North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031

Draft Pre-Submission Plan
Sections A-C
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Performance Indicators and Targets for Monitoring
1. Introduction

1.1 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the strategic Part 1 Local Plan for Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. It outlines a big picture to be developed in more detail through the Part 2 Local Plans prepared by the District and Borough Councils and by Neighbourhood Plans. The JCS is prepared by the Joint Planning Unit, reporting to a Joint Committee (JC) made up of elected representatives from the District, Borough and County Councils.

Figure 1: Plans in North Northamptonshire

1.2 The first Core Strategy was adopted in 2008 and covered the period to 2021. It has been reviewed to take account of progress and to plan forward to 2031. The review has also responded to the Government’s reforms to the planning system, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the revocation of Regional Plans. These have given greater scope for the JCS to respond to local needs and aspirations, although it must still be based on sound evidence and meet objectively assessed development needs and infrastructure requirements.
1.3 The review started in 2009. Early work involved a series of stakeholder workshops run in conjunction with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and a Rural Workshop and Small Towns Workshop run with Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE). Wider engagement has included consultation on an Issues Paper, which involved events in each of the towns and activities aimed at engaging young people. This included a Youth Conference organised with Groundwork North Northamptonshire. Reports on all previous consultation are available on the JPU website www.nnjpu.org.uk (in the Publications section under Engagement and Participation).

1.4 A 10 week consultation was undertaken between August and October 2012 on an Emerging Plan which included draft policies and the key sites to deliver these. The detailed feedback received from this consultation has informed the development of the draft plan, most notably refinements to the approach to housing targets, and amendments to a number of policies to aid clarity and reduce duplication. Further consultation was undertaken on strategic housing and employment sites and the development principles for these between August and October 2013.

1.5 Extensive technical work has been completed to ensure that the JCS is based on robust evidence that justifies the choices made. As well as the evidence base prepared for the adopted Core Strategy (much of which remains relevant) further studies have been completed on matters including population, transport, employment, housing, retailing, flood risk, strategic sites and the urban structure of settlements. The policies have also been subject to plan wide viability testing to ensure that the proposals are viable across the area. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan has informed the Plan and is published alongside this consultation. Reports on technical work undertaken by or for the JPU are available on the JPU web-site (in the Publications section under Evidence Base). Links to other relevant studies are provided throughout this document.
1.6 A number of the strategic sites and broad locations for development identified in Policies 23 and 29 (and on the policies map) already have planning permission or have been identified in adopted plans.

1.7 The Plan takes forward many aspects of the previous Core Strategy, including the emphasis on securing better infrastructure and services; the concentration of new development within the Growth Towns and connected settlements forming the urban spine of the area; and the vision for an enhanced framework of Green Infrastructure. Housing and employment targets, while lower than in the previous plan, remain high. This reflects the ambitions of the partner authorities and the major commitments that exist for development, particularly at the Sustainable Urban Extensions. Although Government policy no longer identifies nationally important “Growth Areas”, North Northamptonshire remains well placed to play this role on the terms set out in this plan.

1.8 While much remains the same, the review of the Core Strategy has resulted in a shift in approach on some issues. The most important changes are summarised below:

- **A more locally distinctive vision** that sets out what the individual parts of North Northamptonshire will contribute to the area. This recognises two distinct functional sub-areas, with the northern area focused on Corby and Kettering and the southern area focused on Wellingborough and the ‘Four Towns’ area of East Northamptonshire;

- **Increased protection for North Northamptonshire’s cultural and environmental assets**, through a set of Core Policies at the start of the plan that seek to protect and enhance assets (policies 1 - 7);

- **Stronger recognition of the importance of the natural environment and the opportunities it provides**, with new special policy areas for the Nene and Ise Valleys and the Rockingham Forest to supplement the existing approach to Green Infrastructure, in particular recognising its role in enhancing connectivity between settlements (policies 19 - 21);

- **Greater emphasis on urban design principles and how places could change for the better**, in particular to enhance design quality and emphasise the importance of connectivity to make it easier for people to get into town centres and out to surrounding countryside and ensure that new developments connect well to existing settlements (policies 8 and 15);

- **Up to date housing targets to meet the objectively assessed needs in North Northamptonshire** and to recognise the strategic opportunity to accommodate even more growth in Corby in line with the spatial strategy of the Plan (policies 28 and 29);

- **A more positive and flexible approach to economic development**, with minimum job targets to deliver at least one job for each additional worker, plus additional growth in the southern area to tackle high levels of out-commuting and a historic jobs/worker imbalance in the Four Towns area. New policies are proposed on rural diversification and logistics (policies 22 - 25);

- **An enhanced role for Rushden as a Growth Town** in recognition of local ambitions and the potential of the town to deliver significant new homes and jobs. The Sustainable Urban Extension proposed to the east of the town (policy 34) will
play a major role in this, alongside the permitted retail and leisure development at Rushden Lakes;

- **An amended retail strategy** reflecting the role that Rushden Lakes will play in meeting the needs of residents in the southern area, and the need to adapt the offer in the town centres of Wellingborough and Rushden accordingly. The focus of investment in the northern area will be the town centres of Kettering and Corby;

- **Identification of Strategic Sites to help deliver new homes, jobs and infrastructure.** The Plan confirms support for strategic housing sites identified in previous plans and identifies the boundary of the Sustainable Urban Extension west of Corby (policy 32) and the broad location of a SUE to the east of Rushden (Policy 33). A number of new strategic employment sites are identified and the area around the Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit (referred to as Rockingham Enterprise Area) is identified as having significant potential and is identified as a Special Policy Area (policy 27). The Plan sets out development principles for these sites to guide their development

- **Providing a framework for locally-driven plans in the rural areas,** through a simplified settlement hierarchy (policy 11) which provides more flexibility for local and neighbourhood plans to determine how much development is needed in local areas. Strategic housing requirements are provided only for the four largest villages. A new policy (policy 13) outlines when development might be acceptable as an exception to the normal policy of restraint in the countryside and a long term, exceptional opportunity is identified to consider a new village at Deenethorpe Airfield (policy 14).
The context for the Plan

1.9 The Plan takes into account other relevant strategies and programmes. This includes the requirements of the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan by recognising the importance of waste management infrastructure, and setting out a range of sustainable development measures. It has reflected the requirement to not sterilise mineral resources, particularly of allocated sites and maximise the use of recycled aggregates. The Plan also reflects the policy aims and key transport schemes of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (Local Transport Plan), as set out in policies 15-17 of the Plan and its supporting text. To inform the infrastructure requirements of the Plan, set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan extensive dialogue has been undertaken with relevant agencies and reference has been made to the Strategic Economic Plans produced by Northamptonshire and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the plans, amongst others, of the education and health authorities and utility companies.

1.10 The Plan and its accompanying Infrastructure Delivery Plan notes the move from Police and Health providers to develop a network of community facilities close to where people live, and the potential for mixed use community centres that provide these facilities. This is particularly relevant to the facilities that should be provided within Sustainable Urban Extensions. Future education requirements and the aspiration of the education authority to build schools where and when needed have been reflected in the distribution of development, and have underpinned the strategy to provide Sustainable Urban Extensions of a sufficient scale to incorporate these facilities.

1.11 An important component that has guided the preparation of the Plan is the requirement to apply a spatial planning dimension to the relevant Sustainable Community Strategies that have been prepared. These individual Strategies all contain a Vision and Objectives and deal with key cross-cutting themes such as:

- **Being successful through sustainable growth and regeneration** – ensuring that physical and social infrastructure will be in place to match growth, improving and protecting countryside and buildings for future generations in addition to regenerating and improving town centres;
- **Health and Wellbeing** – reducing health inequality, increasing life expectancy promoting social inclusion, sport and recreation and providing more access to healthy lifestyle options to improve health and wellbeing;
- **Education and skills** – Raising skills levels to ensure that workers have the right skills for a changing economy, addressing the skills shortage for 16-25 year olds through work based learning;
- **Ensuring economic prosperity** – ensuring the availability of relevant and appropriate business skills and training opportunities; providing high quality infrastructure to support and encourage innovation and growth; build on the unique character and location;
- **Environment** – encouraging and promoting environmental protection, improving the environmental and visual quality of the area, managing resources effectively, sustainable transport for all;
- **Strong and Safe Communities** – Reducing and preventing crime as well as the fear of it by tackling violence, anti-social behaviour, re-offending and improving access to services and facilities.
1.12 The Spatial Vision and Outcomes in the Plan and the policies to deliver these take forward the themes and visions and objectives of the Community Strategies that are outlined above and seek to deliver these priorities. Monitoring of the Plan will be fundamental to assessing its effectiveness in delivering the Community Strategies and the monitoring framework is set out in Section D.

1.13 The Plan and the studies and consultation that underpin it, recognises the spatial relationships between North Northamptonshire and adjoining areas. The Plan has been informed by constructive, active and ongoing engagement with adjoining planning authorities and public bodies, to ensure that it addresses cross-boundary strategic matters including Transport linkages, Green Infrastructure and health care provision. This engagement has established that neighbouring authorities in West Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire (also formerly part of the MKSM Growth Area) are still planning for significant growth, as are Peterborough and Huntingdonshire to the east (formerly part of the Peterborough/Cambridge/Stansted Growth Area). These areas are not reliant on North Northamptonshire to take any of their objectively assessed housing need. It has also ensured that the Plan reflects the infrastructure requirements and methods of service provision of infrastructure providers.

Figure 3: Adjoining Local Authorities
The Plan Period

1.14 This plan is for the period to 31st March 2031 and addresses the objectively assessed need for homes, jobs, retail floorspace and other development, working from a base-date on 1st April 2011. It also recognises the strategic opportunity for higher levels of development as the area becomes a destination of choice for a growing number of people and businesses to live and invest in.

1.15 The spatial strategy set out in the Plan will provide the basis for considering any future growth, with a continuing focus on the Growth Towns and the town centres in particular. The Plan (policy 11) indicates that, subject to further assessment, the identified Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) have potential to continue to grow beyond 2031 (paragraph 5.9). This provides an ongoing supply of housing and employment land. Potential further SUEs will be determined through a future review of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. However, in order to make best use of infrastructure and to support the viability of the developments, priority will be given to expanding the principal SUEs identified in this Plan at the Growth Towns.

1.17 This approach gives a degree of certainty to developers and infrastructure providers but does not pre-judge the technical work and consultation that needs to inform decisions on significant growth beyond 2031 in a review of the JCS. The approach also gives flexibility to monitor and review the Plan, for example in the light of the balance achieved between new homes and the delivery of new jobs and infrastructure.

Preparing a ‘Sound’ Plan

1.18 This is the Plan that the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee considers to be sound.

1.19 The Plan is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) which considers the social, environmental and economic effects of the plan, the reasonable alternatives that have been considered in its development, and its contribution towards delivering sustainability objectives. An Appropriate Assessment has also been undertaken to consider the impact of the Plan on the Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA).

1.20 It will be necessary to demonstrate to the Inspector that the Plan is “sound” as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – namely that it is:

- **Positively prepared** – based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements;
- **Justified** – the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives;
- **Effective** – deliverable over the period to 2031 and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the NPPF.

1.21 The JPU is seeking feedback on whether the plan is robust when considered against the tests of soundness set out above, including whether it is the most appropriate
strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternative. Representations should set out why in the light of the tests of soundness the Plan needs further refinement prior to submission.

How to comment on the Pre Submission Draft Plan

The consultation runs for 6 weeks from the XXth until XXth XXXX 2015.

A response form is available on the website www.nnjpu.org.uk. Comments should be made to the Joint Planning Unit by **5.00 p.m on XX XXXXX 2015** at the latest, by:

e-mail to: consultation@nnjpu.org.uk (our preferred method of response)

post to: North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit

c/o East Northamptonshire Council

Cedar Drive

Thrapston

Northants NN14 4LZ

For further information please visit the JPU web-site www.nnjpu.org.uk or telephone the JPU on 01832 742355.

Following this consultation the Joint Committee will review representations and consider whether modifications will need to be made to the Plan. The Plan will then be submitted for examination by an independent Inspector. Please note that all representations will be made public.
2. Issues, Spatial Vision and Outcomes

Spatial Portrait of North Northamptonshire

National and sub-national context

2.1 North Northamptonshire is located on key strategic transport infrastructure in the form of the A14 ‘Trans European Route’ (E24) providing linkages to the M1 and M6 as well as to the East Coast ports and, and the Midland Mainline railway with stations at Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby providing links south to London St Pancras (average journey time 55 minutes from Wellingborough) with onward Eurostar trains, and north to the Leicester, Nottingham and beyond (although services north from Corby are currently limited). The international airports shown on Figure 4 are all within 70 miles of North Northamptonshire and convenient rail/ bus access is available from stations on the Midland Mainline at Luton airport and at the East Midlands Parkway.

2.2 North Northamptonshire was previously identified in National and Regional policy as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands (MKSM) Growth Area. This was one of four areas identified to help accommodate the economic success of London and the wider South East by delivering major growth in well-designed communities, supported by substantial investment in infrastructure and services. This designation reflected the area’s proximity and links to London and the South East, its economic potential (including its close relationship to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc) and the limited environmental/ policy constraints compared much of the country (no designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Green Belt). It also recognised the opportunity to use growth to support the regeneration of existing communities, in particular Corby.

2.3 Although the current Government has moved away from ‘top-down’ planning, the factors that marked North Northamptonshire out as part of a nationally important growth area have not changed. Significant potential exists for new homes and jobs through existing planning commitments, in particular the Sustainable Urban Extensions at the main towns, provided it is supported by adequate investment in infrastructure.

2.4 At the County level, the Northamptonshire Arc concept1 seeks to ensure a co-ordinated approach to economic development, the environment and connectivity across Northamptonshire. In particular, it identifies connectivity issues and infrastructure deficit that, if not addressed, would prevent Northamptonshire from fulfilling its vision of sustainable growth. The Arc encompasses all the larger towns in the county including Northampton, Daventry and Towcester in the west and south (part of the West Northamptonshire administrative area), Kettering and Corby in the north and Wellingborough, Rushden, Oundle and Thrapston in the east. This potential is recognised in the Strategic Economic Plans prepared by the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) which cover North Northamptonshire. These are the Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP), covering all four districts and the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP), which includes Corby and Kettering.

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The network of settlements

2.5 The four largest towns, Corby (population 54,927\textsuperscript{2}) Kettering (56,226\textsuperscript{3}), Wellingborough (49,087) and Rusden (29,272) are located on a north-south spine, with a chain of smaller towns related to the A6 corridor including Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell. To the east of this urban spine are the towns of Oundle (population 5,735) and Thrapston (6,239) which serve a large rural catchment.

\textsuperscript{2} Usual resident population by Parish. Census Table ks101ew. Published parish data can include more than one settlement.
\textsuperscript{3} Includes Kettering Town and Barton Seagrave.
2.6 Outside these settlements, North Northamptonshire has over 100 villages. These range in scale from Rockingham with a population of 113 to Earls Barton with 5,387 residents. The villages within or close to the Urban areas tend be more reliant on the towns for employment and services than is the case for more remote villages such as King’s Cliffe.

Figure 5: Network of settlements in North Northamptonshire with populations of main towns (2011 Census)

2.7 The network of settlements provides a range of employment, services and facilities to serve the population of North Northamptonshire. For instance Kettering General Hospital provides acute care for the area, supplemented by local hospitals in Corby and Wellingborough; and Tresham Institute provides further education from campuses in the three Growth Towns. In terms of commuting and shopping patterns there are two distinct functional sub-areas in North Northamptonshire: the Northern area with
Kettering and Corby as focal points; and the Southern area, focused on Wellingborough and Rushden, which has closer functional links with Northampton.

2.8 While the network of settlements meets many of the needs of residents, there are some significant deficiencies in the employment, services and facilities available for an area of over 318,000 population, which is planned to grow to 396,000 by 2031. For example, North Northamptonshire:
- Has no university presence (the nearest being the University of Northampton);
- Has relatively few high-tech and knowledge-based businesses;
- Has a limited retail and leisure offer compared to neighbouring larger centres (although this is improving with a new cinema due to open in Corby in early 2015 and the Rushden Lakes development due to open in 2016)
- Lacks a rapid public transit system to link existing urban areas and planned growth areas

2.9 Deficiencies such as these result in North Northamptonshire losing significant wealth and skilled people, including graduates moving away to work, or commuting to London, Milton Keynes or other centres. At the 2011 census, 31% of the area’s labour force was commuting to centres outside North Northamptonshire (compared to 24% in 2001). With a high dependency on car use, this puts significant additional traffic and congestion onto the local and strategic road network. This will increase if North Northamptonshire delivers housing growth without new jobs and an improvement in the range and quality of services and facilities to meet the needs and demands of local people.

2.10 Despite the growth in commuting, travel patterns in North Northamptonshire, are still very localised in nature, meaning the vast majority of trips are being taken within the boundaries of the area. There is a significant movement between the towns in North Northamptonshire and, notably towards Northampton. Car-use dominates as a transport mode (being used for 69% of trips to work) in comparison to less than 5% of trips being made by cycle or bus. Apart from the flagship X4 which links Milton Keynes, Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby and Peterborough, bus connections from North Northamptonshire do not provide attractive alternatives to car use, particularly in the rural areas. The dominance of car-use contributes to problems of congestion on both strategic routes such as the A14 and A45, which is forecast to increase with planned growth and on the local road network, particularly in Kettering and Wellingborough town centres. Upgrading of the highway network, coupled with measures to manage demand for travel, support the use of electric vehicles and to secure modal shift (from car use to public transport, walking and cycling) are fundamental to support the delivery of sustainable growth.

2.11 Each settlement has its own distinctive character, reflecting its evolution. For example, many of the towns expanded significantly as centres for the boot and shoe industry or, in the case of Corby, for the steel industry. This has left a particular architectural legacy and urban structure of streets and buildings which is very different to the historic market town of Oundle and most of the villages. This character and urban structure has an important bearing on how settlements should develop in the future. The four largest towns of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden have reached the size where they have already built up to obvious physical barriers in a number of directions. The positioning of ring roads and other key infrastructure such as railway lines around settlements creates physical barriers to growth and to accessing the surrounding

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4 Forecast based on proposed housing growth of 40,000 dwellings (CCHPR 2013)
5 2011 census qs701ew - method of travel to work
6 Northamptonshire Transportation Plan p56
countryside. These barriers, together with the distance between the edge of the town and the centre, can present a number of challenges in creating new areas which integrate into the existing town and which support the town’s centre. In the smaller towns, the same issues exist and are often compounded by cul-de-sac developments which prevent new streets being easily connected to existing ones, making it more difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to reach the town centres.

2.12 Monitoring of design quality has shown more recently approved development being of higher quality. However, data has also identified a correlation between the number of houses on site and design quality, with smaller schemes generally performing better than larger schemes. Overall, design quality in NN is improving over time, albeit it is more difficult to achieve on larger sites, which tend to incorporate mass market house types, and standard street layouts. Many schemes are still failing to create characterful places and streets are tending to be designed for traffic rather than for people.

2.13 While a key concern of the plan is to maintain the character of the smaller towns and villages, while allowing for necessary development, in a number of the larger towns the emphasis is on securing investment and renewal to transform run-down areas, including parts of the town centres of all of the four largest towns. Corby has 11 of the 50 of the most deprived wards in North Northamptonshire (2010 English Indices of Deprivation⁷), Wellingborough 7 and Kettering 6. East Northamptonshire has fewer deprived wards, and ranks well nationally. Small pockets of deprivation also exist in rural areas where some people encounter difficulties in accessing jobs, services and facilities, due in part to the limited availability of public transport.

The countryside

2.14 The relationship between the network of settlements and the surrounding countryside is a distinctive feature of North Northamptonshire and one of its main attractions for new residents and businesses seeking a high quality environment. There is a marked contrast between the quiet rural character of much of the area, particularly in the Rural North of East Northamptonshire and the main settlements in the urban spine where the emphasis is on securing investment in growth and renewal.

2.15 The North Northamptonshire countryside incorporates many of North Northamptonshire’s environmental and cultural assets and is a diverse mix of landscapes, each with its own distinctive visual, historic and ecological character. The northern and southern boundaries of North Northamptonshire are framed by river valleys; the Welland and the Nene. The Nene changes in character as it moves through the area, from a more urbanised west and a concentration of sand and gravel extraction, to a more tranquil rural north. Much of the northern half of the area lies within the Rockingham Forest; over 200 square miles of woodland, pasture and farmland in North Northamptonshire and Peterborough, within which the King’s Cliffe Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area around King’s Cliffe is recognised for its tranquillity. The various Country Parks and sites of historic importance, including Grade 1 listed assets such as Rockingham Castle, Boughton House and represent valuable leisure, tourism and cultural resources within the countryside.

2.16 Compared to most of the country, North Northamptonshire has a low biodiversity offer with habitats fragmented or degraded as a result of settlement expansion,

⁷ 2010 English Indices of Deprivation
infrastructure developments and agriculture. Its biodiversity and geodiversity assets face continuing pressure from new development, recreational use, the wider impacts of climate change and the introduction of non-native invasive species. These issues are being tackled through innovative approaches to planning and managing key Green Infrastructure assets.

2.17 The Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) was designated by the Government in March 2012 and extends from Daventry to Peterborough, including the River Nene and its main tributaries. NIA’s are ecological networks established to reconnect wildlife habitats and help species adapt to the challenges of climate change. At the heart of the NIA is the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits, a group of lakes and ponds along the Nene between Northampton and Thorpe Waterville, designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site due to its international importance for migratory birds.

2.18 The Rockingham Forest is home to a new scheme to plant significant areas of woodland as a local response to climate change known as ‘Forest for Life Rockingham’. Increased tree planting within the forest area can capture carbon, enhance the natural and cultural environment, reinforce ancient woodlands, link fragmented sites, create wildlife corridors and enhance biodiversity.

9 http://www.rivernenergionalpark.org/images/PDF_Files/River_Nene_Regional_Park/Projects/RFFL/FfLRNewsletter2014w.pdf
Population

2.19 The population of North Northamptonshire increased by nearly 11% between 2001 and 2011 from 285,600 to 316,800\( ^{10} \). This compares to growth of 7.2% in the population of England. Corby has seen the largest percentage population increase (14.4%), followed by Kettering (13.7%) and East Northamptonshire (13.3%). Only Wellingborough (4%) has seen population growth below the national average of 7.2%. At the 2011 census the populations of the local authorities was as follows: Corby 61,300; East Northamptonshire 86,800; Kettering 93,500 and Wellingborough 75,400.

2.20 Population growth has underpinned significant growth in households over the same period. Three of the North Northamptonshire authorities are within the top 20 authorities in the country with the highest growth in households\(^\text{11}\) between 2001 and 2011 (Kettering 16.8%, East Northamptonshire 15.2% and Corby 14.5%). At 6.7% growth at Wellingborough was below the national average of 7.9%.

2.21 The latest ONS 2012-based population projections\(^\text{12}\) indicate that, if recent trends continue, the population of North Northamptonshire will grow from around 321,400 people in 2012 to 370,600 in 2031, an increase of 15.3%. For comparison, the population of England is projected to grow by 12.9% over this same period. The 2012 based projection assumes a lower birth rate and lower net in-migration than the population projections that underpin this plan. These are based on projections prepared by the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR) using previous ONS interim 2011-based projections adjusted and rolled forward to 2031\(^\text{13}\). These project a North Northamptonshire population of 382,300 in 2031, representing a 20.2% increase over the plan period 2011-31 (or, for comparison with the latest ONS projections, 19.5% since 2012).

2.22 The minimum housing requirements set out in Policy 28 will accommodate the increase in households associated with the CCHPR projected level of population growth. The ‘strategic opportunity’ for additional housing at Corby would enable the population of North Northamptonshire to grow even more, with an increase of 78,000 people (a 24.5% increase) over the plan period to 2031 (23.8% since 2012). Figure 7 shows planned population growth compared to national (2012) projections.

*Figure 7: Projected percentage growth in population 2012 – 31*

![Projected percentage growth in population 2012-31](image)

2.23 The age structure of the population is forecast to change over the plan period, with significant implications for the homes, jobs, services and facilities that are required. Figure 8 shows that the growth in working age population is relatively modest but that there will be significant expansions in 60+ age groups (the number of people over 75

\(^{11}\) [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_270487.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_270487.pdf)

\(^{12}\) ONS Sub-National Population Projections November 2014

\(^{13}\) Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research December 2013
is forecast to increase by 92%). This will increase the demand for specialised provision such as designated, sheltered and extra-care housing and will also increase pressure on health and social services. It also creates the potential for large scale downsizing from under-occupied homes. At the other end of the age range, there will be a significant growth in the number of children (27% increase in 0-14 age group). School places will need to be provided for this expanding population.

Figure 8: Forecast change in age structure of North Northamptonshire population 2011-31

2.24 Household projections\textsuperscript{14} identify that there will be a growth of almost 25% in single person households, many of whom will consist of older people, and a small growth in couple households. For families, a small increase in the number of family households made up of a 15% decline in two parent, but a 25% growth in lone parent households.

Housing

2.25 Whilst the economic recession has impacted on the delivery of North Northamptonshire's ambitious growth agenda, particularly in relation to housing and jobs growth, it remains one of the fastest growing areas in the country delivering 19,000 additional dwellings between 2001 and 2013. The dwelling stock in the HMA grew by 13.3% between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, compared to 8.3% for England\textsuperscript{15}. There are planning consents in place for over 20,000 dwellings, notably through the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs).

2.26 The majority of development has been focused at the towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough; however, these settlements have not accommodated the amount of development that was planned in the CSS. This is due to the recession and ongoing

\textsuperscript{14} SHMA 2012 Summary Report
\textsuperscript{15} Growth in dwelling stock between 2001 and 2011 censuses: Kettering 16.3%, Corby 15.5%, East Northamptonshire 14.6%, Wellingborough 7% (ONS)
viability issues holding up development of most of the SUEs. In contrast, rates of development at the Market Towns and within the Rural Area have been broadly met or exceeded those set within the CSS and there remains significant development pressure in these locations.

2.27 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) notes that the ‘housing offer’ in North Northamptonshire is very broad, ranging from lower cost options based around Corby, to the higher value properties available in the high demand area of East Northamptonshire. The area’s housing market has been diversified through the growth of the private rented sector which appears to have responded to the increased requirement for smaller properties. Despite house prices being relatively low in the national context, affordability remains an important local issue, in part due to household incomes also being relatively low.

2.28 Population trends referred to above have significant implications for the type of housing required. The SHMA indicates that for singles and couples, there is an increased requirement for 1 and 2 bed properties in an area with historically low supply of smaller homes. A small increase in the requirement for family housing is complicated by the projected large increase in lone parent households who have incomes typically a third of the average. The implication is that there is a need for more family housing that is affordable to lone parents.

2.29 The home ownership sector has been less responsive to demographic trends and has continued to develop a high level of traditional and larger family housing. The social rented sector continues to play an important role in housing smaller households and both need and demand are likely to increase under the joint pressures of demographic change and welfare reform.

Economy

2.30 North Northamptonshire under-performed against the ambitious job requirements of the previous CSS, which has increased the imbalance between housing and job provision. In the period 2001 to 2011, 17,740 new homes were built in the HMA but there was an estimated net increase of only 7,500 workplace jobs\textsuperscript{16}. Data\textsuperscript{17} between 2011 and 2013 showed that workplace jobs fell by a further 1900.

2.31 North Northamptonshire has around 0.85 jobs for each worker (economically active residents excluding those in full time employment). It has become less self-reliant in terms of employment since 2001, with 69% of the labour force living and working in North Northamptonshire compared to 76% at the 2001 census. This is in part due to job losses during the recession, and population growth outstripping the creation of new jobs.

2.32 Corby has the closest balance between jobs and workers (0.97 jobs: worker), which is reflected in the highest level of self-containment and commuting patterns (67% of the resident labour force also works in Corby and it is the only district in North Northamptonshire with a net in-flow of commuters) and the shortest average journeys to work (15.4 km).


\textsuperscript{17} BRES data
2.33 East Northamptonshire stands out as the district with the poorest balance between jobs and workers (0.70 jobs per worker across the district and only 0.62 in the Four Towns area. Out-commuting to jobs in larger centres such as Wellingborough and Northampton results in the district having the lowest level of self-containment in commuting patterns (36.1%), the greatest net out-flow of commuters (12,200) and the longest average commuting distances (16.5km).

2.34 Kettering is the main employment centre in North Northamptonshire, and after Corby, has the second highest level of self-containment in commuting patterns (52.3%) and the second shortest average journeys to work (15.8km).

2.35 Wellingborough has a balance between jobs and workers (0.91) that is second only to Corby but has the second highest level of net out-commuting after East Northamptonshire (only 45.5% of its resident labour force works in the Borough). This is due to the accessibility of larger centres of employment, in particular Northampton, with 19% of working residents of Wellingborough working in Northampton Borough.

2.36 Broadly speaking there are two functional areas in North Northamptonshire, focused around Corby and Kettering in the North and the South (Wellingborough and Rushden). In addition to people living and working in North Northamptonshire, workers commute into and out of the area. Over 18,000 more workers commuted out of North Northamptonshire than commuted in. Northampton exerts a strong influence on the southern part of North Northamptonshire.

*Figure 9: Commuting flows to and from North Northamptonshire*
2.37 The current economy is weighted towards lower-skilled and lower paid employment. Average workplace earnings are £430 per week, lower than £512 for England\textsuperscript{18}. Fewer residents are qualified to degree level, compared to 27% for England as a whole. Such a skills shortage acts as a barrier to growth given the link between a highly skilled workforce and high productivity and GVA.

2.38 Over a number of years Warehousing and Distribution (B8) has been the largest growth sector taking advantage of the excellent transport links, with sites closely related to the strategic road network and rail freight transfer points and is forecast to remain an important sector of the economy. East Northamptonshire has also benefited from small and medium enterprises. The area has seen significant losses in manufacturing employment which in 1998 was the largest economic sector accounting for $1/3^{rd}$ of all employment in North Northamptonshire. Corby was dependent on manufacturing for 50% of its jobs while in other districts manufacturing accounted for 30% of all employment. Between 1998 and 2008, all districts lost manufacturing employment. The largest losses were in Corby and Wellingborough, which both lost around 5,000 manufacturing jobs, contributing to a net loss of jobs in these areas (Corby lost 800 workplace jobs and Wellingborough 1600 between 2001 and 2011). Between 2001 and 2011 East Northamptonshire and Kettering were the best performing local authorities in creating jobs 4,300 and 5600 workplace jobs respectively.

2.39 22 wards within Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire have been designated by the government as Assisted Areas\textsuperscript{19} for the period 2014 to 2020. These comprise a mixture of urban and rural areas identified because they are less economically advantaged places that would benefit from additional support for development. Assisted Area status encourages business growth and offers eligibility for regional aid, but does not in itself confer any funding.

