



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

# Economic Growth, Tourism and Regeneration Strategy

TOWN CENTRES

EMPLOYMENT

BUSINESSES / COMMUNITIES

INFRASTRUCTURE

TOURISM

2017-2020

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## Consultees

Internal	External
CMT	Northants Economic Development Officers
District Regeneration and Tourism Working Party	Local residents and businesses via website
Policy and Resources Committee	Local Tourism Businesses

## Distribution List

Internal	External
CMT	See committee report for consultation draft

## Links to other documents

Document	Link
Corporate Plan	<a href="http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/100004/your_council/490/the_corporate_plan">http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/100004/your_council/490/the_corporate_plan</a>
Joint Core Strategy	<a href="http://www.njpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1573">http://www.njpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1573</a>

## Additional Comments to note

See also Economic Development Pages on ENC website for list of relevant Government and SEMLEP (South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership) related documents

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## Foreword

Sustained growth of both businesses and homes in East Northamptonshire is continuing to bring benefits for local people, including a lower than average unemployment level and access to a larger number and wider range of job opportunities, improved overall local prosperity and additional income for councils to support the provision of local services.

In the last 10 years the number of residents has grown by nearly 10%, bringing a ready market for local shops and other businesses. The number of businesses in the district (eligible for business rates) has also grown by 5.8% (from 2290 to 2423) in the last three years, helping to replace the major decline in previous decades of the historic shoe and boot industry in the south of the district and the changing face of agriculture in the north.

The forthcoming opening of Rushden Lakes will bring much-needed representation of other key shops and businesses to the area, along with the creation of a high profile gateway to the beautiful River Nene Valley. We will harness this opportunity to further develop the river valley as a focus for tourism activity. The proposed Tresham Village (at the former Deenethorpe Airfield) provides another opportunity to develop an innovative model of sustainable employment focused on enterprise and entrepreneurship, with housing and employment opportunities (including home-based businesses) designed in from the start of this exemplar garden village.

The location of the district, with good access to employment hot-spots such as London, Birmingham, and Cambridge, provides a much needed opportunity to boost the overall quality of jobs in the area. New quality employment opportunities will be included in the Rushden East, along with an Incubator Hub to help entrepreneurs and SMEs make that first step from the drawing board or back room to independent premises and sustained growth.

Technology is changing the way we all live and do business. In particular, the way people shop and come together as communities continues to evolve and this is impacting on our Town Centres. We will work with partners in the public, private and community sectors to develop solutions that match the aspirations and opportunities in each town and revitalise their position at the heart of their community.

In order to retain and improve the quality of life of those who live and work in this area, it is important that the demand for housing growth is accompanied by the provision of appropriate physical, social and digital infrastructure, to fully realise the potential of local residents and local businesses. This will include improvement to strategic routes such as the A43 & A45.

The next few years will be important in setting the scene for a successful economic future across the district for generations to come. This Strategy is an integral part of this Council's priority of achieving regeneration and economic development and will provide the basis for working with others to secure a prosperous future for all .

Cllr Steven North  
Leader

David Oliver  
Chief Executive

East Northamptonshire Council

## 1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This Economic Development Strategy expands on the vision in the council's Corporate Plan of **working with our communities to sustain a thriving district**. The council's primary corporate plan priorities for driving growth through this strategy are:
- Regeneration and economic development – allied to growth must be improvements to the quality of our town centres. We will work with the private sector to bring investment into the area and to reverse the decline of some of our towns. We will continue to consult local communities about the changes that they want to see and work with them to achieve their aspirations for their local area
  - Sustainable development – there is continuing demand for housing in this area. We recognise the need for growth and the benefits it can bring, particularly in helping to revitalise our town centres, but it must be sustainable. We will aim to accommodate sensible levels of growth while preserving the character of our historic towns and villages.
- 1.2 The strategy also reflects the changing national and regional strategic contexts, including the emerging importance of the Cambridgeshire-Oxford Corridor and responses to the Brexit decision. The economic context includes the recent levels of growth in East Northamptonshire in both businesses and residents – each of which supports the other as residents provide the market for businesses and businesses provide employment for residents. However it is noted that we still have high levels of out-commuting and low skills compared to the rest of England.
- 1.3 Current and planned major developments such as Rushden Lakes, Rushden East and Tresham Village (at the former Deenethorpe Airfield), combined with our central location with good access to London and Birmingham, and position on one of the major routes into Cambridge, provides a much needed opportunity to boost the overall range and quality of jobs in the area. Other opportunities are explored in Appendix A.
- 1.4 The emphasis on the potential for the development of the visitor economy continues from the previous strategy, recognising that the combination of the accessibility and range of our countryside, wildlife, heritage and cultural events is a strength that can further support the rural economy in particular. The strategy supports the work of Destination Nene Valley in developing the visitor economy, supported by Greenway project and Blueway (River Nene) to enable active exploration of the countryside by visitors and residents.
- 1.6 Recognising the importance of our town centres to the local economy and communities, the draft strategy also reflects the changing retail environment which has affected the vitality of our town centres and how this council will support town councils or others who have developed a vision and action plan to implement these.
- 1.7 The priorities for the strategy to enable the delivery of sustainable job growth that will make a significant contribution to improving the quality of life for residents whilst enhancing the quality of place and securing prosperity in the local economy are:
- Invest East Northamptonshire – secure and deliver strategic sites and infrastructure to support growth and help jobs growth exceed housing growth
  - Generating Quality Places – drive town centre revitalisation
  - Nurture Business Growth – deliver quality accommodation, business support and ensure council services and assets are aligned behind the economy
  - Increased Tourism Spending and Job Creation - along the Nene Valley and in our

rural areas

- Boosting the Skills Base - of local businesses and communities in the area

More details of the actions that are planned under each priority can be found in section 4.

- 1.8 The focus of this council will be tackling barriers to growth in the local economy, providing leadership to major projects that advance the priorities noted in section 4 and ensuring that businesses have access to practical support to help them grow and thrive in the district. The council will work in partnership to deliver many of the aims of this strategy, influencing the content of, and working within, partners' business plans. This strategy focuses on what this council can do to support local businesses both on its own as a community leader and jointly with others through a range of partnerships. Appendix C sets out the work programme which details the focus for delivery against the priorities outlined above. .

## 2.0 Strategic Context

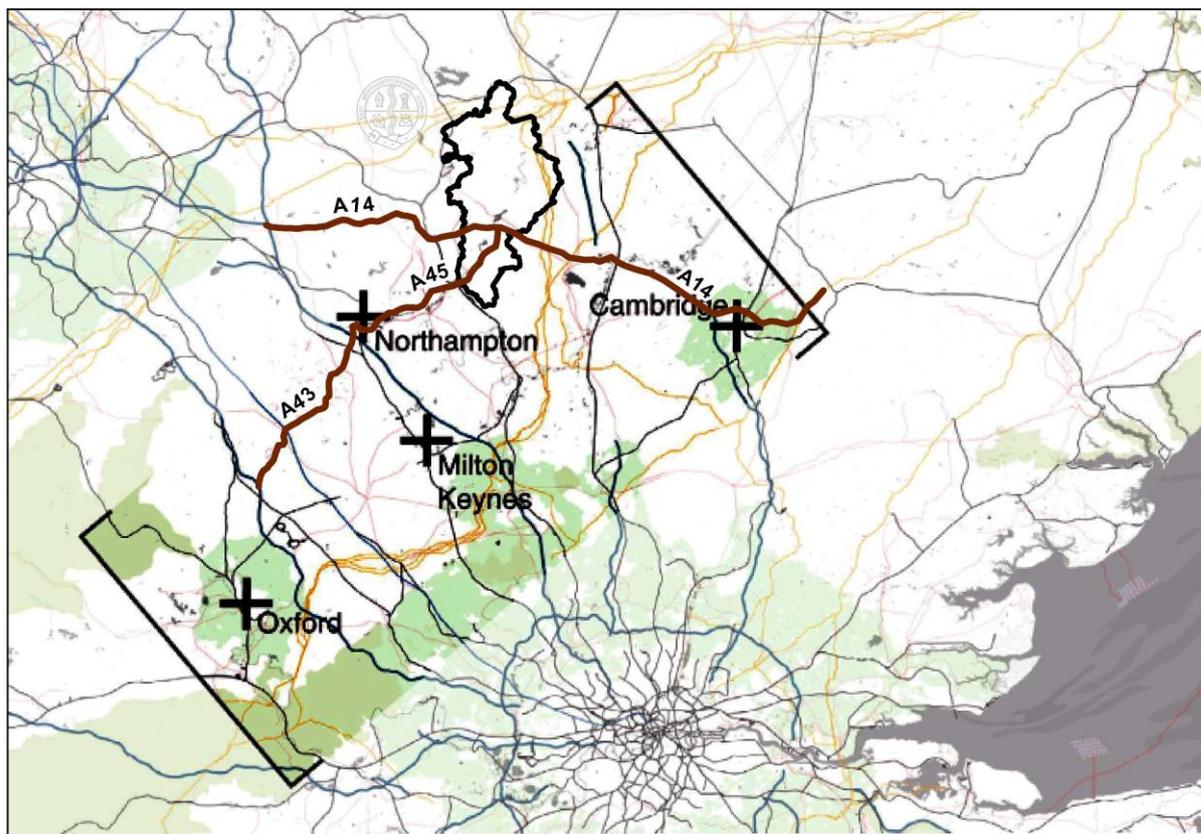
- 2.1 This strategy has been developed within the context of current national, regional and local strategies. However, it comes at a time where the direction and supporting resources for some of these strategies will be revised as a result of the Brexit decision, the devolution agenda and the merger of the South East Midlands and Northamptonshire Local Enterprise Partnerships (SEMLEP and NEP). Therefore we have had to make some assumptions about the likely future strategic context in some cases.

