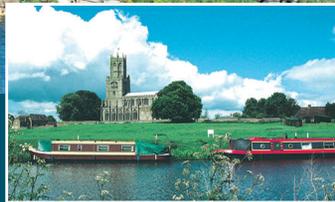
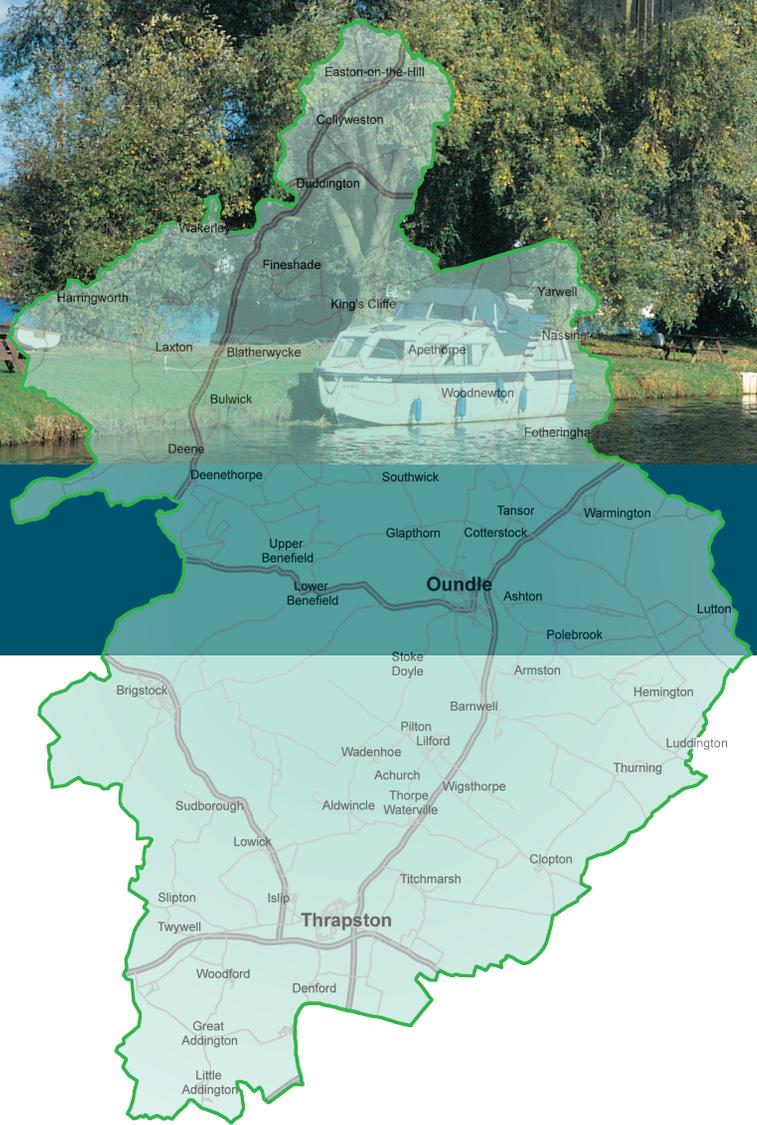




East Northamptonshire Council

Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan



ADOPTED JULY 2011

Foreword



We are pleased to introduce the Adopted Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan.

The Council has considered the document over a period of time and it has been prepared under the framework of the 2008 North Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

The Plan supports the Council's Corporate Priorities. We want sustainable growth, which preserves the character of our historic towns and villages and provides further employment opportunities. Supporting infrastructure and services are also required alongside development.

The policies of the Local Development Framework will be kept under review to ensure that East Northamptonshire continues to be a place where people can live and work, where they can enjoy the environment, and where there is an improving quality of life for the community.

The Plan was Adopted on 18th July 2011 and is now the main site allocations plan for Oundle, Thrapston and the surrounding rural areas.

**Councillor Steven North (Leader of the Council) and
Councillor David Brackenbury (Chairman of Planning Policy Committee)**

CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Forword	1	Policy 23	Rural Buildings – General Approach 63
The Layout of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan	4	Policy 24	Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside 64
1.0 INTRODUCTION	7	Policy 25	Farm Diversification 65
2.0 AREA PORTRAIT	15	Policy 26	Lorry Parking 66
3.0 VISION AND OUTCOMES	21	8.0 OUNDLE – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS	67
4.0 AREA WIDE SPATIAL POLICIES	25	Policy OUN1	Infrastructure 68
Policy 1	Settlement Roles 28	Policy OUN2	East Road, Oundle 69
Policy 2	Windfall Development in Settlements 29	Policy OUN3	Housing Allocations in Oundle (Phase 1) 71
Policy 3	Comprehensive Development 31	Policy OUN4	Housing Allocations in Oundle (Phase 2) 73
Policy 4	Green Infrastructure 33	Policy OUN5	Prince William School 74
Policy 5	Transport Network 35	Policy OUN6	Fletton House, Glapthorn Road 76
Policy 6	Residential Parking Standards 36	9.0 THRAPSTON – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS	77
Policy 7	Flood Risk 37	Policy THR1	Infrastructure 78
5.0 ENVIRONMENT POLICIES	38	Policy THR2	Regeneration of Thrapston Town Centre 79
Policy 8	Housing Mix 38	Policy THR3	Thrapston Regeneration Sites 79
Policy 9	Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest 40	Policy THR4	Relocating Existing Businesses around Thrapston 80
Policy 10	Protection of Local Sites of Conservation Interest and Designation of Local Nature Reserves 43	Policy THR5	Thrapston South 85
Policy 11	Enhancing Biodiversity 43	10.0 RURAL AREAS – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS	84
Policy 12	Considerate Construction 45	Policy KCF1	Kingsmead Small and Medium Enterprises Site, King's Cliffe 85
6.0 SOCIAL POLICIES	46	Policy KCF2	Willow Lane/Wood Road 86
Policy 13	Affordable Housing Requirements 48	Policy NAS1	Church Street, Nassington 88
Policy 14	Rural Exceptions Housing 49	Policy WAR1	Eaglethorpe Barns, Warmington 89
Policy 15	Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities 52	Policy BC1	Brigstock Camp 90
7.0 ECONOMIC POLICIES	54	Policy DA1	Deenethorpe Airfield 91
Policy 16	Protected Employment Areas 55	Policy AP1	Addington Park Industrial Estate, Little Addington 92
Policy 17	Employment Sites Occupied by Single Businesses 56		
Policy 18	Town Centres 58		
Policy 19	Water Related Facilities along the River Nene 59		
Policy 20	Riverside Hotel, near Oundle 60		
Policy 21	Oundle Marina 61		
Policy 22	Lilford Park 62		

CONTENTS

	Page		Page	
APPENDICES		FIGURES AND TABLES		
Appendix 1	Local Plan policies superseded following adoption of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (18 July 2011)	93	Figure 1 Coverage of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy	9
Appendix 2	Saved policies from 1996 Local Plan	94	Figure 2 Local Development Framework	10
Appendix 3	Current List of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest (Policy 13)	95	Figure 3 Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan – Process and Timescale	11
Appendix 4	Nature Conservation Designations	96	Figure 4 Coverage of East Northamptonshire Area Plans	16
Appendix 5	Protected Employment Sites	97	Table 1 Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities – Local Provision Standards	52
Appendix 6	Sites identified by PMP as high value (in terms of quality and accessibility) or of good/ very good quality against the benchmark quality indicator	98		
PROPOSALS MAPS (TO REAR OF DOCUMENT)				

**Every effort will be made to ensure this document is accessible to all.
Please contact Planning Policy on 01832 742010 for assistance and further information.**



The Layout of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan

Plan policies are developed under the headings “Area Wide Spatial Policies”, “Environment Policies”, “Social Policies” and “Economic Policies”. Site specific allocations are incorporated into separate sections dealing with Oundle, Thrapston, and the Rural Areas.

The Plan is made up of the following elements:

- **Introductory and supporting text** – setting the scene in terms of the evidence base and the context of higher level national, regional or Core Strategy policies; outlining key reasons and factors that entail the need for suitable local policies; and setting out a Vision and 9 key outcomes to be achieved.
- **Spatial policies** – these set out how the vision and outcomes will be achieved. Policies do not repeat national, regional or Core Strategy policies but are designed to add value and local distinctiveness.
- **Monitoring framework** – each policy is supported by indicators and targets, which will be monitored annually through the preparation of the Council’s Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Side notes are used to provide references to related survey and policy documents, in order to show how proposals have developed from an evidence base and are in conformity with other policies and strategies.

The Plan, incorporating Inspector’s Modifications (dated 8 July 2009) was initially presented to the Planning Policy Committee on 27 July 2009. At this time, the Committee felt unable to adopt the Plan and the matter was then referred to the Secretary of State. Subsequently, however, the Full Council reviewed the situation and came to a view that the Plan should be adopted with immediate effect, on 18 July 2011. The adopted version of the Plan is that presented to the earlier Planning Policy Committee on 27 July 2009. As such, it does not include references to recent changes to national planning policy; e.g. the replacement of Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 4: “Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms” by Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4: “Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth”, and the replacement of PPG15 and PPG16 by PPS5: “Planning for the Historic Environment”.

Proposals Map

Under the legislation (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and associated regulations, the Proposals Map is classified as a separate document to the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP), within the Local Development Framework. The Adopted Proposals Map shows areas of protection, e.g. statutory land use designations, areas at risk of flooding and allocated sites for specific land uses and development proposals. It forms a critical tool in explaining and understanding specific policies and proposals in the Plan. For practical reasons, a copy of the Adopted Proposals Map as this relates to the RNOTP area has been bound into the printed RNOTP document but it does not form part of it. After the next DPD applying to East Northamptonshire has been adopted the Proposals Map will need to be amended to cover the proposals in that document also. It will thereafter be kept as a separate document within the LDF.

The Proposals Map is in a plastic wallet at the end of the document, with the Inset maps for Oundle and Thrapston on its reverse. Inset maps for Oundle and Thrapston town centres and the villages can be found just before the plastic wallet.

Every effort will be made to ensure this document is accessible to all. Please contact Planning Policy on 01832 742010 for assistance and further information.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan is a site specific proposals document, based on the framework set by the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy¹ (hereafter referred to as the “Core Strategy”. This Plan sets out the vision and detailed policies for the development, regeneration and Planned growth of Thrapston and Oundle Rural Service Centres; the development of King’s Cliffe as a Local Service Centre; and the sustainable development of communities in the rural north of East Northamptonshire. It includes the identification of sites for housing, employment, recreation and other land uses and contains policies relating to specific areas where individual development, conservation or design considerations apply.

¹ *North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted June 2008)*

1.2 The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan area is part of the North Northamptonshire Growth Area, which is identified for significant change and new development in the Government’s Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM 2003)². It is also adjacent to the Cambridge – Peterborough Growth Area and has close geographical and functional links with the towns of Peterborough, Kettering and Corby. The planned growth at these locations needs to be complementary to the Plan area.

² *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (ODPM/Communities and Local Government, February 2003)*

1.3 To provide a robust evidence base, research on a range of issues has been undertaken. This is to ensure that the Plan proposals represent a considered and appropriate way forward. Evidence base studies include a Housing Market Assessment, Employment Land Review, Market Towns and Rural Regeneration Study and an Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Settlement Planning, with other more recent studies such as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Assessment of Potential Housing Sites being completed after submission of the Plan (January 2008). The Plan also needs to conform to other policies and strategies already in place, such as the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8)³; the Core Strategy for North Northamptonshire; and the East Northamptonshire Sustainable Communities Strategy⁴.

³ *East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009)*

⁴ *Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 – 2015 for East Northamptonshire (ENable, 2008)*

What work has already been done?

1.4 A crucial element in the production of the Plan has been early stakeholder and community involvement. Key stages to date in the preparation of this Plan are as follows:

Throughout 2004 – A series of “Design for the Future” discussion papers were produced to encourage public involvement in defining key issues. These included papers covering Thrapston and the surrounding area; Oundle and the surrounding area; and the Rural North including King’s Cliffe.

⁵ *Design for the Future – Your Aspirations (September 2005)*

⁶ *Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Preferred Options (January 2006)*

⁷ *Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Preferred Options: Summary of Consultation (September 2006)*

⁸ *Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan - Summary Responses (December 2006)*

September 2005 – A feedback paper was published, called “Your Aspirations”⁵. This summarised the responses from the discussion paper consultation.

January 2006 – A six week consultation period commenced on the Preferred Options⁶ for the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan. This document was informed by the findings of the Design for the Future consultation and by evidence base studies already completed.

September 2006 – The findings of the Preferred Options consultation process were published in a “Summary of Consultation”⁷ document.

December 2006 – A “Summary Responses”⁸ document was published, which provides an overview of the Council’s main responses to the various issues raised during consultation on the Preferred Options.

January 2008 – July 2009 – Independent Examination into the RNOTP; including statutory consultations and Examination Hearing sessions, and finally delivery of the Examination Inspector’s Report.

July 2011 – Adoption of Plan.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

⁹ *Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan - Sustainability Appraisal Report (submitted January 2008, updated February 2009)*

¹⁰ *Statutory Instruments 2004 No 1633 – Environmental Protection: The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (OPSI, July 2004)*

¹¹ *Statutory Instruments 1994 No 2716 – The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (OPSI, October 1994)*

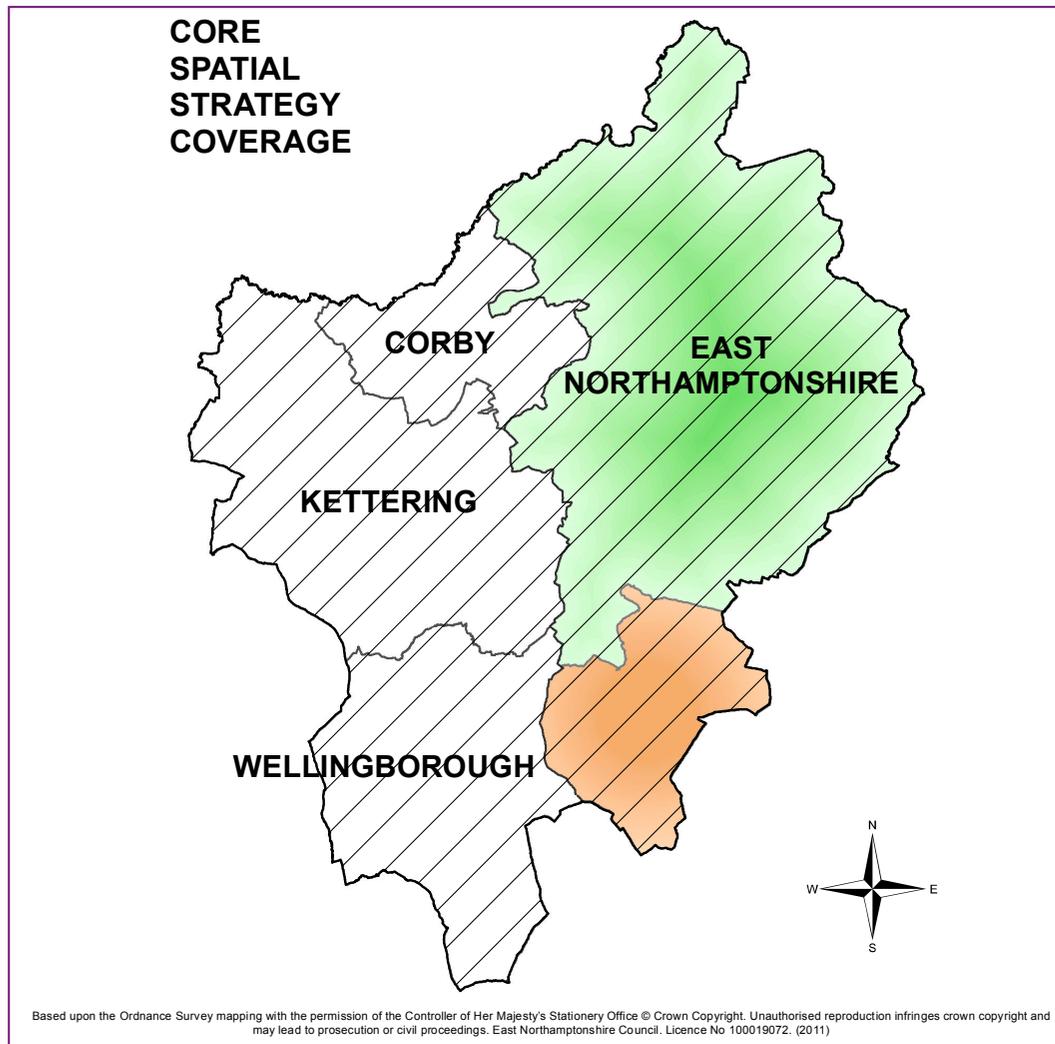
¹² *Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan – Appropriate Assessment Screening (submitted April 2008, updated February 2009)*

1.5 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA)⁹ has been prepared, to ensure that the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. As part of this, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has also been carried out (in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC¹⁰) to “assess the effects of certain Plans and programmes on the environment”. In accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC¹¹, the necessary “Appropriate Assessment” survey work¹² has been undertaken to ascertain the potential effects of the Plan on the special interest of the Nene Valley Gravel Pits (proposed as a site of European importance for nature conservation).

1.6 There will only be a presumption in favour of those projects within the District that would otherwise be in accordance with the overall Plan. Since ‘European Sites’ enjoy statutory protection specific policies in respect of these sites are not included in this Plan (in accordance with PPS9). However, according to the precautionary principle enshrined within the Habitats Regulations this Plan refers to the Appropriate Assessment of projects for the benefit of users of this document.

1.7 In order to ensure that there are no adverse effects on Nene Valley Gravel Pits pSPA/ pRamsar and Rutland Water SPA/ Ramsar, from any of the policies or objectives contained within the Plan, or any proposals which could occur as a result of the Plan, any proposed development likely to have a significant effect on these two internationally important sites will be subject to a thorough ecological assessment. An Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations will need to be made in order to inform development control decisions. Where it cannot be demonstrated that a development proposal will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a site of European or international importance to nature conservation, such development is not supported by this Plan and will not be permitted.

Figure 1 – Coverage of the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy



Where this Plan sits in the planning system

1.8 This Plan conforms to the policies and proposals contained within national planning policy and guidance and the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East Midlands. It forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the area, which is made up of the RSS and the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework (LDF). In turn, the LDF is made up of the Core Strategy, which contains strategic policies for North Northamptonshire, on which more detailed plans such as this Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan are based. Coverage of the Core Strategy is shown on **Figure 1**.

1.9 The Core Strategy, this Plan and the site allocations development plan document(s) for the south of the District (i.e. the area of the District not covered by the RNOTP) will, once adopted, supersede those policies from the 1996 East Northamptonshire District Local Plan that are still retained as part of the Development Plan (the “saved” policies). A list of the remaining Local Plan policies and the policies within this Plan which will supersede them, can be found at Appendix 1.

1.10 The documents that will be used in considering development proposals are shown in **Figure 2** and the process and timescale for the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan is shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 2 – Local Development Framework

National policy is set out in the Governments Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, covering a range of issues of national importance. Regional policy is set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8), which forms part of the Development Plan for the area.

The Local Development Framework forms the rest of the Development Plan for the area and is made up of the following documents:

The **Local Development Scheme** is the project plan which sets out our 3-year timetable for producing our planning documents.

The **Statement of Community Involvement** sets out how we intend to involve the community in preparing the new documents and in the consideration of planning applications.

The **North Northamptonshire Joint Core Spatial Strategy** looks at key issues such as what housing and other land uses should be planned for, the role of the various settlements, how we can protect the environment and reduce the impacts of climate change.

The Area Plans are Site Specific Proposals documents that identify development sites, closely guided by the Core Strategy. Sites will be identified for specific uses based on a range of planning criteria

The Proposals Map will show the sites identified for future development and the areas to which the policies apply, on an ordnance survey base map.

Supplementary Planning Documents will expand on policies and provide detailed supporting information. These are prepared to address particular issues, as necessary.

Local Development Documents will be subject to **Sustainability Appraisals** which examine the economic, social and environmental impact of the proposed policies.

An **Annual Monitoring Report** is produced each year and shows how we are keeping to our programme and if the Plan's policies are achieving their objectives.