2.40 The town centres in North Northamptonshire are relatively small and poorly ranked compared to neighbouring centres. Kettering is the largest and highest ranked\textsuperscript{20} retail centre in North Northamptonshire ranked 200\textsuperscript{th} followed by Corby 365\textsuperscript{th} and Wellingborough 374\textsuperscript{th}. Consequently, there is a loss of trade from North Northamptonshire to larger, higher ranked centres, in particular from Rushden and Wellingborough in the southern area which lose trade to Milton Keynes ranked 29\textsuperscript{th} and Northampton 56\textsuperscript{th}. Leicester (ranked 17\textsuperscript{th}) and Peterborough (54\textsuperscript{th}) also exert influences on North Northamptonshire.

2.41 The North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity update (2011)\textsuperscript{21} indicates that North Northamptonshire now retains around 61.5% of comparison retail spending, an increase from 50% in 2005. However, this increased retention has been driven by increased expenditure at out of town and edge of centre retail parks rather than the town centres. Of the four main towns, only Corby has seen an increase in town centre expenditure as a result of the development of Willow Place. The approval of a major out of town retail and leisure scheme at Rushden Lakes, will contribute towards retention of expenditure, particularly in the southern area but will impact on Wellingborough town centre in particular.

\textsuperscript{18} Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2012
\textsuperscript{19} http://www.ukassistedareasmap.com/
\textsuperscript{20} Venuescore Retail Rankings 2013-14
\textsuperscript{21} http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1181
Infrastructure

2.42 North Northamptonshire benefits from excellent strategic connections. The E24 ‘Trans European Route’ (also known as the A14) provides links to the M1 and M6 as well as the East Coast Ports. The Midland Main Line provides connections from Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough to London.

2.43 Whilst there remains a need for new infrastructure North Northamptonshire has seen significant infrastructure investment since the previous CSS. This investment has included the opening of Corby railway station and completion of the A43 Corby Link Road. Other improvements to key transport infrastructure are being delivered, notably between Junctions 7 and 9 of the A14, which is due to complete in 2015, and the electrification of the Midland Mainline between Bedford and Sheffield, benefitting Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough stations. Increased capacity across the transport network will improve efficiency and reliability whilst accommodating growth and supporting economic development.

2.44 Anglian Water, through its Asset Management Plan (2010-2015) have assigned funding to enable the capacity of the Broadholme Sewerage Treatment works (which serves the majority of North Northamptonshire) to be upgraded as and when required by new development. In addition to this, progress is being made on the design work of a strategic sewer and pumping stations to link developments in Kettering to the Broadholme works (including the Kettering East urban extension).

2.45 North Northamptonshire has sought to meet the challenges of climate change by supporting the development of new environmental technologies. Kettering Borough has an operational wind farm at Burton Wold (17 turbines generating 36.1 MW of electricity). Consent has also been granted for the New Albion Wind Farm near Rushton which will produce 16.1 MW of energy. Cumulatively, it is anticipated these schemes have the potential to produce enough electricity to power 75% of the current homes in Kettering. In addition to this, an aerobic digestion scheme is operational near Rothwell, converting up to 30,000 tonnes of food and vegetable waste from domestic and commercial sources into approximately 1 MW of energy, with the resultant bio-fertiliser being distributed to local farms whilst a gasification plant in Desborough has been approved which will use waste to generate electricity from up to 96,000 tonnes of household and business waste per year to generate 8 MW of energy. Alongside these schemes, a number of solar schemes have been approved across the area. In East Northamptonshire, a solar farm is operational near Islip and a renewable energy park has been consented at Chelveston airfield, which includes an operational wind farm, and consents for a solar farm, an anaerobic digestion plant and bio-oil electricity generators, with a capability to generate over 30 MW of energy.

2.46 Current market conditions both in North Northamptonshire and the wider East Midlands in relation to viability are challenging. This is having impacts on the standards that developments can achieve, and the levels of affordable housing and other contributions that can be provided. Viability conditions are, however, forecast to improve across the East Midlands.
Issues to be addressed in the Joint Core Strategy

2.47 A number of interrelated issues identified by this Spatial Portrait need to be addressed if sustainable growth is to be delivered in North Northamptonshire. These set the context for the overall vision and outcomes of this Plan.

2.48 As an area North Northamptonshire has a number of key advantages that should support sustainable growth. These include:

- Its location at the heart of England with good regional, national and international transport links;
- The attractive rural setting and generally high quality environment and quality of life;
- The network of settlements, each with its own distinctive character, providing accessible local services and facilities;
- The relative affordability of housing compared to any other area within an hour of London;
- The absence of major constraints to development and the substantial commitments that exist for employment and housing development.

2.49 However, the area has a number of challenges and issues to address. These include:

- The lack of some key facilities and services, resulting in residents being reliant on larger centres outside North Northamptonshire. This is particularly the case in the southern area;
- Town centres that struggle to compete with larger neighbours and have lost trade to out of centre developments;
- The need to raise the quality of development and ensure that it connects to the existing settlement and contributes to making it more sustainable. This is a particular challenge where ring roads and modern cul-de-sac developments create barriers;
- Some run-down and deprived urban areas in need of regeneration and restructuring;
- High levels of population and household growth that will need services and facilities. In particular, the needs of an ageing population and also to provide for a significant growth in the number of children;
- The ongoing need for affordable housing;
- Gaps in infrastructure service provision and need for new infrastructure to support growth;
• Dominance of car-use for even short journeys and the need to facilitate modal shift by providing attractive alternatives;

• Limited biodiversity compared to other areas but significant environmental and heritage assets;

• Imbalance between house building and job creation, resulting in increased out-commuting, particularly from the southern area;

• Difficulty in diversifying the economy into higher value sectors and underperformance against job targets, notably in Corby and Wellingborough despite a significant over-supply of committed employment sites;

• Housing delivery at the Growth Towns that has fallen short of targets despite permissions being in place, with ongoing development pressure at the Market Towns and villages;

• The consequent need to unlock and bring forward the Sustainable Urban Extensions to underpin the sustainable growth of North Northamptonshire;

• Viability challenges in securing the highest possible standards of development and infrastructure provision

2.50 The vision and outcomes set out how the Plan aims to address these issues in order to deliver sustainable growth in a way that benefits existing as well as new communities and tackle environmental concerns, particularly around climate change. It incorporates the key principles, identified through ‘place-shaping’ workshops in 2009/10 (see paragraph 1.3). These are that North Northamptonshire should be planned in way that:

1. **Improves its self-reliance** in terms of both economic and social sustainability. This includes building up the network of settlements and the transport links between them so that together they can meet more of the needs of local people, thereby retaining people, wealth and skills in the area;

2. **Increases its resilience** to environmental and economic global changes. This includes promoting a strong ‘green living’ agenda, incorporating enhancement of the green environment, promotion of environmental technologies, requiring the highest possible standards of design in new development and seeking patterns of development that allow people to choose healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyles including a shift away from car use; and

3. **Reinforces its special urban-rural character**, by enhancing the network of countryside and Green Infrastructure and maintains the separate and distinct character and identities of settlements by preventing coalescence.

2.51 Ecosystem services are an aspect of sustainable development that cuts across all of the above principles. These are defined as the benefits that the natural environment provides to humans including the production of clean water and many raw materials used in economic activities, regulation of climate and flooding, soil formation, crop pollination, and cultural benefits such as aesthetic value and recreational opportunities. Changes in land use can alter ecosystems and reduce their capacity to provide these services, detrimentally affecting the resilience of an area. It is therefore important to
recognise the full range of ecosystem services and to enhance their provision where possible to ensure a sustainable environment that can adapt to climate change and continues to provide multiple benefits to society.

Vision & Outcomes

Vision

By 2031, North Northamptonshire will be a showpiece for modern green living and well managed sustainable development: a resilient area where local choices have increased the ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change and to global economic changes. The special mixed urban-rural character of North Northamptonshire will have been maintained through urban-focussed growth supporting a strong network of vibrant and regenerated settlements within an enhanced green framework of living, working countryside.

North Northamptonshire will be outward looking, taking advantage of its excellent strategic transport connectivity to be a nationally important growth area and focus for inward investment. Plan led change will have made North Northamptonshire, its northern and southern sub-areas and individual settlements more self-reliant, with more choices available locally. Investment in infrastructure, services and facilities and growth in high quality jobs will have led to less need to travel and will have shaped places in a way that meets the needs and aspirations of local people. A strong focus on growing investment in tourism, leisure and green infrastructure will be balanced with the protection and enhancement of the area’s landscape character and its valuable built and natural environment.

North Northamptonshire will be an exemplar for construction based innovation and the delivery of low carbon growth. Its high quality environment and prosperous economy will ensure it has a stronger profile within the UK and Europe; widely recognised as a safe, healthy, affordable and attractive area for residents and visitors, and an excellent place for business to invest in.

Ecosystems will be protected and enhanced and provision of ecosystem services increased where demand exists. The Rockingham Forest will be re-invigorated through major new tree planting, providing carbon storage and a focus for tourism, recreation and sustainable wood fuel production. Restored and newly created habitats in the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area and in the Ise corridor, will deliver improvements for both wildlife and people and a step change in nature conservation whilst recognising its tourism potential.

Contributing to this overall vision:

- Corby will be well on the way to doubling its population and will offer international class culture and sport facilities. Enterprise areas will have promoted the town as a base for businesses leading the way in high performance technologies, creative industries and the green economy. Smart and innovative regeneration and growth will have delivered a transformed, and vibrant and growing Town Centre and sustainable urban extensions; together with a network of accessible natural green spaces forming the urban gateway to the wider Rockingham Forest.

- 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 provide a new out of town 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.

- Kettering will be the largest retail centre and its vibrant town centre, regarded for being characterful, distinctive and fun, will provide a focus for its surrounding market towns and villages. The town will be the focus for healthcare and will lead the way in renewable energy investment to strengthen the green economy. Its business community will capitalise on its excellent connectivity, including its position on the Trans-European (E24 route) A14 and on the electrified Midland Mainline rail route.

- Wellingborough will be the gateway to North Northamptonshire for businesses looking for good rail connections to the south east and Europe, with a high profile office development centred on the railway station. Its historic core will be the heart of the community, serving the town and its prosperous satellite villages with a diversified retail, leisure and heritage offer.

Achieving the Vision by 2031 depends upon the successful delivery of the following outcomes:

1. Empowered and proactive communities

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, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where residents are actively involved in shaping the places where they live.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 7 – Community Services & Facilities
- Policy 10 – Provision of Infrastructure
- Policy 11 – Network of Urban and Rural Areas
- Policy 14 – Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity

2. Adaptability to future climate change

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 to meet the highest viable standards for energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable construction.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy 5 – Water Environment, Resources & Flood Risk Management
- Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles
3. Distinctive environments that enhance and respect local character and enhance biodiversity

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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 – Historic Environment
- Policy 3 – Landscape Character
- Policy 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield Land and Land affected by contamination
- Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles
- Policy 14 – Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity
- Policy 19 – The Delivery of Green Infrastructure
- Policy 20 – The Nene and Ise Valleys
- Policy 21 – Rockingham Forest

4. Excellent services and facilities easily accessed by local communities and businesses

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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 7 – Community Services & Facilities
- Policy 14 – Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity
- Policy 10 – Provision of Infrastructure
- Policy 18 – HGV Parking
- Policy 22 – Delivering Economic Prosperity
- Policy 28 – Housing Requirements and Strategic Opportunities
- Policy 32 – Infrastructure Delivery Mechanisms
5. A sustainable balance between local jobs and workers and a more diverse economy

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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 14 – Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity
- Policy 22 – Delivering Economic Prosperity
- Policy 23 – Distribution of new jobs
- Policy 24 – Logistics
- Policy 25 – Rural Economic Development and Diversification
- Policy 26 – Renewable Energy
- Policy 27 – Rockingham Enterprise Area

6. Transformed Connectivity

The Plan seeks transformed connectivity at all levels. It sets of 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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 8 - Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles
- Policy 15 - Well Connected Towns, Villages and Neighbourhoods
- Policy 16 – Connecting the Network of Settlements
- Policy 17 – North Northamptonshire’s Strategic Connections
- Policy 18 – HGV Parking

7. More walkable places and an excellent choice of ways to travel

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 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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles
- Policy 11- Settlement Design Principles
8. Vibrant, well connected towns and a productive countryside

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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 13 – Rural Exceptions
- Policy 15 – Well Connected Towns, Villages and Neighbourhoods
- Policy 16 – Connecting the Network of Settlements
- Policy 19 – The Delivery of Green Infrastructure
- Policy 25 – Rural Economic Development and Diversification
- Policy 28 – Housing Requirements and Strategic Opportunities
- Policy 29 – Distribution of New Homes

9. Stronger, more self-reliant towns with thriving centres

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. The plan identifies the town centres at Kettering and Corby as areas of focus for leisure, retail and cultural facilities for the northern area, making them into real hearts for their communities. Implementation of the consented Rushden Lakes development will provide an additional new 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.

Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield Land and Land affected by contamination
- Policy 12 – Town Centres
- Policy 28 – Housing Requirements and Strategic Opportunities
- Policy 29 – Distribution of New Homes

10. Enhanced quality of life for all residents

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.
Policies to help achieve this outcome are:

- Policy 1 – Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield Land and Land affected by contamination
- Policy 9 – Sustainable Design & Allowable Solutions
- Policy 10 – Provision of Infrastructure
- Policy 14 – Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity
- Policy 19 – The Delivery of Green Infrastructure
- Policy 21 – Rockingham Forest
- Policy 28 – Housing Requirements and Strategic Opportunities
- Policy 30 – Housing Mix and Tenure
- Policy 31 – Gypsies and travellers and travelling show people
- Policy 32 – Infrastructure Delivery Mechanisms
Figure 10 North Northamptonshire Key Diagram
Legend

- Growth Towns (Policy 11)
- Market Towns (Policy 11)
- Committed Sustainable Urban Extensions (Policy 23, 29)
- Proposed Sustainable Urban Extensions
- Broad location of Rushden East SUE
- Deene Thorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity (Policy 14)

Environmental Assets

- Rockingham Forest Area (Policy 21)
- Area of tranquility (Policy 3)
- Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits - Special Protection Area (Policy 4)
- Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (Policy 4)
- Sub regional Green Infrastructure corridors (Policy 19)
- River Network

Strategic sites with planning permission, or resolution to grant planning permission or previously allocated (Policy 23, 29)¹

1. Land at Cockeerell Road - Employment
2. Gefco, Geddington Road, Corby - Employment
3. Station Lane Plantation, Corby - Employment
4. Little Station, Corby - Residential
5. Cranley Park, Kettering - Employment
6. Station Quarter, Kettering - Employment
7. Park Farm Way, Wellingborough - Residential
8. Warth Park, Raunds - Employment
9. Rushden Lakes - Employment & Leisure
10. Islip Vehicle Depot Site - Employment
11. Seymour Plantation - Employment
12. East of Eastfield Road, Wellingborough - Residential
13. A14/Junction 10 Business Park - Employment

Proposed other strategic sites not yet with planning permission or resolution or allocated (Policy 23, 29)²

14. North Kettering - Employment
15. Appleby Lodge, Wellingborough - Employment
16. Kettering South - Employment
17. Nene Valley Farm - Employment
18. Rockingham Enterprise Area - Employment (Policy 27)
19. Kettering energy park - Area of opportunity (Policy 26)

Sustainable Urban Extensions

A - North East Corby
B - Kettering East
C - Wellingborough East/Stanton Cross
D - Wellingborough North
E - Corby West
F - Rushden East
G - Desborough North
H - Rothwell North
I - Irthlingborough West
J - Raunds
K - Thrapston South

Key Infrastructure Projects

- Strategic Seaway
- Wellingborough Improvements - Tresham College
- Chowns Mill
- A14 Junction 10a

Strategic Transport Corridors

- Highway Network
- Electrification of midland main line
- Existing rail stations
- Highway Improvements
- Proposed Strategic Bus Corridors and Coach Corridors (Policy 17)

¹Strategic sites have been defined as 500+ dwellings or 5+ ha of employment land.
In addition to sites shown on the Key Diagram, the following sites have planning permission for substantial developments that fall just below this threshold: West Hill, Kettering (450 dwellings); Polewell Lane, Santon Seagrave (450 dwellings); Dardis Farm, Raunds (460 dwellings).

²Reference is made to the main land-use in permitted schemes or adopted plans. Most developments will include a mix or other uses.
3. Core Policies

Sustainable Development in North Northamptonshire

3.1 Sustainable development in North Northamptonshire is development that contributes to delivering the ‘Vision and Outcomes’ of the Plan and accords with its policies to balance the economic, social and environmental needs of the area. Sustainable communities are those that incorporate sustainable development. The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life for future generations.

How the Plan links to national policy requirements for sustainable development

3.2 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Corby Borough, Kettering Borough, Borough of Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Councils (the Local Planning authorities) will work proactively to ensure planning is not a barrier to new development. This Joint Core Strategy provides a clear framework not just for planning decisions but also many other forms of investment decisions.

3.3 The NPPF provides a comprehensive definition for “sustainable development”, in the context of the planning system. In practice, this requires that planning applications which accord with the policies in the Local Plan (In North Northamptonshire, the Part 1 Local Plan in the form of the Joint Core Strategy and, where relevant, the Part 2 Local Plans Core Strategy Review and, where relevant, policies in site specific and Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

3.4 The Councils will work proactively to ensure that the policies in the Local Plan and associated evidence base are kept up to date. Proposals will need to take account of local evidence. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the relevant Local Planning Authority should grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise taking into account whether:

- The proposal would conflict with the Spatial Vision and Outcomes set out in this plan of the Local Plan;
- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole;
- Specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted

3.5 To understand the implications of the Government’s policies regarding sustainable development for North Northamptonshire, it is necessary to apply these within the local context.

Delivering sustainable development in the North Northamptonshire context

3.6 Sustainable development will be delivered through a place shaping approach, which is directed by the needs of communities and by the distinct character and structure of settlements. The vision and outcomes are taken forward in the policies of the plan, starting with a set of Core Policies addressing the following themes, which

Sustainable development in the North Northamptonshire context should embody the three key principles of:

- planning for the area to become more self-reliant in terms of both economic and social sustainability;
- resilience to environmental and economic global changes; and
- maintaining and reinforcing the special urban-rural character of North Northamptonshire.

3.7 To ensure that these three overarching principles are delivered, there are a number of core themes which underpin the plan and apply across the area and to all forms of development. These themes relate to:

- Protecting environmental and social assets for the benefit of present and future generations;
- Designing sustainable places to ensure that new developments look good, work well and contribute to meeting the challenges of climate change;
- Securing infrastructure and services to support prosperous, more self-reliant communities.

3.7 Development is not sustainable unless it can be delivered. The NPPF requires that the costs of policy requirements such as requirements for affordable housing and infrastructure contributions should, when taking account of the normal cost of development and mitigation, provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.

3.8 The cumulative impact of the policies in this plan has been assessed through a plan-wide viability assessment, taking account of emerging proposals for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in some of the districts. A broad assessment has also been made of the viability of the main SUEs. These studies provide a snapshot of viability issues shortly after an economic recession. They highlight the differences in viability across North Northamptonshire (with greater viability in the market towns and villages) and between different types of development (with smaller schemes that do not require significant infrastructure investment being more viable).

3.9 The viability studies referred to above have informed the policies of this plan. Where, notwithstanding this, site specific viability issues prevent a development meeting policy requirements, an independent viability assessment (funded by the developer) will be required. The planning authority will work with the developer to address viability issues so that development is not inhibited unnecessarily. This may involve approaches such as the flexible application of affordable housing requirements or the deferment of infrastructure contributions. However it will not extend to permitting poor quality development to proceed without the necessary supporting infrastructure.

3.8 The viability of development is a key consideration both within North Northamptonshire and nationally. The policies throughout the Plan have been subject to viability testing to ensure that they can be delivered by relevant development. Independent viability assessment at a site specific level will be an important element in assessing the contribution development can make to achieving the standards set out in the Plan.

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23 BNP Paribas reference
24 BNP Paribas reference
Policy 1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

When considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area meeting the challenges of climate change and protecting and enhancing the provision of ecosystems services.

To be regarded as “sustainable” within the context of North Northamptonshire development should accord with the Plan Vision and wherever possible:

a) Support North Northamptonshire becoming more self-reliant in both economic and social sustainability;

b) Support North Northamptonshire becoming more resilient to environmental and economic global changes;

c) Maintain and reinforce the special urban-rural character of North Northamptonshire

Development should satisfy the relevant standards of this Plan, unless it can be clearly demonstrated through independent viability assessment why certain standards cannot be achieved.

To be regarded as “sustainable” within the context of North Northamptonshire, development should contribute to delivering the Plan Vision and Outcomes through compliance with the relevant policies of this plan. Development that conflicts with policies of the plan will be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where a development is otherwise acceptable but an independent viability assessment demonstrates that certain policy standards cannot be achieved, the planning authority will work with the applicant to consider alternative approaches to deliver the desired policy outcomes.
**i: Protecting and enhancing assets**

3.10 The scale of development planned across North Northamptonshire will place pressure on social and environmental assets. It is therefore important to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and local environment, protect valued landscapes, minimise impacts on biodiversity and enhance green networks, as well as ensuring development provides sufficient community services and facilities to meet the needs of the existing and future population.

3.11 It will be important that the design of development understands and respects its local and environmental context and that the infrastructure requirements arising from development are fully understood and planned for.

**Historic Environment**

3.12 The historic environment is one of the Plan area’s most valued assets. It includes over 2800 designated heritage assets spread across the rural and urban landscapes of North Northamptonshire, and other distinctive characteristics including the views of church spires that are notable in the Nene Valley, and the distinctive building materials that characterise the settlements of North Northamptonshire, including the historic market towns of Oundle, Rothwell and Higham Ferrers and the towns of the county’s boot and shoe industry. It is an important element of the landscape of North Northamptonshire and contributes to the individual character and appearance of settlements. It reflects human interaction with geology, topography and the natural environment over time and includes buildings and structures, parks and gardens, and archaeological remains that are an important aspect of the area’s past. The historic environment can provide a range of other benefits including creating jobs, attracting business, enhancing tourism and is an important aspect in the achievement of sustainable development.

3.13 Elements of the historic environment that hold significance are termed ‘heritage assets’ and include any building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. Heritage assets are the valued components of the historic environment and include designated heritage assets and non-designated assets.

**Designated heritage assets**

3.14 Designated heritage assets within North Northamptonshire include scheduled monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, and conservation areas. North Northamptonshire contains many heritage assets of national importance including Grade 1 listed historic buildings and estates and their settings including Lyveden New Bield, Apethorpe Hall, Rockingham Castle, Kirby Hall and Boughton House. However, some of these assets are currently identified on the English Heritage “Heritage at Risk Register”, which identifies listed buildings, important historic sites, places and landmarks that are at risk from neglect or decay. These currently include:

- Apethorpe Hall, Apethorpe;
- Ashton Mill, Oundle Road, Ashton;
- Lilford Hall, Lilford-cum-Wigsthorpe;

Stanwick Hall, Higham Road, Stanwick;
- Church of St Peter, Berrister Place, Raunds;
- Barton Seagrave Hall, Barton Road, Barton Seagrave;
- Chester House, Higham Road, Irchester.

Non-designated heritage assets

3.15 Whilst not having statutory status, non-designated heritage assets are identified as having a degree of significance that merits consideration in the determination of planning applications. Non-designated heritage assets are an important component of North Northamptonshire and are at risk from the impact of development, or the cumulative loss of structures. These locally identified heritage assets can include buildings of local architectural or historic interest, locally important archaeological sites, undeveloped areas of visual importance and parks and gardens of local interest.

Industrial heritage, including that of the boot and shoe industry, modern built assets, including 21st century architecture, can also contribute towards a sense of place and identity, and it may be appropriate to preserve these as future historic assets through local listings. Local Lists provide a positive way for the Councils to identify non-designated heritage assets against consistent criteria.

The role of heritage assets in delivering sustainable development

3.16 The conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle in the NPPF. Great weight should be given to the conservation of designated assets with the greatest weight and protection being given to those of most importance (scheduled monuments and grade 1 and 2* listed buildings, parks and gardens). Any harm to a designated asset requires convincing justification. Where the harm is substantial, consent should be refused, unless outweighed by substantial public benefits or where the development would meet the tests for the conservation of the asset set out in the NPPF (para 133). Where the harm is less significant, this should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use of the asset. In addition, and specifically in respect of listed buildings, the decision maker must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building and its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.26

3.17 Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and effective conservation delivers wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits. Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of diverse assets.

3.18 In the case of buildings, the risks of neglect and decay are best addressed by ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued may require sympathetic changes to be made. Appropriate marketing will be required to demonstrate the redundancy of a heritage asset, and that an appropriate viable use cannot be found. Where loss of historic features is unavoidable and justified, provision should be made for recording and the production of a suitable archive and report.

3.19 Heritage assets may be affected and harmed by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important in understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals. The

NPPF defines setting as the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Significance relates to the value of heritage asset to this and future generations due to its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence but its setting, which may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate the significance or may be neutral.

3.20 It is important to create places that are sympathetic to the local character of the surrounding environment, achieved through the use of locally sourced materials, which reflect the distinctive characteristics of the settlements in North Northamptonshire, and the creation of streetscapes that are visually sympathetic to the historic environment. It is expected that development will be of the highest standard of design in order to maintain and enhance the quality of the area or building, and be sensitive to its character and appearance. In considering applications for new development, the Councils will seek to ensure that the form, scale, design and materials of new buildings are complementary to the historic environment. Applications will need to be accompanied by a description of the significance of any heritage assets affected by the proposal and clear justification where any harm or loss of heritage asset is involved.

**Policy 2 - Historic Environment**

The distinct North Northamptonshire historic environment will be protected, preserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. Where a development would impact upon a heritage asset, including its setting:

a) Proposals should conserve and, where possible, enhance the heritage significance and setting of the asset in a manner commensurate to its significance;

b) Proposals should complement their surrounding historic environment through the form, scale, design and materials;

c) Proposals must be sensitive to and, where possible, enhance key views and vistas of heritage assets, including of the church spires along the Nene Valley and across North Northamptonshire;

d) Proposals should demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of the impact of development on surrounding heritage assets and their setting in order to minimise harm to these assets. Where loss of historic features or archaeological remains is unavoidable and justified, provision should be made for recording and the production of a suitable archive and report;

e) Particular attention will be given to heritage assets at risk of harm or loss of significance, or where a number of heritage assets have significance as a group or give context to a wider area. Where appropriate, flexible solutions to the re-use of buildings and conservation of other types of heritage assets at risk will be encouraged, especially, where this will result in their removal from the ‘at risk’ register.
**Landscape Character**

3.21 The landscape is primarily the visual appearance of the land including its shape, form and colours. Landscape is not purely a visual phenomenon and relies on a range of other dimensions including geology, landform, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations. It provides the setting and context for development, and is also a key element of the urban/rural character of North Northamptonshire, including the transition from settlements into the countryside.

3.22 The landscape in North Northamptonshire has been influenced by a combination of human and physical influences. These landscapes, both man-made and natural, are what makes the area distinctive and there is a pressing need to conserve and enhance many of the features of importance landscape settings, as well as recognising the importance of views and vistas of these.

3.23 Some landscapes are more sensitive to change than others. Development can impact on the landscape through its effects on the character and the quality of the landscape and the degree to which development will become a significant or defining feature in the landscape, including skyline (where additional development appears disproportionately dominant), and loss of sense of remoteness. Visual impacts concern the degree to which proposed development will become a feature in particular views (or sequences of views) and the impacts this has on people experiencing views.

3.24 The Northamptonshire Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), which forms part of the Northamptonshire Environmental Character Assessment, identifies a range of landscape character types and 41 character areas across North Northamptonshire that sit within these, helping to identify what in a landscape sense gives a locality its own sense of place and what makes it different from its neighbouring areas. The Assessment provides the basis for guiding, informing and understanding the ability of any location to accommodate change and to make positive proposals for conserving, enhancing or regenerating character as detailed proposals are developed. The LCA will be used in the determination of development proposals to ensure that the diverse character of the area’s landscape is respected, retained and, where possible, enhanced for future generations.

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27 Definition from River Nene Regional Park Landscape Character Assessment

3.25 It is important that proposals understand and respond to the character of the landscape setting within which they are located. In accordance with local validation requirements, planning applications should include a landscape and visual impact assessment to ensure that these issues are addressed as proposals are being designed. Landscape mitigation measures can reduce, potentially remedy or offset against negative landscape impacts. These measures should be designed to suit the existing landscape character and needs of the locality, respecting and building on local landscape distinctiveness and helping to address any existing landscape issues. Landscape mitigation measures can include location of development within the site, retention of...
existing landscape features such as trees and hedgerows, restoring degraded landscape and restoring hedgerow patterns ground modelling, planting and the creation of new landscape features.

3.26 The importance of ‘tranquillity’ has long been emphasised by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and in 2008 it commissioned researchers to create a national tranquility map. The CPRE findings and Landscape Character Assessment both recognise the importance of the King’s Cliffe Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area around King’s Cliffe. This area is at the core of the Rockingham Forest and is the only landscape area associated with the Wooded Limestone Hills and Valleys landscape character type within the county.

3.27 This area is characterised as having significant wooded areas, with large areas designated as ancient woodland. It has villages of varying size, generally located on lower slopes adjacent to these watercourses. Outside these, the area is thinly settled with farms and individual dwellings. As a result of the sparse settlement pattern, the landscape retains a strong agricultural character, with arable farmland the predominant land use on the hills and valley slopes and pasture along the valley floor and close to woodlands. Although limited in number, country houses are important features in the landscape, and communication routes are principally confined to minor roads. These features combine to provide a peaceful and secluded local landscape.

3.28 The sense of elevation and enclosure varies dramatically across the landscape. Some areas on the fringes of the area afford long distance views over the surrounding lowlands. Within valleys and deep undulations where significant woodlands screen long and middle distance views, and intimate human scale landscape is perceived.

3.29 It is important to protect tranquillity in this area in particular from urban intrusion such as excessive levels of noise, light spillage and traffic and to ensure that development is of an appropriate density, and massing, consistent with its surroundings.

Policy 3 - Landscape Character

Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and enhancing the distinctive qualities of the landscape character area in which it would be situated or viewed from.