- 2.2 Nationally, we anticipate that the government's focus will be on the following areas:

- Creation of a national Industrial Strategy which includes the following relevant activity areas:
  - Ensuring that development land and supporting services are available not just to major employers but also to the increasingly integrated supply chain of smaller, specialist firms. This will largely be addressed locally via the East Northamptonshire District Plan (part of the Local Development Framework) currently under development.
  - Facilitating the right infrastructure – roads, rail, public transport, broadband and mobile telephony – that can connect businesses to their workforce. (See 4.2 for more detail of local implications)
  - Improving the skills of young people so they are better educated and trained than our competitors – and their predecessors. This is of particular concern in this region where predicted future employment demand is likely to outstrip current anticipated supply in several key sectors, especially STEM-related areas. (See 4.6 for more detail)
  - Setting the technical and legal standards that create long-term confidence in Britain as a place to do business. (See 4.5 for local activity)
- Greater support for areas to work with DIT to attract overseas investment as the country exits the European Union and seeks new sources of investment and trade deals.
- Greater interest in domestic and international tourism.

As indicated by the references, East Northamptonshire is well placed to benefit from these areas of focus.

Map showing A14 and East Northamptonshire in relation to Cambridgeshire – Milton Keynes-Oxford Growth Corridor



2.3 At the regional level, East Northamptonshire is now part of SEMLEP which covers the geographic area comprising Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury Vale and Northamptonshire. The recent merger of SEMLEP and NEP means that their Strategic Economic Plans which were originally written in 2014 will need to be revised to reflect the merger and revised geography. However, the strategic priorities of both LEPs in their economic plans were similar, so it is reasonable to assume that the revised plan will build on the central accessible location of the LEP, including its position in the Cambridge-Oxford Arc (or corridor of growth). As can be seen from the above map, East Northamptonshire is well placed on existing trunk road links between the two cities, particularly if the proposed dualling of the remainder of the A45 between Stanwick Lakes and Thrapston is completed to provide a dual carriageway route along the whole of the A14/A45/A43 route.

2.4 Projected priorities will probably include the following areas, the majority of which are also relevant locally:

- Creating more sustainable jobs
- Attracting and creating new businesses
- Growing existing businesses
- Meeting future skills needs
- Increasing inward investment and expanding foreign trade
- Increasing the number of apprenticeships

Investing public and private money in prioritised, deliverable and key strategic infrastructure projects such as east-west road and rail links (within the Cambridge and Oxford Arc).

- 2.5 We anticipate that the SEMLEP key sectors for growth will continue to be:
- High Performance Engineering Technology
  - Logistics
  - Manufacturing
  - Advanced Technology (including food and drink)
- Growth in the Logistics sector is already strong locally but most of the suitable development sites have now been built out. As a result, the focus for East Northamptonshire in this sector is likely to be around facilitating matches for future skills requirements and ensuring that appropriate overnight parking facilities are provided to match the growth in this sector locally. The Food and Drink sector is strongly represented in our SMEs, particularly in rural areas, and is a sector where the council is uniquely situated to provide support because of its existing regulatory role. Finally we will also look to support growth in niche aspects of the science and technology sectors as part of our strategic position in the Oxford to Cambridge corridor
- 2.6 Our Corporate Plan 2016-2020 vision of **Working with our communities to sustain a thriving District** provides the overall direction for this Growth Strategy. It is driven by the key priority of *Regeneration and Economic Development*, which links growth to the improvements to the quality of our town centres and, in particular, reversing the decline in some of these areas. The Corporate Plan recognises the role of the private sector in bringing investment into the area and the need to work with local communities to achieve their aspirations for their local area.
- 2.7 The link between housing growth and economic benefits is recognised in a second key priority, *Sustainable Development*, which also stresses the importance of preserving the character of our historic towns and villages. The Corporate Plan outlines our continuing commitment to existing policies that have contributed to the local economy, such as free parking in our town centre car parks and the provision of business-friendly services. All of this will be pulled together and driven forward via a business charter that will ensure council services are aligned behind the local economy and play a pivotal role in nurturing innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- 2.8 Other relevant key priorities include *Increased Participation in Active Recreation* and *Good Public Health*. Economic development activity, including planning services, regeneration activity and provision of occupation health and safety advice and regulation, is now clearly seen as one of the wider determinants of health and wellbeing which can be influenced by district councils. In particular, the development of opportunities for sport and recreation along the River Nene through the Greenway and Destination Nene Valley projects provide opportunities for increasing the well being of residents.
- 2.9 Relevant specific actions from the Corporate Plan have been included in the priorities in Section 4 of this Strategy. These also link to the policies of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy which aim to support the planned creation of 7,200 jobs by 2031 in order to achieve a sustainable balance between local jobs and housing and a more diverse economy. Key policy measures include site-specific development policies for a Sustainable Urban Extension at Rushden East with 2,500 homes and jobs, an exemplar Garden Village (at the former Deenethorpe Airfield) and a landmark business development at Rushden Gateway (Nene Valley Farm) to complement the nearby Rushden Lakes development.

## 3.0 Economic Context

### 3.1 Growth and Communities

- 3.1.1 East Northamptonshire is an area with a generally prosperous economy in regional and national terms. The district has two different but complementary parts. In the south is the largest urban area (with a joint population of 38,500, comprising the adjacent settlements of Rushden and Higham Ferrers) together with the two nearby towns of Raunds and Irthlingborough (each with a population of roughly 9,000). All of these settlements were once part of the Northamptonshire boot and shoe industry which declined significantly towards the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Irthlingborough was also a mining town). However today they can also be characterised by their positions on the A45 (and A6) with consequent good links to the A14 (and hence to the A1 and M1 and the wider Oxford to Cambridge corridor). This has attracted significant growth in logistics sites on the edge of their settlements.
- 3.1.2 North of the A14, the area is more rural in nature, with two Market Towns (Thrapston and Oundle, with populations of approx. 6,000 each), together with the larger village of Kings Cliffe, acting as service hubs to a network of smaller villages and agriculture, food and drink and tourism employment sectors. The impressive natural setting and architectural style (often described as the 'hidden Cotswolds') continues up the River Nene and across the former Rockingham Forest area.
- 3.1.3 Despite the financial constraints under which the council has been operating, we have remained ambitious and have worked with the private sector to deliver significant growth in the District. All of the district has been, and is likely to continue to be, in demand for both employment and housing growth. (The later is partly due to competitive house prices compared to other parts of the region.) In the last 10 years the number of residents in East Northamptonshire has grown by nearly 10%, bringing a ready market for local shops and other businesses. The number of businesses (eligible for business rates) has also grown by 5.8% (from 2,290 to 2,423) in the last three years, along with a related growth in business rates revenue of 12%. This economic growth has brought benefits to residents in terms of low unemployment and new markets for local businesses. However, this growth may also present challenges associated with an undersupply of labour in some sectors/areas. This is an issue that will be considered and addressed as part of the action plan..
- 3.1.4 However, it has been challenging to achieve these levels of growth while preserving the character of our towns, villages and countryside. Our town centres are being hit by other factors such as the changing patterns in retail activity (including the internet), the provision of larger housing developments on the outskirts of towns and high levels of out-commuting for employment from these settlements which mean that those centres need to find new ways of continuing to fulfil their historic role at the heart of communities.

