



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Land East of the A6/Bedford Road, Rushden Policy Extract and Supporting Text



Draft Version – October 2020

## Draft Policy: Land east of the A6/Bedford Road, Rushden

*Land to the east of the A6/Bedford Road, Rushden, as shown on the policies map and indicated in fig 1 below, is allocated for residential development together with associated supporting infrastructure, which should include a mix of ancillary retail, business and community uses to support the proposal.*

*A masterplan, to be agreed by the local planning authority, will address all relevant policy requirements. The key principles of the proposed development will deliver the following:*

- a) Up to 450 dwellings;*
- b) A housing mix which includes provision for both specialist and older persons housing, and on site affordable housing (meeting the target of 30% of the total number of dwellings provided within a Growth Town);*
- c) Vehicular access should be provided directly from the Bedford Road/ A6 Bypass roundabout;*
- d) To maximise opportunities to improve connectivity to, and enhance the quality of, the public rights of way network; in particular*
  - providing pedestrian and cycle connections to the surrounding urban area, and to adjacent sports and recreational facilities, such as the relocated Manor Park playing pitches and John White Golf Club (to the south east);*
  - to deliver enhancements and net biodiversity gain to the Rushden – Souldrop local green infrastructure corridor;*
- e) Appropriate mitigation measures, to the satisfaction of Natural England, to avoid significant adverse impacts upon the integrity of the Upper Nene Gravel Pits Special Protection Area;*
- f) High quality landmark features at the main access point, adjacent to the A6 / Bedford Road roundabout; and*
- g) Appropriate multi functional structural landscaping to service the development, including suitable bunding along the western boundary to*

provide the necessary mitigation for noise and air pollution arising from the A6 Bypass.

h) The development proposal will be expected to be guided by a design code to be agreed with the local planning authority as part of the application process.

