



Local Plan Part 2 – Defining “local centres” (Policy EN23)

January 2021

This background paper has been prepared to:

1. Explain the process for identifying and designating “local centres” (hubs of main town centre uses, outside the designated town centres); and
2. Explain the policy implications for managing the development of main town centre uses around local centres.

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 Outside the six town centres within the District, there are various groups of local neighbourhood hubs of main town centre uses, situated within the main urban areas and/ or largest villages. The concept of defining such “local centres” within Part 2 Local Plans is recognised in the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) 2011-2031 (Local Plan Part 1); policies 12(g) and 33.
- 1.2 JCS Policy 12 makes specific provision for Part 2 Local Plans to designate local centres. This takes forward the NPPF, which requires the Local Plan to define an appropriate network and hierarchy of centres (paragraph 85(a)) and ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community (paragraph 92(d)). The JCS and NPPF therefore provide a strategic framework for “local centres” to be designated in the Local Plan Part 2.
- 1.3 These local centres would be designated, **in addition** to the town centres. If local centres are to be designated in the Local Plan Part 2, it will be necessary to consider a number of matters:
 - Defining what is meant by a “local centre”;
 - Identifying a proposed list of local centres, for designation;
 - Typologies of local centres; and
 - Setting robust “local centres” policy criteria.
- 1.4 Each of these issues will be considered in turn, within the main body text of this background paper.

2.0 Defining what is meant by a “local centre”

2.1 The term “local centre” refers to those smaller scale hubs of main town centre uses; but which do not fulfil the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) criteria to be designated town centres in their own right. Typically, a local centre would contain most (if not all) of the following types of use:

- Convenience store;
- Post office;
- Financial services, e.g. small bank or estate agency;
- Pub, entertainment or eating establishment;
- Community centre;
- Local leisure facility.

2.2 The former Four Towns Plan Working Party (reporting to the Planning Policy Committee) considered a possible approach to defining “local centres”, as well as potential locations. This earlier work was expanded during 2017-18 (stakeholder workshops), to assess other urban areas (Oundle and Thrapston) and larger villages within the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) area.

2.3 The initial analysis undertaken during 2015 identified various issues for consideration in designating local centres. One particular matter of significance is whether major “out of centre” retail areas could be regarded as “local centres” if they fit with the stated criteria above, on the basis that in practice it is probable that these would perform a significant function providing convenience retailing or other facilities to serve the locality.

2.4 It will be necessary to ensure that the designation of “out of centre” retail areas as “local centres” would conform to JCS Policy 12 and/ or NPPF paragraphs 85-86, both of which emphasise that planning policies should support and promote competitive and viable **town centres**. A robust policy framework will need to ensure that the designation of local centres does not give way to undermining the vitality or viability of the six town centres within the Plan area (or other centres just beyond the Plan area such as Burton Latimer, Corby, Kettering, Stamford or Wellingborough).

2.5 Overall, the criteria at paragraph 2.1 (above) set the tests for designating neighbourhood/ community hubs as local centres in the Local Plan Part 2. The remainder of this paper provides an assessment of potential locations and whether these are appropriate to designate “local centres”. It then goes on to consider how these designations should be shown on the policies map and the detailed policy criteria that may be applied.

3.0 Identifying a proposed list of local centres, for designation

3.1 During 2015 preliminary survey work was undertaken through the former Four Towns Plan Working Party, to consider the potential designation of local centres at Rushden, Ringstead and Stanwick in the Local Plan. This was later extended to consider possible locations at Raunds (Planning Policy

Committee, 16 November 2015, Item 7, Appendix 1¹). The former Working Party considered draft policy text and proposed local centres.

3.2 In order to establish whether these fulfil the requirements for a “local centre”, it is necessary to assess each against the proposed local centre definition (paragraph 2.1, above). Table 1 (below) provides a summary of potential locations for local centres undertaken for Rushden, Raunds, Ringstead and Stanwick in 2015; setting out a brief qualitative assessment/ commentary as to whether or not they could be recommended for designation. This analysis was undertaken with reference to the Council’s Town Centre Monitoring², “In My Area” mapping and Google Street View.