### 3.2 The Local Business Economy

- 3.2.1 Northamptonshire was assessed by the Government as being the most enterprising location in the UK in 2015, with SMEs making up 99.6% of the county business base. East Northamptonshire has a particularly strong SME base, at 99%, which means that the area is not reliant on a small number of internationally-mobile businesses, which

could be positive in the post-Brexit period. The total number of business increased by 435 to 3815 between 2013 & 2016. The current 5-year survival rate for new businesses in the district is 50%, which is one of the highest in the South East Midlands (equal with South Northants).

- 3.2.2 Food businesses are making an increasing contribution to the diversification of the rural economy. The number of registered food and drink businesses in the district is now 1067 (up by 22% on 2014) with an average of 80 new businesses registering a year (albeit we lose a few as well). Some local specialist producers have national retail outlet agreements whilst the established Farmers' Markets at Oundle and Higham Ferrers have been joined by one at Thrapston, providing an important local shop window.
- 3.2.3 Not all local business are SMEs. Other current local major employers include Belkin, DSV, Kier, Howdens, Lloyds TSB, Morrisons, Oundle School, Primark, MCE, RPC Containers, Rolton Group Ltd, Whitworths, and East Northamptonshire Council itself. Another significant long-standing Oundle employer, Fairline Boats, has started to grow again after a difficult period and has recently recruited more staff. The highest employment sectors are wholesale and retail trade, which when combined with transport and storage, employ an estimated 7250 people and manufacturing which is estimated to employ 3500 people.
- 3.2.4 Some of the latter companies have moved to this area because of its excellent arterial road connectivity with fast dual carriageway/motorway connectivity via the A14, A1, A45 and M1 with Cambridge, Birmingham and London. In addition, the A14 Trans- European route, which bisects the district, provides access to the Port of Liverpool and the Haven Ports within three hours' drive. Although distribution hubs are often perceived as offering low quality employment, the increasing trend to centralise distribution sites with headquarters and other support services, including marketing and research teams, means that they can bring high quality employment. For example, a recent survey of local logistics firms highlighted ratios between 1 in 3 to 1 in 8 of higher- quality to other jobs.
- 3.2.5 The development of Rushden Lakes will bring some major retail businesses into the area for the first time, e.g. House of Fraser, Marks and Spencers, H&M, River Island, New Look, Schuh, Fat Face, Moss Bros, Jigsaw, Hobbs of London, Phase Eight, L'Occitane and Joules.
- 3.2.6 The district's wide range of businesses means that the local economy is not dependent on any one employment sector or large employer. This has enabled the overall local economy to grow over the past few years when other areas of the country have seen an economic decline. The district also has low public sector dependency, which will help it weather the reductions in that sector.

### 3.3 Employment and Skills

- 3.3.1 East Northamptonshire has a higher than the English average level of economically active people within its working age population at 83%, although the level varies considerably by ward. The highest level of unemployment was in Rushden Hayden ward (in 2011) and the lowest level of economic activity in the working age population in Oundle (where it was also matched by low unemployment suggesting a higher proportion of early retirees or on non-earned incomes).

- 3.3.2 East Northamptonshire has approximately 34,000 jobs for a working age population of around 55,000 (a job density of 0.62), meaning that East Northamptonshire is a net exporter of workers. The working population has remained fairly steady over the past five years. However although the job density has improved from 0.54 in 2010, it remains consistently well below the Great Britain average over the same period of 0.80. Statistics show that the difference between the median salary levels of those residents working in the district and those working outside of the district is £63.80 per week. (Place of work in the district £417.00, place of residence £480.80). 64% of residents leave the district for employment (2011 Census)
- 3.3.3 The increasing use of technology in all aspects of business activity from manufacturing to caring services is also driving greater demand for a higher skilled work force. When combined with the demographic changes resulting from the baby boomer bulge now approaching retirement, this means that there is a projected shortfall in suitably qualified people across the SEMLEP area to meet the projected 440,000 vacancies by 2026. It will become increasingly important to make sure that the entire available workforce is effectively deployed to ensure that there is a continued supply of a well-qualified labour force, given the tight labour market conditions. This will include preparing young people for the emerging types of work and retraining older people whose previous employment opportunities are reducing. Both of these tasks will be largely the responsibility of partners and will require additional funding. This will include ensuring enterprise and entrepreneurship is woven into the fabric of the local community so as to increase local business growth whilst nurturing a community that is motivated and willing and able to work.
- 3.3.4 The level of the adult population with no qualifications has reduced from 12.8% in 2010 to 11.6% in 2013 but the gap between East Northamptonshire and the UK average is growing over the same period. (ONS annual population survey) Potentially even more worrying is the fall from 30.2% to 27.7% in the adult population having level 4 qualifications or above at a time where the national level is rising. In addition educational attainment in East Northamptonshire at Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4, and at A level is lagging behind national averages. A systemic approach by local schools will be required to address these employability and basic skills needs, alongside promoting vocational routes and supporting those young people at risk of becoming Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).
- 3.3.5 The level of young people aged 16-24 in East Northamptonshire who are NEET has fluctuated over the past 3 years, peaking at 7.3% in May 2014 before falling to its current level of 5.4%. However, the level of Job Seeker Allowance Claimants aged 18-24 has shown a steady reduction, with fewer than 2% claiming for more than 12 months in the last two years.

	<i>May 13</i>	<i>May 14</i>	<i>May 15</i>
No of NEET	129 (5.4%)	181 (7.3%)	123 (5.4%)
No of Job Seeker Allowance Claimants aged 18-24	430 (7.1%)	225 (3.7%)	155 (2.5%)

- 3.3.6 Only 23% of apprenticeship starts during 2014/15 in the county were under the age of 19 and, whilst the pattern is similar amongst other local authorities, Northamptonshire had the lowest percentage of overall starts under the age of 19.

### 3.4 Tourism and the Rural Economy

3.4.1 Tourism makes a major contribution towards the economic well-being and quality of life of the communities and businesses in the rural areas. East Northamptonshire offers an eclectic mix of beautiful unspoilt countryside, historic market towns and attractive villages, together with a diverse range of arts festivals and other cultural events and an area of wildlife reserve in the south of the district which has been recognized internationally via designation as a RAMSAR wetland site for over-wintering birds. As a result the area attracts a large number of visitors from its surrounding regions, although it is not yet recognised as a destination in its own right.

3.4.2 The Council has supported the Destination Nene Valley (DNV) partnership (see [www.nenevalley.net](http://www.nenevalley.net) ) from its inception. The DNV partnership aims, amongst other objectives, to co-ordinate and increase tourism activity along the River Nene from Northampton to Peterborough. The majority of its activity is delivered through its partners but its future strength lies in collaborative activity. The partnership commissioned a consultancy study on how to develop tourism which identified how it can work with it's mainly day visitor market (until more hotel accommodation can be provided) through concentration on specific sectors within the large population (90% of England population) that live within one hour's drive of this area. The partnership now has a dedicated tourism steering board and Tourism Plan, as well as a strategic board which coordinates activities with other strategic projects for the same geography.