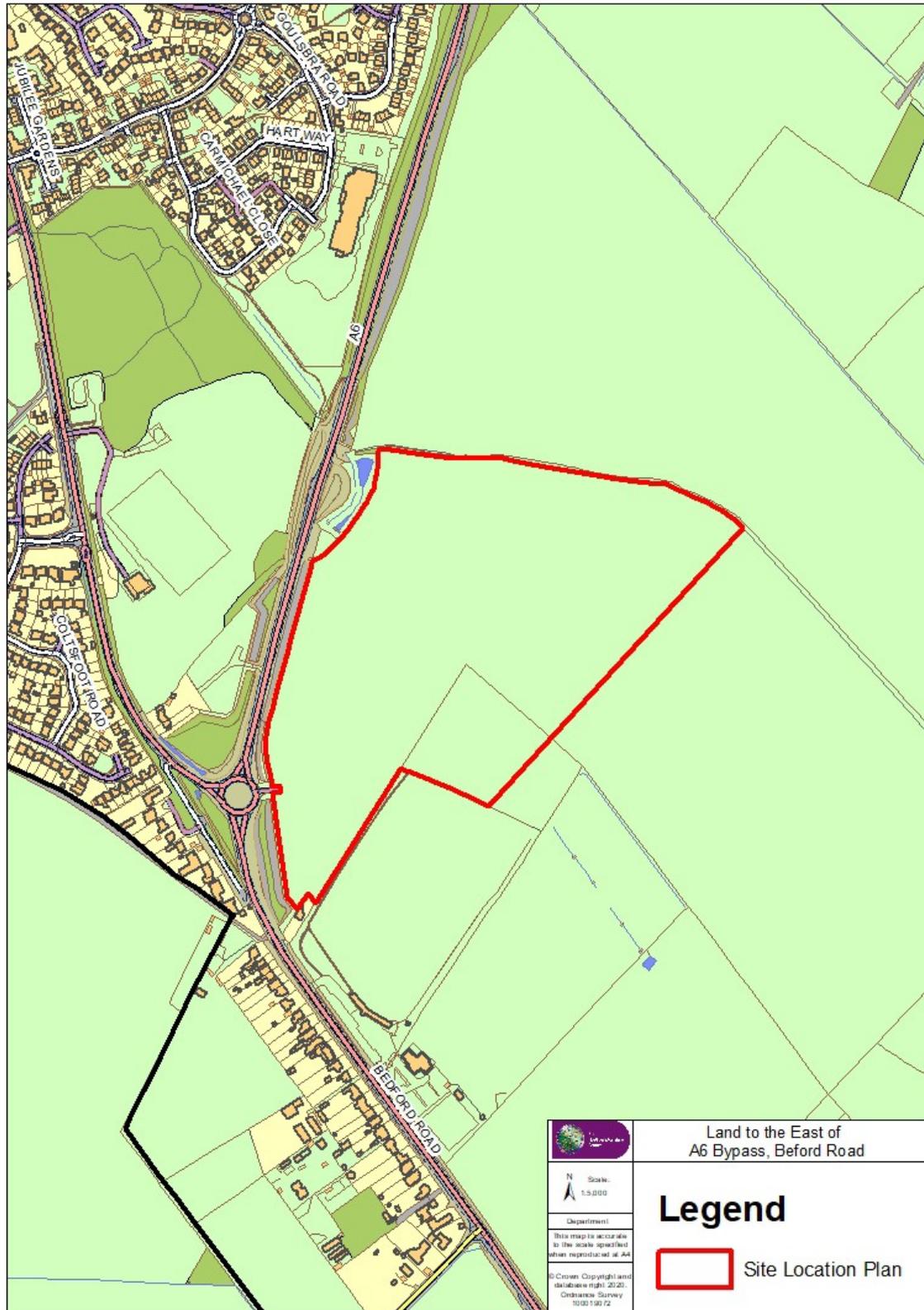


Figure 1: Land to East of A6 Bypass, Bedford Road – Site Location Plan

# Supporting Text

## 8.0 Housing Delivery

### Additional housing requirements – Rushden and Irthlingborough

**8.37** The Joint Core Strategy (Policies 11 and 33) emphasises that the focus for this Plan should be to work with key stakeholders to secure the delivery of priority strategic sites, particularly those at Irthlingborough West and Rushden East. The delivery trajectories set out in the Joint Core Strategy (Annex 1) are as follows:

- Irthlingborough West – 700 dwellings, 2019-2030; and
- Rushden East – 1,600 dwellings, 2020-2031.

**8.38** The trajectories for the major strategic sites (sustainable urban extensions) have been reviewed yearly, through subsequent Authorities' Monitoring Reports (AMRs). Since adoption of the Joint Core Strategy (July 2016) the trajectories for Irthlingborough West and Rushden East have been substantially reviewed, in response to the latest deliverability evidence. The 2019 AMR<sup>1</sup>, indicates the following:

- Irthlingborough West – 250 dwellings, 2026-2031; and
- Rushden East – 1,200 dwellings, 2022-2031.

**8.39** The April 2019 trajectories for the two sustainable urban extensions equate to a combined reduction of 850 dwellings for Irthlingborough and Rushden within the Plan period. Predominantly this is due to development viability affecting housing delivery of these two sites; in particular costs associated with ground stability mitigation for Irthlingborough West arising from the former mine workings. The revised trajectories equate to residual shortfalls of 323 dwellings and 306 dwellings, for Irthlingborough and Rushden respectively.

**8.40** The NPPF requires the Council to maintain a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites (paragraph 67). Challenges around development viability impacting on delivering major sustainable urban extensions was the subject of detailed discussion held during the 2015 Examination for the Joint Core Strategy. However, the Inspector concluded that, the overall urban-focused spatial development strategy concentrating "*on existing towns and a series of deliverable SUEs represents the most suitable and sustainable strategy for the area over the plan period*" (paragraph 91, Joint Core Strategy Inspector's Report, 22 June 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> Item 10: [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1062/planning\\_policy\\_committee](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/1062/planning_policy_committee)

**8.41** The Local Plan housing requirements for Irthlingborough and Rushden (Joint Core Strategy Policy 29/ Table 5) represent minimum housing delivery figures and ., the Joint Core Strategy (paragraph 9.10) allows for the Local Plan Part 2 to assess higher levels of housing provision at individual settlements, or in locations wherethis would meet a shortfall in deliverable sites at another settlement within the southern part of the District, which includes Irthlingborough and Rushden. In other words, the Joint Core Strategy allows for the allocation of additional housing land to meet any outstanding residual requirements for Irthlingborough and Rushden (totalling 629 dwellings, as at 1 April 2019).