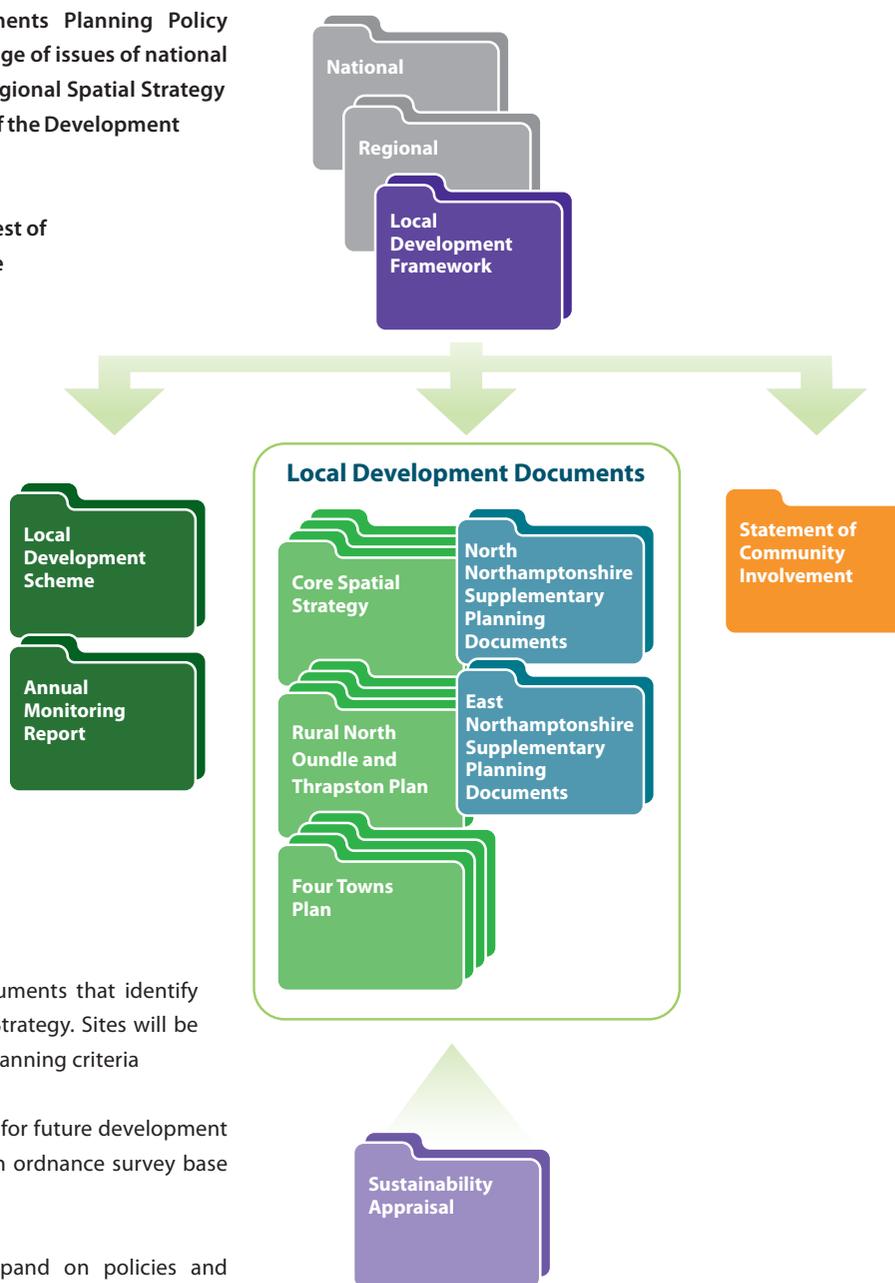
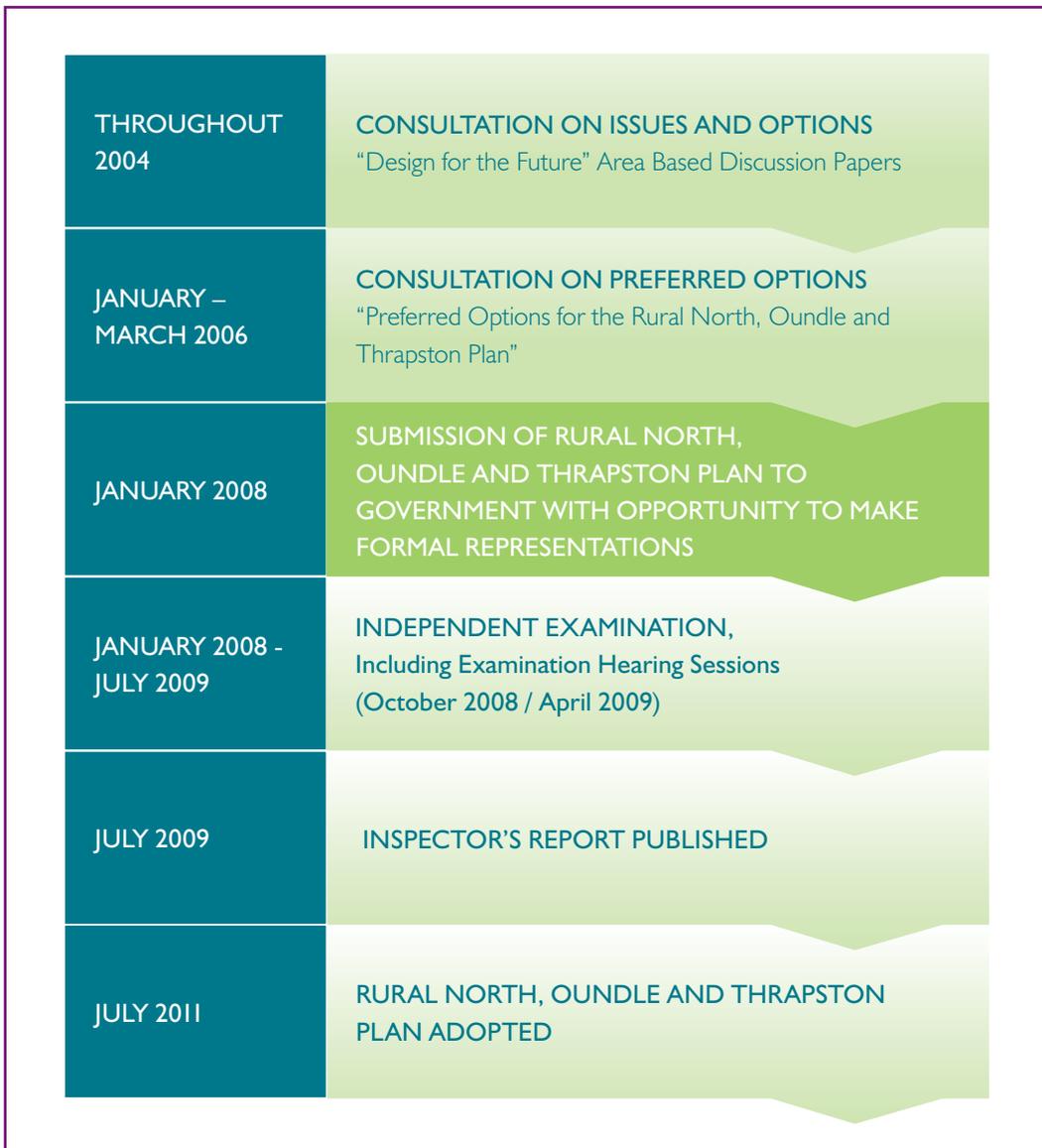


Figure 3 – Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan – Process and Timescale



Delivery, Monitoring and Review

1.11 This is the first Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan, for the period up to 2021. It plans for development against a base date of 2001; therefore some of the housing and employment development has already been completed, or has planning permission. This Plan sets out new proposals for the remaining development that is required up to 2021.

1.12 The new Regional Plan (RSS8) was adopted in March 2009. This will run up to 2026 and supersedes the previous RSS8. A review of the Core Strategy (adopted CSS, paragraph 1.21) was started in February 2009, which will take this to 2026. Similarly, this will be followed by an early review of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan, looking at longer term development proposals for the Plan area.

1.13 There are indicators and targets set out against the Plan proposals¹³. An Annual Monitoring Report, published in December each year, will measure progress against these, which will indicate whether the Plan policies are being implemented as envisaged. Evidence that policies are not working as intended; changes in national and regional policy; or new information and evidence that comes to light, may all trigger a review of the Plan.

1.14 Delivery of the Plan will be through a number of means, including the development control process (the consideration of planning applications); the preparation of other documents such as development briefs; public and private investment in infrastructure and new development; and partnership working with other agencies and organisations. Investment in the area will be coordinated and managed by the North Northants Development Company, which has been established in order to drive the delivery of sustainable growth and the regeneration of communities and places within North Northamptonshire.

1.15 Regeneration proposals are a key part of the strategy in this Plan. Delivering the regeneration of town centre and other individual sites in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston area, is fundamental to the successful implementation of the Plan as a whole. The Council will if necessary not hesitate to use its land assembly powers in bringing forward key regeneration sites in a timely manner.

Housing Implementation Strategy

1.16 In accordance with PPS3 paragraph 62, it is necessary for the RNOTP to set out a housing implementation strategy, in respect of managing the delivery of housing targets over the remainder of the Plan period to 2021. This expected to cover matters of scenario and contingency planning; risk assessment; engaging housebuilders and stakeholders; and triggers for action.

1.17 The general anticipated delivery scenario is for the great majority of new housing to be provided by private house builders on privately owned sites which are allocated in the Plan. Within this general scenario there will be limited interventions by social housing providers in relation to affordable housing.

1.18 Within this general scenario the detail of who the active providers will be is subject to change and there is also the possibility of a more general change in the outlook depending on the outcomes of the current slump in the private housing market.

1.19 The currently perceived potential constraints and attached risks in relation to future housing delivery can be indicated as follows:

- 1** Current decline in purchasing power/ will to invest of potential buyers continuing with resulting low sales levels, lack of turnover and stagnation resulting in low price expectations and low confidence in achieving sales for new build properties introduced to the market.
- 2** This decline being mirrored in a reduced supply and more onerous terms for money supply to finance new house building.
- 3** Withdrawal/ business failure and/ or diversification of existing house builders and related trades resulting in reduced new house building capacity.

- 4 Reduced potential land supply due to land owners holding on to land in the hope of improved land values/ profits after a housing market recovery.
- 5 A shift to increased rental as an ongoing feature with a consequent need for developers and housebuilders to financially re-profile and refund future new house building provision.
- 6 Developers/ housebuilders withdrawing from the process of pursuing existing allocated and bringing forward other potential development sites to full planning permission (together with any other necessary consents) so that there is a lag in recovering new build rates.
- 7 Underpinning work to deal with site specific obstacles and constraints that would normally be resolved through the pre-application planning consent process being put on hold by developers adding to the above risk of a slow response to improved market conditions.

1.20 Risk management to ensure that the risks to future continuing housing supply are adequately identified and assessed will be an ongoing process. Risk management will need to be focussed accordingly. The Annual Monitoring Report will need to address these considerations, and maintaining key stakeholder contact and involvement will also be important.

1.21 Actual variations in starts, completions and planning consents will be monitored in relation to past performance with a view to anticipated changes in future supply. Annual change significantly in excess of a 10% year on year variation from the five year rolling average supply of new houses (552 for the period ending in 2007/8) or the trajectory for future supply would be regarded as a trigger for further management action. The five year average variation from the five year average supply for the period ending in 2007/8 was 11.6%¹⁴.

1.22 The range of actions which are available to the Council to manage the full range of risks outlined above are limited. Key action areas would be:

- Updated housing market assessment and land supply assessments to inform revised action requirements;
- New stakeholder engagement to establish alternatives for improving supply;
- Planning policy and allocation changes as required through early Plan reviews;
- Other appropriate actions.

1.23 The housing trajectory for the District is contained in the Annual Monitoring Report and incorporates estimates of when allocated sites in the Plan area are forecast to deliver the housing targets in the Core Strategy. Notably, outline planning permission for the allocation at Willow Lane/ Wood Road, King's Cliffe (Section 10.0, Policy KCF2) was granted in 2008. Planning applications have also been submitted for Creed Road, Oundle (Section 8.0, Policy OUN3(2)), and most of the Thrapston South allocation (Section 9.0, Policy THR5).

¹⁴ Annual Monitoring Report (East Northamptonshire Council, December 2008)

1.24 Pre-application work, including public engagement, is well advanced for the Ashton Road/ Herne Road (Oundle) site (Section 8.0, Policy OUN3(1)), with submission of a planning application expected imminently. Outside the Plan area itself, major applications have been recently received in respect of possible urban extensions/ site allocations at Raunds, Irthlingborough and Higham Ferrers. In particular, the Council has recently granted planning permission (subject to legal agreement) for over 420 dwellings on sites at Irthlingborough and Higham Ferrers.

1.25 This progress in bringing forward the allocated sites demonstrates that at the local level continuing developer interest in bringing forward these sites provides a basis for the continuing delivery of housing for the remainder of the Plan period. The continued activities of the Council in actively working with stakeholders to bring most major development proposals forward will also help to minimise the risk of deteriorations in market supply.

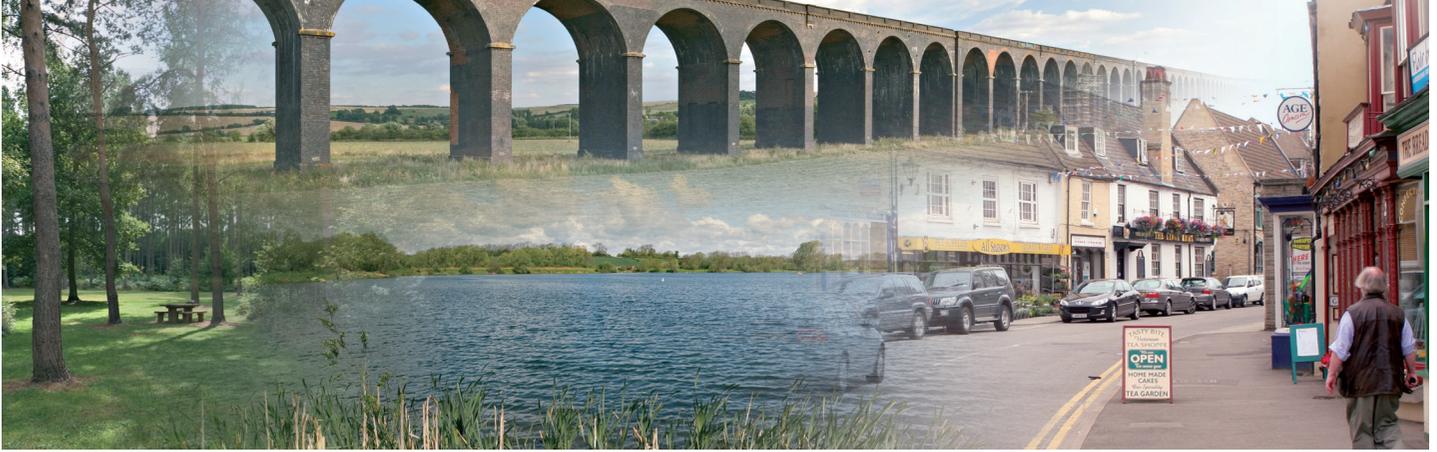
1.26 In order to ensure a continued housing supply in the Plan area, it will be necessary to review this. The CSS Inspector's Report (12 May 2008) stated that while this was generally sound, an early review would be necessary to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to give certainty to the required housing and employment provision (CSS Inspector's Report, paragraph 142).

1.27 The North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit has already begun preliminary work towards undertaking an early review of the CSS and this will be the trigger for an early review of the RNOTP. A draft revision to the LDS timetable was prepared and submitted to the Government Office (GOEM) as part of the December 2008 Annual Monitoring Report. The review of the RNOTP is scheduled to commence during late 2010/ early 2011.

Status of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan

1.28 The adopted Plan, as a "site allocations" Development Plan Document (DPD) should be read in conjunction with the adopted Core Strategy, the two documents combined form the principal DPDs for the Plan area. National policies (i.e. Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes – PPSs and PPGs) and the Regional Plan will also be important material considerations in respect of many development proposals, such as those with the potential to affect statutory designations (e.g. listed buildings, Conservation Areas, SSSIs, Scheduled Ancient Monuments etc).

1.29 Development proposals that prejudice the implementation of the Plan, or the delivery of its Vision and Outcomes, will not be viewed favourably.



2.0 AREA PORTRAIT

Introduction – Background to the Plan area

2.1 In this Plan, site specific allocations (Section 8) are divided into Oundle; Thrapston; and the Rural North (King's Cliffe, other villages and countryside). The Plan area is made up of the wards of Oundle, Thrapston Lakes, Thrapston Market, King's Forest, Barnwell, Lower Nene, Lyveden, Prebendal, Fineshade, and Woodford, comprising 43 parishes. The preparation of separate site allocations proposals for the four towns of Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Rushden and Raunds in the south of the District, together with the adjoining villages is currently in its early stages. The extent of coverage for the RNOTP and other DPDs across East Northamptonshire can be seen in **Figure 4**.

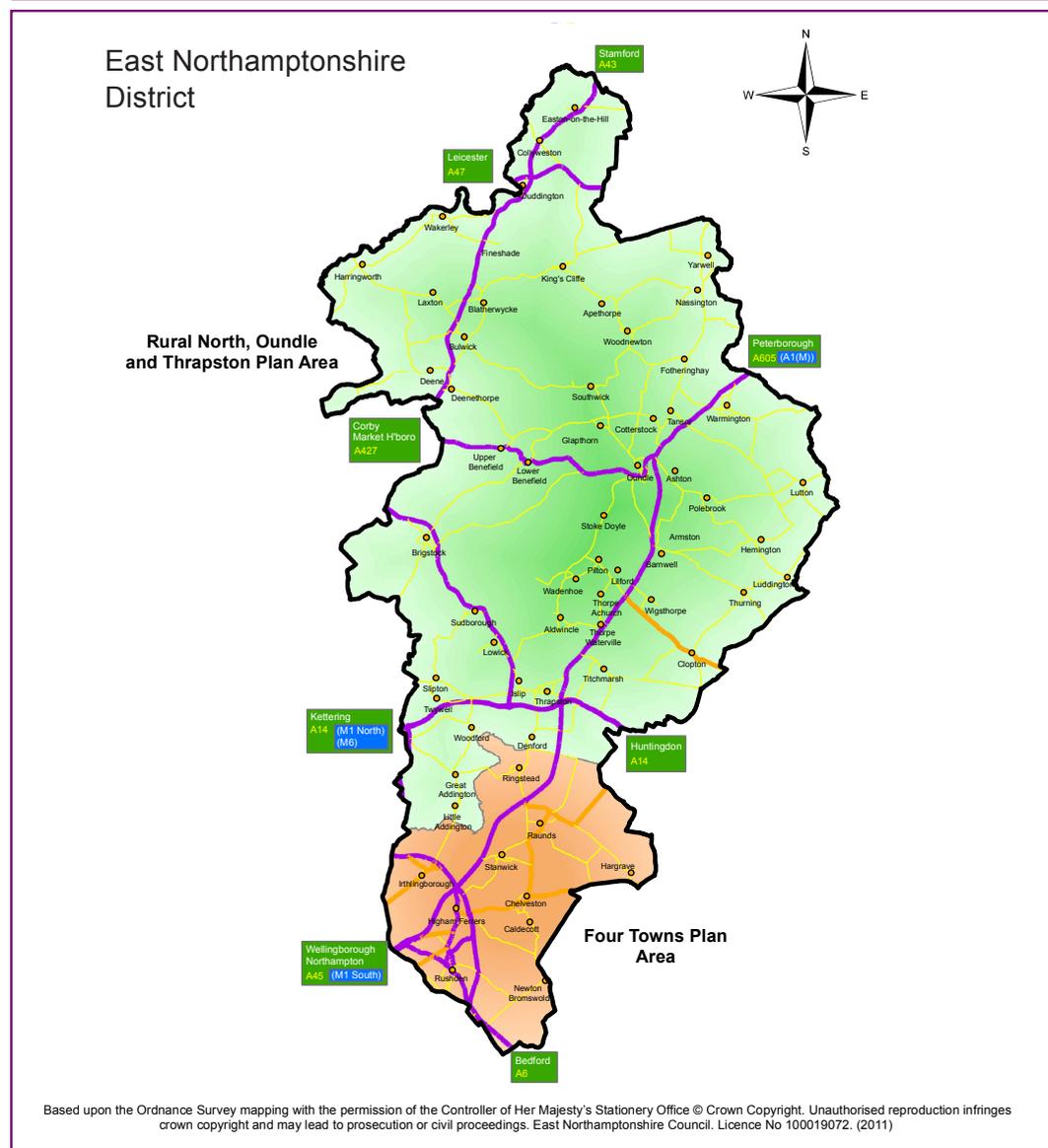
2.2 The area covered by this Plan has a dispersed settlement pattern encompassing 2 towns and 50 villages, the urban areas forming a comparatively small amount of the Plan area. The area covered is 42,174 hectares and the population in 2001 was 25,116¹⁵. The population density is 1.6 people per hectare and the average age is around 40 years. Around 19,000 people are economically active; of these around 8,200 are in full time employment. Nearly 75% of dwellings in the Plan area are owner occupied and 13% are socially rented. The population is estimated to increase by around 16% in the period up to 2021.

¹⁵ Census in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, April 2001)

2.3 Key landscape features are the River Nene, River Welland and Rockingham Forest. Biodiversity is relatively high and there are nationally designated areas covering both woodland and water based sites. Thrapston Lakes is part of the Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI and is proposed as a Special Protection Area and Ramsar Site (Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971) as it is of European importance for nature conservation. The Ramsar designation has been proposed as the gravel pits form an important wetland habitat for wintering birds. The Nene is also a focus for recreational activities, including the Nene Way, which passes through many of the villages and both towns. Rockingham Motor Speedway near Corby is a more recent development that is prominent in the local landscape.

2.4 Within the Plan area there are several places of major historic interest – including Apethorpe Hall, Lilford Hall, Prebendal Manor, Fotheringhay, Deene Park and Lyveden New Bield. Other notable features include the viaduct at Harringworth, and the Charter market towns of Oundle and Thrapston.

Figure 4 – Rural North Oundle and Thrapston Plan Area



Oundle

2.5 The rural service centre of Oundle is geographically the centre of the Plan area. The majority of buildings around the core of the town are listed and much of the town centre is designated a Conservation Area. There are many fine examples of buildings made from local materials. Oundle School, a public school whose history goes back to 1556, is a major land and property owner. The school pupils use Oundle as their campus and their presence adds to the vitality of the town.

Thrapston

2.6 Thrapston, to the southern end of this Plan area, is also classified as a rural service centre. It was granted market town status in 1205 for the price of two riding horses. The centre of the town is designated a Conservation Area and the Parish church dates from the 13th century. The town is well served by road transport links being situated near the junction of the A14, the A605 and the A45. It is also home to the District's newest leisure centre and swimming pool.

Rural Areas

2.7 King's Cliffe, located to the north of the area, has grown in recent years and provides services and facilities to a network of surrounding villages. The area to the west of the A605 and north of the A14 contains the main remnants of the Rockingham Forest. The landscape in this area is varied, with farmland, open pasture, pockets of woodland and villages built from local stone and stone slate. There are designated Conservation Areas in 24 of the 50 villages. The Plan area forms a significant part of the River Nene Regional Park, which extends from Northampton to Peterborough.

Key Issues for the Plan

Accessibility

2.8 The Plan area has good strategic road transport links, serving both Oundle and Thrapston and linking them to larger towns in the adjoining area. The A14, the A43 and the A605/A45 make the connection with the M1 and A1. The rural roads, in various states of condition, criss-cross the area covering all the villages.

2.9 Historically the area has suffered from poor rural public transport links. The situation has improved recently with the addition of an inter urban bus route, the X4, which serves Oundle. Significant improvements are still required in the wider rural north, in order to reduce rural isolation. There are no rail stations within the Plan area itself, the nearest stations being Kettering (Midland Main Line), Peterborough (East Coast Main Line) and Stamford (Midlands – East Anglia rail line). A new railway station has also recently been opened at Corby, with an hourly train service to London. A number of villages within the Plan area, namely Bulwick, Deene, Deenethorpe, Benefield and Brigstock, are all situated within 10km of the new Corby station.



Level of Development and Housing Costs

2.10 Historically, residential development in the District has been consistently high and has far exceeded planned levels in previous development plans. In this Plan area, development has been concentrated in the major settlements of Oundle and Thrapston; the latter having seen significant growth. Several of the larger villages have also accommodated development on large sites and most villages have seen some development on smaller infill sites.

2.11 The attractiveness of the Plan area to newcomers, and therefore to house builders, has led to increases in both land and house prices. Recent analysis has indicated that house prices in the area are high by Northamptonshire and East Midlands standards. In consequence, housing in the area has become less affordable to local people, making it harder for first time buyers in particular to access the housing market.

2.12 Corby Borough Council has recently approved the Priors Hall scheme. This is a substantial development crossing the boundary between this Plan area and Corby. The submitted application provides for around 5,000 homes, 3,000 jobs, a neighbourhood centre, two local centres and an academy along with three primary schools. East Northamptonshire Council has not yet granted approval for the parts of the scheme in its district, which includes over 700 houses, nearly 23,000 m² commercial developments, a hotel, a local centre and a primary school.

Economy, Tourism and Regeneration

2.13 Surrounding this Plan area are several regional centres that have an impact on life in the area, mainly through competition in terms of shopping, major employment and leisure provision. This is particularly so for employment opportunities. Rates of out commuting are relatively high; around 42% of East Northamptonshire's residents work in the district, with the remaining 58% commuting to other centres. Major destinations from the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston area include Corby, Peterborough, Kettering and Huntingdon.