Map of the Destination Nene Valley area



- 3.4.3 One of these strategic projects is the Greenway which aims to provide walking and cycling routes that link our towns and villages, together with key wild-life and heritage sites, along and across the river valley for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Recent activity has focused on identifying suitable routes to build the Greenway from Peterborough to Northampton and establishing detailed costs for future fundraising. It is considered particularly important to link with the railway stations at Northampton, Wellingborough and Peterborough, in order that visitors can access the river valley by alternative means to cars.
- 3.4.4 The River Nene (however pronounced) which is still an underutilised asset for active recreation despite the recent investment by the Environment Agency in improving portage points for canoe use along the river. There are further opportunities to increase the use of this 'Blueway', including, where appropriate, developing moorings and marinas. In particular the potential to develop a, new canal link between Bedford and Milton Keynes which would create a 'ring' (circular route) for boaters, navigable in 2 weeks, could bring wider benefits for the visitor economy across the whole SEMLEP area.
- 3.4.5 It is likely that Brexit will extend the current trend for an increase in domestic and international tourism and it is probable that there will be new streams of funding to stimulate demand. In addition, the County Council has recently produced a Heritage Strategy which reflects the strong offer in the county in relation to historic houses and gardens, churches, museums and archaeological sites. East Northamptonshire has roughly 1700 listed buildings (56 Grade 1 listed, including Apethorpe Palace and 27 churches) and 56 scheduled ancient monuments. The County Council is also working with the University of Northamptonshire and other tourism partners on a 'Best Kept Secret' national tourism promotion.
- 3.4.6 All of our towns and villages suffer to some degree from the high level of out-commuting in the district, but the impact can be particularly high in rural villages where it threatens the viability of local services, particularly local shops and pubs. Visitor spend can make a significant difference to viability and we will continue to look for ways to spread this across the district in a sustainable way e.g. by promoting walks or cycle routes that include local producers and places to eat and drink. We will also continue to work with local bus service providers and the County Council to explore ways of improving public transport linkages between key gateways such as railway stations at Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Peterborough and our visitor attractions, towns and villages.
- 3.4.7 East Northamptonshire also has a wide range of annual arts festivals and other cultural events. These range from the Oundle International Festival, which presents internationally renowned performers to over 3000 people per year, to the Rushden Cavalcade of Historical transport where over 1000 exhibits are visited by 25,000 people. Other events are more local in scope such as the Higham Ferrers Christmas Sparkle and Thrapston Charter Fair. but together with regular Farmers Markets and other events, as well as providing important community connections locally, they attract visitors from outside their immediate locality.
- 3.4.7 We will also seek, through planning policies and other measures (such as provision of superfast broadband), to encourage the diversification of the rural economy, including both new initiatives that add value to existing rural business activity and new approaches that bring more rural employment e.g. woodland management for bio-fuels

and eco-tourism accommodation. One key development in the area is the proposal to create a new Garden Village, to be known as Tresham Village, at the former Deenethorpe Airfield, which it is proposed will include the provision of land and buildings for owner-occupiers of SMEs and home-working.

### 3.5 – Others Drivers of Change

There are a number of other factors that will influence the shape of East Northamptonshire's economy over the coming years:

- **Globalisation and Brexit** – More and more companies and businesses are, and will be, operating in different international markets which provides challenges and opportunities in terms of the local impact of economic shocks and trends from around the world..
- **Sustainability** – Scarcity of resources places pressure on the economy at all levels. Solutions are currently focused around the circular economy together with a drive towards low carbon activity and associated commercial opportunities in managing the efficient use of resources, waste and energy.
- **Technology** – Advances in new technology continue to change the dynamics of economies and markets from how goods and services are produced and transported to enabling more agile working practices.
- **Industrial Change** – Around the world there are industrial structures that reflect different stages and rates of growth between different countries. In the UK current trends reflect a shift away from primary and manufacturing sectors towards more service, creative and knowledge based industries. These trends impact on a range of factors from land use for commercial premises and infrastructure investment to the shape and nature of skills training and business support.

These factors are very much interrelated and will be considered further as part of delivery to ensure local strategies and actions remain fit for purpose within a local, national and global context.

## 4.0 Strategic Priorities

### 4.1 The overarching vision for East Northamptonshire is :

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

4.1.1 As noted in section 3, the district has historically experienced high levels of out-commuting and low job density, which has impacted on the sustainability of its urban and rural settlements. In order to rebalance this position, the council will work to ensure that future employment opportunities better reflect the profile of our resident population by increasing the level of higher quality jobs available locally and that, in the longer term, housing growth matches employment growth to avoid further unsustainable patterns of travel.

4.1.2 The council has started to change the profile of local employment through its support of the Rushden Lakes major mixed retail, recreation and leisure scheme development. As well as providing much-needed employment within in the district, the 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. It will also provide opportunities for tourism-based businesses, including those in town centres, to benefit from increased visitor numbers.

#### 4.2 Invest East Northamptonshire - secure and deliver strategic sites and infrastructure to support growth and help jobs growth exceed housing growth

4.2.1 The council's aspirations for the masterplan for the Rushden East sustainable urban extension will complement employment provision at Rushden Lakes with high quality employment opportunities as well providing additional housing, leisure and open space which position Rushden as a key growth town within North Northamptonshire. The masterplan will ensure the provision of a mix of employment opportunities will be available via:

- dedicated offices and industrial premises, including limited logistics provision
- small-scale business spaces, including an Incubator Hub and a range of accelerator offers
- a local centre and leisure businesses
- dwellings suitable for home working or business start-ups.

4.2.2 Other strategic sites that have been already identified as offering the potential to upgrade local employment offer include:

- Nene Park - set largely in the flood plain, this site was previously the home of two football clubs. The stadium now stands disused and the owners are proposing to develop a mix of retail and leisure uses on the site
- Rushden Gateway – this site near to Rushden Lakes on the former Nene Valley farm is allocated in the Joint Core Strategy for a mix of business and industrial employment uses together with a place of worship and open space. The design is intended to include landmark buildings close to the A45 to create a significant gateway feature for Rushden and Higham Ferrers
- Oundle Marina – this key site on the River Nene provides an opportunity to develop leisure-related employment businesses to complement the nearby country park and river access of a quality similar to those that have been developed at Oundle Wharf on the other side of the town.
- Whitworths and Irthlingborough West – the latter is a consented mixed-use urban extension comprising around 700 houses, employment land and provision for the expansion of the neighbouring Huxlow Science College, which is adjacent to the current Whitworth's factory site. Whitworth's are looking to relocate and the site has had permission for over 250 houses in the past, although that has now lapsed.
- Tresham Village The proposed Tresham Village (at the former Deenethorpe Airfield) provides another opportunity to develop a different model of sustainable employment at the SME level, with housing and employment opportunities (including home-based businesses) designed in from the start of this exemplar garden village.

The council will work with owners/developers to find solutions that add value to the local economy and meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and local development plan.

4.2.3 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 in sustainable locations or within larger, strategic sites can help to meet the needs of small and medium-sized businesses and identified growth sectors and support the expansion of

existing businesses enabling their retention in East Northamptonshire. The council will identify any suitable sites for additional employment during the development of the District (Part 2) Plan and encourage Neighbourhood Plan groups to do so also.

