </ul>

5.31 The following standards are proposed in the KKP Open Space Standards Paper for each open space typology. No standard is set for cemeteries or civic spaces due to their unique nature and usage. These standards will be applied to all new development in the Plan area. The accessibility standards in Table 7 (below) apply to the whole of the district.

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>
Parks and gardens	1200 metres (15 minute walk time)
Natural and semi-natural	1200 metres (15 minute walk time)
Amenity greenspace	400 metres (5 minute walk time)
Children and younger people	800 metres (10 minute walk time)
Allotments	1200 metres (15 minute walk time)

5.32 In terms of quantity of open space provision, there are current and future standards set out for each area of East Northamptonshire (Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rushden, Thrapston and Rural). Table 8 (below) identifies what minimum level of requirement for each typology would be needed to support appropriate new development proposals.

Typology	Higham Ferrers	Irthling-borough	Oundle	Raunds <sup>38</sup>	Rushden	Thrapston	Rural
	(ha per 1000 population/ 417 households <sup>39</sup> )						
Parks and gardens	0.25	0.01	0.31	0.58*	1.12	0.15	1.85
Natural and semi-natural	1.28	14.98	1.63	2.87	1.38	1.04	9.33
Amenity greenspace	0.39	1.16	0.36	0.56	0.58	0.64	0.94
Children and younger people	0.05	0.03	0.09	0.03	0.04 <sup>40</sup>	0.09	0.14
Allotments	0.09	0.38	0.12	0.16	0.38	0.34	0.79

- 5.33 New housing developments create additional need with regard to open space, however the viability of small housing schemes may be affected. Therefore, a threshold of 10 or more dwellings or 0.5 ha or more for housing schemes will be established for the requirement of developer contributions towards the provision and enhancement of open space which is suitable for children and younger people as well as older people. The preference is for provision to be made onsite, however where sites are physically constrained, if necessary to achieve development viability, it may be appropriate to seek development contributions towards off-site provision where this can be justified.
- 5.34 The open space for the Sustainable Urban Extension of Rushden East will be dealt with as a separate matter and the precise detail of what is to be provided there will be informed by the Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (or subsequent updates), future iterations of the MFD/SPD for the site and negotiations through the planning application process.
- 5.35 Open space requirements will be calculated using the most up to date evidence on open space. An Open Space SPD will be prepared which will provide a step by step guide for calculating open space requirements. Contributions toward open space would be spent in accordance with the Open Space Study and Local Infrastructure Plan.
- 5.36 There is a clear relationship between open space and the green infrastructure network. Open spaces form an integral component of the green infrastructure network. To ensure a commensurate approach when determining contributions, the requirements of EN5 and EN6 should be taken into account. Opportunities to combine open space and green infrastructure schemes should be sought to optimise design and keep contributions proportionate. The Council will take care to avoid double counting between strategic and local green infrastructure and open space requirements when calculating contributions.

<sup>38</sup> Raunds was identified as having no existing parks and gardens provision therefore the wider East Northamptonshire figure has been used.

<sup>39</sup> Applying 2.4 persons per household standard

<sup>40</sup> The figure of 0.04 ha per 1000 population is a minimum

## **Policy EN8: Enhancement and provision of open space**

**All new residential development of 10 or more dwellings (or sites more than 0.5 ha) will be required to contribute to the enhancement and provision of open space to meet the needs of the population arising from the development.**

**The provision of new open space will be required for development where there is an identified quantitative and/ or qualitative need. Requirements will be determined in accordance with the most up-to-date evidence base. Where applicable, new open space will need to be provided in order to meet the following requirements (or subsequent updates to these requirements set out in the most up-to-date evidence base):**

- **Quality and value criteria in Table 6;**
- **Accessibility standards in Table 7; and**
- **Quantity standards in Table 8.**

**Rushden East SUE will have its own bespoke open space, sport and recreation facilities which will be agreed in accordance with Policy EN29, informed by the Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (or subsequent updates).**

**For all other qualifying development, contributions to enhance the quality and value of existing open space onsite, or where appropriate offsite, including enhanced connectivity between open spaces and the Green Infrastructure network within the locality, will be required. Developer contributions will be calculated based on the quantity standards for the scale of development proposed.**

**The long term management and maintenance of all new open space must be secured. Developers should work with the Council to determine the most appropriate long term management and maintenance arrangements.**

### **Sport and Recreation**

- 5.37 The KKP Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report provides an evaluation of the local supply of and demand for playing pitch facilities in the district. The quantity, accessibility and quality of each of the following types of facility have been assessed: football pitches (both grass and artificial), rugby pitches, hockey pitches (artificial), cricket pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.
- 5.38 In the KKP Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan, the district is divided into two analysis areas, north and south, to allow for a more localised assessment. Oundle and Thrapston are located in the north of the district, whilst Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Raunds and Rushden are located in the south. The shortfalls in the study are expressed in match sessions rather than in number of pitches required. To convert match sessions into a number of pitches, the number of match sessions is halved (to take account of teams playing on a home and away basis). This has been done to calculate the total demand, combining current demand and future demand.

- 5.39 For all types of facilities either current demand is being met or there is an identified shortfall. Some facilities also have a predicted future shortfall as a result of the exacerbation of the current shortfall. The study concludes there is a need to protect and improve the existing provision, as well as to create new playing pitches.
- 5.40 The Plan focuses upon maximising opportunities for people to be physically active, as reflected in the Northamptonshire Physical Activity and Sport Framework (NPASF) 2018-2031. These opportunities should be maximised through encouraging active lifestyles, beyond a focus upon protecting traditional sports based facilities such as playing pitches, for competitive sports. This can include green gyms, marked/ measured trails and activities trails.
- 5.41 New developments create additional need for sport and recreation facilities, therefore major residential developments and strategic employment developments will be required to provide developer contributions towards the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities or make provision for these on site.
- 5.42 A Sports and Recreation SPD will be prepared to set out the process for determining contributions. This will set out a step by step process for calculating requirements using Sport England planning tools to inform decision making. The focus for investment of contributions will be the Playing Pitch Strategy (or subsequent update), and where appropriate, other relevant documents, including Sports Facilities Strategies, Physical Activity and Sports Frameworks, Health and Wellbeing Strategies, Neighbourhood Plans and/ or plans or strategies prepared by National Governing bodies for sport and physical activity.

#### **Policy EN9: Enhancement and provision of sport and recreation facilities**

**All new residential development of 10 or more dwellings (or sites more than 0.5ha) and employment development of 5ha or more will be required to enhance the quality and value of existing sports and recreation facilities within the locality and/ or create new facilities to meet needs arising from the development. Developer contributions will be calculated based on the most up-to-date evidence base.**

**Preference will be to meet need through new onsite provision, though off-site provision and enhancement of existing facilities will be considered, where a need for such an approach can be fully justified.**

**Rushden East SUE will have its own bespoke sport and recreation facilities which will be agreed in accordance with Policy EN29, informed by the Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy (or subsequent updates).**

**The long term management and maintenance of all new sport and recreation facilities—must be secured. Developers should work with the Council to determine the most appropriate long term management and maintenance arrangements.**

## 6.0 Social Capital

6.1 Social capital is about how people (communities) coexist, function and live together. It is defined as “*the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively*”. Typically, the concept of social capital is closely related to quality of life considerations.

6.2 There are many ways that the Plan can deliver social capital enhancements or gains i.e. quality of life improvements. The Joint Core Strategy includes a policy framework to deliver the following outcomes:

- Empowered and proactive communities;
- Enhanced local character;
- Excellent services and facilities;
- A more diverse economy;
- More walkable places and an excellent choice of ways to travel;
- Stronger, more self-reliant towns; and
- Enhanced quality of life for all residents.

6.3 There are many aspects to social capital. Elements of this concept include the protection, retention or enhancement of community assets. For this, the Joint Core Strategy sets out a comprehensive overarching policy to support and enhance community services and facilities (Policy 7).

6.4 The six urban areas all host a range of services and facilities typical to market towns of their respective sizes. In rural areas, development should be supported where this is necessary and appropriately located to boost local services and a prosperous rural economy. In particular this should be the focus of development within the larger villages (Table 5; section 4.0, above), all of which, to some degree, function as service hubs for the wider area.

6.5 However, the concept of social capital underpins all elements of quality of life, much of which is greatly influenced by the built environment. The Joint Core Strategy sets out a range of policies for protecting assets, including the historic environment, landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, water environment, place shaping and sustainable building standards. These policies provide the overall framework for managing development.

6.6 The initial consultation for the Plan (Regulation 18 consultation) and subsequent stakeholder engagement has revealed that there are a number of themes where this Plan could provide additional direction, over and above the Joint Core Strategy. Policies within this section of the Plan will address the following matters:

- Health and wellbeing;
- Design and character;
- Historic environment;
- Tourism and culture; and
- Education and training.

## Health and wellbeing

- 6.7 Health and wellbeing are key aspects of social capital and are reflected as overall quality of life functions. This Plan provides additional district level policy direction to support the place shaping principles of the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 8).
- 6.8 Although faring better than average in some regards, East Northamptonshire, like all parts of the country faces a number of significant health and wellbeing challenges within its communities. In order to address these, local councils and their health partners are working with their communities to support and improve health and wellbeing. Important issues include:
- Increasing levels of physical activity – approximately one quarter of adults<sup>41</sup> are not physically active enough to maintain good health.
  - Healthy diet and weight - Two-thirds of adults in East Northamptonshire are overweight or obese, which has significant implications for their health and wellbeing.
  - In school year 6 (final year of primary education), 17.2% of children are obese.
  - Social isolation – ensuring people have opportunities for social interaction and engagement with their community.
  - Access to appropriate healthcare services when required.
  - Mental wellbeing – for all ages
  - Healthy Ageing – supporting people to stay independent and active.
- 6.9 The planning system can contribute significantly to health and wellbeing by ensuring that these are considered effectively at all stages of the planning process. The design of new developments can have a major influence on community health and wellbeing in a number of ways. Well-designed places should support and enable people and communities to live healthier lifestyles, thus improving community wellbeing and reducing pressures on local health and social care services.
- 6.10 Good design can achieve this through:
- Physical activity – Creating environments which encourage and support people to be active, through active travel, play, informal and formal leisure and sporting activities.
  - Social interaction – providing facilities and spaces that can be used for formal and informal social interaction and community activity and enable access to these services.
  - Green infrastructure – effective incorporation of multi-functional green infrastructure and spaces, providing benefits such as; access, play and recreation, attractive environments and wildlife habitat, flooding, climate and air quality management, relaxation and enhanced mental wellbeing.

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<sup>41</sup> Recent survey data collected by Northamptonshire Public Health indicates that while over 75% of respondents are recorded as “active” – above national average – this still means almost a quarter are noted as being “inactive”



- Streets/ public spaces – distinctive, high quality, safe and interesting streetscapes and public realm; which are safe, interesting and attractive, accessible and not polluted.
- Quality homes – which support health and wellbeing, through providing adequate internal and external space, attractive, accessible design and are flexible to meet changing needs.
- Movement and access – providing infrastructure to encourage and enable access for all by prioritising non-motorised means of transport such as walking, cycling and horse riding, together with public transport, balancing access by private car with any negatives impacts.
- Safe environments – Creating safe environments by identifying risks from hazards such as crime and anti-social behaviour, noise and air pollution and designing the development to minimise these impacts.
- Food and healthy diet – Encouraging a healthy diet through providing spaces for community gardening and engagement with food, ranging from allotments, community orchards and gardens.
- Economy and employment – providing access to employment and learning opportunities and creating workplace environments which support employee health and wellbeing.
- Social and healthcare infrastructure – providing suitable infrastructure for community services that support health and wellbeing, including appropriate health care provision.

6.11 A range of good practice exists in regards to designing for good health and wellbeing. Three documents are cited as particularly useful references<sup>42</sup>. The local planning authority recognises the implications of air quality and pollution for health and wellbeing. In July 2020, the former East Northamptonshire Council introduced a requirement for air quality assessments supporting planning applications/ proposals to be prepared in line with the latest EMAQN guidance.

### **Health Impact Assessment**

- 6.12 Health Impact Assessment (HIA) enables the identification and assessment of the likely effects that a proposed development will have on the health and wellbeing of the community. The purpose of systematically assessing these impacts is to develop the proposals in a way that minimises negative health and wellbeing impacts and maximises positive contributions to community wellbeing, including reducing health inequalities.
- 6.13 Where a health impact is identified, any actions that have been/will be undertaken to reduce a negative impact or maximise a positive impact should be identified and described. The HIA process will enable health and wellbeing issues to be identified and assessed and the development proposals to be adjusted accordingly. The completed HIA

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<sup>42</sup> Building for a Healthy Life - <https://www.udg.org.uk/publications/othermanuals/building-healthy-life>

Healthy Streets - <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/healthy-streets-for-london.pdf>

Active Design Guide - <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>

will help enable relevant organisations to judge whether the proposal effectively addresses health and wellbeing issues and thus meet the relevant local planning policies.

- 6.14 In line with the Northamptonshire Planning and Health Protocol<sup>43</sup>, major applications (10+ homes or 1000m<sup>2</sup>+) will need to be accompanied by an appropriate HIA. This assessment will demonstrate how the development proposals promote good health and wellbeing and minimise any negative health and wellbeing impacts and thus meet policy requirements.
- 6.15 A local Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) toolkit<sup>44</sup> has been developed to enable an assessment of the likely health impacts of spatial planning related proposals – including specific development proposals or planning applications. This should be used at the earliest practicable stage of the planning process, in order to influence the proposals as they are being developed.
- 6.16 Policy EN10 (below) sets out how health and wellbeing, will be managed within the planning system, including for example, the application of place shaping principles set out in JCS Policy 8 to ensure the delivery of good design that promotes health and wellbeing. It provides a mechanism for HIA to be incorporated into the development management system.

#### **Policy EN10: Health and wellbeing**

**Development proposals should demonstrate that the design will contribute positively to health and wellbeing by enabling and promoting healthy lifestyles and minimising any negative health and wellbeing impacts, through:**

- a) Effective application of -design and place shaping principles;**
- b) Creating a distinctive, high quality and accessible public realm which promotes and encourages physical activity and social engagement;**
- c) Having regard to the implications for and access to healthcare services and demonstrate how this will be addressed;**
- d) Engagement with local and national health bodies, including local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (or replacement body), to inform proposals relating to healthcare provision and / or access; and**
- e) Undertaking Health Impact Assessments at an early stage to ensure HIA influences the design process, for example, through pre-application advice, to ensure that the issues identified can be addressed or incorporated into the design proposals, and have regard to the Northamptonshire Planning and Health Protocol.**

**Health Impact Assessments will need to be objective and proportionate, dependent upon the scale of development proposed. In line with the Northamptonshire Planning and Health Protocol, all major development proposals (Development of**

<sup>43</sup>

[http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/site/assets/files/1456/updated\\_northamptonshire\\_planning\\_and\\_health\\_protocol\\_mar20.pdf](http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/site/assets/files/1456/updated_northamptonshire_planning_and_health_protocol_mar20.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/northamptonshire-rapid-hia-for-planning-tool/>

**10 or more homes (or with a site area of 0.5 ha) or for non-residential development of 1000m<sup>2</sup> or more) will need to be accompanied by an appropriate HIA.**

### **Design and character**

- 6.17 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 8) sets out a broad range of place shaping principles relating to connectivity, the public realm, local character and quality of life
- 6.18 The character of East Northamptonshire is defined by a range of built environment assets. There are a large number of distinctive streetscapes and buildings of character across the district.
- 6.19 The varied criteria set out in Policy 8 of the Joint Core Strategy relate to a range of development schemes. In the case of development management, over 80% of applications are minor schemes (householder applications, changes of use, schemes of 1-2 dwellings etc). A need to provide further direction regarding design and character through this Plan has been highlighted.
- 6.20 In some instances, Village Design Statements may provide additional local direction and information regarding character and design for a Parish or settlement. Village Design Statements. Local examples include Cotterstock<sup>45</sup>, and Pilton, Stoke Doyle and Wadenhoe<sup>46</sup> Village Design Statements; adopted as a Supplementary Planning Documents in September 2020 and February 2016, respectively. These provide detailed local guidance regarding the built vernacular and local styles.
- 6.21 Policy EN11 (below) sets out detailed criteria against which new buildings, and extensions to existing buildings, will be assessed within their immediate context or setting. Policy EN11 focuses upon the immediate setting of new development. Issues such as the wider setting, including connections to green infrastructure and ensuring walkable neighbourhoods are addressed through the place shaping criteria in Policy 8 of the Joint Core Strategy and Chapter 12 of the NPPF (Achieving well-designed places).
- 6.22 Policy EN11 and Policy 8 of the Joint Core Strategy are supported by various specialist supplementary planning documents. Most recently, the Householder Extensions SPD (adopted June 2020<sup>47</sup>) provides detailed guidance on extensions to residential properties in situations where they require Planning Permission. Earlier examples include the Domestic Waste Storage SPD (2012)<sup>48</sup>, providing additional local guidance regarding the provision of domestic waste storage facilities for new residential development and the Shop Front SPD (2011)<sup>49</sup>, which provides specialist guidance for retail business premises regarding new shop fronts and alterations to existing frontages. In addition, statutory bodies may apply their own adopted policies (e.g. Northamptonshire Parking Standards,

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<sup>45</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11861/draft\\_cotterstock\\_village\\_design\\_statement](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11861/draft_cotterstock_village_design_statement)

<sup>46</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9056/adopted\\_pilton\\_stoke\\_doyle\\_and\\_wadenhoe\\_village\\_design\\_statement](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9056/adopted_pilton_stoke_doyle_and_wadenhoe_village_design_statement)

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11668/householder\\_extensions\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_document](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11668/householder_extensions_supplementary_planning_document)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/planning-strategies-and-plans/supplementary-planning-documents-spd>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/planning-strategies-and-plans/supplementary-planning-documents-spd>

September 2016<sup>50</sup>) in providing detailed feedback or responses to inform the determination of applications.

## **Policy EN11: Design of Buildings / Extensions**

**Development proposals should relate well to and where possible enhance the surrounding environment, and will be supported where the design:**

- a) Integrates positively with the surrounding area and creates a continuity of street frontage in terms of appearance, layout, massing and scale;**
- b) Does not detract from the character of the existing building(s);**
- c) Creates visual interest through careful use of detailing and appropriate materials;**
- d) Is locally inspired where appropriate, reflecting local distinctiveness;**
- e) Incorporates accessible and well designed amenity space proportionate to the scale of the unit and space for waste management to serve the needs of all end users<sup>51</sup>;**
- f) In the case of Houses in Multiple Occupation, have regard to the minimum space standards as defined in ‘The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Order 2018<sup>52</sup> or any amendment to that Order; and**
- g) For all other developments, provide sufficient internal space in line with National Space Standards**
- h) Does not result in -significant harm arising from light pollution.**

### **Historic Environment**

- 6.23 The Joint Core Strategy and NPPF set out a range of policies for the protection of the historic environment or heritage assets. The historic environment should be recognised as a critical element of the cultural and tourist offering of the district. The district is home to a rich variety of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, and statutory and locally listed structures.
- 6.24 The Joint Core Strategy contains an overarching policy for the protection of the historic environment (Policy 2). The need to provide more detailed local direction through this Plan has been considered. This Plan identifies where additional policies are necessary to supplement Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy, with regard to both designated and non-designated heritage assets.

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire-highways/transport-plans-and-policies/Pages/northamptonshire-parking-standards.aspx>

<sup>51</sup> A typical garden length will be 10.5m

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/616/contents/made>

## Designated Heritage Assets

- 6.25 As illustrated in the Area Portrait (section 2.0, above), the historic built environment of East Northamptonshire is rich and varied. The area is noted to contain the highest number of designated heritage assets within North Northamptonshire. These include scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, and registered parks and gardens. Notable sites include:
- Former Rothschild Estate at Ashton
  - Country houses including Apethorpe Palace
  - National Trust site at Lyveden
  - Key historic settlements such as Oundle, Higham Ferrers and Fotheringhay
  - Buildings and townscape of the boot and shoe industry
- 6.26 The Joint Core Strategy and this Plan take a proactive approach to addressing the current pressures on this valued resource. These measures include:
- a series of historic environment policies which target heritage asset types, which are of particular local concern;
  - robust criteria for the identification of non-designated heritage assets, given the high number of such assets in the district; and
  - landscape and design policies which address the important inter-relationship between the historic, built and natural environment.
- 6.27 National legislation provides statutory protection for designated heritage assets. However, to ensure the historic environment (including heritage assets and their settings) to be adequately protected and enhanced within the development management process, it is considered that a local strategic policy is necessary to reinforce this. The key consideration is the potential harm that might be caused to the heritage asset or its setting and the great weight that should be given to its conservation, proportionate to its level of significance, and how that is balanced against the proposed public benefits of development proposals; i.e. application of national policy and legislation in the local context.
- 6.28 Policy EN12 (below) recognises the key principles of the NPPF. The balancing principles referred to in Policy EN12 reflect paragraphs 199-202 of the NPPF, providing additional district level direction. In addition, the NPPF emphasises the importance of the opportunity that new development may provide to better reveal the significance of heritage assets. Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments are also subject to separate regulatory regimes.
- 6.29 There is a great deal of evidence available in the public domain relating to the historic environment which assists in the identification of historic significance. Principally this is held at the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record. However, in the case of conservation areas, a number of them are supported by published appraisals and management plans, which are available through the Council's website. These evidence-base documents should be consulted and taken into account in the formulation of development proposals.

## Policy EN12: Designated Heritage Assets

**In considering proposals that affect a designated heritage asset or its setting great weight will be given to the asset's conservation.**

**Development proposals that protect and enhance the character, appearance and significance of designated heritage assets (and their settings), and that put them to viable uses consistent with their conservation, will be supported.**

**Where development:**

- a) protects and enhances heritage assets (including non-designated assets) and prevents harm to their significance and setting;**
- b) has been informed by a conservation area appraisal, landscape character assessment, village design statement or neighbourhood plan;**
- c) supports the sympathetic re-use of buildings of architectural or historic importance to ensure a positive contribution to the historic environment is maintained; and**
- d) conserves, protects and enhances heritage assets that are considered to be at risk.**

### Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 6.30 A number of sites, structures and buildings have been identified as non-designated heritage assets through Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, as well as relevant planning history. Any building, structure or feature (including designed landscapes) has the potential to be a heritage asset, where this can be demonstrated through appropriate evidence. It is necessary to apply policies for the protection of non-designated heritage assets in a proportionate way when considering the impact of a development proposal.
- 6.31 One way that this Plan can provide additional policy direction to non-designated heritage assets is through the preparation of a local list. The Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 3.15) specifically recognises the potential to provide additional protection for non-designated heritage assets, through the preparation of a local list. This recognises the need to apply consistent criteria, but does not provide further details as to what criteria should be applied.
- 6.32 Some made Neighbourhood Plans (e.g. Brigstock, Higham Ferrers and Raunds) include local lists. The previous Local Plan also included a limited local list, which would need to be reviewed and updated. In 2013, the former East Northamptonshire Council agreed a standardised methodology for assessing non-designated heritage assets, including production of a draft local list for the southern part of the former District (Planning Policy Committee, 22 July 2013<sup>53</sup>). However, the draft list was not taken forward; instead non-designated heritage assets may continue to be identified using the standard methodology as and when Neighbourhood Plans are prepared. The preparation and adoption of a local

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<sup>53</sup> Item 7: [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/429/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/429/planning_policy_committee)

list through a Neighbourhood Plan should provide enhanced weight in securing the protection of such heritage assets and/ or their setting.

- 6.33 In order to ensure consistency, Policy EN13 sets out further guiding principles for preparing local lists-and provides clarity on the types of buildings, sites and structures that the Council considers to be non-designated heritage assets, thereby setting a local blueprint or methodology for preparing a local list. It is not necessary for an asset to meet all relevant criteria, and the state of repair of an asset is not a relevant consideration when deciding whether or not a building, site or structure is a heritage asset.

### **Policy EN13: Non-Designated Heritage Assets**

**Development affecting a non-designated heritage asset (this relates to all relevant heritage assets not just those on a local list, i.e. non-designated historic parks and gardens; buildings and structures; and/ or archaeological remains) where it is designed sympathetically having regard to the significance of the asset, its features, character and setting will be supported. Development should seek to enhance the character of the non-designated heritage asset whether or not it is included in a local list.**

**Non-designated heritage assets should be conserved in a manner consistent with their significance. The assessment of proposals for new development that would impact on the demolition or total loss of a non-designated heritage asset will take into account the significance of the asset and the scale of harm or loss.**

**Whether a site, feature or structure is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset will be guided by the following criteria:**

#### **Historic parks and gardens**

- **Historic interest**
- **Proportion of the original layout still in evidence**
- **Influence on the development of taste whether through reputation or reference in literature**
- **Early or representative of a style of layout**
- **Work of a designer of local importance**
- **Association with significant persons or historical events**
- **Strong group value**
- **Within, or contributing to, a locally significant landscape**

#### **Buildings and structures**

- **Aesthetic/architectural merit**
- **Historic association**
- **Age and rarity**
- **Completeness**
- **Social or communal value**

## Assets of archaeological interest

- **The clarification provided by the Planning Practice Guidance and Historic England guidance on Local Heritage Listing as to what can be considered as a non-designated site of archaeological interest will be used. These non-designated sites may be included in the Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record.**

## Tourism and Culture

- 6.34 Tourism is a longstanding priority within the former East Northamptonshire area. The former Council's Economic Development Strategy specifies that the priority for economic growth should be those sectors "*that will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for residents whilst enhancing the quality of place and securing prosperity in the local economy*" (Economic Growth, Tourism and Regeneration Strategy 2017-2020<sup>54</sup>, paragraph 1.7). These include delivering increased tourism spending and job creation, particularly along the Nene Valley and in rural areas.
- 6.35 The Economic Development Strategy highlights the mix of unspoilt countryside, historic market towns and attractive villages, which contribute to the character of the district. The Council remains a key partner in the Destination Nene Valley (DNV) partnership<sup>55</sup> which promotes a diverse range of arts festivals and other cultural events throughout the Nene Valley between Northampton and Peterborough, including the Nene Valley Festival, held each September.
- 6.36 Cultural attractions can be based on a variety of different interests. Art galleries, environmental attractions, museums, historic buildings and landscapes may define cultural interest. These are one mechanism by which improved participation in active leisure and recreation may be achieved (recognised in the Economic Development Strategy), thereby securing broader net gains to overall public health and wellbeing. The development and expansion of cultural attractions should therefore be supported by an appropriate policy framework, to ensure that their success and integrity is not compromised.
- 6.37 The Joint Core Strategy contains several policies to enhance the area's tourist and cultural assets and support proposals to expand the tourist industry (Policy 22(e)). The Joint Core Strategy also seeks to promote tourism through delivering net improvements to Green Infrastructure (Policy 19), emphasising the importance of Oundle and Thrapston as gateways to the Nene Valley (Policy 20(b)) and the Rockingham Forest as tourist and recreation attractions (Policy 21(d)). Recent developments such as Rushden Lakes and the Greenway have also delivered enhanced connectivity between the urban areas of Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough and Rushden and the Nene Valley. Growth in the tourist economy balanced with the delivery of enhancements to GI corridors will be promoted through this Plan.

## Cultural developments

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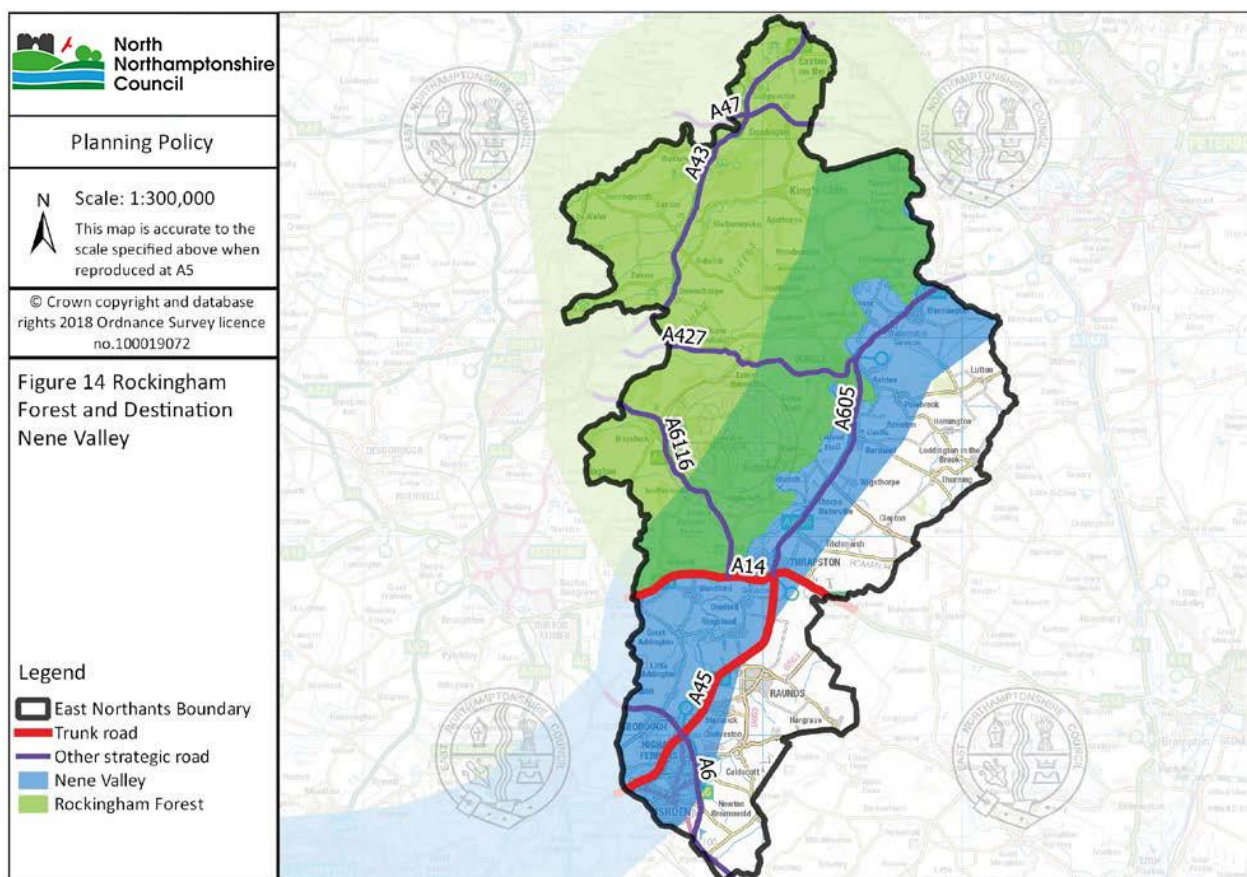
<sup>54</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/site/scripts/download\\_info.php?downloadID=479&fileID=2016](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=479&fileID=2016)

<sup>55</sup> [www.nenevalley.net](http://www.nenevalley.net)



- 6.38 East Northamptonshire has a wide range of tourist and cultural assets, from the River Nene to churches and idyllic villages, to significant tracts of woodland, many of which contribute to defining the Rockingham Forest. These all benefit the existing residents and workforce but also appeal to visitors and tourists. It is important to not only protect and enhance the existing attractions but to actively support new tourist and visitor attractions through the planning system, including rural tourism.
- 6.39 Cultural attractions such as theatres, museums, galleries, concert halls, cinemas and hotels are all defined as main town centre uses (NPPF Annex 2). The NPPF (paragraphs 87-91) requires that larger scale proposals for new cultural assets will be subject to the Sequential and Impact Tests for main town centre uses, although smaller scale rural office, tourist or other small scale developments are exempt.
- 6.40 Many tourist and cultural assets are associated with the Nene Valley (spatial corridor defined by [www.nenevalley.net](http://www.nenevalley.net); incorporated into Figure 9, below). Most are sited in locations that provide optimum opportunities for non-motorised vehicular access, utilising dedicated off-road routes such as the Greenway. Committed or established tourist destinations such as Fineshade, Lyveden New Bield, Rushden Lakes, Stanwick Lakes and Oundle Marina already include provision for cultural uses which would otherwise be regarded as main town centre uses.

**Figure 9: Rockingham Forest and Destination Nene Valley**



- 6.41 In order to promote tourism and attract visitors to the area it is important to provide a range of accommodation options. The initial stakeholder engagement and the Economic Development Strategy highlighted the lack of overnight tourist accommodation

throughout the district. Maintaining the existing stock of tourist accommodation and increasing the overall offer of the district will be key objectives for this Plan.

### **Tourist accommodation – north of the District**

- 6.42 Across the predominantly rural north of the district, there are a limited number of camping locations, B&Bs, independent hotels and a few chain hotels located alongside main highway routes. The north of the district is relatively well served with facilities sites include Top Lodge, Fineshade; New Lodge, Laxton (A43); the Talbot Hotel, Oundle and Yarwell Mill. Several village pubs in the rural north of the district also offer overnight (B&B) accommodation. For example, in nearby towns such as Stamford to the north there is a wider offer of overnight accommodation including large hotels.
- 6.43 Recent consents include a proposed Rockingham Forest Park, which includes 55 tourist accommodation lodges and 9 camping pitches at Jack's Green, Nassington. If this scheme is implemented it will offer a significant improvement to the overall provision of tourist accommodation for the rural north of the district.

### **Tourist accommodation – south of the District**

- 6.44 By contrast to the north, in the southern part of the district (south of the A14) tourist accommodation is limited, with few hotels and inns offering overnight accommodation. Therefore, a need to promote and provide for additional hotels or other tourist accommodation to the south of the district is emphasised. It is important to recognise that to attract overnight visitors that want to enjoy all that there is on offer in East Northamptonshire, that accommodation needs are met. This could take place with the re-use of redundant buildings in settlements, new provision in the towns, or further camping locations in rural areas. In order to enhance and reinforce the existing characteristics of the district, it will be expected that the highest level of sustainability should be achieved.

### **Promoting sustainable tourism**

- 6.45 Sustainable transport modes from tourist attractions and accommodation offers will be critical to ensure any adverse impacts, arising from increased tourism activity, is minimised. It will be important to roll out programmes, such as the Greenway, in order to promote further connections to the key attractors and also for new provision to deliver further links into the network.
- 6.46 It is reiterated that the one of the most significant issues affecting the tourist industry concerns the lack of overnight accommodation, particularly in the south of the district. This issue is reflected in national policy which sets a general presumption in favour of reusing redundant rural buildings for residential use (NPPF paragraph 80(c)). It is important that this Plan provides appropriate direction to ensure that further losses to existing tourist accommodation do not occur.
- 6.47 In accordance with Policy 25 of the Joint Core Strategy, the small scale development of self-catering accommodation through the conversion of, for example, farm buildings which could supplement farm incomes, or outbuildings attached to public houses should be supported.
- 6.48 This Plan will maximise opportunities to support sustainable growth in the tourism industry through supporting the development of tourism, in particular new hotels and tourist accommodation, especially in priority locations such as the Nene Valley and

Rockingham Forest. In order to proactively support arts, culture and tourism related development within the Rockingham Forest and Destination Nene Valley corridor, new proposals for these uses should be exempt from the Sequential and Impact Tests (Policy EN14, below).

- 6.49 Policy EN14(a) sets out relevant criteria for managing tourism and cultural developments in the Nene Valley corridor and the Rockingham Forest. These should not adversely affect sensitive receptors (the SSSI and SPA) and would be subject to the SPA Mitigation Strategy with regard to potential impacts of tourism upon the integrity of the SPA/ Ramsar site. Outside of these areas, Sequential and Impact Tests will apply for main town centre uses (i.e. cultural developments, hotels etc) in the normal way.
- 6.50 The potential impacts of proposals for new tourism, cultural developments and tourist accommodation on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA need to be fully considered. Policy 4 of the JCS and the Special Protection Area SPD set out requirements for developments with the potential to have an adverse impact on the SPA. Development with the potential to cause an adverse effect on the SPA must meet the requirements of JCS Policy 4, or any subsequent replacement or update to that policy. A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required to accompany any planning application to demonstrate the absence of any such adverse effect.

#### **Policy EN14: Tourism, cultural developments and tourist accommodation**

- a) Within the Destination Nene Valley corridor and Rockingham Forest areas, as shown on the Policies Map, proposals for the development of hotels (particularly in the South of the District), new tourist and/ or cultural assets, or the expansion of existing sites, to support established tourism assets, will be supported provided that these:**
- i. Deliver enhanced connectivity to the Greenway and other defined Green Infrastructure corridors, as referred to in Policies EN5 and EN6; and**
  - ii. Do not have an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside e.g. King's Cliffe Hills and Valleys area of tranquillity (Joint Core Strategy Policy 3(f)).**

**Beyond the Destination Nene Valley corridor and Rockingham Forest areas, tourist and cultural developments will be supported where these comply with other relevant local and national planning policies.**

- b) Throughout the District, new-build tourist accommodation, or the conversion of dwellings or redundant or disused rural buildings to guest house or bed and breakfast use will be supported, where new-build accommodation is appropriate to its location and respects the setting,**

**quality and character of its surrounding hinterland.**

**In order to manage such developments it will be necessary to use suitable planning conditions and/ or legal agreements to ensure that these are retained for tourist accommodation.<sup>56</sup>**

### **Education and training**

- 6.51 The 2017 North Northamptonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan and 2021 East Northamptonshire Local Infrastructure Plan identify strategic infrastructure requirements necessary to support growth. This is particularly relevant when considering education, learning and training, where a mixture of localised and strategic infrastructure projects may be required to support growth. Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy provides the principal mechanism by which development contributions towards education can be sought.
- 6.52 In addition to securing development contributions to mitigate the impacts of new development, the Council and the Department for Education (DfE) have strategic responsibility for local authority maintained schools, academies and Free Schools, respectively. The Joint Policy Statement from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Education on 'Planning for Schools Development' (2011)<sup>57</sup> sets out the Government's approach to support the development of state-funded schools and their delivery through the planning system.
- 6.53 The DfE identifies that the Plan should give consideration to evidence on education capacity and need, to ensure that developer contributions towards education infrastructure (school expansions or new schools), can be effectively secured in accordance with Policy 10 of the Joint Core Strategy. In this way, these obligations can be made clear to developers and other stakeholders in assessing both viability of this Plan and development proposals.
- 6.54 The Government (DfE) has considered Rushden's Growth Town status and the Rushden East allocation (Joint Core Strategy, Policy 33), initially putting forward proposals through the draft Plan consultation, November 2018 – February 2019 (Specialist School Site consultation paper, January 2020<sup>58</sup>). In light of the SUE proposals and strategic educational infrastructure requirements, the DfE and the former County Council identified an overwhelming need for additional educational facilities for students aged 11-18 with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan for moderate learning difficulties to severe learning difficulties, including students with autism. This has been addressed by the development of a new Free School to the south of Chelveston Road, Higham Ferrers (east of the town), with a full capacity of 145 pupils which opened in September 2021.