2.14 Employment sites in the Thrapston area include Halden's Parkway and Cottingham Way, with several large distribution companies taking advantage of the good transport links. The town is home to the main offices of East Northamptonshire Council and still has a thriving livestock market. Oundle has the Nene Valley Business Park and two major employers in the town are the nationally renowned Fairline Boats and Oundle School.

2.15 In King's Cliffe there is a small industrial estate at Kingsmead, with three units completed in the last three years and a further extension planned. The economy in the rural area is mixed, with an established agricultural and forestry base now diversifying into the service and tourism industries.

2.16 In terms of regeneration, there has been a Thrapston Healthcheck¹⁶, as part of a Market Town Initiative that commenced in 2001 and was completed in 2002. This work led to the development of a town centre master plan, which has since brought forward several proposals for regeneration projects in the town. A Healthcheck of Oundle has also recently been undertaken.

¹⁶ *Thrapston Market Town Initiative Healthcheck – Action Plan (2002)*

2.17 There are many opportunities for enjoying the countryside, including two country parks at Barnwell and Fermyn Woods. The former recently gained a Green Flag award – the national quality standard for parks and open spaces. Towards the north of the Plan area the Forestry Commission's Top Lodge also acts as a centre for the reintroduction of Red Kites into the area. Twywell Hills and Dales, is owned by the District Council and managed by the Rockingham Forest Trust. It is an important conservation and recreation facility in the south west of the area, covering around 72 hectares, some of which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.

2.18 The northern part of East Northamptonshire has many assets which attract visitors and contribute towards the local economy. Visitor accommodation includes hotels, bed and breakfasts, caravan parks, self catering accommodation and other places to stay overnight or for longer breaks. Tourist attractions, including a wide range of restaurants and public houses, can be found in both the towns and in the countryside.

Local Infrastructure

2.19 The Core Strategy relates the overall rate of new development to the provision of key infrastructure, so any new development in the Plan area must go hand in hand with the delivery of the necessary infrastructure. Policy 6 of the Core Strategy sets out the framework for infrastructure delivery and will be supported by a supplementary planning document (SPD) on Developer Contributions, setting out a standard charge to be levied on all new development. The North Northamptonshire Development Company will set out the planned delivery of key infrastructure in its Business Plan and Spatial Investment Strategy.

2.20 Thrapston and Oundle provide a range of local services and facilities for their own residents and those of the surrounding villages. Both have Primary and Middle Schools but Oundle has the secondary school, with Thrapston pupils having to travel daily by school bus. King's Cliffe has a doctor's surgery, primary school, middle school, village hall and post office, providing services to the surrounding network of villages, but secondary school pupils need to travel by bus to Oundle. Other villages, notably Nassington and Warmington, have local rural services such as village shops and village halls. There are community halls in only 30 of the 50 villages.

2.21 In terms of indoor sports facilities, there is a new leisure centre (the Nene Centre) located in Thrapston. In Oundle many of the facilities are provided by the Public School, with shared use for members of the public and clubs; however this is not consistent throughout the year with school use taking precedence.

2.22 The Plan area is affected by transport barriers to housing and services, which can lead to pockets of deprivation due to poor accessibility to GPs, supermarkets, primary schools and post offices. Several of the more rural areas in the north suffer from a lack of these facilities. Research also shows that there is currently a shortfall in affordable housing provision within the Plan area including the towns and villages. This is an essential issue to tackle in the context of steady increases in property prices and land values.

2.23 The area is served by medical centres in Oundle and Thrapston, and in Wansford just outside the district boundary. The Plan area does not have any hospital provision – the nearest can be found in Kettering, Huntingdon, Peterborough and Stamford. The population in the Plan area mostly describe their health as ‘good’.

2.24 Several of the rural schools currently have spare capacity compared with schools in Oundle and Thrapston, where some are now struggling on their existing sites. There are no higher education establishments in the Plan area.

2.25 The **Key Issues** can therefore be summarised as:

- good strategic road links but poor rural accessibility to employment and services
- a reliance on car based travel
- high levels of out-commuting
- high levels of housing growth in recent years
- high land and house prices
- potential to capitalise on green infrastructure and tourism assets
- pressure on local infrastructure
- protecting high levels of biodiversity and a distinctive historic environment

2.26 The following section sets out a Vision and desired Outcomes, the remainder of the Plan sets out proposals for delivering these outcomes.



3.0 VISION AND OUTCOMES

3.1 If the Plan is to influence change and achieve sustainable communities across the area, it must be visionary and look forward over time. The main reason for providing a vision is to set out an overall purpose for the Plan and help to define what outcomes are to be achieved.

3.2 The Core Strategy vision and objectives set out a strong 'green living' agenda, requiring sustainable methods of construction, high standards of design and patterns of development that reduce the area's contribution to climate change. The wider Core Strategy objectives are part of the Development Plan for North Northamptonshire and do not therefore need to be repeated in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan, as it is concerned with site specific matters.

3.3 The Plan takes on board the concerns and priorities of the people who live, work and visit East Northamptonshire, as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 – 2015. The Strategy sets out a vision to make East Northamptonshire a network of thriving communities where people enjoy a high quality of life, through achieving the following outcomes:

- Reduced fear of crime
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved access to services
- Empowered communities
- Reduced deprivation
- Increased skilled job opportunities
- Higher educational attainment
- Appropriate housing that meets the needs of communities
- Improved natural and physical environment
- Low carbon footprint

3.4 The vision and desired outcomes of the Plan have these key challenges in mind. The Plan is also compatible with the vision and objectives of the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy.

The Vision

The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston area will be distinctive and successful, with local businesses supported and the local economy diversified and strengthened. There will be a strong focus on tourism, leisure and green infrastructure, alongside the protection and enhancement of the area's landscape character and its valuable built and natural environment. A balanced pattern of development in East Northamptonshire overall will be achieved by planning for vibrant rural and local service centres and thriving village communities in the rural north.

Plan Outcomes

3.5 Key outcomes have been identified which will deliver the vision for the Plan area. Aligned with the format of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, and building on the objectives of the Core Strategy, these outcomes are divided into four groups:

- **Strategic outcomes** – expanding upon the Core Strategy and identifying how this relates to the Plan area
- **Environmental outcomes** – concerning the built and natural environment and how design forms a critical element in sustainable development
- **Social outcomes** – around housing and quality of life
- **Economic outcomes** – relating to employment and town centre development

3.6 Strategic outcomes are underpinned by the principle of 'infrastructure led' development:

1. Sustainable growth at Oundle, Thrapston and King's Cliffe, with development to meet rural needs and sustain facilities in the remainder of the rural north

This means enhancing the service centre roles of Oundle, Thrapston and King's Cliffe and enabling villages to thrive by ensuring that vital services are retained and local infrastructure deficiencies resolved. For this to be achieved, appropriate opportunities must be available to meet housing and employment needs, including those of the farming communities.

2. Increased travel choice supporting the service centre roles of Oundle, Thrapston and King's Cliffe

This means maintaining and improving the existing transport network, providing a real choice of transport to access services and employment in the service centres; and increasing public transport capacity in the area as a whole. The priorities will be to make walking and cycling easier and more attractive in the towns and villages and find innovative ways of making public transport genuinely available for village residents.

3. A net gain in green infrastructure through the creation of a network of new walking and cycling routes, linking biodiversity, leisure and tourism assets

This means working with partners to achieve new cycle routes; improving walking and horse riding links across the Plan area; ensuring that new development contributes in the form of improved connectivity, habitat creation and recreational facilities; and providing for opportunities to make the most of tourism assets by encouraging tourist accommodation and new visitor attractions.

3.7 Environmental outcomes are:

4. Enhanced biodiversity management and statutory protection for key sites across the Plan area

This means designating new Local Nature Reserves and working in partnership with environmental groups to ensure the future management of sites of biodiversity importance.

5. A high quality of design that respects local distinctiveness and enhances the historic character and setting of the area's towns and villages

This means ensuring that development fits in with the special character of the location in which it is placed; does not have an adverse visual impact on landscape character and that areas within settlements that are visually important to their form and character are protected from development.

3.8 Social outcomes are:

6. Market and affordable housing is provided to meet locally identified needs

This means ensuring that the mix of house types, sizes and tenures provided in new housing development are in line with both identified needs and market demand.

7. Healthy, fulfilled and balanced lifestyles for all in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston

This means increasing the capacity of local educational establishments to cater for the increasing population and drive up local expectations and educational achievements, planning for good quality and publicly accessible sport and recreational space, increasing opportunities to enjoy the countryside, improving access to health and community facilities, enhancing community safety and reducing the fear of crime.

3.9 Economic outcomes are:

8. A diverse range of jobs and business opportunities throughout the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston

This means safeguarding employment sites and identifying new locations for small and medium sized businesses, promoting opportunities for office based service activities, working in partnership with other bodies to improve workforce skills and match them with those required by local businesses, and positively planning for 'green' tourism and leisure developments.

9. Attractive and vibrant town centres for Oundle and Thrapston

In Thrapston this means investing in the town centre to extend the range of shopping and employment opportunities, enhance access to community and leisure facilities and ensure the town remains a prosperous focus for its rural hinterland. In Oundle this means working to find car parking and traffic management solutions that respect the town centre's historic character and enable businesses to thrive and diversify.

3.10 The outcomes will be delivered through implementation of the policies and proposals in the following sections.



4.0 AREA WIDE SPATIAL POLICIES

4.1 The Plan policies complement the strategic policies contained within the Core Strategy and provide more guidance on the location, type and mix of development. This section sets out what scale of development is planned for in different types of settlement and how new development should contribute to rather than detract from community sustainability. The section also deals with the phasing of development alongside infrastructure provision and the green framework into which development fits and contributes. Sections 5 to 7 of the Plan then deal in more detail with environmental, social and economic objectives.

The Scale and Distribution of Development

4.2 The Core Strategy identifies Oundle and Thrapston as Rural Service Centres and King's Cliffe as a Local Service Centre. Larger centres near to the Plan area act as higher level service centres, notably Corby, Kettering, Peterborough and Stamford. Taking into account the findings of the Rural Strategy and the Integrated Approach to Rural Planning report¹⁷, the settlement hierarchy is further refined in this Plan, recognising the differing level of local services and roles of the various villages forming a network within the Plan area. Policies 1, 2, 23, 24 and 25 provide further guidance on the approach to be taken to proposals for different development locations and contexts.

¹⁷ Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Planning in East Northamptonshire (Baker Associates, January 2006)

Settlement Boundaries and Development Potential – Urban areas

4.3 The Core Strategy requires the identification of settlement boundaries for most towns and villages within the Plan area. During the Plan preparation process, the principle of settlement boundaries was agreed, together with rules for drawing these.

4.4 In Oundle and Thrapston, settlement boundaries are delineated tightly to reflect the main built up part of each settlement. Boundaries are drawn along the peripheral curtilages of the property, except where this is extensive; in which case the area most immediately related to the built development has been included (e.g. the essential garden area). Peripheral playing fields have been excluded, including school playing fields. In the case of the latter the boundaries have been delineated to include the school building complex and immediate open land within the curtilage. The boundaries include land with extant planning permission.

- 4.5** Land on the periphery of the towns has been included if it is:
- a.** small in scale relative to its surroundings;
 - b.** well related to the urban area (existing or committed);
 - c.** clearly distinct from the countryside physically and visually;
 - d.** bounded by compatible development (existing or committed);
 - e.** bounded by existing or committed development on all sides but one, which should be adjoined by a road (or other strong and distinct physical feature);
 - f.** unlikely to be of any beneficial uses as open land, including for agriculture;
 - g.** a proposed allocation for development.

Exceptionally land that does not meet the last criteria has been included, where the unique appearance of the land and its relationship to adjacent development is such as to consider it a logical and potentially beneficial extension and it is small in scale relative to its surroundings.

¹⁸ East Northamptonshire
Urban Potential Study
2002-2006 (May 2007)

¹⁹ East Northamptonshire
Village Potential Study
(January 2008)

4.6 Research into the potential supply of housing land within the current settlement boundaries is contained within the Urban Potential Study¹⁸ and the Village Potential Study¹⁹.

Settlement Boundaries and Development Potential – Rural areas

4.7 Village Framework survey work and ongoing consultation from 2002 to 2005 identified village planning boundaries for most villages, referred to in this Plan as “Local Service Centres” (King’s Cliffe), “Smaller Service Centres” (Nassington and Warmington) or Category A villages.

4.8 The approach to defining village boundaries differs from the approach applied to urban areas. Firstly, village boundaries need not be contiguous. It may be appropriate given the nature and form of the settlement to define two or more separate elements. In the case of King’s Cliffe, Nassington, Warmington and the Category A Network Villages (listed below) the following guiding principles have been used to define the settlement boundary:

- a.** existing employment uses, caravan sites or leisure uses on the edge of villages which are obviously detached from, or peripheral to, the main built up area are excluded;
- b.** free standing, individual or groups of less than 10 dwellings, nearby farm buildings or other structures which are obviously detached from, or peripheral to, the main built up area are excluded;
- c.** public open spaces and undeveloped areas of land on the edge of villages are excluded;
- d.** the curtilages of dwellings are included unless the land has the capacity to extend the built form of the village;
- e.** areas of land currently with planning permission at 1 April 2008 adjoining the built up area are included; and
- f.** proposed allocations are included.

4.9 The Category A Network Villages are:

Aldwincle	Glapthorn	Southwick
Apethorpe	Great Addington	Stoke Doyle
Barnwell	Harringworth	Sudborough
Upper Benefield	Hemington	Tansor
Brigstock	Islip	Thorpe Waterville
Bulwick	Laxton	Thurning
Clopton	Lilford	Titchmarsh
Collyweston	Little Addington	Twywell
Cotterstock	Lowick	Wadenhoe
Deenethorpe	Lutton	Woodford
Denford	Polebrook	Woodnewton
Easton on the Hill	Slipton	Yarwell

4.10 Category B Network Villages do not have a defined village planning boundary; due either to their special historic conservation interest or to a small scale, scattered or dispersed built form. There will still be scope for development that involves the re-use of buildings, which in most cases will be redundant agricultural buildings. The Category B villages are:

Achurch	Deene	Pilton
Ashton	Duddington	Wakerley
Lower Benefield	Fineshade	
Blatherwycke	Fotheringhay	

4.11 Whilst there may be other hamlets or small groups of dwellings within the Plan area that are not named above, these are considered to be part of “open countryside” where general residential development will not normally be permitted. These areas are covered by the rural buildings, farm diversification and countryside policies in this Plan.

4.12 Overall targets for the provision of housing in the district and the strategic approach to allocating land for employment uses are set out through policies in the Regional Plan and the Core Strategy. Policy 10 and Table 5 of the Core Strategy identify specific housing targets for individual towns and the wider rural area. Policy 8 proposes significant levels of job growth in East Northamptonshire, particularly in the Office (Class B1) sector. Policy 11(b) safeguards existing employment areas and allocated employment sites, except where alternative uses would be more sustainable. In line with this approach, the Plan will first identify employment areas to be safeguarded and then allocate new employment sites where a supply shortfall is identified.

4.13 In accordance with the Core Strategy (Policies 1, 9, 10 and 11), the principal housing and employment allocations will be situated at Thrapston (1140 dwellings and mixed use regeneration sites), Oundle (610 dwellings and at least 2.0 ha of Class B1 uses) and King’s Cliffe (200 dwellings as part of overall rural provision, with planning permission also granted in 2008 for 6 No. small business units at Kingsmead). Additionally, the Integrated Approach to Rural Planning report identifies Nassington and Warmington as performing limited local service centre roles. Small scale greenfield housing and employment allocations are therefore proposed in these villages (Nassington 11 dwellings; Warmington 12 dwellings and 0.38 ha of Class B1 (office) uses).



Policy 1 – SETTLEMENT ROLES

A 4-tier hierarchy of settlements for the Plan area is defined as follows:

1. Rural Service Centres – Oundle, Thrapston

To support their role as focal points for infrastructure and development in the Plan area, the employment and service base of these towns will be diversified and extended. Development opportunities include the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, other windfall development and greenfield sites as identified in this Plan.

2. Local Service Centre – King’s Cliffe

To support its role in providing services for villages in the rural north, the accessibility of King’s Cliffe will be enhanced through investment in demand responsive public transport services. Development opportunities include the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, other windfall development and a greenfield site identified in this Plan.

3. Smaller Service Centres – Nassington, Warmington

The limited service centre roles of Nassington and Warmington will be strengthened. Development opportunities include the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, other windfall development and the development of three greenfield sites identified in this Plan.

4. Network Villages

The dependency of the remaining villages on service centres within and surrounding the Plan area is recognised and the emphasis will therefore be on meeting local needs. Development opportunities in all villages for housing, employment or community facilities include the re-use and conversion of buildings within and adjacent to villages. In Category A villages, which have a defined village planning boundary, there may also be scope for other windfall development, subject to the criteria set out in Policy 2.

In the Open Countryside, housing development will not normally be permitted and the re-use of buildings will be judged against policies 23, 24 and 25.

Indicators:

- % of development on PDL, both within and adjacent to settlement boundaries
- % of development in Thrapston and Oundle; King’s Cliffe; Nassington and Warmington
- Number of applications approved with a local needs justification adjacent to Network Village boundaries
- Improvement in public transport services

Targets:

- No net loss of services and facilities
- At least 60% of new development in Plan area within Rural Service Centres; at least 10% in King's Cliffe; at least 5% in Nassington and Warmington
- No new development (excludes re-use and conversion) granted adjacent to village boundaries without a local needs justification
- Net jobs measured against CSS jobs target

Windfall Development

4.14 Any development sites that are not specifically identified on the Proposals Map accompanying this Plan are referred to as “windfall sites”. These include changes of use and conversion of buildings; redevelopment of brownfield sites; other small scale development within defined town and village boundaries (such as infilling gaps in an otherwise built up frontage). Policy 2 sets out the criteria against which the impact of windfall development within towns and villages will be judged.

4.15 Redevelopment of sites involving the demolition of an existing unit (or units) and replacement by a higher number of new units, frequently has undesirable impacts on local character. Such proposals amount to overdevelopment and will not normally be acceptable.



Policy 2 – WINDFALL DEVELOPMENT IN SETTLEMENTS

Planning permission will be granted for windfall development within the settlement boundaries of towns and villages where the developer has addressed and sufficiently demonstrated through supporting information that:

- a) the overall mix of housing types and sizes of the development meets local circumstances and need and provides for a balanced mix in the neighbourhood or community;
- b) proposals for employment related development are of a scale and nature appropriate to their location and character of the locality;
- c) the scale and siting of any dwellings accord with the character of the surrounding properties and are satisfactorily integrated into, the settlement and the surrounding area;
- d) local services, facilities and infrastructure are sufficient to serve the development, or are supported or provided by the development;
- e) the proposal would not unacceptably block important views or vistas within the settlement, or of open countryside beyond the settlement, and would not significantly detract from the appearance of the settlement from the surrounding area.

Indicators:

- %/ total amount of all development that is defined as windfall
- Number of applications approved that do not adhere to criteria in Policy 2

Targets:

- 0% of applications approved without compliance to criteria in Policy 2

Infrastructure and Phasing

²⁰ Supplementary Planning Document – Developer Contributions (adopted June 2006)

4.16 Policy 6 of the Core Strategy defines the strategic approach to infrastructure delivery in association with new developments in the Plan area. The term ‘infrastructure’ is used generically to describe a range of services and facilities, including health, education, libraries, community halls, open space, sport and recreation; as well as road and public transport improvements. The East Northamptonshire Developer Contributions SPD²⁰ was adopted in 2006 and addresses issues of developer contributions, including affordable housing, transport, education, recreation, leisure and community facilities. This will be superseded by the North Northamptonshire Developer Contributions SPD, once this is adopted (anticipated 2009/10).

4.17 The proposed Priors Hall development incorporates infrastructure to meet local needs. The part of the development that falls within this Plan area includes a local centre and a primary school. Although the residents should look to these new facilities, particularly schools, parental choice will mean that additional strain is put on facilities further afield in Oundle and King’s Cliffe.

²¹ Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (Communities and Local Government, November 2006)

4.18 In response to the requirement now set out in PPS3²¹, possible longer term development proposals in Oundle and Thrapston are dealt with in sections 8 and 9 of this Plan. In practical terms these will need to be subject to preferred options consultation as part of a review of this Plan. Any release of further development land will be dependent upon the delivery of appropriate infrastructure, as set out in the Core Strategy (Policy 6).

4.19 The development strategies for Oundle and Thrapston (Sections 8.0 and 9.0) provide more details about the phasing of development in these rural service centres. The full approaches to development in Oundle and Thrapston with respect to infrastructure delivery are set out in policies OUN1-OUN4, THR1-THR3 and THR5 respectively.

Housing Trajectory

4.20 The current housing trajectory for the Plan area is set out in the 2008 AMR. Sites in Oundle (policies OUN3 and OUN4) are expected to begin to deliver new houses from 2010/11 and are forecast to be completed by 2014/15. Other sites in the rural north are expected to be implemented between 2011/12 and 2021, while the Thrapston South allocation (Policy THR5), the largest single site allocation, is likely to be started in 2011 but will take the remainder of the Plan period (up to 2021) to complete.

Comprehensive Development

4.21 In order to plan effectively and comprehensively for new development and promote balanced, sustainable communities; it is important to avoid proposals that result in a piecemeal approach which could compromise the delivery of local infrastructure. Similarly, 'ransom' situations can be created where the road and footpath layout does not go all the way up to the site boundary. This can frustrate attempts to ensure that development is carried out in a planned and orderly manner.

4.22 Development forming part of a group of smaller scale developments within an adjoining or adjacent area may be required to contribute towards facilities or infrastructure, justified by the cumulative impact of the proposals. Similarly, if development on larger sites is to be 'phased' over a long time period, master plans will be required in order to ensure that a comprehensive overview is taken of site potential and the need for developer contributions. All development proposals will therefore be judged against Policy 3, which will ensure that development is carried out in the most efficient and sustainable way possible.

Policy 3 – COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Proposals that prejudice the delivery of comprehensive development and fail to provide integrated infrastructure and support facilities will not be permitted. The layout of development sites should not preclude the development of adjoining land with longer term potential or create situations that lead to a piecemeal form of development.

On large sites (over 100 dwellings or 3 hectares of non-residential development) a masterplan will be required prior to approval being granted for development, in order that any phasing can be agreed at the earliest possible stage and the cumulative need for infrastructure, services and facilities made necessary by the development can be established.