- 4.2.4 The council will also focus its efforts on those partnerships that make a significant contribution to our priority outcomes, particularly in delivering economic growth and in reducing costs through shared services. This will include working with site owners and developers to match available property to the needs of the existing businesses, and seeking opportunities for inward investment. The potential of East Northamptonshire as a business location will be promoted via appropriate partnerships such as SEMPLEP or with other North Northamptonshire councils as part of the Joint Delivery Unit Garden Communities initiative.
- 4.2.5 The Corporate Plan includes an action to develop a Local Infrastructure Plan that sets out the facilities and transport links that local communities need and directs the use of our Community Facilities Fund, S106 (and CIL payments if the policy is adopted by the council in the future) associated with new developments, and External Funding Officer activity to securing funding for this infrastructure. To develop this plan, we will engage proactively with town and parish councils to identify these local needs and, where appropriate, to plan for these via the development of Neighbourhood Plans.
- 4.2.6 The council has previously identified that implementation of high-speed broadband across the district is an important part of a competitive business environment to attract and retain businesses. 90% of the district's homes and business will have access by the end of 2016 and the council has committed £300k to help ensure delivery of at least 95% coverage in Phase 3 of the superfast broadband roll-out.
- 4.2.7 We will continue to support the government's commitment to upgrade the Chowns Mill roundabout at the junction of the A6 and A45, and its proposals for the dualling of the A45 between Stanwick and Thrapston. The former is planned for implementation by 2020. The latter is supported by the transport partnership (Midlands Connect) for the dualling of the A45 to be extended from Stanwick Lakes to the A14 as part of the critical road infrastructure to enable regional connectivity and growth. Although this has been identified as a Highways England priority for the next funding round, continued lobbying will be required to ensure that it remains a priority in the face of conflicting demands and restricted funding. Both upgrades are important if this area is to maximise its role within the Cambridge-Oxford Arc as the A14 and A45 are currently key east-west routes in the Arc. Both could also be relatively quick to implement and low cost compared to other road and rail improvement measures proposed.
- 4.2.8 We also recognise the importance of having the right mix of housing in the District, not only to meet existing residents' needs but also to attract the senior managers and entrepreneurs who will increase the overall spend in the district and create new businesses. This will be delivered through the development of a new Housing SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)
- 4.2.9 *Summary of actions*
- *Allocate any available sites suitable for business in District Plan, primarily for SME and growth sector use, and for Neighbourhood Plans to do the same*
  - *Ensure that the masterplan for Tresham Village maximises the opportunities for home-working and the establishment of new businesses within the site.*
  - *Work with partners to agree a marketing plan for key sites and the wider area to*

*attract inward investment*

- *Work with partners including landowners/developers of strategic employment sites to agree an inward investment framework to secure appropriate business development and increase local employment*
- *Develop a local infrastructure plan that outlines the facilities and transport links that local communities need and outlines possible sources of funding*
- *Continue to lobby for the upgrading of the Chowns Mill (A45/A6) roundabout and dualling of the A45 from Stanwick to Thrapston.*
- *Develop a Housing SPD to promote the right housing mix for the district.*

### 4.3 Generating Quality Places – Driving Town Centre Revitalisation

4.3.1 It has already been noted that our town centres require revitalisation to enable them to continue to play a significant role at the heart of their local communities. Such revitalisation is likely to be based more on opportunities for social/community interaction than on retail activity alone, as noted in the DCLG Report ‘Re-imagining urban spaces to help revitalise our high streets’:

*“There is no point in simply chasing the traditional model of the high street – a place where people come together to shop. Retail is an important element of a thriving town centre, but it’s not sufficient. Instead, you need to re-imagine your high street and town centre, and drive towards a new future where people come together for many different reasons. Simply continuing as you are is not an option”*

4.3.2 We anticipate that Town Councils, and relevant Business and Neighbourhood Plan Groups, will work to develop a vision for the future of each centre, accompanied an action plan to translate this vision into reality.. This council will work to identify any strategic elements of these visions and incorporate these into its plans and strategies. These might include

- redefinition of primary shopping areas to consolidate the retail offer
- supporting creation of Local Development Orders to facilitate the redevelopment of key sites
- changes to policies to accommodate new town centre uses
- improvements to the community/ leisure/ cultural offer
- enhancement of the public realm and key gateways into the district
- consolidation of public sector holdings in ‘hubs’ to increase footfall
- support to develop fundraising strategies to implement action plans

4.3.3 We will work through its Business Account Managers and Tourism Development Officer to improve the linkages between visitor attractions, Rushden Lakes and town centre managers and businesses to add value to the anticipated increase in visitor numbers.

4.3.4 We will explore partner opportunities for the retail groups from towns in the district to collectively access digital skills and marketing approaches. We will also continue to promote the availability of free parking on council car parks in our towns as per the corporate plan policy,

4.3.5 *Summary of actions*

- *Facilitate the production of a vision statement and action plan for each town in partnership with the appropriate Town Council and other partners such as business groups*
- *Build links between visitor activity and town centres*
- *Explore opportunities to improve digital and marketing skills of town centre retailers*

- *Maintain and promote free parking in our town centre car parks*
- *Produce and deliver public realm framework*

#### 4.4 Nurturing Business Growth - deliver quality accommodation, business support and ensure council services and assets are aligned behind the economy

- 4.4.1 As a council we have recognised through our Business Friendly Council aspiration that we have an opportunity to add value to our statutory interactions with new and existing local businesses by taking a positive and holistic approach. This includes providing easy-to-understand advice to help them navigate the regulatory hurdles or signposting them to partners who can help. This help must, of course, be balanced with ensuring that they comply with any measures required for public safety and that they add to the wellbeing of residents by contributing to business rates or the local infrastructure.
- 4.4.2 Our Better Business approach to business-friendly services over the past two years has been commended by the Local Government Association. We are building on the success of the Better Business pilot with individual Business Account Managers identified to work primarily with food and drink businesses in the district following the creation of two new part time roles. These two posts are split, with 50% of each role being as Business Account Managers and the other 50% being in Environmental Health (EH) and Planning. During the 12 months of the pilot project the following outcomes were realised:
- Local businesses were saved an estimated £82,000
  - Over £520,000 of grants were obtained by businesses advised by the council
  - 6% improvement in food regulation business compliance
  - Redesigned processes to make easier for businesses and council, resulting in 7% improvement in business satisfaction and 37% less enforcement action in relation to businesses supported
- 4.4.3
- This work stream will be accelerated over the coming years through a new business charter and business champions group that will:
  - Establish a single point of contact at new employment sites to ensure the earliest possible conversations with the businesses who will locate there about regulatory compliance (as the inclusion of best-practice at the point of business start-up means that business costs for legal compliance can often be reduced significantly) and to ensure they know where to go for future business advice in order to ensure that they survive and grow.
  - Explore any opportunities for major businesses locating headquarters in the area for ENC to form Primary Authority Partnerships (in relation to Food Hygiene regulations) or Local Authority Building Control Partnerships scheme so that our services can be used nationwide.
  - Introduce Business Liaison events to further reduce barriers and improve the responsiveness of our services to local business needs.
  - Design and developing a Business Rates information pack for distribution to each new Business Ratepayer in the area.
  - Improve access to procurement opportunities
  - Facilitate the provision of modern commercial accommodation
  - Champion skills provision

- 4.4.4 We have grown our partnership arrangements by joining SEMLEP and are now able to offer businesses access to two Growth Hubs. The SEMLEP-funded Velocity Growth Hub offers free, tailored 1:1 advice, workshops, training, and networking for SMEs. The Northamptonshire Growth Hub, hosted by the University of Northampton, provides complementary support for start-up businesses and those with innovative ideas. Both are part of the BEIS national Growth Hub Network. To assist local access, we will provide hot-desk and meeting room facilities for advisors from both Hubs at the council's offices and will co-ordinate a series of SEMLEP Velocity Business Adviser Presentations at local Business Network Meetings.
- 4.4.5 We will monitor the changes in funding opportunities as we exit from the European Union, and ensure that we maximise any remaining opportunities to secure EU funding such as that under the Leader programme, and sign-post businesses to emerging opportunities.

The imperative for the council to support growth in the local economy has been increased by the change in central government funding to an approach based on retention of locally-raised business rates (NNDR). To drive the council's approach, we have created a new role of Head of Economic and Commercial Development, who will have responsibility for:

- the development of economic growth and business support strategies across the district, to boost the economic position of towns and the skills base of local businesses;
- working with partners to find ways of revitalising our town centres;
- building strong relationships with local businesses and business organisations with a view to increasing the Council's business rates income; and
- the creation of commercial opportunities for income generation for the council and the management of the council's property portfolio to maximise net income.

The post-holder will also be the line manager of the two new Business Account Managers and the council's Facilities Manager..

Part of the role of this new post will be to expand the review of the council's own property to optimise their use for council purposes, income generation and contribution to the local economy by provision for SME development. This will build on the current work in relation to leasing a section of the Red Brick, part of the Council's headquarters building at Thrapston, and will include the industrial units owned by the council. It is anticipated that additional property will be secured via a new property investment company, including the creation and the management of an Incubator Hub at Rushden East.