Development should:

a) conserve and, where possible, enhance the character and qualities of the local landscape through appropriate design and management;
b) make provision for the retention and, where possible, enhancement of features of landscape importance;
c) safeguard and, where possible, enhance important views and vistas including sky lines within the development layout;
d) protect the landscape setting and contribute to maintaining the individual and distinct character, and separate identities of settlements by preventing coalescence;
e) provide appropriate landscape mitigation and/or suitable off-site enhancements; and
f) preserve tranquillity within the King’s Cliffe Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area (as shown on the Policy Map) by minimising light and noise and limiting the visual impact of development.
**Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

3.30 Biodiversity and geodiversity are crucial in supporting the full range of ecosystem services provided by the landscape and interaction of species and their habitats, with their non-living environments. Biodiversity in particular enhances environmental resilience to events like droughts and flooding. Protecting and enhancing biodiversity can play an important role in mitigating effects of climate change, for example through reducing flood risk and providing new habitats.

3.31 North Northamptonshire’s biodiversity and geodiversity assets are facing increasing pressure from new development, recreational use, the wider impacts of climate change and the introduction of non-native invasive species. There is a pressing need not only to protect, enhance and manage the adaptability of existing sites but also to restore and create habitats at a landscape scale, especially where this would contribute to the wider green infrastructure network and enable wildlife to move more freely. Wildlife and geological sites will not be considered in isolation but in the context of the surrounding landscape character, ecological functionality and potential connectivity to other sites.

3.32 Soils are an important asset in geodiversity, providing a growing medium for many resources including food and non-food crops. Soils should be protected from pollution and the best and most versatile agricultural land\(^{29}\) should be safeguarded.

**Statutory designations**

3.33 Within North Northamptonshire, biological and geological sites include those with international designations (the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site), and national designations including (e.g. the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)), and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and local sites with statutory protection i.e. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), which receive statutory protection.

**Non-statutory designations**

3.34 Sites designated at a local level (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites, Local Geological Sites, Pocket Parks and Local Nature Reserves) are also important parts of North Northamptonshire’s ecological network. These local sites contain a large proportion of the area’s natural resource and contribute to the connectivity and resilience of the ecological network and the landscape as a whole.

3.35 Development will support the delivery of conservation at the landscape scale, helping to reverse fragmentation, increase habitat connectivity and create a coherent and resilient ecological network. This will include the recognition of the wider benefits of these habitats and species in the provision of ecosystem services. New development must take account of existing biodiversity resources on individual sites and contribute to the links between them.

3.36 The mitigation hierarchy should be used to address potential harm to priority habitats\(^{30}\) or species, identified through ecological surveys in accordance with local designations.

\(^{29}\) Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) defines the best and most versatile agricultural as Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

\(^{30}\) those species and habitats identified as being of principal importance for England, section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2011. Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services, p.9)
validation requirements. Negative impacts to biodiversity should be avoided, and unavoidable impacts should be mitigated and/or minimised. Compensation for residual impacts should only be used as a last resort when independent expert advice indicates that it has a high probability of success, and Compensation must be deliverable and enforceable and. Compensation is unlikely to be appropriate for irreplaceable features such as ancient woodlands and grasslands and veteran trees or where significant harm is identified. Where avoidance of all impacts is not possible, the local planning authority will need to be satisfied that the development cannot reasonably be located on any alternative sites that would result in less or no harm.

3.37 Development should, where possible secure a net gain in biodiversity (a sustained increase in abundance, quality and extent of species and habitats of national, regional or local importance) through the maintenance, restoration and creation of priority habitats. Ecological networks will be strengthened by reversing habitat fragmentation and increasing habitat connectivity where possible by structuring and locating biodiversity gain in ways that enlarge and connect to existing biodiversity assets. The protection and recovery of priority species, linked to national and local targets will be supported and emphasis given to maintaining, restoring and creating priority and other natural and semi-natural habitats within and adjacent to development. Biodiversity gain should be appropriate to the scale, type and location of the development. Enhancements that add value to an existing habitat network and increase connectivity provide greater biodiversity benefits than those considered in isolation.

The Nene Valley

3.38 The Nene Valley has significant environmental assets of international and national importance. These include:

- the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar Site (designated April 2011), which includes wetland habitats along the Nene Valley, between Earls Barton and Thorpe Waterville (near Thrapston) and;
- the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) (designated April 2012), which covers the River Nene, River Ise, Harper’s Brook and Willow Brook valleys.

3.39 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits (extending for around 35 kilometres and covering around 1,370 hectares) is designated as a Special Protection Area for its international importance as wetland habitat for non-breeding waterbirds. The site is also protected under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance and is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.40 Due to the international importance of the SPA, a Habitats Regulations Assessment, often referred to as an Appropriate Assessment, is required where development is

31 Harm which results in an irreversible adverse change, or in some other substantial adverse change, in the functioning of an ecological system within any substantial part of that location; or harm which affects any species of special interest within that location and which endangers the long-term maintenance of the population of that species at that location (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 2006. Defra circular 01/2006 Environmental Protection Act 1990: Part 2A Contaminated Land, Annex 3, p. 86.)


33 European Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora
likely to have a significant effect on the area. Where the need for mitigation is identified, appropriate mitigation measures must be identified and incorporated into the proposal. If mitigating measures cannot be identified and it cannot be ascertained that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA, the development will not be permitted.

3.41 A detailed study\textsuperscript{34} to assess the impacts of visitor access in the SPA has been undertaken. This identifies that the collective effect of incremental increases of recreational pressure arising from developments, which individually may not have a significant effect, is a potential problem for the SPA.

3.42 A strategic approach to the long term management of visitor pressure within the Nene Valley is needed to restore, maintain and protect the ecological interest of the SPA. The approach in North Northamptonshire to manage visitor pressure in the SPA should include:

- Locating development away from sensitive sites;
- The management of visitor flow and access on adjacent land, outside of the SPA;
- Provision of new greenspace sites where access is promoted and encouraged;
- Provision of designated access points for water sports; and
- Enhancement of access in areas away from designated sites

3.43 A Supplementary Planning Document on the SPA will be prepared, that will outline the surveys and mitigation that may be required for developments within set distances from the SPA boundary.

3.44 The designation of the Nene Valley as a NIA has enabled Natural England, the Wildlife Trust, local planning authorities and other relevant stakeholders to be proactive in bringing forward specific projects to enhance the natural environment. The Nene Valley NIA partnership is working to reverse the decline in biodiversity and restore the ecological network within the NIA on a landscape scale. It aims to meet the ecological challenges of a growing population, changing climate and need to produce food and provides a critical opportunity to create a resilient, sustainable ecological network along the course of the River Nene and its major tributaries.

\textsuperscript{34} Visitor Access Study of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits SPA, 2014
Policy 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Across North Northamptonshire, a net gain in biodiversity will be sought and features of geological interest will be protected and enhanced through:

a) Protecting existing biodiversity and geodiversity assets by:

i. Refusing development proposals where significant harm to an asset cannot be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated. The weight accorded to an asset will reflect its status in the hierarchy of biodiversity and geodiversity designations;

ii. Protecting key assets for wildlife and geology, in particular the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area, from unacceptable levels of access and managing pressures for access to sensitive habitats;

iii. Protecting the natural environment from adverse effects from noise, air and light pollution;

iv. Where appropriate requiring developments to provide or contribute to alternative green infrastructure (Policy 19); and

v. Ensuring that habitats are managed in an ecologically appropriate manner.

b) Enhancing ecological networks by:

i. Reversing the decline in biodiversity and restoring the ecological network at a landscape scale in the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA);

ii. Reversing habitat fragmentation and increasing connectivity of habitats where possible by structuring and locating biodiversity gain in such a way as to enlarge and/or connect to existing biodiversity assets such as wildlife corridors;

iii. Preserving, restoring and creating priority and other natural and semi-natural habitats within and adjacent to development schemes;

c) Supporting, through financial contribution or development design, the protection and recovery of priority species linked to national and local targets.

Developments that are likely to have an adverse impact, either alone or cumulatively, on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area must satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations, determining site specific impacts and avoiding or mitigating against impacts where identified. Phasing of development infrastructure or mitigation will be required where necessary to ensure adverse effects are avoided.
Water Environment, Resources and Flood Risk Management

3.45 An important part of North Northamptonshire’s resilience and self-reliance is ensuring that its water environment is protected, there is sufficient water and waste water infrastructure and that the area is resilient to flood risk, particularly when the impact of future climate change is considered.

Principal river catchment areas

3.46 Most of North Northamptonshire is located within the River Nene catchment. The northern extent falls within the River Welland catchment and the south-eastern extent of the area is located within the Great Ouse catchment.

3.47 The principal watercourses in North Northamptonshire are:

- The River Nene and its main tributaries (the River Ise, Harpers Brook, Alledge Brook, Slade Brook and Willow Brook); and
- The River Welland and its main tributary (the River Jordan).

3.48 Development can have a significant impact on water resources, from putting additional strain on existing supplies, to affecting flood patterns by changing both the way that water flows across and percolates into land. It is essential to protect and enhance the quality and quantity of both ground and surface water, ensure necessary service provision, conserve water supplies and manage flood risk.

Delivering improvements to water quality

3.49 New developments will need to have the necessary means of water supply but this must not affect the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA) or overall water quality within the catchment.

3.50 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires Member States to achieve ‘good ecological status’ in all surface freshwater bodies between 2015 and 2027 and to ensure that in future there is no ‘deterioration’ of the ecological potential of the water environment. Different water bodies are categorised based on four elements - biology, chemical water quality, physical structure and water quality - which together determine the overall ecological potential of the surface water environment. The Anglian River Basin Management Plan details what actions need to be taken in order for the WFD requirements to be met in the area. Development with the potential to lead to river status deterioration or compromise the achievement of good ecological status as set out in the Anglian River Basin Management Plan should be accompanied by a suitable assessment and proposals for mitigation.

3.51 There is a presumption against the use of non-mains foul drainage, except where it is proven that it is not reasonable to use mains drainage, taking into account cost, practicality and sustainability.

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35 European Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy
Managing flood risk

3.52 Flood risk can arise from fluvial sources (rivers), through surface water flooding (usually arising when rainfall overwhelms drainage systems) and groundwater flooding (when the water table, the water level below ground, rises above the ground surface). The location of development can play a significant role in flood risk management. The use of the sequential approach, in considering the locations of development, and also the specific uses within site boundaries can ensure that development is focussed towards areas with lower probability of flooding.

3.53 Flood risk management will require a collaborative approach between agencies that have roles and responsibilities relating to flood risk management. The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) gives Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) a lead responsibility in relation to all local flooding issues (Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)), notably the management of flood risk from surface run off, ordinary watercourses and groundwater, working in partnership with the Borough/District Councils, the Environment Agency (EA), water companies and other relevant parties Buckminster and River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board. Once schedule 3 of the Act has commenced, NCC will also have responsibility for the assessment, approval, adoption and maintenance of all surface water drainage systems, whilst water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from water and foul water or combined sewer systems. This new drainage consenting regime, also known as “Sustainable Drainage System” (SuDS) approval, is due to be implemented during 2014. It will operate entirely separately from the planning system. The Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) sets out how NCC as LLFA and the partnership will work together and the activities to improve management of local flood risk.

3.54 The Act also gives the Environment Agency (EA) a strategic overview of flood and coastal erosion risk management. The EA are the lead authority for managing flood risk from reservoirs, main rivers and the sea, with an overview of all sources of flood risk.

3.55 The North Northamptonshire Flood Risk Management Study (2012) (FRMS) Update indicates that it is not possible to protect all of North Northamptonshire to a uniform standard due to the wide range of flooding sources including from fluvial (rivers), surface water run-off and the under capacity of some drainage systems. As a result, dependent on location, some areas of existing development will be at greater risk of flooding than others. Therefore, flood risk management which combines traditional flood defences with more accurate flood warning and mitigation measures that incorporate the idea of resilience and resistance are now considered more appropriate than flood defences alone.

3.56 The way in which developed, built up areas are drained is changing. Sustainable drainage systems are an important part of flood risk management, and are an essential component in the design of development. SuDS manage rainwater run off in a way that is similar to natural processes. It is important to identify the most natural position of SuD features at the master planning stage. Consideration should also be given at this stage to the interplay between drainage and all aspects of land use, amenity and biodiversity to produce a holistic development proposal with integrated drainage.

3.57 Flood risk in North Northamptonshire will be managed through a positive approach that will increase the resilience of the area to risks arising from climate change. After taking
into account the flood risk vulnerability of land uses, development must demonstrate through the application of the Sequential Test as set out in the NPPF, that there are no reasonably available sites in a lower flood risk zone or at a lower risk of flooding than the application site. Where necessary, the Exception Test—set out in the NPPF should be applied. Development should be safe and not increase flood risk elsewhere.

3.58 Developers should manage flood risk on site for a 1% (1 in a 100) annual probability flood with an allowance for year plus climate change probability event without increasing risk to others. Piecemeal flood-mitigation measures should be avoided by implementing strategic flood risk management infrastructure projects through partnership schemes that will benefit the main towns of North Northamptonshire and the wider area downstream, taking climate change into account. Developers should demonstrate how their schemes are informed by the relevant Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA’s), Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) and the Northamptonshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), and where applicable, design to a higher standard of protection.

3.59 As well as being relevant to site selection, developers should where appropriate apply the sequential approach to locating development within the site boundary. New development should be located in areas at the lowest probability of flooding so that the most vulnerable development is located in the lowest flood risk areas.

Strategic flood risk management projects

3.60 The FRMS considers that a strategic approach to managing flood risk should be undertaken including the development of strategic flood storage on river floodplains upstream of urban areas which will provide benefits by not only offsetting the increased runoff from new development but also by reducing the flood risk to existing development downstream of the storage facility. The building of a large numbers of small local storage schemes for each individual development is not favoured by the Environment Agency and the Agency’s Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP) promotes a strategic approach to flood storage.

3.61 The Flood Risk Management Regulations (2009), which transpose the EU Flood Directive into UK legislation set out the requirement for the EA to prepare a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP), which must be published by 2015. The plans will cover the same geographical area as the River Basin Management Plan and will be informed by the LFRMS, Surface Water Management Plans as well as carrying forward and updating CFRMP actions.

3.62 The approach of replacing the small storage schemes with much larger strategic schemes for an area is a key part of the strategy contained within the Environment Agency’s Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP). Flood storage measures will be required are planned in the Nene corridor and the upstream catchments of the Slade Brook and River Ise to enable future growth to be facilitated. These schemes include:

- Slade Brook flood storage reservoir;
- Alledge Brook flood storage reservoir;
- Weldon flood storage reservoir;
- Harrowden Brook flood storage reservoir enlargement; and
- Opportunities for natural flood attenuation or extra storage within and on the fringes of flood zones 2 and 3 in the River Nene corridor from Earls Barton to Thrapston.

37 As defined in Table 2: Flood Risk Vulnerability classification in Technical Guidance to the NPPF
In addition, there are small scale local improvements set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan that can have significant local benefits. Measures may include the creation of backwaters; the repositioning of bunds; tree planting, which can all reduce the impact of flood waters and improve water quality.

These schemes offer opportunities for creating additional benefits for the local communities in addition to flood alleviation, which include the creation of green and blue infrastructure, recreational areas, wildlife habitats and corridors linking adjoining communities. Measures that maintain and improve the present standards of flood protection will be supported.

**Policy 5 – Water Resources, Environment and Flood Risk Management**

Development must contribute towards reducing the risk of flooding and to the protection and improvement of the quality of the water environment. This will be achieved through the following criteria:

a) Development should, wherever possible, be avoided in high and medium flood risk areas through the application of a sequential approach considering all forms of flooding for the identification of sites and also the layout of development within site boundaries;

b) Development should meet a minimum $1\%$ (1 in 100) year annual probability standard of flood protection with allowances for climate change unless local studies indicate a higher annual probability, both in relation to development and the measures required to reduce the impact of any additional run off generated by that development to demonstrate that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing, surrounding properties;

c) All major new development should, subject to viability and feasibility, contribute directly or through contributions where appropriate, to flood risk management in North Northamptonshire;

d) Following any identified mitigation, development that would lead to deterioration or may compromise the ability of a water body or underlying groundwater to meet good status standards in the Anglian River Basin Management Plan (required by the Water Framework Directive) is unlikely to be permitted;

e) Development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that adequate and appropriate water supply and wastewater infrastructure capacity for the connection, conveyance, treatment and disposal of quantity and quality water for the proposed development is (or will be prior to occupation) available on, and off site to prevent flooding, pollution and detriment to public amenity, meet the additional requirements placed upon it to address capacity and environmental constraints.
Securing development of brownfield land and land affected by contamination

3.65 Focussing development on previously developed land (brownfield development) is a priority for North Northamptonshire. It is an important part of ensuring North Northamptonshire’s resilience, limiting the use of greenfield land, particularly of the best and most versatile agricultural quality, and ensuring the regeneration and restructuring of settlements. Brownfield sites do, however, often have ecological potential that should be considered under the provisions of policy 4.

3.66 However, brownfield land may be subject to contamination from previous uses, which can pose risk to surface water, human health and the wider environment. North Northamptonshire’s groundwater is dominated by secondary aquifers, notably the Northampton sands formation although smaller areas which lie over the Lincolnshire Limestone are classified as a Principal aquifer. These aquifers are capable of supporting water supplies at a local scale and support surface water features. They are vulnerable to contaminants.

Key locations with an identified history or risk of contamination

3.67 Certain parts of North Northamptonshire have a greater risk of ground contamination, arising predominantly from historic industrial processes, mineral extraction, landfill or intensive agricultural processes. These locations include:

- Corby, Gretton and Weldon - legacy of former steelworks and ironstone quarrying;
- Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds – former tanning, in association with boot and shoe industries;
- Wellingborough, Kettering, Irthlingborough, Finedon and Islip – Former sites of blast furnaces and/or metal treatment facilities;
- Collyweston/ King’s Cliffe – Slate quarries, former MOD uses and landfill sites.

3.68 Contamination can also occur in other locations, including in the countryside (e.g. by inappropriate spreading of materials such as sludges, or as a result of contamination being moved from its original source). In addition, some areas may be affected by the natural or background occurrence or potentially hazardous substances, such as radon, methane or elevated concentrations of metallic elements.

Managing contamination

3.69 A number of the potential development sites in North Northamptonshire are on brownfield land. Some sites are close to or include historic or current landfill sites. All new development must take into account the potential environmental impacts on people, buildings, land, air and water arising from the development itself and any former use of the site including, in particular, adverse effects arising from pollution.

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38 Defined in NPPF glossary: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.
Consideration of these risks at an early stage is an important part of brownfield land regeneration. To assist the assessment of risk, the screening of sites that have potential to be affected by contamination should be undertaken. The results can be used to identify constraints that may be associated with land contamination. In enabling redevelopment of brownfield sites remediation may be necessary. The level of remediation required will be dependent on the proposed end use of the land.

3.70 Where development is proposed on a site which is known or has the potential to be affected by contamination, a preliminary risk assessment should be undertaken by the developer and submitted to the local planning authority as the first stage in assessing the risk. Preliminary risk assessments and subsequent investigations should be carried out in accordance with the Environment Agency’s Contaminated Land Report (CLR 11) ‘Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination’, or any subsequent replacements.

3.71 Unless this initial assessment clearly demonstrates that the risk from contamination can be satisfactorily reduced to an acceptable level, further site investigations and risk assessment will be needed before the application can be determined.

3.72 Remediation strategies should be proportionate to the proposed end use and should seek to ensure that there is no additional risk arising from the development. Remediation strategies are dependent on desktop/research based survey and potentially testing/site investigation and these will advise the necessary level of remediation. Prior to submitting SuDS proposals, developers should ensure that land is suitable for soakaways, and that the soakaways would provide effective drainage and protect vulnerable groundwater.

3.73 Where pollution issues are likely to arise, intending developers should hold pre-application discussions with the local planning authority, the relevant pollution control authority and stakeholders with a legitimate interest.

3.74 In cases where planning permission is granted for development of a site on which the presence of contamination is known or suspected, the responsibility for safe development for the site rests with the developer and/or landowner.

**Policy 6 - Development on brownfield land and land affected by contamination**

*Priority will be given to the reuse of suitably previously developed land and buildings within the urban areas.*

*Where development is situated on a site with known or high likelihood of contamination, remediation strategies to manage this contamination will be required.*

*Subject to the Policies in this Plan, Planning permission will be granted for development on land affected by contamination where it can be established by the proposed developer that the site can be safely and viably developed with no significant impact on either future users or on ground and surface waters.*
Community Services and Facilities

3.75 To increase the self-reliance of North Northamptonshire it will be important to ensure that the needs of the existing and future population are met. Development, notably the Sustainable Urban Extensions will generate population that require new services and facilities. The provision of facilities and services enjoyed by the local community are often called “community assets”

3.76 Local shops, community facilities and other services play a vital role in promoting the sustainability of communities and contributing towards their self-reliance. Whilst the Growth Towns and Market Towns are the focus for facilities it will be important to provide services and facilities where they are appropriate to the needs of a community and to ensure the retention of premises and land for such uses.

Retention, enhancement and new facilities

3.77 The loss of services and facilities can have a significant impact on people’s quality of life and the overall viability of communities. With an increasing proportion of older people in the population, access to locally based services will become increasingly important, reflecting lower mobility levels.

3.78 New development should retain, and, where possible, enhance existing community assets, services and facilities. It will be important that these are incorporated into the design of new development where possible. The co-location of community facilities achieved through measures such as the provision of multi-purpose community buildings is encouraged as this can represent an effective way of utilising existing assets to increase the provision of facilities and make them more viable. The viability of facilities is an important consideration and any application that would result in a loss of community asset or facility should be accompanied by marketing information to demonstrate why the existing use is not viable and information to show why the facilities are no longer needed by the community it serves or that the facility is being suitably relocated to meet community needs. This viability information should include details of previous use, accounts and marketing information demonstrating that the premises has been marketed for use as a community facility for a reasonable length of time and that no suitable user has been found/or is likely to be found.

3.79 Open space, sports, arts and culture, recreation are essential elements of sustainable communities that contribute towards health, quality of life, sense of place and overall well-being. In addition they can add to an area’s uniqueness, making it a distinctive, stimulating an exceptional place in which to live and work. Spaces and facilities form part of the overall green infrastructure framework and within built up areas may also provide local linkages with town centres and urban neighbourhoods. The North Northamptonshire Strategic Sports Facilities Framework identifies the level of provision required to meet population growth in North Northamptonshire. It also sets out a range of key sports facilities that should be safeguarded and enhanced. The Cultural Investment Framework Plan identifies the provision of cultural provision that is required to accompany growth in North Northamptonshire. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out the necessary sport and cultural requirements.

3.80 Where development would result in the loss of a facility, applications should be accompanied by an assessment which sets out; the availability of alternative or replacement facilities; whether the facility is still required, or whether there may be wider community benefits associated with the new proposal. New services and facilities should be of an appropriate scale to meet the needs of the community where it is proposed.
3.81 Through mechanisms such as the new Community Rights to Challenge and Build, voluntary groups, neighbourhood forums, parish councils and other community organisations should consider opportunities to develop or establish new community assets. Local authorities should encourage and support local initiatives to establish new community projects.

**Access to natural greenspaces and woodlands**

3.82 Open space can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to green spaces within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby, have an ecological value and contribute towards green infrastructure.

3.83 Natural greenspaces are places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate. Natural England has provided guidance on accessibility standards for natural areas. The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends that everyone should have a publically accessible area of natural greenspace of:

- at least 2ha in size, no more than 300m from home
- 20ha site within 2km from home
- 100ha site within 5 km of home, and
- 500ha site within 10km of home.

3.84 There are currently no accessible 500ha sites in North Northamptonshire, a key greenspace deficit although there are plans alongside the Rushden Lakes development to open up and connect existing greenspace areas to create one contiguous natural greenspace area of around 500ha. Sites larger than 100ha are mainly restricted to open access woodlands of the Rockingham Forest and wetland areas in the Nene Valley.

3.85 The woodland trust has adopted a woodland access standard that aspires to everyone having access to a wood within easy reach of their homes. Whilst access is important it does need to be in appropriate locations and not override ecological values in sensitive areas. Across North Northamptonshire access to woodland is variable but access within 2ha of people’s homes ranges from 0.2% to 15.4% of the population. The recommended woodland access standards are:

- a wood of at least 2ha within 500m of their home; and
- a wood of at least 20ha within 4km of their home.

3.86 The North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies a number of areas in North Northamptonshire that currently have poor or no access to significant (more than 20ha) accessible natural greenspace.

3.87 Public open space and other green spaces provide a major component of broader “community assets”. Individual areas of open space will be designated for protection through borough/district level site specific or neighbourhood plans. Evidence in support of a designation will be obtained with reference to:

• Up to date quantitative and qualitative local needs assessments of open space, sport and recreation facilities, including the identification of high quality areas;
• Assets of community value listings;
• Parish/Community Plans.

3.88 Green areas identified through local assessments as being of particular importance to the community may also be designated for special protection as Local Green Space (LGS) through Part 2 Local Plans/site specific or neighbourhood plans. The preparation of action plans to protect and strengthen the features that make LGS distinctive and of value should also be considered.

Policy 7 – Community Services and Facilities

Development should support and enhance community facilities and assets, where appropriate by:

a) Providing on site where necessary or contributing towards accessible, new or enhanced community facilities and assets to meet the needs arising from the development utilising, where possible, opportunities for the co-location of facilities or the use of existing suitable sites;

b) Providing accessible greenspace in accordance with Natural England’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) and the Woodland Trust’s Woodland Access Standard unless local standards have been adopted.

c) Safeguarding existing facilities unless it can be demonstrated that:
   i. they are no longer viable;
   ii. no longer needed by the community they serve and
   iii. are not needed for any other community use or that the facility is being relocated and improved to meet the needs of the new and existing community;

d) Not resulting in a net loss of open space, allotments, sports and recreation buildings and land, including playing fields unless:
   i. the facility is surplus to requirements;
   ii. a site of equivalent quality and accessibility can be provided, serviced and made available to the community prior to use of the existing site ceasing;
   iii. the development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the need for which clearly outweighs the loss;
ii: Ensuring high quality development

4.1 A key element of the Place Shaping agenda that underpins the Plan is the importance of good design, both at proposal and settlement level. Good design is critical in ensuring that proposals create sustainable, connected, characterful and healthy places, which people will enjoy for years to come. In order to create sustainable places, all development will be assessed against the North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles set out in Policy 8, which provides a checklist of the key issues that need to be considered by development in delivering the highest possible quality of development sought by the Plan. These principles seek to ensure that development proposals support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, which, where possible, make physical activity easy to do and create inclusive places and spaces that support community engagement. The specific Place Shaping principles for the key settlements in North Northamptonshire are set out in Table 2 of the spatial strategy section of the Plan.

4.2 As well as shaping development proposals, these principles should be used to help structure discussions between local communities, the local planning authority, the developer and other stakeholders. The principles should also be addressed in a Design and Access Statement where required by local validation requirements to accompany a planning application. Whilst smaller schemes may not require design and access statements it is important that these developments respond to their local context, and the North Northamptonshire design principles should be used to shape these schemes.

Connectivity

4.3 The Urban Structure Study\(^{40}\) found that many town centres are not as accessible as they could be, being disconnected from their immediate residential areas, transport interchanges or local open spaces. Blockages and barriers can include a street network with dead end streets and infrastructure such as railways and main roads. New development should provide connections to the maximum number of local streets and avoid dead ends to allow it to integrate into the wider settlement and connect to existing services and facilities, making legible routes, so places are easy for people to find their way around. Connectivity is a critical element in place making since well-connected towns and neighbourhoods can enhance land values; make local shops and facilities more viable; encourage people’s safety and security by improving surveillance; encourage more walking and cycling, leading to health benefits; and reduce vehicle emissions through fewer car trips.

4.4 The importance of accessibility and permeability was also emphasised in the New Urbanisms New Citizens Study\(^{41}\) which examined, amongst other sites, completed schemes in North Northamptonshire. This sets out the importance of having local facilities within walking distance, but noted that if there are barriers, such as major roads, that need to be crossed to access these facilities this can be a significant issue for parents, children and young people as well as elderly people. It also emphasises the importance of centrally locating facilities in communities to ensure that all residents have easy and safe access to these.

\(^{40}\) North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (2013) Urban Structure Study – Consultation Draft

\(^{41}\) http://newcitizens.wordpress.com
Climate change and sustainability

4.5 Development needs to respond to climate change through its design, considering measures such as sustainable travel, landscape, planting for biodiversity, and sustainable drainage. It will also be important to consider the impacts on the wider natural environment. Where development will impact through air and light pollution, especially on designated sites, it will only be permitted where measures can be put in place to minimise or eliminate impacts to a level that provides a high standard of protection for health and environmental quality.

4.6 Incorporating ecologically sensitive design and features for biodiversity within a development scheme (Biodiversity by Design)42 can achieve significant improvements for biodiversity. By addressing ecological and green infrastructure aspects early on, design aspects such as site layout can be tailored to provide enhancements and improvements for biodiversity that may not be possible later on within the design process. Measures to encourage biodiversity can include green roofs, planting and landscaping, the use of native species, setting up bird and bat boxes and sustainable drainage systems.

Character

4.7 Character can be defined as the combination of qualities or features, which distinguish one place from another. As such, it is insufficient to examine any single aspect of place in isolation, and ‘character’ must be considered at all scales, from settlement to building. The USS and Building for Life Assessments have consistently identified that new developments often have a weak sense of character and identity. This is frequently the result of using standard responses to a range of design elements, such as public realm, landscaping or building typologies, resulting in developments which neither comprehensively respond to the established surrounding character, nor are sufficiently distinctive in themselves.

4.8 Development should respect and enhance local character by ensuring that it responds to its topography, wider context, the landscape setting within which it is located, and the local streetscape and local building materials. This does not preclude innovative designs that can raise quality and can use materials and techniques that exceed the sustainability standards as set out in Policy 9.

4.9 A design-led approach is considered to be the most appropriate approach to determining densities on a site by site basis having regard to the objective of securing the efficient use of land and the particular characteristics of a site and the area in which it is located.

Community

4.10 Development should ensure that new places are designed to be safe and healthy, responding to the needs of people of all ages, both within the proposed site, and in surrounding existing places. Designing places where people can be active, have places to meet and play, seeking to design out crime and ensuring that appropriate community and fire safety design considerations are incorporated within new development schemes will contribute towards the long-term sustainability and resilience of developments. Another important aspect is ensuring community safety and cohesion. Measures to assist with counter terrorism, community safety and

42 http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/71045
security will need to be incorporated into the design of buildings and spaces, particularly public spaces that are likely to attract crowds.

Assessing Design Quality

4.11 There is a significant amount of national and local guidance relating to good design. Building for Life (BfL) 12\(^{43}\) published in 2012 and recognised as the industry standard is a toolkit helping developers and local authorities assess residential development and to assist in developing well designed schemes. It is based on a traffic light system, where the more green light answers to questions, the better the scheme is judged to be. “Reds” are to be avoided and ambers minimised. Developments which achieve green in all 12 questions are eligible for ‘Built for Life’ status as they would act as exemplars. BfL 12 has informed the North Northamptonshire Place Making principles.