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<sup>56</sup> Under the 2015 Deregulation Act a residential property may be let for up to 90 days in a calendar year as tourist accommodation, above which a change of use is deemed to have occurred.

<sup>57</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6316/1966097.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6316/1966097.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11673/appendix\\_3\\_-\\_specialist\\_school\\_site\\_provision](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11673/appendix_3_-_specialist_school_site_provision)

## 7.0 Economic prosperity

- 7.1 Policy 22 of the Joint Core Strategy (Delivering Economic Prosperity) sets out North Northamptonshire's overarching approach to economic development and sets a target net increase of 31,100 jobs across the North Northamptonshire area. This is further defined in Joint Core Strategy Policy 23 (Distribution of New Jobs) which sets an East Northamptonshire target for a net increase of 7,200 jobs (Policy 23/ Table 3) across all economic sectors within the Plan period (2011-31). Local economic development is being driven by the 2018 initiative *Enterprising East Northants*<sup>59</sup>, which is underpinned by the former Council's Economic Strategy 2017-2020.
- 7.2 In response to the Covid-19 national emergency the *Recovery Through Enterprise*<sup>60</sup> prospectus details East Northamptonshire Council's response to the economic shock resulting from the pandemic. This response builds on the *Enterprising East Northants* economic initiative and is being developed within the context of an ongoing strategic approach through a national economic recovery group, the Oxford Cambridge Arc (OCA), the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and the Northamptonshire Local Resilience Partnership. The prospectus aims to act as a local mechanism for joining up and driving delivery at a local level.
- 7.3 Conventionally, employment monitoring has related to business, industrial (heavy and light) or logistics uses (formerly referred to as 'B' Use Classes, in the 1987 Use Classes Order and subsequent amendments). This is a reflection of historical monitoring regimes, which have focused upon the quantum of business, industrial and logistics uses that have been developed. Current national policy identifies a distinct separation between main town centre uses and other employment uses. The Use Classes Order was comprehensively revised in 2020, although the NPPF maintains the town centre/ other economic uses differentiation. Further details, cross referencing the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020<sup>61</sup>, are set out at Appendix 2 of this Plan.

### **Macro-economic context: Strategic economic strategies**

- 7.4 To help set out effective district level policies, this Plan should consider and reflect the strategic economic framework. The district forms the northernmost part of the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) area; centred upon Milton Keynes and Northampton, and ranging from Corby, Oundle and the rural north of the district in the north, to Bicester, Aylesbury and Luton in the south. Its east-west extent lies between Biggleswade (east) to Banbury (west). SEMLEP also recognises the implications of major sub-regional centres beyond: London, Birmingham, Cambridge, Oxford, Leicester and Peterborough.

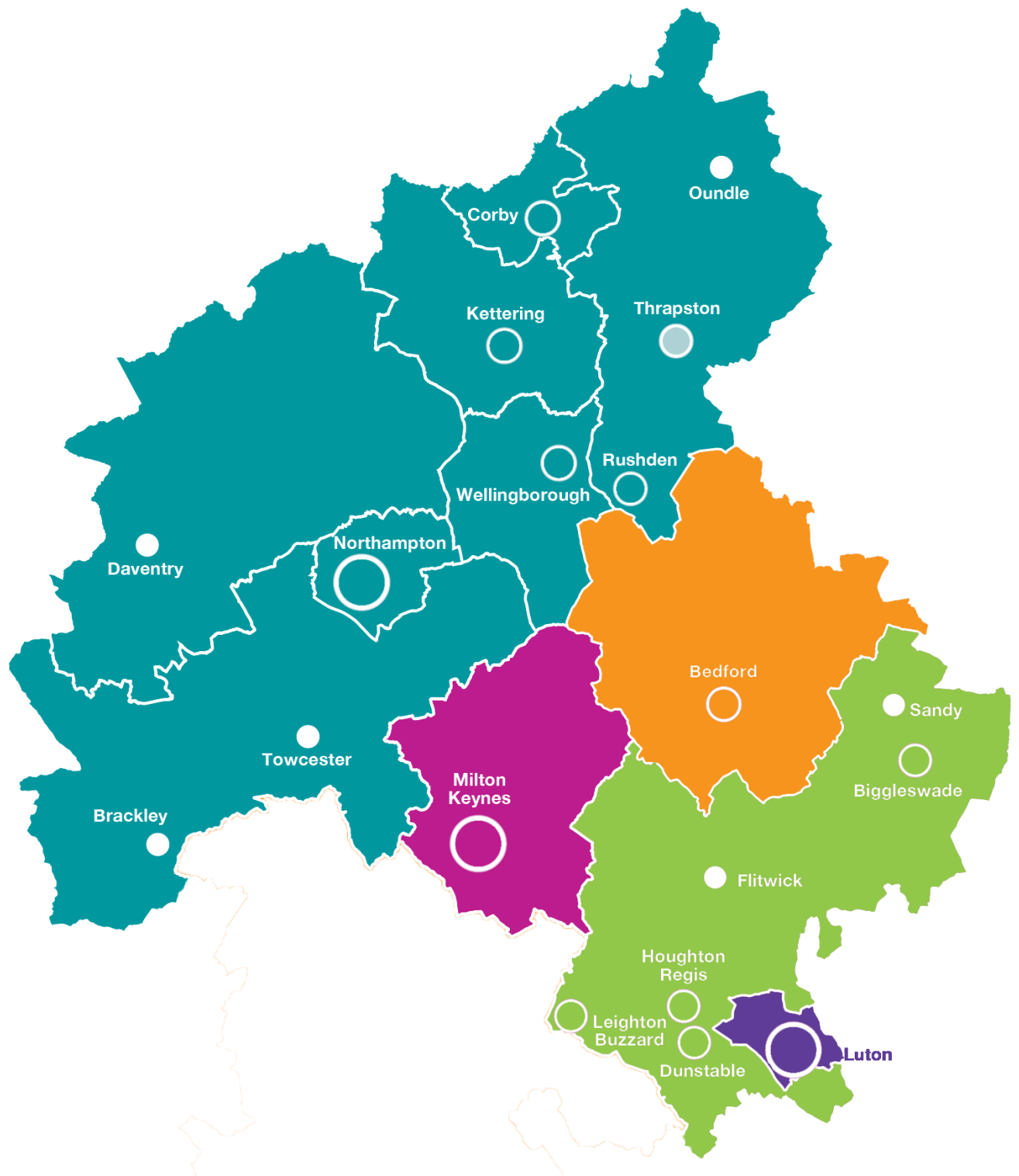
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<sup>59</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10850/enterprising\\_east\\_northants\\_strategy\\_2018](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10850/enterprising_east_northants_strategy_2018)

<sup>60</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11859/recovery\\_through\\_enterprise\\_prospectus](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11859/recovery_through_enterprise_prospectus)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/757/contents/made>

Figure 10: South East Midlands area (Strategic Economic Plan, Figure 1, p9)



7.5 The SEMLEP Strategic Economic Plan<sup>62</sup> was updated in November 2017 to reflect the incorporation of the former Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership into SEMLEP from 1 April 2017. The Strategic Economic Plan applies a long term vision, seeking to double

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.semlep.com/strategic-economic-plan/>

the value of goods and services produced across the area by 2050<sup>63</sup>. This Plan should understand and reflect SEMLEP's strategic priorities. The Strategic Economic Plan emphasises the opportunities offered by the development of the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor, now known as the Oxford Cambridge Arc (OCA), to transform the area into a hub of knowledge intensive industry, to achieve a vision for the Corridor as "*the UK's Silicon Valley – a world renowned centre for science, technology and innovation*".

7.6 The Strategic Economic Plan itself defines an overarching vision, that: "*The South East Midlands will build on its reputation as a premier location for growth, innovation, creativity and world-leading technologies*". To deliver this vision, it sets the following economic priorities:

1. High-Performance Technology, including Next Generation Transport, to deliver commercialisation of innovation;
2. Increased levels of private sector investment and grow jobs by 10% by 2025;
3. Deliver greater trading activity between companies;
4. Deliver sufficient new homes to meet the needs of the growing population;
5. Deliver the infrastructure needed, including much-improved Broadband and wireless connections;
6. Ensure that growth is undertaken in a manner that promotes social inclusion, equality and environmental sustainability.

7.7 The Strategic Economic Plan highlights the SEMLEP growth hub's active engagement with businesses, supporting these to set up and scale up. It emphasises the function of productivity-led growth i.e. innovation, enterprise, skills, physical capital (suitable infrastructure and premises) and competition. It also seeks to promote the South East Midlands to prospective investors, to ensure that sufficient and suitable employment land and premises are made available. This supports the 2019 South East Midlands Local Industrial Strategy (LIS)<sup>64</sup>, which sets out collective ambitions for the whole of the OCA, as well as specific ambitions for the SEMLEP area within it.

7.8 This Plan considers how the overarching Strategic Economic Vision and economic priorities could be achieved at a local level. The Joint Core Strategy contains a range of policies for delivering economic prosperity (policies 22-25). These, however, pre-date SEMLEP economic priorities. The Plan provides policy direction, building on the principles set out through Enterprising East Northants and acknowledging the economic priorities of SEMLEP, OCA and central Government.

### **Priority economic sectors**

7.9 There are a number of economic sectors for which this Plan is well placed to define spatial and more detailed local site specific proposals such as the East Northamptonshire Enterprise Centre at Warth Park, Raunds which is now completed and operating . The Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 8.9/ Policy 22) identifies priority employment sectors. This aligns to Enterprising East Northants and the South East Midlands LIS priorities; investment in skills, industries and infrastructure to boost productivity by backing businesses to create high quality well paid jobs. This will be achieved by enhancing the

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<sup>63</sup> Known as "Gross Value Added", or "GVA"

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.semlep.com/industrial-strategy/>

skills base wherever possible; e.g. nurturing and promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship are identified as a key focus for the Enterprise Centre. Priority sectors are highlighted as follows:

- Life Science in supporting local niches and the international offer as part of the wider Oxford Cambridge Arc;
- Creative and cultural industries with focus on the emerging TV, Film and digital media sector;
- Visiting economy with focus on hospitality, attractions and retail;
- Logistics – storage and distribution;
- High performance technologies; and
- Renewable and low carbon energy and green technologies, including food production.

7.10 It was anticipated in the Joint Core Strategy that high performance technologies, particularly related to motorsports would be located at the Rockingham Motor Speedway/ Enterprise Area. In recognition of the fact that motorsport activities at Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area have proved difficult to establish, significant changes to the strategic policies would need to be considered as part of a forthcoming Joint Core Strategy review; anticipated to start following the vesting date for the new North Northamptonshire unitary authority (1 April 2021), with a focus on life sciences, renewable energy and creative and cultural industries.

7.11 The importance of renewable energy technologies is emphasised, given the Government's legal commitments to to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050 set out in the Climate Change Act 2008<sup>65</sup> and subsequently signed up to in the Paris Agreement. This is also highlighted in SEMLEP's Energy Strategy (December 2018)<sup>66</sup>, which also sets an objective of ensuring that energy availability does not limit the area's growth and prosperity.

7.12 SEMLEP's identified key economic sectors correspond to the Joint Core Strategy priority economic sectors. The Strategic Economic Plan identifies particular strengths across the South East Midlands, in high performance technologies (e.g. autonomous vehicles, next generation transport), manufacturing technology (e.g. food and drink, footwear), logistics, the creative/ cultural sector and tourism. The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 22) supports the co-ordination of skills and training with sector specific requirements; e.g. through training and employment agreements.

7.13 At a district level, Enterprising East Northants defines local economic development priorities. As with the Strategic Economic Plan, the Council's strategy recognises the opportunities provided by Rushden Lakes, Rushden East, the Nene Valley and Tresham Garden Village. It also recognises the emerging importance of the OCA, reiterates the importance of the visitor economy (i.e. tourism) and highlights specific growth sectors of the economy such as life sciences. Enterprising East Northants sets an overarching economic vision for the district:

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

<sup>66</sup> [https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file\\_name=1271](https://www.semlep.com/modules/downloads/download.php?file_name=1271)



*“To secure sustainable job growth that will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for residents whilst enhancing the quality of place and securing prosperity in the local economy.”*

7.14 Recently delivered and emerging major developments throughout the district reflect the key economic sectors, highlighted in the North Northamptonshire Economic Prospectus (September 2020)<sup>67</sup>:

**Existing sectors:**

- **Logistics** – major distribution centres developed at Warth Park, Raunds (Phase 2) and Islip Furnace (Primark);
- **Manufacturing** – Howden’s site, Warth Park (Phase 3);
- **Retail and leisure/ visitor economy** – Phases 1 of Rushden Lakes opened July 2017, with phases 2-4 opening in July 2019 and potential for further phases to be delivered within the plan period.

**Future opportunities:**

- **Renewable and low carbon energy** – expansion of renewable energy capacity and low carbon innovations at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park;
- **High performance technologies** – appropriate new employment uses will be considered for the Rockingham Motor Speedway/ Enterprise Area;
- **Research and development** – sectoral growth in specialisms such as life sciences and construction.

7.15 Significant logistics, renewable energy and tourism developments have been delivered within the first half of the Plan period. However, it is recognised that to remain competitive the East Northamptonshire area needs to expand its attraction locally, both through developing its core sectors and a continued focus upon the training and skills base. Employment development is anticipated at Rockingham Motor Speedway/ Enterprise Area during the Plan period, although for the purposes of Local Plan monitoring any new jobs would count against the Corby target (9,700 jobs across Corby Borough, 2011-2031), rather than that for East Northamptonshire.

7.16 The Strategic Economic Plan highlights construction as a further driver for growth throughout the South-East Midlands area, including an expansion of apprenticeships. This reiterates the Government’s growth priorities, particularly regarding housebuilding. Other priority sectors such as green technologies are already highlighted in the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 22), with research and science (e.g. Life Sciences) similarly identified by SEMLEP. The 2019 Local Industrial Strategy, which covers the SEMLEP and wider OCA, also reiterates the importance of commercialisation for the central area which includes the former East Northamptonshire District.

**Delivering jobs**

7.17 The Joint Core Strategy Monitoring and Implementation Framework focuses on monitoring the numbers of jobs delivered over the Plan period. This does not, however, set sectoral targets. Instead, the Joint Core Strategy sets an overall requirement for a net

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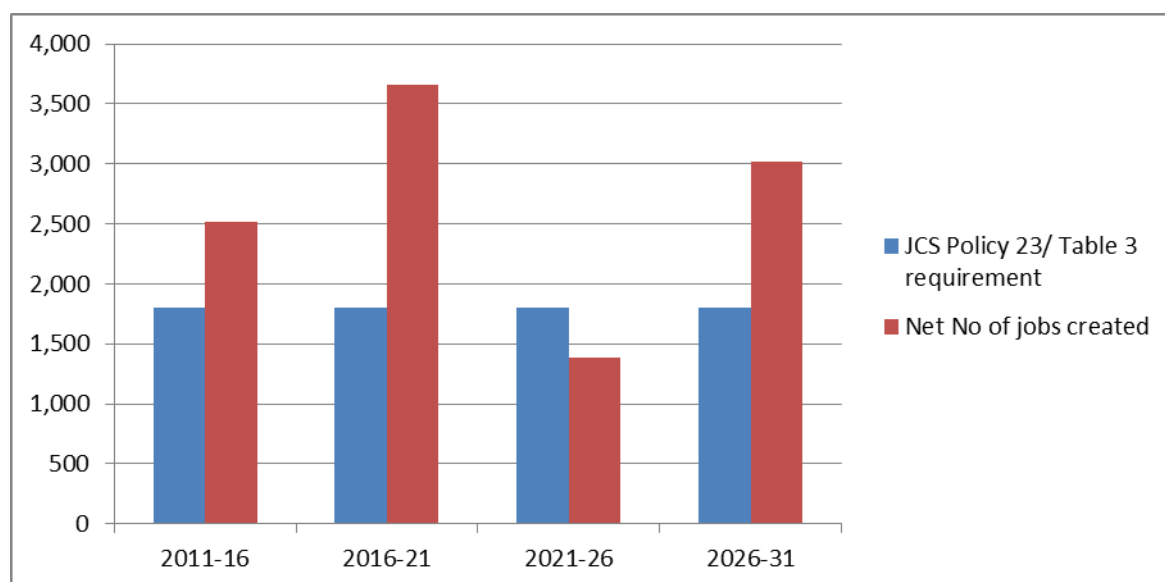
<sup>67</sup> [http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/site/assets/files/1459/16461\\_nn\\_economic\\_prospectus\\_final\\_26\\_06\\_20.pdf](http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/site/assets/files/1459/16461_nn_economic_prospectus_final_26_06_20.pdf)

growth target of 7,200 jobs across all employment sectors for East Northamptonshire (Policy 23/ Table 3).

7.18 Delivery of the 7,200 jobs requirement will entail a net increase of 360 jobs per year during the Plan period. The jobs delivery trajectory has been undertaken on the basis of five-year blocks (Table 9 and accompanying graph, below). This shows job growth being above the policy target which is good for the economy of the area.

**Table 9: Jobs delivery trajectory**

Table 5	Joint Core Strategy Policy 23/ Table 3 requirement	Net No of jobs created	Difference (Joint Core Strategy Table 3 requirement minus Net No of jobs created)
2011-16	1,800	2,520	-720
2016-21	1,800	3,665	-1,865
2021-26	1,800	1,382	418
2026-31	1,800	3,015	-1,215
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,200</b>	<b>10,582</b>	<b>-3,382<sup>68</sup></b>



### 2011-2021

7.19 During the first quarter of the Plan period (2011-2016) it is estimated that just over 2,500 jobs<sup>69</sup> were created, from significant developments that have already taken place. The most substantial developments delivered during this period include:

- Primark, Islip (over 1,300 jobs);
- Warth Park (Phase 2), Raunds (over 600 jobs); and

<sup>68</sup> Table 9 shows a “negative” jobs figure, indicating that the Joint Core Strategy requirement for 7,200 jobs should be exceeded by 3,382 jobs by 2031

<sup>69</sup> Data regarding job numbers has been collected from a range of sources, including planning application forms, planning statements or economic statements that accompany applications, as set out in Background Paper 5. However, it is recognised that numbers may vary between the granting of permission and implementation.

- Scottish Widows, Shipton Way, Rushden (over 300 jobs).

7.20 It is anticipated that during the current (second) quarter of the Plan period (2016-2021), nearly 3,900 jobs are expected to be created. Monitoring has identified a number of schemes, which have delivered or are expected to deliver, between 10 and 250 jobs. The most significant developments, recently delivered or currently under construction, are:

- A later development phase (Phase 3) by Howdens, at Warth Park, south of Meadow Lane, Raunds (600 jobs); and
- Phases 1-4 of Rushden Lakes (over 2,700 jobs).

7.21 The large number of jobs that are anticipated to come forward during the 2016-2021 period (Table 9, above) are largely a reflection of the Rushden Lakes development.

### **2021-2031**

7.22 During the second half of the Plan period (third and fourth quarters; i.e. 2021-2031) further significant employment sites are anticipated to come forward. The following strategic employment sites are anticipated to deliver the remaining jobs requirements over the rest of the Plan period:

- Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area, Corby/ Deene, although job creation at this location will be counted as part of Corby Borough's jobs requirement (which is 9,700 jobs across Corby Borough, 2011-2031);
- Chelveston Energy Innovation Park, to deliver zero-carbon solutions for industry, integrating high energy consumer businesses with large scale direct-supply renewable energy (estimated around 800 jobs);
- Oundle Marina currently functions as a hub for small businesses, but the consented redevelopment scheme (granted in 2018) for holiday accommodation, improved marina facilities, pub/ restaurant, retail and business accommodation, boatyard, clubhouse and associated infrastructure has the potential for significant future job creation , if implemented;
- West End/ Warth Park, Raunds (up to 700 jobs, including 400 at the East Northamptonshire Enterprise Centre);
- Rushden Gateway, Nene Valley Farm, Rushden (nearly 500 jobs at strategic employment land site, allocated in the Joint Core Strategy, Policy 35); and
- Rushden East (up to 1,500 jobs by 2031; i.e. 2,500 jobs gross in line with the Vision Statement, to 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, focusing upon higher skilled economic sectors such growing digital technology).

7.23 Other significant sites are anticipated to come forward during the latter quarter of the Plan period. However, these are anticipated to come forward beyond 2026, so have not been included within the deliverable employment land supply:

- Tresham Garden Village, Deenethorpe (estimated 1,500 jobs gross – 500 jobs within the current Plan period – on the basis of a 1:1 jobs to households ratio, as set out in the 2018 Tresham Garden Village Masterplan)<sup>70</sup>;
- Irthlingborough West (over 950 jobs, 340 net by 2031; a mixture of office, industrial and logistics uses); and
- Former Rushden & Diamonds FC stadium site, Nene Park, Irthlingborough (estimated around 300 jobs).

7.24 Further details about jobs already delivered together with the trajectory for the remainder of the Plan period are set out in the Jobs Background Paper (BP5)<sup>71</sup>. The summary assessment (Table 9, above) estimates that over 10,500 jobs (i.e. 3,382 in excess of the Joint Core Strategy requirement) will be delivered during the Plan period. Even in a scenario discounting sites where deliverability is uncertain; e.g. Irthlingborough West, Tresham Garden Village, and Nene Park, the Joint Core Strategy requirement for 7,200 jobs should be comfortably exceeded, by over 2,200 jobs, providing a significant contingency to cover any potential fallout from macro-economic events such as the Covid-19 pandemic or Brexit.

7.25 Major development sites that are expected to come forward during the remainder of the Plan period are expected to deliver significantly in excess of the Joint Core Strategy requirement. On this basis there is no need identified for further strategic employment sites to be allocated through this Plan; instead the focus will be upon delivering the remaining employment sites that are already in the pipeline, maximising opportunities for delivering high quality jobs in the priority sectors, alongside the retention and performance of existing employment areas. Whilst this Plan prioritises delivery of the remaining employment sites identified, it is also recognised that sites coming forward exceed the Joint Core Strategy target. This should be addressed through a forthcoming review of the Joint Core Strategy from 2021, in respect of future strategic employment growth.

### **Rushden Lakes West**

7.26 Over and above the major outstanding employment land commitments anticipated to be delivered during the remainder of the Plan period, further potential economic development opportunities may be identified. Employment land commitments in and around Rushden Lakes (e.g. Rushden Gateway) and Stanton Cross (Wellingborough East) should provide opportunities to further enhance the A45 corridor between Wellingborough and Rushden as a focus for economic growth, as emphasised in the Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 5.6). There is also potential for integration of these and existing Nene Valley employment sites by way of the Greenway (section 6.0, above).

7.27 Permission has been granted for a mixed use development to the west of Rushden Lakes (reference 19/01092/FUL, approved 16 September 2020). When implemented, this new development (known as “Rushden Living”) will deliver the following:

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<sup>70</sup> In the case of Tresham Garden Village the proposal represents an exception to the overall urban focused spatial development strategy. Successful implementation of this site falls outside (i.e. over and above) the strategic housing and jobs requirements and it therefore should not be included as part of the overall strategic employment land supply for jobs delivery. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that jobs creation at Tresham will be taken into account in assessing future requirements in reviewing the Joint Core Strategy, given that this development is already likely to be happening by the time that this review is completed (beyond 2021).

<sup>71</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12106/background\\_paper\\_5\\_-\\_job\\_targets](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12106/background_paper_5_-_job_targets)

- A mix of employment uses, consisting of retail, restaurants, offices, leisure and ancillary/ business uses, including;
- A new link road between Ditchford Lane and Rushden Lakes, incorporating footpaths, cycleways and associated works;
- Structural landscaping and sustainable drainage systems, to deliver green and blue infrastructure enhancements; and
- Opportunities for local manufacturers to showcase their brands and explain the manufacturing process and/ or local/ regional independent businesses e.g arts, crafts, antiques and artisans.

7.28 This mixed development should promote the wellbeing of Rushden and the wider area. It will deliver broader strategic benefits such as new green infrastructure connections between Rushden Lakes and Stanton Cross (Greenway Forward Plan, Phase 4). However, in implementing this scheme, developers will need to work closely with Natural England to ensure that the scheme does not lead to any significant adverse impacts for the adjacent SPA/ Ramsar site.

### **Longer term economic growth opportunities**

7.29 The Strategic Economic Plan sets a long term economic vision for the South East Midlands area, for the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Plan should acknowledge this vision, although jobs growth beyond 2031 is a matter for a review of the Joint Core Strategy, having regard to the growth aspirations arising from the Oxford/ Cambridge Arc. If the North Northamptonshire Growth Deal bid is successful, there could be a step change in the requirement for new employment opportunities linked to the acceleration of housing growth across the district and the rest of North Northamptonshire.

### **Skills and innovation**

7.30 SEMLEP emphasises the importance of technological innovation as a key priority for the South East Midlands area. To enhance skills development, SEMLEP has worked alongside employers in developing a “Growing People Skills Plan” (November 2017)<sup>72</sup>, to meet the skills needs of local employers and unlocking peoples’ potential. Enterprising East Northants also reflects this priority; for: “*Boosting the Skills Base of local businesses and communities*”. The Economic Strategy also highlights a range of economic sectors where skills gaps are lacking e.g. health and social care and mechanical engineering.

7.31 The Council is proactively working with employers and other partners in the training and educational sectors to address skills shortages. A number of initiatives have already been delivered including the Business Charter, which has been prepared to strengthen the Council’s working relationship with local businesses, to enhance the services delivered and secure job creation for the district.

7.32 Enterprising East Northants recognises the importance of major developments in delivering the vision:

- Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension, with focus on knowledge economy employment in the life sciences and creative industries;
- Tresham Garden Village; and

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<sup>72</sup> <https://www.semlep.com/growing-people-skills-plan/>

- The Enterprise Centre (Michael Way, Raunds) and other associated public led developments to provide the quality of commercial space to drive the rebalancing of the economy towards knowledge higher paid jobs and once that is underpinned by innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

- 7.33 The Joint Core Strategy already provides detailed direction for delivering Rushden East and Tresham Garden Village. The Enterprise Centre at Michael Way (north of Warth Park), Raunds was opened in summer 2020, with a focus upon ensuring throughput to nurture and encourage business start and growth.
- 7.34 The new Enterprise Centre provides a new blueprint for how the growth of new SMEs may be supported. Dependent upon the performance of the Enterprise Centre, other possible opportunities for such developments may be considered elsewhere within the Plan area. On this basis it is necessary to set policy directions for any such future projects. Policy EN15 (below) provides such parameters. It will also be necessary to ensure, by way of conditions and/ or legal agreements if necessary, that any future commercial space projects will function to support a pipeline of business growth from start up to scale up and beyond. Future proposals should recognise existing provision and work to complement this. In this way, capacity for small and medium enterprises could be enhanced.
- 7.35 The potential impacts of proposals for new commercial development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA need to be fully considered. Policy 4 of the JCS and the Special Protection Area SPD set out requirements for developments with the potential to have an adverse impact on the SPA. Development with the potential to cause an adverse effect on the SPA must meet the requirements of JCS Policy 4, or any subsequent replacement or update to that policy. A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required to accompany any planning application to demonstrate the absence of any such adverse effect.
- 7.36 The following policy seeks to support the potential for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) which play an important role in the economy, they are generally entrepreneurial in nature, helping to shape innovation. Small-sized enterprises typically number fewer than 50 employees, whilst medium-sized enterprise comprise less than 250 employees. In addition to small and mid-size companies, there are micro-companies, which employ up to 10 employees.

**Policy EN15: Development of Commercial space to support economic growth for Small and Medium-sized enterprises**

**Proposals for the development of new commercial employment space will be supported where these will deliver flexible managed workspace for small medium, and micro-businesses.<sup>73</sup> Such projects should:**

- a) Provide a range of unit sizes to meet demand across the whole business pipeline;**
- b) Provide for adequate parking, in line with the Northamptonshire**

<sup>73</sup> For the purposes of awarding structural funds etc, the European Union defined small businesses as up to 50 staff; micro-businesses up to 10 staff: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en). This definition has been retained for the purposes of this Plan.

#### **Parking Standards<sup>74</sup>**

- c) Deliver pedestrian, cycle and public transport connections to adjacent businesses, residential areas and public open spaces, to maximise integration with the surrounding locality<sup>75</sup>;**
- d) Allow for opportunities for future expansion in the medium/ longer term;**
- e) Not give rise to unacceptable impacts upon the amenity of adjoining business premises; and**
- f) Where necessary, include suitable structural landscaping, in recognition of its wider setting.**

#### **Protection of existing employment areas**

- 7.37 The outstanding new employment developments are anticipated to come forward during the remainder of the Plan period, predominantly at the major sites already committed, or allocated in the Joint Core Strategy. The focus should be to support the economic outcomes of the Plan; namely the implementation of these schemes to deliver a diverse range and quality of jobs and business opportunities through indigenous growth and inward investment so as to encourage enterprise and entrepreneurship along with opportunities for residents to work locally.
- 7.38 Nevertheless, the Plan should also recognise the role of the district's existing/ established employment base. The focus for this Plan ought therefore to be the identification, retention and consolidation of the area's existing/ established employment base. This is also emphasised in the Council's Economic Strategy, which identifies an important constraint to economic growth as the lack of available sites to support the expansion of existing businesses (paragraph 4.2.3).
- 7.39 The Joint Core Strategy already provides overarching policy criteria for safeguarding existing employment areas. This includes a requirement for: "*Safeguarding existing and committed employment sites for employment use unless it can be demonstrated by an applicant that there is no reasonable prospect of the site being used for that purpose*" (Policy 22(c)), as one aspect of delivering a strong sustainable economy. This Plan, as a site specific development plan document, ought to identify those industrial and commercial sites that should be designated as protected employment areas.
- 7.40 The 2019 Employment Land Review (ELR)<sup>76</sup> considered 44 established employment areas of greater than 1ha across the district. A further 8 smaller employment areas (i.e. less than 1ha) were also assessed. These vary greatly, between areas dominated by general industrial uses (e.g. Wellingborough Road, Rushden, and Kimbolton Road, Higham Ferrers); logistics sites (e.g. Islip Furnace; Warth Park, Raunds, and Haldens

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<sup>74</sup> By way of example, the ENC Enterprise Centre at Michael Way, Raunds, has provided 114 spaces

<sup>75</sup> A Transport Assessment to assess these matters shall be submitted as part of as part of any planning application

<sup>76</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11259/190307\\_east\\_northants\\_elr\\_report\\_final](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11259/190307_east_northants_elr_report_final)

Parkway, Thrapston), or those dominated by the leisure or visitor economy, such as Rushden Lakes.

- 7.41 Of the 52 sites considered through the ELR, 19 are already designated as protected employment areas, by virtue of their status in other recently adopted development plan documents. Of these 19 sites, 8 Rushden sites (forming the Sander’s Lodge/ Crown Park, Northampton Road/ Wellingborough Road employment area) are covered by a single designation in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. This designation is also incorporated into the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan. The other 11 such areas are similarly designated through Neighbourhood Plans and this Plan should recognise this position.
- 7.42 Sander’s Lodge (Rushden), Kimbolton Road (Higham Ferrers) and the Nene Valley Business Park (Oundle) employment areas are identified in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan as suitable locations for waste management facilities (Policy 13; site references WL19, WL20 and WL21, respectively). It is important to ensure that the adverse environmental impacts arising from waste management uses are minimised, through robust application of development management policies from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Joint Core Strategy (Policy 8), alongside associated licencing regimes. In addition, the acceptability and suitability of these sites can be looked at again when the Minerals and Waste Local Plan is reviewed.
- 7.43 The remaining 33 established employment areas were subject to more detailed assessment through the ELR. Of these, 31 areas were found to be worthy for retention, at least in the short/ medium term. Many of the assessed employment areas contain one or more “Top 40” businesses in East Northamptonshire, in terms of rateable value. This provides a strong indicator as to the relative value or importance of a site as part of the existing employment land portfolio.
- 7.44 Rushden Lakes also hosts a number of top 40 businesses, including Marks & Spencer and Next. This was not assessed for the ELR, as it is a recently implemented purpose built site. Instead, the ELR focuses upon analysing the quality and marketability of long established employment areas that may (in some cases) be coming to the end of their operational lives. Table 10 (below) shows the employment areas which host one or more of the top 40 businesses.

<b>Table 10: Top 40 businesses</b>		
<b>Site name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Top 40 businesses (measured by rateable value, as at 2018/19)</b>
Horizon Centre, Gretton Road	Deene/ Corby	Lloyds Bank plc
Lakeside House, Bypass	Higham Ferrers	RPC Containers Ltd
Whitworths, Wellingborough Road	Irthlingborough	Whitworths Ltd
Islip Furnace Site, Kettering Road	Islip	Primark Stores Ltd; Dodson & Horrell Ltd
East Road	Oundle	Waitrose Ltd
Nene Valley Business Park	Oundle	Fairline Yachts Ltd
Warth Park	Raunds	Howden Joinery Group Plc; Indesit Co UK Ltd; DSV Solutions Ltd; Exertis (UK) Ltd; Airwair



<b>Table 10: Top 40 businesses</b>		
<b>Site name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Top 40 businesses (measured by rateable value, as at 2018/19)</b>
		International Ltd;
Crown Park/ Express Business Park/ Sanders Lodge etc	Rushden	Waitrose Ltd; Belkin Ltd; Prism-DM Ltd
Spire Road, John Clark Way	Rushden	URBN UK Ltd; DHL Supply Chain Ltd
Rushden Lakes	Rushden	Marks and Spencer Ltd; Primark Stores Ltd; H & M Hennes Mauritz UK Ltd; River Island Clothing Ltd
Halden's Parkway	Thrapston	Primark Stores Ltd; WM Morrison Supermarkets plc; DSV Solutions Ltd; Saica Pack UK Ltd; Paperchase Products Ltd; Simplehuman (UK) Ltd

- 7.45 The Aspinall Verdi study has stated that Whitworths has expressed a desire to retain its current premises at Irthlingborough for the medium/ long term. Previous proposals for comprehensive redevelopment of the site for housing and wholesale relocation of Whitworths' operation have been replaced by proposals for the release of part of the site for residential development; while concentrating the existing business on part of the site.
- 7.46 The designated employment protection areas (i.e. those that ought to be safeguarded) are shown on the Policies Map. Appendix 3 provides summary details for each site, with the Protected Employment Areas Background Paper (BP6)<sup>77</sup> setting out further details about how the Aspinall Verdi study has been applied in setting policy for protecting the established portfolio of employment sites. Policy EN16 (below) should be utilised in conjunction with Joint Core Strategy Policy 22(c) or relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies for the retention of existing employment areas. It is, however, recognised that certain changes of use are allowed under permitted development rights (General Permitted Development Order) and this Policy cannot protect against this.

### **Policy EN16: Protected Employment Areas**

**The existing employment sites, as shown on the Policies Map, are protected for employment use<sup>78</sup>. Proposals for re-development or changes of use of existing buildings should ensure that the overall provision of employment on the site is no less than that of the current or most recent use. A reduction net job numbers/employment land or development for non-employment uses can only be supported where it can be demonstrated that:**

- a) **There is no realistic prospect of the site or buildings being used or re-used, including redevelopment, for employment purposes<sup>79</sup>; and/or**

<sup>77</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12107/background\\_paper\\_6\\_-\\_protected\\_employment\\_areas](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12107/background_paper_6_-_protected_employment_areas)

<sup>78</sup> Appendix 2 sets out the differentiation between main town centre uses (as defined by national policy) and other employment uses

<sup>79</sup> In relation to criterion a) a suitable time period would be to sites being marketed for employment purposes for at least 12 months without success

- b) **Constraints associated with the site or buildings mean these would be unsuitable for re-use, in terms of siting, design, access, layout and relationship to neighbouring buildings and uses.**

### **Meeting development needs of business**

- 7.47 Enterprising East Northants emphasises the need to maintain a sufficient supply of deliverable land, to allow for existing businesses to expand. While the committed major employment sites are more than sufficient to fulfil the Joint Core Strategy target (7,200 jobs), it is important to recognise the ever-changing needs of existing and established businesses/ employers at both a local and strategic level. In the medium to long term these targets are likely to increase, largely due to additional growth aspirations arising from the Oxford Cambridge Arc.
- 7.48 The Economic Strategy also proposes an approach to ensure the release of suitable land, in and around existing employment areas. It advises that the provision of smaller parcels of land in sustainable locations or within larger, strategic sites can help to meet the needs of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and identified growth sectors and support the expansion of existing businesses enabling their retention within the district. To this end, the Economic Strategy states that: “*The council will identify any suitable sites for additional employment during the development of the District (Part 2) Plan*” (paragraph 4.2.3).
- 7.49 To meet the requirements of the Economic Strategy, the series of stakeholder (Member and Town/ Parish Council) workshops (held during 2017-2018) included the collation of local information regarding specific sites where redevelopment or enhancement is deemed desirable, or where provision could be made to facilitate the expansion of established businesses. Where applicable, site specific policies for individual sites are included within the Town Centre Strategies (section 10.0).
- 7.50 It is considered important for this Plan to work towards creating the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt (NPPF paragraph 81). The Joint Core Strategy already specifies that economic prosperity will be delivered through prioritising the enhancement of existing employment sites and the regeneration of previously developed land (Policy 22(b)). This Plan will take this concept further, by explicitly recognising potential/ latent needs for established businesses to expand and grow.
- 7.51 The potential impacts of proposals for the expansion or relocation of existing business premises on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA need to be fully considered. Policy 4 of the JCS and the Special Protection Area SPD set out requirements for developments with the potential to have an adverse impact on the SPA. Development with the potential to cause an adverse effect on the SPA must meet the requirements of JCS Policy 4, or any subsequent replacement or update to that policy. A Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required to accompany any planning application to demonstrate the absence of any such adverse effect.