- 4.4.6 We will continue with our policy of paying invoices from local businesses within 10 days and all invoices within 30 days in order to support their cash flow
- 4.4.7 *Summary of actions*
- *drive delivery of an incubator centre and assess the need for accelerator space*
  - *implement a commercial plan for the council's properties and consider establishing a commercial property company to exploit opportunities to provide facilities to enable the growth of local SMEs and generate income for the council*
  - *continue to develop our business-friendly service approach by:*
    - *recruiting to the new part time Business Account Manager posts and establishing single points of contact with new businesses and business advisors*
    - *exploring opportunities to establish formal business partnership with major*

- businesses based in the district*
    - *organising annual or other local Business Liaison event throughout the district*
    - *developing and distributing a Business Rates information pack*
- *continue to aim to pay invoices from local businesses within 10 days in accordance with our policy*
- *promote the availability of Leader funding whilst this funding stream remains*

#### 4.5 Increased Tourism Spending and Job Creation – along the Nene Valley and in our rural areas.

4.5.1 Our primary tourism activity will be the continuing promotion and support for the Destination Nene Valley (DNV). The key areas of activity for DNV which will build tourism in the next few years are:

- a) Nene Valley Festival. Over the past three years ago, over 30,000 visitors have been attracted by Nene Valley Festival to events and locations within the Valley, with 86 partner events being included in 2016. The event has been deliberately programmed for mid-September to extend the summer season for local attractions. Each year has had a primary focus on a target market group e.g. older people looking for heritage, and the opening or closing event venues are chosen to highlight upgraded or new venues.
- b) Rushden Lakes Visitor Centre – DNV will work in partnership with the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire, who will run this centre to provide displays which raise the profile of the Nene Valley, highlight the opportunities to see the wildlife along the river valley and increase awareness of the heritage and arts/culture activities along the river
- c) Development of a plan, with associated design guidance and fundraising strategy (to avoid the use of public funds), in partnership with Northamptonshire Highways and Town and Parish Councils, to install a series of landmark sculptures on key sites, such as roundabouts along the Nene Valley.
- d) Work with partners to exploit new or existing opportunities where these will generate a regional or wider visitor demand which will support development of the local visitor economy
- e) Working with our Town and Parish Councils to encourage the development of local tourism plans, where appropriate, which can complement the wider activity of DNV and their holistic plans for their towns.

4.5.2 Northamptonshire benefits from strong existing environmental partnerships – partners successfully bid for and launched the Nature Improvement Area (NIA) in 2012 whilst River Nene Regional Park has recently led a consortium bid to secure £206,000 of Phase 1 funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Nenescape project, which will explore the themes of “Listen to the Past”, “Explore the Now” and “Secure the Future” of the River Nene from Northampton to Peterborough. Securing Phase 2 approval will bring £2.6m of investment to the valley whilst the project will also provide value baseline data on visitor activity. We will continue to support such partnership activity where it brings investment to enhance the environment and visitor infrastructure.

4.5.3 We will continue to work with Rockingham Forest Trust to maximise the potential of Stanwick Lakes both as a major local destination which brings visitors to the area and also because of their contribution to the understanding of heritage in the area through their projects and their support for apprenticeships and NEETS.

- 4.5.4 We will continue the development of the Greenway to provide walking and cycling routes that link our towns and villages, together with key wild-life and heritage sites, along and across the river valley for the benefit of both residents and visitors. (See Appendix F) Our first priority is to complete the Wellingborough Station to Stanwick Lakes part of the route to provide sustainable access and link the existing attraction of Stanwick Lakes to opportunities provided by Rushden Lakes and the forthcoming archaeological-based attraction at Chester Farm.
- 4.5.5 We will, along with the County Council and the Environment Agency, invest to replace the footbridge at Islip, which is currently a key barrier to extended navigation of the River Nene (or Blueway). We will support the Environment Agency's plans to increase use, including, where appropriate, developing moorings and marinas and work with SEMLEP and other partners to explore the opportunities to develop a new canal link between Bedford and Milton Keynes which would create a 'ring' (circular route) for boaters, navigable in 2 weeks. We will also look to include in the District Plan (and encourage in Neighbourhood Plans) policies which encourage new developments to 'add value' to river frontages for both visual and amenity benefit.
- 4.5.6 Finally we will survey rural businesses, particular food and drink businesses to see what they require to develop and how they see themselves in terms of the overall development the sector. We will also explore opportunities to create 'clusters' of artisan producers of crafts or foods, to support the local network of Farmers Markets.
- 4.5.7 *Summary of actions:*
- *Continue to support DNV via core funding and staff resources and assistance with grant-aid applications*
  - *Ensure that DNV is strongly represented in the Rushden Lakes visitor centre and any county-based tourism promotion initiatives*
  - *Work to promote East Northamptonshire projects within the Nene Valley Festival and Nenescape Programme*
  - *Develop and implement landmark sculpture plan and install pilot sculpture*
  - *Work with Rockingham Forest Trust to maximise the impact of activities at Stanwick Lakes for the local economy*
  - *Working with partners to exploit new or existing opportunities where these will generate a regional or wider visitor demand which will support development of the local visitor economy.*
  - *Working with our Town and Parish Councils to encourage the development of local tourism plans, where appropriate, which can complement the wider activity of DNV and their holistic plans for their towns.*
  - *Allocate capital funds to continue the implementation of the Greenway between Wellingborough Station and Stanwick Lakes*
  - *Work with partners to secure the replacement of the Islip footbridge over the River Nene*
  - *Carry out a survey of rural businesses to see how the council can assist further with their development*
  - *Look at opportunities for developing a water space strategy*
  - *Ensuring through District Plan (and Neighbourhood Plans) that we ensure developments (housing or commercial) link to and enhance the river corridor where possible.*

## 4.6 Boosting the Skills Base – of local business and communities.

4.6.1 It is clear that there is an emerging skill shortage in the SEMLEP area despite projected higher than English average growth in the working age population (16-64). The expected requirement is for 66,000 new jobs by 2026 (plus approximately 374,000 vacancies arising from retirement of older workers). Key areas where the gaps are likely to be largest locally are:

- health and social care
- mechanical engineering
- manufacturing operatives
- skilled drivers

The council will work with employers in key growth sectors to better understand their skills needs and with partners in education and training to increase the skills required to fill these gaps, as well as making provision for additional housing for these new workers and explore how best to unlock the potential of older residents..

4.6.2 Locally, the high levels of growth we are planning in housing and other development will create a rise in demand for employees with construction skills. It is estimated that employment in this sector locally will need to rise by 10% over the period 2016-21 due to high levels of planned development aligned with the government's stated desire to increase levels of house building even further. This has raised concerns that the sub-region will not have a sufficient supply of skilled workers, as well as those able to progress to higher level occupations such as project management, technical engineering, positions emerging in the sustainability field and building logistics. However, it is possible that there is a construction skills oversupply at level 2 but undersupply at level 3 and above. When combined with the insights of the Farmer review of construction, which notes the difficulty of recruiting young people into the profession, there is a risk that local economic growth could be seriously impeded by a lack of skilled employees. This could also be an opportunity for the only Further Education provision in the district – the Moulton College centre at Higham Ferrers, which specialises in construction training.

4.6.3 In the short-medium term there is also a potential challenge to our town centre retail businesses from recruitment at Rushden Lakes. This is likely to attract experienced retail staff from surrounding town centres, which could in turn create significant employment issues for the predominately independent businesses in those centres. While we will work through the Rushden Lakes Working Party led by Rushden Town Council (which will include the local Job Centre) to assist in the organisation of local recruitment fairs, it is probable that additional support will be required to facilitate the training of replacement employees.