4.12 The quality of development can be reviewed by an independent panel of professionals through an Accredited Design Review. In North Northamptonshire this is provided by OPUN, the regional architecture centre alongside the National panel operated by Design Council/CABE. Significant projects should be referred to design review at an early stage. In addition, local design “surgeries” are provided in North Northamptonshire to assess major (10+ houses/1000sqm + commercial) or sensitive schemes, preferably at pre-application stage. These surgeries use a development team approach, typically with representatives of the police, highways, urban design and other professionals, as required, and will assess schemes using the Northamptonshire Design Principles and Building for Life 12 for residential schemes.

Policy 8 - North Northamptonshire Place Making Principles:

Development must demonstrate how it is compatible with the following 5 North Northamptonshire place making principles:

1. Connected places
2. Makes safe and pleasant streets and spaces
3. Ensure adaptable, diverse and flexible places
4. Create strong, local character
5. Ensure quality of life and safer and healthier communities

1. Create connected places by ensuring that:

i. Development connects to the maximum number of local streets, avoiding dead ends, to allow it to integrate into the wider settlement and to connect to existing services and facilities;

ii. Development integrates well with existing cycle, pedestrian, public transport and vehicular movement networks and links to these routes in the most direct and legible way possible, to achieve logical routes;

iii. Development improves or creates open green spaces which tie into the wider network of public green spaces and routes to allow for movement across the settlement through its green infrastructure;

iv. Development provides direct routes to local facilities within or outside the site to create more walkable neighbourhoods; and

\(^{43}\) http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/knowledge-resources/building-life-12
2. **Making safe and pleasant streets and spaces by**

   i. Prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;
   ii. Ensuring that streets and spaces are continuously enclosed by buildings, or by strong landscaping with well-defined public and private space;
   iii. Ensuring that streets and spaces, are overlooked, active, feel safe and promote inclusive access;
   iv. Creating legible places which make it easy for people to find their way around; and
   v. Requiring that development contributes, towards enhancements to the existing public realm such as tree planting to add to the character and quality of the main streets and to encourage walking and cycling.

3. **Ensure adaptable, diverse and flexible places by:**

   i. Creating varied and distinctive neighbourhoods which provide for local needs through a mix of uses, unit sizes and tenures; and
   ii. Mixing land use and densities within settlements and ensuring that people can move easily between and through them by non-car modes;

4. **Create a distinctive local character by:**

   i. Understanding and responding to the site’s immediate and wider context and local character to create new streets, spaces and buildings which draw on the best of that local character without stifling innovation;
   ii. Responding to the local topography and the overall form, character and landscape setting of the settlement; and
   iii. The creative use of the public realm through the use of measures such as incidental play spaces, bespoke street furniture and memorable features.

5. **Ensure quality of life and safer and healthier communities by:**

   i. Protecting amenity by not resulting in an unacceptable impact on the amenities of future occupiers, neighbouring properties or the wider area, by reason of noise, vibration, smell, light or other pollution, loss of light or overlooking;
   ii. Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, light, water or noise pollution or land instability;
   iii. Incorporate ecologically sensitive design and features for biodiversity to deliver ‘Biodiversity by Design’;
   iv. Seeking to design out antisocial behaviour and crime and reduce the fear of crime through the creation of safe environments that benefit from natural surveillance, visible streets and open spaces and other security measures;
   v. Incorporating appropriate community and fire safety measures; and
   vi. Incorporating flexible and resilient designs for buildings and their settings, including access to amenity space.
Sustainable Buildings and Allowable Solutions

Sustainable Buildings

4.13 The Building Regulations set national standards on key aspects of sustainable design including the reduction in carbon emissions and the efficient use of water. Those relating to carbon are being progressively strengthened in response to legally binding targets for the UK to reduce of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 26% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. From 2016 all new larger housing developments\(^{44}\) will need to meet Building Regulations 2016 and will need to be zero carbon\(^{45}\) using Allowable Solutions if necessary (See 4.21). New public buildings will need to be zero carbon from 2018 and all other new non-residential buildings from 2019. Smaller housing developments will need to meet Building Regulations 2016.

4.14 The NPPF indicates that any local requirements for a building’s sustainability should be consistent with the Government’s zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards. It stresses that the costs of any local requirements must not make development unviable.

4.15 There is a variety of nationally recognised standards addressing a wider range of sustainability issues than covered in Building Regulations. These include the Government’s Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) and the Building Research Establishment’s Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM). These standards have been incorporated into local plans including Policy 14 of the adopted CSS. The planning authorities have secured significant sustainable design measures in developments permitted under this policy. It is important that these proposals are implemented as agreed unless there has been a material change in their technical feasibility or economic viability.

4.16 Following a comprehensive review designed to reduce cost burdens and complexity, the Government has decided that, in future, technical standards relating to housing will be consolidated into the Building Regulations and accompanying Approved Documents. Energy efficiency and carbon compliance for individual homes will be covered in this way, with no provision for local variation. However, National Planning Practice Guidance emphasises the role of planning in reducing energy use through building orientation and form. In respect of water use, the Government proposes that an optional higher level of water efficiency of 110 litres/person /day (105 litres within the home and 5 litres external use) will be allowed in areas of water stress. This equates to the requirements set out in CSH levels 3 and 4 and compares to the current Building Regulation level of 125 l/p/d. North Northamptonshire is classified by the Environment Agency as an area of water stress\(^{46}\).

\(^{44}\) Pending a national definition of ‘larger’ developments, policy 9 treats these as schemes of 50 or more dwellings.

\(^{45}\) The definition for zero carbon currently stands at only regulated emissions for a building to be reduced to zero. These emissions include heating, fixed lighting, hot water and building services. Unregulated emissions from cooking or plugged in appliances such as computers or televisions are not included in zero carbon.

\(^{46}\) Using current usage and climate change scenarios an indicative stress situation for each water authority has been arrived at. This is not related to the water company’s ability to supply its customers or on public water supply.

4.17 Policy 9 recognises this changing national context, together with evidence that sustainability standards need to be applied flexibly to ensure that developments are viable. It encourages and promotes high standards of sustainable design and requires applicants to demonstrate how issues have been addressed, where appropriate through Design and Access Statements. Further details are set out in the North Northamptonshire Place Making Supplementary Planning Document.

4.18 Compliance with agreed standards should be demonstrated through the submission of a pre-assessment at planning stage, with planning conditions used to secure Design Stage/Post-Construction reviews.

4.19 Developers are encouraged to exceed the minimum standards set out in this plan and Building Regulations. In particular, the scale of consented developments and new proposals in this plan, including the Sustainable Urban Extensions and Strategic Employment Sites, provides opportunities for use of decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy or a need to safeguard their potential future use.

4.20 While sustainable design and construction cannot make development acceptable on land in an unsustainable location, the provision of exemplary standards of sustainable design will be an important material consideration in determining planning applications. Sustainable design technologies are becoming cheaper and some of the most fundamental aspects can be tackled at limited cost through a passive approach at the initial design stage, for instance building orientation and building form. Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that sustainable design measures in excess of minimum requirements may impact upon the viability of a development and will need to be considered as part of the overall package of planning benefits offered by a proposal.

**Allowable Solutions**

4.21 The Government’s approach to zero carbon buildings provides an opportunity to identify “Allowable Solutions” within North Northamptonshire for developers of large developments to choose to invest in. From 2016, zero carbon homes are to be achieved through:

a. Carbon Compliance through Building regulations Part L 2016 - Meeting 44% reduction in CO₂ levels from 2006 Building regulations (equivalent to CSH 4 energy requirements)

b. Allowable Solutions – Enabling larger developments to mitigate or off-set the remaining level of carbon emissions, if required, through a range of on-site or off-site solutions to achieve zero carbon.

http://www.zerocarbonhub.org/definition.aspx?page=4
4.22 House builders will be able to decide how to meet the energy shortfall through Allowable Solutions through any combination of the following options:
- More on-site measures or though connected measures i.e. District Heating
- Meeting remaining carbon abatement requirement themselves through own off-site carbon abatement action
- Contract a third party to deliver abatement measures
- Paying into a fund

4.23 Subject to any national requirements. The preferred approach is for developments to deliver or contribute towards Allowable Solutions within North Northamptonshire. This will ensure that impacts are mitigated close to where they arise, and that the benefits arising from a development are experienced by the local community. The Local Planning Authorities will identify a range of cost effective and verifiable Allowable Solutions within North Northamptonshire that developments can choose to invest in.

4.24 The Rockingham Forest for Life (RfFL)\textsuperscript{47} is an Allowable Solution whereby developers can directly support woodland planting as a carbon sink to play a major role in the off-site mitigation of carbon emissions from new developments.

4.25 Where developers do not invest directly in an Allowable Solution, the Government has indicated that they will be able to pay into a fund. If this can be administered at a local rather than national level the North Northamptonshire planning authorities will consider establishment of a Community Energy Fund to make it easy for developers to invest in cost-effective local Allowable Solutions that deliver carbon mitigation and environmental benefits.

\textsuperscript{47} http://www.rivernenergionalpark.org/default.asp?PageID=401
Policy 9 - Sustainable Buildings and Allowable Solutions

Development should incorporate measures to ensure high standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions.

All residential development should incorporate measures to limit use to no more than 105 litres/person/day and external water use of no more than 5 litres/person/day or alternative national standard applying to areas of water stress.

Design and access statements must demonstrate how sustainable design principles have been addressed. In particular:

1. Subject to economic viability, developments of 1000+ square metres of non-residential floorspace should, as a minimum meet BREEAM very good or equivalent nationally recognised standards.

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

3. Where off-site “allowable solutions” are to be used to reach zero carbon, the presumption is that these should be achieved through investment in projects within North Northamptonshire such as:

   - Retro fitting of community buildings
   - Retrofitting of housing stock - social and market housing
   - Tree planting schemes in the Rockingham Forest for Life area
   - Small scale renewable community projects
   - Other schemes that are able to capture carbon or reduce carbon emissions (through a decrease in non-renewable energy use or generation of renewable energy)
Provision of Infrastructure

4.26 Improved infrastructure is necessary to cater for a growing population and to also deal with existing deficiencies. The phasing and delivery of the necessary infrastructure, in co-ordination with proposed growth for the area, is essential to achieving sustainable communities and protecting and enhancing North Northamptonshire’s environmental assets. Generally infrastructure can be divided into three types, and all three are required to deliver sustainable communities that function effectively:

- **Physical** - these are necessary to connect homes and workplaces to the wider environment such as transport, waste, utilities to meet the day to day needs;
- **Green** - to provide green spaces and habitat to allow ecosystems to function alongside development and includes land and water; and
- **Social** – to ensure that the communities can function effectively and covers a wide range of assets such as education, healthcare, sport facilities, libraries.

4.27 New development should be located and designed to minimise its demand on infrastructure. Design, layout and location of development can minimise the need for, or make more efficient use of some items of infrastructure. For example, improving water efficiency within homes and businesses reduces demand on potable water and sewerage infrastructure, the increase in provision of regular bus services can achieve modal shift, with fewer cars on the road that can ease congestion and help minimise costly highways improvements. Undertaking these small steps can develop better quality places and potentially release funds to support the delivery of critical infrastructure.

4.28 Any necessary Infrastructure will need to be delivered in an appropriate timescale that is agreed with infrastructure providers and the local planning authorities. In the case of larger developments, this will be linked to specific trigger points that are set out in S106 agreements or through planning conditions. In addition where a Community Infrastructure Levy is adopted this will be collected from the type of development set out in the schedule and spent on infrastructure to support the area, within the scope of the regulations. It will be important that development proposals fully consider the wider cumulative impacts on infrastructure of the scheme, alongside other committed and planned development. Key infrastructure requirements are identified in the policies of this plan and in the Monitoring and Implementation framework in Section C.

4.29 The implementation of the JCS will require a co-ordinated approach to the activities of key delivery agencies including South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) and Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) and service providers to ensure that new development is phased and supported by necessary infrastructure provision. Opportunities to secure funding both through public and private means must be maximised. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared to identify the key infrastructure required to support the JCS, potential funding sources and broad phasing to be delivered alongside the proposed development in North Northamptonshire to 2031.

4.30 North Northamptonshire’s commitment to sustainable growth and close working with infrastructure providers has led to significant investment in a number of key infrastructure projects, notably strategic projects such as the A14 J7-J9 improvements, Corby train Station, the A43 Corby Link Road and committed funding for Broadholme Sewage Treatment Works improvements from Anglian Water. Despite this, a number
of elements of the existing infrastructure in the plan area are already at or close to capacity.

4.31 The ongoing development in North Northamptonshire, including the delivery and implementation of the SUEs will need to be supported by improvements to the physical, social and green infrastructure, which will affect the rate that development can be brought forward. This includes the roads, sewers, utilities, waste management facilities, broadband and public transport services needed for development to work, and the facilities such as schools, libraries, leisure centres, museums, green infrastructure, health and social care infrastructure and open spaces that make sustainable communities.

4.32 Funding for infrastructure will come from a variety of different sources such as planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy where adopted. Contributions will either be direct provision, through development design or cumulatively with other developments.

4.33 The demand for some of this infrastructure will be influenced by the success of policies and initiatives to encourage ‘greener’ lifestyles for instance encouraging modal shift and reducing car trips generated by a development or reducing water use. It is essential that development is phased to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place, especially for water quality. It is important that development does not go ahead unless the required sewage and water infrastructure is in place to accommodate the required sewage to ensure that there will be no locally significant effects or adverse effects on Natura 2000 sites.

4.34 Next Generation Access (NGA) to fibre-based broadband is becoming an essential part of modern life, supporting superfast download speeds of 30Mbps or more. It will support business transformation and growth, and will enable more people to work from home; it will reduce the need to travel and increasingly provide access to public services, health care and on-line learning.

4.35 The availability of superfast broadband is increasingly influencing where businesses chose to locate or expand and where people choose to buy homes. All new premises should be able to access fibre based broadband technology and the need to retrofit new properties should be avoided. Developers should anticipate future needs and secure an appropriate broadband supplier to design and deploy the fibre network (alongside other utilities) at the outset. Alternatively, developers should seek advice from broadband providers on the layout, design and specification of ducting and other required infrastructure, both external and internal to premises, in advance of provision to ensure that it meets standard service provider requirements. Care should be taken to ensure that infrastructure is not restricted by design to the specification of a single broadband service provider. Developers may wish to consider efficiency opportunities for the provision of ducting alongside other utilities, including beneath carriageway and footways.
Policy 10 – Provision of Infrastructure

Development must be supported by the phased, timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities necessary to mitigate the impact of the proposals and to support the development of North Northamptonshire.

To achieve this:

a) A combination of funding sources will be sought to deliver the infrastructure required by this plan. Developers will either make direct provision or will contribute towards the provision of infrastructure required by the development either alone or cumulatively with other developments.

b) Development should seek to minimise increases in the demand for infrastructure and services including the use of travel plans and other through measures to encourage a reduction in car use, measures to limit the need for additional/expanded water and waste infrastructure and to create safe, healthy environments;

c) Planning permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is or will be sufficient infrastructure capacity provided within an agreed timescale to support and meet all the requirements arising from the proposed development;

d) The planning authorities will work with developers and infrastructure/service providers to identify viable solutions to delivering infrastructure, where appropriate through phasing conditions, the use of interim measures and the provision of co-located facilities;

e) Next Generation Access fibre based broadband should be provided to serve all areas by partnering with a telecommunications provider or providing on-site infrastructure to enable the premises to be directly served by fibre based broadband technology.
B. Spatial Strategy

5.1 The Spatial Strategy defines the role that the Growth Towns, Market Towns, Villages and Countryside will play in building a more sustainable, self-reliant North Northamptonshire in a way that maintains the area's distinctive mixed urban-rural character. It provides the framework for more detailed Part 2 Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. The amount and distribution of new development, the part to be played by the town centres, and the provisions for infrastructure set out in this plan are determined largely by the roles that places are to play (summarised in Table 1) and the opportunities to use development to change places for the better (summarised in Table 2).

5.2 The revocation of the Regional Plan has allowed the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire to be reviewed, taking greater account of local needs, opportunities and aspirations for development and positive change. Links with London and the wider South-East remain important to the future of the area, for all the reasons that previously warranted it being identified as a nationally important Growth Area. However, the new plan takes greater account of North Northamptonshire's relationship with neighbouring areas, in particular Northampton. It supports the County Council's 'Northamptonshire Arc' concept of an integrated approach to economic development, the environment and connectivity across the county.

5.3 The plan seeks to increase the self-reliance of North Northamptonshire at all spatial scales: from the Housing Market Area as a whole; to the Northern and Southern functional sub-areas; and down to individual settlements. The general approach will be to meet needs as locally as possible, recognising that 'higher-order' facilities serving more than one settlement should be in the most accessible location (by a choice of means of transport) for the population served. The plan also provides a framework for the component parts of North Northamptonshire to cooperate in securing a greater range of facilities and services to compete more effectively with neighbouring areas. This will involve building on existing strengths and supporting distinctive roles for places as referred to in the vision.

5.4 Section 1 of this plan explains how the spatial strategy has evolved and what the main changes are. The spatial strategy encompassed in the Vision and Outcomes for North Northamptonshire is amplified into the following key spatial themes that underpin this plan:

A. Establishing a strong network of urban and rural areas that make North Northamptonshire more self-reliant in terms of access to jobs, shops, leisure, arts and culture, affordable homes and services such as education and training, with an emphasis on Sustainable Urban Extensions as key 'building blocks' for sustainable growth;

B. Setting out place-shaping principles for the main settlements to ensure that development and investment reinforces the best of local character and, where possible, changes places for the better. This includes the objective to maintain the character of settlements by avoiding coalescence;

C. Ensuring that the settlements are well-connected within and to each other and to places outside North Northamptonshire, with an emphasis on providing greater transport choice to support a modal shift away from reliance on use of the private car. This will mean planning communities in a way that makes public transport,
walking and cycling attractive alternatives to car use for many people and ensuring that new development connects to the existing settlements.

D. Enhancing the green and blue framework of countryside, open spaces, waterways and other natural, historic and recreation assets including the Nene and Ise Valleys and the Rockingham Forest. These are promoted for their importance for biodiversity, leisure, tourism and green economic uses and as an important element in maintaining the urban-rural character of the area.

These spatial themes are amplified below and provide the context for subsequent policies on:

E. Delivering economic prosperity through the identification and provision of high quality employment sites and the enhancement of the local skills base, enabling the provision of more and better jobs for a growing population.

F. Delivering homes to accommodate significant population growth and inward investment, meeting the objectively assessed needs of the housing market area and planning positively for still higher levels of growth at Corby.

G. An infrastructure strategy to secure the services and facilities required in support of sustainable communities.

1. The Network of Urban and Rural Areas

Settlement roles

5.5 The roles of settlements in North Northamptonshire are set out in Table 1. Infrastructure investment and the distribution of new homes, jobs, shops and other types of development will contribute to creating a well-connected network of settlements that together meet most of the needs of residents in North Northamptonshire. The focus will be on:

- Co-ordinated regeneration and growth in jobs, housing, leisure, retail and services at the Growth Towns of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden;

- A scale of development related to existing commitments, infrastructure capacity, regeneration needs and local character at the Market Towns, allowing them to provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland;

- Supporting villages as focal points for community infrastructure and development to meet locally identified needs, where these cannot be met more sustainably at nearby larger settlements;

- Maintaining a living, working countryside and improving the area’s self-reliance by supporting opportunities to diversify the rural economy while conserving and enhancing the natural environment and maintaining distinctive and separate settlements by preventing coalescence.

5.6 The plan recognises the different opportunities and aspirations that exist in the north and south of the plan area:
The north will deliver the bulk of new homes and jobs, with a strong focus on the Growth Towns of Corby and Kettering, where growth in population will be supported by expanded town centres and facilities to provide a counter-point to Northampton and other larger centres;

In the south, the Growth Towns of Wellingborough and Rushden will deliver significant growth, in particular in employment to reduce reliance on out-commuting. The permitted Rushden Lakes development will provide a major new retail and leisure development serving the southern area, allowing it and North Northamptonshire as a whole to become more self-reliant.

5.7 Distinctive and separate settlements will be maintained in North Northamptonshire. Part 2 Local Plans can identify areas of particular sensitivity to coalescence that should be protected strategically using measures such as strategic gaps to maintain the separate identities of settlements.

5.8 Within the southern area, the close geographic and functional links between settlements will be strengthened by the development of Wellingborough East and Rushden Lakes. Joint work on Part 2 Local Plans and/or strategic master planning is encouraged to ensure that development and infrastructure are coordinated in this area, including maximising accessibility to Rushden Lakes and the Nene Valley by non-car modes and identifying areas of countryside to be protected, and where possible enhanced, to avoid coalescence between settlements.

Figure 12: Functional sub-areas of North Northamptonshire
Sustainable Urban Extensions

5.9 Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) are key building blocks for growth in North Northamptonshire during and beyond the plan period to 2031. These large mixed-use developments are an opportunity to create well planned and managed new neighbourhoods that integrate physically and socially with the existing towns. The principal SUEs shown in Figure X include between 2,500 and 5,500 dwellings together with employment and supporting infrastructure and services. These SUEs are committed through planning permissions except for:

- Corby West SUE, which was agreed as a broad location in the 2008 CSS. Policy 33 now allocates this land for a mixed-use development including around 4,000 new homes and sets out development principles to guide the preparation and consideration of a planning application; and

- Rushden East SUE, which is a new proposal including around 2,500, reflecting the status of Rushden as a Growth Town. Policy 34 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.

Figure 13: Principal SUEs
5.10 Concentrating resources on a limited number of sites is designed to ensure that major growth is implemented effectively, bringing forward infrastructure quickly and minimising disruption to existing and new communities. The planning authorities are working with the landowners and developers to ensure that the SUEs are implemented as soon as possible. Priors Hall (NE Corby) is underway and the consented SUEs at Kettering and Wellingborough are due to commence in 2014/15. The SUEs will be delivered during and beyond the plan period to 2031. Further growth will be considered through a future review of the JCS. Subject to detailed assessment, priority will be given to expanding the principal SUEs identified in Figure X in order to make best use of infrastructure and to support the viability of these developments.

5.11 The scale of consented and planned SUEs in North Northamptonshire provides a major opportunity to take forward the Government’s Garden City/Suburb agenda. The SUEs, as part of the towns, should individually and collectively address the principles set out in the Governments Locally-led Garden Cities Prospectus\(^{48}\), which are consistent with the aims and objectives of this plan.

The rural area

5.12 The villages vary greatly in character, size and function and it is important for plans to be responsive to local circumstances. The strategy is for development at villages to be limited to meeting those locally arising needs that cannot be met more sustainably at a nearby Growth Town or Market Town, unless meeting those needs would harm the form, character or setting of the village, result in coalescence or could not be served with suitable infrastructure. In these cases that need would be more sustainably met at a nearby larger settlement. Part 2 Local Plans may identify a more detailed rural settlement hierarchy based on local evidence in order to guide planning decisions and Neighbourhood Plans.

5.13 ‘Local needs’ in the rural areas will generally relate to a village/parish or a group of villages/parishes where there is a strong functional relationship such as smaller villages relying on the school and shops in a larger village, and in turn helping to support those rural services. The need for rural development will be appraised with reference to Neighbourhood Plans, surveys and other community initiatives. These should distinguish the need for development to sustain thriving and sustainable rural communities from the more general demand for development in the rural area.

5.14 Local housing needs will be identified through site specific assessments agreed with the local planning authority. Evidence provided by applicants may be a material consideration where it demonstrates how a proposal will address issues such as a community’s need for affordable housing, the need to support viable local services or to enable a local business to prosper. In line with an urban focused strategy it is reasonable to expect some needs arising in the rural area close to a Growth Town or Market Town to be met at these larger settlements. This is particularly the case for villages that are located within 5 km\(^{49}\) of a Growth Town or Market Town to which they are linked by frequent public transport services\(^{50}\).

5.15 The four largest villages (Earl’s Barton, Finedon, Irchester and Wollaston) are significantly bigger than any other villages. They have populations in the range 3,500 to 5,400 (2011 Census), compared to the next largest villages of Mawsley and

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\(^{48}\) Locally-led Garden Cities Prospectus, DCLG April 2014

\(^{49}\) CTC 2013 Average cycle distance = 5km which would take 15 minutes at a moderate 20 km/h

\(^{50}\) An hourly bus service linking a village to larger settlement in a journey time of 15 minutes or less
Broughton at around 2,200 residents. This scale is likely to give rise to a strategically significant level of locally arising housing need over the period to 2031. Table 5 sets out a housing requirement for these four largest villages in order to provide a strategic steer for Part 2 Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. These villages are situated close to the Growth Towns of Wellingborough and/or Rushden, which are the most sustainable locations for residential development in the south of the plan area. In order to focus growth at these towns and to protect the character of the villages, additional housing development above the requirements identified in Table 5, other than small scale infilling in accordance with Policy 11, will be resisted unless agreed through the Part 2 Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans.

5.16 An exceptional opportunity has been identified to create an exemplar new village community at Deenethorpe Airfield. This will be assessed against Policy 14 and if acceptable, will be treated as a ‘windfall’ in addition to the housing and employment targets for East Northamptonshire

**Infilling and Village boundaries**

5.17 Criterion 2b of Policy 11 refers to small scale infill development being permitted on suitable sites within villages. This refers to the development of vacant and under-developed land within the main built up areas of the village on land which is bounded by existing built curtilages on at least two sides, such as the filling in of a small gap in an otherwise built up frontage.

5.18 In order to clarify the application of the criteria 2b and 2c of Policy 11, Part 2 Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans may define village boundaries or more detailed village boundary criteria, taking account of the character of the village. Village boundaries can provide a tool to plan positively for growth and to prevent ad-hoc encroachment into open countryside, particularly for villages located close to larger settlements where coalescence is a concern. Alternatively, where greater flexibility is warranted, Local or Neighbourhood Plans may set out policy criteria to clarify when a site will be treated as lying ‘within’ a village for the purposes of policy 11.

**Table 1- Spatial Roles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Roles include</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth Towns</td>
<td>To provide the focus for major co-ordinated regeneration and growth in employment, housing, retail and higher order facilities serving one or more districts.</td>
<td>Greatest share of new housing and the focus of employment, retail and leisure development, with scale dependent upon individual needs, opportunities and aspirations. Main locations for higher order facilities and for infrastructure investment, including improved transport choice and links to neighbouring towns. Development requirements will be met through a combination of the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, the Sustainable Urban Extensions and other committed sites. Smaller greenfield developments may be allocated in Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans or identified by the planning authority if required to maintain a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land against the objectively assessed needs set out in Policy 28. The regeneration of the town centres is a priority and will be the catalyst for growth in housing and employment (see Policy 12). The permitted Rushden Lakes development will provide a focus for retail and leisure investment in the southern sub-area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Towns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rothwell, Thrapston

To provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland. Burton Latimer and Higham Ferrers provide a more localised convenience and service role, with growth pressures directed to the adjoining Growth Towns.

The scale of development at individual settlements will be related to existing commitments, the current and potential capacity of infrastructure and services, regeneration needs and the character of the town.

Improved transport choice and strengthened links to the Growth Towns.

Regeneration, diversification and expansion of the employment and service base at Desborough, Irthingborough, Raunds and Thrapston. The consolidation and enhancement of the successful town centres at Rothwell and Oundle.

Development requirements will be met through a combination of the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings, Sustainable Urban Extensions and other committed sites, and smaller greenfield developments identified in Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans.

### Villages

**All 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.

The scale of development in an individual village, other than small scale infill opportunities, will be led by locally identified employment, housing, infrastructure and service requirements and dependent upon the form, and character and setting of the village and its proximity to larger settlements.

The plan sets out housing requirements for the largest villages of Earls Barton, Finedon, Irchester and Wollaston, where the scale of development arising from local needs will be of strategic significance. Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans should identify the best locations for accommodating these development needs and may test higher levels of growth.

Development within villages that have only a limited range of services and facilities is likely to be limited to small scale infill development and ‘rural exceptions’ affordable housing schemes, unless Local or Neighbourhood Plans identify growth as a means of sustaining or improving the range of services in the village.

Part 2 Local Plans may identify villages that have a sensitive character or conservation interest, in which new development will be strictly managed. Opportunities for development to meet specific local needs may be identified through Neighbourhood Plans or the Community Right to Build.

Strong development management will be required to ensure that development pressures are not diverted to villages if development at the Growth Towns and Market Towns is slower than planned.

### 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.

Development will be carefully managed to safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and to maintain distinctive and separate settlements by ensuring that development does not result in coalescence.

Some small rural settlements with a dispersed built form may be designated as open countryside, where development will be limited.

Support for agricultural and forestry enterprises and other appropriate rural businesses. Opportunities for diversification including the re-use of buildings and new tourism, recreation and renewable energy based activities. Opportunities will be taken to enhance the Green Infrastructure that provides an essential biodiversity and recreational resource and delivers other key ‘ecosystem services such as flood risk management and carbon capture.
Policy 11 – Network of Urban and Rural Areas

Development will be distributed to strengthen the network of settlements in accordance with the roles in Table 1 and to support delivery of the place-shaping principles set out in Table 2. The special mixed urban/ rural character of North Northamptonshire with its distinctive and separate settlements will be maintained through the avoidance of coalescence. Priority will be given to the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings within settlements, then to other locations that are readily accessible by a choice of means of travel.

1. The Urban Areas

   a. The Growth Towns will be the focus for infrastructure investment and higher order facilities to support major employment, housing, retail and leisure development;

   b. The Market Towns will provide a strong service role for their local communities and surrounding rural areas with growth in homes and jobs to support regeneration and local services, at a scale appropriate to the character and infrastructure of the town;

   c. Provision will be made for new housing as set out in Policy 28. Any proposals for significant additional growth should be tested and supported through Part 2 Local or Neighbourhood Plans;

   d. The identified Sustainable Urban Extensions provide strategic locations for housing and employment development within and beyond the plan period. If it is necessary to identify additional sites to maintain a 5 year deliverable supply of housing land in the district accordance with Policy 28, these should be identified at the Growth Towns followed, if necessary, by the Market Towns.