## Policy EN17: Relocation and/ or expansion of existing businesses

Proposals for the extension of existing business premises beyond their current curtilages or for businesses that need to relocate, will be supported where they meet the following criteria:

- a) Is adjacent to an existing built up area, and there is no significant impact on the countryside ecology, highways, the character of the surroundings or the amenity of neighbouring properties;
- b) For main town centre uses, if applicable, meets the requirements of the sequential and impact tests; and
- c) Provides maximum accessibility for the workforce by sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.

### Town Centres

7.52 The Plan recognises the national policy distinction between main town centre employment uses and non-town centre uses. To fully address the economic and planning policy requirements of the district it is necessary to establish a comprehensive policy framework for main town centre uses.

7.53 Policy 12 of the Joint Core Strategy provides the overarching spatial approach to managing main town centre uses within the North Northamptonshire Context. This sets a two tier hierarchy of town centres:

- **Growth Towns (including Rushden town centre)** – Focus upon adaptation and diversification so that the town centre can continue to function in a complementary way to the Rushden Lakes development;
- **Market Towns (including Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston town centres)** – Focus upon the role of Market Towns in providing mainly convenience shopping and local services.

7.54 The NPPF emphasises a “town centre first” approach for main town centre uses, whereby the national sequential and impact tests should be applied for main town centre uses that are beyond the defined town centres. This requirement is incorporated into the Joint Core Strategy (Policy 12(g)).

### Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas

7.55 The NPPF (paragraph 86(b)) requires Local Plans to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, setting policies to give direction as to what types of uses would be permitted in these locations. The Neighbourhood Plans for Higham Ferrers, Raunds and Rushden already set detailed policies for managing development within the respective town centres and primary shopping frontages (i.e. areas). Table 11 (below) identifies where current up to date Neighbourhood Plan policies are already in place and/ or where previous Local Plan designations are extant.

**Table 11 Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas**

Town Centre	Designated town centre boundary (since 2012 NPPF)	Designated primary shopping area/ frontage (since 2012 NPPF)	Development plan document/ policy reference and other information
Higham Ferrers	✓	✓	Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031, “made” (adopted) April 2016 (HF.TCE1)
<i>Irthlingborough</i> <sup>80</sup>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<i>Primary shopping frontage designated through District Local Plan, adopted November 1996 (Policy S5). Pre-dates NPPF; therefore new town centre boundary has been designated and primary shopping frontage reviewed.</i>
<i>Oundle</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<i>Town centre boundary and defined shopping frontage designated through RNOTP, adopted July 2011 (Policy 18). Pre-date NPPF; therefore town centre boundary and defined shopping frontage have been reviewed, but the previous Local Plan (RNOTP) designations have been retained.</i>
Raunds	<b>X</b>	✓	Linear primary and secondary shopping areas defined through Raunds Neighbourhood Plan, made November 2017 (Policy R9/ Figure 6). Linear designations reflect the character of Raunds Town Centre i.e. the Neighbourhood Plan found this to be the most appropriate approach.
Rushden	✓	✓	Town centre boundary (Policy R1) and defined shopping frontages (Policy R2) defined through Rushden Neighbourhood Plan, made June 2018
<i>Thrapston</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<i>Town centre boundary and defined shopping frontage designated through RNOTP, adopted July 2011 (Policy 18). Pre-date NPPF; therefore town centre boundary and defined shopping frontage have been reviewed.</i>

<sup>80</sup> Town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas for Irthlingborough, Oundle and Thrapston (shown in *italics*) are defined/ designated through this Plan. In the cases of Higham Ferrers, Raunds and Rushden, these are already defined in the respective Neighbourhood Plans.

- 7.56 The Plan will focus upon defining town centre boundaries and primary shopping areas for Irthlingborough, Oundle and Thrapston i.e. those town centres whose designations pre-date the NPPF.
- 7.57 In the case of Oundle, the town centre boundary and primary shopping frontages were reviewed for the draft Neighbourhood Plan during 2017-18. The draft Neighbourhood Plan concluded that: *“The town centre area and primary shopping frontages have changed very little since the boundaries were defined in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan and it is therefore the intention to retain these boundaries as defined on the Policies Map”*. This review therefore found that the previous Local Plan boundaries should be retained, although developments incorporating town centre uses at Oundle Wharf and East Road (Waitrose) since 2013 will have implications for the established town centre. Furthermore, earlier Local Plan town centre policies have been reviewed, in order to accord with Policy 12 of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 7.58 The town centre boundaries and defined shopping frontages for Irthlingborough and Thrapston have also been reviewed. This review was undertaken with reference to the series of Member and Town Council Workshops, held between November 2017 and April 2018, together with the latest town centre monitoring, undertaken in spring 2018. These two town centres were found to have the following characteristics:
- **Irthlingborough** – Linear town centre (High Street) between Market Cross (east) and Oliver Twist pub (west), with the new Coop development at Market Cross (Church Street) becoming the main focus for the town centre.
  - **Thrapston** – Linear town centre (High Street) between Oundle Road junction (east) and Cosy Nook/ Midland Road junction (west), but no defined central focal point.
- 7.59 This Plan sets out additional direction, over and above Policy 12 of the Joint Core Strategy, with reference to managing development within the existing town centres. While the Neighbourhood Plans for Higham Ferrers, Raunds and Rushden each set their own town centre development management policies, the Plan must address the requirements of other town centres which do not have Neighbourhood Plans in place.
- 7.60 The town centre boundaries are shown on the policies map. The town centre boundaries effectively function as the primary shopping areas reflecting the relatively small size of the town centres which do not have areas of predominantly leisure, business and town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping frontages. For clarification, for the purpose of criterion a of Policy 12 of the JCS and for the consideration of edge of centre proposals in accordance with the NPPF, where town centres do not have a defined Primary Shopping Area, ‘edge of centre’ will for retail purposes be considered as within 300m from the town centre boundary.
- 7.61 Local regeneration strategies will be prepared for town centres to assist town centre regeneration. These strategies could range from comprehensive town centre masterplans to site specific development briefs and could also include Town Centre design codes.

## **Policy EN18: Town centres and primary shopping frontages**

**Development within the town centre boundaries of Rushden. Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds<sup>81</sup> and Thrapston, as shown on the Policies Map will be supported where this will achieve vibrant and viable town centres. Development should deliver increased vitality, through all or where appropriate some of the following:**

- a) At street level, maintaining a balance and mix of main town centre uses;**
- b) Opportunities for a mixture of businesses, residential and live-work units, including at first floor level and above;**
- c) Avoiding an over concentration of a particular town centre use with the exception of retailing;**
- d) Retaining a predominantly retail offer for the defined primary frontages, as shown on the policies map;**
- e) Enhancing the streetscape, to maximise opportunities for increased footfall;**
- f) Improving the connectivity between High Streets, town centre car parking and the surrounding urban hinterland with a particular focus on cycling and walking; and**
- g) Preparing local regeneration strategies to encourage the re-use of vacant and redundant premises for a balanced mix of uses, including where appropriate residential uses, to revitalise the character of the town centres.**

### **Managing the impacts of main town centre uses beyond the town centres**

7.62 The NPPF requires the preparation of an impact assessment for retail, office and leisure uses beyond the town centres (paragraph 90), except where sites are allocated through a development plan (i.e. this Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan). The NPPF sets a default maximum 2,500m<sup>2</sup> threshold floorspace for these main town centre uses before an “impact test” is required but, where appropriate, allows for Local Plans to set a lower local threshold.

7.63 The Joint Core Strategy applies the national 2,500m<sup>2</sup> threshold (Policy 12(g)). This therefore provides an opportunity for this Plan to define a lower impact test threshold, provided that there is an evidence base to justify this. It is necessary to assess the implications of the default threshold, in order to understand what this represents in practice. In the case of retailing, consideration has been given to recent A1 retail developments that have been constructed throughout the district. Table 12 (below) identifies these recent schemes.

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<sup>81</sup> In Raunds this applies to development within the Primary Shopping Area defined through the Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Table 12: Recent convenience retail developments</b>		
<b>Recent proposal or development scheme</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Gross floorspace (m<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Aldi, Attley Way	Irthlingborough	1,254
Former Express Works site, Church Street	Irthlingborough	930 (main store)
Waitrose, 66 East Road	Oundle	2,203
Asda, Warth Park	Raunds	931
Lidl, Newton Road	Rushden	2,250
Sainsbury's, 100 High Street South	Rushden	372

- 7.64 An assessment of town centre units undertaken by Raunds Town Council in 2015 indicated that a majority of retail units could be lost through the new permitted development rights (SI 596<sup>82</sup>) i.e. being less than 150m<sup>2</sup> ground floor (retail) floorspace. Setting a lower threshold should therefore be considered in the case of the six town centres.
- 7.65 Any impact test threshold should be set at an appropriate level. On the one hand, it is essential to ensure that future edge of centre, out of centre and out of town developments for main town centre uses could be tested for their impact upon the town centres. On the other hand, any such standards must be workable, especially in view of the need for Market Towns “to provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland”, and (in the case of Rushden) provide “the focus for major co-ordinated regeneration and growth in employment, housing, retail and higher order facilities” (Joint Core Strategy, Table 1).
- 7.66 The Raunds based assessment revealed particular concerns about the loss of town centre retailing through the possible unchecked application of permitted development rights. In the case of convenience retailing (priority for the Market Towns) reference is also made to the recently opened Sainsbury's convenience store (out of centre) at 100 High Street, Rushden. This 372m<sup>2</sup> (gross) floorspace development (250m<sup>2</sup> net tradeable area) is closely related to the current “Sunday trading law” floorspace threshold; whereby Sunday opening times are restricted to 7 hours (stores greater than 280m<sup>2</sup> trading area<sup>83</sup>).
- 7.67 Evidence demonstrates the Market Towns (particularly Raunds, as is evidenced in objections from the Town Council in 2015 in connection with a number of applications to change small retail units in the town centre into residential use) are vulnerable to the loss of smaller retail units from primary shopping areas. This demonstrates that it is appropriate to set a 100m<sup>2</sup> threshold floorspace, for changes of use not covered by the 2015 General Permitted Development Order, recognising this sensitivity to the cumulative loss of smaller units (100-150m<sup>2</sup> floorspace). By contrast, it may be appropriate to apply a different threshold in the case of Rushden, acknowledging its Growth Towns status. Based upon the recent Sainsbury's case, the 280m<sup>2</sup> Sunday

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2015/596/contents>

<sup>83</sup> The “Sunday trading law” threshold is recognised in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 757); which differentiates between convenience retailing (<280m<sup>2</sup> floorspace – Use Class F.2) and comparison/ larger convenience retailing (>1 unit and/ or 280m<sup>2</sup> floorspace – Use Class E)

trading threshold is considered appropriate for Rushden. Further analysis is provided in the Retail impact assessments threshold Background Paper (BP7)<sup>84</sup>.

### **Policy EN19: Impact test thresholds for retail development**

**Proposals for retail development outside the town centre boundaries of Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds<sup>85</sup> and Thrapston, as shown on the policies map, should be supported by an appropriate impact assessment, where the following floorspace thresholds are exceeded:**

- a) Rushden Town Centre 280m<sup>2</sup>; and**
- b) Market Towns Centres 100m<sup>2</sup>.**

**Impact assessments and Sequential tests should be prepared in accordance with the relevant national guidance<sup>86</sup>. Failure to demonstrate there will be no significant adverse impact would result in a refusal of planning permission.**

### **Local Centres**

- 7.68 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 12(g)) makes provision for the identification of further local centres, as appropriate. The NPPF requires that all development proposals for main town centre uses (e.g. retailing, restaurants, indoor leisure and entertainment, hotels, offices, cultural and tourism development) need to be subject to the sequential test, where these are not in an existing centre and not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. The Council may need to develop a built sports facilities strategy in line with paragraph 93 of the NPPF, to set out a local approach to the development of leisure based main town centre uses, both in the town centres and local centres.
- 7.69 In the case of the six towns within East Northamptonshire, there may be circumstances where development proposals for uses such as neighbourhood convenience retailing, offices, pubs or other leisure facilities in out of centre locations would not meet the requirements of the national sequential test (NPPF paragraph 87 ). Whilst the NPPF exempts small scale retailing, community or office developments in rural areas from national requirements to undertake sequential and/ or impact tests, no similar national policy exemption exists for equivalent uses in out of centre locations within urban areas, although the updated Use Classes Order (September 2020) may go some way to overcome this issue.

### **What is a “local centre”?**

- 7.70 Groups or hubs of local services and facilities were identified through the series of Member and Town/ Parish Council workshops (2017/18). These have been assessed on the basis of the existing range of these uses focusing upon defined main town centre

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<sup>84</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12108/background\\_paper\\_7\\_-\\_retail\\_impact\\_assessment\\_thresholds](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12108/background_paper_7_-_retail_impact_assessment_thresholds)

<sup>85</sup> In Raunds this applies to development outside the Primary Shopping Area defined through the Neighbourhood Plan

<sup>86</sup> The Planning Practice Guidance provides full details about the obligations for undertaking a main town centre uses impact assessment: “Ensuring the vitality of town centres”: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres>



uses, to establish whether any of these hubs could be considered to function as a local centre. A detailed site by site assessment is set out in the Local Centres Background Paper (BP8)<sup>87</sup>.

7.71 For the purposes of the Plan, the term “local centre” refers to those smaller scale hubs of predominantly main town centre uses, but which do not fulfil the NPPF criteria to be designated town centres in their own right. Typically, a local centre would contain most (if not all) of the following types of use:

- Convenience store;
- Post office;
- Financial services e.g. small bank or estate agency;
- Pub, entertainment or eating establishment;
- Community centre;
- Local leisure facility.

7.72 To be defined as a local centre, the range of facilities must typically function to serve the immediate neighbourhood i.e. no more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace (the standard threshold for major planning applications). Other out of centre or out of town hubs of main town centre uses (e.g. retail parks) which serve a wider area cannot be regarded as local centres, even where these attract the predominant quantum of footfall.

#### **Local centres within existing urban areas**

7.73 Local Centres are identified at Raunds and Rushden. The promotion or retention of local facilities is a fundamental aspect of providing for suitable mixed use developments and enhancing opportunities to promote health and social wellbeing at a neighbourhood level, in accordance with the Government’s own (NPPF) definition of sustainable development.

7.74 In the case of Rushden, the more peripheral residential parts of the urban area are up to 1.5km “as the crow flies” (2-2.5km travelling distance) distant from the town centre. This means that encouraging and supporting the development of neighbourhood hubs for appropriate “main town centre” uses could represent a vital assertion of sustainable development. The development of a local centre is a specific requirement for Rushden East (Joint Core Strategy, Policy 33).

7.75 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 12) allows for the designation of local centres. Successful implementation of the overall strategy relies upon delivery of the sustainable urban extensions (including Rushden East). This mechanism is therefore proposed as a means to allow for a local standard to be applied in the case of smaller scale development schemes for main town centre uses which are proposed to serve a local neighbourhood.

7.76 The assessment process has found that the following locations fulfil the criteria for designation as local centres within the urban areas (site-specific maps for designated Local Centres are included at Appendix 4):

- **London Road/ Michael Way, Raunds** – Local centre;
- **High Street South, Rushden** – Linear local centre;

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<sup>87</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12109/background\\_paper\\_8\\_-\\_defining\\_local\\_centres](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12109/background_paper_8_-_defining_local_centres)

- **Wellingborough Road, Rushden** – Linear local centre;
- **Grangeway shopping precinct, Rushden** – Local centre;
- **2-12 Blackfriars, Rushden** – Local centre; and
- **Rushden East** – Local centre(s), to be developed as part of SUE;

### **Local centres at large villages**

- 7.77 For main “town centre” uses within rural areas the NPPF applies specific exemptions i.e. small scale retailing, community or office developments in rural areas (paragraph 89). Nevertheless, this Plan (Table 5/ Policy EN1) proposes a differentiation between the eight large villages and other freestanding (small) villages.
- 7.78 Of the district’s eight large villages, Brigstock, Ringstead, Stanwick and Woodford all have nucleated hubs of local services and facilities (defined main town centre uses); namely convenience retailing/ post office, fast food takeaways, village hall/ social club and/ or pubs. These differ from the other large villages (Easton on the Hill, King’s Cliffe, Nassington and Warmington) that have equivalent provision of local services and facilities, but which are dispersed around the villages. Similarly, the small villages only tend to accommodate individual isolated local facilities; none are considered to host service hubs.
- 7.79 In determining development proposals around villages with clustered service locations, it may be appropriate to include reference to the proximity of development to these hubs as one such measure (test) for sustainability. The designation of local centres at Brigstock, Ringstead, Stanwick and Woodford (Appendix 4) should assist this aspect of decision making:
- **Hall Hill/ High Street, Brigstock** – Linear local centre;
  - **High Street, Ringstead** – Linear local centre;
  - **Church Street/ High Street, Stanwick** – Linear local centre; and
  - **High Street/ The Green, Woodford** – Linear local centre.
- 7.80 None of the relevant Neighbourhood Plans has opted to designate local centres. Therefore, Policy EN20 (below) provides a detailed Local Plan policy framework for the defined local centres.
- 7.81 The NPPF requires that all development schemes for defined main town centre uses, except those within existing town centres or allocated in an up to date development plan document, should be subject to the national sequential test requirements. In practice, the application of Policy EN20 would mean that main town centre uses within the defined thresholds would be exempt from the national sequential test requirements.
- 7.82 Class E of the Use Class Order provides significant flexibility in changes of use between main town centre uses. Policy EN20 seeks to support specific types of main town centre uses to reflect the role of these centres in serving the immediate local area. In some circumstances it may be necessary to remove permitted development rights to ensure that the local centres maintain their role in serving the needs of the immediate neighbourhood.

## **Policy EN20: Local centres**

**Proposals of a scale and type limited to serving the immediate local area, which are adjoining or closely related to the designated local centres, as set out below and shown on the policies map, will be supported for, the following types of 'main town centre' uses:**

- **Convenience retailing;**
- **Financial services;**
- **Community facilities;**
- **Eating and drinking establishments; and**
- **Local leisure facilities.**

**Designated Local Centres:**

- **London Road/ Michael Way, Raunds**
- **High Street South, Rushden**
- **Wellingborough Road, Rushden**
- **Grangeway Shopping Precinct, Rushden**
- **2-12 Blackfriars, Rushden**
- **Rushden East SUE**
- **Hall Hill/ High Street, Brigstock**
- **High Street, Ringstead**
- **Church Street/ High Street, Stanwick**
- **High Street/ The Green, Woodford**

**Such proposals will be supported, provided that they:**

- a) Deliver an overall enhancement to the neighbourhood offer for 'day to day' local services;**
- b) Improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, between the designated local centre and the adjacent neighbourhood, where appropriate;**
- c) Do not adversely affect local amenity, through providing an unacceptable impact through increasing antisocial behaviour, noise, smell or other impacts, and fulfil other relevant development management criteria within the Local Plan;**

**Permitted development rights may be removed where exceptional circumstances are considered to exist.**

**In large villages which do not have designated local centres sites that are proposed for 'main town centre' uses will be considered on their merits.**

## 8.0 Housing Delivery

- 8.1 The Government, through the NPPF, emphasises the importance of providing a supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations as a means to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities. Broadly, the plan process for managing housing delivery falls into two parts:
- Setting out housing requirements – ensuring that the Local Plan meets the identified housing need (both market and affordable housing); and
  - Allocation of housing land – Identifying a supply of specific achievable (i.e. deliverable or developable) housing sites for the entire Plan period (2011-2031).
- 8.2 The Joint Core Strategy sets the overall housing requirements for the district identifying the major strategic development sites, such as the Rushden East sustainable urban extension. This Plan will allocate housing sites to ensure the Council delivers, as a minimum, the overall strategic housing requirement for the district up to 2031.
- 8.3 This Plan will consider how the Local Plan housing requirements, as set out in Tables 4 and 5 of the Joint Core Strategy will be delivered throughout the district, as well as providing detailed policies relating to local housing need including housing mix and tenure, specialist housing needs, custom and self build. The Plan also provides indicative housing targets to assist parish and community groups in planning for future proposals through Neighbourhood Plans.
- 8.4 Paragraph 69 of the NPPF requires that land to accommodate at least 10% of the housing requirement is provided on sites no larger than 1 hectare. The Council meets this requirement, (evidence is contained within Background Paper 10 – Rural Housing Update July 2021).

### **Housing Requirements**

- 8.5 The Joint Core Strategy specifies a housing requirement of 8,400 dwellings for the Plan period (2011-2031). Table 5 sets out the required housing numbers that are expected to be delivered for each of the six towns, totalling 7,580 dwellings. It also sets out a generic district-wide rural target (820 dwellings).
- 8.6 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that, where appropriate, plans should set out the anticipated rate of development of specific sites. The Housing Trajectory is set out in Appendix 6. The Housing Trajectory demonstrates that the supply of sites available in the plan period will deliver homes in excess of the requirements identified in the Joint Core Strategy.

### **Urban Areas**

- 8.7 A number of significant development sites have already come forward (i.e. under construction or having extant planning permission) at each of the six towns (Rushden, Raunds, Irthlingborough, Thrapston, Higham Ferrers and Oundle) during the first 9 years of the Plan period (2011-2020). Alongside these, a large

number of smaller development sites have also come forward; these are included in the latest ( 2020) AMR Housing Site Schedule<sup>88</sup>.

- 8.8 At Raunds, development sites to the north, north-east and south of the town have progressed on the basis of the previous Local Plan (2008 Core Spatial Strategy) and are now under construction or mostly complete. Similarly, the Thrapston South urban extension (allocated in the previous Local Plan) is mostly complete (earlier development phases) or under construction (later development phases). Within the district three further major development sites are committed during the Plan period. Details about these sites are set out in Table 13, below.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Site name</b>	<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>No of units, 20-20-2031</b>	<b>Delivery beyond 2031</b>	<b>Development Plan Document</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Note</b>
Rushden	Rushden East	2700	1250	1450	Local Plan (JCS Policy 33)	New strategic site/ SUE	
Higham Ferrers	Land East of Ferrers School	300	300	0	Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan	Self contained strategic site allocation	
Irthlingborough	West of Huxlow School/ Irthlingborough West	700	200	500	N/a - Resolution to grant	Strategic site/ SUE	JCS Annex A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Major urban extensions</b>	<b>3700</b>	<b>1750</b>	<b>1950</b>			

- 8.9 As at 1 April 2020, the outstanding housing requirement for the six urban areas has been calculated, by way of deducting the following elements for each town:

- Completions, 1 April 2011 – 31 March 2020;
- Commitments (i.e. extant planning permissions or previously allocated sites), as at 1 April 2020 (2020 AMR, Housing Site Schedule);
- Major development sites (Table 15, above) plus other emerging proposed development sites identified in the 2020 AMR Housing Site Schedule).

- 8.10 This approach provides a residual requirement for each of the six urban areas of the district. The residual balance from the 8,400 total requirement represents a net quantum of development for which the Plan will need to make provision (Table 14, below).

<sup>88</sup> Planning Policy Committee, 8 June 2020, Agenda Item 10, Appendix 3: [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1062/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1062/planning_policy_committee)

<b>Table 14: Urban areas residual housing requirement, as at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Housing requirement (2011-31)</b>	<b>Completions 2011-19</b>	<b>Completions 2018-20</b>	<b>% housing requirement delivered as at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>Commitments (starts and planning permissions) as at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Commitments (resolutions to grant, Development Plan allocations, Rushden East) as at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>Residual requirement as at 1 April 2020 (committed sites deducted)</b>
<b>Growth Town</b>							
Rushden	3,285	-1036	-19	32.1%	-175	-1515	-540
<b>Market Towns</b>							
Higham Ferrers	560	-370	-4	66.8%	3	300	-117
Irthlingborough	1,350	320	27	25.7%	149	280	-547
Raunds	1,060	662	47	66.9%	-347	0	-4
Thrapston	680	202	223	62.5%	260	0	-5
Oundle	645	392	3	61.2%	11	70	169
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,580</b>	2,982	323	43.6%	945	2,165	1,165

8.11 Table 14 shows that as at 1 April 2-20 JCS housing requirements for Higham Ferrers, and Thrapston are being met, through housing completions (799 dwellings) and housing commitments ( 563 dwellings). A minimal residual requirement has been identified for Raunds (4 dwellings), but other emerging and brownfield site proposals identified in the 2020 Annual Position Statement (total 88 dwellings) are more than sufficient to address the housing requirements for the town.

8.12 Outstanding residual housing requirements have been identified at Rushden (540 dwellings), Irthlingborough (574 dwellings) and Oundle (169 dwellings). Further detail about how these residual requirements will be addressed is set out at paragraphs 8.10-8.12, below. It is necessary, therefore, for this Plan to address the outstanding residual requirements for Rushden, Irthlingborough and Oundle. Further details about these outstanding requirements are set out in the (updated 2020) urban housing Background Paper (BP9)<sup>89</sup>.

### **Rushden**

8.13 For Rushden, commitments consist of extant planning permissions ( plus outstanding\_Neighbourhood Plan site allocations ( total 315 dwellings); with 1050 dwellings at Rushden East anticipated to be delivered by 2031. This equates to an outstanding requirement for 540 dwellings. A further 134 dwellings housing land supply is identified at specific unallocated brownfield sites within the urban area, equating to a residual requirement for 406 dwellings.

<sup>89</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12110/background\\_paper\\_9\\_-\\_housing\\_requirements\\_-\\_urban](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12110/background_paper_9_-_housing_requirements_-_urban)

## Irthlingborough

- 8.14 For Irthlingborough, commitments for 429 dwellings are identified within the 2020 housing land supply. A further 199 dwellings is included within the housing land supply, consisting of specific brownfield sites and other emerging sites which did not, as at 1 April 2020, have planning permission. These emerging sites reduce the residual requirement to 375 dwellings. Table 14 (above) shows the latest position for the Irthlingborough West urban extension; namely that the trajectory for this site has been set back until later during the Plan period, such that just 200 (out of 700) dwellings are now anticipated to come forward within the Plan period. While Irthlingborough West remains a commitment, it is expected that this site could only begin to deliver late in the Plan period.

## Oundle

- 8.15 A residual requirement for a further 169 dwellings at Oundle is identified, where additional strategic land allocations are required to meet this target. This residual figure for 169 dwellings at Oundle includes the previous Local Plan allocations at Ashton Road/ Herne Road Phase 2 (50 dwellings) and Dairy Farm (20 dwellings). If these sites are excluded, the Oundle residual requirement would rise to 239 dwellings<sup>90</sup>, as a minimum.

## Rural Areas

- 8.16 Table 5 of the Joint Core Strategy sets a district-wide rural housing requirement for 820 dwellings. This has implications for all rural parishes across the district. Table 15 (below) sets out a current position statement for the residual rural housing requirement, as at 1 April 2020.

<b>Table 15: Rural areas residual housing requirement, as at 1 April 2020</b>	<b>District rural housing requirement 2011-31</b>
<b>JCS rural housing requirement 2011-31</b>	<b>820</b>
Rural housing completions 2011-19	-513
Rural housing completions 2019-20	-65
Extant planning permissions as at 1 April 2020_(as shown in 2020 AMR housing site schedule)	-124
Local Plan/ Neighbourhood Plan site allocations (as at 1 April 2020)	-136
Emerging Neighbourhood Plan site allocations, other emerging rural sites (>4 dwellings), as at 1 April 2020	-58
<b>RESIDUAL DISTRICT REQUIREMENT, AS AT 1 APRIL 2020</b>	<b>-76</b>

- 8.17 Table 15 demonstrates that the current Local Plan rural housing requirement for the district is already being met; indeed, exceeded by 76 dwellings. As specified in the Joint Core Strategy, further rural housing sites will continue to come forward through windfalls, infilling, Neighbourhood Plan allocations and rural exceptions

<sup>90</sup> As at 1 April 2017 (the latest available base date data when the first draft Plan was being prepared during 2018) the residual requirement was for 294 dwellings, which formed the basis for the 300 dwellings requirement. This figure reduced to 239 dwellings for the latest (2020) monitoring data.

schemes (Policy 11(2)). Further details about these outstanding requirements are set out in the (updated 2020) rural housing Background Paper (BP10)<sup>91</sup>.

### Setting Village Housing Requirements

- 8.18 The rural housing requirement is already delivered (578 dwellings), committed (260 dwellings); or allocations in Neighbourhood Plans “made” since 1 April 2020 and other emerging rural sites ( 58 dwellings). Nevertheless, Neighbourhood Planning groups have sought indicative Ward or Parish level housing “targets”, to provide a basis for allocating future housing sites in a Neighbourhood Plan. This issue is addressed in the updated NPPF (2021 update), which states that strategic policies should also set out a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas (paragraph 66) or, at the very least, provide an indicative figure if requested by the neighbourhood planning body (paragraph 67).
- 8.19 On the basis of this recent national policy change, it is necessary for the Plan to provide further local direction, in addition to the requirements stated in Table 5 of the Joint Core Strategy. This Plan will therefore set additional local direction in identifying an appropriate quantum of development for each village to meet a locally arising need, in accordance with policies 11(2)(a) and 29 of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 8.20 Using the total district rural population (20,260)<sup>92</sup>, a methodology of rural population apportionment may be applied to estimate indicative growth figures for individual parishes/ villages for the Plan period (Table 16, below). By this process (applying the 2011 Census i.e. population at the start of the Plan period), supported by local housing needs assessments, indicative quanta of development over the plan period are identified. It is emphasised that these are derived from the overall rural housing requirement (820 dwellings) and are not minima or set targets; rather, this is indicative guidance to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Table 16 sets out indicative figures for each rural Parish over the Plan period.

<b>Population 2011 Census<sup>93</sup></b>	<b>Step increase in no of dwellings over 20 years</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Parishes/ Villages</b>
<100	5	1-5	Blatherwycke, Deene, Lilford cum Wigsthorpe, Luddington, Newton Bromswold, Pilton, Stoke Doyle, Thurning, Wakerley
100-249	10	6-10	Fotheringhay, Deenethorpe, Cotterstock, Apethorpe, Bulwick, Tansor, Twywell, Southwick, Lutton, Sudborough, Ashton, Laxton, Haringworth, Hargrave, Wadenhoe

<sup>91</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12111/background\\_paper\\_10\\_-\\_housing\\_requirements\\_-\\_rural](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12111/background_paper_10_-_housing_requirements_-_rural)

<sup>92</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>93</sup> In some cases (e.g. Thorpe Achurch and Clopton), 2011 Census data was gathered at a multi-parish or ward level. This is reflected in Table 18, where Census data (corresponding to the start of the Plan period) has been applied to apportionment of the Joint Core Strategy rural housing requirement (820 dwellings).



<b>Population 2011 Census<sup>93</sup></b>	<b>Step increase in no of dwellings over 20 years</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Parishes/ Villages</b>
250-499	20	11-20	Hemington, Glapthorn, Duddington-with-Fineshade, Denford, Yarwell, Lowick & Slipton, Aldwincle, Great Addington, Little Addington, Benefield, Barnwell, Thorpe Achurch (with Clopton), Woodnewton, Polebrook
500-749	30	21-30	Collyweston, Chelveston cum Caldecott, Titchmarsh
750-999	40	31-40	Nassington, Islip, Warmington
1000-1249	50	41-50	Easton on the Hill, King's Cliffe
1250-1499	60	51-60	Brigstock, Ringstead, Woodford
1500-1749	70	61-70	n/a
1750-1999	80	71-80	Stanwick

8.21 In many cases (in particular, King's Cliffe), these step increase/ range figures have been exceeded. In other cases (e.g. Chelveston cum Caldecott and Glapthorn), Neighbourhood Plans seek to deliver more housing than is set out in the indicative rural figures.

8.22 Notwithstanding, it is emphasised that the rural housing requirement (820 dwellings) has already been met; either by way of completions, existing commitments or Neighbourhood Plan site allocations. The role of these indicative figures is to inform the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans by setting out what would constitute an appropriate level of development for individual villages and/ or wards.

## **Strategic Housing Requirements**

### **Oundle**

8.23 In assessing housing land requirements, each urban area has a specifically identified housing requirement. This requirement will need to be considered for each area where further housing sites would need to be allocated in the Plan. Policy 29 of the Joint Core Strategy (Distribution of New Homes) requires a minimum of 645 houses to be provided at Oundle over the Plan period up to 2031. To ensure Oundle meets this requirement, an outstanding requirement of approximately 300 new houses are to be provided through this Local Plan (Table 14 above refers).

8.24 Development contributions will be sought towards infrastructure requirements; highways, utilities (i.e. sewerage, water, power etc), healthcare, education, open space, affordable housing and any other requirements where appropriate. These obligations will be delivered in accordance with the relevant policy requirements throughout this and other adopted development plan documents.

8.25 Further, to ensure that the housing allocations proposed are brought forward to reduce the impact of development within the local area, the following development principles set out in the Oundle housing policies -will be expected to be addressed in addition to any specific requirements set out in each site allocation policy.

8.26 Detailed assessments were undertaken to inform the choice of sites. The Council published its own assessment of sites (November 2018<sup>94</sup>), together with a sustainability appraisal of strategic options for Oundle (AECOM, December 2018<sup>95</sup>) to inform the site selection process. This was followed by a more detailed reassessment of shortlisted sites (DLP Planning Ltd, July 2019<sup>96</sup>). Together these assessments provide a robust and systematic justification for the chosen site specific allocations.

8.27 Site specific requirements are set out at Policies EN21 to EN23, below.

#### **Land rear of Cemetery, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle**

8.28 The land to the rear of the Cemetery, to the north of Stoke Doyle Road and west of Warren Bridge (south west of the existing urban area) was initially recognised as a potential longer term housing land allocation in the previous Local Plan (2011 Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan). Its credentials as a deliverable housing land allocation were confirmed by the site assessments undertaken during 2018-19.

8.29 This site was chosen as it represents a logical extension to the existing urban area. Lyveden Brook forms the northern boundary; to the north of which is established residential development. Similarly, the site is bounded by residential development to the east (Warren Bridge) and the Cemetery to the south. However, there are a range of development constraints that would need to be overcome; in particular fluvial flood zones 2 and 3 (Lyveden Brooks) and highways limitations due to the narrow Warren Bridge (Stoke Doyle Road).

8.30 The site is located approximately 6.5km from the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, a specific wintering bird survey should therefore be undertaken for any planning application. The applicant will be required to provide evidence that the development will not result in a Likely Significant Effect. To achieve this, surveys will be required to determine habitats and current use of the site to determine if it does support a significant population of qualifying species. Where habitats are suitable, non-breeding bird surveys will be required to determine if the site and neighbouring land constitute a significant area of supporting habitat. Surveys should be required to be undertaken during autumn, winter and spring and at more than 1 year of surveys may be needed (to be agreed in consultation with the local planning authority and Natural England). If habitat within the site is identified to support significant populations of designated bird features avoidance measures and mitigation will be required, such as the creation of replacement habitat nearby, and the planning application will likely need to be supported by a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that the development does not result in adverse effects on integrity.