4.6.4 As noted in section 3.3, young people will play an important role in filling the skills gaps in future years. This council has a particular role to play because of its knowledge of local businesses in helping facilitate links between businesses and education providers and supporting direct employer engagement with schools. This engagement will focus on promoting businesses requirements and opportunities to young people and influencing the value placed on apprenticeships so they are not seen as second best to academic routes. Actions could include:

- facilitating local apprenticeships fairs to match people to jobs and raise aspirations
- requiring the inclusion of construction apprenticeships in all major development

schemes, including higher level apprenticeships where possible

- encouraging local employers to provide basic employment skills training or work experience to help young people prepare for work.
- Work in partnership with local further education and training providing to meet local skills needs

4.6.5 The council has also itself employed 13 apprentices over the past 5 years. The aim of these apprenticeships is to:

- Provide development opportunities for local people.
- Establish a talent pipeline to help fill future ENC jobs.
- Help to deliver cost-effective administration.

Three of these apprentices are still in training but six have gone on to external employment or further training whilst four have found permanent roles with the council. All of these apprenticeships have been in Level 2 Business Administration. However, to coincide with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, we are now considering whether higher level apprenticeships might be appropriate to continue the council's tradition of 'growing its own' planning and environmental services officers.

4.6.6 One of the issues that the council's recruitment of apprenticeships has highlighted is that of the difficulty of some young people in getting to Thrapston from their homes in the district if they don't have access to public transport. It is probable that we are not the only employer in the District affected by this and the Scrutiny Committee Panel reviewing public transport is looking into possible solutions.

4.6.7 Finally, although the council's procurement spend is relatively small compared to other public sector bodies in the area, the council will explore the opportunities under the Public Services (Social Value) Act under which public service commissioning can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits

4.6.8 *Summary of actions*

- *Meet with key existing and growth sector employers locally to understand future jobs demand and barriers to recruitment*
- *Work with partners, including local further education and training providers, to explore ways of matching need to delivery, including facilitating local apprenticeship fairs for young people (and their parents) and promoting the Apprentice Ambassadors and*
- *Work with partners to ensure that recruitment events are held in the area for any significant new employment developments*
- *Work with local retailers and other partners to facilitate retail training for local people to accommodate additional employment demand from Rushden Lakes*
- *Work with Moulton College to increase local training for constructions skills, particularly at higher levels and through major developments*
- Continue to provide council apprenticeships and building in pathways to higher level apprenticeships where possible
- *Supporting the Apprentice Ambassadors Scheme where current council apprentices promote apprenticeships to individuals and parents in schools, at careers events etc*

4.7 We will deliver the above actions in accordance with the Action Plan in Appendix D. Responsibility for the development of this plan will be the responsibility of the Head of Economic and Commercial Development.

## 5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Following approval of this strategy, priority will be given to wider engagement of businesses by the Head of Economic and Commercial Development, and the development of a marketing strategy with partners to promote East Northamptonshire as a positive location for business.
  
- 5.2 Note that whilst 4 years is a short time to embed significant change in the local economy, because of the potential significant changes ahead for the national economy It is therefore proposed that a significant review is undertaken in late 2018 to ensure that it continues to provide the most appropriate focus for local activity and support for economic growth in the District.

## Appendix A – SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Small Business Rates exemption extension boost to local SME economy
- High London area costs combined with good location/access driving local economic growth

### Weaknesses

- High level of out-commuting
- Lack of hotel or other bed space, particularly in south of district, to support overnight business or tourism-related activity.

### Opportunities

- Localisation of NNDR
- Membership of SEMLEP – better SME support
- Positive ripple effect from Rushden Lakes
- Greater demand for UK short breaks and holiday as a result of Brexit
- Promotion of companies that have relocated to ENC
- Proposals for Cambridgeshire –Milton Keynes- Oxford Corridor of Growth may stretch to East Northamptonshire

### Threats

- Funding schemes focused on areas with devolution deals
- Centralised policy for NNDR reliefs
  - Demand for more business-focused services as result
  - Call for reduction in NNDR rates by businesses
- Change in LEP role/offer
- Housing offer doesn't match employment offer and/or ambitions
- Uncertainties during Brexit and impact on funding streams for infrastructure and farming
- Plethora of uncoordinated local tourism offers
- Lots of areas chasing high quality employment
- Skill base of residents doesn't match local demand
- Impact of (longer term use of) Molesworth Airfield Site currently being considered by HCA
- Lack of council and SEMLEP support for Midlands Engine and Combined Authority discussions may reduce funding opportunities

## Appendix B

<b>Key District Economic Facts and Figures</b>	
<i>Please note that these are the most up to date figures available – dates vary because data assembled from a variety of sources</i>	
Size of district (hectares)	50,982
Population (2015 ONS midyear population estimates )	89,700 (9.5% increase in last 10 years)
Job Density (NOMIS – 2015 density of jobs per resident aged 16-64)	0.59 (East Midlands 0.77, GB 0.82)
No of residents in employment (including self-employed ) (June 2016 Nomis)	46,200 (up from 44,400 in June 2013)
% of self employed within economically active pop (June 2016 Nomis)	16.6%
Average (median) weekly residents' earnings in East Northamptonshire 2016	£480.80 (England £442.30)
Average (median) weekly Workplace earnings in East Northamptonshire 2016	£417.00 (England £441.90)
% of working age qualified at NVQ level 4 or above (2015)	27.7%
Number of businesses paying business rates (March 16)	2423 (up from 2312 in Nov 2012)
% of small businesses with rateable value <£12,000 and qualifying for small business rates relief (March 16)	1056 (up from 890 in Nov 2012)
Percentage of residents of working age claiming Job Seekers Allowance (May 16)	1.0% (Average level of mainly rural districts)
Percentage of population of working age	61%
Young people aged 16-24 not in Employment, Education or Training	123 (May 15) 211 (Sept 12)
Estimated visitor spend (2010 – estimate – latest available data via STEAM – see glossary)	£81.8m

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## Appendix C – High level action plan

Priority	Work Streams	Specific Actions 2017/2018	ENC Lead	Timeframe
<b>1. Invest East Northamptonshire</b>	WS1 - Secure delivery of strategic employment sites	a) Secure employment sites via District and Neighbourhood plans	PB	Local Plan timetable Feb 2018  Neighbourhood Plans – as and when opportunity presents
		b) Feed into Tresham Village Masterplan to secure economic development infrastructure	AL	Draft Masterplan due summer 17
		c) Produce ENC Asset Management/ Site Acquisition strategy and bring forward priority site	GM	Nov 2017
	WS2 - Secure infrastructure investment	a) Lobby for key infrastructure investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chowns Mill Roundabout Upgrade</li> <li>○ A43/ A6 Roundabout, dualling of A45 from Stanwick to Thrapston</li> </ul>	DO  DO	Ongoing
		b) Ensure economic infrastructure is reflected in the local infrastructure plan as part of local planning process	PB	Local Plan timetable Feb 2018

		c) Contribute to site allocations work as part of local plan to ensure appropriate housing mix to support economic priorities	GM	As part of Housing SPD Feb 18
		d) Work with NCC to improve broadband and mobile telephony infrastructure	DO	2018 for Phase 2 rollout (95% coverage in district for superfast broadband)
	WS3 – Support inward investment	a) Work with partners to produce marketing plan for key sites and wider area to attract inward investment	GM	October 17
		b) Work with partners, including landowners/developers of strategic employment sites, to set up inward investment framework for the District	GM	October 17
<b>2. Generating quality places</b>	WS4 - Town Centre Revitalisation	a) Scope Town Vision and action plan each town as part of, or in parallel to Neighbourhood or District Plan as agreed locally	GM	From Spring 17
		b) Explore opportunities to improve digital and marketing skills of town centre retailers	GM	From Autumn 2017
	WS5 - Public Realm Improvements	c) Commission Public Realm Framework as SPD to the Local Plan	PB	As part of Local Plan Timetable

<b>3. Nurturing business growth</b>	WS6 - Deliver Incubator Centre	Secure site, funding and support	GM	Dec 17
		Develop and deliver commissioning strategy for build, operation and business support	GM	March 18
	WS7 - Aligning council services and assets	Develop and deliver business engagement/ events programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiting Business Account Manager posts and establishing lead points of contact with businesses and business advisors</li> <li>publication of Business Charter</li> <li>establishing Business Champions Group</li> <li>exploring opportunities to establish formal business partnership with major businesses based in the district</li> <li>promoting the availability of Leader funding whilst this funding stream remains</li> </ul>	GM	Dec 17
		Produce ENC Asset Management/ Site Acquisition strategy and bring forward priority site	GM	Nov 2017
		Develop and circulate business rates information pack	GM	March 18
		Explore scope for supporting local economy via procurement process	GM	May 18