2. The Rural Areas

   a. Development in the rural area 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;

   b. Small scale infill development will be permitted on suitable sites within Villages where this would not materially harm the character of the settlement and residential amenity or exceed the capacity of local infrastructure and services. Part 2 Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans may identify sites within or adjoining villages to help meet locally identified needs or may designate sensitive areas where infill development will be resisted or subject to special control;
c. **Local and Neighbourhood Plans will identify sites within or adjoining the named Villages to meet the rural housing requirements identified in Table 5.** Other than small scale infilling or ‘rural exceptions’ schemes, development above these requirements will be resisted unless agreed through the Part 2 Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans to meet a particular local need or opportunity;

d. **Rural diversification and the appropriate re-use of rural buildings will be supported in accordance with Policy 25. Renewable energy developments will be considered under Policy 26. Other forms of development will be resisted in the open countryside unless there are special circumstances as set out in Policy 13 or national policy;**

e. **The strategic opportunity for an exemplar sustainable new village community at Deenethorpe Airfield will be explored in accordance with Policy 14.**

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**North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles**

5.19 To achieve thriving towns that are economically and socially sustainable it is important to understand the role of the urban structure; the framework of street and built form, and how this promotes or inhibits movement at a settlement level. The USS assessed the twelve towns in North Northamptonshire looking at their existing structure of streets and open spaces, and how this allows people to move around. The basis behind this place shaping approach is that well connected towns and neighbourhoods can enhance land values, make local shops and facilities more viable; improve people’s safety and security by encouraging surveillance, encourage more walking and cycling leading to health benefits; reduce vehicle emissions through fewer cars being used for local and non-work trips and therefore contribute towards achieving modal shift.

5.20 The key attributes that the USS seeks to create are:

- **Well connected places** - to the centre, through the suburban periphery and to the countryside edge;
- **Mixing up land uses**
- **Streets for all** (complete streets) - designed to be safe, pleasant, lively and characterful.

5.21 Table 2 sets out the place specific principles for each of the towns in North Northamptonshire in relation to the key themes set out above. The principles seek to maximise existing opportunities and address constraints in the existing movement network. They provide a set of guiding principles to help shape places over and beyond the plan period, ensuring that individual developments, public investment and part 2 Local Plans cumulatively contribute to more sustainable places.
**Well Connected**

- A45 and A509 act as barriers to growth and access to wider countryside and surrounding villages. Need to humanize roads to allow access across, provide frontage, landscaping and gateway features.
- Capitalise and expand excellent landscape network, heritage of significant street trees.
- Enhance connections to surrounding villages for cycling. Improved landscapes on connecting streets.
- Support town centre access by focusing on the historic radials which are the most direct and connected routes.
- Connecting up the cul-de-sac areas where possible and ensuring that existing shopping and service areas are developed to promote walking and cycling access.

**Mixed Use**

- In existing single use areas, enhance for walking, cycling and be flexible about introducing a wider mix of uses.
- Encouraging new buildings to have active uses onto the street — ie shops, reception areas, even make industrial processes visible if they can animate the street.

**Complete Streets**

- The streets and public spaces provide the face of Wellingborough and its own distinctive character. The typical local pattern is for historic regular and irregular grids of streets.
- Built form continuously encloses the spaces between building, clearly demarcating public and private space.
Well Connected

- Provide additional GI linking routes and convert existing streets into GI connectors with an emphasis on landscaped routes for walking and cycling.
- New neighbourhoods should be internally well connected, but also improve links through existing areas to local centres/town centre and between neighbourhoods.
- Focus on the key road routes to the town centre to ensure they are designed with pedestrians and cyclists in mind along with improved links between the out of town retail and town centre.
- Ensure new development at the edges of the town is not severed from the town by the existing large roads or industrial areas.

Mixed Use

- In new development, provide a greater mix of unit sizes and uses to make areas walkable and pleasant.
- Existing large employment areas need to be developed to connect with the rest of the town, so that they are pleasant to go through to get to housing and retail around them.

Complete Streets

- Introduce lower speeds, more crossing points and footways, bike routes, improvements for buses, additional tree planting and landscaping - particularly key on the existing main routes.
Well Connected
- Connect up the green and river assets as walking/cycling routes, looking for opportunities to create new green routes.
- Creating much greener streets, with an emphasis on landscaping, street trees and pedestrian/cycle routes would help create a connected GI network.
- Opportunities exist to create more routes across, and to improve the quality of the routes for walkers and cyclists.
- Prioritise the radial routes, which are the oldest and most direct for investment, particularly for cycling and buses.
- Future growth at Kettering, or access to the countryside around it is constrained by major roads encircling it and access across these roads is limited and vehicle focused. Create more links across and improve quality of routes for all.

Mixed Use
- Connect existing out of town retail and employment areas to surroundings providing pleasant walking/cycling environments, and create easy access for public transport.
- Ensure a greater mix of uses, in connected streets designed for all users.

Complete Streets
- Make the main roads cycle and pedestrian friendly. The town is of a cyclable scale, and the centre is walkable. The main, radial roads are fast, direct, easily navigable routes that people want to use, and should be designed for all users, not just motor vehicles to support town centre access.
- Development should generally front onto the streets.
- Historic street pattern of regular grids is characteristic. Development should create connected street patterns, avoiding cul-de-sac layouts.
Well Connected
• Create connected green space network, using rivers and greening streets to connect to open spaces and the wider countryside.
• Use model of existing local connected streets in new development.
• Improve connections to Kettering across A14 and alongside the River Ise and railway line.
• Improve radials for walking and cycling.

Mixed Uses
• Wider mix of uses, and smaller units, which can provide a more animated and human scale frontage and street pattern.

Complete Streets
• Improved public realm in town centre and higher quality walking and cycling routes to it.

Burton Latimer

Desborough

Well Connected
• An additional bridge link across the railway line is key alongside measures to improve access along and across Harborough Road for walking and cycling.

Mixed Use
• More activities in the Town Centre with better public realm, easier to get to on foot and by bike, with a wider mix of uses.

Complete Streets
• More pedestrian and cycle friendly radial streets to support easy access to the centre and out to the countryside and surrounding neighbourhoods.
**Rothwell**

**Well Connected**
- Additional east/west link to the north of the town, avoiding the historic core of the town centre would ease congestion.
- Improving the existing streets for walking and cycling.
- Link up existing green spaces and enhance connections around the town and access to the Ise and wider footpath network.
- New development to continue the pattern of close links into the large open spaces.

**Mixed Use**
- Ensure schools integrate better with local streets.
- New employment to be integrated into walkable neighbourhoods.

**Complete Streets**
- Better walking and cycling connections to Desborough.
- Public realm enhancements to the town centre.

**Irthingborough**

**Well Connected**
- Maintain and enhance links to surrounding settlements and the Nene, particularly improvements for local cycling.
- Integrate open spaces through GI corridors within new and existing areas.
- Create small pockets of green space/play spaces within the existing and new streets.
- Re-design and slow the A6 through the town, so it becomes a town street, not a bypass, so facilities can be easily accessed.
- Connect local streets using the historic central core.

**Mixed Use and Complete Streets**
- New development should support and integrate with the existing town centre and ensure streets to the centre are pedestrian and cycle friendly.
Well Connected

- Enhancements to Stanwick Road and A45 crossing points and links to Stanwick.
- Potential for “Quiet Lanes” schemes to prioritise low traffic rural roads for walking and cycling.
- Improve connectivity in the NW quadrant where possible, and seek to create further east-west connections.
- New development should form walkable connected blocks.

Mixed Use

- Adding vibrancy to the town centre through a wider range of uses, including cultural and social facilities and improvements to public realm.
- Ensure large scale uses create walkable areas.

Complete Streets

- The existing pattern created by the streets relationships to the contours should be continued.
- Watercourses should be made more of a feature in the town.

Oundle

Well Connected

- Link Oundle to its landscape – better access to the waterways, improve access across the A605 to the wider countryside and rural settlements, and links south to Barnwell, better design for urban/rural edge.
- Improve connections around the secondary school, better access for pedestrians.
- Cycling signage and slowed routes on rural lanes to nearby settlements such as “Quiet Lanes” schemes.

Mixed Use

- Support pedestrian and cyclist improvements to allow easier access between town centre, education and edge of centre employment.

Complete Streets

- Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre and to highlight historic townscape.
- Limit cul-de-sacs and use existing pattern of irregular grids to improve local connectivity.
Rushden and Higham Ferrers

**Well Connected**
- Reduce barrier caused by the A45/A6.
- Development along the edge should not provide further barriers in terms of layout and bunds.
- Prioritise cycling between centres.
- Green Infrastructure - extend to link to the Nene Valley corridor.

**Mixed Use**
- More employment uses with small scale workshop/live work units in the centre.
- Improving the public realm and access to the Nene Valley as key assets of

**Complete Streets**
- Use Rushden’s Victorian grid street pattern in new development, to ensure that places are well connected.
- Improve connections in the southern area of the town.
- Provide active built frontages, street tree planting, wider pavements.

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Thrapston

**Well Connected**
- Improve links to surrounding settlements, particularly for cycling.
- Connect the town to the river and Thrapston lakes with functional and visual links and create attractions to riverside.
- Create connections between discrete areas of the town.
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**Mixed Use**
- Focus on the principal streets for mixed use development.
- Supporting access to the town centre by foot and bike.
- New facilities should be on the most connected streets, supported by walking, cycling and public transport routes.

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**Complete Streets**
- Promote walking and cycling along the main streets.
- Improve enclosure to streets with built form.
**Town Centres and Town Centre Uses**

5.22 The town centres in North Northamptonshire are the focus of retail, leisure and cultural facilities and provide significant employment. They are the hearts of their communities and serve the surrounding rural area.

5.23 A key outcome sought by this plan is stronger, more self-reliant towns with thriving centres. This is supported by national policy, which requires planning authorities to plan positively to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full, adopting a ‘town centre first’ sequential approach.

The existing network and hierarchy of centres

5.24 Kettering is the largest centre within North Northamptonshire in terms of comparison shopping floorspace, and expenditure, followed (in order) by Wellingborough, Corby and Rushden. However, the town centres are small compared to those in neighbouring settlements such as Northampton, Leicester and Peterborough.

5.25 The SUEs will include district/local centres of an appropriate scale with convenience shops and facilities such as medical centres and schools to meet the day-to-day needs of residents. They will not provide significant convenience and comparison shopping provision or other facilities serving a wider area, which would be better located in the town centres.

5.26 The latest survey of shopping patterns indicates that residents are spending more of their money in North Northamptonshire but that there is still a significant leakage of comparison spending, particularly from the southern area. The share of spending on comparison shopping is up from 50% in 2005 to 62% in 2011. This compares to 87% of convenience spending retained in the area. Despite the fact that an increasing amount of comparison spending is being retained, of the town centres, only Corby has seen its share grow, with gains elsewhere being a result of out-of-centre developments.

Challenges and opportunities for town centres

5.27 The Government has highlighted the challenges facing town centres in the face of pressures from out-of-town shopping and the growth of on-line retailing. It believes that, for town centres to prosper, they need to be social places with a vibrant evening economy and to offer something that neither shopping centres or the internet can match.

5.28 The Government-commissioned Portas Review concluded that, to remain successful, town centres must diversify with a range of uses beyond their traditional

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51 NPPF defines main town centre uses as: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, 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).

52 Roger Tym & Partners (RTP) 2011

53 Define comparison/convenience

retail roles. Cultural and tourism facilities should be retained and improved and new facilities incorporated within town centres and regeneration schemes through a variety of mechanisms: including art, indoor sport and leisure, heritage, libraries, green infrastructure, and bars and restaurants. Opportunities to provide housing within the town centres will be an important element of regeneration.

5.29 In response to this the Government is introducing a package of support for high streets addressing the burdens of business rates, parking enforcement and planning restrictions, and supporting community-led renewal and business improvement districts and local markets.

Rushden Lakes

5.30 North Northamptonshire will soon have an additional focus of retail and leisure uses in the form of the Rushden Lakes development. This was permitted by the Secretary of State in June 2014 and is expected to open late in 2016. Rushden Lakes is a mixed retail, recreation and leisure scheme, including garden centre and retail units totalling no more than 26,747 square metres net sales area (of which no more than 929 sq m for convenience goods), together with an hotel and leisure club, restaurants and lakeside visitor centre. This development will enhance the retail and leisure facilities available to local residents in the southern area, helping to retain a higher proportion of spending and contributing to the goal of greater self-reliance.

Retail strategy

5.31 The planned expansion of housing and population in North Northamptonshire means that, even with the growth in on-line retailing, there is forecast to be an increase in spending available to support shops, restaurants and other businesses.

5.32 A qualitative need has been identified for the provision of a medium-sized foodstore (around 2,000 sq m net) to serve the Rothwell/Desborough area and a quantitative need for around 4,500 sq m of convenience goods floorspace in the southern area by 2031. It is expected that the Rushden Lakes development will account for most, if not all, of the forecast additional comparison goods spending in the southern area and will also divert some trade from existing shopping locations. The greatest impact will be upon Wellingborough town centre, which is forecast to lose around 12% of its comparison shopping turnover. In the northern area, the forecast growth in spending after 2021 presents the opportunity for the town centres of Kettering and Corby to expand and improve their retail offer. In order to attract this investment they need to compete effectively with out-of-town developments and neighbouring larger centres.

5.33 In view of the scale of the consented Rushden Lakes scheme, Policy 12 does not identify a specific comparison retail floorspace requirement for Rushden or Wellingborough town centres. The retail capacity update indicates that growth in spending on comparison goods could support some additional floorspace after 2026 but that this is dependent upon the performance of the Rushden Lakes scheme. The need for additional retail floorspace in the southern area will therefore be monitored and reviewed when the Rushden Lakes development has become established. In the meantime, the emphasis will be on consolidating and developing a retail, leisure/culture and housing offer that allows Rushden and Wellingborough town centres to...
operate successfully alongside Rushden Lakes. These changes will be plan-led through the review of the Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan and the preparation of the Four Towns Plan.

5.34 Policy 12 identifies a minimum floorspace requirement for Kettering and Corby, giving them an equal share of the capacity forecast to arise from population growth in the northern area over the period to 2031. This reflects the fact that Kettering is currently the largest retail centre but that Corby is accommodating a greater share of planned population growth. These objectively assessed requirements will be met within the town centres through the implementation of the adopted Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Corby Town Centre Masterplan, or any subsequent plans prepared by the Councils. These requirements are forecast to arise after 2021 but proposals for earlier development or development in excess of the minimum requirements will be supported in the town centres where this will allow them to strengthen their position relative to other retail centres.

5.35 Retail investment alone will not be sufficient to sustain and regenerate the town centres. Part 2 Local Plans will identify the extent of the town centres and, within them, the primary shopping areas where retention of retail uses is most important. They will set out policies and proposals to accommodate new uses including additional housing, and to create the conditions in which businesses can prosper. This includes the identification of development sites, an enhanced public realm, improved access and adequate car parking. Alongside these planning initiatives the partner councils will work with local communities and businesses to take forward Government initiatives to support the town centres.

Policy 12 – Town Centres and Town Centre Uses

The vitality and viability of the town centres in North Northamptonshire will be supported by:

a) Securing and maintaining a vibrant mix of retail, employment, leisure and cultural facilities and supporting the provision of additional residential uses on appropriate sites including the re-use of vacant space above shops. Part 2 Local Plans will identify the extent of the Town Centres, sites to accommodate town centre uses, and Primary Shopping Areas where existing retail uses should be retained;

b) Enhancing the public realm and improving access to the town centres for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and supporting proposals to provide convenient, safe and secure car parking;

c) Maintaining and regenerating Kettering and Corby town centres as the focus of higher order facilities and retail investment serving growing communities in the north. This will include a minimum increase of 13,000 sq m net comparison shopping floorspace in each of Corby and Kettering town centres by 2031;

d) Adapting and diversifying Wellingborough and Rushden town centres to provide offers complementary to the permitted out-of-town retail and leisure development at Rushden Lakes, which will provide up to 26,750 sq m net retail sales area serving growing communities in the southern area;
e) Supporting the provision of a medium-sized foodstore to serve the Desborough/Rothwell area and an additional 4,500 sq m of convenience goods floorspace in the southern area by 2031;

f) Supporting development in the town centres of the Market Towns where this is of a scale and nature consistent with the character of the settlement and the role of Market Towns in providing mainly convenience shopping and local services. Part 2 Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans may identify additional development opportunities where these do not undermine the focus of retail development at the Growth Town Centres; and

g) Applying the sequential and impact tests set out in the NPPF to the assessment of retail development and other town centre uses which cannot be accommodated within the defined town centre areas (other than small scale rural development and the creation of local centres to meet the day to day needs of residents in the SUEs)
Rural Exceptions

5.36 The spatial strategy seeks to focus development towards the urban areas to ensure that the character of the rural area is maintained and reinforced, and that the open countryside is strongly protected. However, there may be special circumstances where development is acceptable in the rural area that is not identified in Part 2 Local or Neighbourhood Plans. These developments may be justified to meet locally identified needs for employment and services or to provide affordable housing in the rural area on sites that are well related to settlements.

5.37 It is expected that rural exception housing sites will be small in scale and normally be developed solely for affordable housing. In those cases where an element of market housing is required to cross-subsidise the delivery of affordable housing, the scale should be the minimum required to secure a viable scheme. This will need to be justified through a viability assessment which demonstrates that the land value is reasonable having regard to the planning status of the land as open countryside. Any market housing should itself be tailored to meeting local needs such as accommodation for older people who wish to remain within their local community, or live/work units for activities which are particularly suited to a rural area. Where affordable housing is provided under the provisions of Policy 13 this must remain affordable in perpetuity and be consistent with the requirements set out in the relevant Local Authority Housing Strategies.

5.38 The effective involvement of local communities is an essential prerequisite for the consideration of schemes to meet local housing needs, especially where the provision of market housing is proposed.

Dwellings in the open countryside

5.39 This Plan seeks to avoid new isolated new homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances as set out in the NPPF. One of the special circumstances in which isolated residential development may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work to support the vitality and viability of the rural economy. It will often be as convenient and more sustainable for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings. However, there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to the site of their work.

5.40 There are specific functional, financial and viability tests which need to be satisfactorily met in order for an isolated rural workers’ dwelling to be acceptable. These are:

- A clearly established functional need for the development, and demonstration that this could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling or accommodation in the area suitable for occupation by the workers concerned;
- The rural enterprise concerned has been established for at least three years, has been profitable for at least one year and is currently financially sound with a clear prospect of remaining so; and
- The size and scale of the proposed dwelling is commensurate with the established functional requirements.
The NPPF indicates that exceptionally, the development of a dwelling in the countryside may also be acceptable if it is of an exceptional quality or due to the innovative design of the dwelling. It indicates that such a design should:

- Be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;
- Reflect the highest standards in architecture;
- Significantly enhance its immediate setting;
- Be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.

Within North Northamptonshire, this will only be the case where proposals provide innovative standards of sustainable design, in excess of those set out in policy 9 and national regulations, and make an outstanding contribution to the character of the landscape, promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness. These matters require rigorous assessment given the protection afforded to the open countryside. Promoters of such schemes should therefore seek early advice through an accredited design review to provide an independent assessment of the proposal, or local design surgeries.

Policy 13 - Rural Exceptions

New development may be permitted on the periphery of established settlements, beyond their existing built up area or defined boundary. Rural Exception Housing schemes should be purely affordable housing unless an element of market housing is essential to enable the delivery of the development. In such cases, the scale of market housing will be the minimum necessary to make the scheme viable and should be tailored to meeting specific locally identified housing needs.

Proposals should satisfy all of the following criteria:

a) The form and scale of the development should be clearly justified by evidence that it meets an identified need arising within a village or network of villages through a local needs survey.

b) Sites should be well-related to a settlement that offers services and employment to meet the day to day needs of occupants of the development;

c) Development should enable access to local services and facilities by foot, cycle or public transport;

d) The scale and nature of the development will not exceed identified needs and must be appropriate to the surroundings, minimise impacts on the environment and be supported by existing or new infrastructure;

e) Occupation of the development will be controlled through a legal agreement or conditions to ensure that it remains available and affordable in perpetuity to meet local needs.

In open countryside, away from established settlements, permission will not normally be granted for new built residential development, with the exception of individual dwellings of exceptional quality or innovative design as set out in paragraphs 5.42 and 5.43 and proposed dwellings for rural workers at or near their place of work in the countryside. To meet such a need, a new dwelling may be permitted for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside, provided that:
a) The dwelling is required to enable someone who is full time in agricultural, forestry or similar rural businesses to meet the essential need of the enterprise concerned; and

b) It can be demonstrated the functional and financial tests in paragraph 5.42 have been met.

Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity

5.43 The Rural North of East Northamptonshire has a special rural character, with a dispersed settlement pattern incorporating attractive villages and the historic market towns of Thrapston and Oundle. This plan sets out how these existing settlements will contribute to meeting objectively assessed needs for housing jobs, services and facilities, taking account of the need to protect the character of the settlements and surrounding countryside and to ensure that most new development is focused on the Growth Towns as the most sustainable places.

5.44 A potential exceptional opportunity has been identified to enable the Rural North to accommodate additional development through the creation of an exemplar new ‘Garden Village’ including 1,000-1,250 homes at Deenethorpe Airfield. This would be in addition to growth delivered through an urban-focused spatial strategy elsewhere in North Northamptonshire (including the housing provision set out in policies 28 and 29).

5.45 Deenethorpe Airfield is located between Corby (3.5km to Priors Hall centre, 8km to the town centre) and Oundle (9km). Development of the new ‘Garden Village’ would enable the provision of dedicated pedestrian and cycle connections between Deenethorpe, Upper Benefield and the North East Corby sustainable urban extension (Priors Hall and Weldon Park). The airfield and its surroundings are in the single ownership of the historic Deene Estate. It is a major brownfield site and has no designated areas of landscape or biodiversity value, but is surrounded by an attractive landscape of farmland. The airfield is located close to the A427 (and public transport services between Corby and Oundle) and development could potentially improve the highway network by providing a link between this road and the A43.

5.46 The opportunity to consider the creation of a new village is considered unique to this location because of the commitment of the Deene Estate to use its landholdings and long term stewardship of the development to deliver an exemplar settlement, built to the highest possible standards of design and sustainability, with generous green space and a mix of homes, jobs, community facilities and services to create a balanced and cohesive community that is well integrated with the existing network of settlements. In particular, the single historic ownership of the site will enable substantial investment in infrastructure and community facilities early in the scheme.

Policy 14 sets out criteria against which this development opportunity can be refined and tested through the preparation of a masterplan. The onus is upon the Deene Estate (Brudenell family), in its role as promoter and intended long term steward of the Deenethorpe Airfield proposal, to satisfactorily demonstrate how the scheme would be an exemplar development.
Cross-boundary working

5.48 It is important that any development at Deenethorpe Airfield should be is complementary to the delivery of growth planned at Corby, particularly the SUEs, and must protect the setting of the village of Weldon from further coalescence. therefore To achieve this, it will be necessary for the proposal to:

- Provide a distinct offer as a genuinely ‘exemplar’ sustainable rural community;
- Include an extensive belt of countryside around the new village that will be protected and enhanced for the foreseeable future;
- Demonstrate that the delivery of necessary transport infrastructure and the provision of public transport, health, education and other local services is properly co-ordinated across administrative boundaries.

Delivering a mixed and balanced community

5.49 The new development must deliver a mixed and balanced community through the provision of a wide choice of high quality market and affordable homes to meet the needs of different groups including families and older people and those wishing to build their own homes. A housing strategy will be prepared to identify the mix of house sizes, types and tenures required to meet this objective. Only around 12% of the dwelling stock in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston area is affordable housing and there are very few shared ownership properties. The new village must help to address this deficit. However, it is recognised that, given the scale of investment needed in infrastructure and other measures to achieve an exemplar development, the affordable housing needs evidenced in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (over 40% of new housing in East Northamptonshire) may not be viable. Furthermore, this scale of affordable housing provision in a new village is unlikely to provide a mixed and balanced community. For these reasons, Policy 14 sets a minimum requirement for 25% of the development to be affordable, to include intermediate tenures such as shared ownership. In addition specialist housing for older people and opportunities for self-built/ custom-built housing should be provided.

Developing a Masterplan for Deenethorpe Airfield

5.50 Policy 14 sets out the exemplar standards and provisions that will need to be achieved in order for the proposed village to be supported. Based on this policy, the site promoters will work with the local planning authority and relevant Parish Councils (in particular, Deene and Deenethorpe, Benefield and Weldon) to prepare a masterplan for the new village, in consultation with local communities and other stakeholders including Corby Borough Council. This should take forward the vision for a sustainable ‘garden village’ of a character and scale in keeping with East Northamptonshire’s attractive small towns and villages, but which provides an exemplar of 21st Century standards of design, construction and community facilities.

5.51 The masterplan will consider infrastructure requirements and any necessary matters of avoiding, mitigating or as a last resort compensating for environmental impacts. This will include consideration of how the proposal will contribute to the wider network of settlements, providing a focus for rural services and connecting to and supporting services and facilities in nearby towns.

5.52 The masterplan will include a delivery strategy to identify how and when the development will be implemented to the exemplary standards that are being proposed and with the required infrastructure and services. The mechanisms identified in the
delivery strategy must provide a high degree of certainty that the exemplary standards and provisions set out in the masterplan will be achieved on the ground. This will include design coding, provisions for long term management and stewardship and opportunities for community governance, and the outline heads of terms for a legal agreement to deliver planned infrastructure and services.

5.53 If the masterplan demonstrates to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that the criteria and standards set out in Policy 14 can be met in a viable development, it will be used as the basis for either a Part 2 Local Plan, other site specific development plan document or a Supplementary Planning Document to be adopted by East Northamptonshire Council.

Policy 14 - Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity

The unique opportunity to create a new ‘Garden village’ of between 1000 and 1250 dwellings at Deenethorpe Airfield will be assessed through the preparation of a masterplan and delivery strategy agreed with the Local Planning Authority and subject to public consultation. The masterplan will include phasing and define funding requirements and a delivery strategy for the timely provision of infrastructure. For such a proposal to be supported, the masterplan will need to demonstrate how the proposal would meet all of the following criteria:

a) Create a model for sustainable rural living, with exemplary standards of design, construction and community facilities, made possible by the long term commitment of the Deene Estate, including through the use of pre-set design codes;

b) Provide for the new village as a whole to be carbon neutral through:
   • Buildings utilising contemporary construction techniques and exemplary construction standards and including systems to reduce their energy demand;
   • A bespoke energy strategy including the production of heat and electricity from renewable and low carbon sources to provide at least 80% of energy requirements on site;
   • Investing in tree planting in the Rockingham Forest

c) Make effective use of previously developed land to restore despoiled landscape and remove the existing aviation activity and open storage uses;

d) Support the rural economy through:
   i. The provision of land and buildings for owner occupiers of small and medium sized enterprises and service providers to build to their requirements within the design code;
   ii. Ensuring extra land will be made available under 10 year options to allow successful enterprises to expand;
   iii. Installation of super-fast broadband for all businesses and community facilities and also for all dwellings to support home working;
   iv. Use of mechanisms to deliver apprenticeships and training opportunities in association with the construction phases for the new village;
   v. Provision of community food production to serve local businesses.

e) Provide a hub for rural services, phased early in the development, through:
i. Providing nursery and primary education within the village and identify how secondary education will be provided in a way that complements provision in neighbouring communities;
ii. The provision of appropriate health care facilities;
iii. Provision of local shops and services including a range of spaces for the community use.

f) Develop a balanced and mixed community, and address affordable housing needs through:
   i. Providing at least 25% integrated affordable housing;
   ii. Specialist provision to meet the needs of an ageing population;
   iii. Opportunities for bespoke individual and community custom-build projects.

g) Maximise integrated transport choice and connections to services and facilities in neighbouring settlements through the preparation and implementation of a Travel Plan to achieve modal shift, including provisions for:
   i. A network of dedicated pedestrian and cycle links throughout the new village, with direct and clearly defined connections to neighbouring towns and villages;
   ii. A road network that allows the village to be served by public transport with the minimum possible diversion of services from the A427 to deliver viable public transport services to Corby and Oundle, e.g. through diversion of the X4 Milton Keynes – Peterborough bus service at the earliest possible opportunity;
   iii. Improving the highway network with a link between the A427 and A43;
   iv. Comprehensive infrastructure and incentives to facilitate the use of electric vehicles;

h) Provide a sustainable waste water treatment facility that meets the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and secure improvements in water quality and surface water management;

i) Strengthen the Green Infrastructure (GI), to enhance the landscape, prevent coalescence with neighbouring villages, support biodiversity, and providing accessible opportunities for recreation and contributing to the Rockingham Forest for Life and wider Green Infrastructure links to nearby settlements through:
   i. Provision of parks, allotments and large private gardens;
   ii. Provision of significant areas of connected GI including new woodland, woodland pasture, agricultural meadows, open space and creative nature conservation including re-connecting the ancient semi natural woodlands of Weldon Park Wood to Langley Copse;
   iii. Creating an extensive walking, cycling and riding network with the new GI across the Deene Estate and into the wider area of the Rockingham Forest.

j) Help achieve good ecological status on the Willow Brook, in accordance to the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, through contributing to protection and enhancement of its river quality elements and protecting ground water.

k) Establish appropriate liaison and governance solutions by identifying the ways in which inclusive and continuous engagement, joint working and long term
stewardship can be secured to deliver on the unique and exceptional garden village development.

2. Connections within and beyond North Northamptonshire

6.1 Good transport and communication connections underpin a strong network of settlements and are essential to the economic prosperity of North Northamptonshire, the quality of life of local people and enhancing the urban structure of settlements. This Plan addresses connectivity at the following levels:

- **Neighbourhood connectivity** - improving connections, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, between and around local neighbourhoods and villages and between settlements and the adjoining countryside;

- **Local connectivity** - improving connections to their most accessible town centre from urban neighbourhoods and from the urban fringes and rural hinterlands of North Northamptonshire;

- **Area connectivity** – connecting key places in North Northamptonshire; and

- **Strategic connectivity** – connecting North Northamptonshire at a national and regional level.

6.2 This Plan has been informed by the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (The Local Transport Plan) which sets out the strategic aims and goals for transportation in Northamptonshire. The Transportation Plan comprises a suite of documents which include a series of thematic ‘daughter’ documents that provide more detail on specific strategies and policy for specific themes and areas.

Achieving modal shift and reducing the need to travel

6.3 The growth identified in the Plan will cause a significant increase in the demand for travel, particularly along the A14, A45 and A43 and on roads in towns, some of which are already congested at peak times. To alleviate the effects of growth on the transport network it will be necessary to increase levels of modal shift away from the private car towards other forms of travel including public transport, cycling and walking. The Plan takes forward the requirements of the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan by supporting the introduction of effective and attractive sustainable transport options that will encourage lasting modal shift in North Northamptonshire in order to deliver the following targets by 2031:

- A reduction of 5% in single occupancy car journeys to work from the existing built up areas of the Growth and Market towns; and

- A reduction of 20% in single occupancy car journeys to work from new developments

6.4 These targets are considered to be challenging but realistic. New, large developments, in particular the Sustainable Urban Extensions provide the greatest scope for achieving modal shift because it is possible to design-in appropriate measures from

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the start. In contrast, it is much more difficult to achieve the same scale of change in existing areas, where a 5% target is considered more appropriate. In applying these targets to individual settlements and sites, account will be taken of local circumstances including existing levels of car use, the scale of development, the accessibility of the site and the viability of the development to sustain sustainable transport measures.