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<sup>94</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11074/oundle\\_site\\_assessments](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11074/oundle_site_assessments)

<sup>95</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11075/oundle\\_strategic\\_options\\_assessment](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11075/oundle_strategic_options_assessment)

<sup>96</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11408/sustainability\\_assessment\\_of\\_potential\\_development\\_sites\\_in\\_oundle\\_july\\_2019](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11408/sustainability_assessment_of_potential_development_sites_in_oundle_july_2019)

**Figure 11: Land rear of Cemetery, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle**



**Policy EN21: Land rear of Cemetery, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle**

**Site Specifics**

Land at Stoke Doyle Road, as shown on the Policies Map and indicated above, is allocated for 3.5 ha. It is expected that the proposed allocation will deliver around 70 houses. Development should be delivered in accordance with the criteria below:

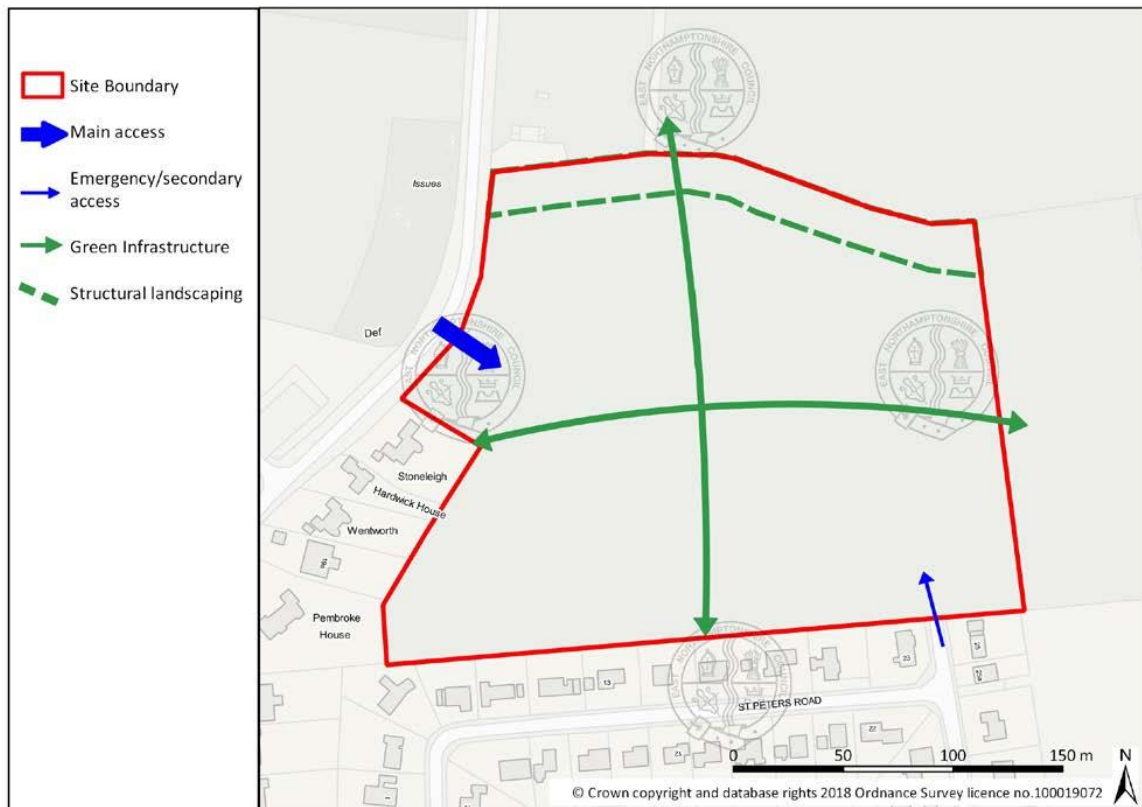
- a) This site is owned by two separate landowners but should be subject to a scheme that allows comprehensive development of the site.
- b) It will be expected to provide a housing mix which includes provision for older persons, on site affordable housing provision and 5% of plots should be made available as serviced building plots for self and/ or custom housebuilding.
- c) Upgrades to Stoke Doyle Road, including appropriate mitigation measures to address the impact of development upon the single track Warren Bridge, a significant heritage asset.
- d) Connections will be provided to the adjacent Public Rights of Way network, providing access to Benefield, Stoke Doyle and the town centre.
- e) Suitable structural landscaping will be provided to mitigate any potential adverse impacts of the development.

**The site will be required to set aside land to allow for an extension to Oundle Cemetery, as indicated in Figure 11 (above), in order to meet future requirements.**

### **Cotterstock Road/ St Peter's Road, Oundle**

- 8.31 Land to the east of Cotterstock Road (opposite the Primary School) and north of St Peter's Road (north of the existing urban area) was initially recognised as a potential longer term housing land allocation in the previous Local Plan (2011 Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan). Its credentials as a deliverable housing land allocation were confirmed by the site assessments undertaken during 2018-19.
- 8.32 The site is bounded by built development to the west (Cotterstock Road), including residential development and the Church of England Primary School. To the south is St Peter's Road and the site has two potential accesses; off Cotterstock Road (to the west) and St Peter's Road (to the south). Outline planning permission to develop the site for up to 130 dwellings was granted in June 2020 (reference 19/01327/OUT).
- 8.33 Notwithstanding, previous consultations for the Local Plan (2018-19) and the subsequent planning application have revealed a number of issues that will need to be suitably addressed when implementing the consented scheme; e.g. drainage (both surface water and groundwater), access arrangements and potential odour issues from the sewage works to the north of the site. Detailed development proposals will need to address these matters and other site-specific constraints.
- 8.34 Notably, there is an existing foul sewer in Anglian Water's ownership within the boundary of the site and the site layout should be designed to take these into account. This existing infrastructure is protected by easements and should not be built over or located in private gardens where access for maintenance and repair could be restricted. The existing sewer should be located in highways or public open space. If this is not possible a formal application to divert existing asset may be required.

**Figure 12: Cotterstock Road/ St Peter's Road, Oundle**



## Policy EN22: Cotterstock Road/ St Peter's Road, Oundle

### Site Specifics

Land at Cotterstock Road<sup>97</sup>, as shown on the Policies Map and indicated above, is allocated for 5.1 ha. It is expected that the proposed allocation will deliver around 130 houses. Development should be delivered in accordance with the criteria below.

- a) This site, which is within single ownership, will be expected to provide a housing mix which includes provision for older persons, on site affordable housing provision and 5% of plots should be made available as serviced building plots for self and/ or custom housebuilding, in line with other policy requirements.
- b) Enhanced connectivity; e.g. to the adjacent Public Rights of Way network, providing access to the Nene Valley and nearby villages (e.g. Cotterstock, Glapthorn and Tansor).
- c) Drainage will be managed by the provision of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), including improvements to west/ east drainage capacity between Cotterstock Road and the River Nene to the east.
- d) Dwellings and residential gardens should be located at a suitable distance from Oundle Water Recycling Centre to ensure that there is no

<sup>97</sup> Approximately 50% of the gross site area (the northern part) is situated within Glapthorn Parish, although the whole site is regarded as meeting the strategic housing requirements for Oundle, comprising part of the Oundle urban area for the purposes of Local Plan monitoring

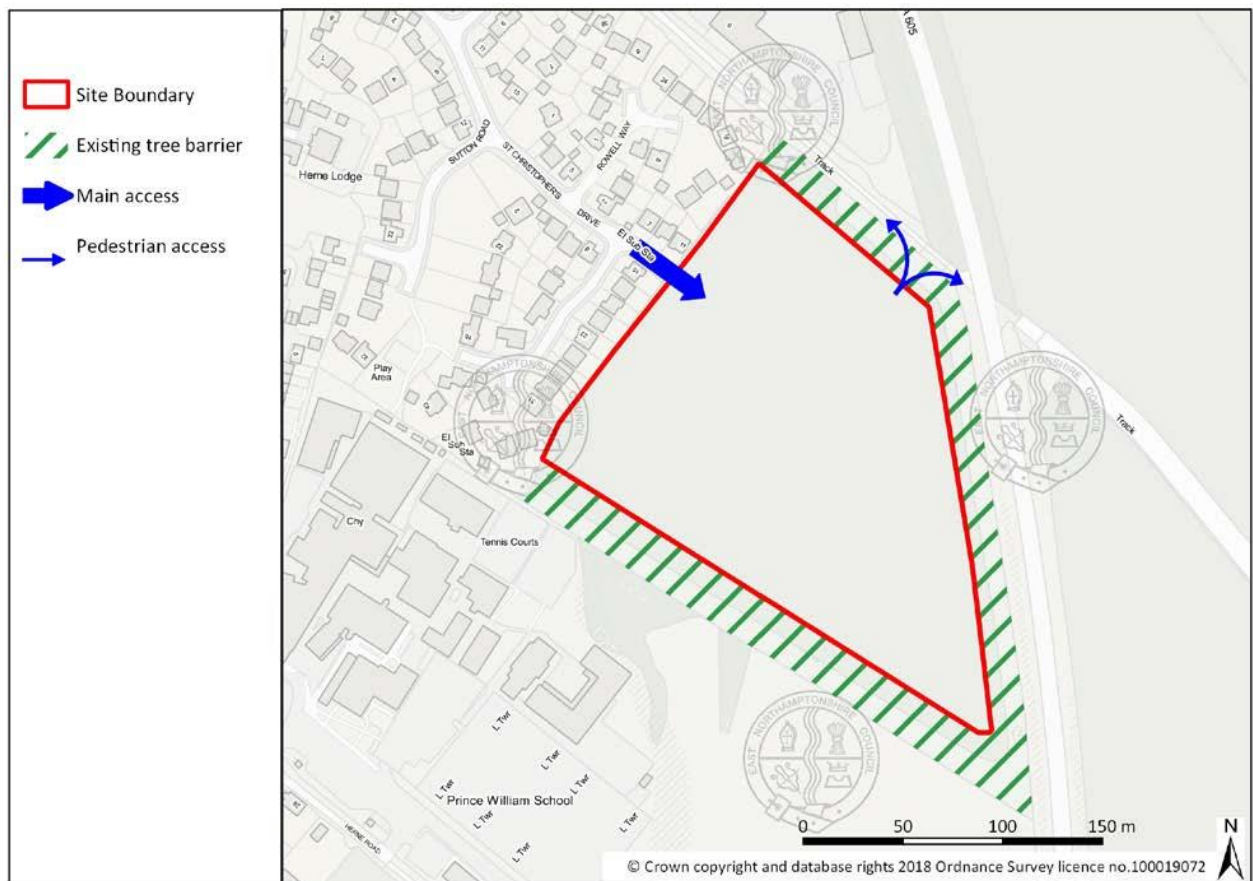
**unacceptable impact on residents and that any mitigation can be achieved without detriment to the continuous operation of Oundle Water Recycling Centre. Structural landscaping will also be provided for the site boundary, to mitigate the impacts of smell or other pollution (e.g. from the water recycling centre to the north).**

- e) Net biodiversity gains will be sought, by way of on-site and/ or off-site provision. These may include measures such as enhanced management of existing local wildlife sites such as the nearby Snipe Meadows local wildlife site.**
- f) The safeguarding of suitable access for the maintenance of foul drainage infrastructure.**

### **St Christopher's Drive, Oundle**

- 8.35 Land to the east of St Christopher's Drive and west of the A605 Bypass is a self contained greenfield site adjacent to the existing built up area. It is surrounded on three sides by a variety of land uses; residential (Ashton Road/ Sutton Road/ St Christopher's Drive estate) to the west; educational (Prince William School) to the south and employment (Nene Valley Business Park) to the north. The site is enclosed by the A605 Bypass, which forms the eastern boundary.
- 8.36 An outline application to develop the site for up to 65 dwellings and an extra care facility of up to 65 units was submitted in summer 2019 (reference 19/01355/OUT). This scheme was subject to detailed negotiations with the promoters around the development of extra care housing, for which Oundle has a particular acute need. The site was highlighted as suitable for extra care housing (see paragraph 8.75/ Policy EN27, below) due to its proximity to key town centre services such as convenience retailing, within 600m walking distance.
- 8.37 In June 2020 outline permission was granted for the application scheme (totalling 130 units), subject to S106. A significant element of the S106 negotiations relates to securing a robust legal mechanism to ensure delivery of the extra care element of the scheme, in lieu of affordable housing obligations. In the event that the extra care scheme does not prove to be deliverable, then the legal agreement should allow for this to be replaced by conventional affordable housing; to deliver the Joint Core Strategy requirement to provide for 40% affordable housing (Policy 30).
- 8.38 Previous consultations for the Local Plan (2018-19) and the subsequent planning application have revealed a number of issues that will need to be suitably addressed when implementing the consented scheme. Notable matters that need to be overcome include noise and air pollution from the adjacent Oundle Bypass, together with access arrangements for emergency vehicles. Therefore, it is necessary for this Plan to set a policy framework for managing the detailed development proposals.

**Figure 13: St Christopher's Drive, Oundle**



**Policy EN23: St Christopher's Drive, Oundle**

**Site Specifics**

**Land at St Christopher's Drive, as shown on the Policies Map and indicated above, is allocated for 3.9 ha. It is expected that the proposed allocation will deliver around 100 houses. Development should be delivered in accordance with the criteria below:**

- a) This site, which is within single ownership, will be expected to provide a housing mix to meet identified local needs and 5% of plots should be made available as serviced building plots for self and/ or custom housebuilding, in line with other policy requirements.**
- b) The site is well placed to deliver specialist housing, particularly extra care provision. Provision of such housing should be in lieu of the normal requirement for affordable housing; otherwise affordable housing should be delivered in accordance with normal policy requirements.**
- c) The road layout should be delivered in accordance with the Local Highway Authority's standards, supported by an appropriate Transport Assessment, with the main vehicular access forming a continuation of St Christopher's Drive.**
- d) Connections will be provided to the adjacent Public Rights of Way network, providing access to the Nene Way and adjacent villages (e.g.**

**Ashton, Barnwell and Polebrook).**

- e) **Structural landscaping will be provided for the site boundary, to mitigate the impacts of noise and other pollution from the A605.**
- f) **The design and layout should consider the proximity of the foul pumping station<sup>98</sup>. to reduce the risk of nuisance/ loss of amenity associated with the operation of this.**

**Additional housing requirements – Rushden and Irthlingborough**

- 8.39 The Joint Core Strategy (Policies 11 and 33) emphasises that the focus for this Plan should be to work with key stakeholders to secure the delivery of priority strategic sites, particularly those at Irthlingborough West and Rushden East. The delivery trajectories set out in the Joint Core Strategy (Annex 1) are as follows:
- Irthlingborough West – 700 dwellings, 2019-2030; and
  - Rushden East – 1,600 dwellings, 2020-2031.
- 8.40 The trajectories for the major strategic sites (sustainable urban extensions) have been reviewed yearly, through subsequent Authorities' Monitoring Reports (AMRs). Since adoption of the Joint Core Strategy (July 2016) the trajectories for Irthlingborough West and Rushden East have been substantially reviewed, in response to the latest deliverability evidence. The 2020 AMR<sup>99</sup>, indicates the following:
- Irthlingborough West –200 dwellings, 2027-2031; and
  - Rushden East – 1050 dwellings, 2023-2031.
- 8.41 The April 2020 trajectories for the two sustainable urban extensions equate to a combined reduction of 1050 dwellings for Irthlingborough and Rushden within the Plan period. Predominantly this is due to development viability affecting housing delivery of these two sites; in particular costs associated with ground stability mitigation for Irthlingborough West arising from the former mine workings. The revised trajectories equate to residual shortfalls of 375 dwellings and 406 dwellings, for Irthlingborough and Rushden respectively.
- 8.42 The NPPF requires the Council to maintain a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites (paragraph 68). Challenges around development viability impacting on delivering major sustainable urban extensions was the subject of detailed discussion held during the 2015 Examination for the Joint Core Strategy. However, the Inspector concluded that, the overall urban-focused spatial development strategy concentrating "*on existing towns and a series of deliverable SUEs represents the most suitable and sustainable strategy for the area over the*

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<sup>98</sup> Anglian Water requires a minimum distance of 15 metres between the Oundle-Ashton Gate Terminal Pumping Station (OUNASM), which is located within the boundary of the allocation site, and the curtilage boundaries of the nearest dwellings.

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/amr-2018-19-assessment-of-housing-land-supply-2019-24/>  
<http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-authorities-monitoring-report-19-20/>



*plan period*" (paragraph 91, Joint Core Strategy Inspector's Report, 22 June 2016<sup>100</sup>).

- 8.43 The Local Plan housing requirements for Irthlingborough and Rushden (Joint Core Strategy Policy 29/ Table 5) represent minimum housing delivery figures and the Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 9.10) allows for the Local Plan Part 2 to assess higher levels of housing provision at individual settlements, or in locations where this would meet a shortfall in deliverable sites at another settlement within the southern part of the Plan area, which includes Irthlingborough and Rushden. In other words, the Joint Core Strategy allows for the allocation of additional housing land to meet any outstanding residual requirements for Irthlingborough and Rushden (totalling 781 dwellings, as at 1 April 2020).
- 8.44 The combined shortfall for Irthlingborough and Rushden equates to greater than 700 dwellings. This significantly exceeds the definition of a "strategic" housing requirement, (500 dwellings) as defined in the Joint Core Strategy (Figure 12: Key Diagram/ paragraph 9.14). However, regard should also be given to the housing land supply figures for Higham Ferrers, which currently exceed the Joint Core Strategy requirement by 247 dwellings (principally due to additional brownfield development opportunities within the urban area) and Raunds which exceed the requirement by 84 dwellings. If the Higham Ferrers and Raunds figures are applied to offset the Irthlingborough and Rushden shortfall, this would give a residual requirement for 450 dwellings across the four urban areas.
- 8.45 The Local Plan Part 2 has considered a number of possible further directions for growth around Irthlingborough and Rushden. The following locations at Irthlingborough and Rushden (lying within the East Northamptonshire area) were assessed:
- North of the A6, Irthlingborough;
  - North and East of Crow Hill, Irthlingborough;
  - East of Higham Ferrers;
  - South East of Rushden; and
  - West of Rushden Lakes.
- 8.46 An assessment of these potential locations was undertaken in autumn 2019<sup>101</sup>. This recommended that a site allocation for mixed use development to the west of Rushden Lakes was the most appropriate option, due its access to services and facilities (e.g. Rushden Lakes, the Greenway and Stanton Cross), and to support the implementation of consented new infrastructure including the Ditchford Lane/ Rushden Lakes link road.
- 8.47 This site assessment was endorsed by the Planning Policy Committee (17 December 2019). This was followed by a 6-weeks consultation (February – March 2020) proposing the allocation of a new mixed use development of up to 450 dwellings on land identified at Rushden Lakes West. Due to the proximity of the

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<sup>100</sup> <http://www.nnjpd.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-joint-core-strategy-inspectors-report-22nd-june-2016/>

<sup>101</sup> Planning Policy Committee, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2019, Item 6: [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1023/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1023/planning_policy_committee)

site to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site, the policy proposal highlighted a need for appropriate mitigation measures, to the satisfaction of Natural England, to avoid significant adverse impacts upon the integrity of the adjacent SPA/ Ramsar site. However, in its response to the consultation Natural England submitted a written objection to the proposal. Whilst additional work has been undertaken to provide appropriate mitigation measures (including restricting the site area and reducing its capacity) the objection remains.

- 8.48 As part of the requirements to address the objection submitted by Natural England's the Council has undertaken a more detailed assessment of viable alternative site options (previous work was informed by broad site locations) around the designated Growth Town of Rushden.

#### **Rushden South East: Land east of the A6/ Bedford Road – alternative site specific proposal**

- 8.49 A site assessment was undertaken (September 2020<sup>102</sup>), to consider alternative site specific proposals to Rushden Lakes West, capable of accommodating up to 450 dwellings. This considered land east of Higham Ferrers (at Slater's Lodge, a potential northern development phase for Rushden East), and three potential site allocations to the south east of Rushden (south of Newton Road and east of the A6 Bypass).
- 8.50 This more detailed site assessment process identified land east of the A6 / Bedford Road as a viable alternative to Rushden Lakes West. This site was identified as having a number of positive attributes, namely:
- Opportunities for connectivity to the existing urban area (via Bedford Road/ High Street South) and surrounding services and facilities;
  - Single ownership;
  - Active promotion by landowner/ partner housebuilder;
  - Potential to provide new access from Bedford Road roundabout, with a 40mph limit already in force;
  - Deliverable independently of Rushden East sustainable urban extension;
  - No known constraints; and
  - The potential to integrate the proposed sports hub with the urban area.
- 8.51 The Policy (below) sets out the development principles and requirement for the development of land east to the east of the A6 / Bedford Road; a deliverable and achievable alternative to Rushden Lakes West.
- 8.52 The site is located approximately 3.5km from the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, it is therefore possible it could constitute functionally linked habitat for the SPA. The applicant will be required to provide evidence that the development will not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar. To achieve this, surveys will be required to determine habitats and current use of the site to determine if it does support a significant population<sup>103</sup> of

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<sup>102</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11974/background\\_paper\\_-\\_assessment\\_of\\_alternative\\_site\\_options](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11974/background_paper_-_assessment_of_alternative_site_options)

<sup>103</sup> A significant proportion is classified as a site that is regularly used by more than 1% of the population of the qualifying bird species

qualifying species. Where habitats are suitable, non-breeding bird surveys will be required to determine if the site and neighbouring land constitute a significant area of supporting habitat. Surveys should be required to be undertaken during autumn, winter and spring and more than 1 year of surveys may be needed (to be agreed in consultation with the local planning authority and Natural England). If habitat within the site is identified to support significant populations of designated bird features avoidance measures and mitigation will be required, such as the creation of replacement habitat nearby, and the planning application will likely need to be supported by a project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment to ensure that the development does not result in adverse effects on integrity’.

**Figure 14: Land east of the A6/ Bedford Road, Rushden (South East Rushden)**



## **Policy EN24: Land east of the A6/ Bedford Road, Rushden**

Land to the east of the A6/Bedford Road, Rushden, as shown on the Policies Map and indicated in Figure 14 above, is allocated for residential development together with associated supporting infrastructure, which should include a mix of ancillary retail, business or community uses to support the proposal.

A design led masterplan is to be agreed by the local planning authority as part of the application process, which will address all relevant policy requirements. The key principles of the proposed development will deliver the following:

- a) It is expected that the proposed allocation will deliver around 450 dwellings;
- b) A housing mix which includes provision for both specialist and older persons housing, and on-site affordable housing (meeting the target of 30% of the total number of dwellings provided within a Growth Town);
- c) Vehicular access to be provided directly from the Bedford Road/ A6 Bypass roundabout, with the proposals informed by a Transport Assessment subject to approval by the Highway Authority;
- d) To maximise opportunities to improve connectivity to, and enhance the quality of, the public rights of way network; in particular:
  - providing pedestrian and cycle connections to the surrounding urban area, and to adjacent sports and recreational facilities;
  - improving local bus connections serving the site;
  - delivering enhancements to the Rushden – Souldrop local green infrastructure corridor and net biodiversity gain; and
  - delivering facilities to assist the sustainability of the allocation , in particular by supporting the creation of a community hub to enhance the relocation of the sports facilities, to be located on the eastern edge of the site boundary.
- e) Appropriate mitigation measures, to avoid significant adverse impacts upon the integrity of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area;
- f) Provision of a landmark feature at the main access point, adjacent to the A6 / Bedford Road roundabout; and
- g) Appropriate multi-functional structural landscaping to service the development, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and suitable features along the western boundary to provide the necessary mitigation for noise and air pollution arising from the A6 Bypass.

### **Housing Mix and Tenure**

8.53 The NPPF requires that a sufficient amount and variety of land should be brought forward through the Local Plan to address the needs of groups with specific housing requirements (paragraph 59), and that the size, type and tenure of

housing needed for different groups of the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policy (paragraph 61), in order to create inclusive and mixed communities.

### **Wheelchair accessible housing**

- 8.54 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 30) sets out the strategic approach to providing for a mix of dwelling sizes and tenures in order to meet the needs of the wider community. The policy sets out targets for affordable housing provision and highlights the need to provide for specialist forms of housing, particularly those relevant to older persons. It builds on the requirements set out in the NPPF that support strong, vibrant and healthy communities by providing a sufficient number and range of houses to meet the needs of both present and future generations, as well as requiring new development to meet national space and accessibility standards (Category 2 as a minimum). Policy 30 also provides for LPAs to set the proportion of Category 3a (wheelchair adaptable ) or Category 3b (wheelchair accessible) housing based on evidence of local needs, with Policy EN25 below setting a District-wide standard.

### **Policy EN25: Delivering wheelchair accessible housing**

**To help meet current and future needs for housing for people with disabilities, all new housing developments of 20 or more dwellings should include a target of 5% Category 3 (wheelchair accessible or adaptable) housing. Wheelchair accessible housing will only be required for dwellings where the local authority is responsible for allocating or nominating a person to live in that dwelling.**

### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment**

- 8.55 The Joint Core Strategy provides extensive policy direction for the provision of affordable housing within the district. The Council will utilise Policy 30 to negotiate its affordable housing provision based on local evidence of need and scheme viability. The Council also welcomes the provision of low cost home ownership initiatives, in addition to meeting the affordable housing requirements.
- 8.56 This Plan seeks to provide additional policy direction to help address local housing needs/ demands across East Northamptonshire. Policy 30 of the Joint Core Strategy is based on the 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and subsequent updates (to 2015), which analyses demographic and housing data to project the need for future housing requirements across the area. It provides the basis for developers, housing providers and local planning authorities to identify the mix of housing that is required to help create a balanced housing market, and set policies to this effect.
- 8.57 The 2015 update to the SHMA<sup>104</sup> provides an interactive toolkit to enable household requirements to be remodelled or updated based on new information being received. Whilst Policy 30 provides a strategic approach to providing for an appropriate mix of housing, detailed negotiations with site promoters will be based

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<sup>104</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/strategic-housing-market-assessment-update-january-2015/>

on the latest evidence together with further appropriate studies. The locally specific policies contained in this section of the Plan are informed by evidence bases and other evidence of housing need, which is referred to in relation to the particular policy itself.

- 8.58 In addition to the above it is important to take into account the Council's aspirations not just in recognising its pro active approach to delivering future housing growth above the strategic requirements, but also in driving up the value of the district, building on its desire to attract improved and higher quality job opportunities as well as ensuring an element of future housing delivery seeks to reflect that change by providing the ability to deliver high quality homes.

### **Informing East Northamptonshire's Housing Mix**

- 8.59 Requirements for new homes are based on the identified need to address existing deficits between the housing supply and local need and demand, as identified through the SHMA. The Plan will aim to further inform local imbalances in housing provision by seeking to provide a balance and mix of housing that recognise the requirements of those inadequately housed and the aspirational requirements of demand.
- 8.60 The Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 9.26) indicates that the demographic evidence of need does not take into account the aspirations of many households to have a spare bedroom, to provide for additional useable space for a number of reasons. Further, the Joint Core Strategy supports the opportunity to provide for a higher proportion of larger (4-bedroom) dwellings, where local evidence is provided in relation to the housing market stock and the local housing need.
- 8.61 In addition to providing flexibility to accommodate demand for larger dwellings, Policy 30 requires that account be taken of the composition of the existing dwelling stock. The aim is to ensure a balanced dwelling stock is provided in a particular neighbourhood or ward, where local evidence supports this approach.
- 8.62 The Council has sought additional evidence to better understand and inform a local approach to setting out its housing mix, through commissioning a report by Housing Vision – Informing East Northamptonshire's Housing Mix – Evidence to support Planning for Larger Residential Properties (June 2017)<sup>105</sup>. This study has found significant spatial differences in housing needs. In the rural north there is a general need for smaller houses, while in the south the need is predominantly for larger properties<sup>106</sup>.
- 8.63 The report concludes that there is some opportunity to develop larger and higher value housing options, and that an exclusive focus on the supply of smaller dwellings to meet population growth and the needs of new households may not be the most appropriate solution to meeting future housing need. For example, more sophistication is found to be required to meet aspirational demand and to enable a

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<sup>105</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10894/informing\\_east\\_northamptonshires\\_housing\\_mix\\_evidence\\_to\\_support\\_planning\\_for\\_large\\_residential\\_properties\\_final\\_report](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10894/informing_east_northamptonshires_housing_mix_evidence_to_support_planning_for_large_residential_properties_final_report)

<sup>106</sup> The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 30(a)) defines small and medium dwellings as 1-3 bedrooms, and large dwellings as 4 or more bedrooms

wide range of housing options, including options for older households looking to downsize within the district, along with providing choices which might appeal to those with high incomes. East Northamptonshire is facing significant demographic change through increased growth in the number of older households, which will continue to be a key driver throughout the Plan period. The implications relate to the need and demand for suitable housing options ranging from quality properties to attract down sizing, to the need for accommodation with high levels of support and care.

- 8.64 The report concludes that there is some opportunity to develop larger and higher value housing options, and that an exclusive focus on the supply of smaller dwellings to meet population growth and the needs of new households may not be the most appropriate solution to meeting future housing need. For example, more sophistication is found to be required to meet aspirational demand and to enable a wide range of housing options to reflect the Council's aspirations as reflected above.
- 8.65 Aspirational housing should be considered in relation to the geography of the district; i.e. the need for larger properties is in the urban areas in the south of the district and not in the north, compared to the more rural areas where the need is for predominantly smaller and affordable properties. Defining an appropriate housing mix should be considered as part of the wider viability testing for delivering a policy compliant scheme.
- 8.66 In addition the Council has an increasing number of older persons households. The Housing Vision report recognised the opportunity to address opportunities through the Local Plan to provide high quality smaller housing provision across the district as part of the Council's housing mix, to enable older person households looking to downsize and to help free up larger properties as a consequence.

#### **Policy EN26: Housing mix and tenure to meet local need**

**All housing developments will be expected to provide a suitable mix and range of housing, including a range of size, type and tenure (as set out in Policy 30 of the Joint Core Strategy) that recognise the local need and demand in both the market and affordable housing sectors, unless viability testing shows otherwise. Evidence should be provided to support the proposed housing mix.**

**In particular consideration will be given to:**

- a) Meeting the needs of an ageing population by providing the opportunity for smaller properties to encourage downsizing within the district;**
- b) Recognising the potential to increase the proportion of higher value, larger properties in areas where local evidence identifies a lack of opportunity for higher income earners to acquire such properties; and**
- c) Increasing the numbers of smaller dwellings in the rural areas to meet the needs for starter homes, affordable housing and downsizing.**

## Specialist and Older Persons Housing Provision

- 8.67 One of the most pressing issues facing North Northamptonshire over the next 20 years is the growth in older person (65+ years) households. The North Northamptonshire SHMA (2015 toolkit update) estimates the need for growth of around 20,100 specialist housing units to meet community need between 2011-2031; with the largest growth forecast within East Northamptonshire district. Here 79% of future household provision (compared with a figure of 60% across the sub region) is identified.
- 8.68 Supported housing – for older persons requiring a greater range of facilities than retirement housing – can include extra care housing. Extra care units provide self-contained accommodation, but with support and care services available on site. Three main types of provision are identified as follows:
- **Retirement housing** – provides some additional features including communal areas, often referred to as “sheltered housing” in the affordable sector and “retirement living” in the private sector, which may include a scheme manager based on site.
  - **Supported housing** – for older persons requiring a greater range of facilities than retirement housing, with support and care services available, and which includes extra care housing. Each household has self-contained accommodation.
  - **Retirement villages** – larger schemes of accommodation with a central hub providing a range of facilities, which can include registered care home accommodation. This type of provision is usually developed close to existing centres of population.
- 8.69 In addition to the above, whilst not recognised as specialist housing, both residential and nursing homes can also provide care and/ or nursing requirements for people whose care or health needs mean that they cannot live independently.
- 8.70 The 2015 toolkit update projects the number of older households requiring specialist housing in East Northamptonshire as 985 dwellings over the Plan period (up to 2031), which equates to 49 per annum. Table 17 below refers:

**Table 17: East Northamptonshire: Projected housing requirements for older persons 2011-2031 (SHMA update 2015)**

65+ households	65+ totals	Under occupying	Designated	Sheltered	Extra care
Additional households	6,656	4,125	419	200	366

- 8.71 More recent information, commissioned by the Northamptonshire Councils along with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) is reported through the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People across Northamptonshire (March



2017<sup>107</sup>) undertaken by the consultants Three Dragons. Using the Retirement Housing Group (RHG) model, which assumes that 15% of people over 75 and 2.5% of people aged 65-74, would move to retirement housing if it was available. The study identifies the future requirement for retirement housing in East Northamptonshire as an annual target figure of 103 dwellings per annum up to 2031.

- 8.72 Subsequent Sheffield Hallam University research still concentrates on the needs of people of 75 and over as they are the most likely to require specialist housing, but identifies even higher needs than the Three Dragons study. It is the preferred model of Northamptonshire County Council as it provides a more detailed analysis of data and allows for local adjustments such as urban/rural factors and the prevalence of dementia. It identifies an annual requirement of 598 units per annum across North Northamptonshire and an increasing shortfall in specialist housing for older people, estimated in East Northamptonshire as 207 units in 2017, rising to 387 in 2020 and 2,267 by 2035 as can be seen in Table 18, below.

<b>Table 18</b>	<b>Specialist older person's housing shortfall (East Northamptonshire)</b>				
Year	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035
Cumulative shortfall	-207	-387	-1,202	-1,756	-2,267

- 8.73 Specialised housing services for older person provision vary between tenures, types of accommodation and providers, with individual care needs supported in different ways, therefore a variety of care needs should be addressed across the Plan period. In addition a shortfall in care home provision has been identified within the County as a whole, along with the need for more specialist care to be provided to meet dementia patient requirements. Going forward, new care and nursing home provision in specific locations will need to be supported by North Northamptonshire Council's Social Care and Health Team.
- 8.74 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 30) encourages Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) and other strategic developments to make specific provision towards meeting the needs of specialist housing requirements for older persons, including designated sheltered and extra care accommodation. The strategy also recognises the role that SUEs can provide in meeting the needs of the older person requirement, but expresses caution of the ability to meet these needs in the earlier phases of development, advising that sites should be reserved for future provision through the masterplanning process and that it may be appropriate, initially, to look at additional locations that have better established access to local facilities.
- 8.75 To this end, the new housing site allocations at Oundle (Policies EN21-EN23) are all required to make provision for older persons households, with the St Christopher's Drive site (EN23) being particularly suitable due to its location in

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<sup>107</sup> <https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/adult-social-care/policies/Documents/Study%20of%20Housing%20and%20Support%20Needs%20of%20Older%20People%20Across%20Northamptonshire.pdf>

close proximity to key services in the town. The Higham Ferrers site, East of Ferrers School (300 dwellings), should also provide a proportion of housing for older people. Sites in Rushden and Irthlingborough (the SUEs) also need to be identified to contribute to the provision of older persons housing.

- 8.76 Locations around the district's Growth and Market Towns (as identified in Table 5 of the Joint Core Strategy) offering a more sustainable location in relation to accessing local facilities and services will provide the most suitable opportunity to meet retirement and extra care provision in the short term. These will therefore be encouraged, together with the provision and safeguarding of sites at the SUEs and strategic sites.
- 8.77 Policy EN27 (below) sets thresholds to allow a proportion of housing to meet older person provision on development proposals to be negotiated. Provision could be made for age restricted accommodation, sheltered or extra care schemes, with the expectation that proposals will be designed to meet the Building Regulations Category 3 accessibility standards, or through the provision of bungalow style development.
- 8.78 This could include:
- Accommodation to enable downsizing such as bungalows, apartments and other smaller homes which are available to meet general needs but are particularly suitable to encourage and facilitate older people to move from larger family housing to smaller properties
  - Retirement Housing which will include also bungalows as well as other high quality homes which may be 'age restricted' to provide for older persons. The accommodation can be provided as individual homes or as part of a retirement housing scheme and may include communal facilities and on-site management.
  - Extra Care housing providing independent accommodation with 24 hour care and support available on site.
  - Residential and Nursing Care Homes.
- 8.79 The focus for specialist housing has tended to be for older persons; a reflection of the increasing proportion of this demographic. However, housing for younger adults (18-64) with specialist needs should also be recognised, and delivered in accordance with the requirements of Policy EN27.
- 8.80 In determining an appropriate proportion the Council will have regard to evidence of local need (where this is available), the scale and location of the site, including access to facilities (where appropriate, depending on the type of older person's accommodation that is proposed) and the viability of the development. Any case that is made on the topic of viability needs to be accompanied by a detailed viability assessment in order that it can be determined whether it is fully justified.
- 8.81 Providing sites are accessible by public transport, strategic housing developments can play an important role in meeting future needs for specialist older persons accommodation. This is recognised through the evidence provided by the study of housing needs of older people across Northamptonshire (March 2017) which also indicated that provision be made, in the first instance by zoning sites for future

development of older persons housing/care homes when public transport routes are in place.

### **Extra Care Housing**

8.82 Extra Care Housing is housing designed for the needs of older people who require varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing can still occupy their own self contained homes, having their own front door. Extra Care Housing is also known as very sheltered housing, assisted living, or simply as 'housing with care'. It comes in many built forms, including blocks of flats, bungalow estates and retirement villages. It is a popular choice among older people because it can provide an alternative to a care home.

## **Policy EN27: Older people's housing provision**

**To help meet future requirements for retirement housing for older people, the Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that a proportion of its overall housing provision will address the identified needs of the ageing population within the district unless it can be justified that such provision is not appropriate for the location or would have an adverse impact upon the deliverability and/or viability of the scheme.**

**To address the identified need and where there is access to local facilities and public transport services, larger sites will be required to provide for the needs of older households.**

**Larger sites will be expected to deliver a minimum of 10% of housing for older people.**

**For Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs), specialist housing requirements will be agreed with the Local Planning Authority through the preparation of a Masterplan Development Framework or a Strategic Masterplan. Elsewhere, due to the rural nature of the district, and to prevent the loss of opportunities to provide accommodation for older people, a threshold hierarchy will be applied so that, in respect of older people's housing, other larger sites will be classified as:**

- 50 or more dwellings in the towns of Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough and Raunds**
- 25 or more dwellings in the towns of Oundle and Thrapston; or**
- As opportunities for development in the villages are limited, and sites are often small scale in nature, all developments of 5 or more dwellings will be expected to deliver a minimum of 20% of housing for older people, unless evidence justifies a departure.**

**The criteria for site selection and design principles will also need to meet the requirements laid out in Appendix 5, although these will be relaxed in the villages in recognition of the difficulties in meeting them.**

**The type of housing provision required for older people will vary according to the scale and location of the development and will include:**

- a) Downsizing – Accommodation such as bungalows, apartments and other**

smaller

b) Retirement Housing will include bungalows and other high quality homes which may be ‘age restricted’ to older people.

c) Supported Housing for Older People – Extra Care:

i. SUEs and Strategic Sites

Mixed tenure Extra Care Housing should be provided on major strategic housing sites at Rushden East and Irthlingborough West. Masterplan Framework Documents for these developments should ensure such provision through the safeguarding of suitable sites and the setting out of design principles for delivery. Further consideration needs to be given to whether a future Extra Care Scheme or a retirement village would be sustainable at Tresham Garden Village once the necessary infrastructure, transport and local facilities are in place.

ii. Allocated sites

- St Christopher’s Drive, Oundle (EN27), and Hayway, Northampton Road, Rushden<sup>108</sup> will, subject to viability, be supported to deliver specific Extra Care provision
- East of Ferrers School, Higham Ferrers<sup>109</sup> this site could also provide an opportunity to deliver a mixed tenure Extra Care scheme, subject to achieving suitable connectivity of the site to the town.

iii. Windfall sites

In addition to the strategic sites listed in this policy, the Council will encourage the provision of Extra Care accommodation in sustainable locations across the district, particularly within the designated growth and market towns.

d) Residential and Nursing Care Homes

Where the need for care homes has been identified, and is supported by Social Care and Health, these will be encouraged on strategic, allocated and windfall sites.