<b>4. Increased Tourism Spending</b>	WS8 – Supporting Destination Nene Valley	Secure DMO status for Destination Nene Valley	SM	April 18
		Secure strong representation of DNC in Rushden Lakes visitor centre and links to countywide marketing initiatives	SM	Sept 17
		Develop and deliver landmark sculpture plan and pilot scheme	SM	March 19
		Work with Rockingham Forest Trust to maximise economic and lifestyle benefits of Stanwick Lakes	JS	Ongoing
		Work with partners to exploit new or existing opportunities where these will generate a regional or wider visitor demand which will support development of the local visitor economy	SD	Ongoing
		Drive Greenway initiative and support with strategic match capital funding	JS	Ongoing
		Look at opportunities for developing a water space strategy	SM	March 18
		Ensuring through District and Neighbourhood developments (housing or commercial) link to and enhance the river corridor where possible.	PB	To Local Plan Timetable

		Working with our Town and Parish Councils to encourage the development of local tourism plans	SM	Ongoing
		Secure delivery of key tourism infrastructure:	SM	Summer 17
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Islip footbridge</li> <li>• New Bedford Milton Keynes Canal (as part of Nene &amp; Ouse waterway 'ring')</li> </ul>	SM	Ongoing
<b>5. Boosting the Skills Base</b>	WS9 - Develop next generation	Work with local HE and FE providers to improve access to skills training, including Moulton College re construction sector	GM	From Summer 17
		Drive delivery of ENC apprenticeship training programme	AA	Ongoing
		Continue support for Dragons Apprentice Challenge initiative	JS	Ongoing
	WS10 - Connect workforce to economic opportunities	Work with Rushden Lakes & DWP to co-ordinate recruitment events	JS	From Spring 17
		Explore opportunities for sector based academies to support new employment developments	GM	From 2018
	<b>Supporting delivery</b>	WS13 – Supporting Delivery	Undertake business survey to highlight specific sector/geographical needs	GM

		Produce local skills strategy to support this strategy and feed these into partner strategies	GM	Summer 19
		Ensure local and strategic policies and strategies reflect ENC economic priorities	GM	Sept 18
		Support development of sector based local groups	GM	Dec 18
		Set up and delivery landowners/ developers/agents forum to enable sites to be matched to inward investment opportunities	GM	Dec 17
		Explore commercialisation opportunities for all council services	GM	Ongoing

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## Appendix D – Glossary of terms

Use this section to give definitions to any words that require explanation – especially if this is a public document. If you can't avoid jargon or technical terms, this is the place to explain them.

Term	Definition
<b>BEIS</b>	The Department for Business, Energy, Innovation & Skills is the government department for economic growth. It invests in skills and education to promote trade, boost innovation and help people to start and grow a business. BEIS is also looking at reducing the impact of regulation.
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy is a new levy that local authorities in England and Wales can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The levy is designed to be fairer, faster and more transparent than the previous system of agreeing planning obligations between local councils and developers. If introduced by the council, it will partly replace S106 agreements (see below).
<b>Circular Economy</b>	A circular economy is an industrial economy that promotes greater resource productivity aiming to reduce waste and avoid pollution by design or intention. Relying on system-wide innovation, it aims to redefine products and services to design waste out from the start, while minimising negative impacts through forward planning for end of life reuse.
<b>DIT</b>	Department for International Trade (replaced UKTI) as the lead body for co-ordinating overseas investment in the UK
<b>DNV</b>	Destination Nene Valley
<b>Educational Qualification Levels</b>	<p>A level 1 qualification is equivalent to GCSEs grade D to G, a BTEC level 1, an NVQ level1 or a Foundation Diploma.</p> <p>A Level 4 is a qualification such as an NVQ level 4, a BTEC level 4, an HNC or a Certificate of higher education.</p> <p>HNDs rank at level 5, Bachelor degrees at level 6 and Masters' Degrees at level 7.</p> <p>For the purposes of reporting most statistics are collected as Level 4 and above.</p>
<b>Greenway</b>	The East Northamptonshire Greenway is a project which aims to create a network of cycle and footpaths across and along the length of the River Nene Valley from Northampton to Peterborough.
<b>LBRO</b>	Local Better Regulation Office, which was dissolved on 1 April 2012. Its functions are now exercised by the Regulatory Delivery directorate, an independent unit within the BEIS (see above)

<b>LDO</b>	A Local Development Order (LDO) is a planning tool which aims to simplify the planning requirements for development within a defined area. It is intended to help speed up the planning system by removing the need for a planning application by giving specific permitted development rights to an area. The LDO therefore allows the planning authority to, in effect, grant permission for a particular development or for a particular class of development.
<b>LEADER</b>	LEADER is an EU funding programme. LEADER stands for Liaison Entre Actions de Development Rural - integrated action for rural development.
<b>NEP/ SEMLEP</b>	A Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a voluntary partnership between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within its local area. Previously East Northamptonshire's LEP was the Northamptonshire Economic Partnership (NEP). Following the decision of this council and the Borough Council of Wellingborough to also join the South East Midlands LEP (SEMLEP), the two LEPs formally merged in Autumn 2016. The north of the District also borders the Greater Peterborough Greater Cambridgeshire LEP.
<b>NCC</b>	Northamptonshire County Council.
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training – usually referring to young people aged under 25 years.
<b>NNDR</b>	National Non-Domestic Rates – commonly known as business rates
<b>NOMIS</b>	Office of National Statistics official labour market data base
<b>NJCS</b>	North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031. The Strategy has been produced and approved by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee, which has representatives from East Northamptonshire Council, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough Borough Councils, and NCC. The most relevant policies are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 12 Town Centres and Town Centre Uses</li> <li>• Policy 14 Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity</li> <li>• Policy 22 Delivering Economic Prosperity</li> <li>• Policy 23 Distribution of New Jobs</li> <li>• Policy 24 Logistics</li> <li>• Policy 25 Rural Economic Development and Diversification</li> <li>• Policy 27 Rockingham Enterprise Area</li> <li>• Policy 33 Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension</li> <li>• Policy 35 Land at Nene Valley Farm, Northampton Road, Rushden</li> </ul>

<b>RAMSAR site</b>	A wetland of international wildlife importance, designated under the Ramsar Convention. The flooded former gravel pits near Rushden are RAMSAR designated for over-wintering bird as well as being a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EC Birds Directive (for wintering birds), and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (for breeding birds, wetland habitats and invertebrate interest plus wintering birds)												
<b>SME</b>	<p>Small – medium enterprises –generally defined as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="595 477 1493 723"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Headcount</th> <th>Turnover</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Medium</td> <td>&lt; 250</td> <td>£ 41 Million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Small</td> <td>&lt; 50</td> <td>£ 8.2 Million</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Micro</td> <td>&lt; 10</td> <td>£ 1.7 Million</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Headcount	Turnover	Medium	< 250	£ 41 Million	Small	< 50	£ 8.2 Million	Micro	< 10	£ 1.7 Million
Category	Headcount	Turnover											
Medium	< 250	£ 41 Million											
Small	< 50	£ 8.2 Million											
Micro	< 10	£ 1.7 Million											
<b>S106 Agreement</b>	S106 agreements take their name from Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. S106s agreements relate to monies paid by developers to Local Planning Authorities in order to offset the costs of the external effects of development. For example, if a developer were to build 100 new houses, there would be effects on local schools, roads etc., which the Local Authority would have to deal with. In that situation, there might be a Section 106 agreement as part of the granting of planning permission and the developer might agree to make a contribution towards the provision of new schools or traffic calming on local roads.												
<b>STEM</b>	STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are the foundations of the industrial and corporate world and provide a a skill-set that is in high demand by employers.												
<b>STEAM</b>	STEAM stands for the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor - this is a methodology for estimating tourism spend in a geographic area. The STEAM methodology has been used by a range of local authorities and other economic bodies in the last decade.												