Indicators:

- Provision of infrastructure alongside new development

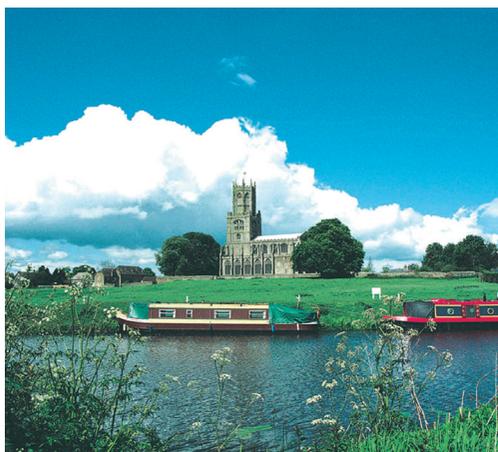
Targets

- All residential sites of 100 units and over, or 3 hectares and over for non residential, provide for infrastructure via a masterplan
- No permissions granted that potentially prohibit the comprehensive development of a site, or create a 'piecemeal' form of development

Green Infrastructure

²² *Northamptonshire's Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite (RNRP, November 2006)*

4.23 Green Infrastructure²², defined as a network of connected multi-functional green spaces, is an important part of the strategic infrastructure for the Plan area and should bring a variety of benefits. Policy 5 of the Core Strategy sets out the wider green framework and this Plan sets out the local requirements. Policies 10, 11, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 25 of this Plan set out the local requirements in terms of the linked issues of important green spaces, biodiversity, sport and recreation, tourism and farm diversification.



4.24 This Plan defines specific proposals for new green infrastructure links and the creation and enhancement of habitats. The aim of these complementary proposals is to link up important habitats and create a network that can be utilised by locals and visitors to access a variety of services and facilities, as well as the wider open countryside for recreation and tourism.

4.25 There are certain routes within the Plan area that are already established walking paths. The Nene Valley Way and The Jurassic Way are two of these; there are also many local rights of way crossing the Plan area. Where appropriate, and with legal orders and landowners consent, footpaths will be improved to allow for cycle access where needed. Bridleways will link into equestrian development and appropriate routes will need to be established to ensure these connections are made for equestrians and cyclists. Details of enhancement proposals for existing rights of way are set out in Northamptonshire County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan²³.

²³ *Northamptonshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2011 (adopted November 2007)*

4.26 To link in with the national and regional cycle network it is proposed to develop and seek contributions for a new cycle link between Thrapston, Oundle and Peterborough; as well as across the Plan area incorporating King's Cliffe and other villages. Sustrans, the national cycling association, has identified and proposed future national cycle network links in the Plan area to link to Corby and Kettering in addition to the wider green infrastructure proposals.

²⁴ *Circle Thrapston Development Project (ENC (2002))*

4.27 In addition to these strategic routes, several others have been identified and proposed in the Circle Thrapston²⁴ project which considered cycle routes to link into and improve the gateways to Thrapston.

4.28 The Plan identifies specific proposals for the development of new green infrastructure links, principally utilising former railway lines, which cross the Plan area, quiet roads and upgrading rights of way. The proposals set out in the policy below reflect the green infrastructure corridors identified in Figure 9 of the Core Strategy.

Policy 4 – GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Development within the Plan area will contribute and link into the wider green infrastructure network. To prevent adverse impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits pSPA/ pRamsar site, specific Green Infrastructure projects will be designed in consultation with Natural England.

1. **Thrapston – Oundle – Peterborough**
2. **Wakerley – Kings Cliffe – Yarwell – Peterborough**
3. **King’s Cliffe – Oundle**
4. **Wadenhoe – Brigstock**
5. **Brigstock – Twywell**
6. **Twywell – Thrapston**
7. **Thrapston – Raunds**
8. **Thrapston – Kettering**
9. **Thrapston – Corby**
10. **Oundle – Oakham**
11. **Thrapston – Stamford**

Other routes, utilising and enhancing the existing rights of way network, will be established in order to promote and diversify green infrastructure in the Plan area.

Residential and employment development should provide:

- a) **improved connectivity through the provision of foot and cycle routes;**
- b) **creation of space for nature conservation and green education;**
- c) **green economic uses; and**
- d) **imaginative recreational facilities.**

On large sites (over 100 dwellings or 3 hectares of non-residential development), the masterplan should set out how the green infrastructure will be delivered.

Indicators:

- An increase in the amount of green infrastructure accessible
- Provision of specified routes
- Length of foot and cycle routes and links provided
- Amount of new nature conservation areas provided
- Number of developments that involve green economic uses or green education
- Type of recreation space provided

Targets:

- New accessible Green Infrastructure
- Completion of the specified routes by 2021
- 100% of development providing or linking into foot and cycle links
- 100% of development creating space or contributing towards nature conservation
- Increase in green economic uses and green education
- 100% of large sites providing for green infrastructure through a masterplan

4.29 A number of the Green Infrastructure routes identified in Policy 4 run adjacent to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits European site. Principally, this is the case with those routes that radiate from Thrapston, to the south of the Plan area. If mitigation measures are required to prevent impacts on the pSPA/ pRamsar sites these should include one or more of the following:

- The design of vegetation and landscaping schemes to ensure adequate screening and buffering to the pSPA/ pRamsar site;
- If necessary, fencing and/ or controlled access to the most sensitive areas of the pSPA/ pRamsar site; and
- The use of interpretation/ information boards if appropriate.

Transport, Accessibility and Parking

4.30 The Core Strategy defines the strategic approach to improving connectivity in and around the North Northamptonshire area. At a broader strategic level, it proposes a number of improvements to bus services and physical improvements to the highway infrastructure within the Plan area, in particular improvements to the A45 and A605 between Wellingborough and Peterborough. Similarly, the Core Strategy puts forward a strategic approach to the provision and improvement of walking and cycling infrastructure.

4.31 The strategic approach towards enhancing local connectivity in the Core Strategy is broadly based around supporting mechanisms for bus-based public transport:

- Proposed Strategic Bus & Coach Corridor, linking Wellingborough and Oundle via Thrapston (A45/A605);
- Development of rural service routes including “feeder services” around the rural service spine.

4.32 The level of public transport provision to the five defined service centres within the Plan area varies greatly. Two of the service centres (Oundle and Warmington) are situated on the existing X4 strategic bus route, having at least hourly bus services linking Peterborough, Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Northampton. Thrapston has regular services to Kettering, while King’s Cliffe and Nassington are both currently served by limited services (2-5 buses per day).

4.33 Due to the reliance on the private car throughout much of the Plan area, increasing the availability of transport modes is important in order to provide choice and improve accessibility for “hard to reach” groups. Whilst bus transport can be increased in line with the strategic priorities mentioned above, actual use of the services will need to be closely monitored. The current transient nature of funding bus services needs to be recognised and mechanisms found to secure their future in light of the ongoing need for subsidy; otherwise increased transport choice will be short lived. In order to help support the role and prosperity of the rural and local service centres, the priority will be to focus funding on ‘feeder’ services to make them more attractive destinations for the villages around them.

4.34 There is scope for Community Transport and similar initiatives, such as ‘Wheels to Work’ (funding mopeds for young people to access training and employment) to broaden the choices available. Improvements to cycle and walking routes within towns will significantly increase the attractiveness of non car journeys to work.

Policy 5 – TRANSPORT NETWORK

Improvements to the bus and community transport network should be concentrated upon providing “feeder services” from rural areas to service centres in the Plan area; particularly on increasing the frequency and overall quality of local services in the King’s Cliffe and Nassington area.

New developments of over 10 dwellings, or 0.5 hectares of commercial uses, will be required to include attractive and direct walking and cycling routes, connecting into the existing and planned network.

Indicator:

- Level of bus usage and community transport
- Delivery of additional bus services, in particular to King’s Cliffe and Nassington

Targets:

- Increase in bus service provision
- Increase in community transport provision and use

4.35 Improvements to and maintenance of strategic bus services and local feeder services in and around the Plan area will be implemented through appropriate funding mechanisms, as set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP)²⁵. In particular, new funding is available until at least 2010 through the recent Rural Bus Service Strategy, to provide for additional bus service support, though it is recognised that this revenue support may not be available in the longer term.

²⁵ Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan 2006/7 - 2010/11 (March 2006)

Parking Standards

4.36 Generic car parking policies are set out in Policy 48 of the East Midlands Regional Plan. Further guidance and standards are provided in the adopted Parking supplementary planning guidance document (SPG)²⁶ and this is used by the highway authority when commenting on planning applications. The Parking SPG contains maximum car parking and minimum cycle parking requirements; although recognising that alternatives to car usage are not widely available in the rural area. Notable exceptions within the Plan area are settlements located on the existing X4 route (Lower Benefield, Upper Benefield, Oundle and Warmington). Despite planned improvements to public transport infrastructure, the Council recognises that car ownership remains high and that only over the longer term will it be possible to broaden real travel choice and thereby limit car usage.

²⁶ Parking – Supplementary Planning Guidance (Northamptonshire County Council, March 2003)

4.37 Policy 6 therefore provides for slightly higher residential parking standards across most of the Plan area than are set out in the Parking SPG. Oundle and Thrapston are the only locations within the Plan area where residents have access to a significant range of services and employment opportunities within easy walking and cycling distance. A reduced parking standard in and around the town centres is therefore appropriate within the two defined town centre areas.

Policy 6 – RESIDENTIAL PARKING STANDARDS

For new residential developments within the Plan area, an average maximum residential parking standard of 2 spaces per dwelling will apply.

Within the defined town centres of Oundle and Thrapston, an average maximum residential parking standard of 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit will apply.

Indicator:

- Provision of car parking in association with new residential developments

Target:

- No more than 2 off road parking spaces per residential unit/1.5 spaces per unit in town centre locations

²⁷ Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (Communities and Local Government, December 2006)

²⁸ East Northamptonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Stage 2 (September 2006)

Flood Risk

4.38 PPS25²⁷ aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. The completion of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in September 2006²⁸ has enabled the Council to take decisions based upon actual assessments of flood risk, enabling PPS25 standards to be applied to the District as a whole.

4.39 The 200 year standard of flood protection set out in Policy 7 is the standard for flood defences constructed by the Environment Agency in the aftermath of the Easter 1998 floods in Thrapston.



Policy 7 – FLOOD RISK

Planning permission for new development will not be granted on sites that are at risk of flooding (as shown on the Proposals Map) and fail the sequential and exception tests set out in PPS25.

A 200 year standard of flood protection is applicable throughout the Plan area both in relation to development and the measures required to reduce the impact of any additional run off generated by that development.

Measures that maintain and improve the present standards of flood protection will be supported, especially the provision of additional flood storage in the Nene floodplain downstream of Northampton.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) should be used wherever practicable. Planning conditions or obligations will ensure that the funding of the maintenance and inspection of the facility is guaranteed for the life of the development.

Decreasing surface water runoff is a key consideration and development schemes that allow for this and improve the current situation will be supported.

Indicators

- Number of permissions granted for schemes that fail PPS25 sequential and exceptions test
- % of development that adheres to the 200 year standard of flood protection in relation to development and run off from new development
- Creation of additional flood storage within the Nene floodplain
- Number of SUDS schemes that include future maintenance and inspection schemes funded by the developer for the lifetime of the development

Target:

- No permissions granted that fail the sequential or exceptions tests in PPS25
- 100% of permissions to meet the 200 year level of flood protection
- Creation of additional flood storage by the end of the Plan period
- 100% of schemes that incorporate SUDS to include maintenance and inspection schemes funded by the developer



5.0 ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

Housing Design – Density and Mix

²⁹ North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Fordham Research, July 2007)
³⁰ East Northamptonshire Secondary data analysis of market and affordable housing sub-district requirement (Fordham Research, August 2007)

5.1 The Core Strategy provides general sustainability policies with respect to housing design, with this Plan providing more detailed policy. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)²⁹ recommendations for East Northamptonshire as a whole sets out indicative district-wide levels of new housing need (75% 2 and 4-bed types and 25% 1 and 3-bed types). A more detailed Ward based assessment³⁰ has enabled target percentages to be set, based on the findings that, with the exception of Thrapston, there is a need for more smaller dwellings within the Plan area. The SHMA recommends a different housing mix for developments of above 50 dwellings, due to the more free-standing nature of larger developments.

5.2 North Northamptonshire shows a higher than average proportion of supported housing needs. It is unlikely that a high number of the first occupants, especially of the market housing, will have support needs. The current need relates to only around 1% of households. Over the lifetime of the dwellings however, it is likely that a significant fraction will require wheelchair accessibility. Allowance for the ageing of the English population generally and a movement towards care in the home, suggests a higher percentage for new housing.

Policy 8 – HOUSING MIX

New housing development should include a mix of housing types to take account of local need. Unless specific housing needs information is available to suggest a more appropriate mix, proposals for new housing (including affordable housing) should provide:

1. On sites of over 50 units, an even split between 2,3 and 4 bed house types;
2. On smaller sites in Thrapston, a mix of house types to include mainly 3, 4 or more bedrooms;
3. On smaller sites other than in Thrapston, a mix which includes mainly 1 or 2 bedroom house types.

Housing should be provided to “Lifetime Homes”³¹ standard and 5% (or at least 1 unit, whichever is the greater) of all housing on sites of over 10 dwellings should be designed as wheelchair accessible.

³¹ The Lifetime Homes standards (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, April 1996)

Indicators:

- %/total number of dwellings by number of bedrooms
- % of wheelchair accessible units on developments of 10 or more

Targets:

- Thrapston – 100% of housing developments of 3-50 units providing at least 50% of units with 3 or more bedrooms
- Elsewhere in Plan area – 100% of housing developments of 3-50 units providing at least 60% of units with 1 or 2 bedrooms
- 5% (or at least 1 unit, whichever is greater) of all housing on sites of over 10 dwellings to be designed as wheelchair accessible

The Historic and Built Environment

5.7 PPS1³², PPG15³³ and Core Strategy Policy 13 provide for a criteria based approach to design and built environment considerations. Some aspects of minor development affecting the historic or built environment, particularly relating to non-listed buildings of historic interest, are not fully addressed by higher level generic policies, therefore Policy 9 below sets out the approach in the Plan area. Furthermore, the Plan approach to Conservation Area Appraisals is also set out in this section.

Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

5.4 The recent heritage White Paper, "Heritage Protection for the 21st Century"³⁴ proposes to give local lists of historic buildings additional statutory protection. This recognises that in the past local planning authorities have been largely powerless to prevent the demolition or loss of buildings of local architectural or historic interest.

5.5 PPG15 (paragraph 2.8) requires the Council to set out policies for the preservation and enhancement of the historic environment, considering its wider context. This approach may include the identification of a 'local list' and associated policy.

5.6 The Rockingham Forest Trust, in conjunction with local communities, is currently producing a local list for the Rockingham Forest area, covering the majority of the Plan area. The current list (to date) is set out in Appendix 3, though more such buildings may be included in a future review of the Plan. Policy 9 below therefore provides additional protection for locally listed buildings.

³² *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development* (CLG, February 2005)

³³ *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (CLG, September 1994)

³⁴ *Heritage Protection for the 21st Century* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, March 2007)

Policy 9 – BUILDINGS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

When considering proposals which affect a Building of Local Architectural or Historic Interest or its setting, these will only be acceptable where:

- a) the character, appearance and historic interest and integrity of the building is safeguarded;
- b) the setting of the building is preserved or enhanced.

Indicator:

- Number of permissions granted that will lead to a loss of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

Target:

- No permissions granted for development that adversely impacts Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

Conservation Area Appraisals

5.7 To date, 26 Conservation Areas within the Plan area have been designated, with boundaries shown on the Proposals Map. PPG15 and the relevant legislation place a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas once designated. Conservation Area Appraisals are accorded statutory status through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990³⁵; though they do not form part of the Local Development Framework. PPG15 provides national policy regarding the status of Conservation Areas, and is supported by more detailed English Heritage guidance about undertaking Appraisals.

5.8 In accordance with PPG15 and English Heritage Guidance, the Council is undertaking an ongoing programme for the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals, which are important material planning considerations in considering development proposals in and around Conservation Areas. Outside of Conservation Areas, Village Design Statements (VDSs) may address similar design issues.

5.9 Other elements of the historic and built environment such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other statutory designations are dealt with by separate legislation and national policy, in particular the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, PPG15 and PPG16³⁶.

Important Open Land

5.10 PMP³⁷ was commissioned to undertake an audit and quality assessment of accessible open spaces within East Northamptonshire together with a detailed assessment

³⁵ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (May 1990)

³⁶ Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (CLG, November 1990)

³⁷ Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (PMP, January 2006)

of local needs, in terms of accessibility and quality, completed January 2006. This assessed 7 separate categories of open space (Table 1, Section 6.0 below). However, this did not address wider issues relating to local landscape; in particular the role of open spaces within settlements in defining the character of the local built environment.

5.11 The character of towns and villages across the Plan area depends not only on their buildings, but also upon the open spaces and their relationships to buildings and features. The particular character of a settlement may be determined largely by the arrangement of buildings around these open areas and the views they give of the surrounding countryside. Apart from their visual attractiveness, such areas may also have historic or nature conservation significance, or may be part of an important network of green space, which it is desirable to maintain and enhance.

5.12 Areas of Important Open Land were initially designated under Policy EN20 of the adopted Local Plan. Monitoring of previous planning application decisions (latterly through the AMR, since 2005), has revealed Policy EN20 to be an effective tool in protecting those specific areas of land which play a role in defining the local character or townscape of individual settlements. As such, Policy EN20 has been retained as part of the statutory development plan. Defined Important Open Land areas are shown on the Proposals Map Insets, and development proposals affecting these will need to be assessed against saved Local Plan Policy EN20 (Appendix 2, Saved policies from 1996 Local Plan).

5.13 As stated in paragraph 5.8 above, the Council is undertaking an ongoing programme of Conservation Area Appraisals which will provide supplementary local detail as to the significance of individual areas of Important Open Land in the setting of a Conservation Area. Identifying important vistas or areas of open space will also be key considerations in preparing Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.

Biodiversity and the Natural Environment

5.14 The Plan area largely falls into the Rockingham Forest, which supports a variety of wildlife. It contains a range of sites forming some of the richest areas of biodiversity in the county. It is important that these sites are protected and enhanced through appropriate management and buffering and through the creation of habitat links between them.

5.15 There are a varied range of biodiversity, wildlife and geological designations within the Plan area. All such designations have differing aims and objectives and are covered by different legislation or policies, though there is inevitably considerable overlap. Planning policies concerning biodiversity, the natural environment and Green Infrastructure are contained in PPS9³⁸ and in criteria based policies in RSS8 and the Core Strategy, but these are not spatially defined.

Hierarchy of wildlife designations and biodiversity

5.16 The Plan area contains a significant number of international and national statutory biodiversity sites, in particular parts of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is being granted international status as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. PPS9 provides policy guidance for these statutory designated sites with respect to development proposals. International and national statutory biodiversity sites are identified on the Proposals Map and are subject to national and regional planning policies.

³⁸ *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (CLG, August 2005)*

5.17 PPS9 and RSS8 define several levels of biodiversity and wildlife designations, both statutory and non-statutory. Appendix 4 contains a table summarising the different designations that are situated within the Plan area.

Local Sites of Conservation Interest

5.18 There are a range of Local Sites, identified through survey work undertaken by the Wildlife Trust. These sites form a mosaic of local habitats and can act as stepping stones for the movement of wildlife between sites of national importance. Other sites are important because of their geological interest. Criteria based policies regarding the designation of LNRs and Local Sites are included in RSS8. Local Sites are protected through Policy 10 below and are identified on the Proposals Map.

Ancient Woodlands

5.19 Ancient Woodlands are a non-statutory national designation. PPS9 defines national policy for Ancient Woodlands, in particular those that do not have statutory protection as SSSIs or National Nature Reserves. Ancient Woodlands identified on the Proposals Map are subject to national and regional planning policies.

Local Nature Reserves

5.20 Local Nature Reserve (LNR) designation is a useful planning tool for a number of reasons, such as protecting wildlife habitats and natural features, and offering a positive use for land which local authorities would prefer was left undeveloped. In addition, because they are designated through a statutory declaration, this gives a clear signal of the Council's commitment to nature conservation.

5.21 Policy 10, below, proposes the designation of additional LNRs, which will be undertaken in liaison with Natural England. LNRs are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally which offer people opportunities to study or learn about nature or simply to enjoy it.

5.22 All of the proposed LNRs were previously, partially or wholly, designated as sites of local conservation interest in the 1996 Local Plan. In addition to the three proposed LNRs one existing LNR within the Plan area was previously identified in the 1996 Local Plan; the 73 ha Titchmarsh LNR. This site is now incorporated into the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI (proposed SPA/ Ramsar site) and is an important element of green infrastructure along the Nene Valley, as there is widespread public access.

Policy 10 – PROTECTION OF LOCAL SITES OF CONSERVATION INTEREST AND DESIGNATION OF LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Development that may destroy or affect adversely (either directly or indirectly) a designated or proposed Local Nature Reserve or other Local Site, will not be permitted unless planning conditions or obligations secure practicable, effective and appropriate mitigating measures.

In order to provide statutory protection for key sites of local biodiversity importance, the following will be designated as Local Nature Reserves:

1. King's Cliffe Meadow (1.9 ha)
2. Oundle Snipe Meadow (2.7 ha)
3. Twywell Hills and Dales (72.3 ha)

Indicator:

- Number and condition of LNRs, sites of local conservation interest or other sites of biodiversity or geological interest

Targets:

- No permissions granted that adversely impact LNRs, sites of local conservation interest, or other sites of biodiversity or geological interest
- Declaration of three new LNRs by 2011

5.23 The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)³⁹ provides a targeted approach to increasing the biodiversity value of Northamptonshire as a whole. Priority measures for increasing the level of biodiversity are addressed through policies 26-33 of RSS8. Further to this, biodiversity 'opportunity mapping' will need to be undertaken locally, to develop habitat creation, protection and management proposals. These will not only provide linkages and 'stepping stones' in terms of wildlife movement across the area, but will help to restore characteristic and priority habitats, such as Limestone Grassland in the north east of the Plan area. Policy 11 below therefore provides a framework for integrating the results of opportunity mapping into the development plan process locally.

³⁹ Northamptonshire
Biodiversity Action Plan
(2nd Edition 2008)

Policy 11 – ENHANCING BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping will inform local targets for the creation, restoration and management of characteristic priority habitats, as set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan. New development that is linked to or has an effect upon these priority habitats, will be required to contribute towards habitat creation and restoration and wherever possible to provide stepping stones and corridor links for the migration and dispersal of wildlife.

Indicator:

- Change in priority habitats and species by type (CO18 (i))

Parish Plans and Village Design Statements



5.24 Parish Plans are prepared by Parish Councils, with active community involvement, and provide a holistic approach to sustainable development in a Parish or settlement. Village Design Statements (VDSs) pre-date Parish Plans and are prepared by local design groups which are often set up for this purpose. VDSs identify the key factors defining local character and provide guidance for development and design in individual villages.

5.25 Parish Plans and VDSs, often combined, provide additional local frameworks for enhancing and contributing to the preparation of statutory plans affecting Parishes and communities. Broadly, when prepared they will perform the following functions:

- Address local concerns and assess data on local needs;
- Enable parishes and communities to take the lead in tailoring planning policy to meet local circumstances;
- Add value to planning at a local level – guidance for communities which may be too detailed to be included in statutory plans;
- Enhance community knowledge and participation in the planning process;
- Develop partnerships between communities and the District Council;
- Inform planning policies and development proposals, notably through VDS elements of Parish Plans.