### Self and Custom Build

8.83 Self and custom build can play a key role in increasing housing supply, enabling more people to meet their aspirations of home ownership. Self build and custom build housing is defined as housing built by individuals or groups for their own use, either by building the home on their own (self build) or by working with housebuilders (custom build); this can assist in providing homes to meet individual requirements that aren’t available in the current market. Government recognises that self build rates are lower in the UK than in other European countries and that

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<sup>108</sup> Rushden Neighbourhood Plan Policy H2F

<sup>109</sup> Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan Policy HF.H4

a number of barriers to delivery have been recognised, including access to suitable serviced plots, exacerbated through the planning system. A serviced plot is defined as a plot of land that has access to a public highway and has connections for the usual range of facilities including electricity, gas, water, waste water and digital connectivity, or can be provided with these services in specified circumstances or a defined period.

- 8.84 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to provide for a mix of housing reflecting both demographic trends and local community needs, including those groups of the community who wish to build their own home. The Council recognises that there is a growing interest from people to influence the design and specification and to build their own home and supports the belief that, if managed properly, self and custom housebuilding can make a meaningful contribution to the overall supply of housing in the area.
- 8.85 Policy 30 of the Joint Core Strategy supports the opportunity to bring forward proposals for individual and community custom build developments and requires that SUEs and other strategic developments should facilitate this provision by making available serviced building plots to assist delivery. In addition, it is envisaged that Neighbourhood Plans may also provide local communities with the opportunity to encourage self and custom build housing by creating new planning policies or allocating new development sites in their designated area to meet local need.

### **Self and Custom Build Register**

- 8.86 The Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act (2015)<sup>110</sup> requires local planning authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations who are seeking to acquire serviced plots of land in order to build houses within the local area, and to have regard to this register as a material consideration in making planning decisions. The 2015 Act is supported by the Housing and Planning Act (2016)<sup>111</sup> which, together with associated secondary legislation (Regulations<sup>112</sup>), places a duty upon local planning authorities to set up a register and grant suitable development permission in respect of providing serviced plots of land to meet demand arising within the local area. It is therefore considered appropriate to set a target figure for providing that a proportion of development sites be identified through the Plan for self and custom build.
- 8.87 The Council set up its Self and Custom Build Register, with effect from 1 April 2016, as required by under the legislation. This provides some indication of the local level of demand for serviced plots. To fulfil this demand and encourage the contribution that self and custom build can make to the housing market mix, the Council will look to support applications for the delivery of serviced plots on suitable sites. To ensure that the Council is appropriately complying with the statutory duties for Self and Custom Housebuilding, more detailed guidance to enable delivery of these housing types will be provided by way of a supplementary planning document.

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<sup>110</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/17/contents>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/22/contents>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/105/contents/made>;  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/950/contents/made>

## **Delivering Self Build**

- 8.88 The majority of self-build housing is likely to be delivered in the form of minor (1-2 dwelling) infill or other windfall developments. In most cases, these minor developments will be connected to services and/ or utilities through the statutory mechanisms for connecting to the distribution networks; i.e. electricity and/ or gas (Western Power), and water/ sewerage (Anglian Water Services).
- 8.89 Self build projects may also provide opportunities to deliver bespoke exemplar carbon neutral development proposals. For example, the development of innovative technologies or designs, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 79(e), may be achieved on an occasional basis through such “one off” schemes.

## **Delivering Custom Build**

- 8.90 Custom build housing, unlike self build, tends to be delivered by volume housebuilders. Most main housebuilders offer a range of standard specification dwelling types. However, these construction firms may also provide services to allow house buyers to design their own bespoke house/ houses.
- 8.91 In 2018 the Council appointed “Three Dragons” to prepare an assessment for forecasting demand and need for self and custom build housing<sup>113</sup>. This study compared the numbers of persons/ groups on the Self and Custom Build Register, finding that a mean average 28 dwellings per annum were being delivered through 1 and 2 dwelling sites, compared to a need to make provision for 39 dwellings per annum for self and custom build as a whole.
- 8.92 Single dwelling minor/ infill plots, together with conversions and/ or changes of use are appropriate to fulfil the need for self build housing. By contrast, the annual 11 dwellings self and custom build shortfall, identified by the Three Dragons study, could be met through setting policy requirements to provide custom build plots on medium to large scale dwelling schemes (i.e. 50-500 houses). The Council reviewed the Three Dragons study and concluded that a requirement for 5% of plots on sites of 50 or more dwellings should be sufficient to meet the shortfall and provide for delivery of custom build housing<sup>114</sup>. Further analysis is provided through the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Background Paper (BP11<sup>115</sup>).
- 8.93 In order to ensure that serviced plots identified for self and custom build housing can be delivered, the local planning authority will require appropriate conditions to be put in place on an outline planning permission. Where schemes propose a range of housing types and tenures, development proposals will be expected to be divided into separate phases for site infrastructure, speculative development and each serviced plot. Furthermore, serviced plots should be offered for sale to

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<sup>113</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11328/custom\\_and\\_self\\_build\\_demand\\_assessment\\_framework\\_three\\_dragons\\_december\\_2018](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11328/custom_and_self_build_demand_assessment_framework_three_dragons_december_2018)

<sup>114</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11329/enc\\_response\\_to\\_three\\_dragons\\_report\\_dec\\_2018](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11329/enc_response_to_three_dragons_report_dec_2018)

<sup>115</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12112/background\\_paper\\_11\\_-\\_self\\_and\\_custom\\_housebuilding](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12112/background_paper_11_-_self_and_custom_housebuilding)

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custom and (where viable) self builders, for a minimum of 12 months, to allow developers to reclaim plots if they remain unsold and to prevent the possibility of undeveloped plots of land in the long term and planning applications for such developments should be accompanied by a comprehensive report detailing how it is intended to deliver the development in a timely manner.

- 8.94 Policy EN28 (below) sets out the policy requirements to make provision for self and custom build housing. It does not, however, set targets for the building of dwellings by individuals on plots, other than custom build serviced plots.

### **Policy EN28: Self and custom build housing**

**New build developments will make provision for the delivery of serviced plots for self and custom build housing in suitable locations, where proposals are in compliance with other plan policies.**

**a) Self build housing**

**Proposals for self build housing developments on infill or other windfall development sites within urban areas, freestanding villages or ribbon developments will be supported where these fulfil the requirements of relevant design and place-shaping policies. To be regarded as a self build housing plot, a site should:**

- i) Provide for a single unit net increase change of use, conversion or new build, or alternatively a replacement dwelling;**
- ii) Allow for access to a highway; and**
- iii) Allow for sufficient opportunities to provide electricity, water and waste water connections, or make adequate alternative arrangements.**

**b) Custom build housing**

**On sites of 50 or more dwellings, 5% of the plots should be made available on site as serviced custom build plots. These serviced plots should be offered for sale for custom (or self) build for a minimum of 6 months, after which these may be released for general market housing as part of the consented scheme. To be regarded as a custom build housing plot, a site should:**

- i) Include servicing, as part of the overall physical infrastructure obligations for the development as a whole;**
- ii) Be clearly identified and offered for sale for custom (or self) build for a minimum of 6 months; and**
- iii) Be situated in order to provide opportunities for enhancement of the local distinctiveness of the development site in accordance with the relevant design and place shaping policies.**

**On sites of less than 50 dwellings provision of custom build housing will be supported, including sites which are solely custom build sites, provided they comply with the spatial development strategy.**

**Detailed guidance and direction regarding delivery mechanisms for self and**

**custom build housing will be provided through a supplementary planning document.**

### **Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**

- 8.95 Government policy requires local planning authorities to use evidence to plan positively and manage development for the travelling community, using a robust evidence base to establish accommodation needs to inform local plan policy along with the determination of planning applications.

### **Provision for Gypsies and Travellers 2011-2022**

- 8.96 Policy 31 of the JCS provides that sufficient sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People accommodation, will be identified in line with a clear evidence base. It sets out a pitch provision (2011-2022) based on findings of the 2011 North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)<sup>116</sup>, which updated the 2008 Assessment.
- 8.97 The 2011 GTAA informed the requirements for pitch provision for the period 2011-2022 in the Joint Core Strategy, Table 7. This advised that over the first 11 years of the Plan period a requirement to provide 14 pitches in the district, comprising a mixture of residential and transit pitches in addition to plots for travelling show people.
- 8.98 Policy 31 of the Joint Core Strategy also requires the Council to protect existing lawful sites, plots and pitches for gypsy and travellers within the district. Where necessary it requires Part 2 Local Plans to allow any further sites required to meet identified need, setting out criteria to guide the consideration of locations for new sites.

### **GTAA update 2019**

- 8.99 The GTAA was comprehensively updated during 2018 to accord with the current planning definition of a Traveller, as defined in national policy (Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, August 2015<sup>117</sup> and NPPF, February 2019) and legislation (2016 Housing and Planning Act). The GTAA update was undertaken to provide a robust, defensible and up-to-date evidence base about the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in North Northamptonshire. National policy requires that only those households which fall within the statutory definition now need to be formally assessed for the GTAA<sup>118</sup>. Households that do not meet the current definition should be assessed as part of the overall housing

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<sup>116</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-gypsy-and-traveller-accommodation-assessment-update-2011/>

<sup>117</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/457420/Final\\_planning\\_and\\_travellers\\_policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf)

<sup>118</sup> To meet the planning definition, households need to demonstrate that they “travel for work purposes, or seeking work, and stay away from their usual place of residence when doing so (or who have ceased to travel temporarily due to education, ill health or old age)”. The definition does not specify a “temporary” time limit, although being away for 2-3 months at a time (e.g. seasonal work) provides an indicative guide.



need and their needs will be addressed through other Plan policies; e.g. Policy EN28: Self and custom build housing.

- 8.100 The GTAA (2019) identified no gypsy and traveller households who met the planning definition, 67 undetermined households who may meet the planning definition and 6 households who did not meet the planning definition. Four travelling showpeople households were identified who met the planning definition.
- 8.101 The needs assessment compared known supply (i.e. vacant pitches) with a range of identifiable household needs including unauthorised sites and new household formation (e.g. teenagers). Table 19 below provides details of residual needs for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

**Table 19: Identifiable needs for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation 2018-2033.**

Status	Identified need 2018-31	Identified need 2031-2033
Gypsies and Travellers		
Meet Planning Definition	0	0
Undetermined	14	3
Do not meet Planning Definition	11	0
Travelling Showpeople		
Meet Planning Definition	6	0
Undetermined	0	0
Do not meet Planning Definition	0	0

- 8.102 The GTAA identifies a need for 0 pitches for gypsy and traveller households who meet the planning definition and a need for 17 pitches for undetermined households. The GTAA estimated that applying national averages of households who meet the definition the undetermined need could result in a need for 4 pitches. Policy 31 of the JCS provides a criteria-based policy for addressing needs from undetermined households who subsequently demonstrate that they meet the planning definition
- 8.103 The GTAA identifies a need for 6 plots for travelling showpeople households who meet the planning definition. The North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy DPD will include policies and allocations to meet need arising from households who met the planning definition across North Northamptonshire, the need for Travelling Showpeople plots will therefore be addressed through the preparation of this document.
- 8.104 No sites have been proposed or granted planning permission within East Northamptonshire since the start of the Plan period. No representations were received in respect of the district's provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation through the draft Plan consultation (November 2018 – February 2019) or Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017).
- 8.105 Overall, the residual requirements for additional gypsy and traveller pitches are minimal and relate to undetermined need which can be met using criteria based

policies, therefore there is no need to allocate further sites in the Plan to fulfil requirements. If future proposals are forthcoming, Policy 31 of the Joint Core Strategy provides a clear steer for assessing any such future planning applications that may arise. The need for travelling showpeople plots will be addressed through the North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Policy which will address need for gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation across North Northamptonshire.

## 9.0 Delivering Sustainable Urban Extensions

9.1 The Joint Core Strategy (Annex A), made provision for the delivery of 2,300 dwellings (27% of the total requirement for 8,400 dwellings) and accompanying jobs, facilities and services at the two Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) within the District during the Plan period. Trajectories for SUEs in subsequent Authorities' Monitoring Reports (2017<sup>119</sup>, 2018<sup>120</sup>, 2019 and 2020) have seen the anticipated delivery at these progressively diminishing; such that as at 1 April 2020 it is currently forecast that just 1250 dwellings would come forward at the two sites by 2031 (15% of the total requirement). Table 22 below provides a comparison between the 2016 (Joint Core Strategy adoption) and 2020 (latest Authorities' Monitoring Report) positions.

**Table 20 Sustainable Urban Extensions - Anticipated delivery by 2031**

Sustainable Urban Extension	Relevant Policy reference	Anticipated delivery by 2031	
		Joint Core Strategy (JCS), Annex A (base date, 1 April 2016)	2020 Authorities Monitoring Report (base date, 1 April 2020)
Rushden East	JCS Policy 33	1,600	1050
Irthlingborough West	JCS Annex A	700	200
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,300</b>	<b>1250</b>

9.2 The effective implementation of the overall spatial strategy, as defined by the Joint Core Strategy, is underpinned by the timely delivery of the SUEs across North Northamptonshire. It was concluded by the Inspector; that the overall urban-focused spatial development strategy concentrating “*on existing towns and a series of deliverable SUEs represents the most suitable and sustainable strategy for the area over the plan period*” (paragraph 91, Joint Core Strategy Inspector's Report, 22 June 2016<sup>121</sup>).

9.3 Delivery of the two SUEs (at least, in part) remains important to delivery of the Local Plan as a whole. This section will provide the necessary additional policy direction

<sup>119</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/amr-2016-17-assessment-of-housing-land-supply-2018-23-may-2018/>

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/amr-2017-18-assessment-of-housing-land-supply-2019-24/>

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-joint-core-strategy-inspectors-report-22nd-june-2016/>

which, in association with the strategic framework set by the Joint Core Strategy, should allow for the timely implementation of the SUEs.

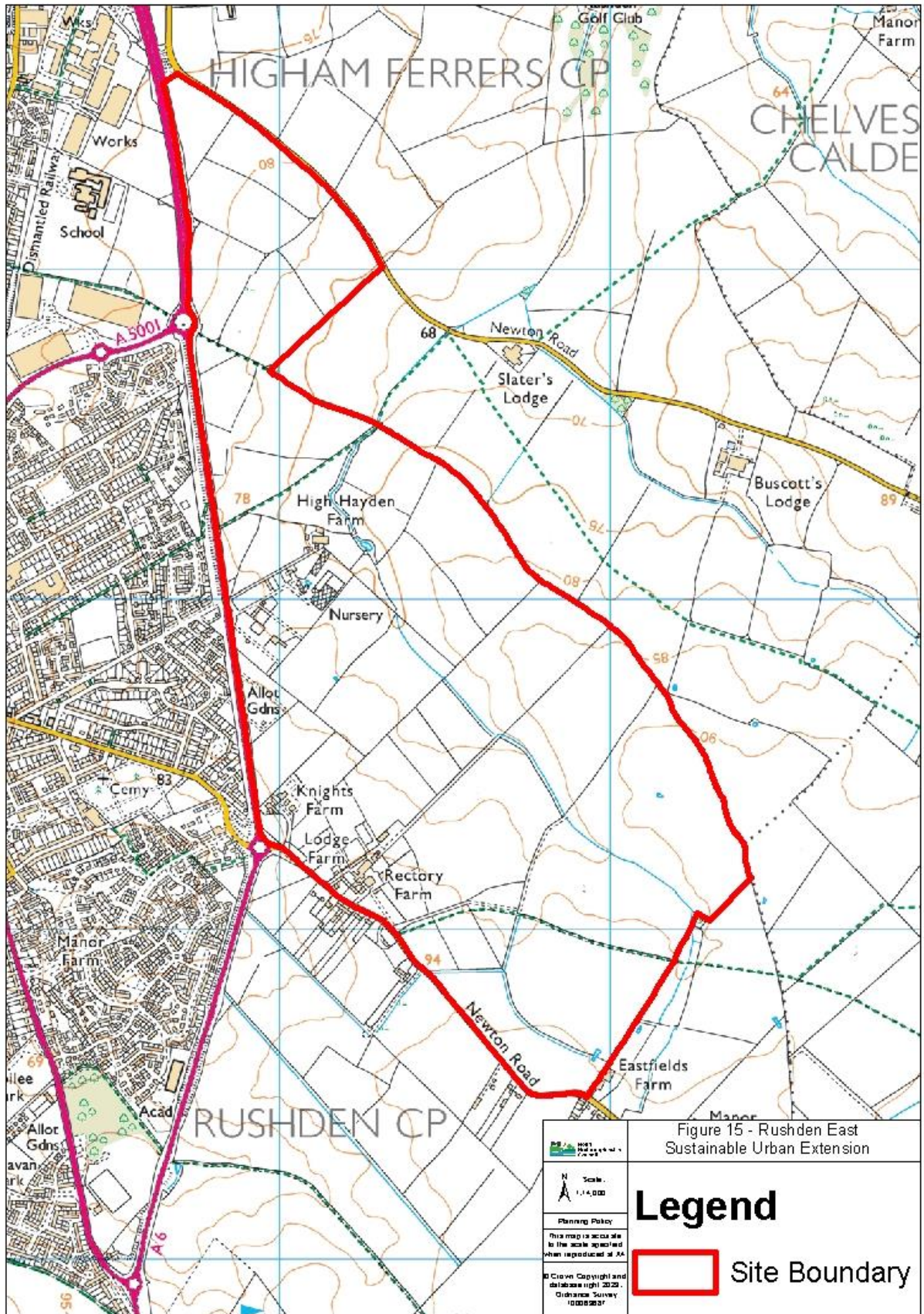
### **Rushden East**

- 9.4 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 33) provides a comprehensive framework for delivering the principal strategic development proposals to the east of Rushden. This Sustainable Urban Extension is anticipated to be delivered over the duration of the next 20 years. Of this, 1050 (out of up to 2,700 dwellings) are currently anticipated to come forward by 2031.
- 9.5 Joint Core Strategy Policy 33 anticipated that the detailed development proposals should be supported by an agreed development masterplan, which would guide the development of Rushden East through the Local Plan Part 2 or a planning application (Joint Core Strategy, paragraph 10.31), which ever comes forward first. The draft Masterplan Framework was published for consultation during February/ March 2020, this emphasises that the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension should be delivered in accordance with the Government's Garden Communities principles.
- 9.6 Notwithstanding, the Joint Core Strategy does not define a firm development boundary for the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension. Instead, it provides an indicative broad location (Figure 23). Given that the Masterplan Framework has not, as yet, been finalised it is considered necessary for this Plan to define the extent of the development area in the interests of clarity and surety. The site allocation has capacity to accommodate at least 2,700 dwellings, with potential capacity for further additional development in the longer term.
- 9.7 The extent of the site allocation shown on the Policies Map, is defined by Policy EN29 and depicted in Figure 15 below. The extent of the site allocation, as put forward in the Masterplan Framework, has been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study (December 2014<sup>122</sup>) and the spatial framework defined by Joint Core Strategy Policy 11; i.e. the need to direct development towards Rushden.
- 9.8 A draft Masterplan Framework Document has been endorsed by the former Council and was published in February 2021. This document will be taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document supporting Policy EN29. Policy EN29 sets out the settlement boundaries together with the main delivery principles required for the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension.

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<sup>122</sup> <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1549>

**Figure 15: Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension**



**Policy EN29: Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension**

**In order to meet the requirements of Policy 33 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy the area shown on the local plan policies map, and defined in Figure 15, above, identifies the development boundaries for the delivery of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). This SUE constitutes a mixed use development, where land is allocated for up to 2,700 dwellings, a mix of retail, community facilities, employment development and open space, including two new primary schools, (and land reserved for a secondary school), a town park, allotments, sports facilities, a cemetery, and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space and associated infrastructure.**

**Policy 33 of the adopted Joint Core Strategy requires a masterplan to be prepared to define the policy expectations for the development of the SUE. The Masterplan Framework Document (MFD) or Supplementary Planning Guidance, will support Policy EN29, providing detailed guidance for the delivery of the site. Planning applications will be required to be broadly consistent with the MFD and the principles of the Government's Garden Communities initiative.**

**Proposals for development will be granted planning permission where they are consistent with the relevant policy expectations listed below. Further detailed guidance and illustration on how these policy expectations might be met is set out in the MFD or Supplementary Planning Guidance.**

**Economic:**

- 1. Ensuring the delivery of the employment land, located on the northern part of the site, that aims to achieve parity between rates of new housing occupations and job creation, as set out in Joint Core Strategy Policy 33 criterion c.**
- 2. Providing opportunities for small-businesses and those driving enterprise and innovation.**
- 3. 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 the broad locations serving the northern and southern areas of the SUE, along with a programme for delivery relative to the phased delivery of housing.**
- 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.**
- 5. 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.**
- 6. 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.**
  - 7. 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.**
  - 8. Provision of a hierarchy of streets and a legible and accessible network of dedicated footpaths and cycle paths.**
  - 9. Provision of a central green corridor link through the SUE to Hayden Road and incorporating a dedicated footpath and cycle path, as well as formal tree planting.**
  - 10. 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.**
  - 11. 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.**

**Environmental:**

- 12. Provide a sensitively designed environment incorporating:**
  - **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.**

**Social:**

13. **Provision of a new Town Park (of approximately 3.6ha).**
14. **Provision of formal, 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, or subsequent update.**
15. **Provision of a Cemetery (approximately 2ha) with access, parking and relevant supporting infrastructure.**
16. **Provision of allotments in the northern and southern neighbourhoods (approximately 2.20ha).**
17. **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).**
18. **Provision of a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures (including specialist**



housing provision and home working/larger homes) to accord with housing Policies EN25-EN28, and Policy 30 of the Adopted Joint Core Strategy, together with relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies.

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.

However, in accordance with the policy objectives for the “grey land” within the SUE, to deliver a “bespoke residential character”, the Council will bring forward detailed design guidance through a Supplementary Planning Document.

The infrastructure requirements for the proposed SUE are to be provided for through planning conditions and/or planning obligations following the principles of fairness and proportionality. To ensure all parts of the SUE make an appropriate contribution towards the SUE infrastructure it is expected that collaboration will be sought as part of S106 planning obligations.

### **Irthlingborough West**

- 9.9 Outline planning permission for the Irthlingborough West sustainable urban extension was granted in November 2014<sup>123</sup>, subject to the completion of a S106 agreement. Amended conditions and the draft S106 Agreement Heads of Term were subsequently agreed in August 2015<sup>124</sup>. This site is identified as a strategic commitment in the Joint Core Strategy.
- 9.10 Since 2015 progress with S106 negotiations has been limited, due to ongoing uncertainties regarding development viability. The trajectory has been revised to take account of continued deliverability (viability) issues, predominantly due to infrastructure obligations and the necessary site remediation work arising from the former Irthlingborough mine workings. Given the passage of time since the development was initially approved, it is probable that the S106 agreement would need to be comprehensively reviewed.
- 9.11 The allocation of additional housing land to the south east of Rushden (Policy EN24, above) has been necessitated due to the ongoing uncertainties around the delivery trajectory for Irthlingborough West; as much as that for Rushden East. The Joint Core Strategy allows for some offsetting of settlement specific housing requirements in the case of Growth Towns and Market Towns (i.e. Rushden and Irthlingborough), would meet a shortfall in deliverable sites at another settlement within the same Part 2 Local Plan area (Joint Core Strategy paragraph 9.10).

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<sup>123</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/547/development\\_control\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/547/development_control_committee)

<sup>124</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/600/planning\\_management\\_committee\\_formerly\\_known\\_as\\_development\\_control\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/600/planning_management_committee_formerly_known_as_development_control_committee)

- 9.12 Notwithstanding, the Council will continue to work to promote and support the successful delivery of Irthlingborough West. The breakdown of the development area is set out in Table 21, below.

**Table 21 - Irthlingborough West - breakdown of the development area**

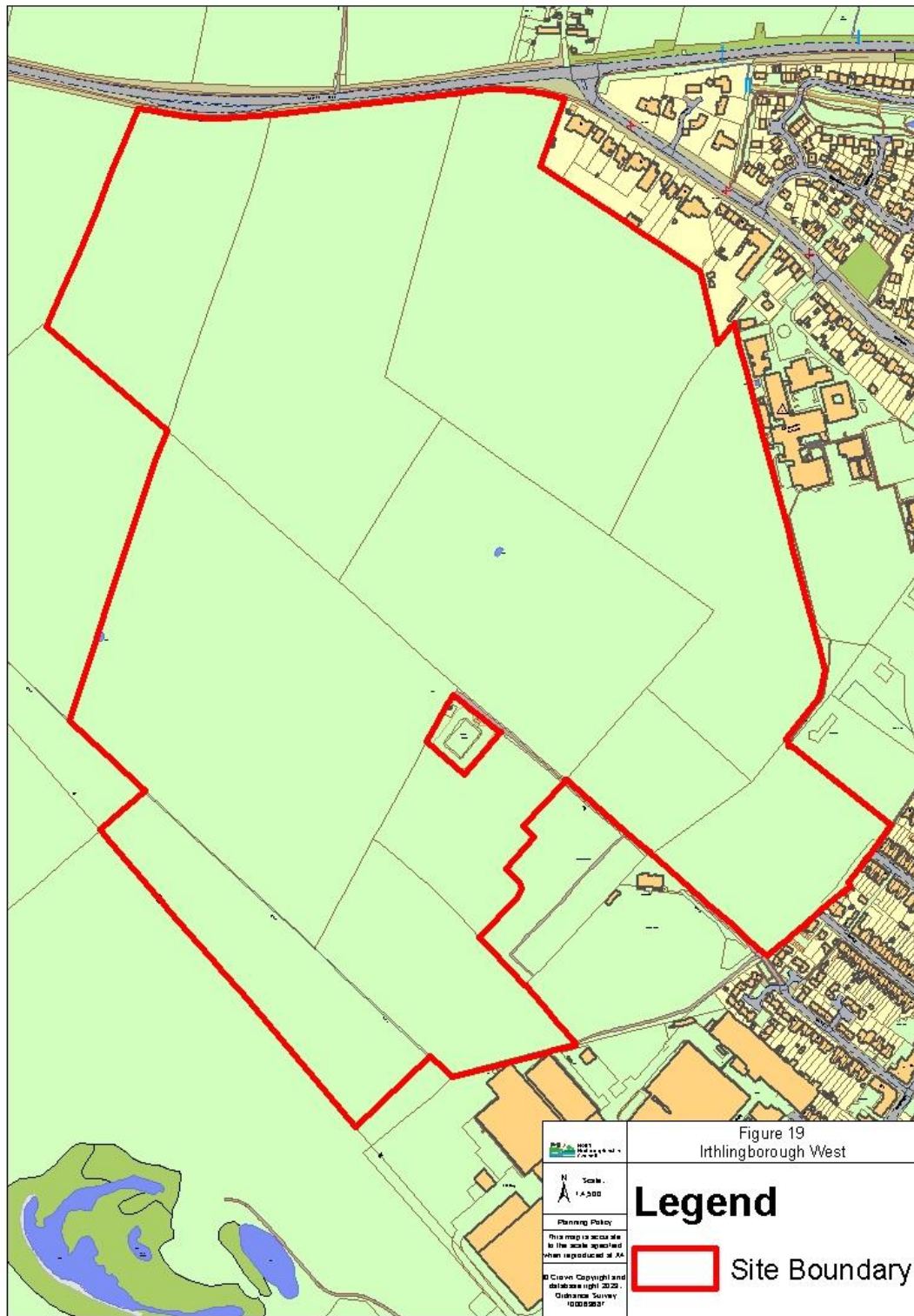
<b>Land use typology</b>	<b>Gross developable area (ha)</b>
Residential	23.45
Employment (office, industrial and/ or storage or warehousing)	7.5
Open space and structural landscaping	11.57
Huxlow Science College extension	7.11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>49.63</b>

- 9.13 The spatial extent of the site is defined by the application submitted in 2010 (reference 10/00857/OUT). The application was accompanied by a masterplan. This was refined through the development management process; such that the final illustrative masterplan (dated March 2013<sup>125</sup>) was approved by the former Council (Development Control Committee) on 24 November 2014. The site plan for Irthlingborough West is shown at Figure 16, below.

**Figure 16: Irthlingborough West site plan**

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<sup>125</sup> <https://publicaccess.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=L21KMIGO03N00>



9.14 The extent of the Irthlingborough West SUE is defined by the approved masterplan. The Council will work to deliver the SUE in line with the masterplan.

## 10.0 Town Centre Strategies

- 10.0 The East Northamptonshire area includes six towns, each of which contains services and facilities that serve a wider catchment area, and provide the opportunity for future growth and investment. This is recognised through the spatial policy direction set out in the Joint Core Strategy and explained further through the earlier sections of this Plan, which provide an area portrait and spatial development strategy in respect of the towns. This Plan will also consider the fundamentals of town centres as hubs for social interaction within the local community as the basis for understanding how town centres need to evolve to be fit for purpose in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Britain.
- 10.1 This section of the Plan seeks to promote the vitality and viability of the six towns, by allowing the potential for each town to prosper and diversify whilst meeting the district's development needs in a sustainable manner. This will include providing the opportunity for each town to respond to evolving market conditions, by identifying future investment potential and providing the flexibility to respond to changes in demands for different uses.
- 10.2 The Joint Core Strategy sets a general presumption in favour of the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings within the urban areas. This Plan will provide further direction by identifying particular sites, within the main urban areas, that can actively contribute to supporting the future prosperity and activity of each town.
- 10.3 In addition to policy direction provided through the Joint Core Strategy, this Plan will seek to complement those detailed town centre related policy proposals set out in Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans for Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds are already in place; whilst a Neighbourhood for Irthlingborough is at an early stage of preparation. There is no Neighbourhood Plan in preparation for Thrapston, or Oundle. Thrapston Town Council has proposed to work with the Council to secure local aspirations through this Plan.
- 10.4 The Plan sets out overarching guiding principles for the re-imagination of the six town centres. This is supplemented by individual town strategies, recognising policy initiatives identified in the relevant Neighbourhood Plans, but providing additional project and/ or site specific detail where appropriate. Each town strategy is structured in the following way:
- **Spatial character** – An assessment of the key characteristics of each urban area undertaken to inform decision making, based upon concepts outlined in the 2015 Urban Structures Study<sup>126</sup> and character area designations set out in some Neighbourhood Plans;
  - **Town centre re-imagination** – site specific redevelopment proposals for town centre sites (where applicable);
  - **Other redevelopment opportunities** e.g. sites identified in the Brownfield Land Register<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>126</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-urban-structures-study-january-2015/>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.nnjpdu.org.uk/publications/north-northamptonshire-brownfield-land-register-2020/>

## Reimagining Town Centres – guiding principles

- 10.5 The Joint Core Strategy sets out the overarching spatial policies for the six towns (Policy 11(1)). Further direction for the town centres is set out at Policy 12(d) for Rushden and Policy 12(f) for the other market towns.
- 10.6 This Plan provides additional guiding principles to support the re-imagination of all town centres, in order to enhance and/ or maintain their vitality and viability as community hubs. These principles will be complemented through an assessment of assets, challenges and opportunities which will inform future delivery strategies for each town. A number of future redevelopment or investment opportunities exist within the town centres, including those identified through ongoing stakeholder involvement which has informed the preparation of this Plan.
- 10.7 It is important to remember that the varied range of functions and roles that the town centres perform, over and above the retail offer. Main town centre uses should be supplemented by other opportunities; e.g. training facilities, art and craft events, ‘pop up’ businesses or ‘above shop’ living. Such activities all have the potential to enhance the town centres’ offer.
- 10.8 Economic Development is an issue for Rushden and the market towns as a whole, not just the town centres. There are many challenges to delivering sustainable economic growth for the six urban areas, although the town centres must be supported as a critical aspect of the spatial strategy.
- 10.9 In preparing this Plan, views of the strengths and weaknesses of the district’s town centres were sought, both through public consultation and through a series of stakeholder events held with ward Councillors and with Town and Parish Councils. Policy EN30 sets out a framework for assessing development opportunities within the wider town centres, as and when these arise. Strategies for each town will also be prepared to provide further site specific guidance, where appropriate.

### **Policy EN30: Reimagining Town Centres – guiding principles**

**Development proposals for the town centres: Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds and Thrapston should seek to increase local community interaction, by increasing footfall to sustain and enhance vitality and viability. The Council will work proactively with stakeholders where opportunities arise within the identified Growth and Market Towns to secure the following outcomes:**

- a) Maintain a mixture of uses that attract visitors and encourage greater social interaction, including both economic, social and, in some circumstances, residential, uses;**
- b) Consolidate and improve the retail offer of the town centres, by way of enhancements to identified active frontages;**
- c) Improve the leisure and cultural offer of each town to provide for the growth of both day and night time economies;**
- d) Seek to Implement high quality public realm improvements, including the development of new landmark features, within town centres especially**

**addressing gateway sites, as identified in town strategies or neighbourhood plans;**

- e) Seek enhancements to pedestrian connectivity both within town centres, and to residential and employment areas beyond; and**
- f) Encouraging a step change in the quality of urban design, providing sustainable development with a focus on low carbon energy solutions, through measures including green initiatives such as urban tree planting.**

**Development opportunities will be informed by the preparation of town strategies, with site specific details set out through development briefs.**

## **Rushden**

10.10 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) defines Rushden's status as the Growth Town; the focus for major regeneration and growth within the district. The majority of this growth will be delivered through the following strategic sites:

- Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (including a minimum of 2,500 new homes, rising to 2,700 for later development phases beyond the current Plan period, employment and supporting community and leisure facilities);
- Land at Nene Valley Farm, Northampton Road, also known as "Rushden Gateway" (employment); and
- Rushden Lakes (focus on retail, leisure and tourism).

## **Rushden Neighbourhood Plan**

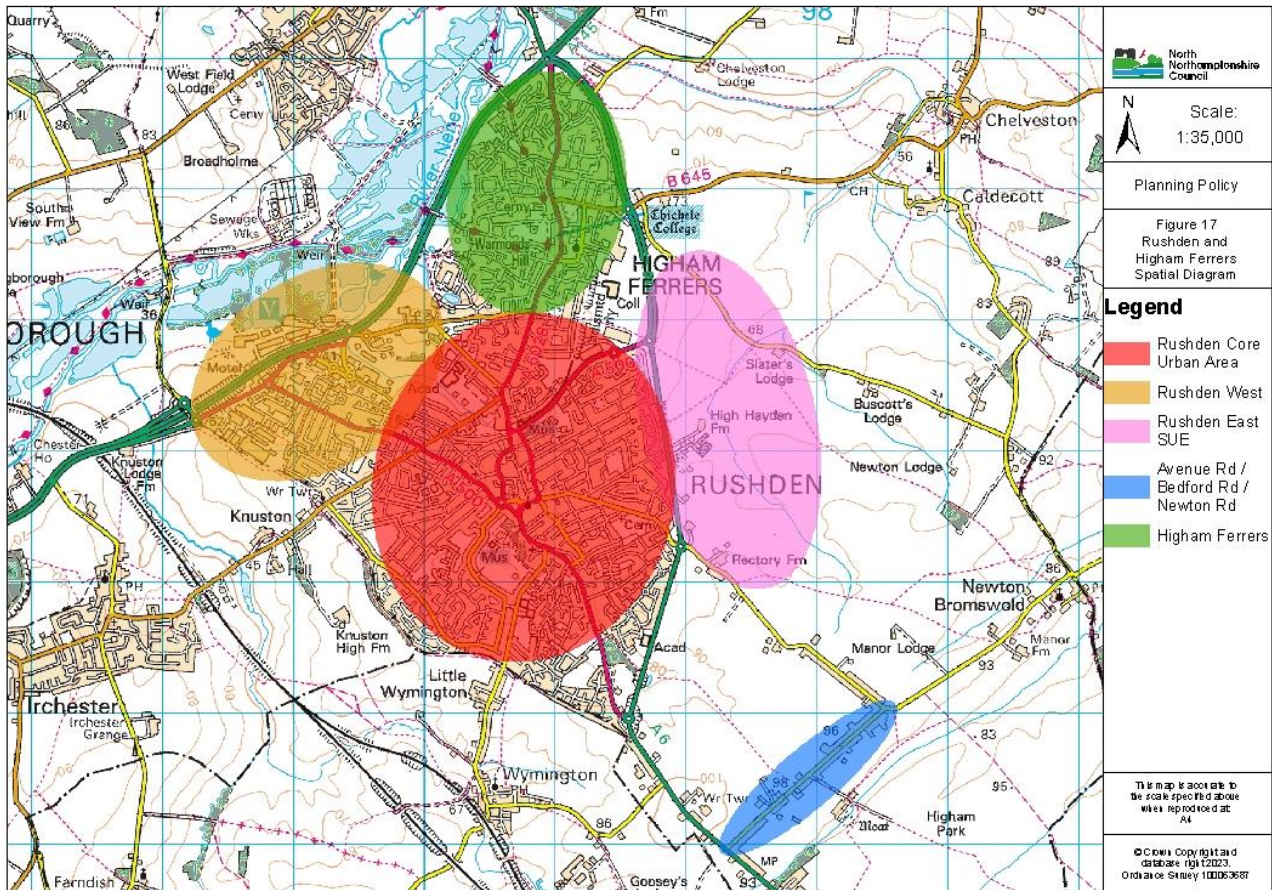
10.11 The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan provides further detailed policies for managing development within the Parish area. This was made in June 2018 and sets out policies which address the following issues:

- Managing new development within the defined urban area;
- Promoting housing allocations for over 600 dwellings within the urban area;
- Preferred housing mix, types and making provision for self-build housing ;
- Design, landscaping, enhancing the public realm, including town centre car parking;
- Town centre – mix of uses, shopping frontages and first floor uses; and
- Employment – delivery of new and retention of existing employment floorspace.