6.5 Reducing the need to travel and securing modal shift is dependent upon joint working between public and private sectors to design and implement an extensive range of measures in order to reduce the need to travel and, in particular, the need to travel by car.

6.6 In all matters of land use planning, priority will be given to sustainable means of transport with consideration given to user groups in accordance with the following user priority order: pedestrian – cyclist – public transport – private vehicle. Reducing design speeds on residential roads, where appropriate and economically viable can support sustainable modes of transport. Planning policies will contribute to securing modal shift by:

- Increasing the ‘self-sufficiency’ of the area and individual settlements by maximising opportunities to access employment, services and facilities as locally as possible;

- Ensuring that new developments are well connected to existing towns, services and facilities and that, where feasible, they contain an appropriate mix of land-uses;

- Improving travel options for public transport, cycling and walking; requiring development to be designed around easy access to these modes including the provision of new services and facilities and prioritised routes within existing urban areas;

- Improving the quality of parking in town centres, so it is convenient safe and secure, but where convenient and attractive alternatives to car use exist, or can be created managing parking supply at key destinations such as town centres and major retail and employment areas, in order to reduce congestion and level the playing field between the car and other travel options;

- Promoting the transfer of road based freight transport to rail and water where it is feasible to do so; and

- Promoting high speed electronic communications within all developments, allowing businesses to communicate effectively without travel and providing the opportunity for residents to work at home and more locally.

6.7 Parking standards for non-residential developments can be found within the Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2003) and for residential development within the Northamptonshire Place and Movement Guide (December 2008). The Northamptonshire Parking Strategy (January 2013) sets out that all developments will be assessed against these standards in order to determine the maximum parking requirement.

6.8 The funding and investment framework provided by the Plan will be critical to the successful delivery of a modal shift over its lifetime. The Sustainable Urban Extensions provide a major opportunity to forge new travel patterns and habits for new and existing communities. Alternatives to car use will need to be championed here and elsewhere through marketing, the use of technology such as smartcards and seed-funding or kick start funding of public transport, alongside the hard infrastructure provision.

Well Connected Towns, Villages & Neighbourhoods:

The connectivity framework

6.9 A key ingredient of successful places is their ‘connectivity’. This section deals with physical connectivity; the ability of new developments to be integrated with the existing/established built up area and ensuring that facilities can be easily accessed. Digital connectivity is also an important part of supporting economic growth and reducing the need to travel as set out in Policy 10. The Urban Structure Study\(^{60}\) (USS) examines the scope for greater sustainable movement through the towns. The way settlements are designed and laid out has a dramatic effect on travel, which in turn affects the climate. Cars and lorries generate about a third of Northamptonshire’s carbon dioxide (CO\(_2\)) emissions. Reducing the need to travel by car is best tackled through well-planned places where shops and services are located in the most accessible places and where streets, squares and open spaces are pleasant, safe and direct so that walking, cycling and public transport are an automatic choice.

6.10 Better connectivity to the town centres will support their economic performance; improved links through suburban areas will support more travel by foot, bike and public transport; and enhanced connectivity to the rural area will improve access to the countryside and strengthen the urban-rural links which are a vital part of North Northamptonshire’s character.

The USS indicates that places should:

- Be well connected to the centre and to the countryside;
- Include a mix of land uses; and
- Provide ‘Streets for All’, which are designed to be safe, pleasant, lively and characterful.

Connectivity across major roads

6.11 The USS and work undertaken by the Highways Agency\(^{61}\) has identified particular issues with development located alongside ring roads which often comprise dual carriageways with speed limits of 40-60 mph and very little frontage development. These routes can be intimidating to non-motorised users, creating a barrier to pedestrian movement. Furthermore, the design also limits opportunities for other modes of transport along them. In particular, these routes have sometimes been built without footways or provision for cycling.

6.12 It is imperative that opportunities are taken, particularly where major development is being planned along or beyond such roads, to re-address the balance between place and movement and enhance connectivity across such routes. There is a strong

\(^{60}\) http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1382

\(^{61}\) HA Felixstowe to the Midlands Route Strategy Evidence Report April 2014
preference for this to be achieved through the use of at-grade crossings along desire lines to ensure safer crossing points, combined with measures to improve the visual appearance of the road, reduce traffic speeds and enhance the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. These objectives will, however, need to be balanced against any demonstrable and detrimental impacts on the capacity of the road and the surrounding highway network and on the safety and technical and economic viability of solutions.

6.13 The USS also identifies the need to improve key radial routes, which provide the most direct access to the town centres. Improvements to these routes are likely to occur incrementally, as changes associated with development or local improvements are implemented. Corridor management plans can provide a mechanism for ensuring that incremental improvements form part of a comprehensive plan for the whole route, designed to improve pedestrian and cycle access and their overall quality and character through measures to lower speeds, encourage tree planting and provide active frontages. Local authorities may develop these plans in consultation with NCC.

6.14 Enhanced connectivity can also be achieved through areas of open space, which can provide pleasant routes through towns and villages. Routes are, however, often fragmented and opportunities to link these areas will be pursued, in accordance with policy 19. Where there is little scope to achieve this, other local streets should be improved with public realm enhancements to make them much greener. These “green streets” will help to link open green spaces with additional street tree and shrub planting and reduced vehicular speeds that create a safer environment with greater emphasis on pedestrian and cycle movement.

Policy 15 – Well-Connected Towns, Villages and Neighbourhoods

Connectivity will be strengthened within and around settlements through an emphasis on:

a) Improving access from the edge of towns to their centres by focusing activity and investment on the main radial routes and rebalancing design towards pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;

b) Creating safe, direct and convenient crossing points on those major roads that form a barrier to movement connectivity, where feasible;

c) Designing development to give priority to sustainable means of transport, including measures to contribute towards meeting the modal shift targets in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan;

d) Improving local integration by ensuring well-connected street networks, very limited use of cul-de-sacs (which should be short in length) and low design speeds for residential roads to allow cycling on street and pedestrian priority;

e) Extending the existing Green Infrastructure network into new development and linking existing open spaces together through the provision of either new Green Infrastructure or “Green Streets”.

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Connecting the Network of Settlements:

The role of public transport

6.15 Enhanced public transport provision, both in terms of frequency and speed is fundamental to alleviating the impacts of development in North Northamptonshire and strengthening the network of settlements. Improving public transport links across North Northamptonshire will assist in mitigating any adverse impacts of development upon traffic flows along the key transport corridors such as the A14, A45 and A43. The Northamptonshire Bus Strategy outlines that to accommodate the levels of growth set out in the Plan the number of passengers will need to increase by around 50% from a 2012 base figure. The Strategy identifies a range of inter urban services that should be enhanced which provide linkages between the Growth Towns and across the County and beyond together with minimum levels of provision at the Market Towns and within the rural area, proportionate to population.

Northamptonshire Arc Transit Network

6.16 The Northamptonshire Arc\textsuperscript{62} concept seeks to increase connections between Corby, Kettering, Rushden and Wellingborough to Northampton and Daventry. Detailed local studies and investigations co-ordinated by the County Council indicate that a new rapid-transit alternative is needed to help meet the forecast increase in demand for travel and manage its impact on the transport network.

6.17 The proposal is to develop and implement a strategy for a high quality Northamptonshire Arc Transit Network (NAT) utilising the latest technology (such as active demand management and real time information) to provide an attractive, practical, affordable and low carbon alternative to the private car not only for urban travel, but also for inter-urban journeys. This will link the urban spine of North Northamptonshire (the four Growth towns), with Northampton and Daventry.

6.18 The NAT will incorporate bus based rapid transit links, which will be introduced between the town centres, major employment sites and major new developments such as the Sustainable Urban Extensions where commercially feasible. This will help to transform internal connectivity and improve access to transport hubs and the strategic network. This is a long term objective and it is likely that the network would be implemented in phases within and beyond the period of this plan.

Local Highways improvements

6.19 Planned improvements to the A509 between the A45 at Wellingborough and A14 at Kettering will reduce congestion along this route and enhance transport links between the two towns. The proposals (known as the Isham bypass and Isham to Wellingborough improvement) will bypass the settlements of Isham and Great Harrowden and bring traffic relief to these villages. Funding towards the Isham bypass has been secured through the Northamptonshire Growth deal, and the scheme is scheduled for completion by 2019 which will support the delivery of the Wellingborough North SUE. Implementation of this scheme, together with the completed A43 Corby Link Road, will mean that there will be few settlements still lying on North Northamptonshire’s strategic road network. It is not therefore proposed to build further village bypasses or other roads in North Northamptonshire unless improvements are needed due to the proximity to major new development.

6.20 The provision of a link road between Rothwell North and the A6 bypass and the Wellingborough Eastern Distributor Road, providing a link between the A509 and the A45, will be brought forward as part of the sustainable urban extensions at those towns. Similarly, the A427 Weldon Relief Road will be facilitated by proposed development at Weldon Park, which forms part of the North-East Corby sustainable urban extension.

6.21 Funding has been secured for Phase 2 of the Corby Northern Orbital Road, which will serve development to the north east of Corby and facilitate development at Rockingham Enterprise Area as set out in Policy 27.

6.22 The provision of a distributor road to the east of Kettering, linking the A43 Northern Bypass and a new junction on the A14 (Weekley-Warkton Avenue) will be brought forward as part of the proposed Kettering East sustainable urban extension. As well as providing this connection (to the A43), enabling access to/from the north of the site it also provides substantial relief to the villages of Weekley and Warkton. Transport modelling indicates that this road will be required prior to the completion of 2,700 dwellings, in order to improve access to the sustainable urban extension and provide some traffic relief to Kettering town centre, villages to the east and the A14. Development proposals should safeguard the potential for this distributor road.

Multi modal interchanges

6.23 The Transportation Plan and its Bus and Rail Strategy daughter documents emphasise the importance of improving and developing bus interchanges in the Growth Towns and ensuring that the railway stations are improved and enhanced. Significant improvements are proposed at both Kettering and Wellingborough Rail Stations, which will act as focal points for major committed development around the stations and are important components to ensure the economic prosperity of North Northamptonshire. The development of multi-modal interchanges and increased access to stations by walking and cycling is supported as part of the wider package of station improvements.
Policy 16 – Connecting the Network of Settlements

Connections between the towns in the Northamptonshire Arc will be strengthened and links between the Market Towns and the train stations improved. This will be achieved through:

a) Priority being given to enhanced public transport provision, including the Northamptonshire Arc Transit Network and its phased implementation for the introduction of rapid transit links between the town centres, major employment sites and Sustainable Urban Extensions where feasible;

b) Improving and developing centrally located bus interchanges at Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden;

c) Developing multi modal interchanges at the railway stations to include facilities for service information, good access by foot and bicycle, provision for buses and taxis, and secure parking facilities; and

d) The provision of road infrastructure required to facilitate associated with development, in order to strengthen connections between settlements and/or, relieve existing communities from traffic, where appropriate including but not limited to the following improvements:

I. A43/A14 as part of the Kettering East sustainable urban extension;

II. Rothwell North/A6 as part of the Rothwell North sustainable urban extension;

III. A509/A45 Wellingborough Eastern Distributor Road as part of the Wellingborough East sustainable urban extension;

IV. Corby Northern Orbital Road (phase 2) as part of the Rockingham Enterprise Area; and

V. A427 Weldon Relief Road as part of the North East Corby sustainable urban extension.
North Northamptonshire’s Strategic Connections

6.24 Whilst improved self-reliance is a key aim of this Plan, North Northamptonshire will not meet all of the needs of local people. In particular, health and higher education facilities; retail and leisure services at surrounding large towns and cities; and employment opportunities will continue to draw people out of North Northamptonshire. Investment in strategic transport infrastructure to ensure that people and goods can move around is crucial to the future success and functioning of North Northamptonshire and its ability to attract and accommodate growth. North Northamptonshire’s key strategic connections include the A14, A45 and A43 corridors and the Midland Main Line railway.

6.25 North Northamptonshire needs to be accessible for inward investors and local businesses need to be able to compete both in national and international markets. Arrival gateways to the area, and particularly to the Growth Towns utilising employment opportunities around the Stations, will be critical in presenting a competitive image for the area. Additionally, strategic transport routes, both road and rail, need to provide a high quality service without congestion or overcrowding.

Improving strategic connections

6.26 Improvements to North Northamptonshire’s strategic connections will incorporate enhancements to increase the capacity of roads, including the creation of new roads, widening of existing roads and junction improvements alongside improvements to bus and rail services.

6.27 Extensive technical work has been undertaken with the County Council (the Local Highways Authority) who are responsible for the Primary Road network, and the Highways Agency (HA) who is responsible for the trunk road network, including A14, and A45 to determine the cumulative highway impacts of future developments, including any requirements for highways infrastructure to mitigate these impacts and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place for the timely delivery of these.

6.28 The Joint Planning Unit is working, closely with the County Council, Highways Agency, adjoining local authorities Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) and South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). This work will ensure consistency between the JCS and priority schemes identified in strategic economic plans, in order to support the funding and delivery of transport priorities required for the sustainable growth of North Northamptonshire within its wider context.

6.29 North Northamptonshire is dependent on investment beyond its boundaries to improve its connectivity. A key initiative for Northamptonshire and a major infrastructure gap in the national strategic road network is an ‘all moves’ interchange between the M1, M6 and A14 at Junction 19 of the M1. This is critical to the logistics sector and the national economy. Work on this scheme, known as ‘the M1 J19 Improvement’ commenced in January 2014 and is scheduled to be completed by Autumn 2016. The comprehensive upgrading of the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge (including the new Huntingdon southern bypass) is supported as part of the strengthening of the A14 as a trans-European network route that serves North Northamptonshire.

6.30 Policy 17 lists schemes included in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan (major Roads Strategy63). Many of these schemes are important to area connectivity, and

strengthening connections between places in North Northamptonshire and beyond. Widening of the A14 between junctions 7 and 9 of the A14 around Kettering is a key priority for North Northamptonshire. Work commenced in 2013 and is scheduled to be completed in 2015.

6.31 There is also a need for junction improvements at Junctions 9 and 10 of the A14. As part of the Kettering East development the provision of a new junction to the east of A14 junction 10 (known as Junction 10a) is required, which will replace the east facing slip roads at Junction 10 and support the future growth of Kettering. Funding has been awarded through the Governments Local Infrastructure Fund to support this improvement and there is a strong commitment from the Government and LEPs to ensure the scheme is delivered.

6.32 Improvements are needed to the A43 between Northampton and the A14 at Kettering and further northwards at Corby. Essential improvements to the A45 include improvements to the Nene Valley Way between the M1 and Wellingborough and a number of A45 junctions between the A509 Wilby Way and B663 at Raunds, notably Chowns Mill have been identified as priority junctions requiring improvement. These improvements form part of a wider package of improvements for the A43/A45 artery. The dualling of the A45 between Stanwick and Thrapston has been identified by local stakeholders as an important priority. The scheme is identified in the Northamptonshire Transportation Plan and is supported by the JPC and other stakeholders. Whilst the Highways Agency does not have any current proposals to improve this section of the A45 to dual carriageway standard it remains an important local priority for North Northamptonshire, and measures to secure funding will continue to be strongly supported.

The role of rail

6.33 The re-opening of Corby Station to provide a rail link to the town has been a significant part of the Corby growth and regeneration strategy. The Northamptonshire Rail Strategy identifies a range of priorities to enhance rail provision within North Northamptonshire including the electrification of the Midland Main Line which has commenced and is due to be completed by 2019, with improved north and south bound services. Enhanced north bound services from Corby include an improved service to Oakham, Melton Mowbray with more regular services throughout the day, and beyond to Derby and Nottingham.

6.34 The potential for provision of mainline services to new rail stations at Desborough and Irchester will be considered at a later date and the feasibility should be investigated. The Rail Strategy sets out that to succeed, any new station will need to demonstrate a positive business case, have a realistic chance of obtaining funding and have benefits to the local community which outweigh any localised disturbances in terms of additional road traffic generation or other negative impacts.

6.35 Whilst the proposed HS2 rail network does not pass through North Northamptonshire it will be important that current services on the Midland Main Line are maintained and potential opportunities to access HS2 routes from the Midland Main Line and exploit additional network capacity to reduce journey times and increase frequencies are supported.

Policy 17 - North Northamptonshire’s Strategic Connections

North Northamptonshire’s strategic connections with surrounding areas will be strengthened and enhanced to ensure that they are to the standard necessary to fulfil the role expected of them. New development that would prejudice their role will not be permitted.

The priorities for further work and investment within North Northamptonshire in the period to 2031 are:

a) Rail (Midland Main Line)

Upgrading of the rail infrastructure to increase capacity for passengers and rail freight, including:

i. Electrification and line speed improvements northbound, including from Corby, and southbound from all stations to London St Pancras International and Europe;

ii. Station improvements, the provision of additional capacity and improved frequency of services calling at Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough;

iii. Ensuring continuation of through services to Leicester, Derby and Nottingham and connecting with HS2 for onwards northbound travel; and

iv. Investigation of the longer term potential for railway stations at Irchester (to serve Irchester, Higham Ferrers and Rushden) and Desborough (to serve Desborough and Rothwell).

b) Bus Services

i. A sub-regional bus network with priorities for investment being Bedford to Market Harborough, linking the towns in the urban spinecore with the Midland Main Line stations; and Peterborough to Northampton providing a direct strategic link along the A605/A45 spine;

ii. Express coach services linking North Northamptonshire to the West Midlands and East Anglia along the A14; and

iii. Real Time information at key boarding stops to give passengers details as to the expected likely arrival times of buses.

c) Road Network

i. A14 Kettering Bypass improvements between junctions 7 and 9;

ii. A14 improvements at A509 junction 9 and A6 junction 10 including the provision of Junction 10a to serve the Kettering East SUE;

iii. A45 improvements including the A45/A6 Chowns Mill junction and dualling between Stanwick and Thrapston;

iv. A509 between A14 Kettering and A45 Wellingborough (including Isham Bypass and Isham to Wellingborough improvement); and

v. A43 Kettering to Northampton improvements.
HGV Parking

6.36 Lorry parking facilities need to be available to serve strategic routes and freight attractors within the Plan area to assist in achieving the efficient, safe and secure movement of freight and reduce crime related to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) parked in unsecure locations.

The need for HGV Parking

6.37 The Northamptonshire HGV Parking Study\textsuperscript{65} considered the need for HGV parking facilities to meet strategic needs and to address existing local needs associated with major freight generators, particularly in the logistics sector. The Study identified a substantial gap between the availability of formal lorry parking facilities and demand and concluded that up to three lorry parks are required in Northamptonshire. The A14, A45 and A43 strategic corridors provide the preferred locations for new, designated truck stops and at least one facility should be located on both the A14 and A45 routes, each with provision for a minimum of 200 lorries. Research undertaken as part of the Study also indicated that 75\% of drivers would be willing to travel 2km from these strategic corridors to find suitable parking facilities and that 25\% would not be willing to leave their intended route. Shorter distances will also reduce the negative impacts arising from HGV movements. It is important that access routes for HGVs avoid residential areas.

6.38 Subsequently, a detailed assessment of potential HGV parking sites along the A14 corridor has been undertaken and planning permission has been granted (2012) for a 24 hour, secure HGV parking facility with 204 spaces at junction 3 of the A14 near Rothwell. This provision will meet a significant proportion of the identified strategic need along the A14 corridor in North Northamptonshire.

Reviewing the need for HGV parking

6.39 The need for HGV parking should be regularly reviewed to ensure that contributory factors that can impact on need such as changes in the provision of HGV parking facilities, the level of freight transferred from road to rail and additional freight generators are fully understood. Planning applications for new facilities should be accompanied by robust assessments of need.

6.40 Strategic distribution businesses (logistics) within North Northamptonshire attract significant HGV traffic and generate a need for HGV parking facilities, both overnight and for drivers awaiting their collection or delivery time slot. Where new developments are likely to create a demand for such provision or exacerbate an existing problem the local planning authority may require suitable on-site provision or provide a financial contribution towards an appropriate facility.

\textsuperscript{65} \url{http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/HGV%20Parking%20Updated%20Feb%202009%20Final.pdf}
Ensuring safe and secure HGV provision

6.41 Lorry parks must include effective measures to create a safe and secure environment which restricts opportunities for crime to be committed. Proposals should incorporate ‘Secured by Design’ principles and applicants are encouraged to seek ‘Park Mark’ accreditation by Northamptonshire Police.

6.42 Where a new truck stop is proposed in open countryside the need for the facility must outweigh the need to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with national policies and this Plan. Should sites be granted planning permission in an open countryside location a restoration plan, which sets out how the site will be restored to its previous use in the event that the HGV parking operation ceases, will need to be agreed with the local planning authority.

Policy 18 - HGV Parking

A net increase in HGV parking will be sought to address an existing shortfall and to meet the needs arising from new employment development by:

a) Resisting the loss of lorry parks unless it can be demonstrated that:
   i. The facility is no longer required; or
   ii. An alternative use of the site is beneficial and replacement lorry parking will be provided in an appropriate location before the existing use ceases.

b) Ensuring that developments likely to lead to an associated demand for lorry parking which is not already provided for by an appropriate facility, contribute towards the provision of formal lorry parking facilities which could include lorry stacking areas within the proposed development or financial contributions towards extending or providing an appropriate facility.

c) Granting planning permission for HGV parking facilities where it can be demonstrated that the proposal:
   i. Is supported by robust, up-to-date evidence of need;
   ii. Is of a size that is viable and makes a significant contribution to meeting the identified need;
   iii. Is located within 52kms of the trunk road network or a major freight attractor and can be directly accessed avoiding existing residential areas;
   iv. Is designed and laid out to a high standard and incorporates ‘Secured by Design’ principles;
   v. Will provide a level of on-site facilities for lorry drivers appropriate to the size of the scheme, with any ancillary uses being of a type and scale appropriate to the main use of the site as a truck stop;
   vi. Incorporates suitable arrangements for the management and maintenance of the facility; and
   vii. Where located in the open countryside, incorporates a restoration plan agreed by the local planning authority for the after-use of the site to be...
implemented in the event of the cessation of the use of the site for HGV parking operations.
3. The Green and Blue Infrastructure Framework

7.1 The green and blue infrastructure network provides a range of ecosystem services and is vital in maintaining the rural/urban character of North Northamptonshire. The focus is on the strategic corridors of the Rivers Nene and Ise, and the Rockingham Forest area and includes the open countryside around urban areas, which is important to maintain distinct and separate settlements. In some instances there is limited connectivity to access the natural greenspace from the main towns and opportunities need to be taken to link urban parks and woodland into the wider countryside.

7.2 The network also provides opportunities to enhance tourism in North Northamptonshire, while ensuring that its most sensitive assets are protected. The Special Policy Areas of the Nene and Ise Valleys and Rockingham Forest will be important in stimulating sustainable economic growth through tourism and rural diversification.

7.3 The Special Policy areas will be a focus for promoting:
- Recreation and tourism
- Public access
- Environmental education
- Biodiversity
- Water management
- Climate change mitigation
- Green economic uses
- Sustainable land management.

Green Infrastructure

7.4 Green infrastructure (GI) is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits. For example GI supports healthier lifestyles, manages flood water, improves air quality and helps to mitigate the effects of climate change. Green infrastructure should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland.

7.5 Green infrastructure networks have been identified at both strategic (i.e. sub-regional) and local scales across Northamptonshire. The sub-regional network consists of a series of interlinked corridors which broadly follow the main river valleys and tributaries and extend beyond the boundary of North Northamptonshire. These corridors connect areas of particular natural heritage, greenspace, biodiversity or other environmental interest. The sub-regional corridors are priority areas for investment and enhancement.

7.6 The sub-regional GI network is complemented by local GI corridors. These cover a variety of land uses and provide opportunities for projects and investment at a smaller, more local scale. Increasing the range of uses within each local corridor will improve benefits at the community level. The local corridor locations are indicative: their alignment and extent can be defined further through more detailed studies, including Sustainable Urban Extension, master plans, Part 2 site specific Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.
Figure 28: Green Infrastructure Corridors

Sub-regional Corridors
1. Nene Valley (Northampton - Wansford)
2. Ise Valley
3. Jurassic Way
4. Willow Brook
5. Harlaxton Brook
6. Elton Park - (Peterborough Wheel Link)

Local Corridors
7a. Ecton - Wilby
7b. Rushden - Souldrop
8. Sywell Reservoir - Broughton
9a. Hocklery Lodge - Finedon
9b. Finedon - Little Addington
9c. Little Addington - Hargrave
10a. Rotwell (Triangular Lodge) - Wicksteed Park
10b. Wicksteed Park - Thrapston
10c. Thrapston - Bythorn
11. Top Lodge - Desborough
12a. Macmillan Way
12b. Stoke Albany - Little Oakley
13a. Boughton Park - Titchmarsh Wood
13b. Aschune - Clifton
14a. Geddington - Stanton
14b. Stanton - Deene Park
15a. Briggstock Country Park - Quostle
15b. Oundle - Great Gidding
16. Oundle Wood - Shire Hill Wood
17. Blatherwycke - Fotheringhay
18a. Greeton - Harrington (Jurassic Way)
18b. Wakerley Wood - Fineshade Wood
19b. King's Cliffe - Wansford
20. Welland Valley
7.7 The development proposed in North Northamptonshire presents an opportunity to contribute to the green infrastructure network. Natural England encourages the integration of green infrastructure at the outset of development so that the greatest benefits will be gained. Development located within the GI network will be expected to contribute towards its enhancement. The JPU and local planning authorities will liaise with adjoining authorities to ensure that green infrastructure corridors are harmonised and enhanced across administrative boundaries and recognised in the development of specific proposals.

7.8 The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies key green infrastructure projects planned or underway in North Northamptonshire. These projects are primarily a response to growth and development, which increase the number of visitors to nature reserves and other natural areas. Creating new green infrastructure is one way to mitigate this pressure. Where not managed appropriately, visitor pressure can damage the features that made a site special and attractive to visit in the first place. The projects will help to reduce recreational impacts in key sensitive locations, notably within the Upper Nene Valley Special Protection Area (SPA). Many also address local deficiencies in access to natural green space (see Policy 7). Projects will be delivered by a wide range of partners, who must be prepared to take ownership of and commit to taking forward specific projects.

7.9 The Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership is strengthening leadership on landscape and other environmental matters, and raising awareness of the services and benefits a healthy natural environment brings to economic, social and ecological wellbeing. The designation of the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area is helping to develop the next phase of environmental improvements to enhance and reconnect nature across the Nene Valley landscape.
Policy 19 – The Delivery of Green Infrastructure

The special mixed urban and rural character of North Northamptonshire will be maintained and enhanced through its green infrastructure assets. This will be achieved by:

a) Seeking a net gain in green infrastructure through:
   i. Establishing multi-functional greenspaces within the GI network;
   ii. Providing where opportunities exist, new habitats, facilities and routes to enhance assets and the linkages between them;
   iii. Supporting the strategic green infrastructure priorities of
       1. The Nene and Ise Valleys (Policy 20)
       2. The Rockingham Forest (Policy 21).

b) Safeguarding identified sub-regional green infrastructure corridors by:
   i. Not permitting development that compromises their integrity and therefore that of the overall green infrastructure network;
   ii. Using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and robustness;
   iii. Investing in enhancement and restoration where opportunities exist.

c) Contributing towards the enhancement or ongoing management of local green infrastructure corridors by:
   i. Prioritising green infrastructure investment in areas where net gains can be made to the range of functions, particularly those that improve access between the towns and their surrounding countryside and remedy local deficiencies in open space provision and quality.

Nene/Ise Valleys

7.10 The Nene and Ise Valleys are the green and blue threads linking North Northamptonshire’s urban centres with its countryside and containing many of its key environmental and green infrastructure assets. The Valleys include the settlements of:

- Wellingborough, Irthlingborough, Ringstead, Thraps ton and Oundle (Nene Valley);
- Desborough/Rothwell, Geddington, Kettering and Burton Latimer (Ise Valley)

7.11 This special policy area offers opportunities to use and enjoy the rivers and lakes, increase waterway-based tourism including provision of marinas, moorings and boat hire, strengthen biodiversity conservation and management, create new and improve existing green infrastructure, enhance connections between settlements and create a sense of place in and around the river valleys.

7.12 Rushden Lakes will form a major new green infrastructure resource, allowing the public to access and enjoy wildlife and other assets along the Nene Valley. The management proposals associated with the development will support the linking up via the North Northamptonshire Greenway (cycle and footway) of various established nature reserves along the Nene Valley, and through Wellingborough East and Chester Farm to Wellingborough railway station. It will also link to the adjacent Stanwick Lakes site, producing a total area under nature conservation management of about 500 hectares.
The Rushden Lakes development will also incorporate a visitor centre from which conservation activities will be based.

7.13 The Nene Valley and Ise Valleys have a diversity of attractions like historic mills, tourist attractions including Wicksteed Park, water based country parks, nature reserves and traditional market towns alongside larger towns of Kettering and Wellingborough. Some such as Stanwick Lakes and Oundle have become destinations in their own right. Others have the potential to be better appreciated and provide tourism opportunities.

7.14 The Nene Valley Strategic Plan\(^66\) identifies specific economic opportunities at each settlement in the Nene Valley. The riverside towns provide the main opportunities for tourism. The vision in the Strategic Plan is of a gradual transition from more formal activities in the urban centres to informal, dispersed activities in the rural area. The preparation of Town-River Plans for the urban areas (or inclusion of guidance within site specific Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans) to develop the potential of the towns as gateways to the river and the wider valleys could help to identify site opportunities and proposals to improve visual and physical linkages with the waterways, including floodplain re-naturalisation and de-culverting within the urban area.

7.15 Increased visitor pressure must be managed to conserve the area’s environmental assets particularly within and around the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA. Certain locations within the SPA are more easily accessible, particularly close to the urbanised areas. Some of these areas are able to support higher levels of visitors than other areas as they contain suitable infrastructure to support visitors, whilst ensuring that biodiversity is protected. Development within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA) is expected to take account of the natural environment early in the design process and that ecological connection through and around the development site to the wider habitat networks is delivered.

7.16 Environmental designations including the Special Protection Area, nature reserves and wildlife sites, determine the level of protection at some locations and the subsequent level of visitor access. A study undertaken to understand the impacts of visitor access in the SPA emphasises that within the SPA, visitor activity should be focussed on existing key sites such as Stanwick Lakes, and opportunities exist to enhance provision at other locations outside the SPA. Away from the ‘honeypots’ access should be more low key, with measures put in place to ensure access levels remain low, particularly at the most sensitive sites.