5.26 National policies define the role of Parish Plans and VDSs. PPS1 states that Parish Plans have a key role in developing active community involvement, a critical principle of sustainable development. This is further supported by PPS7⁴⁰, which states that planning authorities should utilise tools such as VDSs and Parish Plans to develop policies in Local Development Documents.

⁴⁰ *Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (CLG, August 2004)*

Local Impact of Construction

5.27 While development is necessary in order to meet needs for housing, jobs and services; construction can have a direct impact upon people in the area surrounding development sites. This is particularly the case with brownfield sites, and other sites within built up areas, where related traffic, noise and dust may significantly affect the quality of life in the local area whilst construction is underway.

5.28 The Construction Industry has developed an eight point “Code of Considerate Practice”⁴¹ covering the following factors: Considerate, Environment, Cleanliness, Good Neighbour, Respectful, Safe, Responsible and Accountable. In order to deal more effectively with the short term local impacts of development, the Council will encourage developers to require their construction contractors to sign up to the industry code.

⁴¹ *Guidance for Project Sponsors and Project Managers – Guidance Note 5: Considerate Constructors’ Scheme (Sustainable Construction Group, June 2006)*

Policy 12 – CONSIDERATE CONSTRUCTION

In negotiations on development proposals, the Council will encourage developers to require their builders and construction contractors to sign up to the Industry Code of Considerate Practice, in order to mitigate the short term local impact of development whilst construction is underway.

Indicator:

- Number of developers actively promoting Industry Code of Considerate Practice

Targets:

- Increase in the number of developers actively promoting the Industry Code of Considerate Practice over Plan period
- Decrease in the number of construction site related complaints received through Environmental Health and Enforcement



6.0 SOCIAL POLICIES

Affordable Housing – General Policies

6.1 The policies in this Plan are designed to provide the framework for sustainable communities within East Northamptonshire. They are set in the context of the Core Strategy and national policy, in particular PPS3, and provide a framework for the major development anticipated within this part of the Milton Keynes & South Midlands growth area. PPS3 serves both to define national standards for affordable housing delivery and set out where policies need to be developed in the LDF. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies levels of need, including an appropriate tenure split, which form the basis for the targets set out below.

Definition

6.2 PPS3 provides the first national definition for affordable housing, which includes social rented and intermediate housing (for example shared ownership, key worker housing) exclusively. This definition specifically excludes low-cost market housing for sale, which encourages this to be provided within the market total.

Affordable Housing Need

6.3 The SHMA identifies an annual shortfall of 255 dwellings per annum for East Northamptonshire as a whole, while the 2004 Housing Needs Survey⁴² undertaken at Ward level, identified a shortfall of 138 dwellings per annum for the Plan area. The Council's Housing Strategy⁴³ identifies 140 units of affordable housing as having been, or being delivered, by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the previous 2 years (2004-6).

Affordable Housing Target

6.4 Taking account of the findings of the SHMA, the Core Strategy specifies a target of 40% affordable housing units on sites within East Northamptonshire. The thresholds being applied through saved Local Plan policies and adopted SPD are currently 15 units in the urban areas (in line with the national indicative minimum site size threshold stated in PPS3) and 10 units in other settlements.

6.5 An informed assessment has been undertaken to determine the viability of different thresholds and proportions of affordable housing⁴⁴. Development appraisals have been carried out for allocated sites in this Plan plus some other examples that would constitute 'windfall' sites. The appraisals included estimated development costs (including current Section 106 costs) and sales and rental values based upon existing market data as

⁴² *Housing Needs Survey 2004 (Outside Research and Development, September 2004)*
⁴³ *East Northamptonshire Housing Strategy 2006-2009 (December 2006)*

⁴⁴ *EDAW Affordable Housing Viability Model for East Northamptonshire Council (January 2009)/ updates (April 2009)*

at January 2009. The modelling has concluded that it is presently not viable to secure 40% affordable housing from development contributions alone and that public subsidy will be required in order to meet identified needs.

6.6 Delivery of affordable housing to meet identified needs therefore requires additional finance from public sources; presently via Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) subsidy. In the case of small rural sites, the public funding requirement is significant. In the 2008-11 period, approximately £36m of HCA funding is allocated per annum to Northamptonshire as a whole. This will be distributed on a competitive value for money basis, with levels recently around £44,000 per rented home and £20,000 per low cost home ownership home. The available level of funding should enable the delivery of new affordable homes to be secured in line with the targets set out below.

6.7 The Plan therefore includes provision for affordable housing delivery in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston, with respect to:

- Targets for numbers of affordable housing to be delivered by 2021;
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Thresholds for individual development sites, above which affordable housing will need to be provided;
- Affordable housing tenure types.

Thresholds

6.8 PPS3 specifies a general threshold of 15 dwellings or more, above which the local target for affordable housing should be applied. However, lower thresholds can be set, where viable and practical, in rural areas. The SHMA found that, based on need, a minimum threshold of 3 dwellings should be applied in the rural area. In terms of practicality, viability testing has found that developer contributions from sites under 15 units would be difficult to achieve.

6.9 While the need for smaller scale developments to be viable is of substantial importance in the current economic climate, the underlying issue is that there continues to be an acute need for affordable housing in the rural area. The Council therefore remains committed to maximising opportunities for the development of affordable housing to meet these needs. Accordingly, to ensure sustainable development in the rural areas (i.e. outside Oundle and Thrapston), the policy approach for sites between 10 and 14 units is to consider need and viability on a case by case basis, applying 'Saved' Local Plan Policy H4 (Appendix 2) and the adopted SPD on Developer Contributions.

6.10 Larger new housing developments differ in principle from smaller allocations. That is because they do not contain the range of lower priced second hand housing types that are typically found within established urban communities and which therefore form part of the context for smaller new developments. In Oundle and Thrapston affordable housing will be sought only on sites of 15 dwellings or more.

6.11 PPS3 includes a requirement to provide for low cost market housing but does not define what this may be. The North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment suggests that a target of 5% low cost market housing could be applied on development sites of over 50 units. The delivery of these units would require a covenant restricting cost to 30% below equivalent full market value, but given the relatively small

proportion of total housing to be provided by this means it would only be appropriate to impose such a standard on larger scale developments, where a full range of dwelling types will be provided. The Council wishes to encourage an element of low cost market housing but is not presently convinced that the evidence base is sound enough to set a local target at this time, or that delivery and monitoring mechanisms could be put in place to achieve such a target. Subject to these issues being addressed, a low cost market housing target will be brought forward in a future review of this Plan.

Policy 13 – AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

On all development sites of 15 dwellings and over and on sites of between 10 and 14 dwellings outside of Oundle and Thrapston, based on local housing need an element of affordable housing will be sought of up to 40% of the total number of dwellings proposed, although the finally agreed proportion will depend upon specific site viability.

Public subsidy will be sought in order to maintain affordable housing provision at or near the 40% target for individual sites wherever possible.

Affordable units should comprise 75% social rented and 25% intermediate housing, unless an alternative tenure split is agreed with the Council in response to local needs.

Indicators:

- % of applications meeting the threshold of 15 units that provide the required level of affordable housing and the stated tenure breakdown
- % of applications between 10 and 14 units that deliver affordable units

Targets:

- 100% of development sites over 50 dwellings providing 40% affordable housing, with a mix of 25% social rented and 15% intermediate housing

Numbers of affordable housing units – targets for the Plan area

6.12 The 2004 Housing Needs Survey identified an indicative need to deliver at least 500 affordable dwellings within the Plan area by 2021. Sites in the Plan area could provide around 485 affordable dwellings up to 2021, as follows:

- 185 affordable dwellings on allocated sites at Oundle
- 270 affordable dwellings at Thrapston South
- 30 affordable dwellings at King's Cliffe

6.13 The Council's Housing Strategy (December 2006) defines the mechanisms, partnerships and the locally available resources available for affordable housing delivery.

The District wide aims, objectives and priorities set out in the Housing Strategy will be implemented through the affordable housing policies set out in the Plan.

Affordable Housing – Rural Exceptions Sites

6.14 National planning policies (PPS3 and PPS7) state that affordable housing provision in rural areas should be supported by a rural exception policy. The findings of the Housing Needs Survey 2004 indicated a need for 100 more affordable units annually in the rural areas; however, there is a viability issue with developer contributions towards affordable housing on rural sites under 15 units. Although past delivery rates on exceptions sites have not made major inroads towards meeting these needs, they do constitute an important element of supply.

6.15 The Council's Housing Strategy (December 2006) provides the framework for involving different partnerships in bringing forward rural sites for development. This develops previous work undertaken by the Rural Housing Enabler, Housing Corporation and Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency). A rural exception policy will support this earlier work by ensuring that affordable housing can be provided where it is needed in a flexible manner.



Policy 14 – RURAL EXCEPTIONS HOUSING

In the rural area, planning permission will be granted for affordable housing to meet genuine local needs (identified through a local housing needs survey) where the following criteria can be satisfied:

- a) The site is within or well-related to a village and the scale and nature of the development is appropriate to its surroundings;
- b) The village concerned offers (individually or as part of a network of villages with an affordable housing need) at least a basic range of services appropriate to the form of housing provided, and there are no more sustainable locations available;
- c) The impact on adjoining countryside is minimised through careful siting, design, materials, access, drainage, landscaping and open space provision; and
- d) Occupation of housing is controlled through a legal agreement or planning obligation to ensure that the benefits of affordable housing are also enjoyed by subsequent occupiers.

Indicator:

- Number of exception site applications approved which meet the stated criteria

Target:

- 100% of approved applications to adhere to the criteria as set out in Policy 14

Affordable Housing Allocations

⁴⁵ *East Northamptonshire Council Rural Strategy (Atkins, November 2005)*

6.16 A key objective of PPS3 (paragraph 9) is to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas, both urban and rural. In accordance with the aims and objectives of PPS3, the Council's Rural Strategy⁴⁵ notes that small "Sites of Social Diversity", or allocations purely for affordable housing, would be especially beneficial to smaller rural communities where the numbers of possible development sites are limited but there is clear evidence of local need. Due to the acute problems with affordability in the north of the District, and to assist with delivery of affordable housing in suitable locations, small "sites of social diversity" are being sought. Although work on specific sites and local needs is not sufficiently advanced at present to make allocations at this time, future reviews of this Plan will bring forward proposals based on detailed evidence.

6.17 Proposals for sites of social diversity need to be accompanied by an up to date, robust local housing needs assessment, which will provide evidence of an imbalance between incomes and house prices, supplementing the 2004 Housing Needs Survey for the District. Negotiations regarding possible sites in Barnwell, Great Addington and Titchmarsh are in their early stages, so it is currently uncertain whether these sites are deliverable, an important requirement of PPS3 in allocating specific sites for affordable housing.

6.18 As evidence becomes available to support the delivery of affordable housing allocations in villages, specific sites will be identified in a review of this Plan. Prior to any future review, or if specific development proposals for affordable housing are forthcoming, these should be considered against the policy 14 above.

Gypsy and Traveller Needs

⁴⁶ *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in Northamptonshire (Fordham, March 2008)*

6.19 The Northamptonshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published in March 2008⁴⁶. Over the decade 2007-17, this has identified a need for 9 additional residential pitches, 2 additional transit plots and 4 additional plots for Travelling Show People. Policy 16/ Appendix 2 in the Regional Plan set an initial (5 year) target for the delivery of 6 pitches (including 2 transit pitches) by 2012.

6.20 There are currently no authorised gypsy or traveller sites within the Plan area. However, there is a storage facility for travelling show people near Polebrook. Furthermore, there are two small gypsy and traveller sites totalling 20 pitches between Ringstead and Denford, adjacent to the Plan area. There is an existing consent to extend the number of pitches by a further six, subject to other site amenities being provided.

6.21 The GTAA has made specific recommendations that future provision should be close to existing private sites. It is considered therefore, that additional accommodation would, most appropriately, need to be provided near/ adjacent to the existing sites in the district, at Ringstead and Irthlingborough. It will be necessary, therefore, to resolve this matter through the emerging site allocations DPDs for the Raunds and Irthlingborough areas. Specific proposals for the small scale expansion of the existing show people storage site near Polebrook would need to be considered against the criteria in Core Strategy Policy 17, together with relevant criteria in PPS7.

Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities

6.22 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of towns and villages; for example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment; and to provide a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity.

6.23 Each type of open space has various benefits, for example allotments for the growing of produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Many open spaces also have secondary functions, for example outdoor sports facilities have an amenity and recreational value. All the open space, sport and recreation sites in the Plan area have been identified on the Proposals Map (PPG17⁴⁷).

6.24 Sufficient recreational and amenity open space must be provided throughout the Plan area to meet the existing and future open space needs of the community. Government guidance in PPG17 requires the Council to prepare strategies for the provision and enhancement of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities based on up to date assessment of need. In accordance with this requirement, PMP carried an assessment of open space, sport and recreational facilities during 2005. An update of this assessment is being undertaken at present, looking at current levels of provision and need. This will closely inform the development of an Open Space Strategy SPD for East Northamptonshire.

6.25 The objectives identified in the forward to PPG17 have been fully considered and, as required by PPG17 (paragraph 11), Policy 15 sets out the measures to be taken to achieve these in the Plan area.

6.26 The January 2006 PMP study was undertaken to provide a comprehensive survey of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the District. The PMP study has provided the evidence for locally based detailed policies and provision standards for each type of open space. This will enable negotiations on new housing development which will ensure that planning obligations can be directed towards sites in order to implement open space requirements. Where there are shortages in quantity the local planning authority will seek additional provision.

6.27 The PMP study sets out a means to assess open space. This includes a qualitative and value assessment to be applied, in addition to quantitative and accessibility factors to sites in order to determine and set out actions needed to ensure appropriate implementation (PMP, paragraph 13.14). This will be used as a test when considering development applications and as an element of the proposed SPD and to identify and inform action to deliver the open space elements of this Plan set out in Policy 15.

6.28 The following local provision standards have been developed from the PMP study taking into account the results of the full assessment and these will be applied to all housing developments in the Plan area.

*⁴⁷ Planning Policy
Guidance 17: Planning
for Open Space, Sport
and Recreation (CLG, July
2002)*

Table 1 – Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities – Local Provision Standards

	QUANTITY	ACCESSIBILITY
Parks and Gardens	0.6 ha per 1,000 population	15 minute walk (720m)
Natural and Semi Natural Open Space	1.30 ha per 1,000 population (urban areas) and 8.79 ha per 1,000 population (rural)	15 minute walk (720m)
Amenity Green Space	0.8 ha per 1,000 population	5 minute walk (240m)
Children and Young People	0.1 ha per 1,000 population (urban) and 0.14 ha per 1,000 population (rural)	10 minute walk (480m)
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.69 ha per 1,000 population (excluding golf courses)	15 minute drive (5 miles)
Allotments	0.34 ha per 1,000 population	15 minute walk (720m)
Cemeteries and Churchyards	None set	None set

6.29 Areas of open space on development sites should be located, designed and laid out by developers to enhance the amenity of the area. Provision of open space by the developer must include arrangements for public access, long term retention and future maintenance in order to fulfil the guidance of the PMP Study.

⁴⁸ East Northamptonshire Council Supplementary Planning Document Developer Contributions (June 2006)

Policy 15 – OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

On all new housing developments of 15 or more dwellings or 0.42 ha or larger⁴⁸, new open space, sport and recreation facilities shall be provided and/ or improvements and enhancements undertaken to existing off-site facilities.

To achieve protection and enhancement of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities, measures will be taken to:

- a) **Protect and enhance the sites identified as having high value (in terms of quality and accessibility).**
- b) **Enhance the quality and accessibility of sites currently assessed to be below the local quality and accessibility standards as set out in Table 1.**
- c) **Consider the exchange of one site for another in order to substitute for any loss of open space or sports and recreational facility or to remedy deficiency in accordance with PPG17.**
- d) **Achieve sufficient open space and recreation provision; the recommended local accessibility standard for each open space type will be applied as set out in Table 1 above.**
- e) **Secure provision through planning obligations, from developers to improve open space, sport and recreation facilities and direct developer contributions towards areas of key deficiency, including off site provision.**

Indicators:

- Total number and area of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities
- Additional open space, sport and recreational facilities created through Developer Contributions SPD

Targets:

- 100% of applications approved to provide for open space in accordance with the required standard zero net losses of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities including zero net loss to their quality.

6.30 Those Open Space Sites identified as being of high quality are recognised and given protection (PPG17) and set out on the Proposals Map and schedule (Appendix 6).



7.0 ECONOMIC POLICIES

Approach to Economic Development

⁴⁹ North
Northamptonshire
Market Towns and Rural
Regeneration (Entec,
May 2004)

⁵⁰ East Northamptonshire
Employment Land Review
(Atkins, December 2006)

7.1 The strategic approach to employment development to 2021 in the Core Strategy involves both the protection of existing employment areas and allocation of new land, where appropriate. The 2004 Market Towns and Rural Regeneration study⁴⁹ identified a need to provide additional employment land, primarily for local uses and offices, in the northern part of the district, with particular reference to Oundle.

7.2 The 2004 study is supported by the more detailed Employment Land Review⁵⁰, identifying existing employment sites within the District; with B Class uses, Planning applications/ permissions or allocated in the 1996 Local Plan. All existing employment sites were considered to be suitable for future employment protection. A total 31 sites in the District were considered; 13 of these located within the Plan area.

Strategic Approach to Employment Land

⁵¹ Planning Policy
Guidance 4: Industrial,
Commercial Development
and Small Firms (CLG,
November 1992)

7.3 Given the differing locations and nature of the existing employment areas identified and assessed in the Atkins report, it is appropriate to define differing policy approaches for each. While PPG4⁵¹ recognises the varied locational needs of different types of employment uses, the general strategic approach for the Plan area is set out in the Core Strategy, and concentrates development within or adjoining the main urban areas or rural and local service centres. The policies set out in PPG4, together with PPS7 and the Core Strategy, permit extensions to existing businesses where these are necessary, in accordance with appropriate design criteria (Core Strategy Policy 13).

7.4 The Core Strategy sets out overall levels of job creation in the office, general industrial and distribution sectors (Class B1, B2 and B8 uses respectively); with the greatest emphasis placed on new office development. It is necessary for this Plan to allow for sufficient land to accommodate any shortfall in supply identified by the Employment Land Review.

7.5 Of the 13 sites in the Plan area, identified within the Employment Land Review, six are within, or closely associated with, the Thrapston urban area (including Islip); while a further three are associated with Oundle. King's Cliffe has one industrial estate adjoining the built up area (Kingsmead), with a further two sites associated with the village within 3km. Finally, the Addington Park industrial estate is situated between Little Addington and Crow Hill (Irthlingborough).

7.6 Certain employment areas are situated in open countryside, away from established settlements. Facilities such as West Hay Farm (King's Cliffe) have resulted from previous farm diversification schemes. Similarly, the Islip Furnace/ automobile storage (formerly Inchcape) site, while associated with the Thrapston urban area, has been developed as a result of the District's historic legacy (until the 1970s) of ironstone quarrying and associated industrial processes situated within the open countryside.

Protection of existing employment sites

7.7 The Employment Land Review recommends that all assessed sites are judged to require ongoing protection. Given the isolated situation of some open countryside employment sites (particularly King's Cliffe Industrial Estate and West Hay Farm); any alternative uses to employment on such sites are likely to be contrary to national policy and the principles of sustainable development.

7.8 The majority of sites are located within, or closely related to, existing settlements or urban areas. All of these, except Addington Park, relate to the three service centres (Oundle, Thrapston and King's Cliffe). Sites perform differing roles in relation to their respective localities. In accordance with the Core Strategy and recommendations from the Employment Land Review, these 13 sites will be safeguarded for employment use.

Policy 16 – PROTECTED EMPLOYMENT AREAS

The existing employment sites, identified in Appendix 5, are protected for employment use. Proposals for re-development or changes of use of existing buildings should ensure that the overall provision of employment after development is no less than that of the current use or most recent use. A reduction in the level of employment or development for non-employment uses will be permitted only when it can be demonstrated that:

- a) there is no realistic prospect of the site or buildings being used or re-used, including redevelopment, for employment purposes; or
- b) constraints associated with the site or buildings mean these would be unsuitable for re-use, in terms of siting, design, access, layout and relationship to neighbouring buildings and uses.

Indicator:

- Total area of employment uses

Targets:

- Zero net loss of key employment areas

Sites occupied by single enterprises

7.9 Some significant employment sites in the Plan area, identified by the Employment Land study, are currently fully-utilised, but occupied by a single business, offering comprehensive redevelopment opportunities if these are vacated by the current user. Given the varied nature of the following sites, it is not appropriate for the Plan to have a single policy covering all of these:

- Automobile storage and adjacent 1.66 ha site at Islip Furnace (total 23.13 ha);
- West Hay Farm (4.72 ha);
- Oundle Marina (9.21 ha).

7.10 The Islip Furnace automobile storage and West Hay sites are both occupied by Class B8 storage and distribution businesses, including large proportions of the site for the open storage of goods. In contrast, Oundle Marina includes both facilities for the manufacture and repair of boats, together with facilities serving pleasure boats operating along the River Nene, but is also situated in Flood Zone 3, the highest risk of flooding. A separate policy for the possible redevelopment of the Oundle Marina is contained in the Tourism section of this Plan (Policy 21).

Policy 17 – EMPLOYMENT SITES OCCUPIED BY SINGLE BUSINESSES

If the protected automobile storage, adjacent under-utilised land at Islip Furnace and West Hay Farm employment sites, as shown on the Proposals Map, are vacated by their current occupier, schemes for their redevelopment should consist of the following:

1. **At least 40% of new floorspace as offices (B1 usage);**
2. **At least 20% of new floorspace for general industry (B2 usage);**
3. **Not more than 40% of new floorspace for storage, distribution or warehousing (B8 usage).**

Planning conditions will be used to ensure the longer term retention of office or general industrial (B1 and B2) uses or an appropriate mix of employment uses as set out in this policy.

Indicator:

- Use status of sites

Target:

- 100% of redevelopment applications approved to meet the criteria set out in Policy 17

Sites with potential for additional development or intensification

7.11 The Employment Land Review identifies certain employment locations within the Plan area which, while in most cases being occupied, contain under-utilised or vacant areas. These are all occupied by multiple numbers of businesses, but the roles and types of operation vary greatly within and between the sites.

7.12 The Acorn (Islip) and King's Cliffe industrial estates contain primarily business and general industrial premises, with a large part of King's Cliffe Industrial Estate in distribution and storage (Class B8) uses. As such these perform a role as locally important employment locations, but have scope for additional development or intensification of uses.

7.13 The East Road, Kingsmead and Addington Park sites each have their own particular characteristics and play an existing or potential future role in delivering the employment needs of the Plan area. These sites are considered in more detail in policies OUN2, KCF1 and AP1 respectively.

Town Centres and Retail

7.14 National guidance stresses the importance of maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres. The strategic approach to development in and around the town centres is defined by Policy 12: Distribution of Retail Development, in the Core Strategy. These policies are reflected locally with Thrapston and Oundle fulfilling much more than a retailing function for their surrounding areas.