## **Spatial character**

10.12 The urban areas of Rushden and neighbouring Higham Ferrers consist of four distinctive spatial elements, plus the Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road ribbon development. The spatial strategy for the latter is defined by Policy H1 of the Neighbourhood Plan. Figure 17 and Table 22 (below) set out the main characteristics of each spatial area.

**Figure 17: Rushden and Higham Ferrers Spatial Diagram**



**Table 22 Spatial parts of Rushden and Higham Ferrers**

Spatial parts of Rushden and Higham Ferrers	Characteristics
Core urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined by radial routes – Higham Road/ High Street/ Bedford Road (north-south) and John Clark Way/ Newton Road/ Wellingborough Road (east-west)</li> <li>• Based around Victorian terraced roads, with former Boot and Shoe factory sites, with post-war suburban development to the south</li> <li>• Distribution centre to east of town centre, off John Clark Way (Spire Road) constructed late 2000s</li> <li>• Includes key services and facilities – town centre, leisure centres (Pemberton Centre/ Splash Pool), schools</li> <li>• Character defined main public open spaces – Rushden Hall Park, Spencer Park</li> </ul>
Rushden West (employment area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main employment area of Rushden</li> <li>• Longstanding industrial area, has grown in a piecemeal way over a long period</li> <li>• Includes environmentally challenging businesses e.g. Monoworld, Sander’s Lodge (waste)</li> </ul>

Spatial parts of Rushden and Higham Ferrers	Characteristics
	treatment) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporates Rushden Lakes and Rushden Gateway – main new employment sites</li> <li>• Includes enhanced visitor access to Nene Valley, via Rushden Lakes</li> </ul>
Rushden East (Sustainable Urban Extension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed strategic urban extension to east of A6 Bypass</li> <li>• Requires new east-west connections across A6</li> <li>• Development will include new community infrastructure; e.g. schools, neighbourhood centre</li> <li>• Development will be supported by strategic green infrastructure</li> </ul>
Avenue Road/ Bedford Road/ Newton Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribbon development, connecting Newton Road, Avenue Road and Bedford Road</li> <li>• Suburban character</li> <li>• Includes a mix of rural businesses (e.g. stables) and more urban uses (e.g. care homes)</li> </ul>
Higham Ferrers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self contained urban area, enclosed by Rushden (south), A6 Bypass (east) and A45 Bypass (west)</li> <li>• Historic market town – includes many heritage assets e.g. Chichele College, Castle</li> <li>• Main employment area to the east of the town (south of Kimbolton Road)</li> <li>• Individual character areas are defined in the Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan</li> </ul>

10.13 In preparing this spatial character portrait a number of issues affecting Rushden have been identified:

- Achieving the delivery of the Joint Core Strategy allocated strategic sites at Rushden East, and Rushden Gateway (Nene Valley Farm);
- Opportunities to deliver improved connectivity and enhanced wellbeing through improved access to the Greenway;
- Town centre – improving overall character and quality; improving traffic management within the town centre (possible proposals to realign road network) with particular focus on the area bounded by the High Street, College Street and Duck Street;
- Sport and Leisure – future of existing leisure centres (Splash Pool/ Pemberton Centre);
- Reconfiguring town centre car parks to improve accessibility, whilst also driving mixed use development opportunities
- Environmental challenges arising from existing industrial operations e.g. Monoworld (Sander’s Lodge), Travis Perkins (town centre);
- Potential for additional tourist accommodation, especially in light of the success of Rushden Lakes (5 million visitors in its first year of operation);



- Design of new residential development within the urban areas; and
- Flood risk from culverted sections of Skew Bridge Dyke adjacent to the town centre (Duck Street, College Street, Station Road).

10.14 In many cases, the issues identified through the 2017/18 workshop events<sup>128</sup> are addressed through Neighbourhood Plan policies e.g. town centre public realm traffic and car parking within the town centres, housing design and mix, and housing land allocations. Furthermore, the Rushden West employment area is identified as being suitable and appropriate for waste management operation through the policies contained in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted July 2017). Nevertheless, site specific policies are included within the Rushden town strategy, relating to the following:

- Town centre re-imagination;
- Other brownfield sites.

### **Town centre re-imagination**

10.15 The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan focuses upon managing development and the retention of public car parking within the existing town centre. It does not include site specific proposals for the enhancement or re-imagination of the town centre. It does, however, set out principles for enhancement of the public realm, including the identification of town centre gateway sites.

10.16 The Council's Economic Strategy seeks to revitalise and bring investment into the district's town centres. It proposes active measures for "Driving Town Centre Revitalisation". This is a particular issue for Rushden, as the designated Growth Town and largest town centre within the district.

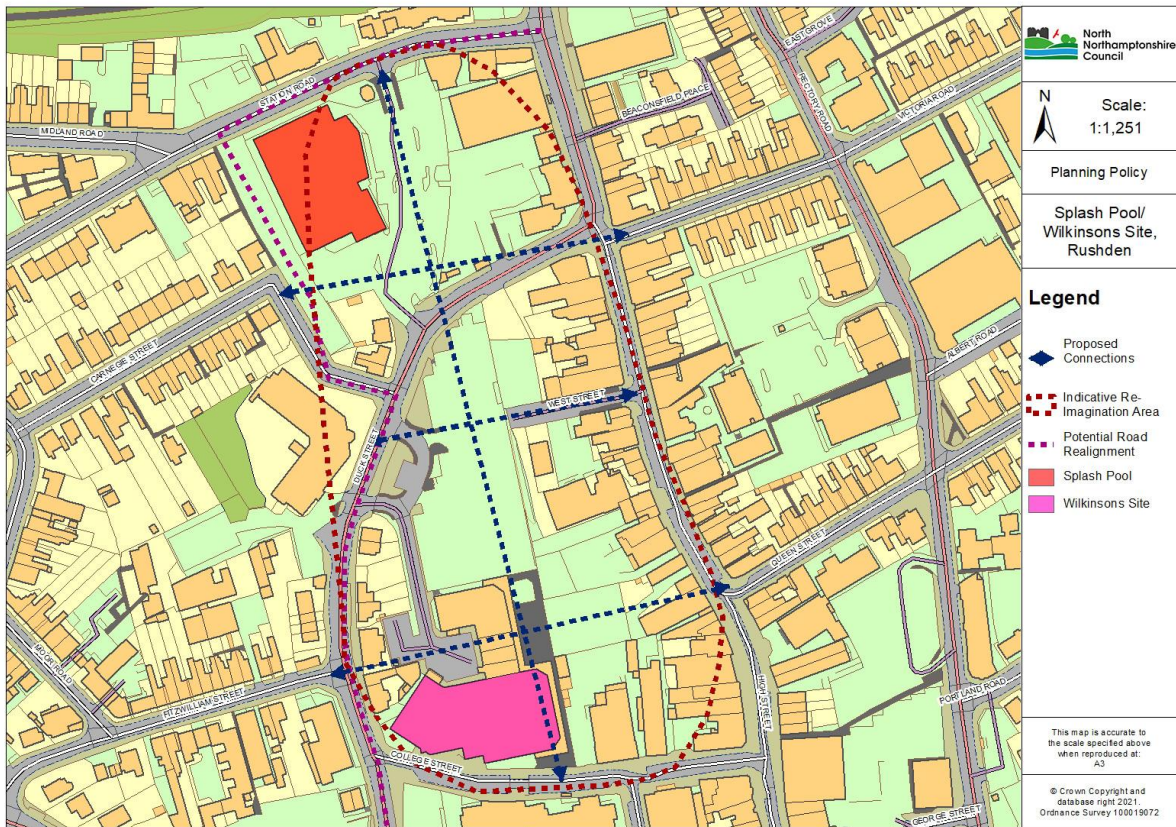
10.17 As part of the engagement with stakeholders in drafting the Plan, site specific opportunities for revitalising Rushden town centre have been identified as follows:

- Alfred Street and associated Tennyson Road School sites;
- Potential redevelopment of publicly owned town centre land holdings; e.g. Splash Pool and Wilkinson site, with possible linkages to High Street; College Street, Duck Street, Eaton Walk, Station Road, West Street;
- Reconfiguration of town centre car parking.

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<sup>128</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/837/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/837/planning_policy_committee)  
[https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/853/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/853/planning_policy_committee)

**Figure 18: Rushden redevelopment opportunities**



10.18 Of the potential town centre re-imagination sites, the redevelopment of the Splash Pool and Wilkinson sites, two of the Council’s main remaining land holdings within the former district, is currently being pursued. Policy EN31 sets out redevelopment proposals for the Splash Pool and Wilkinson sites. Other redevelopment opportunities in and around the town centre will be guided by the town centre re-imagination principles (Policy EN30, above) and through the preparation of development briefs.

10.19 Release of the Splash Pool (Station Road) and/ or Pemberton Centre (HE Bates Way, to the west of the town centre) sites is dependent upon the development of replacement facilities. The Healthy and Active Lifestyles Strategy (October 2017)<sup>129</sup> recognises that developments coming forward around the south of the District (most notably Rushden East) will create significant additional demand for facilities. Relocation of existing facilities should be directed by a built sports facility strategy.

10.20 There is an existing foul and surface water sewer in Anglian Water’s ownership within the boundary of the Splash Pool site and the site layout should be designed to take these into account. This existing infrastructure is protected by easements and should not be built over or located in private spaces (e.g. domestic gardens/ back yards) where access for maintenance and repair could be restricted. The existing sewer should be located in highways or public open space. If this is not possible a formal application to divert the sewer may be required. The majority of the site is situated within Flood Zone 2. Whilst this does not preclude more vulnerable forms of

<sup>129</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10496/healthy\\_and\\_active\\_lifestyles\\_strategy](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10496/healthy_and_active_lifestyles_strategy)

development (subject to appropriate flood mitigation measures), the site would be suitable for town centre uses, leisure or commercial uses.

### **Policy EN31: Splash Pool and Wilkinson site redevelopment, Rushden**

**Redevelopment proposals for the Splash Pool and Wilkinson sites together with the associated highways network, as shown as an area of opportunity in Figure 18 above, should deliver increased footfall and enhanced vitality and viability for the town centre.**

**The redevelopment would comprise ‘town centre uses’ to consolidate and improve the town centre retail offering, improve the leisure and cultural offering to encourage the growth of both day and night-time economies and offer ‘above the shop’ residential opportunities.**

**Whilst it is envisaged that redevelopment of this key centre site could be delivered in phases, the two main components (Wilkinsons and the Splash Pool) should be informed by a comprehensive development brief, which takes into account the following principles:**

- a) The creation of a pedestrian link between the High Street and the shop units on Eaton Walk;**
- b) The development of a new public square located between the High Street and Eaton Walk;**
- c) Providing improvements to the public realm to create a distinct quarter;**
- d) The reconfiguration and enhancement of public car parking provision to improve connection to the High Street primary shopping area;**
- e) The preservation and enhancement of the heritage assets on the site, in accordance with a heritage impact assessment;**
- f) The safeguarding of suitable access for the maintenance of foul drainage infrastructure;**
- g) In addition to the above, the redevelopment of the Splash Pool leisure site will be required to address the loss of the facility by providing an equivalent replacement facility and the Council will aim to undertake a built sports facilities strategy to inform future opportunities for its relocation as well as bringing forward the regeneration of this key town centre site.**

#### **Other brownfield sites**

10.21 The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan allocates six housing sites, delivering around 600 new homes. This covers virtually all of the remaining deliverable housing land within the main urban area. Three such sites have been identified, through the Brownfield Land Register or Employment Land Review, where redevelopment should be encouraged and supported through the Local Plan:

- Former factory site, between 71 Oakley Road and 37-51 Washbrook Road (0.28ha) – identified in Brownfield Land Register;

- The Windmill Club / Business Centre, Glassbrook Road (0.5ha) – assessed by Aspinall Verdi (Employment Land Review); and
- Rectory Business Centre (1.1ha) – assessed by Aspinall Verdi.

10.22 Site specific proposals to support the release of these sites for redevelopment are set out below.

### **Former factory site, between 71 Oakley Road and 37-51 Washbrook Road**

10.23 This former factory was vacated in 2009 and the site remains derelict. Various potential redevelopment proposals have been put forward, but none have been successful. The challenge in securing redevelopment of this site was recognised during 2016/17, when the Pilot Brownfield Register was set up. As at 2018 the 0.28ha Oakley Road factory site was the only outstanding site listed in the Brownfield Register remaining undeveloped, or without current planning permission. The Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU) recently identified this as a priority stalled housing site; appointing Local Partnerships to review potential approaches or interventions to support redevelopment (Stalled Sites Delivery Supporting Technical Report, May 2020)<sup>130</sup>.

10.24 Given that the site is not allocated in a development plan document, but is listed in the Brownfield Land Register, it is therefore necessary to set out development principles for the site through this Plan. These are set out in Policy EN32 (below).

10.25 Financial contributions to mitigate the adverse impacts of development upon the SPA/Ramsar site will be sought in accordance with the Addendum to the SPA Supplementary Planning Document: Mitigation Strategy. In line with the SPD requirements, consultation is required by Natural England in advance of submitting any planning application. As part of that consultation, further mitigation may be needed in exceptional circumstances and where Natural England advise. If a bespoke process is required, then a project level Appropriate Assessment will be required to accompany any planning application.

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<sup>130</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11864/stalled\\_sites\\_delivery\\_supporting\\_technical\\_report\\_may\\_2020](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11864/stalled_sites_delivery_supporting_technical_report_may_2020)

**Figure 19: Former factory site, between 71 Oakley Road and 37-51 Washbrook Road, Rushden**



**Policy EN32: Former factory site, between 71 Oakley Road and 37-51 Washbrook Road, Rushden**

The vacant Oakley Road factory site, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for the development of approximately 10 dwellings. The development should provide for:

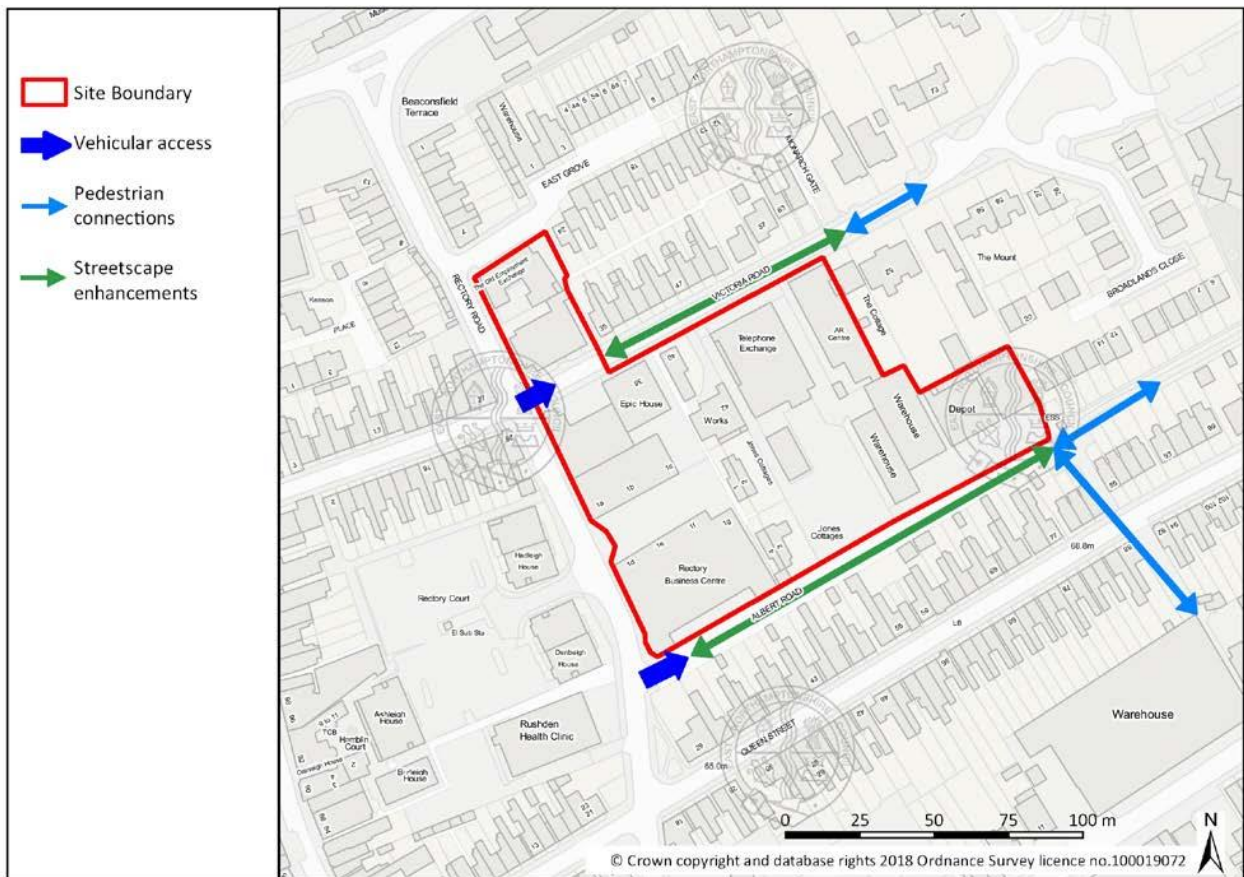
- a) A mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, consisting of predominantly small and medium sized properties;
- b) Appropriate development contributions towards education (primary and secondary), employment and the Greenway;
- c) Vehicular access off Oakley Road; and
- d) Pedestrian and cycle connections to Washbrook Road and the Greenway.

**Employment sites recommended for development**

10.26 The Employment Land Review (March 2019) recommended that two employment areas should be released for alternative uses. In both cases, it was found that the existing employment premises were found to be in poor condition and coming to the end of their useful economic lives.

- 10.27 The 0.5ha Windmill Club/ Business Centre, Glassbrook Road, consisting of small business units and a social club, is situated within a predominantly residential area, adjacent to the Pemberton Centre. This dry leisure centre was previously considered for redevelopment, along with the town centre Splash Pool site, as part of wider proposals for a new Rushden Leisure Centre. It remains uncertain when these longstanding proposals for a new leisure centre could be delivered, although any future masterplan for redevelopment of the Pemberton Centre could also incorporate the Windmill Club and Business Centre site.
- 10.28 The larger (1.1ha) Rectory Business Centre and adjacent telephone exchange, warehousing and factory premises, are situated adjacent to the town centre to the east of Rectory Road, between Albert Road and Victoria Road. This significant and long established employment area has poor and difficult road access, with the current units in a poor state of repair and nearing the end of their economic lives. The Employment Land Review found that the site is situated within a predominantly residential area, so would be well suited for housing.
- 10.29 Policy EN33 supports the redevelopment of the Rectory Business Centre employment area between Albert Road and Victoria Road for residential uses. This sets out key development principles, as and when the site becomes available for redevelopment.
- 10.30 There is an existing sewer, in Anglian Water's ownership, within the boundary of the Rectory Business Centre site and the site layout should be designed to take this into account. This existing infrastructure is protected by easements and should not be built over or located where access for maintenance and repair could be restricted. The existing sewer should be located in highways or public open space. If this is not possible a formal application to divert Anglian Water's existing drainage/ sewerage infrastructure may be required.
- 10.31 Financial contributions to mitigate the adverse impacts of development upon the SPA/Ramsar site will be sought in accordance with the Addendum to the SPA Supplementary Planning Document: Mitigation Strategy. In line with the SPD requirements, consultation is required by Natural England in advance of submitting any planning application. As part of that consultation, further mitigation may be needed in exceptional circumstances and where Natural England advise. If a bespoke process is required, then a project level Appropriate Assessment will be required to accompany any planning application.

**Figure 20: Rectory Business Centre, Rushden**



**Policy EN33: Rectory Business Centre, Rushden**

Redevelopment of the Rectory Business Centre site, as shown on the Policies Map, will be supported for residential development, for approximately 35 dwellings. Redevelopment proposals will be informed by a comprehensive masterplan and should deliver:

- a) A mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, consisting of predominantly small and medium sized properties;
- b) Improved vehicular access and parking arrangements, upgrading the Albert Road and Victoria Road junctions with Rectory Road;
- c) Enhancements to the public realm, especially the streetscapes of Albert Road and Victoria Road;
- d) Improved east-west pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the town centre and residential areas to the east, including appropriate crossing arrangements along Rectory Road; and
- e) The preservation and enhancement of the heritage assets on the site, in accordance with a heritage impact assessment, and
- f) The safeguarding of suitable access for the maintenance of foul drainage infrastructure

## Higham Ferrers

- 10.32 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 1/ Policy 11) sets a distinctive spatial strategy for Higham Ferrers, as providing a localised convenience and service role, with growth pressures directed to Rushden. This provides recognition of Higham Ferrer's close function relationship with its larger neighbour and Growth Town.
- 10.33 The Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan (made April 2016) sets out a comprehensive range of detailed policies for the town, regarding:
- Housing – windfall development, mix and tenure;
  - Site specific policies/ allocations – Land east of Ferrers School, Higham Ferrers East (part of Rushden East);
  - Provision, protection and enhancement of community facilities;
  - Development management – design (e.g. character areas), heritage assets;
  - Green infrastructure – Greenway extensions, Local Green Space;
  - Communications – Chowns Mill junction improvements, development of broadband, connections;
  - Residential parking standards;
  - Town centre – managing uses (e.g. hot food takeaways), public realm improvements.
- 10.34 Higham Ferrers' spatial character is considered alongside neighbouring Rushden, in Table 24, above. This recognises the strong functional relationship between the two towns, and the different but closely related spatial development strategies (see Policy EN1). Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Plan includes detailed guidance regarding various defined character areas which make up the urban area.
- 10.35 Whilst the Neighbourhood Plan contains detailed policies for managing development within the town centre, the stakeholder engagement for this Plan revealed a significant brownfield redevelopment opportunity within Higham Ferrers.

## Brownfield sites

- 10.36 One significant potential redevelopment opportunity within the Higham Ferrers urban area has been identified. This is the brownfield Federal Estates site, south of Newton Road and east of William Steele Way.
- 10.37 The 4.4ha Federal Estates and former Textile Bonding factory sites are situated within the designated Employment Protection Area, designated as such by the Neighbourhood Plan and JCS Policy 22(c). Nevertheless, the sites contain two large warehouses and a factory, which have stood vacant for over 10 years. Despite long term marketing of the Federal Distribution Centre site and former Textile Bonding factory the units (totalling over 18,000m<sup>2</sup>) remain vacant. The NPPF and relevant Local Plan policies allow for the release of sites for alternative uses where there is no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the allocated use (paragraph 122).

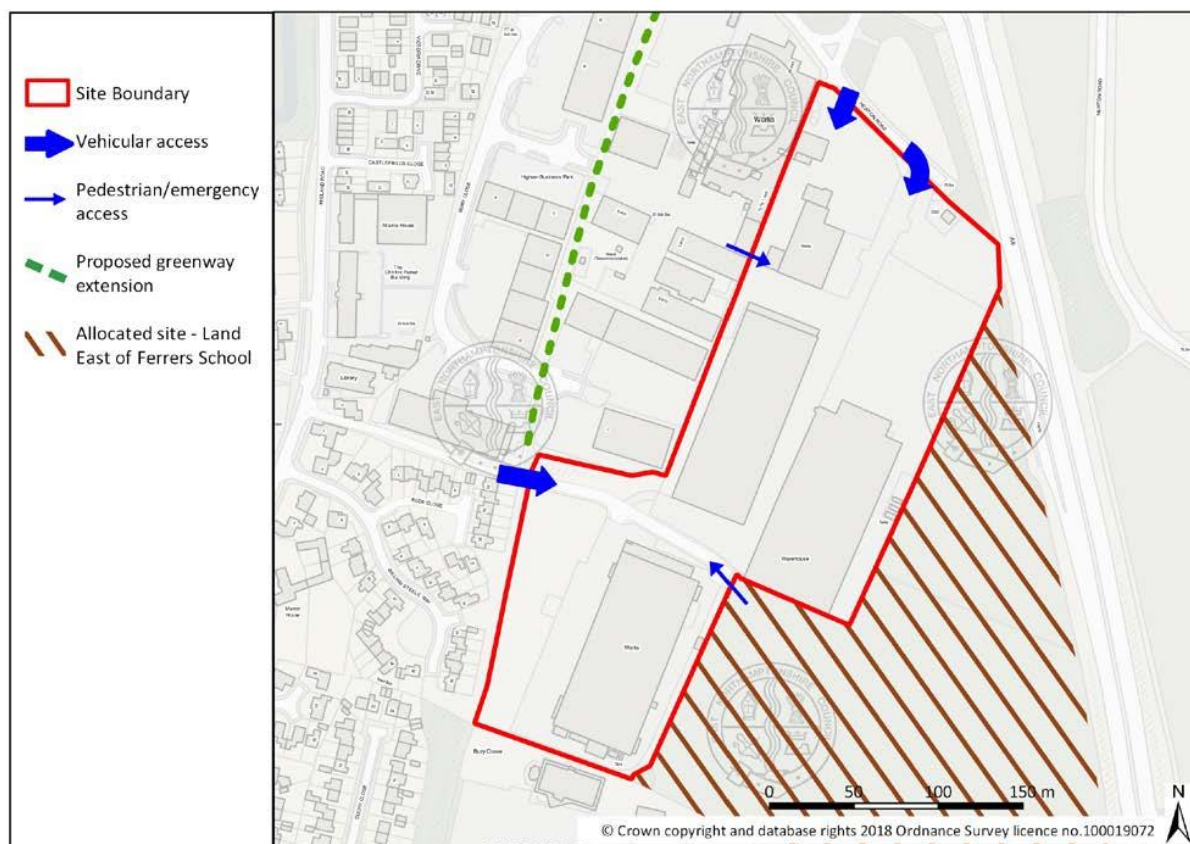


- 10.38 The Employment Land Review (Aspinall Verdi, March 2019)<sup>131</sup> found the premises to be in a poor state of repair; such that these could be better released for residential development. Any such release of the land for residential development should not adversely affect the operational requirements of the more modern industrial units to the west (Aspinall Verdi, paragraph 7.20).
- 10.39 In 2019, Federal Estates Ltd submitted a two part application, for the comprehensive redevelopment of these land holdings in Higham Ferrers, for housing. As part of the same application, it is proposed to relocate existing operations at the northern part of the Federal Estates site (south of Newton Road) to a new “Chelveston Energy Innovation Park”, to the south of the existing Chelveston Renewable Energy Park. The Energy Innovation Park focuses upon low carbon technologies, including energy storage facilities and renewable hydrogen production, with a view to accelerating the growth of zero-carbon/ green industries. Permission for these proposals was granted in November 2020 (reference 19/01781/FUL), subject to S106.
- 10.40 Notwithstanding, concerns were raised through stakeholder engagement regarding the limited options available to provide pedestrian and cycle connections between the allocated housing site (Land east of Ferrers School; Neighbourhood Plan Policy HF.H4) and town centre facilities. If the two vacant warehouses and factory building were released for housing, they could deliver the following benefits:
- Redevelopment of redundant brownfield land;
  - Additional housing land supply within the Higham Ferrers urban area; and
  - Opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycle connections between the allocated housing site to the east of Ferrers School and Higham Ferrers town centre, via Newton Road and/ or the Midland Road/ former Textile Bonding factory link road.
- 10.41 The site has capacity for around 120 dwellings. Appropriate structural landscaping would be required to provide a suitable buffer between the site and adjacent factories (i.e. Woodleys, Bury Close).

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<sup>131</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11259/190307\\_east\\_northants\\_elr\\_report\\_final](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11259/190307_east_northants_elr_report_final)

**Figure 21: Federal Estates/ former Textile Bonding factory site, Newton Road/ Midland Road, Higham Ferrers**



**Policy EN34: Federal Estates/ former Textile Bonding factory site, Newton Road/ Midland Road, Higham Ferrers**

The vacant Federal Estates/ former Textile Bonding factory sites, as shown on the Policies Map, will be allocated for the development of approximately 120 dwellings. The development should include:

- a) A mix of housing types and tenures to meet local needs, consisting of an appropriate mix of residential properties;
- b) Appropriate development contributions towards education, social, community, public open space and green infrastructure, in accordance with priorities set out in the Local Infrastructure Delivery Plan;
- c) East/ west connections, providing linkages between Ferrers School, the allocated housing land to the east, Moulton College campus and the Rushden East sustainable urban extension, and the town centre;
- d) Provision for vehicular access from Midland Road and Newton Road where these fulfil current highways standards; and
- e) Appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that the amenity of future occupiers is not unacceptably affected by the established businesses at

## Woodley's Yard and Bury Close.

### Irthlingborough

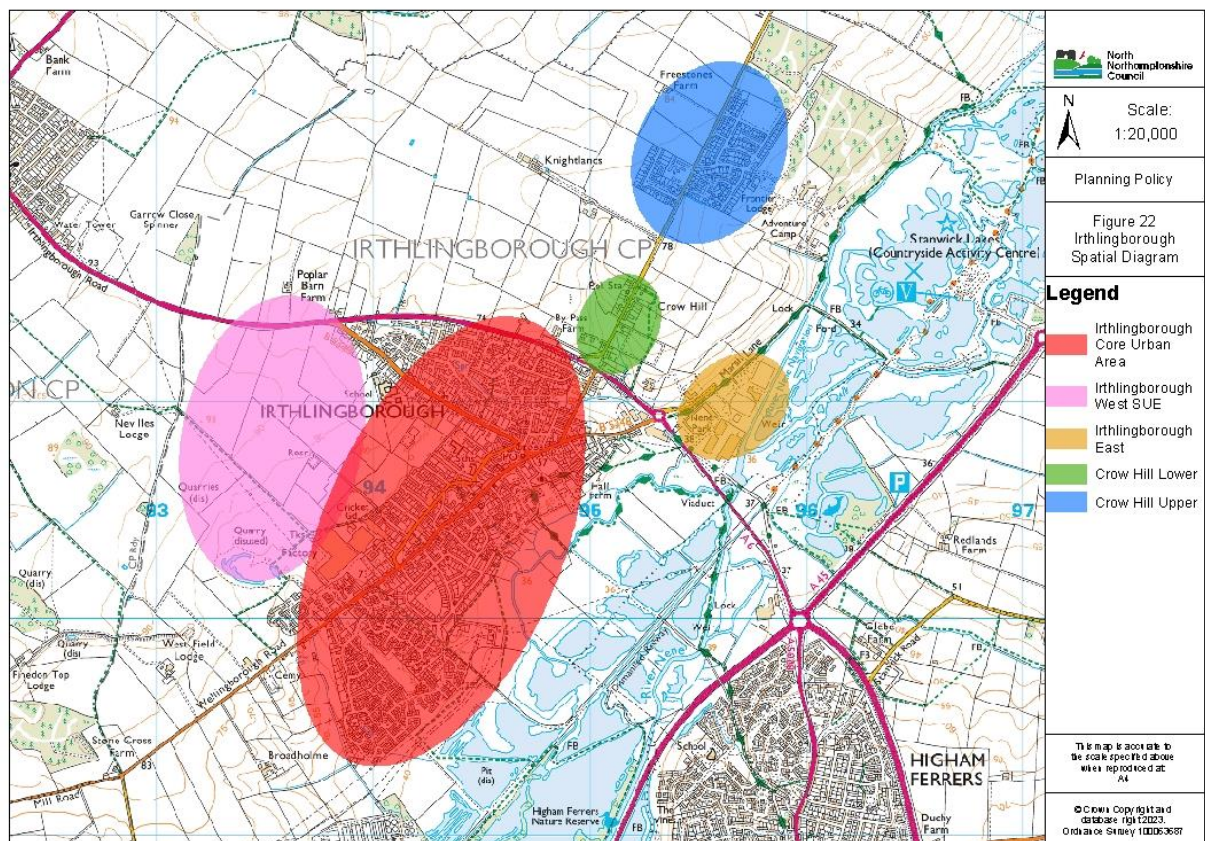
10.42 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) defines priorities for Irthlingborough; the regeneration, diversification and expansion of the town's employment and service base. This Plan (Policy EN1(1)(b)) provides further direction, including a focus upon delivering the Irthlingborough West sustainable urban extension. It also identifies the following redevelopment opportunities within the urban area:

- Town centre re-imagination – Former Select & Save, 13-21 High Street/ St Peter's Way Car Park, Irthlingborough; and
- Other brownfield sites – Former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium site, Nene Park, Diamond Way, Irthlingborough.

### Spatial character

10.43 Irthlingborough consists of five distinctive spatial parts. Figure 22 and Table 23 (below) outline the main characteristics of each area:

**Figure 22: Irthlingborough Spatial Diagram**



**Table 23: Spatial parts of Irthlingborough**

Spatial parts of Irthlingborough	Characteristics
Core urban area (existing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South of the A6, defined by main arterial routes – Finedon Road, Station Road, Wellingborough Road</li> <li>• Includes key services and facilities – town centre, schools</li> <li>• Hosts main employer – Whitworth</li> </ul>
Irthlingborough West (Sustainable Urban Extension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permitted major extension to main urban area</li> <li>• Will enable new Finedon Road (A6) and Wellingborough Road connections</li> </ul>
Irthlingborough East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former principal employment and leisure hub</li> <li>• Separated from main urban area by A6 Bypass</li> <li>• Two main elements – Nene Park (former Rushden &amp; Diamonds FC stadium, south of Diamond Way/ Marsh Lane) and Nene Business Park (mixed use redevelopment site, north of Diamond Way/ Marsh Lane)</li> <li>• Mixed use developments at Nene Business Park site (Attley Way) currently under construction – new food/ convenience retailing, housing</li> </ul>
Crow Hill (lower)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribbon development along Addington Road</li> <li>• Separated from main urban area by A6 Bypass</li> <li>• Characteristically suburban, but with rural elements e.g. Bypass Farm/ butchers</li> </ul>
Crow Hill (upper)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary/ smaller part of Irthlingborough, with urban character</li> <li>• Separated from main urban area by A6 Bypass and some agricultural fields</li> <li>• Addington Road provides main arterial route</li> <li>• Includes some local services, facilities and businesses – convenience store, community centre, Frontier Centre</li> </ul>

10.44 Irthlingborough is a designated Neighbourhood Area, and there is the intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. Preparation is at an early stage and will aim to complement the policies that are set out in this Plan.

10.45 In formulating this Plan, a number of issues affecting Irthlingborough have been identified. These were initially highlighted through the Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017) and subsequent stakeholder workshops as follows:

- Securing the successful implementation of the Irthlingborough West sustainable urban extension;
- Making provision for Whitworths' business plans (main employer in the town), enabling the company to remain at Irthlingborough;
- Town centre re-imagination – securing the benefits of the new Market Square/ Church Street Coop etc development and addressing other redevelopment opportunities (e.g. former Select & Save premises, 13-21 High Street and St Peter's Way Car Park); and
- Securing the successful redevelopment of Nene Park (former Rushden & Diamonds FC stadium) site.

10.46 The spatial strategies for the Crow Hill parts of Irthlingborough are set in Policy EN1 of this Plan. This section of the Plan considers what further direction is required to facilitate the redevelopment of significant development sites within Irthlingborough.

#### **Irthlingborough West and Whitworth site**

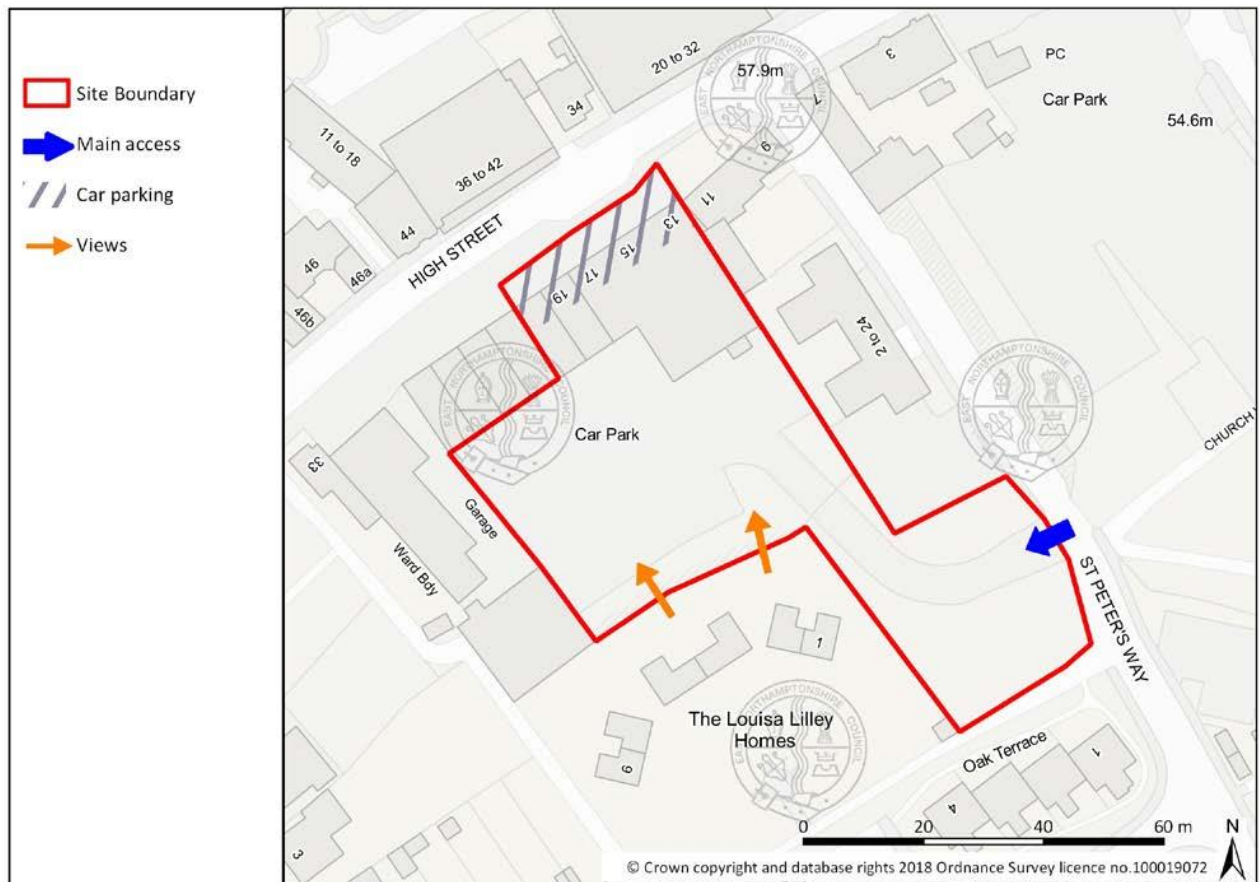
10.47 The Irthlingborough West Sustainable Urban Extension is identified as a strategic commitment in the Joint Core Strategy and the Council will continue to work to promote and support the successful delivery of this. Permission for the comprehensive redevelopment of the adjacent Whitworths food factory site (to the south) for housing was granted in 2010. This has since lapsed and Whitworths has since indicated that it is keen to realign its operations on the current site. Policies EN16 and EN17 (Protected Employment Areas, and relocation and/ or expansion of existing businesses respectively) provide the relevant policy framework for managing future Whitworths' development proposals.