**8.42** The combined shortfall for Irthlingborough and Rushden equates to greater than 500 dwellings, this exceeds the definition of a “strategic” housing requirement, as defined in the Joint Core Strategy (Figure 12: Key Diagram/ paragraph 9.14). However, regard should also be given to the housing land supply figures for Higham Ferrers, which currently exceed the Joint Core Strategy requirement by 244 dwellings (principally due to additional brownfield development opportunities within the urban area). If the Higham Ferrers figure is applied to offset the Irthlingborough and Rushden shortfall, this would give a residual requirement for 385 dwellings across the three urban areas.

**8.43** The Local Plan Part 2 has considered a number of possible further directions for growth around Irthlingborough and Rushden. The following locations at Irthlingborough and Rushden (lying within the East Northamptonshire area) were assessed:

- North of the A6, Irthlingborough;
- North and East of Crow Hill, Irthlingborough;
- East of Higham Ferrers;
- South East of Rushden; and
- West of Rushden Lakes.

**8.44** An assessment of the potential locations was undertaken in autumn 2019<sup>2</sup>. This recommended that a site allocation for mixed use development to the west of Rushden Lakes was the most appropriate option, due its access to services and facilities (e.g. Rushden Lakes, the Greenway and Stanton Cross), and to support the implementation of consented new infrastructure including the Ditchford Lane/ Rushden Lakes link road.

**8.45** This site assessment was endorsed by the Planning Policy Committee (17 December 2019). This was followed by a 6-weeks consultation (February – March 2020) proposing the allocation of a new mixed use development of up

to 450 dwellings on land identified at Rushden Lakes West. Due to the proximity of the site to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA/ Ramsar site, the policy proposal highlighted a need for appropriate mitigation measures, to the satisfaction of Natural England, to avoid significant adverse impacts upon the integrity of the adjacent SPA/ Ramsar site. However, in its response to the consultation Natural England submitted a written objection to the proposal. Whilst additional work has been undertaken to provide appropriate mitigation measures (including restricting the site area and reducing its capacity) the objection remains.

- 8.46** As part of the requirements to address the objection submitted by Natural England's the Council has undertaken a more detailed assessment of viable alternative site options (previous work was informed by broad site locations).around the designated Growth Town of Rushden.

***Rushden South East: Land east of the A6 / Bedford Road – alternative site specific proposal***

- 8.47** A site assessment was undertaken (September 2020<sup>3</sup>), to consider alternative site specific proposals to Rushden Lakes West, capable of accommodating up to 450 dwellings. This considered land east of Higham Ferrers (at Slater's Lodge, a potential northern development phase for Rushden East), and three potential site allocations to the south east of Rushden (south of Newton Road and east of the A6 Bypass).

- 8.48** This more detailed site assessment process identified land east of the A6 / Bedford Road as a viable alternative to Rushden Lakes West. This site was identified as having a number of positive attributes, namely:

- Opportunities for connectivity to the existing urban area (via Bedford Road/ High Street South);
- Single ownership;
- Active promotion by landowner/ partner housebuilder;
- Potential to provide new access from Bedford Road roundabout, with a 40mph limit already in force;
- Deliverable independently of Rushden East sustainable urban extension; and
- No known constraints .

- 8.49** The Policy (below) sets out the development principles and requirement for the development of; land east to the east of the A6 / Bedford Road.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11974/background\\_paper\\_-\\_assessment\\_of\\_alternative\\_site\\_options](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11974/background_paper_-_assessment_of_alternative_site_options)