\(^{66}\) River Nene Regional Park- Nene Valley Strategic Plan Final Report October 2010

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**Policy 20 - The Nene and Ise Valleys**

The Nene and Ise Valleys will be priorities for investment in green infrastructure to strengthen biodiversity and landscape character, support a prosperous local economy, provide leisure and recreational opportunities and support the revitalisation of towns and the protection and enhancement of their surrounding countryside. This will be achieved by:

a) Developing stronger links, orientation and integration of the towns within the Nene Valley, or directly with the River Nene where possible, and ensuring enhanced connections to settlements close to the river;

b) Developing the tourism potential of Wellingborough, Thrapston and Oundle as gateways to the rivers and the wider valleys as focal points for the provision of waterside facilities, including provision of marinas, moorings, and boat hire;

c) Prioritising the protection and enhancement of existing visitor attractions and facilities with appropriate infrastructure to ensure that these remain the focal points for visitors, particularly within the SPA;

d) Supporting new green infrastructure and heritage based attractions of a type and scale that can be accommodated by existing or new infrastructure and which strike an appropriate balance between visitor numbers and biodiversity, landscape, local amenity and heritage interests;

e) Providing along the River Nene a focus for improved navigation and enhanced waterways;

f) Improving visual and physical linkages with the waterways, improving strategic recreation trails along the length of the Nene Valley and developing these where possible in the Ise Valley.

g) Identifying opportunities and proposals for floodplain and river renaturalisation, de-culverting within urban areas and river habitat improvements.

**Rockingham Forest**

7.17 To address the issue of woodland fragmentation across North Northamptonshire and to align with the many other benefits of increasing tree planting, the Rockingham Forest area has been identified as a special policy area. In addition the Rockingham Forest was selected by Defra as one of only five climate change projects nationally, to support the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and the government’s Carbon Plan to pilot a Carbon Sink Forestry Project. The Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and other key partners established the Rockingham Forest for Life (Forest for Life: Rockingham) project, which aims to:

- Protect, enhance and increase existing ancient woodland through linkages and buffering;
- Reinstate woodland on previously wooded sites;
- Capture carbon dioxide by creating 40 hectares of new woodland each year;
- Community engagement with local woodlands; and
- Reinvigorate traditional woodland activities and food from the forest.
7.18 The project encompasses the community, land owning and business sectors. It seeks to secure private sector investment to provide additional funding and encourage the planting of sites that would not otherwise come forward. To date, significant tree planting through the project has already taken place, with over 15,000-29,000 trees planted on 12.6 ha at two sites in the Rockingham Forest north of Kettering. The planting has used a mix of native trees to provide a range of environmental and landscape benefits. Alongside the creation of new woodland, the protection and buffering of ancient woodland will be important.

7.19 In addition to carbon capture, the establishment of new woodland will provide many other benefits associated with the creation of green infrastructure including reinforcing green infrastructure corridors, aid surface water management and improve landscape, urban and village settings. It also has the potential to play a major role in climate change adaption by increasing connectivity and enhancing existing and create new wildlife corridors.

7.20 The Rockingham Forest provides a range of tourism and recreational opportunities largely focussed around green infrastructure and heritage. The development of additional tourism facilities, including the provision of additional accommodation will need to be balanced with the need to protect and enhance environmental assets and ecosystem services as set out in policies 1-4 and infrastructure capacity. Resource opportunities from biofuels and renewables will have to be balanced with food production needs. Such land uses should be focused on lower grade agricultural land and incorporate opportunities to increase biodiversity—It will be important that new tree planting is appropriately sited and uses suitable species to ensure the successful enhancement of the forest.

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67 2013 15,000 trees were planted on 6.6 ha of woodland in Weekley Hall Wood, March 2014 14,000 trees on 6 ha in the Boughton Estate, west of Weekley Hall wood
Policy 21 - Rockingham Forest

The Rockingham Forest will be regenerated to increase carbon storage, strengthen biodiversity, landscape character and green infrastructure, support a prosperous rural economy and provide appropriate leisure and recreational opportunities. This will be achieved through:

a) 40ha a year of new tree planting appropriately sited and using suitable species secured through direct input of landowners, local communities and businesses, supported by funding mechanisms including development contributions;

b) Linking fragmented habitats and protecting and reinforcing ancient woodland, particularly in and around urban areas supported through landscaping associated with development proposals;

c) Supporting rural economic development in accordance with Policy 25, with a focus on woodland based activities including sustainable food and fuel production;

d) Protecting or enhancing tourism and recreation attractions and supporting new green infrastructure and heritage attractions of a type and scale that can be accommodated by existing or new infrastructure and which strike an appropriate balance between visitor numbers and biodiversity, landscape, local amenity and heritage interests;

e) Enhancing green links in accordance with Policy 19 to enable residents of towns and villages easy access to the forest on foot, horseback or bicycle.
4. Delivering Economic Prosperity

8.1 The plan aims to make North Northamptonshire more self-reliant by achieving a sustainable balance between local jobs and workers and a more prosperous and diverse economy. It does so by:

1. Planning for enough **jobs** to match the forecast growth in labour force plus an additional number in the southern area to reduce further reliance on out-commuting. This results in a challenging **minimum** target for 2931,100 net additional jobs alongside the strategic opportunity for 40,000 new homes over the period 2011-31;

2. Ensuring that the right amount and type of **employment land** is available in locations that balance the demands of the market with the capacity of infrastructure and the need to protect, and where possible enhance the environment. This includes
   a. **Safeguarding** existing and committed employment sites which are of the right quality and suitably located in relation to infrastructure and neighbouring uses. This will include safeguarding employment land allocations for a range of uses in support of a balanced economy;
   b. Providing for **additional sites** in sustainable locations, particularly to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses and **identified growth sectors**;

3. Supporting the enhancement of **skills** in the local workforce through improved opportunities for education and training to provide a more dynamic and flexible labour market and providing the infrastructure required to support skills delivery at all ages;

4. Promoting the provision of **infrastructure and services** needed to provide a competitive business environment, including transport and electronic communications infrastructure notably enhanced broadband provision (see Policies 10 and 25)

5. Promoting the regeneration of the **town centres** as a focus of employment provision (see Policy 12), with the permitted Rushden Lakes development providing additional retail and leisure jobs in the south of the area;

6. Promoting the diversification of the **rural economy**, in particular by supporting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages; the development of rural economic activities; and supporting farm diversification including the conversion of existing farm buildings and infrastructure for employment and other commercial developments such as tourism related development.

These themes are developed further below and in Policy 23 which deals with the spatial distribution of economic development.
**Jobs/worker balance**

8.2 The Plan aims to ensure that, as a minimum, North Northamptonshire delivers enough new jobs for the labour force arising from planned population growth, plus additional jobs in the southern area to help reduce levels of out-commuting.

8.3 The 2011 Census indicates that around 69% of the employed labour force living in North Northamptonshire also works in North Northamptonshire. This has fallen from 76% at the 2001 census, reflecting the fact that housing growth has outstripped employment growth, which has under-performed against ambitious jobs targets, in part due to the recession.

8.4 The employment background paper\(^{68}\) indicates that in 2011, over 18,000 more workers commuted out of North Northamptonshire, than commuted in, with the largest flows to Northampton. This is a significant pool of labour that could take up jobs closer to home within North Northamptonshire.

8.5 To achieve a better balance, between the projected labour force and employment opportunities within North Northamptonshire, it will be necessary to create a minimum of \(29,311,100\) net jobs across all sectors of the economy by 2031. This is a significant challenge when compared to the recent economic performance of the area, particularly in Wellingborough and Corby, which have lost jobs over a longer time period, particularly in the manufacturing sector. Achieving these job targets will require partnership working between the public and private sectors and close working with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership (NEP) and the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) to ensure that priorities are aligned and that barriers to delivery and measures to resolve these are identified and removed.

**Employment land**

8.6 A major part of the strategy for generating new and better jobs and creating a stronger and more sustainable economy, will be the provision of the right amount and type of employment land in locations that balance the demands of the market with the need to protect, conserve and where possible enhance North Northamptonshire’s environmental assets. ‘Employment land’ in this instance refers to those uses falling within the planning B use classes including offices (B1) manufacturing (B2) and warehousing and distribution (B8) known in this Plan as Logistics. Driven partly by population growth, a significant proportion of new jobs (at least 35%) are likely be generated in other areas of the economy, including retail, leisure and professional and public services. These are referred to as ‘non B jobs’.

8.7 North Northamptonshire has an over-supply of committed employment land\(^{69}\), particularly in the B1 sector\(^{70}\). Nevertheless, to provide choice and flexibility to support the delivery of employment, the Plan has identified a number of additional high quality strategic employment sites. An important constraint to economic growth is the lack of available sites to support the expansion of existing businesses. The provision of smaller parcels of land within larger, strategic sites can help to support the expansion of existing businesses, and their retention in North Northamptonshire. A number of B1 sites are located in key locations, notably around the railway stations at Kettering and Wellingborough, and within the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs). The delivery of

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\(^{68}\) Update to the evidence base for minimum jobs targets in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy- August 2014

\(^{69}\) Sites with planning permission or allocated in an adopted Local Plan.

\(^{70}\) As reported to 25th July 2013 JPC, Item 6 Appendix 2
B1 sites around the stations is a key priority of the Plan, and will be an important element of delivering high quality employment.

8.8 Existing employment sites also provide an important part of the employment land supply. Older employment areas provide opportunities to regenerate and improve the structure of settlements as well as retaining mixed use areas within towns allowing for journeys to work by foot or bicycle. The partner local planning authorities should periodically undertake employment land reviews to inform Part 2 Local Plans to ensure that where sites are safeguarded for employment use, there is a reasonable prospect of the site being brought forward for that use. Proposals for alternative uses should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

Sectoral strengths and opportunities

8.9 Extensive work has been undertaken to identify sectoral strengths that can be used to stimulate economic growth. Capitalising on these opportunities will be important to ensure that North Northamptonshire provides new, high quality jobs in sectors that are attractive to the market. It will be important that these opportunities are appropriately located (policies 24, 26 and 27 provide specific locational guidance), and consistent with the need to protect environmental assets and recognise infrastructure capacity. The evidence base has identified particular sectoral strengths and opportunities in:

- **Logistics**: Storage and distribution associated with B8 activities. These can include National and Regional distribution centres for ‘blue chip’ companies. B8 logistics can provide a significant amount of office floorspace, and deliver higher value employment through providing higher paid jobs such as managerial positions.

- **High performance technologies, particularly related to motorsport**: These include engineering, manufacturing, the application of lightweight materials and composites, testing, research and design, construction and electronics;

- **Renewable and low carbon energy and green technologies including wind, solar, biomass and other technologies, and associated research and development, food production and food production benefits**:

Skills

8.10 As well as the identification of priority sectors and sites, notably the redevelopment of Tresham campus at Wellingborough and sectors, the enhancement of skills in the workforce is crucial to attract inward investment and supporting the development of businesses. Opportunities for training schemes as part of new development will be encouraged, including initiatives to maximise local employment and training in the construction industry and to up-skill the logistics sector. Such initiatives are usually reliant on joined up working between a number of organisations in the identification and delivery of skills, training and recruitment programmes associated with development projects. Developer contributions and training and employment agreements will be encouraged to achieve this and, where possible, develop wider training infrastructure.
Policy 22 - Delivering Economic Prosperity

A stronger more sustainable economy that will deliver a minimum net increase of 2931,100 jobs will be sought through:

a) Ensuring that sufficient high quality sites are identified to support the delivery of the minimum job targets in Table 3 (see Policy 23), recognising opportunities provided by with emphasis on the priority sectors of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Green Technologies, High Performance Technologies and Logistics;

b) Prioritising the enhancement of existing employment sites and the regeneration of previously developed land;

c) Safeguarding existing employment sites, together with committed and allocated 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 and that an alternative use would:
   • Not be detrimental to the overall supply and quality of employment land within the district or to the mix of uses with the Sustainable Urban Extensions; and/or
   • Resolve existing conflicts between land uses;

d) Supporting proposals that encourage a co-ordinated approach to skills and training provision and promote sector specific training. Training and employment agreements will be used to facilitate increased opportunities for the local workforce;

e) Safeguarding and enhancing North Northamptonshire’s tourism and cultural assets and supporting proposals to expand the tourism industry in sustainable ways.

Distribution of Jobs

8.11 The job targets set out in Policy 23 are based on the size of the labour force arising from planned levels of housing. Additional jobs are identified for the southern area to reduce reliance on out-commuting.

8.12 Population growth and town centre regeneration will be important in bringing forward non B-class jobs for instance in public services to support a growing population. The permitted retail and leisure scheme at Rushden Lakes, which replaced a previous predominantly B1 development proposal, will deliver ‘non B’ jobs in leisure and support tourism potential within the southern area. The Sustainable Urban Extensions listed in the table below are key elements of the employment strategy for North Northamptonshire and can provide a range of employment. Technical studies including the Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment (SELA)

72 http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1234
an important issue affecting North Northamptonshire. This plan addresses this through the identification of additional strategic employment sites.

**Delivering a mix of employment**

8.13 Progress in delivering jobs will be monitored against an indicative sectoral split required to achieve a more balanced economy\(^73\). However, given the challenges that North Northamptonshire has faced in delivering economic growth, the plan does not seek to be overly prescriptive by sub-dividing employment targets into different use-classes or economic sectors. Instead it has identified sectors that are well placed to deliver economic growth in North Northamptonshire (see para 8.9) and a range of high quality strategic sites to help achieve this. Land supply analysis demonstrates that North Northamptonshire has a significant over supply of B1 land compared to market demand, and a requirement for additional B8 land has been identified within Kettering Borough. The Plan identifies strategic sites at A14 Junctions 9 and 10, to meet this shortfall, and recognises the important role of logistics to the economy.

8.14 The town centres, and committed sites around the railway stations are the preferred location for new office development followed by other areas with good transport connections. However, in view of the need to bring about economic growth as quickly as possible, certain types of business (such as research and development) may find more commercially attractive locations within the sustainable urban extensions or on other prominent strategic sites at the edge of towns. These will need to be in locations that are, or can be made, highly accessible by a range of modes of transport.

8.15 Quantifying future employment demand is not an exact science. To stimulate jobs growth and to ensure that enough land is identified to ensure balanced economic growth, this Plan identifies a number of high quality strategic employment sites, many of which already have planning permission that should be prioritised for inward investment and infrastructure provision and brought forward to support jobs growth in North Northamptonshire.

8.16 It is important to ensure that wherever possible, the scale and mix of development at these committed sites is brought forward in line with consented schemes and approved master plans to contribute towards the delivery of balanced employment across North Northamptonshire. Proposals to change the mix of employment uses will need to satisfy the policies of this plan and demonstrate that there is no reasonable prospect of the consented scale and mix of employment being brought forward. The use of Local Development Orders and other mechanisms to bring forward the delivery of these sites should be considered. The list of sites is not exhaustive and proposals that deliver jobs growth and economic prosperity will be positively considered subject to compliance with the plan. It will be important that the quantity and quality of existing and committed employment sites is regularly reviewed to ensure that a supply of high quality sites is maintained to deliver the minimum jobs targets and that previously developed land is put to beneficial use if no longer required for employment uses.

8.17 Where there is an identified shortfall of land against the employment targets set out in Policy 23, (having regard to the forecast provision of non B-class jobs), additional sites will be allocated through Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans, or this will be a material consideration in determining planning applications for employment development.

\(^{73}\) Based on Scenarios in the North Northamptonshire Employment Targets Study (RTP 2011)
Figure 29- Proposed and Committed Strategic Employment Sites and Mixed Use sites with employment
Policy 23 – Distribution of new Jobs

a) The quantity and quality of existing employment sites and allocations will be reviewed against the job creation targets set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Minimum net Job Growth (in all sectors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northamptonshire</td>
<td>57,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>6,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northamptonshire</td>
<td>2931,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Employment development of a scale and mix identified within existing commitments and approved master plans will be supported at the strategic sites set out in Figure 29. These sites will act as the focus for the provision of high quality employment in North Northamptonshire. The use of Local Development Orders and other innovative mechanisms to facilitate delivery of these sites will be supported.

c) The town centres and areas around the railway stations at the Growth Towns will be the preferred locations for new office development with additional office sites at areas with good public transport connections.

d) Where, taking account of the forecast growth in non-B class jobs, there is an identified shortfall in supply of deliverable sites to meet the minimum jobs targets, additional sites will be brought forward with priority given to sites within or adjoining the Growth Towns and be in locations that are capable of being accessed by a choice of means of transport.

e) Within the rural area, new employment of an appropriate scale and type will be supported consistent with Policy 25.

Logistics

The role of logistics in the North Northamptonshire economy

8.18 North Northamptonshire’s central location and excellent strategic road connections has made it a centre for the logistics (B8) industry with a substantial increase in the stock of buildings over the last 10 years. Technical studies and market analysis have identified that this sector remains strong and that failure to meet this demand in North Northamptonshire through the provision of suitable sites will lead to activity being displaced away from the area and opportunities to capture investment, unlock other uses and the potential for high quality investment will be lost. A number of logistics sites are committed in North Northamptonshire and identified as strategic employment sites on Figure 29.

8.19 This Plan recognises the opportunities provided by the logistics sector, notably its importance to the economy and creation of significant office based jobs (B1 sector) as
ancillary uses. The early delivery of B8 units on site can act as a catalyst for delivering smaller employment units (e.g. units for small and medium sized enterprises) on strategic sites. **Policy 24 sets a target of approximately 30% of the total floorspace on logistics sites to be provided for a mix of smaller employment units, subject to market demand and recognising the extent of ancillary uses within a logistics proposal. A delivery strategy should be provided to demonstrate how these additional employment uses will be brought forward alongside the main B8 element of the scheme.**

8.20 There are significant differences in the types of B8 development and subsequent operational requirements. Recent research\(^\text{74}\) has indicated that operators are increasingly requiring larger sites that are known as ‘Strategic distribution’ to serve the national warehouse and distribution market. For the purposes of this Plan, these are sites with individual units of over 100,000 square feet (9,300 square metres).

8.21 The benefits of accommodating this strong sector of the economy must be balanced against the impacts that B8 developments, in particular large scale strategic distribution, have in terms of their significant land-take, HGV movements on the strategic and local road network (with associated parking requirements and damage to roads), alongside the visual, landscape and amenity impacts.

**Securing the highest standards of logistics development**

8.22 Policy 24 seeks to address these issues by maximising and safeguarding the potential for rail freight and supporting the development of Freight Consolidation Centres, where part loads are consolidated and delivered to the target area resulting in fewer journeys\(^\text{75}\). The policy seeks to minimise the environmental impacts of logistics developments through sensitive design to reduce the impact on the landscape, townscape and wider setting and by achieving the highest possible standards of design and environmental performance. The use of green roofs, and the design and appearance of buildings can significantly reduce adverse impacts. Developments should contribute towards promoting and enhancing the wider green infrastructure network. There are considerable opportunities to integrate renewable energy generation, sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) and rainwater harvesting at design stage.

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\(^{74}\) Research for Lambert Smith Hampton *Industrial and Logistics Market 2014* identifies small units -10,000 sq ft (-929 sq m) medium 10,001-49,999 sq ft (929 – 4650 sq m) Mid Box 50,000 sq ft – 99,999 sq ft (4645-9,300 sq m) and large units/strategic distribution warehouses as 100,000 sq ft + (9300 sq m+).

\(^{75}\) The Northamptonshire Transportation Plan notes that research from Freight Consolidation Centres already in operation suggests that they can reduce journeys by about 80% and cut carbon emissions from freight by over 50%.
Policy 24 - Logistics

Proposals for logistics, including large scale strategic distribution will be supported where they facilitate the delivery of a mix of jobs and are of the highest viable standards of design and sustainability. Proposals will need to satisfy all of the following criteria:

a) Subject to market demand for such uses, a target of approximately 30% of the total site floorspace should be for a mix of smaller employment units. In applying this criterion consideration will be given to the level of ancillary accommodation integral to logistics uses (e.g. B1 floorspace);

b) Have good access to the strategic road network with priority given to the development of freight consolidation centres and sites which can be served by rail freight and operate as inter-modal terminals. Long term opportunities to provide facilities for transferring freight delivery to rail will be safeguarded;

c) Have good access to local labour supply and be accessible to the local workforce through public transport, walking and cycling;

d) Achieve the highest possible standards of design and environmental performance through maximising the use of sustainable design and construction techniques;

e) Be in locations which allow 24 hour operations with minimal environmental, community and landscape impact;

f) Provide sufficient infrastructure to mitigate highways impacts including the impact of additional HGV movements arising from the development;

g) Address the local operational requirements of HGV parking arising from the development or demonstrate that suitable adequate alternative accessible parking is available.

Rural Economic Development and Diversification

8.23 Whilst the urban-focused spatial development strategy in this Plan seeks to focus the majority of economic activity to the urban areas, primarily to the Growth towns, the rural areas have played, and will continue to play, an important role in North Northamptonshire’s economy. Providing sustainable new employment opportunities within the rural areas that respect its quality and character can increase self-reliance and help reduce the decline of traditional rural employment. The Market towns and larger villages provide the most sustainable locations for rural economic development. Opportunities for farm diversification and conversion of redundant buildings for employment and other commercial uses such as tourism uses will be supported and encouraged where appropriate. Locations within established rural communities or closely related to these will provide the optimum opportunities for sustainable rural businesses to flourish.

8.24 It is important that the necessary infrastructure required to support rural economic development is developed including enhanced broadband provision. Policy 25 seeks to ensure the economic sustainability of rural communities, whilst avoiding urbanisation through excessive levels of traffic, noise and light pollution or through thea significant adverse visual impact of large commercial buildings or open storage in the landscape. This is important in maintaining the attractive mixed rural/urban character of North Northamptonshire.
Priorities for the rural area

8.25 A range of businesses and operations require a rural location and in some instances may need to be located within the open countryside away from established communities, mostly due to their environmental impacts or functional requirements. Such uses may include:

- Development associated with agriculture/forestry, e.g. agricultural or forestry workers dwellings, storage/livestock barns;
- Development associated with existing/established rural businesses where expansion is compatible with the rural character;
- Renewable energy schemes (see Policy 26);
- Minerals extraction/waste disposal

8.26 Agriculture, horticulture and forestry play an important and varied role in supporting the rural economy, including the maintenance and management of the countryside and most valued landscapes. It is important that farmers are able to diversify into new agricultural and commercial ventures in order to ensure a farm’s viability and to maximise opportunities to strengthen the rural economy, whilst maintaining the character of the rural landscape.

8.27 The Nene Valley Strategic Plan\textsuperscript{76} sets out that in addition to farming, forestry and expenditure related to the waterways and natural reserves, there are other opportunities for economic activity related to the rural environment. These other ‘land based’ businesses such as niche food, craft and a small number of eco-tourism businesses also contribute to the visitor economy. The Nene Valley Plan considers that there is scope to expand this activity and sets out a range of activities that can be supported across North Northamptonshire.

Policy 25 - Rural Economic Development and Diversification

1. Opportunities to develop and diversify the rural economy that are of an appropriate scale for their location and respect the environmental quality and character of the rural area will be supported. Enhanced broadband provision to facilitate economic development within rural areas consistent with Policy 10 will be supported. Particular emphasis will be given towards encouraging:

   a) The development and diversification of agricultural and other land based businesses including locally sourced produce and increasing use of sustainable food production methods;
   b) The provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities, recognising that locations with access to local services and facilities by foot, cycle or public transport provide the greatest opportunity for sustainable rural development;
   c) Commercial opportunities related to food, craft and ecotourism, and Green Infrastructure projects;
   d) The enhancement of local supply networks, linking businesses and consumers, that support the shift to a low carbon economy and to support local rural producers and businesses;

\textsuperscript{76} Nene Valley Strategic Plan 2010 Section 7: A Living Countryside
2. **Farm diversification activities should seek to complement and support the ongoing viability of the existing agricultural/farm business. Where proposals involve the re-use of rural buildings, a mix of uses will be supported, including small scale business, tourism activities, tourist accommodation, and live work units.**

### Renewable and low carbon energy

8.28 Green Industries are a sectoral priority to support economic growth in North Northamptonshire and play an important role in securing resilience to climate change and long term energy security. The Government is committed to meeting the target for the UK to achieve 15% of its energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020\(^77\). It has set out a positive framework\(^78\) for low carbon and renewable energy development, where the technology is viable and where adverse environmental, economic and social impacts are addressed satisfactorily.

8.29 A key factor in North Northamptonshire becoming more self-reliant and resilient is ensuring that it generates a significant proportion of its own energy requirements from renewable sources. North Northamptonshire has delivered significant renewable energy provision in recent years, notably at Burton Wold wind farm near Kettering and Chelveston Energy Park in East Northamptonshire, alongside the recent development of a number of solar farms across the area.

### Renewable energy potential in North Northamptonshire

8.30 A Regional study\(^79\) has identified that on shore wind provides the largest potential renewable resource for North Northamptonshire with the greatest wind energy potential in East Northamptonshire and Kettering although, Heat pumps, solar PV and solar thermal also have significant potential across the area.

8.31 Kettering and East Northamptonshire are also identified as having notable potential for the generation of energy from plant biomass in particular from energy crops and agricultural arisings. There are also many sites which have the potential for small scale hydro power, particularly in East Northamptonshire. Although the combined potential for hydro power is relatively small, opportunities to exploit this potential are supported and should be considered where major new developments are planned nearby to these opportunities.

8.32 **Resource opportunities from biofuels and renewables will have to be balanced with food production needs. Such land-uses should avoid the use of the best and most versatile agricultural land and incorporate opportunities to increase biodiversity.**

### Energy Parks

8.33 The co-location of renewable and low carbon technologies in ‘Energy Park’ developments has the potential to strengthen the development of green industries in North Northamptonshire and support a sustainable and stable supply of energy.

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\(^77\) The EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) requires the UK to produce 15% of energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020.

\(^78\) The Government’s Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), paras 97 and 98 and Planning Practice Guidance

\(^79\) Low Carbon Energy Opportunities and Heat Mapping for Local Planning Areas across the East Midlands, July 2011
8.34 The potential for such developments is greatest in locations where energy generators are already in operation; the necessary infrastructure exists or can be provided; they are close to existing or proposed major users of energy; and where adverse impacts of development can be satisfactorily mitigated. The Kettering Energy Park is considered to be the main area of opportunity in this regard.

8.35 Kettering Borough Council has been proactive in contributing to national requirements for renewable energy, increasing the provision of energy from decentralised and renewable sources. The largest of these is at Burton Wold, an operational wind farm located at J10 of the A14. This site already has 19 wind turbines (ranging from 1.6MW to 2MW each) and planning consent for a solar photovoltaic farm, which will generate 19.5MW of power. There is an opportunity to continue to develop an Energy Park and decentralised energy network in this location to serve existing and planned development including the Kettering East SUE and complimentary high-tech employment and sustainable food production through the use of on-site renewable combined heat and power.

Community benefits

8.36 Community benefits such as energy efficiency improvements and the provision of enhanced television reception may be material in considering whether a proposal overcomes any residual harm. Other Community benefits may be offered by an applicant outside the planning system to ensure that there is some community-wide benefit from the development. They do not form a material consideration in the planning process and must not influence the decision on a planning application. It will be important to ensure that any offer is legally binding and that there is clear control over the funds for local benefit.

Factors to be considered in assessing proposals

8.37 The development of larger scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes can have a range of positive and negative effects on nearby communities. They could provide landowners with the opportunity for rural diversification, deliver local jobs and provide opportunities for enhanced community facilities and other benefits. Impacts will vary dependent on the scale and location of proposed development and the type of low carbon and renewable energy technology deployed.

8.38 When considering planning applications for low carbon and renewable energy, an assessment will need to be provided which takes account of possible impacts of the proposal. These can include those on landscape, topography, visual impact townscape, natural, historical assets and areas and nature conservation interests. Proposals should be designed and operated to the highest environmental standards to minimise impacts on the amenity of the area, in respect of visual intrusion, noise, dust, odour and traffic generation.

8.39 Landscape and visual impact assessments must consider the potential cumulative impact of the development. Cumulative landscape impact refers to the effects of a proposed development on the fabric, character and quality of the landscape and is concerned with the extent to which developments begin to collectively change the overall character and perception of a particular landscape.

8.40 If adverse impacts are identified and they are proven to be unavoidable, the proposal will be required to demonstrate that these have been minimised as far as possible. Where residual environmental effects remain after avoidance and minimisation, the
level of harm and extent to which adverse impacts remain will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Energy distribution infrastructure

8.41 Western Power Distribution is the distribution network operator for the East Midlands and are responsible for the distribution of electricity across North Northamptonshire. They have advised that there are no technical constraints to importing energy into North Northamptonshire but limited capacity exists to feed any excess of locally generated electricity into the grid. This is the main barrier to large scale expansion of renewable energy generating capacity.

8.42 Balancing supply and demand will be important in North Northamptonshire. This can be achieved through a mix of development and detailed design measures to ensure that necessary infrastructure is in place to link to a specific demand. Alternative solutions could be delivered through matching generation and demand locally or the use of ‘constraints agreements’ whereby energy generators can be temporarily excluded from the grid if capacity problems arise.

8.43 Should these solutions not prove acceptable, or the strategic improvements not be brought forward, it may not be possible to deliver significant renewable energy provision because generators would be unable to connect to the grid.

Decentralised energy networks

8.44 Decentralised energy involves the generation and distribution of energy closer to the locations where energy is consumed. By locating energy generation close to where the energy is used, decentralised energy networks offer the potential for waste heat to be captured and distributed to buildings or industrial processes which need it, therefore increasing the efficiency of the power generation.

8.45 District Heating, where heat is created and delivered to a network of buildings across a network of pipes can represent a more effective way of generating and delivering heat than the use of individual heating schemes in every building. There can be a central heat source or a variety of sources creating the heat to be distributed. This can include but is not limited to waste heat from industrial processes or heat from heat pumps. The East Midlands study identified Priority Areas for district heating where there was high existing heat demand, a significant heat demand from ‘anchor load’ sites and potential for future heat demand. Priority areas were identified in Kettering town centre and Corby Civic Hub.