7.15 In their roles as Rural Service Centres these towns will attract wider interest from the surrounding area; in particular Oundle has been identified as serving an extensive rural hinterland. Each of these towns has many unique characteristics; Oundle has historic interest along with many individual shops that cater for the area and has recently acquired Fair Trade status; Thrapston is diversifying at the moment with many new retailers arriving complementing the existing provision, the proposed regeneration in Thrapston will also bring more retail and town centre opportunities.

7.16 Primary Shopping Frontages have been identified along with a Town Centre Boundary for both towns; these boundaries are shown on the Proposal Map (Town Centre Insets 1A and 2A).

7.17 In accordance with PPS6⁵², the strategy is to positively and proactively support the town centres by encouraging uses, activities and investment that will sustain or enhance their character, attractiveness, vitality and viability.



⁵² Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (CLG, March 2005)

Policy 18 – TOWN CENTRES

Within the defined shopping frontage the presumption will be to retain A1 uses.

Within the town centre boundaries a change of use from A1 to other uses with the A classes will be acceptable providing the proposal would result in a positive benefit to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

To maintain vibrancy within the town centre boundary, the change of use of spaces above shops will be considered favourably for further retail use, leisure, employment, community facilities and residential units.

Indicators:

- Number of A1 units
- Number of other 'A' use class units
- Number of vacant units

Targets:

- Number of vacant units does not exceed 3 in Thrapston, and 2 in Oundle
- 100% of proposals for the use of spaces above shops adhere to Policy 18 requirements

Tourism

7.18 The Core Spatial Strategy identifies a niche role for East Northamptonshire as a focus for rural recreation and tourism by building on its existing strengths in this area. The current Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008 – 2015 also identifies good environmental quality, natural beauty and high tourism value as key strengths and opportunities for East Northamptonshire, setting as a goal a high quality and accessible countryside.

7.19 Strategic planning policy encourages the focus of tourism development in larger settlements, with appropriate small scale schemes in rural settlements where they assist farm diversification or the retention of buildings which contribute to the rural character. Visitors to the area must be managed in a sustainable way and a balance reached between the local environmental concerns about traffic and pollution and the need to support local businesses which provide services to visitors to deliver economic prosperity.

River Nene Regional Park

7.20 The East Midlands Regional Plan defines regional priorities for strategic river corridors, including the Nene Valley (Policy 33). The River Nene Regional Park initiative (RNRP)⁵³ was set up in 2004 as the implementation body for green infrastructure at a sub-regional level, centred on the growth areas around Northamptonshire. Much of the RNRP is situated within the Plan area, so emerging green infrastructure proposals will be considered against Policy 33 in the Regional Plan and Core Strategy Policy 5.

⁵³ RNRP Feasibility Study (Landscape Design Associates, June 2004)

7.21 The vision for this Plan emphasises the role of tourism in developing a vibrant local economic base, for which the River Nene provides an important focus. The specific role of the river, both as a major green infrastructure corridor and navigation route for pleasure boats, is a major opportunity for the Plan to set out proposals for riverside related developments.

Riverside Developments

7.22 The Navigation Strategy 2004-2007⁵⁴ sets out the Environment Agency's approach to the enhancement of its navigable waterway network, including the River Nene. The Strategy places a high priority on providing more visitors' moorings, support facilities and other associated infrastructure, while setting out a spatial strategy that focuses the provision of new facilities close to towns and villages, centres of economic, cultural and social activity, and the strategic transport network.

7.23 The Plan considers the need to enable the enhancement of existing, or provision of new facilities for hiring and maintaining boats along the course of the river. Considering the general approach to sustainable development related to tourism set out in PPS7 and the Core Strategy, together with the Navigation Strategy, the general approach to the location of such facilities is for these to be situated close to established service centres along the course of the river.

⁵⁴ *Your Rivers for Life – A strategy for the development of navigable rivers 2004-2007* (Environment Agency, 2004)

Policy 19 – WATER RELATED FACILITIES ALONG THE RIVER NENE

Subject to compliance with other policies in the Plan, and the completion of an Appropriate Assessment where this is found to be required, there will be a presumption in favour of the development of facilities for hiring and maintaining boats, visitors' moorings, support facilities and other associated infrastructure along the course of the River Nene. These facilities shall be situated within, or near to the established service centres, particularly Oundle, Thrapston, Nassington and Warmington.

Where new proposals are located away from an established service centre, evidence should demonstrate that there are no suitable sites available closer to such centres.

Indicators:

- Increase in the number of water based leisure and tourism facilities
- Provision of boat hire facilities in association with Oundle, Thrapston, Nassington or Warmington

Target:

- At least one boat hire facility within the Plan area by 2021

Riverside Hotel

7.24 The Oundle Healthcheck (September 2006)⁵⁵ has identified economic priorities in and around the town, including gateway improvements, the provision of more tourist accommodation and the provision of local jobs and training opportunities. The Preferred Options consultation process (January – March 2006) identified a particular redevelopment opportunity along the river with potential to address these priorities, namely the disused Riverside Hotel on the A605 near Oundle.

7.25 Outline planning permission was granted in November 2005 for the development of a new hotel, incorporating the existing Riverside Hotel as an annex. However, given that consent has existed for such a development since 1993, the likely delivery of such a development remains uncertain. Considering the former use of the site as a small hotel/guesthouse and its prominent position adjacent both to the River Nene and A605, it is appropriate to seek the reinstatement of this as a hotel, restaurant or public house, providing a useful facility serving tourism at Oundle.

Policy 20 – RIVERSIDE HOTEL NEAR OUNDLE

The priority for the re-use of the Riverside Hotel near Oundle, should be its reinstatement as a restaurant, public house or hotel, providing tourist accommodation. Alongside this, projects to improve and enhance accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists to the town and Green Infrastructure along the River Nene will be supported.

If reinstatement of the Riverside Hotel is proved not to be viable, alternative uses should be considered in the following order of preference:

- 1. New training facility or resources centre to enable “hard to reach” groups to access local services and opportunities; otherwise**
- 2. Conversion to Class B1 office or business uses.**

Indicator:

- Use status of Riverside Hotel site

Target:

- To have the site in use as stipulated in Policy 20 by 2015

Oundle Marina

7.26 Oundle Marina is an existing facility, well related to Oundle, where there are opportunities for enhancement and tourist related development. It is important to encourage Fairline Boats (the sole occupier of the site) to remain within the town; however, if the firm vacates the site, Policy 21 aims to secure to the optimum alternative use and contribution to green infrastructure at the heart of the emerging River Nene Regional Park.

Policy 21 – OUNDLE MARINA

If the Oundle Marina site is vacated by its current occupier, redevelopment schemes for the site should have a tourism and water based leisure focus and consist of a mix of uses which could include:

- a) **Class B1 uses**
- b) **Class A3 or A4 uses**
- c) **Class D1 and D2 uses**
- d) **Tourist accommodation**
- e) **Ancillary retail uses**

A Concept Statement should be prepared for the site, with input from a range of stakeholders. This should go on to inform preparation of a full development brief which will establish the mix of uses based on the above range.

Indicator:

- Use status of site

Target:

- 100% of redevelopment applications approved to meet the criteria set out in Policy 21

Lilford Hall

7.27 In addition to the key riverside features of tourist interest around Oundle, other sites of natural and historic interest are located along the course of the River Nene, including Fotheringhay, Lilford Hall, Thrapston Lakes and Titchmarsh Local Nature Reserve. Until 1990, Lilford Park was an important recreational resource for local people and attracted visitors from outside the District. A major restoration project for the Grade I Listed Lilford Hall is underway and as part of this the Council will aim to improve public access through the grounds, along the River Nene.

7.28 Currently, the Nene Way path passes Lilford Hall by way of the Pilton – Clopton road, with access to Oundle via Wigsthorpe and Barnwell; up to 3 km away from the River Nene. A public footpath connects Oundle Marina and Lilford Lodge Farm, though no right of way exists through Lilford Park itself.

7.29 A key action/ outcome of the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (November 2007) is to improve links between communities, involving working with communities and Councils to identify, plan, create and improve routes linking different communities. Furthermore, Core Strategy Policy 5/ Figure 10 (Green Framework) support improvements to green infrastructure, including sub-regional corridors such as the Nene Valley.

Policy 22 – LILFORD PARK

In association with restoration proposals for Lilford Hall, improved public access will be sought as follows:

- 1. Riverside access, between Lilford Bridge and the Hall**
- 2. New footpath link between Lilford, Lilford Hall and public footpath NG1 at Lilford Lodge Farm, providing additional Nene Way linkage to Oundle Wharf.**

Within Lilford and Lilford Park, these routes should be constructed and maintained to a suitable standard for use by cyclists and/ or horse riders. The linkage to public footpath NG1 should be prepared and maintained to a suitable standard for pedestrians, and will ultimately form a more direct alternative route for the Nene Way between Thorpe Achurch, Lilford Bridge and Oundle.

Indicator:

- Improved public access to and around Lilford Park

Target:

- Creation of new footpath link between Lilford, Lilford Hall and public footpath NG1

Rural Buildings

7.30 Although the preferred development strategy for North Northamptonshire targets most development over the Plan period to the main settlements and to a much lesser extent to the villages, certain types of activity will still be appropriate in the countryside. These relate to proposals that can positively help to support the diversification or development of the rural economy and the relative sustainability of the communities that live in these areas. However, it is necessary for this to be controlled in order to conserve the environment of the countryside and amenity that also contributes towards sustainability.

7.31 Although the majority of the countryside is of an open nature, it also contains a large stock of farm and other buildings, such as farmsteads. Many of these buildings are well related to existing settlements and are no longer needed for their original purpose. The re-use of these buildings can help bring under-used buildings into productive use, and if used for business purposes can help to boost the economy.

7.32 Evidence indicates that smaller businesses are more likely to be in rural and town and fringe areas than urban, and that these businesses are more likely to relocate and expand. It will therefore be essential to provide locations for these businesses to remain within the Plan area. In accordance with the Core Strategy (Policy 11), to support sustainable economic development within rural areas, the Plan will provide general

support for the retention of rural buildings for existing rural enterprises and other employment generating uses.

Policy 23 – RURAL BUILDINGS – GENERAL APPROACH

Planning permission will be granted for the adaptation or re-use of buildings in the countryside for employment generating or tourism, including tourist accommodation, or residential use, where the location or building is more appropriate for such a use and provided that:

- a) **The character of any buildings of historic or visual interest is conserved, with proposals supported by detailed drawings indicating the layout, design and external appearance of the building after conversion, the materials to be used, the means of access and landscaping proposals;**
- b) **Schemes are limited to situations where buildings are substantially intact, though structural surveys will be required for proposals relating to buildings which are unoccupied and show evidence of some dereliction; and**
- c) **Conditions are imposed withdrawing permitted development rights to prevent future extensions, where these would result in an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding area.**

When considering proposed schemes for premises vacated by existing small businesses, rural enterprises and other employment generating uses, such projects should be assessed against the criteria set out in Core Strategy Policy 11.

Indicator:

- Number of approvals for the re-use of rural buildings in the countryside

Target:

- 100% of approved applications to adhere to the criteria set out in Policy 23

7.33 The national approach to the re-use of existing rural buildings set out in PPS7 is that business re-use is preferable to conversion to housing. Residential conversion of barns for example can harm the character of historic buildings and conflicts with the PPS7 sustainability objective of limiting residential development in the countryside. Due to the demand for business premises throughout the area it is preferable to re-use rural buildings for an economic use and limit conversion to residential development.

Replacement dwellings in the open countryside

7.34 If replacement buildings are not controlled in the countryside they could have adverse visual and environmental impacts. Policy 24 sets out the criteria against which provisions for replacement dwellings will be considered.

Policy 24 – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

Proposals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside will be granted on a one for one basis where:

- a) **The original dwelling has not been abandoned or allowed to fall into a state of dereliction and disrepair, so that any replacement would in effect be treated as a 'new' dwelling;**
- b) **The original dwelling is not a temporary or mobile structure;**
- c) **The replacement dwelling is located within the site boundary of the original dwelling; and**
- d) **The replacement is of a size, scale and massing similar to the original dwelling.**

Indicator:

- Number of approvals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside

Target:

- 100% of approved applications for replacement dwellings to adhere to the criteria set out in Policy 24

7.35 If the existing dwelling shows signs of dereliction or disrepair or has not been occupied for some time a structural survey may be required to be submitted by the applicant in support of the proposal. If the footprint of the proposed dwelling does not match the footprint of the existing dwelling a Section 106 agreement/ condition will be required to ensure that the existing dwelling is fully removed from the site and therefore does not result in an additional dwelling.

Farm Diversification

7.36 Within the Plan area there are 52 businesses classified as agriculture, hunting and forestry businesses. To meet the overriding aim of the strategy; to increase tourism opportunities in the Plan area and to bring into economic use vacant buildings (14% of farming businesses have vacant buildings), farm diversification will be supported. Diversification for current farming practices is sometimes necessary to enable the viability of the business.



7.37 Farm diversification includes a range of different activities such as tourism, equestrian, storage/ haulage and offices, all these activities will boost the local economy. To ensure that the market does not become saturated in terms of tourism uses, the need for this type of diversification should be identified to ensure that other businesses do not suffer.

7.38 PPS7 provides particular support for equestrian enterprises. The Plan area is within the Welland sub-region, one of the most important

equestrian areas in the UK. The Welland Partnership prepared a draft Equestrian Strategy (August 2005)⁵⁶, to develop business support and safe off-road networks in order to enhance the development of equestrian enterprises. The nature of equestrian development varies greatly, from small scale private, single-berth stables and horse shelters; to commercial stables, riding schools and training facilities. Developments associated with these are likely to include new stables, ancillary on-site accommodation and engineering works such as menageries.

⁵⁶ *Equestrianism in the Welland - SSP Strategy and Action Plan 2005 (August 2005)*

POLICY 25 – FARM DIVERSIFICATION

Diversification projects relating to farm uses throughout the Plan area will be supported in accordance with the following:

- a) where buildings for re-use are well related to existing built up areas, a mix of uses will be permitted, including business, tourism activities, tourist accommodation and live work units;
- b) where buildings are located in the open countryside away from built up areas, conversion for general residential uses will not be permitted;
- c) where the proposal involves the establishment of a farm shop, 50% of merchandise sold should be produced on the farm or have local origins;
- d) the diversification activity should be additional to the main agricultural/ farm use and utilise existing buildings.

Expansion or encroachment of new buildings into the countryside as part of farm diversification proposals will not be permitted.

Indicator:

- Mix of uses associated with farm diversification proposals

Target:

- Increase in farm diversification projects in the Plan area
- 100% of approved applications for farm diversification schemes to adhere to the criteria set out in Policy 25

Lorry Parks

7.39 There is a shortage of suitable lorry parking in the Plan area, considering the strategic road links that are present. Currently heavy good vehicles are parking on side roads around the Thrapston Business Park as well as in non dedicated areas, which causes highway and safety issues. Policy 26 sets out the criteria against which a new facility would be considered.

POLICY 26 – LORRY PARKING

Proposals for the provision of strategic lorry parking should:

- a) be located adjacent to the major road network;
- b) include a small range of facilities for drivers of the vehicles;
- c) not be located adjacent to or accessed through a residential area;
- d) the design of the park should apply “Secured by Design” principles; and
- e) be screened and landscaped to minimise landscape impacts.

Indicator:

- Location of new lorry parking facilities across the Plan area

Target:

- 100% of approved lorry park applications to adhere to criteria set out in Policy 26

Lorry Parks

7.39 There is a shortage of suitable lorry parking in the Plan area, considering the strategic road links that are present. Currently heavy good vehicles are parking on side roads around the Thrapston Business Park as well as in non dedicated areas, which causes highway and safety issues. Policy 26 sets out the criteria against which a new facility would be considered.

POLICY 26 – LORRY PARKING

Proposals for the provision of strategic lorry parking should:

- a) be located adjacent to the major road network;
- b) include a small range of facilities for drivers of the vehicles;
- c) not be located adjacent to or accessed through a residential area;
- d) the design of the park should apply “Secured by Design” principles; and
- e) be screened and landscaped to minimise landscape impacts.

Indicator:

- Location of new lorry parking facilities across the Plan area

Target:

- 100% of approved lorry park applications to adhere to criteria set out in Policy 26



8.0 OUNDLE – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS

A Development Strategy for Oundle

8.1 The development strategy for Oundle will recognise that the town has a role as a Rural Service Centre but the scale of new development will be limited in accordance with its special character and sensitive setting. It will be necessary to phase new housing development in order to ensure that growth is accompanied by the delivery of infrastructure and jobs. Owing to its accessibility to the strategic road network (notably the A605) and its role as a rural service centre, Oundle is well placed to meet the demands of business and widen access to employment opportunities in the rural north of the District.

8.2 There are already deficiencies in local infrastructure, particularly in relation to highways and in certain parts of the town, to surface water drainage. The commencement of new development will therefore be dependent upon measures being put in place to cater for the increased demand and improve the situation overall. Infrastructure requirements will need to be looked at holistically to ensure that development in one part of the town does not lead to adverse impacts in other areas. The Oundle Healthcheck identified a range of priorities for action, including transport, health, youth and leisure facilities and town centre improvements. Developer contributions will therefore be required towards transport related infrastructure and a range of social and community infrastructure improvement and provision and these will be a pre-requisite to consent being granted for the sites identified at policies OUN2 and OUN3 of this Plan.

8.3 The flooding and surface water issues will be dealt with through the implementation of PPS25 and Policy 7 of this Plan. Nevertheless, the local community in Oundle continues to express grave concerns about the impact of further development in the town upon local infrastructure, in particular the local highway network.

8.4 In order to develop the transportation evidence base for the Core Strategy, the County Council developed a strategic transport model for North Northamptonshire. This model replicates existing traffic conditions and allowed the Highway Authority (County Council) to predict the impacts of major developments and any improvements which may be required to accommodate traffic generated by the level of growth proposed for Oundle (610 dwellings). During 2008, the County Council also applied the strategic transport model to the specific sites in the submission RNOTP (January 2008), including the Ashton Road/ Herne Road and Creed Road sites at Oundle. It was found that there were no major strategic highway improvements required as a result of the traffic generated by these sites.



⁵⁷ *Guidance on Transport Assessment (Department for Transport, March 2007)*

8.5 Nevertheless, it is emphasised that localised transport improvements may be required in relation to the development of individual sites. A particular concern in the case of Oundle is the limited scope to provide highway improvements within much of the town, due to the narrow historic street network. The location of new site allocations in the most sustainable locations, particularly in terms of accessibility, has therefore been critical in preparing the development strategy for Oundle.

8.6 The County Council considered the need to develop a formal strategy for the strategic transport network in and around Oundle, but concluded that developers of all allocated sites within the town should undertake Transport Assessments (TAs) which include individual and cumulative (i.e. all other allocated sites) assessment of the transport implications of these developments. These TAs will need to be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of PPG13, together with the Department for Transport's Guidance on Transport Assessments⁵⁷.

Policy OUN1 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning permission will be granted for the development of the sites outlined at policies OUN2-OUN4 of this Plan provided it can be demonstrated that any additional infrastructure, services and facilities required to support the development will be provided as it proceeds.

In respect of transport infrastructure, transport assessments for all major sites will need to be undertaken in accordance with PPG13 and the Department for Transport guidance, to the satisfaction of the highway authority. Other necessary infrastructure requirements will need to be addressed by the developer to the satisfaction of the relevant statutory undertakers.

Indicator:

- Improvements in infrastructure associated with the development of sites identified in policies OUN2-OUN4

Targets:

- Improvements in infrastructure implemented prior to or alongside new development, as appropriate
- 0% applications approved on allocated sites without an agreed phasing schedule

8.4 Work conducted on possible directions of growth in Oundle assessed land to the east and south east of the town centre and land to the north west of the town as the most sustainable locations for future development. Land to the east is identified below as a strategic opportunity for high quality employment development. Land to the south east and north west is identified for new housing development.

Employment Strategy

8.8 The Market Towns and Rural Regeneration study indicated that there is a limited availability of high quality employment sites in the northern part of the District. The availability of sites in Oundle is also limited; there are no key regeneration sites in the town centre (as in Thrapston) and the business areas adjacent to the A605 are intensively developed, with the remaining plots earmarked for the expansion of existing local businesses. Opportunities to the south, west and north of the town are either constrained by floodplain or would require commercial traffic to come through the historic town centre in order to access the A605.

8.9 It is considered that the only site within the town with potential to deliver a new high quality employment development is land at East Road. This is a brownfield site on the edge of the urban area, with good access to the A605, but it is also within easy walking distance of the town centre. The site is allocated to make a significant contribution to providing new employment opportunities to balance housing growth over the Plan period. This is supported by the findings of the Employment Land Review, which identified that land at East Road should be safeguarded for future employment development. Policy OUN2 identifies the potential of the site and sets out the approach to employment proposals.

Policy OUN2 – EAST ROAD, OUNDLE

In order to sustain Oundle’s role as a rural service centre, provide for increased job opportunities and reduce out-commuting, land at East Road will be redeveloped for high quality (predominantly Class B1) business uses.

A Design Workshop will be arranged for local people and stakeholders. This will go on to inform the preparation of a development brief, in order to provide certainty for developers, the local community and other stakeholders, and ensure that a good quality scheme is delivered.

Indicator:

- Redevelopment of East Road site for business use by 2016

Targets:

- At least 60% of the East Road site to be developed for B1 uses, with the remainder to be developed for B2 uses

Housing Strategy

Phase 1 development proposals

8.10 Oundle has expanded over recent years, with residential development to the north and west of the town centre. The Core Strategy makes provision for 610 houses in the period from 2001 to 2021. Of this total, 161 units were built by April 2008, with a further 9 under construction and 27 with planning permission. The 2006 Urban Potential Study update estimated that those sites within the built up area considered 'likely' to be developed for housing could accommodate around 350 units. Most significantly, these include a group of small brownfield sites and a large area of vacant land, not previously developed, to the south east of the town centre between Ashton Road and Herne Road.

⁵⁸ *North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Roger Tym & Partners, February 2009)*
⁵⁹ *Assessment of Potential Housing Sites in Oundle and Thrapston (Roger Tym & Partners, January 2009)*

8.11 The Urban Potential Study has also informed Roger Tym & Partners' 2009 North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)⁵⁸ and Sustainability Assessment of Sites update (February 2009)⁵⁹. Through this process, the Ashton Road/ Herne Road site is identified as a sustainable, deliverable site within the urban area and is therefore the main housing allocation within the town.

8.12 Two further deliverable and achievable sites have been identified to the west of Oundle. A small site at Dairy Farm, Stoke Hill has potential to deliver about 20 dwellings, through the conversion of listed barns and a limited amount of new housing immediately to the south. A larger site is allocated to the north west of the town, which is a greenfield urban extension to Creed Road. Work on bringing this site forward is already well advanced and a full application to develop 145 dwellings on this site was submitted in April 2009. All three sites are expected to be delivered within five years and will therefore fulfil the requirement in PPS3 for the allocation of a five year supply of deliverable land.