#### **Town centre re-imagination**

10.48 It is anticipated that the recently completed mixed-use redevelopment of the former Express Works Factory site (Coop site) will provide a catalyst for further investment into Irthlingborough town centre and will provide a major new focal point and hub for the town centre. It has been implemented so as to improve the setting of the Market Cross and St Peter's Church, two key heritage assets within the town.

10.49 The former Select & Save building (13-21 High Street) has been vacant for over a decade. It is highlighted as the principal re-imagination opportunity within the town centre. It is proposed that comprehensive redevelopment of the site, be encouraged through this Plan.

**Figure 23: Former Select & Save, 13-21 High Street/ St Peter's Way Car Park, Irthlingborough**



**Policy EN35: Former Select & Save, 13-21 High Street/ St Peter's Way Car Park, Irthlingborough**

The vacant Select & Save and St Peter's Way Car Park site, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for redevelopment, proposals should deliver:

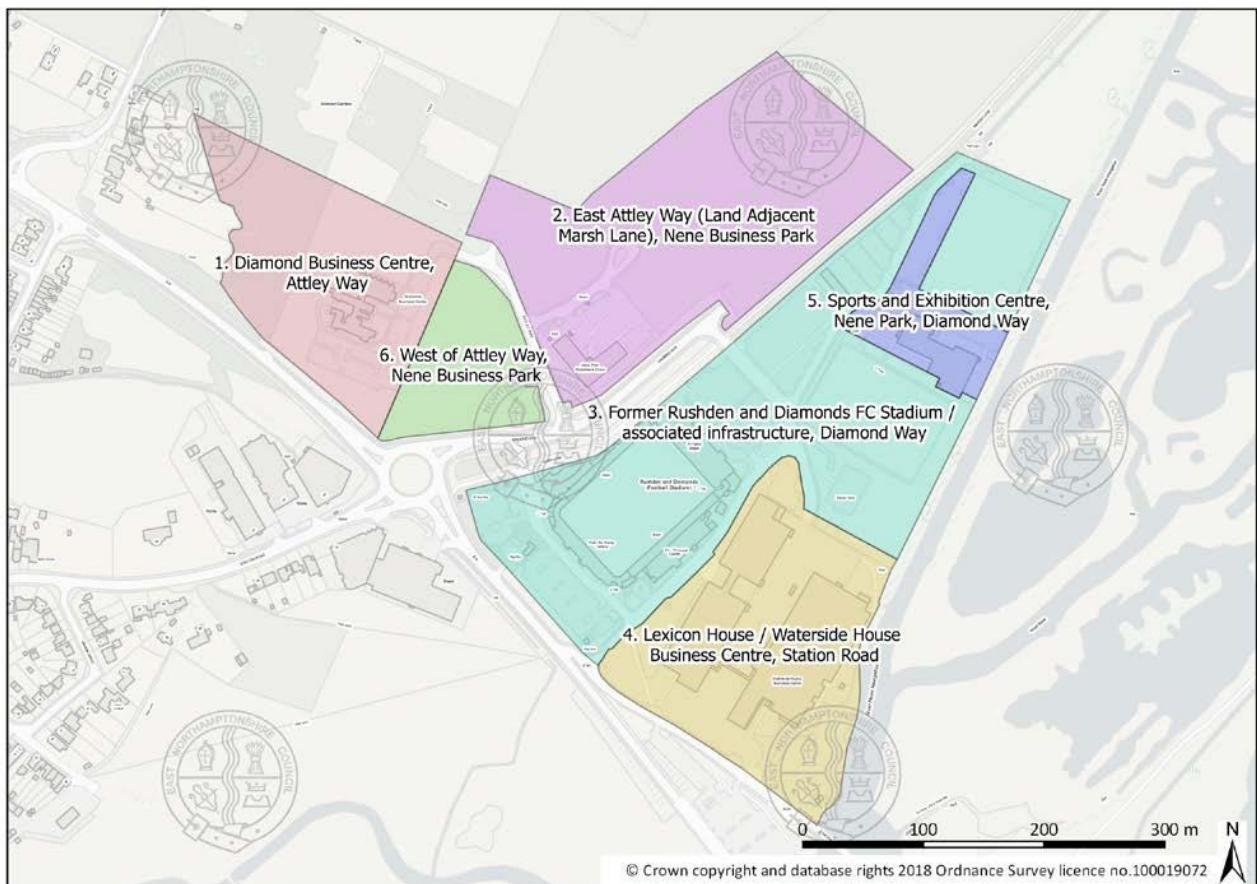
- a) A balance and mix of main town centre uses, including convenience and comparison retailing, financial services and/ or food and drink businesses;
- b) Enhancements to the High Street primary shopping frontage;
- c) Pedestrian connections between the High Street, St Peter's Way and St Peter's Church;
- d) Provision for suitable service arrangements for the new business premises;
- e) Sufficient public car parking;
- f) Opportunities for live-work units at first floor level or above; and
- g) Preservation and enhancement to the settings of heritage assets, with particular reference to St Peter's Church and the Louisa Lilley almshouses.

## Other brownfield sites

10.50 The Irthlingborough East part of the town has long functioned as the main employment and leisure location for the town as a whole. The site has a chequered planning history; further details of which are set out in the Irthlingborough East Background Paper (BP12)<sup>132</sup>. It has hosted a variety of uses and businesses; most notably the former Rushden & Diamonds FC stadium site at Nene Park. The area consists of six distinct parts:

1. Diamond Business Centre, Attley Way (2.9ha);
2. East of Attley Way (Land Adjacent Marsh Lane), Nene Business Park (5.2ha);
3. Former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium / associated infrastructure, Diamond Way (7.2ha);
4. Lexicon House/ Waterside House Business Centre, Station Road (3.8ha);
5. Sports and Exhibition Centre, Nene Park, Diamond Way (1.1ha); and
6. West of Attley Way, Nene Business Park (1.20ha).

**Figure 24: Irthlingborough East/ Nene Park**



10.51 Of the Nene Business Park/ Diamond Business Centre (north) parts of the Irthlingborough East area (sites 1, 2 and 6), a new Aldi store opened at the end of 2018 (site 6). Furthermore, detailed permission was granted in 2019 for the

<sup>132</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12113/background\\_paper\\_12\\_-\\_irthlingborough\\_east](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12113/background_paper_12_-_irthlingborough_east)

construction of 88 dwellings East of Attley Way (site 2), with construction now well underway, having started early in 2020.

- 10.52 Sites 4 and 5 are mostly in use. The Waterside House Business Centre includes premises for small business start ups, while the Sports and Exhibition Centre has, since 2012, been used for leisure and office uses, including a gym.
- 10.53 The Former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium (site 3, Nene Park), was demolished in 2017. The site was identified as a lapsed site in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan (PPS) (October 2016). The PPS identified that the site contained three poor quality adult pitches. The PPS recommended that opportunities to bring the site back into use were explored to meet identified shortfalls. However, if this is not feasible or sustainable or disposal is inevitable then the PPS sets out that requirements of NPPF paragraph 99 must be met. The PPS states that this requires replacement provision of an equivalent or better quantity and quality within boundaries of Irthlingborough. The loss of the stadium, playing pitches and ancillary facilities requires suitable mitigation (i.e. alternative provision, unless it can be demonstrated that the facilities are surplus to requirements), in accordance with NPPF paragraph 99. Account should also be taken of the findings of any subsequent Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 10.54 Replacement leisure facilities are anticipated to be developed in accordance with the Healthy and Active Lifestyles Strategy through the masterplans for the major strategic sustainable urban extensions.
- 10.55 The former stadium site, the largest part of Irthlingborough East, is one of the most significant brownfield sites in the Plan area. However, the range of potential uses for site 3 is greatly restricted by a number of development constraints. The majority of the site is situated within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 3. In most circumstances this precludes all but less vulnerable (to flooding) and water compatible uses; such as most main town centre uses, leisure or general industrial uses. The site is also situated adjacent to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site, which will also have significant implications for the range of appropriate uses for the site.
- 10.56 The importance of securing a suitable redevelopment scheme for the Nene Park site (site 3) will form a key part of the future strategy in order to secure investment for Irthlingborough. This Plan will be proactive in allowing for suitable redevelopment proposals, setting out a framework and parameters for the redevelopment of the former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium.
- 10.57 The site is located adjacent to the SPA, a site specific HRA is therefore required. The HRA should assess all potential impacts including impacts on surrounding Functionally Linked Land, development proposals should include a Construction Environmental Management Plan and an Access Management Plan which includes details regarding the use of moorings. SuDS will need to be incorporated as part of any redevelopment. Flood risk will need to be fully considered and appropriate mitigation measures delivered, proposals will also need to consider the build-up of contaminants. The impact of climate change over the plan period will need to inform future proposals for the site.



### **Policy EN36: Former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium site, Nene Park, Diamond Way, Irthlingborough**

The former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium site, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for employment use, with an emphasis on business, leisure and tourism use. Proposals should deliver:

- a) Flood compatible employment use such as tourism, cultural or leisure related development in accordance with the current EA flood zone status, complementing the nearby offers of Irthlingborough, Higham Ferrers and Rushden town centres, and Rushden Lakes;
- b) Appropriate flood risk mitigation measures;
- c) Measures to enhance biodiversity, deliver ecosystem services and ensure that any development does not have a significant adverse impact upon the adjacent SPA/ Ramsar site. A site-specific Habitat Regulations Assessment should be provided;
- d) Suitable access and highways arrangements to enable the site to be served by public transport;
- e) Improved arrangements for pedestrian and cyclists, crossing the A6 to Station Road and accessing the town centre (east);
- f) Pedestrian and cycle connections to the East Northamptonshire Greenway, via the Old Bridge and Marsh Lane (west);
- g) Design, height and massing together with high quality landscaping, protecting the setting of nearby heritage assets such as Irthlingborough Bridge and Crow Hill Iron Age Fort;
- h) Provision for new moorings along the River Nene Navigation allowing direct riparian access, and
- i) Mitigate for the loss of the stadium, playing pitches and ancillary facilities, unless it can be demonstrated that the facilities are surplus to requirements in line with paragraph 99 of the NPPF.

### **Oundle**

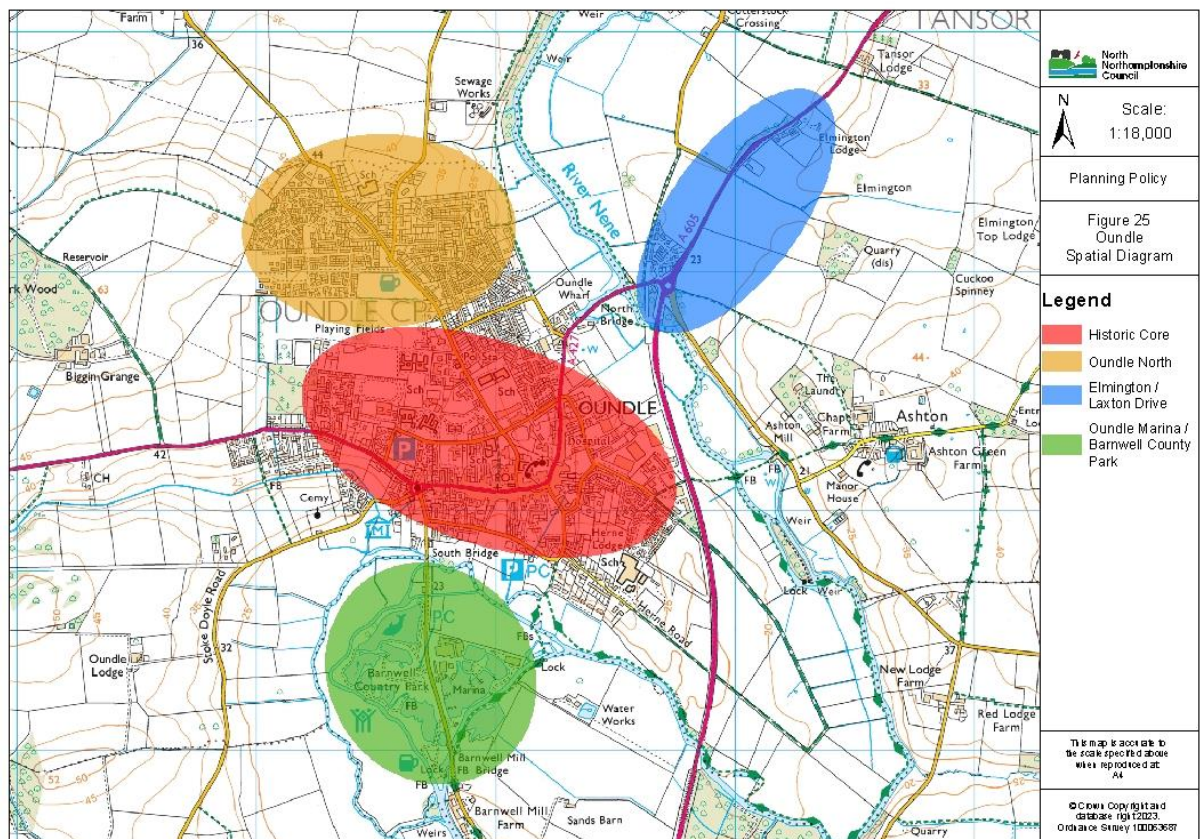
- 10.58 The Joint Core Strategy Policy 11(1)) recognises Oundle's role as the main service centre for the rural north part of the district. This requires that this Plan should focus upon the consolidation and enhancement of this vibrant Market Town.
- 10.59 There is an outstanding requirement for around 300 dwellings during the remainder of the Plan period. This strategic requirement is covered under Housing Delivery (section 8.0). This section of the Plan concentrates on the more detailed (non-strategic) matters affecting Oundle. It focuses upon two potential redevelopment opportunities to the east of the town; the East Road employment area and Riverside Hotel. The latter,

in particular, has been subject to several redevelopment proposals (further details at paragraphs 10.66-10.68, below).

### Spatial character

10.60 Oundle and its surrounding rural hinterland consist of four distinctive spatial parts, plus the closely connected villages of Ashton, Barnwell, Cotterstock, Glaphorn and Stoke Doyle. Figure 25 and Table 24 (below) outline the main characteristics of each. The Oundle built up area includes parts that are situated within the parishes of Ashton (Elmington; Laxton Drive), Barnwell (Barnwell Mill; Barnwell Country Park; Oundle Marina) and Glaphorn (Old Farm Lane) parishes.

**Figure 25: Oundle Spatial Diagram**



**Table 24: Spatial parts of Oundle**

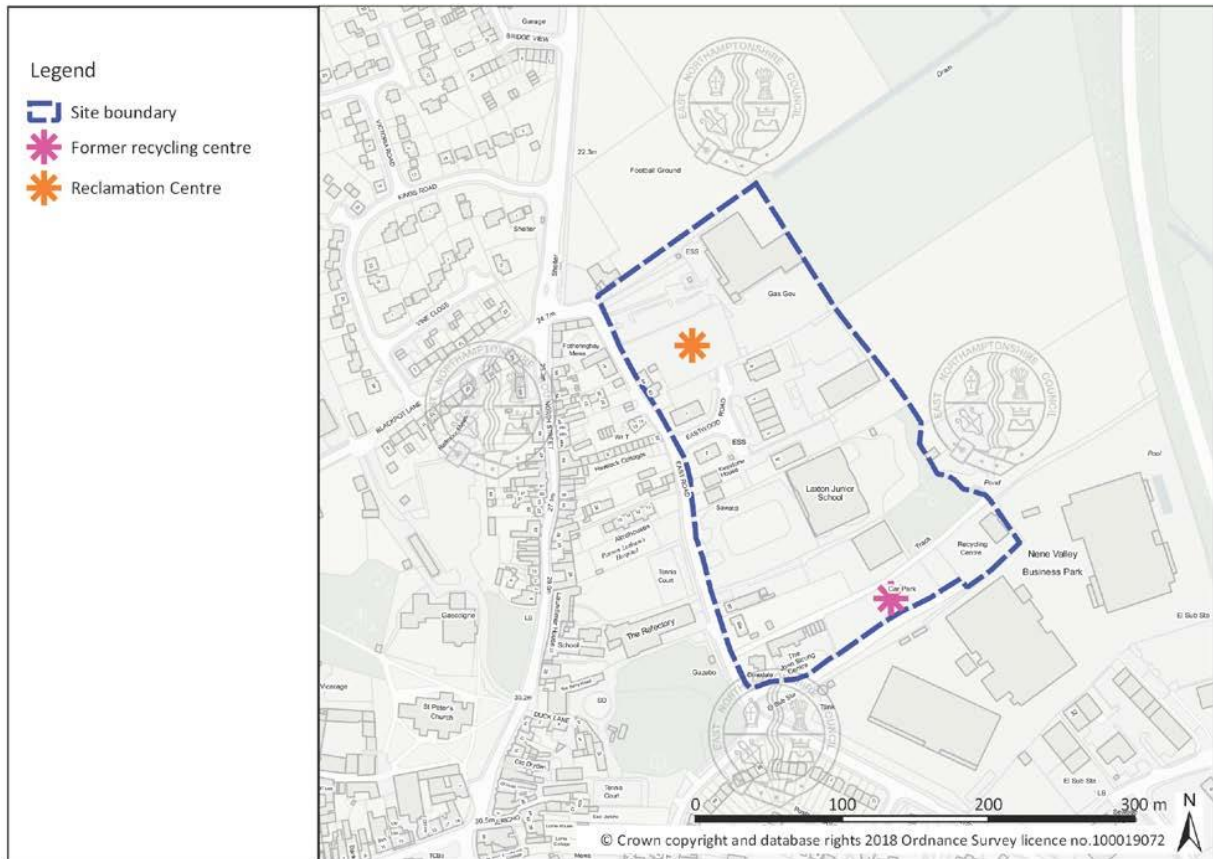
Spatial parts of Oundle	Characteristics
Historic core	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined by West Street and North Street; the Market Place which links them and New Street (A427)</li> <li>Includes key services and facilities – town centre</li> <li>Historic character defined by Oundle School</li> <li>Main employment areas situated to the east of the historic core of the town– Nene Business Park/ Fairline Boats; East Road</li> </ul>

Spatial parts of Oundle	Characteristics
Oundle north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban urban extension, north of New Road, focused upon arterial Glapthorn Road/ Cotterstock Road</li> <li>• Developed since 1950s</li> <li>• Focal points – Oundle Primary School, Occupation Road playing fields</li> <li>• Potential for expansion of urban area to the north (Oundle/ Glapthorn Parish), but recognise concerns regarding potential coalescence with Glapthorn</li> </ul>
Oundle Marina/ Barnwell Country Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant tourism and leisure hub</li> <li>• Separated from main urban area by River Nene</li> <li>• Majority of area is functional floodplain</li> <li>• Committed redevelopment proposal – Oundle Marina</li> <li>• Further opportunities e.g. Barnwell Mill</li> </ul>
Elmington/ Laxton Drive (Ashton Parish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribbon development along A605</li> <li>• Separated from main urban area by A605 Bypass</li> <li>• Suburban element (Laxton Drive)</li> <li>• Riverside Hotel presents redevelopment challenge</li> </ul>

10.61 The Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plan, has implications for the northern part of the Oundle urban area. Accordingly, a number of issues affecting Oundle were identified in formulating this Neighbourhood Plan. These were also highlighted through the Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017), subsequent stakeholder workshops and/ or the Glapthorn Neighbourhood Plan consultation as follows:

- Delivery of the outstanding strategic housing requirements;
- East Road employment areas – further development opportunities at Reclamation Centre, Eastwood Road, and Former Recycling Centre/ Council Car Park (Herne Park), East Road; and
- Delivering redevelopment of the Riverside Hotel.

**Figure 26: Oundle – key redevelopment opportunities**



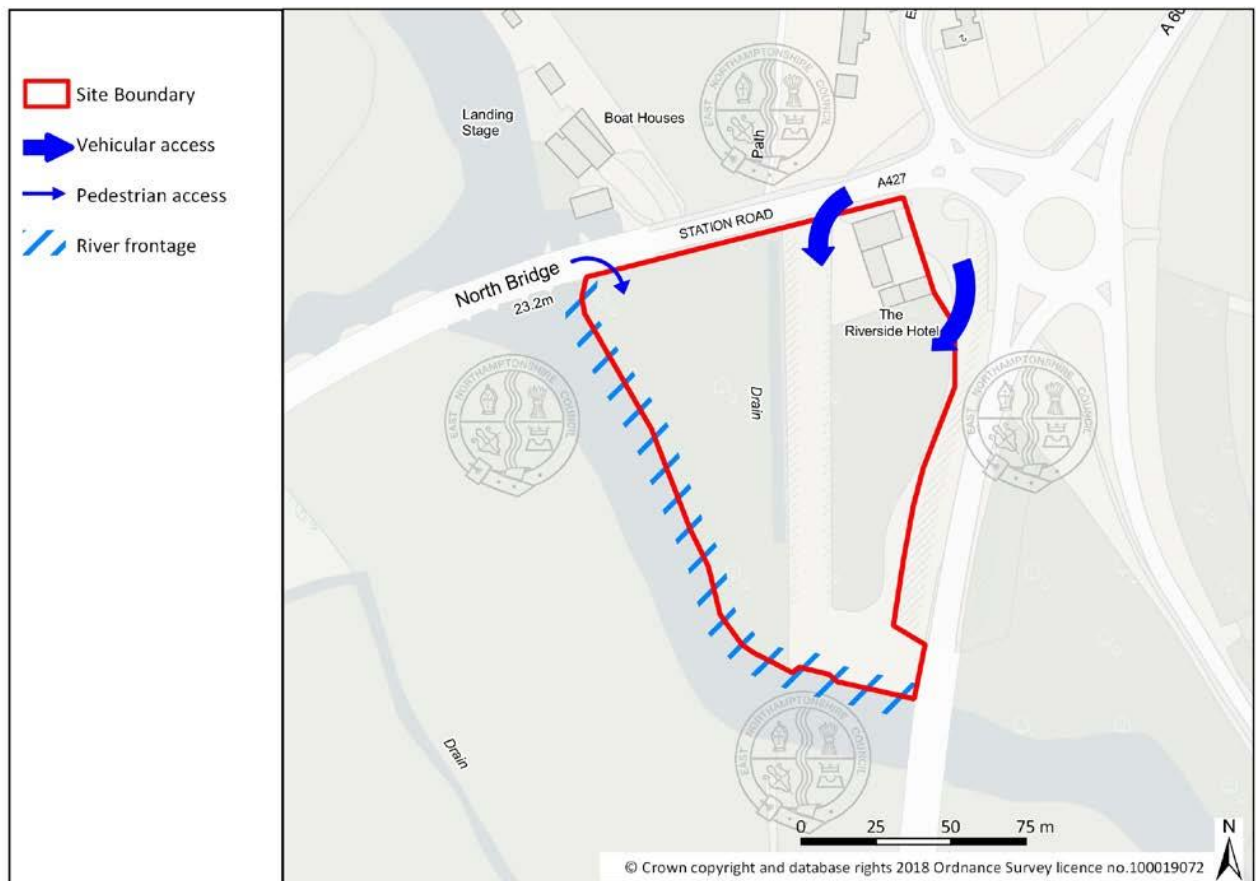
### **East Road employment areas**

- 10.62 Two potential redevelopment opportunities to the east of East Road were identified during the stakeholder workshops. The stone reclamation centre, adjacent to Waitrose (opened 2013) is a long established business. There are no current proposals to relocate the current business, or release the site for redevelopment.
- 10.63 The former recycling centre and car park adjacent to the Joan Strong Centre has undergone some changes in recent years. The former recycling centre was occupied by North Equipment Ltd in 2016, while the adjacent Herne Park car park is well used on most working days, particularly market days.
- 10.64 The recycling centre and car park are brownfield urban sites, but neither is currently available. If either site becomes available in the longer term, any potential redevelopment scheme could be informed by a development brief, alongside other Local Plan policies, including the spatial strategy (Policy EN1(1)(c) and Joint Core Strategy Policy 11(1)(b)), together with other relevant development management policies (e.g. Joint Core Strategy Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield Land). In the short/ medium term, Oundle Town Council has taken over the lease of the East Road/ Herne Park car park and is keen to retain this as an asset for the town.

### **Riverside Hotel**

- 10.65 The Riverside Hotel forms a main gateway to Oundle (although it is located in the Parish of Ashton). It is a non-designated heritage asset, having been constructed in the 1840s as a hotel to serve the former Oundle railway station, and is sited adjacent to the Grade II listed Oundle town bridge and the River Nene.
- 10.66 Outline planning permission for the development of a new hotel at the Riverside was granted in 2005 (reserved matters approved in 2011), incorporating the existing buildings into a larger new hotel complex. This permission remains “live”, as implementation of this consent was subsequently commenced. Notwithstanding, the majority of the site is situated within EA Flood Zone 3 and much of it is identified by the Local Wildlife Trust as a local wildlife site. These factors represent significant challenges to delivering the consented scheme.
- 10.67 The previous Local Plan policy expressed a preference for the reinstatement of the Riverside Hotel as a restaurant, pub or hotel. It also identified potential alternative uses for the site, such as a resource centre, training facility, offices, or businesses uses. The following policy is proposed to guide future proposals in delivering a successful redevelopment of the site:

**Figure 27: Riverside Hotel, Station Road, Oundle**



## **Policy EN37: Riverside Hotel, Station Road, Oundle**

**Redevelopment proposals for the former Riverside Hotel, as allocated on the Policies Map, will be supported for the following uses:**

- **Reinstatement as a restaurant, public house, hotel or tourist accommodation;**
- **Training facility and/ or resource centre; or**
- **Small business units, or other potential service employment uses.**

**Redevelopment schemes should deliver the following outcomes:**

- a) Preservation and enhancement of the heritage asset;**
- b) Appropriate flood mitigation measures, including appropriate access and egress arrangements;**
- c) Provision for new moorings along the River Nene Navigation with direct riparian access; and**
- d) Improved connectivity for pedestrian and cyclists, to the town centre (east, via North Bridge) and riverside paths.**

### **Raunds**

10.68 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) defines priorities for Raunds; the regeneration, diversification and expansion of the town's employment and service base. Further direction is provided in Policy EN1(1)(b) of this Plan. The Raunds Neighbourhood Plan (made November 2017) provides additional local detail relating to the following:

- Housing – design, mix and car parking standards;
- Open space – protection of existing areas and standards for providing new open spaces in association with new developments;
- Local Green Space;
- Protection and enhancement of community facilities;
- Town centre re-imagination – mix of uses, shopping frontages, public realm, creating safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Employment – protecting existing areas, supporting new proposals and supporting tourism and the visitor economy;
- Natural and built environment – Green infrastructure (e.g. tree planting), locally listed buildings (non-designated heritage assets) and protection of Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ SSSI, while supporting enhanced connectivity to the Nene Valley.

10.69 The Neighbourhood Plan also sets out a detailed vision for the town; emphasising the importance of a regenerated town centre, with aspirations to become a vibrant market town, with a variety of artisan and boutique style shops. Policies focus upon managing the existing range of town centre uses, although the Neighbourhood Plan does not

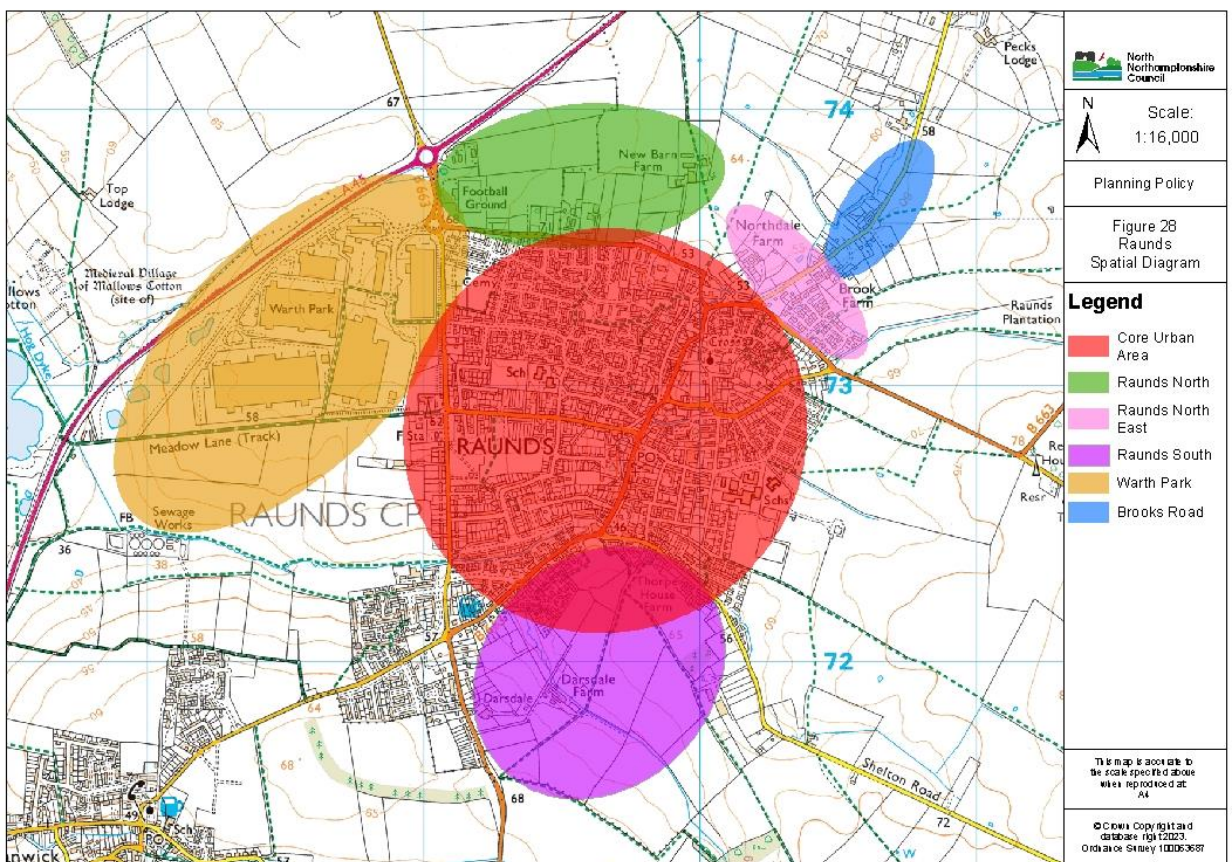
include any site specific proposals, with the exception of policies for the protection of existing functions.

10.70 In developing the Plan, further stakeholder views were sought through the Member and Town/ Parish Council workshops. The workshops provided an opportunity for stakeholders to identify any other matters that the Neighbourhood Plan did not cover and are highlighted below (paragraph 10.73).

**Spatial character**

10.71 The Raunds urban area consists of six distinctive spatial parts, plus the closely connected village of Stanwick. Figure 28 and Table 25 (below) outline the main characteristics of each.

**Figure 28: Raunds Spatial Diagram**



**Table 25 Spatial parts of Raunds**

Spatial parts of Raunds	Characteristics
Core urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined by London Road (west), Brick Kiln Road (north) and High Street/ Brook Street</li> <li>• Includes key services and facilities – linear town centre, focused on The Square/ Brook Street</li> <li>• Historic character defined by St Peter’s Church</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosts significant suburban areas to the east and west of High Street/ Brook Street</li> </ul>
Raunds north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban extension to the north of Brick Kiln Road (also known as Border Park)</li> <li>• Developed since 2013</li> <li>• Focal points – Raunds Town FC, new London Road/ Michael Way local centre/ service hub adjacent to A45</li> <li>• Potential for further expansion of urban area to the east of Border Park</li> </ul>
Raunds north east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban extension to north east of existing urban area, known as Northdale End</li> <li>• Significant new green infrastructure corridor adjacent to Brooks Road, utilising Hog Dyke</li> </ul>
Raunds south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban extension to the south of the town</li> <li>• Two significant developments to south of Grove Street – Weighbridge Way (developed during 2000s) and Willow Way (2010/11)</li> <li>• Major development at Darcy Park (also known as Darsdale Farm) recently started, including significant new public open space</li> </ul>
Warth Park (west of Raunds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main employment area of Raunds</li> <li>• Major strategic warehousing and distribution site</li> <li>• Also includes significant new green infrastructure between warehouses and A45</li> </ul>
Brooks Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ribbon development along Brooks Road, beyond Northdale End</li> <li>• Suburban character</li> <li>• Transition between urban (Northdale End) and rural (Brook Farm Livery Stables)</li> </ul>

10.72 In formulating this Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan, a number of issues affecting Raunds have been identified as follows:

- Retention of existing community facilities and securing improvements to health facilities;
- Employment – need to encourage more small and medium enterprises;
- Town centre re-imagination – overall enhancements to town centre – opportunities identified, including The Spinney, Brook Street and library (High Street) if vacated – town centre “gateway” sites;
- Other opportunities – Fire/ Police Station, if these are relocated and land south of Marshall Road.

10.73 In nearly all cases, the issues identified through the 2017/18 workshop events are specifically addressed by one or more Neighbourhood Plan policies. Identified community facilities (including the library) are protected by Policy 7 of the Joint Core



Strategy and Policy R8 of the Neighbourhood Plan. No significant redevelopment opportunities within the main urban area were raised.

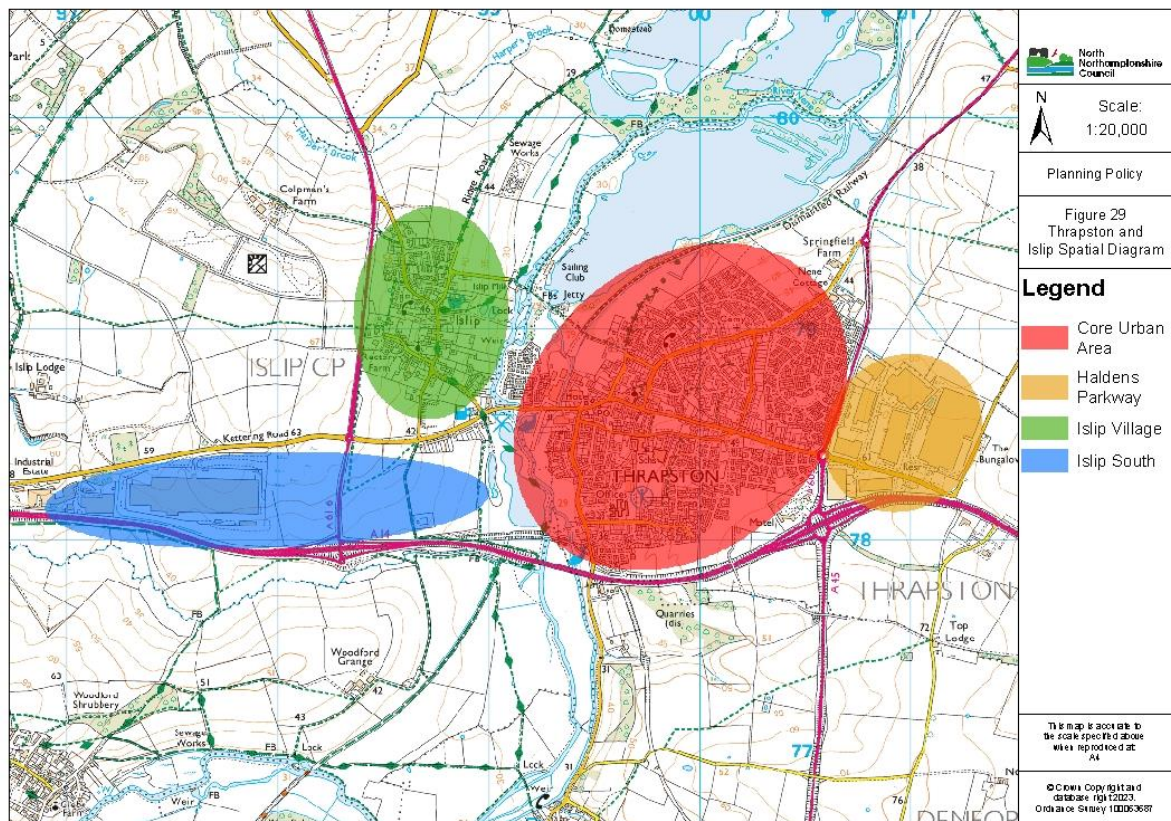
## Thrapston

10.74 The Joint Core Strategy (Table 1) defines priorities for Thrapston; the regeneration, diversification and expansion of the town’s employment and service base. This Plan (Policy EN1(1)(b)) provides further direction, recognising that significant growth has been delivered at Thrapston South, through the previous Local Plan.