8.46 Greater economies of scale can be achieved on larger developments which would make the initial outlay to incorporate local/decentralised energy networks a more feasible and viable possibility. There is also the opportunity for Renewable Heat Incentive payment to be received if biomass, heat pumps or other forms of renewable heat is used to generate the heat for the district heating network.
Policy 26 – Renewable and low carbon energy

Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported where it can be demonstrated that proposal meets all of the following criteria:

a) The most appropriate technology is selected for the site having regard to site characteristics and the Regional Renewable Energy Study;

b) The development links to a specific demand through a decentralised energy network or where this is not possible, the necessary infrastructure is provided to supply power to the National Grid;

c) The siting of development avoids substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset and its setting;

d) The landscape impact of the development is minimised and mitigated against;

e) The siting of development does not create a significant noise intrusion for existing, or proposed, residential dwellings;

f) The development includes a managed programme of measures to mitigate against any adverse impacts on the built and natural environment resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of any equipment/infrastructure;

g) The development does not create an overbearing cumulative noise or visual impact when considered in conjunction with other developments and permitted proposals within North Northamptonshire and adjoining local authority areas;

h) The development provides community benefits, where appropriate, including contributions to energy efficiency measures, which would outweigh any residual harm;

Provision will be made for the removal of apparatus and reinstatement of the site to an acceptable condition, should the scheme become redundant and/or at the end of the permitted period for time limited planning permissions.

Land at Burton Wold is identified as an area of opportunity for an Energy Park to build on the range of renewable energy technologies. The development will link the energy production to high tech employment opportunities, new development at East Kettering and strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14.

Proposals for the Energy Park should meet criteria a) to h) above and should also:

i. Be subject to a comprehensive masterplan;

ii. Make provision for on-site research facilities to facilitate development of local knowledge, expertise and research and development;

iii. Demonstrate how the proposal will contribute towards meeting the energy needs of existing and planned development, including East Kettering SUE, strategic development at Junction 10 of the A14 and employment uses associated with the site;

iv. Retain and enhance on-site biodiversity, including the creation of ecological corridors and enhancement of existing features and safeguarding of the Cranford St John SSSI;
v. *Create a model for zero carbon energy through the installation of exemplary energy efficiency standards in buildings which use energy produced on-site in their operation;*

vi. *Be of a high quality design to mitigate landscape impact.*

**Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area**

8.47 The Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area lies on the north eastern edge of Corby adjacent to the Priors Hall (North East Corby) Sustainable Urban Extension. The 300 ha area straddles the administrative boundaries of Corby and East Northamptonshire councils. Despite the proximity of urban Corby and the surrounding settlements of Gretton, Weldon and Deene, the land is distinct from its surroundings, due to the large scale infrastructure, buildings and road network.

8.48 The significant potential of the site was recognised in a number of technical studies and was taken forward through the Rockingham Development Framework (RDF) which has been endorsed by Corby and East Northamptonshire Councils and identified significant employment potential in the period to 2031 and beyond. It is considered that the delivery of the site is a long term opportunity that will be delivered during and beyond the plan period and consequently this Plan is not reliant on the delivery of the site to meet its minimum jobs targets.

8.49 Policy 27 takes forward the key principles established in the RDF. Corby Borough Council sought for the site to be recognised as an Enterprise Zone, and although this application was unsuccessful it is considered that the site should be promoted as an Enterprise Area in a North Northamptonshire context. Whilst there are a number of extant planning permissions within the site area, the site should be a focus for high performance technologies and research and development within and beyond the plan period. Corby Borough and East Northamptonshire Councils are considering *the use of a Local Development Order and other innovative mechanisms to facilitate delivery, whether to progress a Local Development Order (LDO) for the site.*

8.50 The previous heavy industrial land uses of most of the Enterprise Area have left large areas where ground conditions in the form of made ground and contamination will constrain detailed development proposals. These local environmental issues will need to be resolved as development proposals are brought forward in accordance with the requirements of Policy 6. The Enterprise Area also contains a variety of protected species and proposals will need to fully consider potential impact in accordance with relevant legislation and Policy 4.

8.51 There is high quality landscape to the north of the Enterprise Area and designated heritage assets at Kirby Hall to the east of the eastern boundary. Applicants will be required to provide appropriate mitigation measures, in accordance with the relevant policies to protect and enhance these assets and ensure high quality developments.

8.52 The Willow Brook runs west to east through the Enterprise area, and separates the northern from the southern sides. The impact of the proposals will be particularly pronounced for vehicle and pedestrian movements through the site north-south, and a pedestrian/cycle crossing route will need to be provided.

8.53 Large scale water attenuation features, possibly focussed along the Willow Brook close to the lowest point of the site are needed to accept and intercept site run-off. Whilst the location and combination of these features fits with a green corridor running along the alignment of Willow Brook, the land-take and the topography of the corridor...
will require engineering. It is critical to maximise opportunities for improving the quality of the Willow Brook, to fulfil the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

8.54 Good walking and cycling connections to the development area that link it to Priors Hall and the Town Centre will be important. The Willow Brook, links the Gretton Brook via a series of green infrastructure strips, and establishing a strong green infrastructure corridor will act as a natural habitat, whilst forming a pedestrian and cycling spine through the development and create a route that links Corby town centre and Priors Hall to the development. Careful design of this corridor will be required to ensure that the route is perceived as safe for pedestrians and cyclists and is well used.

8.55 It will be important that development is phased and focused in certain areas of the Enterprise Area, together with provision of appropriate temporary uses to build and maintain development momentum. Whilst the site has significant potential in the short, medium and long term it is important that development is phased in relation to the provision of on and off site infrastructure and mitigation of contaminated land constraints. The full development of the site will rely on the completion of the Northern Orbital Route, to allow for appropriate access to the whole of the Enterprise Area. The design criteria for this route should be reviewed, as there are few existing plot access points other than main roundabout junctions planned. Road infrastructure off-site is currently not able to accommodate additional levels of traffic and would have to be improved in order for large scale development to be accommodated.

Policy 27 – Rockingham Enterprise Area

The Rockingham Enterprise Area identified on the policies map will be a focus for high performance technologies and research and development within and beyond the plan period. Development proposals must include a land remediation strategy for the decontamination of the site and should demonstrate how, subject to viability, the proposal will contribute towards common infrastructure such as phase 2 of the Northern Orbital Road. Development proposals will be supported where they will help to deliver a comprehensive scheme including:

a) The creation of a motor hub immediately adjacent to the motor racing circuit and close to the central boulevard through priority being given to proposals for B1 uses associated with motorsports and automotive industries and the research and development of motorsports and automotive related technologies within this part of the site;

b) The location of new B8 development within the site south of Willow Brook, where larger scale buildings will benefit from good access in a less landscape sensitive location;

c) Creation of a distinctive spine or central boulevard to the development along the route of the Northern Orbital route;

d) The core of the Development retaining a strong focus around Rockingham Motor Sports, with high quality internal public realm and main development frontages facing onto the main routes including the Northern Orbital Route, that create a strong and identifiable image for the area;

e) The establishment of a strong green infrastructure corridor along the Willow Brook, which links to the Gretton Brook via a series of green infrastructure strips. The corridor will act as a natural habitat, whilst at the same time forming the pedestrian and cycling spine through the development, creating a route that links Corby town
centre and Priors Hall with development that includes green businesses and technologies;
f) A landscape/green infrastructure corridor along the Gretton Brook which provides an opportunity for wildlife connections into the plantation as well as along the stream course itself;
g) Provision of a small local centre within the site to provide small scale service or convenience shopping facilities to cater for employees within the area;
h) Not increasing the visual impact of the existing built structures.
5. Delivering Homes

9.1 The NPPF emphasises that planning authorities should plan to boost significantly the supply of housing. It requires an evidence-based approach to identifying and meeting the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with the policies in the NPPF.

9.2 The North Northamptonshire Housing Market Area (HMA) has accommodated significant new housing in the past, in part due to the policy driven growth agenda promoted through the former Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy. Despite the recession, around 19,000 new homes were built between 2001 and 2013. The dwelling stock in the HMA grew by 13.3% between the 2001 and 2011 censuses, compared to 8.3% for England. The vision is for the area to maintain this momentum of growth, with well managed sustainable development delivered, in large part, through Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) at the main towns (see Policy 29).

9.3 DCLG household projections take account of past rates of growth and provide the starting point in considering how much housing is needed to satisfy demands (both locally generated and from inward migration) over the period to 2031. An extension of the latest DCLG (2011 based) interim household projections suggests that, if trends continue, there will be an additional 31,000 households in the HMA between 2011 and 2031. However, these official projections are likely to reflect the impact of the recession and other factors in suppressing rates of household formation and may also underestimate levels of in-migration to Corby. Demographic modelling, applying adjustments for these factors, gives a higher projection of 33,850 additional households in the period 2011-31.

9.4 Assuming that around 3% of the dwelling stock is vacant at any point in time, the adjusted household projections give rise to a need for 34,900 net additional homes in the HMA over the period 2011-31, which has been rounded up to a plan requirement of 35,000 dwellings. This represents an ambitious but realistic scale of housing delivery, which aligns with an equally ambitious employment strategy to deliver a minimum 28,600 jobs in the HMA (see Policy 22). It is more than twice the amount of housing required by natural change in the existing population.

9.5 Delivering this scale of housing growth will maintain North Northamptonshire as a nationally important growth area and a necessary focal point for infrastructure and economic investment. It complements the plans of neighbouring authorities, who are all intending to meet their own objectively assessed housing requirements and in some cases are, like North Northamptonshire, catering for significant in-migration.

9.6 The apportionment of this HMA total between the districts is set out in Policy 28. The local planning authorities will maintain a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land against the requirement for each 10 year period, with appropriate buffers as required by the NPPF.

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80 North Northamptonshire AMR 2013 records 18,939 completions 2001-13
81 Growth in dwelling stock between 2001 and 2011 censuses: Kettering 16.3%, Corby 15.5%, East Northamptonshire 14.6%, Wellingborough 7% (ONS)
82 Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR) 2013
83 ONS Live Table 615, based on Council Tax records, indicates that 2.85% of dwellings in the HMA are vacant
84 CCHPR zero net migration projection is for 15,100 additional households 2011-31
9.7 In addition to these objectively assessed housing needs, the plan incorporates a strategic opportunity for a further 5,000 dwellings at Corby, as the town works towards doubling its population to support ongoing regeneration. This would increase the HMA total to 40,000 dwellings, over 30% more than were delivered in the previous 20 years. Demographic modelling suggests that this is achievable if the town continues to attract levels of inward migration significantly in excess of DCLG projections. The Plan provides the conditions for this strategic opportunity to be realised, including the allocation of land for an additional SUE at West Corby, supporting regeneration of the town centre and development of major new employment, and ensuring that infrastructure plans accommodate the full growth ambition for the town.

9.8 Figure 30 shows the trajectories required to meet the objectively assessed housing needs of the HMA and also the strategic opportunity for additional growth at Corby. Both trajectories assume that completions will rise steadily until around 2021 as the economy and housing market recover from the recession, before levelling out at a consistent high rate of output as the SUEs are built-out. A faster recovery from the recession will be supported by a positive approach from the planning authorities in line with Policy 1. Housing commitments, particularly at the SUEs, would allow for this accelerated delivery. However, it is important that, as well as being aspirational, the plan is realistic. The trajectory shown in Figure 30 is a realistic basis for planning for housing and associated infrastructure as the economy recovers.

Figure 30: North Northamptonshire Housing Trajectory

9.9 The minimum housing requirements represent an increase on the 2011 housing stock of 35% for Corby Borough (52% if the identified strategic opportunity is delivered); 24% for East Northamptonshire District (including 700 dwellings forming part of the Priors Hall SUE at Corby); 25% for Kettering Borough and 21% for the Borough of Wellingborough. The distribution of growth to individual settlements is addressed in Policy 29.
9.10 The housing requirements in Policy 28 assume significantly higher levels of in-
migration into Corby than the adjusted household projections suggest. Some of this
enhanced growth will arise from demand that would otherwise be directed at Kettering
Borough, resulting in a lower than projected rate of growth in that Borough. East
Northamptonshire and Wellingborough will both accommodate the housing
requirements arising from their adjusted household projections to 2031.

Policy 28 – Housing Requirements

The local planning authorities will each maintain a rolling supply of deliverable sites to
provide 5 years’ worth of housing (plus a buffer as required by national policy) and will
identify developable sites or broad locations of growth for the rest of the plan period,
against the requirements set out below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 – Share of objectively assessed needs in the Housing Market Area</th>
<th>Net additional dwellings 2011-21</th>
<th>Net additional dwellings 2021-31</th>
<th>Net additional dwellings 2011-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby Borough &lt;sup&gt;85&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4,700</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>9,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Opportunity</td>
<td>(6,100)</td>
<td>(8,100)</td>
<td>(14,200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northamptonshire District</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>8,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering Borough</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>10,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough of Wellingborough</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Northamptonshire</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(16,400)</td>
<td>(23,600)</td>
<td>(40,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The planning authorities will work proactively with applicants to bring forward sites to
meet these identified housing requirements in line with the spatial strategy set out in
Policy 10 and to realise the identified strategic opportunity for additional development
at the Growth Town of Corby.

<sup>85</sup> The figures for Corby include 700 dwellings from the Priors Hall Sustainable Urban Extension that extend into East Northamptonshire District
The Distribution of New Homes

9.11 The distribution of the housing requirements between settlements is set out in Policy 29 and Table 5. This reflects their role in the settlement hierarchy (Table 1) and identified opportunities and constraints (see Background Paper on the Distribution of Housing, NNJPU 2014). Part 2 Local Plans and/or Neighbourhood Plans will identify sites to deliver the housing requirements for the Growth Towns, Market Towns and named Villages set out in Table 5. These plans may assess higher levels of housing provision at individual settlements where this meets identified local needs and aspirations or, in the case of Growth Towns and Market Towns, would meet a shortfall in deliverable sites at another settlement within the same plan area (district or, in the case of East Northamptonshire, the Four Towns and RNOT areas).

9.12 The distribution of the housing requirements set out in Policy 29 and Table 5 continues the urban-focussed approach from the 2008 CSS, with the four Growth Towns defined as the most sustainable locations for development in each district, followed by the Market Towns. Figure 32 shows that, compared to the existing pattern of housing, the distribution of the strategic opportunity housing numbers seeks to strengthen the role of the Growth Towns and Market Towns.

Figure 32: Distribution of new housing 2011-31 compared to recent pattern of development (2001-11)

9.13 Figure 33 shows the planned sources of housing to deliver the housing requirements set out in Policies 28 and 29.
9.14 In accordance with Policy 11, high priority will be given to the reuse of suitable previously developed (‘brown-field’) sites within the Growth Towns and Market Towns, particularly where these can be served by public transport. Development of these sites should contribute to the delivery of the ‘place-principles’ set out in Table 2.

9.15 However, the supply of suitable previously developed land is limited compared to the identified housing requirements. The delivery of the plan is therefore largely reliant upon the timely delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) and other strategic housing sites (these are defined as including at least 500 dwellings) shown in Figure 34. The importance of the SUEs to the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire is explained further at paragraphs 5.9 to 5.10.

9.16 With the exception of the Corby West SUE and the Rushden East SUE (see paragraph 5.9), all of the sites shown on Figure 34 are committed through planning permissions or resolutions to grant planning permission subject to the completion of necessary legal agreements. The boundaries shown for committed sites are the planning application boundaries. The extent of built development may be less, as at Wellingborough North where only the initial phases of the development to the West of the A509 are expected to come forward within the plan period. Similarly, the broad location for the Rushden East SUE is an area of search which will be refined through master planning to define the extent of the development.
Sustainable Urban Extensions and other strategic (500+ dwellings) housing sites
9.17 In additional to the strategic sites shown in Figure 34, a site including 700 dwellings at
Irthlingborough West is being promoted in line with the policy provisions in the previous
CSS, which proposed a sustainable urban extension at the town. The site is the subject
of a long-standing planning application, held up by issues arising from the history of
mining beneath the site.

9.18 The planning authorities will work with landowners, developers and other parties to
overcome any constraints to delivery of the SUEs and other strategic sites shown in
Figure 34. Progress will be monitored through the North Northamptonshire Authorities
nnual Monitoring Report. If the SUEs and strategic sites are not developed quickly
enough to maintain a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land against the
requirements set out in Policy 28, the planning authorities will:

a. Identify additional sources of housing\textsuperscript{86}, with the priority being the Growth Town
followed, where appropriate by the Market Towns. Additional sites should make
appropriate contributions to infrastructure and help to deliver the place-principles
set out in Table 2;

b. Consider using compulsory purchase powers or de-allocating sites/ not renewing
planning permissions where the failure to develop is due to a landowner or
developer being unwilling to progress despite the scheme offering a competitive
rate of return.

9.19 In addition to the strategy of focusing development at the Growth Towns, followed by
the Market Towns, the Joint Core Strategy supports development to meet local needs
and aspirations in the rural areas. This will be evaluated locally through Part 2 Local
Plans and Neighbourhood Plans. However, these are not comprehensive in their

\textsuperscript{86} The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides the evidence base for this
coverage and it is necessary for the JCS to provide a strategic steer on the contribution that the rural areas will make to the supply of housing in North Northamptonshire. Table 5 does this by identifying the number of new homes that will be delivered if committed sites are built and if a supply of housing on ‘windfall’ sites, such as small scale infill sites within villages and the conversion of rural buildings, continues at the same level as seen in recent years. In the absence of more detailed local information, this is the baseline level of growth that should be planned for in the rural areas of each district/borough to contribute to meeting locally arising needs. It provides a starting point for local assessments through Part 2 Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, which cumulatively may result in higher levels of growth coming forward in the rural areas.

9.20 **Part 2** Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will identify the most sustainable locations for accommodating the rural housing requirement in Table 5 and may test higher levels of growth to address local needs and opportunities. A useful reference point is the proportionate share of the rural housing requirement that a village could expect, based on its population at the 2011 Census (see Background Paper on the Distribution of Housing). The distribution of housing between villages will respond to local circumstances and needs and ensure that housing is located where it will enhance the vitality of rural communities. Isolated homes in the countryside will be resisted unless there are special circumstances as set out in the NPPF, including the essential; need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work.

9.21 Based on evidence of local needs\(^{87}\), Table 5 sets out housing requirements for the four largest villages of Earls Barton, Finedon, Irchester and Wollaston, where the scale of locally arising housing need will be of strategic significance over the plan period (see paragraph 4.14). Additional housing development above the requirements identified in Table 5, other than small scale infilling in accordance with Policy 11 or rural exceptions in accordance with policy 13, will be resisted unless agreed through the Part 2 Local Plan or Neighbourhood Plans.

9.23 The Rural Exceptions approach set out in Policy 13 provides scope for further rural housing to meet specific local needs. The plan also recognises a strategic opportunity for an exemplar sustainable new village community to provide additional homes, jobs and services in the rural north at Deenethorpe Airfield. This is to be explored against the criteria set out in Policy 14. If considered acceptable, the new village would be treated as a strategic opportunity over and above the minimum housing requirements for East Northamptonshire.

**Policy 29 – Distribution of New Homes**

*New housing will be accommodated in line with the spatial strategy set out in Policy 11, with a strong focus at the Growth Towns as the most sustainable locations for development, followed by the Market Towns. Provision will be made for new housing as set out in Table 5.*

*The priority is the re-use of suitable previously developed land and buildings in the Growth Towns and the Market Towns. Further development requirements will be focused on the delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions and other strategic housing sites identified in Figure 34.*

\(^{87}\) Provide reference for rural housing assessment
The planning authorities will work proactively with landowners, developers and other partners to ensure the timely delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions and other strategic housing sites shown in Figure 34. Progress will be monitored in the North Northamptonshire Authorities’ Monitoring Report. Where necessary, the local planning authority will identify additional sources of housing at the Growth Towns, followed by the Market Towns in order to maintain a deliverable 5 year supply of housing sites for the district/borough.

The Strategic Opportunity identified in Policy 28 for an additional 5,000 dwellings at Corby will only be delivered through the successful implementation of the Sustainable Urban Extensions at that town. It is not transferable to other settlements.

Other than small scale infilling (Policy 11) or rural exceptions schemes (Policy_13), levels of housing development in excess of the identified requirements for the named Villages and Rural Areas will only be permitted where tested and supported through Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood plans. These plans should also identify the phasing of individual housing sites to ensure that development opportunities are not exhausted early in the plan period.
### Table 5 – Housing delivery in named settlements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>Housing Requirement (2011-31)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corby Borough</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corby Borough</td>
<td>14,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for assessing 5 year supply 9,200)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Town</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>13,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for assessing 5 year supply 8,290)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New village</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Stanion</td>
<td>790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural housing</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Northamptonshire Total</strong></td>
<td>8,400</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Town</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rushden</td>
<td>3,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market Towns</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higham Ferrers</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irthlingborough</td>
<td>1,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raunds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrapston</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oundle</td>
<td>645</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rural housing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kettering Total</strong></td>
<td>10,400</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Town</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>5,340</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Market Towns</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Latimer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desborough</td>
<td>1,590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rothwell</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rural housing</strong></td>
<td>700</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wellingborough Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Town</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>5,750</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Villages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earls Barton</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finedon</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irchester</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wollaston</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural housing (outside the four named Villages)</strong></td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Opportunity</strong></td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(for assessing 5 year supply 35,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing Mix and Tenure

TO FOLLOW

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

9.32 It is important to provide for the housing needs of a range of specific groups, including gypsies, travellers and travelling show people. The National Planning Policy for Travellers Sites (March 2012) requires Local Planning Authorities to plan positively for the needs of travellers, to robustly assess needs and to identify criteria to guide land supply where there is an identified need.

The need for accommodation

9.33 The 2011 Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) updates the 2008 assessment. The Update considered a range of Gypsy and Traveller groups in North Northamptonshire including English Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers and Travelling Show People across a range of tenure types. The study quantifies the accommodation and housing related support needs of Gypsies and Travellers in North Northamptonshire for the period 2012-2022. There is an overall requirement over the next ten years of some 30 residential pitches (in addition to new ones already planned) 4 transit pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 6 plots for Travelling Showpeople, with a significant proportion of need identified in Kettering Borough. The individual Districts will positively bring forward and allocate sites in Part 2 Local Plans, where necessary to accommodate the identified need, and support the delivery of private site provision using the criteria in Policy 31.

9.34 The priority in North Northamptonshire should be to bring forward residential pitches in the short term. If transit pitches are provided before the shortfall in residential pitches is met, there is a risk that they will effectively be used as permanent/residential sites with all the ensuing management issues that would arise. Resources should be focused on meeting the residential pitch requirements and therefore it is likely that the provision of transit pitches will be met in the longer term, to facilitate the early delivery of residential pitches.

9.35 On-going monitoring of site provision and vacant pitches should be undertaken by the Local Planning Authorities alongside discussions with Gypsies and Travellers to ensure that any additional need that may arise over the plan period is identified and can be taken into account when needs assessments are updated, and planning applications are determined.

Locational requirements for new sites

9.36 When considering the locations for new sites the health and safety implications of a new site’s location should be considering in finding a balance between offering sites in good locations, that do not have a significant negative impact on the settled community and the additional land costs this would entail. The settled community and neighbouring potential gypsy and traveller sites should also be involved in the consultation from an early stage. There may be scope for expanding existing sites to

meet some of the need; however, the preference is for smaller sites, which tend to be easier to manage.

9.37 All sites should be reasonably accessible to services and facilities. A key consideration for the location of transit sites is access to the primary road network. Consideration will be given to the identification of sites which are suitable for mixed residential and business use in recognition of the benefits that such sites offer in terms of supporting traditional lifestyles and reducing the need for travel to work journeys.

Policy 31- Gypsies and travellers and travelling show people

Local Planning Authorities will protect existing lawful sites, plots and pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. The following additional provision will be made for accommodation for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the period up to 2022:

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Residential pitches</th>
<th>Transit pitches</th>
<th>Travelling Showpeople plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northamptonshire</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total NN</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This figure is the number required following the delivery of the 7 pitches at the Laurels, Desborough

New site allocations and applications for planning permission should satisfy all of the following criteria:

a) the applicant can demonstrate that the site is required to meet identified need in accordance with the most up to date North Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment or an impartial needs assessment based on a standard agreed methodology;
b) the site, or the cumulative impact of the site, in combination with existing or planned sites, will not have an unacceptable impact on local infrastructure;
c) the site has good access to community services by non-car modes;
d) the site provides a suitable level of residential amenity for the proposed residents;
e) the site is served (or can be served) by an adequate water supply and appropriate means of sewage disposal;
f) there is adequate space for operational needs including the parking, turning and servicing of vehicles;
g) the health and well-being of occupants is not put at risk including through unsafe access to the site, poor air quality and unacceptable noise or unacceptable flood risk and contaminated land;
h) where sites are proposed in rural or semi-rural settings the scale does not dominate the nearest settled community;
i) the proposed development does not have a significant adverse impact on the character of the landscape and takes account of the Landscape Character Assessment of the area. Appropriate landscaping and boundaries shall be provided to mitigate impact.
C. Monitoring & Implementation Framework

10.1 This Plan and the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan are based on robust evidence of the objectively assessed needs for housing, employment and other development over the period to 2031 and the required improvements to infrastructure and services. The Plan provides a clear framework for development in order that investment and action can be co-ordinated and geared to efficient and effective delivery. Its implementation will require concerted action by a range of organisations. These include parties from the public sector including the Borough and District Councils, Northamptonshire County Council, the relevant Local Enterprise Partnerships, departments and agencies of Central Government (for example the Highways Agency) in addition to developers and businesses in the private sector. It is only by working together in a co-ordinated way that the vision for the area can be delivered.

10.2 The development outlined in this Plan will generate infrastructure requirements whilst also increasing pressure on existing infrastructure and services, some of which is already at or near to capacity. Ensuring that all new development proposals address their impact appropriately and deliver solutions that allow North Northamptonshire to grow in a sustainable manner is essential to the proper planning of the area.

Key infrastructure

10.3 The delivery of the spatial strategy will require specific items of infrastructure. To identify these requirements the North Northamptonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has assessed with stakeholders the quantum and distribution of development and identified the infrastructure requirements to ensure the needs of development are supported and delivered in a sustainable way.

10.4 The IDP provides information on the local and strategic infrastructure required, when it is required, the estimated costs and where the funding may come from and the level of funding gap that exists at that time.

10.5 There are key strategic infrastructure requirements that are fundamental to the delivery of the strategy, the delivery of which will be monitored as part of the Monitoring Framework. These are listed in table 7 below.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure required</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chowns Mill roundabout improvements, A45/A6 Higham Ferrers/Rushden</td>
<td>There is significant congestion at this strategic junction for local traffic as well as those travelling further between the M1 and the A14. Improvements will be required to ensure flow of traffic along this strategic route. The SUE to the East of Rushden will require improvements to this junction to deliver development.</td>
<td>For delivery by 2021. Highways Agency, Northamptonshire County Council, NEP and East Northamptonshire Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Funding and Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isham bypass, Wellingborough</td>
<td>Directly related to Wellingborough development, specifically Wellingborough North SUE and employment opportunities. Preventing traffic congestion along this key route between Wellingborough and Kettering and impacts on the village of Isham.</td>
<td>Through the Northamptonshire Growth Deal there is the provisional allocation of £15m, the remaining to £23.5m will come from partners. For delivery by 2019. Northamptonshire County Council, NEP and Borough Council of Wellingborough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14 junction 10a, Kettering</td>
<td>This is directly related to development at Kettering East and the business and energy park to the east of Kettering.</td>
<td>The LEPs have stated that they will work with Government and the Highways Agency to ensure delivery of this junction improvement. A separate forward funding loan of £14.5m from the Governments Local Infrastructure Fund that will also secure access points, sewerage works and other site preparation for Kettering East. Highways Agency, Northamptonshire County Council, SEMLEP and Kettering Borough Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corby Northern Orbital Road</td>
<td>This road will help to open up employment opportunities around Rockingham Motor Speedway, and also improve traffic flows in this area of Corby, to support the development of Priors Hall.</td>
<td>SEMLEP has awarded £3.85m from its Growing Places Fund as a loan to enable this road to be constructed in relation to Priors Hall SUE. Northamptonshire County Council, SEMLEP, Corby Borough Council and Bela Partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tresham College, Wellingborough</td>
<td>This will enable new sector based skills to be developed around high technology application and engineering. The college at Wellingborough is no longer at the cutting edge of further education in Wellingborough and requires rationalisation and refurbishment in</td>
<td>Through the Northamptonshire Growth Deal this has been awarded £11.4m, in addition to £4.9m identified through partners. For delivery by 2017. Tresham College, NEP, Borough Council of Wellingborough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
addition there is a shortage of local provision.

A43 (Phase 3) Northampton to Kettering Dualling
A45 Stanwick to Thrapston dualling

10.6 Further infrastructure that is required is detailed in the IDP and covers physical, green and social infrastructure. The nature of infrastructure provision and funding will mean that review of the IDP will be required as part of the authorities monitoring report to reflect changes in investment programmes and further evidence base. This will also allow for flexibility if some infrastructure is not forthcoming and to consider ways that it could be delivered differently or might be mitigated.

**Monitoring the JCS**

10.7 Monitoring provides the basis for identifying whether or not the implementation of policy is delivering the vision and outcomes of the JCS. The Monitoring Framework set out in Table 8 (TO FOLLOW) has been developed to record and assess the implementation of JCS policies. It uses a series of indicators to show the outputs and wider outcomes of development and how the area is changing over the plan period. Responsibility for the monitoring of part 2 Local Plans lies with the respective Local Planning Authority.

10.8 The critical areas of the Plan that will be monitored include:
- The completion of serviced employment floorspace, the creation of jobs and the availability of land for employment use in the future;
- Housing completions by location and type and the availability of land for housing in the future;
- The delivery of floorspace to support retail, community and healthcare land use;
- The delivery of major infrastructure projects and provision of financial contribution towards such schemes;
- The protection, enhancement and creation of assets in the natural environment.

10.9 The Monitoring Framework sets out the performance indicators and targets that will form the basis for monitoring the plan. It provides the following information in respect of each of the outcomes in the JCS:
- The indicator- what we are measuring;
- Who is responsible for delivery;
- The target- what is to be achieved and by when;
- The source- i.e. if it is local or national;
- Triggers to establish significant discrepancies between actual policy implementation and established policy targets;
- Contingency measures that may be considered if a trigger is identified.

10.10 If, as a result of monitoring, areas are identified where a policy is not working, key policy targets are not being met or the context has changed (for example the performance and nature of the economy), the JPU and partner authorities will take remedial action, which 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;
• Working with developers and landowners of existing committed or allocated sites to produce a viable and suitable schemes; and
• 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.

10.11 If these actions fail to re-align 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, or other parts of the North Northamptonshire Local plan. Where necessary to aid implementation, Supplementary Planning Documents or further guidance may be produced to provide further detail on specific policy areas.

10.12 The Authorities’ Monitoring Report (AMR) will report annually on the extent to which policies set out in the JCS and Part 2 Local Plans 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. It will also highlight progress in preparing Part 2 Local Plans against the milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) and activity in related areas such as the implementation of CIL.

D. Development Principles for Strategic Sites

TO FOLLOW

11.1

Performance Indicators and Targets for Monitoring to follow