



North Northamptonshire
Joint Planning & Delivery Unit

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Dear Paul,

East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 - Additional sites consultation

Thank you for consulting the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning & Delivery Unit (JPDU) on the above. We note that this consultation comprises of two elements: **Land to the east of the A6 Bypass, Bedford Road, south east of Rushden** and **Rushden East SUE**. An officer level response is provided below on both of these; their conformity with the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) being the key focus of this response.

Land to the east of the A6 Bypass, Bedford Road, south east of Rushden

The rationale for identifying additional housing sites within the district is explained in the draft policy's supporting text. As per our previous response to the 'Draft Local Plan Focussed Consultation: Additional Site Allocation Rushden Lakes West' (31st March 2020), the JPDU supports the principle of allocating one or more additional sites to assist in maintaining a deliverable supply of housing sites to meet the JCS housing requirements. The identification of additional housing at the Growth Town of Rushden is considered to be consistent with the spatial strategy of the JCS set out in Policy 11 (The Network of Urban and Rural Areas) and Table 1: Spatial Roles.

We note that potential housing sites have again been assessed using a matrix linked to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) objectives of the Local Plan. The criteria include environmental constraints; accessibility to services; infrastructure capacity; and the availability and deliverability of sites. These criteria are consistent with those used in assessing strategic sites for the JCS and are helpful in assessing whether the proposed allocation complies with a number of policies within the JCS.

A key issue to address (given its prominence in the previous additional sites consultation) relates to the impact of the development on a protected species or on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance (JCS Policy 4) due its proximity to the SPA. We note that the south east of Rushden site is marked "green" (no negative impact) with regard to this, compared to the Rushden Lakes West site which was marked 'red' (major negative impact) during similar site assessment work. It is noted that the Council will still have to assess whether mitigation options for recreational pressure are required at this site via the HRA process (as highlighted in part e of the draft policy).

The JPDU supports part d of the draft policy which seeks 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; this approach is consistent with Policy 8 of the JCS. It is considered this could be strengthened by specifying that this includes connections to the town centre, the Rushden East SUE as well as the open countryside. Good connectivity to the urban area and town centre is particularly important given the site is separated by the main built form of Rushden by the A6 bypass (Policy 15 of the JCS). This should also be considered in the context of future-proofing the site so that longer term development opportunities are not hindered.

Rushden East SUE

Policy 33 of the JCS sets out the framework for delivering the principal strategic development proposals of the Rushden East SUE. The policy states that a masterplan for Rushden East *“will be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority. The masterplan will define development boundaries and policy expectations for inclusion in the Part 2 Local Plan covering Rushden or the preparation of a planning application for development of the Sustainable Urban Extension.”*

The JPDU notes that the Draft Rushden East SUE Policy for the Local Plan Part 2 has defined a development boundary through the production of the Masterplan Framework Document (MFD) which has capacity to accommodate up to 2,700 dwellings, this is consistent with Policy 33 of the JCS (which states the SUE will “include around 2,500 dwellings”). The Draft Policy essentially acts as a hook to incorporate the MFD into the Local Plan Part 2, the MFD has been prepared as per Policy 33 of the JCS and will be used to inform future planning applications for the site. The JPDU has worked closely with the Council and partners in the development of the MFD particularly through design input and ensuring that the document is policy compliant. Therefore, we agree with the Draft Policy in that we are satisfied that this accords with Policy 33 of the JCS and have no further comments at this point.

We hope that this response assists the Council in progressing a sound Part 2 Local Plan, but if you have any queries in relation to this, please do not hesitate to contact the JPDU.

Yours sincerely,


Head of the North Northamptonshire
Joint Planning and Delivery Unit