Policy OUN3 – HOUSING ALLOCATIONS IN OUNDLE (PHASE 1)

New housing development in Oundle up to 2014 will primarily take place within the existing built up area of the town focussed on site (1). Additional sites are allocated as urban extensions to the west of the town, consisting of a greenfield land release at site (2) forming an extension to the north-west of the built up area and a small allocation at site (3), south-west of the town.

1. Ashton Road/ Herne Road

This site could accommodate housing development (around 145 dwellings depending on the need for other uses) community facilities, associated infrastructure and open space. A master plan for the site will be prepared which will establish the:

- a) overall mix of land uses;
- b) means of access and movement across the site;
- c) proposals to resolve the conflict with the school access, particularly school buses;
- d) design of off-site highway improvements to related junctions;
- e) delivery of open space and community facilities;
- f) retention of on-site features of importance, including Herne Lodge and protected trees along the Ashton Road access

2. Creed Road

This site could accommodate around 145 dwellings, associated infrastructure and open space. A detailed master plan for the site will be prepared, which will establish the:

- a) means of access and movement across the site;
- b) design solutions to resolve highway issues regarding access to and from the Glaphorn Road;
- c) integration of the development into the existing community;
- d) delivery of on-site open space and linkages to other green infrastructure and facilities around the town;
- e) retention of on-site features of importance, predominantly important boundary trees and hedges surrounding the site.

3. Dairy Farm, Stoke Hill

This site could accommodate around 20 dwellings, through the conversion of listed barns at Dairy Farm and additional new housing to the south. Development proposals should address:

- a) retention and re-use of historic features on site, predominantly the listed barns and associated structures;
- b) means of access and highways arrangements from Stoke Hill;
- c) linkages to existing services and facilities within the town;
- d) linkages to adjacent green infrastructure, including the River Nene.

Indicator:

- Production of master plans for sites setting out details of infrastructure delivery and phasing of housing development

Target:

- Commencement of housing development at the Ashton/ Herne Road, Creed Road and Dairy Farm allocation sites by 2011

Phase 2 development proposals

8.13 Work on bringing forward the Phase 1 (Policy OUN3) sites is already well advanced, a full application for the Creed Road site (145 dwellings) having been submitted during April 2009; applications on the other sites are expected imminently. All three sites are expected to be completed within 5 years of the Plan's adoption (by 2013/14), delivering around 310 dwellings by 2013/14.

8.14 The allocation of the currently under-used Oundle School playing field to the west of Glapthorn Road is proposed as a 2nd phase of development, following on from the Creed Road development to the west (OUN3(2)). The playing field site has been allocated as a later phase of development in the north-west of Oundle (west of Glapthorn Road), as this site was found to be "developable" through the Roger Tyms' Sustainability Assessment of Sites. However, it does not meet the criteria for a deliverable site as it is not immediately available. The current landowner, Oundle School, has only recently expressed interest in the possible release of the playing field for housing and further preliminary analysis and community engagement will be necessary before the site is ready to come forward.

8.15 Nevertheless, the Glapthorn Road playing field site has been found to be a sustainable location, being well related to existing facilities within the town including a hub of community facilities to the south (Policy OUN6, below). Due to on site drainage problems this playing field has seen little use by Oundle School for many years. While the site is considered to be a more sustainable location than the nearby Creed Road site, work in bringing it forward is significantly less advanced. Oundle School has recently completed its "SciTech" development (east of Glapthorn Road), which means the Glapthorn Road/ Hillfield Road playing field will no longer be required. This should enable the site, with a capacity of 80 dwellings, to come forward after 2014.

Policy OUN4 – HOUSING ALLOCATIONS IN OUNBLE (PHASE 2)

After 2014, the release of an additional site allocation to the north-west of the town, west of Glaphorn Road is proposed. This site could accommodate 80 dwellings, associated infrastructure and open space. Development proposals for the site should address the:

- a) Means of access and movement across the site;
- b) Design solutions to resolve highway issues regarding access to and from Glaphorn Road;
- c) Integration of the development into the existing community, particularly through linkages to Glaphorn Road community hub (Policy OUN6) and the Middle School (Cotterstock Road);
- d) Delivery of on-site open space and linkages to other green infrastructure, with particular reference to green corridors associated with existing Creed Road/ Hillfield Road development and proposed development to the west;
- e) Retention of natural on-site features of importance, predominantly important boundary trees and hedges.

Indicator:

- Production of master plan for the Glaphorn Road development setting out details of infrastructure delivery and phasing of housing development, in the event that a scheme exceeding 100 dwellings is proposed

Target:

- Commencement of housing development on the Glaphorn Road site by 2014

Longer term strategy

8.16 The development proposals in policies OUN3 and OUN4 are expected to deliver 390 dwellings, leaving a shortfall of 23 dwellings from the Core Strategy target (610). However, PPS3 only requires the identification of specific deliverable or developable sites for 10 years from the date of adoption, so it is expected that the residual shortfall, equating to 0.82 years (i.e. 10 months) housing land supply, will be met through windfall developments.

8.17 The Sustainability Assessment of Sites update (Roger Tyms)⁶⁰ assessed 24 alternative sites (including Policy OUN3 and OUN4 site allocations). These were identified through the SHLAA and earlier (2007) sustainability assessment work by Roger Tyms. Of these, 10 sites were found to be deliverable; the majority being discounted as these are not likely to become available during the Plan period, or have been designated for alternative uses such as open space or employment.

⁶⁰ *The Sustainability Assessment of Sites for Development Plan Documents (Roger Tym & Partners, May 2007)*

8.18 PPS3 requires the Plan to indicate possible locations for housing development from 11-15 years from the date of adoption, i.e. from 2018/19 till after 2021. The Sustainability Assessment work has identified two particular sites which stand out as possible longer term site allocations. These sites, which could come forward following reviews of the Core Strategy and this Plan, are:

- Land to the rear of the Cemetery, Stoke Doyle Road (230 dwellings capacity);
- Land off Cotterstock Road/ St Peter's Road (200 dwellings capacity).

Educational Facilities

⁶¹ Northamptonshire School Organisation Plan 2003 – 2008 (January 2004)

8.19 The County Council has indicated, through its schools organisation plans⁶¹, that schools in Oundle will require additional accommodation. Furthermore, it is noted that the development proposals for King's Cliffe are likely to impact upon the Middle and Upper schools. The planned development at Thrapston will also have an impact on the Upper School; schools in and around King's Cliffe and Thrapston being feeders for Prince William (Upper) School. In addition to this, it is expected that parental choice will lead to increased pressure on the Oundle and King's Cliffe schools from the residents of the Priors Hall development at Corby/ Deene.

8.20 Policy 8 of the Core Strategy supports investment in education and training at existing facilities and where new facilities are necessary these will be developed at locations accessible by a choice of transport modes. As such, the policy states that the preferred approach is for the provision of additional facilities at existing educational premises where possible. It is necessary to make provision in this Plan to allow for the expansion of school premises in Oundle, given the predicted significant increases in the town's population over the next 15-20 years.

8.21 Owing to their respective locations, Oundle CE and Prince William Schools are both physically constrained. Expansion to the Prince William School premises is possible to the east or west of the present site.

Policy OUN5 – PRINCE WILLIAM SCHOOL

The identified need for expansion to the existing Prince William School premises will require the development of new school buildings, extended playing fields and associated infrastructure within the Oundle settlement boundary.

The additional school infrastructure will be delivered to the east of the current school buildings and is expected to be funded predominantly through financial contributions from the major development proposals at Oundle, Thrapston and King's Cliffe.

The required extension to playing fields will be to the east, north east or south east of the existing school site. Where it is necessary to provide additional school buildings or physical infrastructure upon part of the existing playing fields, any shortfall should be accommodated within the new playing fields, and be at least as accessible to current and potential new users, and at least equivalent in terms of size, usefulness, attractiveness and quality.

Indicator:

- Identification/ safeguarding of land for expansion of Prince William School

Target:

- Improvements to school buildings, extended playing fields and associated infrastructure to be underway or programmed prior to the commencement of development on sites identified in OUN3 and THR5

Car Parking and Traffic Management

8.22 The Oundle Healthcheck Report was completed and published in 2007. The highest priorities identified for the town which may be addressed within the scope of this Plan are the highway network and the need for more parking, together with more youth and leisure facilities. Policy OUN1 sets out the requirement for a town wide traffic strategy to be developed, an important aspect of which will be further assessment of the parking situation. Innovative solutions that provide additional parking capacity within sites will be welcomed.

8.23 Surveys undertaken on market days (Thursday and Saturday) during autumn 2006 indicate that at these times there is undoubtedly an acute need for more parking within or near to the town centre. Surveys undertaken on other weekdays have indicated overall car parking usage of up to 80%, with the West Street and Co-op car parks often full to capacity.

8.24 Should there be a need to relocate the Milton Road primary school; preferred new uses for the existing buildings include additional public or community facilities. Otherwise, in accordance with the priorities set out in the Healthcheck, the vacated site could be used to provide additional car parking, given its proximity and ease of access to the town centre.

Community Facilities

8.25 A concern raised through the Preferred Options consultation that has also featured in the recent Oundle Healthcheck is the longstanding lack of adequate facilities for young people within the town. Certain premises have been identified, such as the Drill Hall, Victoria Hall and Courthouse (all owned by the Town Council), together with some facilities at Prince William School, though these may be inadequate for some user groups.

8.26 One particular concern that was identified through previous consultations and the Healthcheck is the future of the County Council's facility at Fletton House, Glapthorn Road. This was formerly used as a residential training centre, but is currently under-used, though three community groups are continuing to use the ground floor of the building; the first floor being vacant. It is estimated that significant expenditure involving refurbishment and internal modifications to Fletton House will be necessary to secure its longer term future.

8.27 Fletton House adjoins a group of other community buildings and premises off Glapthorn Road. The County Council owns the adjacent library, fire station and Mason House premises, while the doctors' surgery and police station are also adjacent. Given the concerns raised about the lack of community facilities in Oundle, specific development proposals to secure the longer term future of the building are set out in Policy OUN6 below. Considering the issue of economic sustainability, the retention of Fletton House solely for community use is unlikely to be viable. Therefore, OUN6 makes provision for the change of use of part of the building to Class B1 (business/ office use).

POLICY OUN6 – FLETTON HOUSE, GLAPTHORN ROAD

Proposals for the change of use of the first floor of Fletton House to Class B1 uses will be supported. However, the ground floor of the building will be retained for community uses, with priorities being determined with reference to the 2007 Oundle Healthcheck report.

Comprehensive redevelopment proposals for the wider Fletton House site, including the library, police station, doctors' surgery and Mason House, will only be acceptable if they make provision for appropriate replacement of these facilities.

Indicator:

- Change of use of first floor to B1 uses.

Target:

- Retention of existing uses at Fletton House



9.0 THRAPSTON – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS

9.1 Development in Thrapston will be of a scale commensurate with the town’s role as a Rural Service Centre. A range of sites, both brownfield and greenfield, will be developed in order to ensure the regeneration of the town centre, enhance job opportunities and maintain a supply of housing land. It will be necessary to phase new housing development in order to ensure that growth is accompanied by the delivery of infrastructure and jobs.

9.2 In association with development proposals affecting secondary education provision in Oundle (see Section 8 above); the increasing pressure upon Prince William School resulting from the proposed housing development throughout the Plan area means that the issue of providing a new secondary school in Thrapston is continually being raised. Furthermore, this particular issue was identified through the earlier Preferred Options consultation for this Plan (January – March 2006). Considering the wider need to Plan for sustainable communities as set out in PPS1 and the growth levels for Oundle and Thrapston set out in the Core Strategy the Springfield Farm location has been identified as a site with some development potential that may be suitable for the development of a new secondary school should one need to be provided.

9.3 The local health services also suffer capacity problems, with the Midland Road surgery oversubscribed and seeking relocation to a larger site. The 2002 Thrapston Healthcheck and 2003 Masterplan⁶² also identified a range of priorities for action, including improving the appearance and range of services in the town centre, making better use of the river and lakes, town centre car parking improvements, more facilities for young people and improvements to public transport. Developer contributions will therefore be required towards a range of social and community infrastructure, in addition to ensuring that the local transport network can deal with the new development.

⁶² *Thrapston Regeneration Masterplan (Entec, October 2003)*

Policy THR1 – INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning permission will be granted for the development sites outlined at policies THR3 and THR5 of this Plan provided it can be demonstrated that the local services and amenities will be in place to deal with the demands arising from new development.

In respect of transport infrastructure, Transport Assessments for all major sites will need to be undertaken in accordance with PPG13 and the Department for Transport's "Guidance on Transport Assessment" (March 2007), to the satisfaction of the highway authority and Highways Agency. Other necessary infrastructure requirements will need to be addressed by the developer to the satisfaction of the relevant statutory undertakers.

Indicator:

- Improvements in infrastructure associated with the development of land identified in Policy THR5

Target:

- Improvements in infrastructure implemented prior to or alongside new development, as appropriate

Regeneration

9.4 Investment in Thrapston is required in order to support its role as a Rural Service Centre. The proposals for Thrapston town centre regeneration draw on the findings of the Healthcheck and related Masterplan outlined above.



9.5 An overall framework for change and development over the Plan period is provided by Policy THR2. Development proposals, traffic management and environmental enhancement schemes should be designed to follow the principles established within this policy.

Policy THR2 – REGENERATION OF THRAPSTON TOWN CENTRE

Town centre and edge of centre proposals for new development and the re-use of land and buildings should contribute towards improving:

- a) **the retail offer – to increase active frontages, enhance and not threaten the viability of existing local businesses**
- b) **the visual appearance of public areas – to create new landmarks and enhanced vistas**
- c) **local facilities – to enhance community infrastructure**
- d) **public car parking – to enhance the provision of convenient and safe parking facilities**
- e) **linkages between the High Street and public areas – to upgrade pedestrian accessibility**
- f) **gateways to the centre – to provide an enhanced sense of place**

Environmental enhancement and traffic management schemes should also respect these key principles.

Indicator:

- Increased vitality and vibrancy within Thrapston town centre

Target:

- 100% of approved town centre applications to adhere to the criteria set out in Policy THR2

9.6 Key sites are identified in Policy THR3 that are pivotal to the regeneration of the town centre; based on the Healthcheck and master planning work referred to above. These sites need to be viewed comprehensively and developed in a complementary manner for a range of town centre uses.

Policy THR3 – THRAPSTON REGENERATION SITES

The regeneration of Thrapston Town Centre will be facilitated through the mixed use redevelopment of the following sites:

- 1. High Street (17-31 High Street, the library and fire station)**
This site has potential for a mix of uses including retail, community facilities, offices, housing and town centre car parking. Development should address the High Street and provide a landmark building to enhance the prominent corner site; creating an attractive gateway to the High Street shopping area and enhancing the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area.

Policy THR3 – Continued

2. Land at Cosy Nook and rear of High Street properties

Development could take place in association with site 1, or independently, and should respect the site's location partly within the designated Conservation Area. It has potential for a mix of uses including town centre car parking, retail, offices and housing.

3. Bull Ring and Church Walk

This site offers opportunities to create an important new civic space for the town. The setting of the Conservation Area, St James's Church and adjacent listed buildings should be enhanced by new development that creates active frontages looking onto a new town square. Redevelopment will be largely dependent upon finding suitable sites to relocate the existing car repair business and St John's Ambulance building. The range of uses that could be accommodated include enhanced town centre car parking, a new site for the weekly market and other specialist market activities, community facilities, specialist residential accommodation for elderly persons, and food and drink establishments with space for outdoor eating.

4. Cattle Market

Redevelopment of this site will be dependent upon relocation of the current livestock market and related activities, preferably to a site in the local area. The site has potential for a mix of uses including retail, housing, offices, community facilities and new town centre car parking. Development should respect the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area and listed buildings. There should be no vehicular access to the High Street but an enhanced pedestrian link should be provided. North-south pedestrian linkages across the site should be designed to increase opportunities to access the High Street on foot from existing areas in the south of the town. Off site highway improvements along Market Road and at its junction with Midland Road will need to both provide for any new development and deal with existing road user conflicts in the area around the schools. This may require some road widening, which could be facilitated by relocation of the Bowling Green to a suitable alternative location within the town.

Indicator:

- The redevelopment of 17-31 High Street, Land at Cosy Nook and rear of High Street properties, the Bull Ring and Church Walk, and the Cattle Market.

Targets:

- Improved town centre retail offer by end of 2011
- Increased amount of town centre parking by end of 2011

Employment Strategy

9.7 Thrapston has several existing business areas, including Cottingham Way/ Cosy Nook (4 hectares); Halden’s Parkway (40 hectares, with 7.5 hectares still undeveloped); and Top Close (2.3 hectares, with 0.8 hectares still undeveloped). Separate to, but closely related to both Thrapston and Woodford, are the Islip Furnace and adjacent automobile storage sites (comprising about 7 hectares and 21.5 hectares respectively).

9.8 In support of the town’s role as a Rural Service Centre, it is important that a range of employment opportunities continue to be available; through safeguarding these existing employment areas, making better use of under utilised land within them, and by planning for new employment and commercial development within town centre redevelopment sites. The potential of town centre sites is highlighted in the regeneration section above.

9.9 It is not considered necessary to identify major new greenfield employment sites in the Thrapston area but there is a need for some local businesses to relocate from their existing cramped and problematic sites, particularly at Chancery Lane and Midland Road. The Council will continue to assist with seeking relocation sites, with a preference for sites within the business areas identified above, in order to enable the expansion of these businesses and their retention in the local area, as well as the redevelopment of their existing sites. If plots within existing business areas are not available or suitable, alternative sites will be judged against the general policies in this Plan and in the Core Strategy, as well as Policy THR4.

9.10 The existing A605 roundabout junction with Huntingdon Road already deals with high volumes of traffic and there are safety issues relating to commercial heavy vehicles overturning. A redesign of the junction will need to be considered as part of any proposals to intensify or extend employment uses in this area.

9.11 Existing businesses are often longstanding employers and have a base of local employees who are able to walk to work. Relocation of these businesses should not compromise the ability of employees to access the new site, making them car dependent where they were not before. Travel Plans are a recently developed means of setting out measures by which single occupancy car journeys can be limited. Options may include improved walking and cycling links, buses provided by the employer, improvements to public transport and car sharing.

Policy THR4 – RELOCATING EXISTING BUSINESSES AROUND THRAPSTON

Proposals for relocating existing businesses in Thrapston and facilitating their expansion will be directed to land within Halden’s Parkway, Top Close or Islip Furnace business areas. If suitable sites in these locations are not available or viable, then potential relocation sites elsewhere should be:

- a) Adjacent to the existing built up area; and**
- b) Suitable for HGV access and manoeuvring.**

Proposals for the further concentration of employment development at Halden’s Parkway will be required to contribute where necessary towards improvements to the A605 roundabout junction.

Indicator:

- Relocation of existing businesses to alternative sites

Target:

- 100% of approved schemes for business relocation meeting the locational requirements set out in Policy THR4

Housing Strategy

9.12 The town has expanded considerably in recent years and the Core Strategy makes provision for a further 1,140 houses in the period from 2001 to 2021. Of this total, 445 were complete by April 2008; with a further 23 under construction and 44 with planning permission but not yet started. An assessment of potential within the built up area of the town estimates that up to 400 units could be developed on 'brownfield' sites. Around 230 of these are however on complex mixed use redevelopment sites which will require coordination between a range of agencies and land owners in order to ensure their delivery in the Plan period. Housing development will be the preferred re-use on sites outside the town centre, but within the town centre housing will be a secondary element rather than the main use.



Housing as part of a new Neighbourhood

9.13 Work conducted on possible directions of growth in Thrapston assessed land to the south of Thrapston, bounded by the A14, as the most sustainable location for a new neighbourhood. The land has considerable potential for housing (estimated at around 685 units) but could also accommodate local facilities such as a medical centre, a relocated fire station, a family pub and high quality business uses. Greenfield housing development over the Plan period will therefore be focused in this area, allocated as THR5.

9.14 The site has a diverse character, to the east there are mainly open agricultural fields; to the west, a former quarry and brownfield land including the former Midland Road Station. Parts of the site to the east have been identified as being of archaeological importance and will need to be safeguarded in any development proposals. Noise attenuation is also a key issue, as the site lies alongside the A14 trunk road. In summary, there are various features within the site which will contribute towards achieving a distinctive character for the new neighbourhood. These elements will need to be comprehensively considered as part of a master plan for the site (as required for all sustainable urban extensions by Policy 16 of the Core Strategy).

Policy THR5 – THRAPSTON SOUTH

A new neighbourhood will be developed on land to the south of Thrapston, between Huntingdon Road/ Market Road, the A14/A605 and Midland Road. The mix of uses will include housing, a medical centre, open space and high quality commercial development.

The phases of development will be defined in a master plan, which will provide full details of the necessary trigger thresholds for additional infrastructure, setting out:

- a) overall mix of land uses;
- b) means of access and movement across the site;
- c) delivery of open space and medical facilities;
- d) delivery of high quality commercial uses;
- e) phasing of housing completions up to 2021 and beyond;
- f) protection of the area of archaeological interest;
- g) protection of geological and biodiversity interest;
- h) detailed design principles;
- i) detailed measures that will be put in place to attenuate noise from the A14 trunk road.

Indicator:

- Production of a master plan for the site setting out details of infrastructure delivery and phasing of housing development

Target:

- Commencement of housing development on the site by 2011



10.0 RURAL AREAS – STRATEGY AND ALLOCATIONS

10.1 Policy 1 of this Plan defines King’s Cliffe as a Local Service Centre, and Nassington and Warmington as Smaller Service Centres. Proposals for development sites in these villages, and in the remainder of the rural north area, have been developed within the framework set out in PPS7, the Regional Plan and Core Strategy (Policy 1). It is recognised however that villages in the rural north have a greater or lesser dependency on the Rural Service Centres of Oundle and Thrapston and on larger centres outside the Plan area.

10.2 Development opportunities throughout the area will be of a scale and nature appropriate to the size and character of the settlements concerned. The retention of existing village services is a key outcome of the Plan. The Council believes that appropriate new development can help to support communities and local facilities; although improvements in travel choice are paramount to achieving more sustainable rural communities. There is an ongoing need to improve and expand local infrastructure, such as community halls, open space and business opportunities. Developer contributions from sites in villages will be used towards such improvements but also towards enhancing travel choice and improving facilities in the Rural Service Centres of Oundle and Thrapston.

King’s Cliffe – Local Service Centre

⁶³ Rural Pathfinder Project in Northamptonshire (Network For Rural Economies and Strategies, July 2007)

10.3 Evidence base studies clearly demonstrate that King’s Cliffe functions as a local service centre for the rural north of the Plan area. In September 2006, the Council’s Strategy Committee endorsed the King’s Cliffe Pathfinder Project⁶³; with £10,000 being allocated to support this from the Welland Partnership. The Pathfinder Project has been set up to further enable existing agencies and community groups in addressing key issues and developing local projects. Extensive consultations were recently undertaken (June – September 2007), following which a multi-agency partnership will be set up, focussing on the most important issues raised by the local community.