## Spatial character

10.75 The Thrapston urban area consists of two distinctive spatial parts, with a further two distinctive spatial elements at Islip, to the west of the River Nene. Figure 29 and Table 26 (below) outline the main characteristics of each:

**Figure 29: Thrapston and Islip Spatial Diagram**



**Table 26: Spatial parts of Thrapston and Islip**

Spatial parts of Thrapston and Islip	Characteristics
Core urban area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defined by radial arterial roads – High Street/ Huntingdon Road, Midland Road and Oundle Road</li> <li>Historic core based around High Street/ Huntingdon Road and Midland Road, with post-war suburban development to the north (Oundle</li> </ul>

	<p>Road, Lazy Acre)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes key services and facilities – town centre retailing, school, main public open spaces, leisure centre</li> </ul>
Haldens Parkway (employment area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main employment area of Thrapston, east of A605</li> <li>• Major strategic warehousing and distribution site, with access to A14 and A45 Trunk Roads</li> <li>• Scope for further expansion of logistics or warehousing businesses, if necessary</li> </ul>
Islip village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self contained village, with a range of services but a close functional relationship with Thrapston</li> <li>• Linear village, defined by Lowick Road, High Street and Chapel Hill/ Toll Bar Road</li> </ul>
Islip south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linear area, west of River Nene, situated between Kettering Road and A14</li> <li>• Major strategic employment site, including Islip Furnace and Primark premises</li> <li>• Linear/ ribbon development part of Islip village to the south of Kettering Road, separated from Islip village by cricket field/ Woolpack pub</li> </ul>

10.77 Thrapston is not a designated a Neighbourhood Area. Given that at present there are no moves to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, feedback from the Local Plan Workshops (May 2017 – April 2018) has been used to inform the Thrapston town strategy in this Plan.

10.78 The close functional relationship between Thrapston and Islip, to the west of the River Nene, is recognised. Islip is defined as rural in other strategic policies (EN1) in order to address any concerns about coalescence of settlements.

10.79 In formulating this Plan, a number of issues affecting Thrapston have been identified as follows:

- Potential for enhanced green infrastructure, sport and recreational facilities in the Meadow Lane/ Thrapston Lakes area;
- Improved connections to the East Northamptonshire Greenway, via Islip;
- Town Centre – future of existing services e.g. library, former Barclay’s Bank (closed October 2018); and the range and offer of town centre businesses;
- Various redevelopment/ re-imagination opportunities around the town.

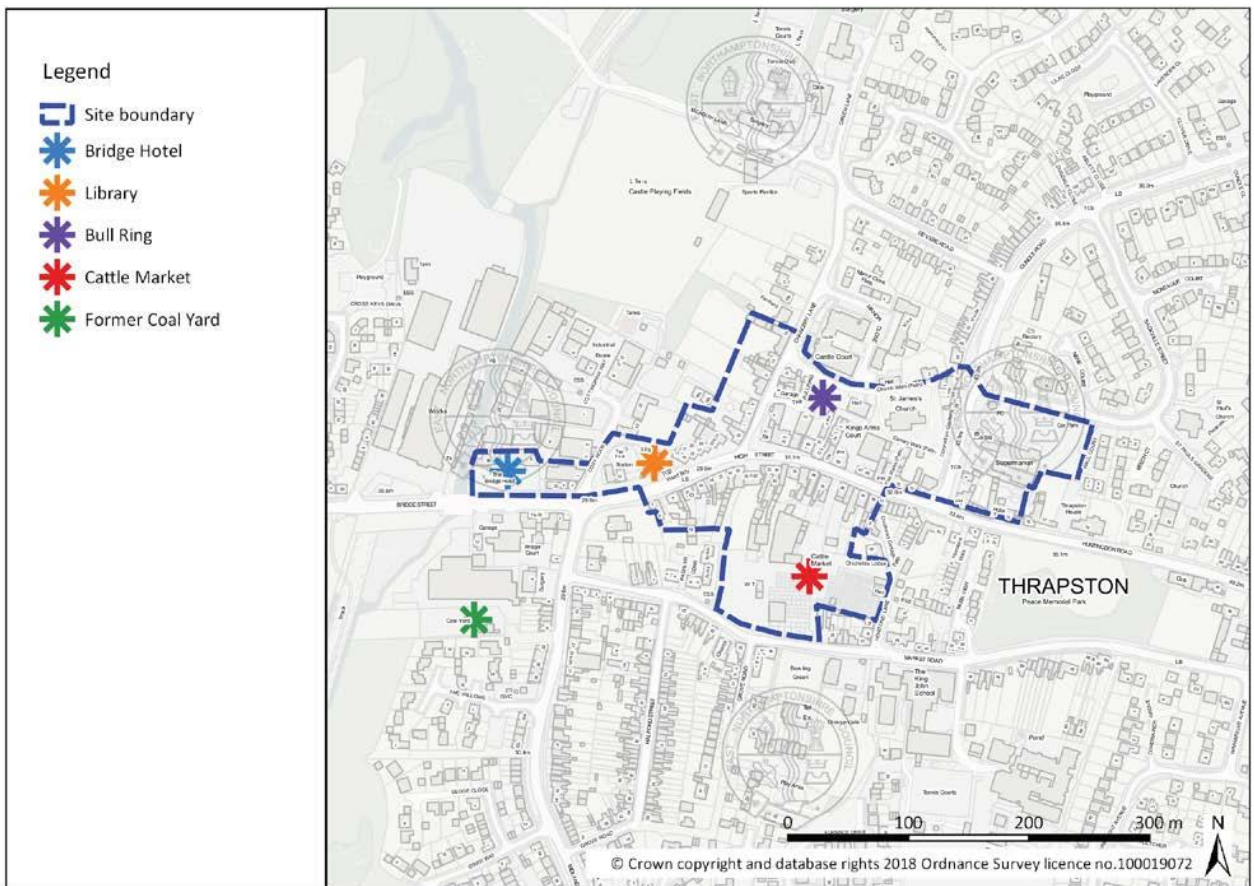
10.80 The previous Local Plan set out detailed policies for the regeneration of Thrapston, including overall principles and site specific proposals based on a 2003 Masterplan for the town, which advocated wholesale redevelopment of certain sites around the town centre.

10.81 The concept of comprehensive redevelopment has been largely replaced by an incremental approach to the re-imagination of town centres, advocated in the current Economic Strategy. Site specific allocations are proposed where these are considered desirable. Elsewhere, development principles are set out to inform future proposals.

## **Town centre re-imagination**

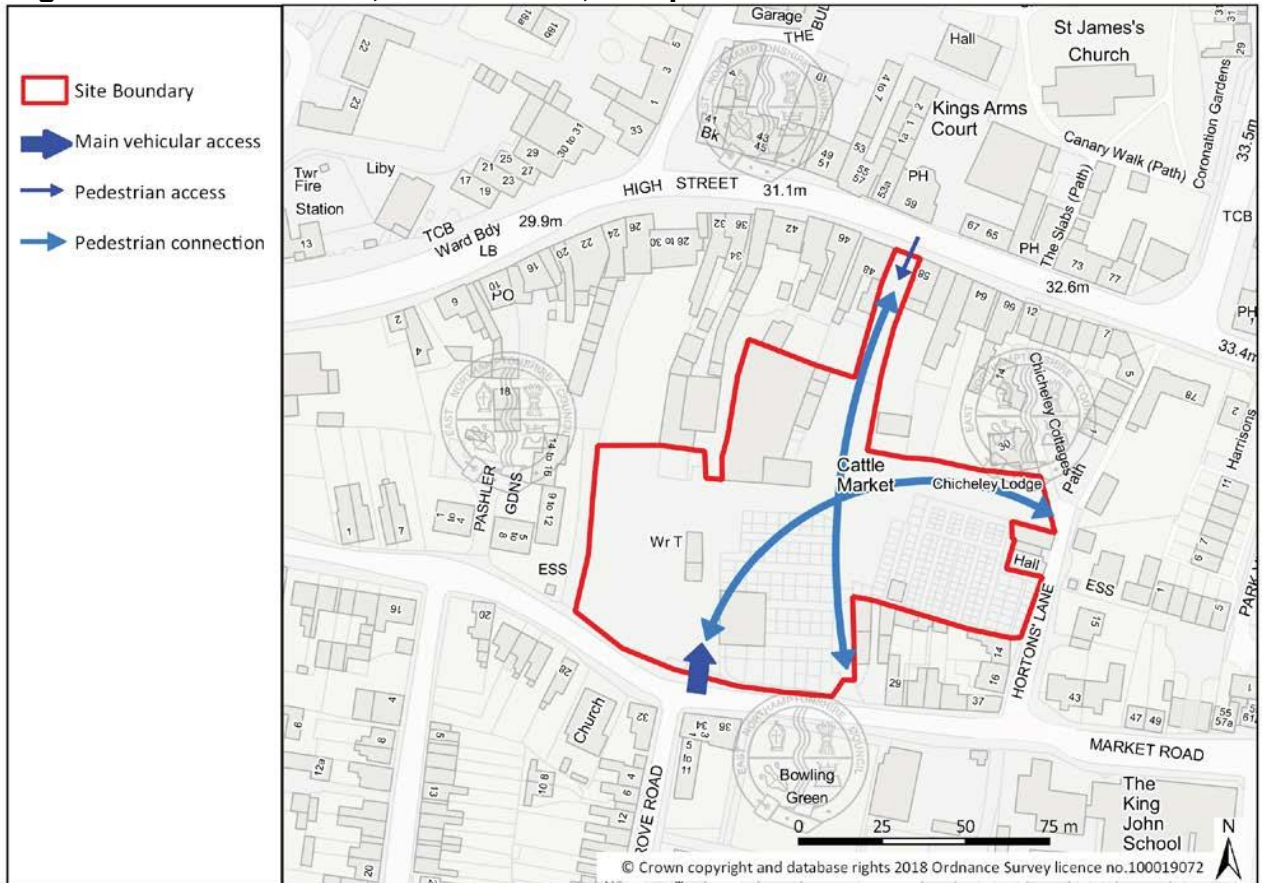
- 10.82 This Plan sets out guiding principles, to provide a framework for the re-imagination of Thrapston town centre. Previous Local Plan regeneration policies have been reviewed and incorporated into the town centre re-imagination guiding principles (Policy EN30, above).
- 10.83 Two deliverable sites, within the town centre, are recognised as having the potential to deliver significant opportunities to enhance Thrapston's vitality. Planning permission for the conversion of the listed 71-75 High Street and associated outbuildings for retail, office and residential uses was granted in 2014. The scheme was implemented from 2015, with the residential aspects of the scheme being followed by the occupation of the retail unit in 2020. This was in spite of the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly for the retail sector.
- 10.84 In October 2018, Barclay's closed its Thrapston branch (41 High Street), the last bank in the town. Like the listed 71-75 High Street, this is a landmark (albeit non-designated) heritage asset at the junction of Chancery Lane and the High Street. During 2020, permission was granted for the change of use of the former bank to a mixed use residential and retail development (reference 20/00289/FUL). Implementation of this commenced during 2020.
- 10.85 Otherwise, there are no deliverable (i.e. short term), site specific opportunities anticipated to further progress the revitalisation of Thrapston town centre. Nevertheless, several potential opportunities were identified through the 2017/18 Member and Town/ Parish Council workshops:
- Cattle Market, Market Road;
  - Chancery Lane/ Bull Ring (Chancery Autos/ St John Ambulance);
  - 17-31 High Street/ Library
  - Bridge Hotel/ Scotts, Bridge Street;
  - Former Coal Yard, Midland Road.

**Figure 30: Thrapston Town Centre redevelopment opportunities**



- 10.86 While none of these sites are available in the short term, in most cases these were recognised in previous Local Plan regeneration policies. Sites such as the Bull Ring, 17-31 High Street, the Bridge Hotel and Scotts may become available in the medium to long term, but there no certainty of this.
- 10.87 Permission was granted in 2012 for the relocation of the Cattle Market from its existing Market Road site (where it has been situated since the 1870s), to a new site at Titchmarsh Lane, north of Haldens Parkway. In order to guide and support the release of the current site for redevelopment, Policy EN38 together with Figure 30 (above) identifies overarching principles that will guide future development proposals as/ when any of these sites becomes available.
- 10.88 The site is located approximately 500m from the SPA, depending on the type of development proposed a Habitat Regulations Assessment may be required to accompany any planning application.

**Figure 31: Cattle Market, Market Road, Thrapston**



**Policy EN38: Cattle Market, Market Road, Thrapston**

The Cattle Market site, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for redevelopment, with a focus upon maintaining an appropriate mix and range of uses compatible with the town centre. Redevelopment proposals should deliver:

- a) A balance and mix of town centre uses, including convenience retailing, financial services and/ or food and drink businesses;
- b) Opening up of a new north-south active town centre frontage to the south of the High Street;
- c) Enhanced north-south pedestrian connectivity, between the High Street, Market Road, Grove Road and the Leisure Centre (Cedar Drive);
- d) Vehicular access from Market Road, with off-site improvements to the Midland Road junction, and provision for suitable service arrangements for the new business premises;
- e) Opportunities for residential uses appropriate for a town centre site, including live-work units or specialist housing at first floor level or above;
- f) Preservation and enhancement to the settings of adjacent heritage assets, non-designated heritage assets and the Conservation Area; and
- g) Additional town centre public car parking.

## 11.0 Monitoring and implementation

- 11.0 In order to measure the effectiveness of the Local Plan Part 2, this needs to be underpinned by an effective monitoring and implementation framework. The Joint Core Strategy sets out a detailed range of monitoring indicators. It highlights the key infrastructure needed to secure implementation of these strategic policies (Joint Core Strategy, Table 8), identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 11.1 The Joint Core Strategy (Policy 10) provides the overarching development plan mechanism for securing planning obligations. This forms the strategic policy, by which delivery of IDP projects can be facilitated through the planning system (development contributions).

### Key infrastructure projects

- 11.2 This Plan, which provides additional detail to support the strategic policies of the Joint Core Strategy, will be supported by the strategic infrastructure identified within the IDP, together with additional more localised infrastructure where a local need has been identified. Key infrastructure within the district – that which is expected to be delivered within the Plan period – is noted as follows:
- Chowns Mill roundabout improvements, A45/ A6 Higham Ferrers/ Rushden;
  - Corby Northern Orbital Road Phase 2 (Final);
  - A45 Stanwick to Thrapston dualling;
  - Ditchford Lane/ Rushden Lakes link road;
  - Tresham Garden Village – A43 link road, with secondary A427 access; and
  - Greenway extensions.
- 11.3 The topic and area based workshops for the Plan (2017-18) and subsequent draft Plan consultation (November 2018 – February 2019) and subsequent Regulation 19 draft submission Plan consultation (2019) identified various localised infrastructure priorities, over and above the strategic projects as identified above:
- Enhancements and improvements to key urban spaces; e.g. town squares and other meeting points;
  - Libraries – sustainable future arrangements;
  - Education – delivery of new academies/ free schools, working with the Department for Education in accordance with current local education authority<sup>133</sup> and national policies<sup>134</sup>;
  - Fire and rescue - depending on the scale and nature of the proposed development and resulting demands on fire and rescue resources, delivery of new types of fleet (e.g. smaller ‘rapid response’ initial intervention vehicles)/ new

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Northamptonshire Organisation Plan for School Places 2018 – 2023:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/670920/response/1598950/attach/4/2018%20Update%20School%20Or ganisation%20Plan%20DRAFT%20v2.pdf?cookie\\_passthrough=1](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/670920/response/1598950/attach/4/2018%20Update%20School%20Or ganisation%20Plan%20DRAFT%20v2.pdf?cookie_passthrough=1)

<sup>134</sup> Planning for Schools Development (2011):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6316/1966097.p df](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6316/1966097.p df) Securing developer contributions for Education (November 2019):

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/909908/Develop er\\_Contributions\\_Guidance\\_update\\_Nov2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/909908/Develop er_Contributions_Guidance_update_Nov2019.pdf)

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bays to existing fire stations to accommodate additional vehicles/relocation or provision of new response facilities/ introduction of new types of equipment and a reduction of risk and demand through the provision of fire suppression systems (sprinklers) in appropriate developments;

- Development of multi-functional community/ healthcare hubs;
- Expansions to capacity of existing sport, recreational and leisure facilities;
- Green Infrastructure enhancements (detailed evidence underpins section 5.0, Natural Capital, above);
- Replacement/ alternative arrangements to compensate loss of financial services (e.g. bank branches, ATMs and/ or Post Office counters).

11.4 The IDP is reviewed annually, through the Authorities' Monitoring Report. In order to supplement the evidence base for this Plan, a district-level Local Infrastructure Plan (review of the IDP) has been prepared. This identifies amendments and updates to infrastructure projects identified in the most recent (2017) full IDP, together with potential new infrastructure needs which have arisen over the past two years.

### **Developer contributions**

11.5 The current system for securing developer contributions operates under provisions set by the 2010 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, as amended<sup>135</sup>. Although none of the North Northamptonshire local authorities (including East Northamptonshire Council) has introduced CIL, the securing of section (S) 106 developer contributions and/ or planning obligations is nevertheless directed by the CIL Regulations.

11.6 S106 contributions, unlike CIL payments (which take the form of tariff payments), are directly related to individual planning permissions. The CIL Regulations specifically define the scope of "planning obligations" (s106 agreements). These require that S106 planning obligations must be:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

11.7 Only in the event that all of these tests are "passed" in respect of an individual development scheme can S106 contributions be sought. These are negotiable through the development management process. That is, contributions may be reduced where it can be objectively demonstrated that these would undermine development viability. Notwithstanding, development contributions tend to be negotiated in accordance with the County Council's adopted policies<sup>136</sup>.

11.8 Since the introduction of the CIL in 2010, the Government has consistently reviewed how this legislation should operate in practice. Several amendments to the Regulations have been continuously made over the past decade; most recently in response to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. The Government has proposed the

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<sup>135</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/primary+secondary?title=community%20infrastructure%20levy>

<sup>136</sup> Creating Sustainable Communities: Planning obligations framework and guidance (January 2015): <https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/environment-and-planning/Documents/Creating%20Sustainable%20Communities%20Jan%202015%20FINAL.pdf>

replacement of CIL and S106 by a simplified national infrastructure levy in the “Planning for the Future” White Paper<sup>137</sup>, but it is anticipated that any such changes would be introduced by way of primary legislation; implemented in the longer term by the new unitary North Northamptonshire Council, in parallel with a review of the Joint Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1).

## **Monitoring the Local Plan Part 2**

- 11.9 The Joint Core Strategy provides an extensive monitoring framework with a comprehensive set of performance indicators and targets. The monitoring indicators within this Plan should be reviewed in conjunction with those in Table 9 of the Joint Core Strategy. Critical elements of this Plan which will be monitored include:
- Housing completions by location; at each town and within the rural areas;
  - Delivery of main town centre uses by location – town centres, local centres, edge of centres and out of centre locations;
  - Delivery of priority green infrastructure corridors, extensions to the Greenway and enhancements to the quality of public open space, sport and recreation facilities;
  - Delivery of improvements to heritage assets, and the tourism and cultural offer of the district;
  - Delivery of jobs and implementation of economic development projects such as the Enterprise Centre;
  - Implementation of housing land allocations to deliver the residual housing requirements; and
  - Delivery of regeneration priorities for the six towns.
- 11.10 If monitoring identifies that a policy is not achieving its objectives, key policy targets are not being met or the context has changed (for example, the performance and nature of the economy), the Council will take remedial action, working with North Northamptonshire partners. This may include:
- Identifying the reasons for under-performance against targets and discussing with partners and stakeholders;
  - Reviewing the evidence base for availability and deliverability of housing/ employment land, through the framework of the Authorities’ Monitoring Report (AMR);
  - Working with developers and landowners of existing committed or allocated sites to produce viable and suitable schemes;
  - Seeking to identify additional sources of finance or alternative programmes for the delivery of infrastructure;
  - Discuss with partners and service providers potential solutions to better address issues within the design of schemes.
- 11.11 This Plan will be implemented in conjunction with the broader strategic framework set out in the Joint Core Strategy. If the various actions fail to realign delivery of outputs and outcomes then it may be necessary to consider a review of targets, consider changes to the allocation of employment/ housing land, or consider a review of this Plan/ Joint Core Strategy. Where necessary to aid implementation, Supplementary

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<sup>137</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>



Planning Documents, masterplans or further guidance may be produced to provide further detail on specific policy areas.

- 11.12 The AMR will report on the extent to which policies set out in the Local Plan are being achieved and targets are being met. As well as linking with spatial outcomes and policies, indicators in the AMR also link to the Sustainability Appraisal objectives in order to identify the significant effects of policy implementation.
- 11.13 The Joint Core Strategy contains strategic direction with regard to development contributions. This direction is set out in Policies 7 and 10.

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
EN1	Provide additional rural spatial direction/ settlement hierarchy (i.e. large/ small/ restraint villages and open countryside)	Number of dwellings permitted within the different areas of the settlement hierarchy	Direct development to Rushden and the Market Towns Restrict all but small scale or infill development in rural areas, unless promoted through Neighbourhood Plans and/ or rural exceptions housing schemes	Levels of development to accord with the spatial roles set out in table 2 of the Plan  Levels of residential development to align with table 3 of the Plan
EN2	Provide development principles to guide development in the rural area.	Location and type of development	Restrict inappropriate development beyond the main urban/ built up areas	All proposals to meet the requirements of the policy.
EN3	Protect the peripheral land of settlements against unsuitable development and provide suitable development management criteria for Rural Exceptions Housing schemes	Development permitted outside of the defined settlement boundaries: number of rural affordable units achieved (Rural Exceptions and open countryside dwellings)	Restrict inappropriate development on the periphery of settlements with a defined boundary, but encourage the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs in the rural areas	No inappropriate development on the periphery of settlements, other than for rural exceptions.
EN4	Provide clear guidelines for appropriate replacement dwellings in open countryside	Number of dwellings permitted and/ or built in the open countryside	Restrict the development of inappropriate new build replacement dwellings in open countryside	No inappropriate new build replacement dwellings in the open countryside other than those which accord with Policy EN4.
EN5	Protect and enhance existing and future Green Infrastructure corridors	Net loss/ gain in GI across the district New open space provided within or connected to the existing GI network Projects to enhance GI in the district	To increase in connected open space and GI throughout the district	Overall net gain in GI.
EN6	Protect and enhance the Greenway and its connections to the wider GI network	Number and amount of contributions by developers and other funding streams Completion of Greenway projects/ developments	Complete the Greenway within the district	Increase in the number of GI projects completed.  Completion of the Greenway and associated projects.
EN7	Define an enhanced local interpretation of the NPPF criteria for the designation of Local Green Space	Designation of Local Green Space within Neighbourhood Plans	To facilitate the protection of Local Green Space	No loss of Local Green Space.  Net increase in Local Green Space.
EN8	Enhance existing open space or provide new open space	Number of permitted developments of 10 or more dwellings, or 0.3 or more hectares	To ensure new development makes adequate provision for open space.	Net increase in open space across the district.  No net loss of open

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
				space.
E9	Enhance existing sport and recreation facilities, or provide new sport and recreation facilities	Amount of new sports and recreation facilities provided/ contributions secured toward facilities.	To ensure new development makes adequate provision for sports and recreation facilities.	Net increase in sport and recreation facilities provided/ increase in improvements towards existing facilities.  No net loss of sport and recreation facilities.
EN10	Provide additional direction re strengthening the role of health and wellbeing as a critical aspect of place shaping	Number of permissions and refusals where the policy was used to make the decision	To enable and promote healthy lifestyles.	All major applications to be accompanied by a HIA.
EN11	Provide clear guidance for the design of development with regard to its impact on the surrounding area	Number of permissions and refusals where the policy was used to make the decision  No upheld at appeal	Restrict inappropriate development of new buildings and extensions so that they are in keeping with the surrounding environment	100% of cases refused on design grounds to be upheld at appeal.
EN12	Sustain and enhance the appearance and setting of designated heritage assets	Number of permissions and refusals where the policy was used to make the decision  Maintaining Heritage Assets  Maintaining non designated Heritage Assets  Change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional, sub regional or local significance	Restrict inappropriate development which affects a designated heritage asset or its setting	Maintain existing areas designated Conservation Areas (no net loss);  Maintain existing number of listed buildings (no loss)  Maintain the number of Scheduled Monuments;  Reduce the number of heritage assets at risk (number on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register)
EN13	Sustain and enhance the appearance and setting of non-designated heritage assets	Number of permissions and refusals where the policy was used to make the decision	Restrict inappropriate development which affects a non-designated heritage asset or its setting	Maintain non-designated heritage assets (no loss).
EN14	Provide clear direction for tourist and cultural developments in the Nene Valley corridor and Rockingham Forest areas and support the conversion of small-scale redundant or	Number of permitted tourist and cultural development within defined Nene Valley and Rockingham Forest areas  Number of permitted	Encourage appropriate development in the Nene Valley corridor and Rockingham Forest areas, including the conversion of redundant small-scale rural buildings	A net increase of tourist/ cultural facilities

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
	disused rural buildings to guest house/ B&B accommodation	conversions of rural outbuildings to provide overnight accommodation		
EN15	Set out policy criteria for the future development/ expansion of commercial floorspace (e.g. by way of the development of further enterprise centres or similar)	Number of developments (future sites/ expansion of existing premises) successfully implemented in accordance with Policy EN18	Encourage established businesses to expand and grow in appropriate locations	A net increase in the number of completions for small and medium scale commercial development.
EN	Ensure that existing employment sites are protected for employment use	Use status of the sites	To prevent the loss of employment uses within the Protected Employment Areas	No net loss of employment uses within the Protected Employment Areas unless the site is demonstrably no longer suitable for employment
EN17	Provide clear direction for the relocation and expansion of existing businesses	Number of permissions and refusals where the policy was used to make the decision	Encourage established businesses to expand and grow in appropriate locations	All expanded/relocated business to be adjacent to built up area.
EN18	Increase the vitality of the town centres and primary shopping frontages	Public realm improvements within the town centres and primary shopping frontages  Percentage of development within defined town centre boundaries  Change of use of upper floors  Change of use to residential (non-primary frontage)  Percentage of non-retail within primary frontages	Encourage appropriate development within the town centres and primary shopping frontages	Increase the percentage of town centre development within defined boundaries.  Decrease the number of vacancies at upper floor level.  Increase the percentage of retail uses within primary frontage/ decrease non-retail uses in frontages.
EN19	Provide floorspace thresholds for impact assessments for retail developments	Number of permitted retail developments outside the primary shopping areas of the six towns  Proposals for out / edge-of centre supported by a sequential test and an impact assessment where above the relevant threshold	Restrict inappropriate retail development outside the primary shopping areas of the six towns	100% of proposals for out / edge-of centre supported by a sequential test and impact assessment above the relevant threshold
EN20	Provide clear direction for specified use developments at local	Number of permitted specified uses adjacent to the local centres	Encourage specified uses at the local centres that offer day to day local services,	100% adjoining/closely related to built up

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
	centres		improved connectivity and do not affect local amenity	area;  Amount of new floorspace for each type of use
EN21	Implementation of Stoke Doyle Road site within the Plan period	Meeting strategic housing requirements site specific	To provide site specific housing requirements assisting the strategic shortfall at Oundle	Delivery of the site by 2031
EN22	Implementation of Cotterstock Road site within the Plan period	Meeting strategic housing requirements site specific	To provide site specific housing requirements assisting the strategic shortfall at Oundle	Delivery of the site by 2031
EN23	Implementation of St Christopher's Drive site within the Plan period	Meeting strategic housing requirements site specific	To provide site specific housing requirements assisting the strategic shortfall at Oundle	Delivery of the site by 2031
EN24	Implementation of Land east of A6 Bypass/ Bedford Road site within the Plan period	Meeting strategic housing requirements site specific	To provide site specific housing requirements assisting the strategic shortfalls for Rushden and Irthlingborough	Delivery of the site by 2031
EN25	Delivery of an appropriate quantum of Category 3 (wheelchair accessible_or adaptable) housing to meet local needs	Number of Category 3 (wheelchair accessible_or adaptable) units delivered	To increase the delivery of Category 3 housing	Delivery of 5% of units as Category 3 housing on sites of 20 dwellings or more
EN26	Delivery of an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and tenures to meet local need	Type, mix and range of units achieved  Proportion of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5+ bed properties.  Tenure split of properties	Encourages a range and mix of house types and tenures to meet the needs of the wider community in accordance with the evidence base	100% in accordance with tenure/ size proportions set out in the evidence base, unless justified by evidence
EN27	Delivery of specialist housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older persons accommodation to meet local need</li> <li>Extra Care development schemes as part of major strategic sites in accordance with local needs</li> </ul>	Numbers of older persons (and specifically Extra Care) units of accommodation achieved on sites over and above the defined policy thresholds  Successful delivery of Extra Care housing at named sites in accordance with development masterplans	To increase delivery of specialist housing for older persons.	Delivery of 10% of units (20% in rural area) as housing for older people, in accordance with defined policy thresholds  Delivery of Extra Care housing in association with development in accordance with policy criteria at named sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rushden East SUE</li> <li>Irthlingborough West SUE</li> </ul>

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Christopher's Drive, Oundle</li> <li>• Hayway, Northamptonton Road, Rushden</li> <li>• East of Ferrers School, Higham Ferrers</li> </ul>
EN28	Delivery of self and custom build	Number of self and custom built dwellings achieved on sites of 50 dwellings or more	To increase delivery of self and custom build housing.	<p>At least 5% of plots on sites of 50 dwellings or more provided for self or custom built dwellings</p> <p>Meeting demand on self/custom build register</p>
EN29	Implementation of Rushden East SUE in accordance with the Local Plan policy framework (Joint Core Strategy Policy 33/ new Policy EN29) and the agreed Masterplan Framework Document (MFD)	<p>Meeting strategic housing requirements site specific</p> <p>Phased delivery of SUE in accordance with MFD phasing/ trajectories</p>	To ensure the principles for delivering the SUE are met.	Delivery of initial development phases by 2031 in accordance with the agreed MFD phasing plan/ trajectory and the housing trajectory
EN30	Delivery of development within the town centres and surrounding urban areas in accordance with the development principles	<p>Development permitted in accordance with the policy criteria</p> <p>Enhance vitality/viability of town centres</p>	No of development proposals approved in accordance with all of the relevant policy criteria	<p>Increased footfall in town centres</p> <p>Increase in the proportion of retail use in town centres</p> <p>Increase in proportion of town centre uses</p> <p>Increase in the no of active frontages.</p> <p>Reduction in the no of vacancies in town centres</p>
EN31	Redevelopment of the Splash Pool and Wilkinson sites	Development permitted on the Splash Pool and Wilkinson sites	Redevelopment of the sites to include pedestrian links, a new public square, public realm improvements, and provision of public car parking	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN31.
EN32	Redevelopment of the former factory site between	Development permitted on the former factory site	Redevelopment of the site to include approximately 10	By 2031, redevelopment of the

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
	71 Oakley Road and 37-51 Washbrook Road		dwelling with a mix of housing types to meet local needs, developer contributions, vehicular access, and pedestrian/ cycle connections	site as set out in Policy EN32.
EN33	Redevelopment of the Federal Estates site	Development permitted for housing on the Federal Estates site	Redevelopment of the site to include at least 120 dwellings with a mix of housing types to meet local need, developer contributions, improved connections and link roads, and appropriate mitigation measures	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN33.
EN34	Release and redevelopment of the Rectory Business Centre site for housing	Development permitted for housing on the Rectory Business Centre site	Redevelopment of the site to include at least 35 dwellings with a mix of housing types to meet local need, developer contributions, improved connections and appropriate mitigation measures	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN34.
EN35	Redevelopment of the former Select & Save and St Peter's Way Car Park site	Development permitted on the former Select & Save and St Peter's Way Car Park site	Redevelopment of the site to include a mix of main town centre uses, enhancement of the primary shopping frontage, pedestrian connections, suitable service arrangements, public car parking, live-work units at first floor or above, and enhancement to the settings of heritage assets	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN35.
EN36	Redevelopment of the former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium site	Development permitted on the former Rushden and Diamonds FC Stadium site	Redevelopment of the site to include flood compatible employment uses, appropriate flood mitigation measures, enhancements to biodiversity, improved pedestrian and cycle connections, high quality landscaping, and new moorings	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN36.
EN37	Redevelopment of the Riverside Hotel site	Development permitted on the Riverside Hotel site	Redevelopment of the site for restaurant, public house, hotel, tourist, training facility/ resource centre, or small business/ employment use, to include retention and enhancement of the heritage asset, appropriate flood mitigation measures, new moorings, and improved arrangements for	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN37.

<b>Table 27: Performance indicators and targets for monitoring</b>				
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Targets</b>
			pedestrians/ cyclists	
EN38	Redevelopment of the Cattle Market site	Development permitted on the Cattle Market site	Redevelopment to include a mix of main town centre uses, opening up of a new active frontage, pedestrian connectivity, vehicular access, appropriate residential uses at first floor level or above, enhancements to the setting of heritage assets, and public car parking	By 2031, redevelopment of the site as set out in Policy EN38.



## Glossary

**Affordable Housing** – social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

**Authorities' Monitoring Report (AMR)** – a report that reviews the performance of the Council's planning policies.

**Biodiversity** – the variety of life in all forms.

**Brownfield Land** – land which has previously been developed or built upon.

**Committed development** – Sites already proposed for development, by way of an extant planning permission, resolution to grant planning permission or an adopted development plan (Local Plan/ Neighbourhood Plan) allocation.

**Comparison Retailing** – the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis, including clothing, footwear and household goods.

**Convenience Retailing** – the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drink and newspapers/ magazines.

**Core Spatial Strategy (CSS)** – the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, adopted in June 2008 and covered the period of 2001-2021.

**Curtilage** – Legal definition for the extent of a single planning "unit". Normally this relates to a domestic garden (in the case of a residential property) or servicing/ car parking for a commercial unit, which are incidental to the operation or functional enjoyment of the planning "unit".

**Development Brief** – a document that set out detailed development principles for a development site.

**Development Plan** – includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

**Geodiversity** – the range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

**Green Infrastructure (GI)** – a network of multi-functional green space which is capable of delivering a range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. GI consists of both statutory (SPA/ Ramsar site, SSSIs or LNRs) and/ or non-statutory (Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites, Protected Wildflower Verges or Pocket Parks). Individually and collectively these form the Council's ecological resources, providing ecosystem services for the district.

**Habitat Regulations Assessment** – required under the European Directive 92/43/EEC to assess the impacts of implementing a policy on European (Natura 2000) Sites, to determine whether it would have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

**Heritage Asset** – a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.

**Housing Land Supply** – paragraph 73 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement, including a buffer.

**Infill or windfall development** – Smaller scale, minor development proposals, typically up to 5 dwellings for rural or 10 dwellings for urban areas, which take place within the existing built up area, as defined by Policies EN1-EN2 and the supporting text. and/ or a defined settlement boundary in a Neighbourhood Plan.

**Joint Core Strategy (JCS)** – the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, adopted in July 2016 and covering the period of 2011-2031.

**Local Centre** – a centre that includes a range of small shops and services of a local convenience nature, serving a small catchment.

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** – a voluntary partnership between local authorities and businesses to create/ improve conditions for economic growth.

**Local Plan** – the plan for future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

**Local Planning Authority (LPA)** – East Northamptonshire Council is the former local planning authority for the district, North Northamptonshire became the Unitary Council on 1 April 2021.

**Main Town Centre Uses** – retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

**Neighbourhood Plan** – a plan prepared by a town/ parish council or neighbourhood forum for a particular neighbourhood area.

**North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU)** – the former local partnership between Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire councils, together with Northamptonshire County Council.

**Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)** – a web-based resource which sets out national planning guidance on various topics.

**Policies Map** – shows the policies of the development plan.

**Previously Developed Land** – land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

**Primary Shopping Area**– defined area where retail development is concentrated

**Primary Shopping Frontage** – Shopping frontage which contains a high proportion of retail uses.

**Section 106 Agreement (S106)** – a legally binding agreement or planning obligation between the local planning authority and named parties in relation to a planning application, often referred to as developer contributions.

**Self and Custom Build Housing** – housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied as homes by those individuals.

**Sequential and Exception Tests (flood risk management)** – two key tests to be applied where development is proposed within the designated Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3.

**Sequential and Impact Tests (Main Town Centre Uses)** – two key tests to be applied when planning for town centre uses which are not in an existing town centre and which are not in accord with an up to date Local Plan

**Settlement boundary criteria** – Policy EN2, and its supporting text, specifies criteria by which built-up areas of settlements should be defined. -These boundaries are solely for development management (decision making) and have no other function.

**Settlement typologies** – Four distinctive rural settlement typologies are noted in the Plan. Two of these typologies are freestanding villages, with a sub-division between large and small villages. Urban outliers are situated at the rural hinterlands/ fringes of main urban areas, while some parishes host rural outliers, beyond the main built up areas.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – a site or area identified and designated by Natural England as being important due to its wildlife, geology or landform.

**Special Protection Area (SPA)** – an area designated under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** – required by European Directive 2001/42/EC and carried out as part of the wider Sustainability Appraisal to assess the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment.

**Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)** – a technical study which assesses housing need and demand across a defined market area.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** – Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a local planning authority to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal of each of the proposals in a Local Plan during its preparation, to promote sustainable development and ensure the Plan contributes to environmental, economic and social objectives.

**Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)** – a substantial mixed use development including employment, local facilities and at least 500 new homes, which provide well planned and managed new neighbourhoods.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – a document that adds further detail to policies in the Local Plan with regard to specific sites or particular issues.

**Town Centre** – a defined area which includes the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area.

**Urban re-imagination** – Also known as “urban re-branding”, this concept involves the application of a range of initiatives to highlight the positive virtues and characteristics of a town, in turn creating local pride and with this the attraction of new investment. The best known example of this concept is Barcelona, and the legacy of the 1992 Olympic Games.