

4 ASSESSMENT OF SITES

Introduction

- 4.1 The assessment of sites is presented by settlement in the same order as identified in paragraph 1.3 above. We commence with the larger more urban settlements and complete this section with an assessment of potential development sites in the three smaller rural settlements of King's Cliffe, Warmington and Nassington.
- 4.2 Information is presented in this section by grouping sites within the previously identified sectors from the January 2006 East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study². This allows for brevity in description as well as making a necessary link with the previous study. However, it should be noted that since the Urban Extensions Study did not consider sites within settlement boundaries, the sectors have been enlarged slightly for the purposes of our analysis, so that the sectors incorporate all sites within and on the periphery of all nine settlements. For ease of identification, sites which could potentially form urban extensions to the nine settlements - and which were therefore considered under the broad remit of the Urban Extensions Study - are marked with an asterisk (*) in the following site analysis.
- 4.3 Below, we provide a summary assessment of each site in each sector of the nine settlements. Our assessment distils the detailed information in the site database, and highlights particular areas of constraint or identified attributes that have been critical in the final assessment of a site's sustainability and suitability for development.

Note on Assessment of Factors

- 4.4 Assessment criterion eleven - water quality - has reference to two attributes: the first attribute is areas that constitute highly permeable geological strata (and a site is assigned orange if it affects such a strata); the second attribute is areas not constituting highly permeable strata (a site is assigned yellow if it affects such a strata). Seven geological formations are identified (in Appendix 1) as being highly permeable. Development is not unduly constrained by these factors, but ground water quality may be more easily affected by development on highly permeable strata, and more care needs to be exercised in the detail of schemes implemented.
- 4.5 Assessment criterion thirteen - agricultural land quality - groups together in one category, land graded 3, 4, and 5. The best and most versatile agricultural land is grades 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification, therefore grade 3 land should ideally be subdivided into 3a and 3b. However, 3a land is normally categorised following a more detailed survey than has been possible with this study. Therefore for any greenfield land classed as grade 3 agricultural land quality, we advise that if development is contemplated on such a site, a more detailed survey should be undertaken to establish whether any part of it is grade 3a. PPS7 refers to the preference for utilising poorer quality land (grades 3b, 4 and 5) rather than that of higher quality.
- 4.6 Assessment criterion seventeen - wealth creation - refers to two attributes (see Appendix 1): the first whether a site is less than 1.5 km to an existing or proposed railway station (a site would be assigned a green rating) and the second, whether a site is more than 1.5 km to an existing or proposed railway station (a site is then assigned orange). Given that none of the nine settlements have railway stations, all assessed sites are more than 1.5km from stations at Wellingborough, Kettering and Peterborough. All sites are therefore assigned orange ratings for this attribute, and this fact is not repeated throughout the report.

² Warmington and Nassington were not considered in the 2006 Urban Extensions Study and so analysis by sector has not been possible in the case of these two smaller settlements.