10.4 The role of the village has recently been further boosted by the granting of planning permission in May 2006 for a 4.1 ha community sports facility project to the north of the Kingsmead industrial estate and disused railway line. This proposal will include a leisure complex and should serve a significant rural hinterland; a further consultation exercise about the details of the scheme was undertaken in March 2007.

10.5 Redevelopment of a former industrial site near Wansford has recently led to the provision of new industrial units and expanded job opportunities for the area. The accessibility of the site by means other than the car will need to be improved as part of any public or community transport initiatives in the King’s Cliffe area; to ensure that local people can fully benefit from new employment provision.

10.6 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has noted that in the King’s Cliffe area there are a number of areas where there is a risk of surface water runoff into water courses that are already at risk of flood. This situation will need to be addressed by any development proposals.

Kingsmead SME site

10.7 A workshop scheme on the site of the station yard in Kingsmead comprising ten small units was completed by the District Council with financial assistance from the Rural Development Commission during the 1980s. Further vacant land exists to the north and west of the present buildings (0.36 ha), providing the potential to accommodate further units on the remainder of the former King’s Cliffe station site. Given the longstanding role of the Kingsmead industrial estate in providing suitable premises for small firms, this Plan contains a policy to ensure the longer term retention of the Kingsmead estate as a site for “small and medium enterprises” (an SME site).

10.8 Planning permission was granted in March 2008 for the development of 6 No small business units for B1 (office), B2 (general industrial) and B8 (storage and distribution) uses on the remaining undeveloped part of the (Council owned) Kingsmead estate. However, the availability of funding for this project is currently uncertain so the site has been retained as an allocation in this Plan.

Policy KCF1 – KINGSMEAD SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES SITE, KING’S CLIFFE

The remaining 0.36 ha of the Council’s Kingsmead industrial estate will be developed for additional SME units, providing suitable affordable premises for the establishment and expansion of small firms.

In addition, the existing Kingsmead SME units will be safeguarded in their current roles.

Indicator:

- Development of affordable SME units on the remaining 0.36ha of the Kingsmead site

Target:

- Construction of affordable SME units on the remaining 0.36ha by 2015

Housing Strategy

10.9 There was a previous allocation in the 1996 Local Plan (Policy KC1), which made provision for 50 dwellings on a 0.9 ha site, off Fineshade Close. Of this, 15 affordable dwellings were completed by the East Midlands Housing Association, with 1.23 ha of the site remaining (37 dwellings estimated capacity). The Sustainability Assessment of Sites looked at 12 potential development sites around King’s Cliffe. Of these, just one was

found to have good development potential, representing the most sustainable location for future development.

10.10 The only site with development potential identified by the Sustainability Assessment is a 6.8 ha site between Wood Road, Willow Lane and the disused railway to the north of the village, incorporating the remainder of the former Local Plan allocation. This land, along with the Important Open Land designation to the south and County wildlife site to the north-west, was subject to a development brief, adopted by the Council as supplementary planning guidance (SPG) in September 1999⁶⁴, exploring site development and design principles. The adopted SPG will inform detailed development proposals for the site; the gross developable area of the site being 4.83 ha.

⁶⁴ *Wood Road, King's Cliffe – Development Brief - Site Development and Design Principles (September 1999)*

Policy KCF2 – WILLOW LANE/ WOOD ROAD

Land off Willow Lane/ Wood Road, King's Cliffe is allocated for the development of between 145 and 150 dwellings and associated infrastructure.

Planning permission will be granted, subject to legal agreement for developer contributions for the following, in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD:

- a) **Affordable housing;**
- b) **Education contributions;**
- c) **Open Space;**
- d) **Phasing schedule for the development.**

Indicators:

- Completion of a legal agreement and provisions agreed in respect of affordable housing, education contributions, open space and phasing

Target:

- Commencement of housing development on the site by 2009

10.11 A planning application for the comprehensive development of the site was submitted in 2005. The Planning Committee approved this in principle in September 2006, subject to S106 agreement. Outline planning permission was ultimately granted in July 2008, but detailed development proposals/ reserved matters are still outstanding so the site has been retained as an allocation in the Plan.

Nassington and Warmington – Smaller Service Centres

10.12 Nassington and Warmington are both identified as Smaller Service Centres in Policy 1 (above). These medium sized villages are identified as offering limited local services for their own population and a few surrounding villages, though the level of provision in services and facilities is not sufficient to label the two villages as Local Service Centres. The Council's "Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Planning in East

Northamptonshire” (January 2006) (paragraph 8.24) proposes a strategy for these two “Limited Local Service Centres”; stating that they “should accommodate new development in or near to the service centre, where affordable housing, service and community facilities can be provided close together”.

10.13 In accordance with the development approach for Nassington and Warmington proposed in this section, small scale development sites are identified for development purposes. Assessment of individual sites is provided in the Sustainability Assessment of Sites, which identifies the preferred potential development sites in and around the two villages.

Nassington

10.14 The Sustainability Assessment considered 11 potential development sites around Nassington. Of these, 3 were found to have good development potential, representing the most sustainable locations for future development. One possible site is situated north of 65 Church Street, well contained by the existing built up area, and comprises redundant and derelict farm buildings along the road frontage and open land to the rear. This site was initially put forward in the Preferred Options document and its designation is also supported by the findings of the Sustainability Assessment. It is therefore proposed for development in policy NAS1 below.



10.15 2 further sites along Fotheringhay Road, south of the village; were found to have development potential, though these are situated opposite one another. Another site, adjacent to 5 Woodnewton Road, was put forward in the Preferred Options document; but following the consultation process and Sustainability Assessment was found to be inappropriate for housing development. Overall, these alternative allocations are all greenfield locations on the periphery of the village and it is considered sufficient to allocate only one new greenfield extension to Nassington. Other proposals could be considered under the Core Strategy (Policy 16) or Rural Exceptions Housing policy (Policy 21, above).

Policy NAS1 – CHURCH STREET, NASSINGTON

Land to the north of 65 Church Street, Nassington is allocated for the development of a minimum of 11 dwellings and associated infrastructure.

Planning permission will be granted subject to legal agreement for developer contributions for affordable housing and open space in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD.

Indicator:

- Development of the site with a minimum of 11 units

Target:

- Commencement of development on the site by 2016

Warmington

10.16 Eight possible development sites around Warmington were considered by the Sustainability Assessment, of which just one, a 0.87 ha site adjacent to Eaglethorpe Barns, north of the village, was considered to have development potential. This supported the findings of the Preferred Options document, which recommended housing and employment development on separate elements of the site, south and east of Eaglethorpe Barns. Possible accesses exist from Peterborough Road, Dexter Way and Short Close.

10.17 Eaglethorpe Barns were converted to B1 business use (offices) during 2002. As such, a housing and predominantly B1 office development on land to the south and east of the Barns will be effectively an extension of this, enabling a comprehensive, integrated mixed use scheme to the north of Warmington. Policy WAR1 below accords with PPS1 sustainable development principles and the Core Strategy (Policy 13), by providing both housing and office development in Warmington, a defined service centre along a strategic public transport corridor.

Policy WAR1 – EAGLETHORPE BARNS, WARMINGTON

Land to the south and east of Eaglethorpe Barns, Warmington is allocated for mixed use development and associated infrastructure:

1. **Minimum 12 dwellings**
2. **0.38 ha of Class B1 (office) use.**

Planning permission will be granted subject to legal agreement for developer contributions for affordable housing and open space in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD.

Indicator:

- Development of land to the south east of Eaglethorpe Barns for mixed uses

Targets:

- Provision of a minimum of 12 dwellings by 2016
- Provision of a minimum of 0.38ha for Class B1 office uses by 2016

10.18 The development proposals for Nassington and Warmington accord with Core Strategy, regional and national policies, by providing for small scale housing and employment developments in defined small service centres in the rural area. The two development sites allow for 23-25 dwellings split between sites in the two villages, together with at least 0.38 ha of employment land in Warmington.

Sites in Open Countryside – Special Policy Areas

10.19 Certain sites with particular local issues are situated in open countryside locations, but require a particular local spatial planning approach. Two such sites are identified: Brigstock Camp (A6116) and Deenethorpe Airfield. Given the particular role of the Addington Park Industrial Estate identified in the Atkins study, a further policy has been set out for this site.

Brigstock Camp

10.20 During 2002 English Partnerships conducted a national survey of “hardcore” brownfield sites; that is brownfield sites that have been redundant or vacant since 1993⁶⁵. In response, the Council identified Brigstock Camp as such a site, this remaining the principle brownfield site within the Plan area. Despite this proactive approach towards encouraging the redevelopment set out in the 1996 Local Plan (Policy BR3) and Preferred Options document, no progress has been made in terms of implementation of any possible development scheme.

⁶⁵ *National Brownfield Strategy – Recommendations to Government (English Partnerships, June 2007)*

10.21 The redevelopment of the site as a 54 bed medium secure hospital facility was granted at appeal in July 2007, despite the Council’s concern that such a development

is not appropriate in this location. The Brigstock Camp site is therefore an “existing commitment”. Given the particular issues relating to the Camp it is considered appropriate for the Plan to contain a policy for the redevelopment of this site, if the development of the hospital facility does not materialise.

10.22 In terms of highways and accessibility, Brigstock Camp has direct access from the A6116, and eight bus services per day to Corby and Kettering passing adjacent to the site. However, while the site is within 2km walking distance of Brigstock village, the need to cross a busy and dangerous road means that this site is effectively isolated from the main village; though the provision of a cycle/ footpath link to Stanion and Corby via a former ironstone railway could enhance the possible accessibility of the site.



10.23 Given the history of Brigstock Camp, and its most recent usage as a lorry park and cattle transport business till 1993, the re-use of the site for warehousing or a storage depot may be appropriate. However, the Council has recently raised concerns about the increase in lorry traffic along the A6116 resulting from such uses, so it may be inappropriate to identify the site for these uses. Given the priority in the Core Strategy and Atkins study for additional office development in the Plan area, this use should be considered with respect to Brigstock Camp. Other possible uses appropriate to its open countryside location will need to accord with PPS7.

Policy BC1 – BRIGSTOCK CAMP

If the consent granted for a medium secure hospital facility is not implemented, then the development of offices on the brownfield part of the Brigstock Camp site will be acceptable. Any proposed scheme for the site should be accompanied by the following:

- a) **The provision of appropriate sustainable transport measures;**
- b) **Construction of a footpath/ cycle link to the Corby – Stanion former ironstone railway path, and/ or a safe crossing of the A6116.**

A development brief will be prepared, incorporating transport measures such as the provision of a bus stop to serve the site together with other design details. This should provide certainty for developers, the local community and other stakeholders, and ensure that a good quality scheme is delivered.

Indicator:

- Production of a development brief setting out proposals for re-use of the Brigstock Camp site

Target:

- Re-use of the site for countryside uses or office development by 2021

Deenethorpe Airfield

10.24 PPG13 Annex B⁶⁶ recognises the increasing demand for air transport and the increasing demand to provide expanded general aviation facilities at smaller airfields. Similarly, Policy 56 in the Regional Plan states that this Plan should support the existing role of smaller aerodromes, where this is consistent with local amenity. PPG13 also requires the identification of sites which could enhance the provision of local and regional aviation infrastructure.

10.25 The Preferred Options document recognised that Deenethorpe Airfield is a long established operation, with various on-site facilities related to its current role. While PPG13 and the Regional Plan are generally supportive of the expansion of aviation facilities when necessary, this should be considered against other transport policies. Particular concerns include the capacity of the existing road network, accessibility by a range of modes and supporting modal shift.

10.26 The general approach to economic development set out in PPS7 and the Core Strategy is to support the development of healthy and diverse economic activity. However, the sustainability agenda, as set out in PPS1, includes the protection of the environment and the need to mitigate against the effects of climate change. Given the importance of sustainable development underpinning all planning policies, in particular the quality of the local road network, the Plan does not support the expansion of the existing operation at Deenethorpe.

⁶⁶ *Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (CLG, March 2001)*

Policy DA1 – DEENETHORPE AIRFIELD

Development proposals which will lead to an intensification of aviation uses at Deenethorpe Airfield will not be acceptable. Applications for new schemes will need to be accompanied by environmental statements, demonstrating that the development will not cause:

- a) Any significant increase in aviation activity on site;
- b) Any increase in noise or other pollution affecting surrounding communities, in particular Deenethorpe, Deene, Upper Benefield or Weldon;
- c) Conflict with other civil or military aviation operations, notably RAF Wittering.

Indicator:

- Level of aviation activity

Target:

- 100% of applications to adhere to the criteria outlined in Policy DA1

Addington Park

10.27 Given its predominantly rural-based usage, it is considered that the Addington Park Industrial Estate is established as a “rural enterprise location”. The approach adopted in PPS7 is a presumption that such rural-based enterprises should be accommodated in existing buildings. However, the Employment Land Review identifies two vacant or under-used plots of land on the site (total 0.73 ha), which could accommodate additional on site development.

Policy AP1 – ADDINGTON PARK INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, LITTLE ADDINGTON

The Addington Park Industrial Estate is defined as a Rural Enterprise Location. New development proposals for the site should be considered against the following criteria:

- a) Suitable vacant premises on the site should be utilised before new development or extensions to the site are considered; and
- b) A “need assessment” should be undertaken to demonstrate a positive socio-economic impact for the proposal.

Planning conditions will be used to ensure the long term retention of new employment development on site, considering the following sequence of preference for uses:

1. Farm and agricultural based enterprise; then
2. B1 or B2 (office or general industrial) uses; and finally,
3. B8 storage or other related uses.

Indicator:

- Number of vacant premises on the site

Targets:

- 100% of approved applications for new development to adhere to the criteria set out in Policy AP1

Appendix 1 – Local Plan policies superseded following adoption of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (18 July 2011)

On 12 June 2008, the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) was adopted. This was followed by the adoption of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) on 18 July 2011.

This list sets out the Local Plan policies relating to the RNOTP area that remained in force after the adoption of the CSS (12 June 2008), but have subsequently been superseded by policies in the RNOTP.

SAVED EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES	POLICY NAME/ DESCRIPTION	REPLACED BY RNOTP POLICY
GEN3	Planning obligations	OUN1 & THR1
EN8	Protection of SSSI's, NNR's and LNR's	10 & 11
EN9	Safeguarding sites of local conservation interest	10 & 11
H2	Land for housing in the towns	THR5
H16	Local Needs housing	14
AG4	Re-use and adaptation of buildings in the countryside	23 & 25
AG5	Stables, riding schools and horticultural establishments	25
AG8	Relaxation of restrictive occupancy conditions	23
AG9	Replacement dwellings in the countryside	24
S5	Non shopping uses within the defined shopping frontages	18
S10	Farm Shops	25
RL3	Recreational open space provision by developers	15
RL4	Children's play areas	15
TR6	Service areas	26
TH1	Provision for housing in Thrapston	THR5
TH2	Provision for recreational use in Thrapston	4
TH3	Provision of a new primary school in Thrapston	THR1 & THR5
TH5	Town centre commercial development in Thrapston	THR1 & THR5
TH6	New car parking in Thrapston	THR3
BR1	Provision for housing in Brigstock	2
BR3	New uses in Brigstock Camp	BC1
KC1	Provision for housing in King's Cliffe	KCF2
IS1	Provision for recreation in Islip	4

Appendix 2 – Saved policies from 1996 Local Plan

Two policies from the 1996 Local Plan have been retained, following the adoption of the RNOTP, on **18 July 2011**. Local Plan policies EN20 and H4 will continue to remain in force and should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the RNOTP on Important Open Land and affordable housing respectively.

Important Open Land Within Towns and Villages

POLICY EN20

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH ADVERSELY AFFECTS OPEN LAND OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF A TOWN OR VILLAGE, AS IDENTIFIED BY ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (i) THE LAND CONTRIBUTES TO THE RETENTION OF THE EXISTING FORM AND CHARACTER OF A PARTICULAR SETTLEMENT;
- (ii) THE LAND PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT OPEN AREA WITHIN A SETTLEMENT WHICH SEPARATES DISTINCT GROUPS OF BUILDINGS OR PARTS OF THE SETTLEMENT;
- (iii) THE LAND CONTRIBUTES TO THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING, A BUILDING OF TOWNSCAPE QUALITY, ANCIENT MONUMENT OR LANDSCAPE FEATURE, OR CONTRIBUTES TO THE CHARACTER OF A CONSERVATION AREA;
- (iv) THE LAND ALLOWS VIEWS INTO THE SETTLEMENT FROM APPROACH ROADS OR OPEN COUNTRYSIDE, VIEWS INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM WITHIN THE SETTLEMENT, AND/OR VIEWS ACROSS TO DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE SETTLEMENT

Housing Land Supply – in respect of affordable housing

POLICY H4

ON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES OF MORE THAN 10 UNITS, A VARIETY OF DWELLING TYPES AND STYLES WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED

Appendix 3

Current List of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest (Policy 9)

This list results from survey work undertaken by Rockingham Forest Trust during 2007. It should be noted that further survey work is ongoing and this list will need to be reviewed accordingly.

BRIGSTOCK	DUDDINGTON
Former School, Back Lane	Old School House, Main Street
4 Bridge Street	EASTON ON THE HILL
18 Bridge Street	The Old Forge, 3 Church Street
22-24 Bridge Street	Barn, rear of 9 Church Street
25 High Street	Barn, rear of 10 Church Street
28 High Street	27 High Street
30 High Street	29 High Street
Village Stores, High Street	1 The Lane (White Horse)
Barn, Kennel Hill	Pump, rear of 3 The Lane
Latham School, Latham Street	Dovecote, rear of 5 The Lane
School House, Latham Street	West boundary wall of the Coach House, The Lane
United Reformed Chapel, Mill Lane	15, 19, 21 Newtown
Barn adjacent to 11 Park Walk	Paratroopers Memorial, Spring Close Park
WI Hall, Park Walk	1 Stamford Road
3 The Syke	3 Stamford Road
BULWICK	27 West Street
Carbery House, Blatherwycke Road	29 West Street (Cherry Pie Cottage)
19-20 Church Lane	Plaque, corner of West Street and Neville Day Close
26-27 Main Street	OUNDLE
Bluebell Nursery School (Reading Room), Main Street	Pillar Box, Corner of East Road and South Road
The Old Bakery, Main Street	Waymarker, wall of churchyard, opposite The Berrystead, North Street
Corner House, Red Lodge Road	
COLLYWESTON	Wall post box, Laundimer House, North Street
Pond Yard, Back Lane	
29 The Drove	
7 High Street	
26 High Street	
The Barn, 27 High Street	
The School, Main Road	
West Farmhouse, Main Road	
Wilson Cottage, New Road	

Appendix 4

Nature Conservation Designations

DESIGNATION TYPE	DESIGNATION (1996 LOCAL PLAN)	ORIGINATING LEGISLATION	STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICIES
STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS			
Proposed Special Protection Area (p SPA)	N/a	EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994	PPS9
Proposed Ramsar site (p Ramsar)	N/a	EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) Conservation (Natural Habitats etc) Regulations 1994	PPS9
SSSI	SSSI National Nature Reserve (NNR)	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, some amendments by Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	PPS9
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	LNR	National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, some amendments by Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	PPS9 RSS8 Policies 26-28, Appendix 4 Core Strategy Policy 5
NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS			
Local Sites of Conservation Interest	Nature Conservation Zones County Wildlife Sites Important River Reaches	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, some amendments by Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	PPS9 RSS8 Policies 26-28, Appendix 4 Core Strategy Policy 5
Ancient Woodlands	Ancient Woodlands	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	PPS9 RSS8 Policies 26-28, Appendix 4 Core Strategy Policy 5

Appendix 5

Protected Employment Sites (Policy 16)

ATKINS SITE ID	SITE NAME	LOCATION	AREA (HA)	NOTES
1	Islip Furnace Site	Islip	7.24	Under utilised land – north east part of site
2	Islip Furnace automobile storage site (formerly Inchcape Automotive)	Islip	21.47	Recent discussions re B1/ B8 development
3	Acorn Industrial Estate	Islip	0.93	Northern/ eastern part of site – builders' merchants storage – potential for further development
4	West Hay Farm	King's Cliffe	4.72	Recent planning permissions for further expansion to premises
6	Kingsmead	King's Cliffe	1.03	Planning permission for access to community leisure facility from Kingsmead (May 2006)
7	King's Cliffe Industrial Estate	King's Cliffe	5.78	Southern part of site – planning permission for storage/ sorting of timber (2001)
8	East Road	Oundle	2.07	Most of site is vacant/ under-used – part used for storage of building materials
9	Nene Valley Business Park	Oundle	7.5	New offices and manufacturing buildings with planning permission/ under construction
10	Oundle Marina (Fairline)	Oundle	9.21	
11	Haldens Parkway	Thrapston	39.89	2 vacant plots – 7.56 ha – recent/ pending planning permissions for B1, B2, B8 developments
12	Cottingham Way/ Cosy Nook	Thrapston	4.17	
13	Top Close	Thrapston	2.3	Planning permission for B1 office use granted on vacant plots
28	Addington Park Industrial Estate	Little Addington	3.9	2 under used plots – used for storage
	TOTAL		110.21	

Employment Land Review, Appendix C (December 2006)

Appendix 6– Sites identified by PMP as high value (in terms of quality and accessibility) or of good/ very good quality against the benchmark quality indicator

Amenity Greenspace

- 36 – Navisford Close, Thrapston
- 532 – Locks Green, Yarwell
- 572 – Townsend Court Green Area, Upper Benefield

Sports Facilities

- 22 – Thrapston Bowling Green
- 26 – Thrapston School Playing Fields
- 29 – Castle Playing Fields and Cricket Ground in Thrapston
- 32 – Green Lane Tennis Courts, Thrapston
- 118 – Oundle Bowling Club
- 147 – Herne Road Playing Fields, Oundle

Parks and Gardens

- 23 – Memorial Park, Thrapston
- 123 – Oundle School Memorial Garden
- 784 – Barnwell Country Park

Allotments and Community Gardens

- 519 – Ashfields Allotments, Cotterstock
- 630 – New Road Allotments, Easton on the Hill
- 770 – St Andrews Lane Allotments, Titchmarsh

Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 626 – All Saints Churchyard, Easton on the Hill
- 702 – Bridge Street Cemetery, Kings Cliffe
- 806 – Woodnewton Burial Ground

Provision for Children and Young People

- 822 – Peace Memorial Park Play Area, Thrapston
- 965 – Clover Drive Play Area, Thrapston
- 966 – Play Area off John Street, Thrapston
- 1981 – Barnwell Country Park Play Area

Natural and Semi-natural

- 389 – Adjacent to Paddock Stone Cottage, Thurning
- 419 – Thorpe Waterville
- 800 – Easton on the Hill
- 835 – Titchmarsh
- 849 – Bulwick

Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan



EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Northamptonshire NN14 4LZ

01832 742000

planningpolicy@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk