

## 2 REGIONAL, SUB-REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXTS

### Regional and Sub-regional Policy

#### *Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands, March 2005*

2.1 Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) was published in March 2005 following a partial revision of previous regional guidance to include issues raised by the since adopted Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy.

2.2 RSS8 provides a broad development strategy for the East Midlands region up to 2021. The overall vision for RSS8, as set by the East Midlands Regional Assembly's Integrated Regional Strategy, is that:

*'the East Midlands will be recognised as a region with a high quality of life and sustainable communities that thrives because of its vibrant economy, rich cultural and environmental diversity and the way it creatively addresses social inequalities, manages its resources and contributes to a safer, more inclusive society.'*

2.3 Urban renaissance is a core priority of the Spatial Strategy and is regarded as:

*'the key to achieving a more sustainable pattern of development'.*

Policy 5 advises that development should be concentrated in urban areas. Significant levels of new development are to be directed primarily to the region's five Principal Urban Areas (Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Northampton and Nottingham); followed by concentration in the region's growth towns (Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough); while appropriate development of a lesser scale should be located in the sub-regional centres, including Market Harborough and Daventry.

2.4 Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough are labelled as 'growth towns' in RSS8 following their identification as such in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy.

2.5 Market towns are also highlighted by RSS8, for the key role they play in the region's rural areas, serving as centres for shopping, employment and service delivery. The future vitality of many rural areas will increasingly depend upon market towns. RSS8 comments in relation to Policy 6 that it is:

*'crucial that the economic and service base of these settlements is consolidated and where appropriate enhanced'.*

#### *Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy, March 2005*

2.6 The Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM SRS) was published in March 2005 by the First Secretary of State, following public examination before an independent Panel in 2004. The MKSM SRS covers parts of three regions, including the whole of Northamptonshire in the East Midlands.

2.7 The purpose of the document is to provide a clear, agreed, sub-regional strategy for the period 2001-2021, and a long-term spatial vision for the sub-region towards the year 2031, as part of the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan. The Sub-Regional Strategy also provides guidance for delivery bodies on the scale, location and timing of the development and the associated transport, employment and social infrastructure needed to achieve the vision of sustainable communities.

2.8 The Introduction, Part A and elements of Part B of the MKSM SRS, have been incorporated into RSS8 for the East Midlands, ensuring that the MKSM SRS policies relevant to Northamptonshire, carry full statutory status.

- 2.9 The core objectives of the Sub-Regional Strategy include the following:
- to achieve a major increase in the number of new homes provided in the area, meeting needs for affordable housing;
  - to provide a commensurate level of economic growth and developing skills in the workforce;
  - to locate development in the main urban areas to support urban renaissance, regeneration of deprived areas, recycling of land and sustainable patterns of travel;
  - to ensure that development contributes to an improved environment;
  - to meet existing infrastructure needs and provide for requirements generated by new development; and
  - to create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure needs are met in step with growth.

### *Emerging RSS8, September 2006.*

- 2.10 A review of RSS8 is underway and the spatial framework of the plan, represented by MKSM Northamptonshire SRS Policy 1, indicates that:

*'The majority of development in Northamptonshire should be concentrated at the Northampton Implementation Area and the neighbouring growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. Beyond these main urban centres development should be focused at the Sub-Regional Centre of Daventry, the smaller towns of Desborough, Rothwell, Burton Latimer, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough and the rural service centres of Towcester, Oundle, Raunds, Thrapston and Brackley. In the remainder of the county, the rural hinterlands, development should be limited with the emphasis being on meeting local needs and the retention of basic services and facilities.'*

## North Northamptonshire

- 2.11 North Northamptonshire is not an administrative district in itself, as explained in section 1, it is the name given to the combined area of the four boroughs and districts of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire. These Councils, together with Northamptonshire County Council, are working together through a Joint Planning Unit. The four authorities are in the process of preparing a Joint LDF, which will deliver the spatial planning strategy for North Northamptonshire to 2021.
- 2.12 The North Northamptonshire JPU submitted a Joint Core Spatial Strategy to the Secretary of State in February 2007. In this strategy, the categorisation of settlements is indicated as follows in Table 2.1.
- 2.13 The four constituent local authorities are in the process of reviewing their adopted Local Plans and have prepared a number of separate emerging Development Plan Documents relating to housing, transport and retailing as well as more general policies.

**Table 2.1 - Categorisation of Settlements in North Northamptonshire**

CATEGORY	SETTLEMENTS INCLUDED	ROLES	IMPLICATIONS
Growth Towns	Corby, Kettering Wellingborough	To provide the focus for major co-ordinated growth and regeneration. Identified as 'sub regional centres' in town centre hierarchy and focus of new retail development.	Greatest share of new employment, retail and leisure development. Main locations for new housing through urban capacity and sustainable urban extensions. Improved transport choice and linkages between neighbouring towns.
Smaller Towns	Burton Latimer Desborough Higham Ferrers Irthlingborough Rothwell Rushden	To complement the Growth Town expansion by providing secondary focal points within the urban core. Rushden Identified as 'other main town centre' in town centre hierarchy, remaining towns identified as 'localised convenience and service centres'.	Scale of new development related to infrastructure provision and regeneration needs. Local service roles and expansion of employment opportunities. Improved transport choice and links to Growth Towns. Rushden to consolidate its position as fourth main town centre and be a focus for new employment development.
Rural Service Centres	Oundle Raunds Thrapston	To provide the main focal points for infrastructure and development in the rural north east. Identified as 'localised convenience and service centres' in town centre hierarchy.	Diversification of employment and service base. Regeneration and diversification at Raunds and Thrapston, plus the consolidation and enhancement of Oundle's successful town centre, to bolster the three towns' wider service role for their rural hinterlands. Improved transport choice within a rural service spine and links into urban core.
Rural Areas	All other settlements	King's Cliffe to provide a secondary focus for the rural north east. All other villages in North Northamptonshire largely dependent on the identified service centres, smaller towns or growth towns for services.	Within the overall policy of restraint, the scale of development will be led by locally identified employment and housing needs and to support existing services, therefore focused on those settlements that clearly provide some services to a wider group of villages. Improved accessibility from King's Cliffe to larger centres and related villages. Restraint Villages to be identified where conservation is the primary consideration.

Source: Table 1, North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (submitted version), February 2007

## The Emerging Local Development Framework

- 2.14 The Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Preferred Options DPD, published in January 2006, sets out a number of objectives, including:
- to deliver growth based on sustainable principles focused on Oundle and Thrapston, and thereafter King's Cliffe;
  - to enable villages, including smaller settlements, to have a sustainable future by ensuring that vital services are retained and appropriate opportunities are available to meet housing and employment need including those of the farming communities;
  - to meet strategic housing needs for around 3,200 dwellings by 2021 and to ensure efficient use is made of land in terms of density whilst respecting local character; and
  - to diversify and strengthen the economy whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing the amenities and environment.
- 2.15 It is the Council's intention to submit the document to the Secretary of State in September 2007, with a public examination anticipated in April/May 2008.
- 2.16 The Three Towns (Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough) Preferred Options DPD was published in September 2006. The draft DPD is based upon a range of objectives, including to:
- promote Rushden as the principal settlement within the Plan area, reinforcing its continuing role as the primary urban centre within the District;

- deliver a significant level of residential growth at Irthlingborough, incorporating appropriate complementary services, facilities and infrastructure, whilst affording careful consideration to the impact of growth on greenfield sites;
  - exploit and enhance Higham Ferrers' vitality and distinct historic identity; and
  - enable villages to prosper, ensuring that vital local services, facilities and infrastructure are retained and appropriate opportunities are available to meet housing and employment need.
- 2.17 It is the Council's intention to submit the document to the Secretary of State in November 2007, with a public examination anticipated in June/July 2008.
- 2.18 The Raunds Area Preferred Options DPD was published in January 2007. The draft DPD contains a range of objectives, including primarily that the town of Raunds should be promoted as the principal growth settlement within the Plan area. It is the Council's intention to submit the document to the Secretary of State in January 2008, with a public examination anticipated in August/September 2008.