Table 1				
Location	Address/ street name	Key local services/ facilities	Commentary	Recommend- ation
Rushden	High Street South	Some redundant units, e.g. former filling station; pubs, fast food takeaways; convenience store (Sainsbury’s); place of worship	Linear area, between St Mary’s Church/ Skinner Hill – Recognised as secondary to main town centre (i.e. area north of War Memorial); recent additional convenience retail development (Sainsbury’s, 88a-116 High Street South, Rushden)	Linear local centre designation
Rushden	Newton Road	Single units, east of main town centre – pub; convenience retailing; garage; place of worship	Linear area, between Rectory Road (Rushden Customer Service Centre) and Cromwell Road/ Newton Road Primary School – Redevelopment of former recycling centre/ car park by Lidl may be regarded as effectively an extension of the existing town centre to the east. Beyond Robinson Road junction just one unit (65-67 Newton Road) accommodates main town centre uses	No local centre designation, but extend town centre boundary to Robinson Road junction, to incorporate current Lidl scheme and adjacent pub
Rushden	Wellingborough Road	Several convenience stores; several fast food takeaways; restaurant/ café; offices; place of worship	Linear area between Fitzwilliam Street/ Purvis Road and Irchester Road – Established range of services appropriate for a Local Centre; although clearly physically separate from main town centre to the east	Linear local centre designation

¹ https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/631/planning_policy_committee

² https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200190/annual_monitoring_report/68/evidence_base_and_monitoring

Table 1				
Location	Address/ street name	Key local services/ facilities	Commentary	Recommend- ation
Rushden	Grange- way shopping precinct	Convenience stores; post office; fast food takeaways; pub; bookmakers	Local retail and service hub – may be regarded as definitive definition of a Local Centre	Local centre designation
Rushden	2-12 Blackfriars	Convenience store; hairdresser; fast food takeaways; restaurant; pre- school nursery	Single block local retail and service hub, but considered to include a significant range of local services and facilities	Local centre designation
Rushden	38-44 Upper Queen Street	Convenience store; pet shop	Two retail units, at junction of Upper Queen Street and Lawton Road – single convenience retail unit, as opposed to local service centre	No local centre designation, as effectively single retail outlet
Rushden	Rushden East	Character of the proposed local centre to be determined in accordance with JCS Policy 33	Location and make-up of proposed local centre to be determined through emerging Rushden East masterplan	Local centre designation
Raunds	Enterprise Road	Sui Generis/ warehousing uses; e.g. tyre depot, equestrian retail trade counter	No convenience retailing; instead trade counters, ancillary to main business, industrial or warehouse premises	No local centre designation, as no Local Centre functions
Ringstead	High Street	Convenience store; post office; fast food takeaway; village hall; social club	Linear area, following Ringstead High Street, between 7/12 and 23/28 High Street – range of uses appropriate to be defined a Local Centre	Linear local centre designation
Stanwick	Church Street/ Chapel Lane/ High Street	Convenience store/ post office; village hall; social club; pub; primary school; pre- school nursery	Linear area, from High Street (Chapel Lane junction) to Duke of Wellington Pub/ Stanwick Primary School – range of uses appropriate to be defined a Local Centre	Linear local centre designation

3.3 When the Local Plan Part 2 was re-launched as a District-wide Plan in January 2017, this necessitated the expansion of potential hubs to cover the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) area. The Regulation 18 consultation document (paragraph 11.19/ Q21³) acknowledged the previous (2015) recommendations for designated local centres:

- **High Street South, Rushden** – Linear local centre;

³ https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9952/reg_18_statement_jan_17_v4pdf

- **Wellingborough Road, Rushden** – Linear local centre;
- **Grangeway shopping precinct, Rushden** – Local centre;
- **2-12 Blackfriars, Rushden** – Local centre;
- **Rushden East** – Local centre;
- **High Street, Ringstead** – Linear local centre;
- **Church Street/ High Street, Stanwick** – Linear local centre.

3.4 Feedback regarding the possible designation of local centres was received through the Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017); reported to the Planning Policy Committee on 3rd April 2017 (Item 5⁴). Stanwick Parish Council raised concerns about the proposed designation of local centres at Stanwick and Ringstead; although, other respondents (e.g. Investment Land International and Sainsbury's) supported this approach, as a means to enhance the vitality and viability of these localities.

3.5 The issue was considered further during the stakeholder (Member and Town/ Parish Council) workshops (May 2017 – April 2018). The matter was initially discussed at a topic-based Member workshop, on 4th October 2017. This was followed by the following area-focused (town centre/ urban area and rural area) workshops, for the RNOTP area⁵:

- 16th January 2018 – Oundle and Thrapston Member workshops;
- 24th January 2018 – Rural areas (north and south Member workshops);
- 6th February 2018 – Thrapston Town Council workshop;
- 13th February 2018 – Oundle Town Council workshop;
- 14th March 2018 – Rural parishes (northern Parish Council workshop); and
- 20th March 2018 – Rural parishes (southern Parish Council workshop).

3.6 The role and functions of local hubs were considered during the various Member and Town/ Parish Council workshops. For Oundle, the potential for expansion of the Wharf as a tourist/ retail hub was noted, while the Fletton House/ Glaphorn Road community services was considered as a possible multi-functional hub. The Thrapston workshops similarly highlighted a need for further convenience retailing (smaller/ medium sized supermarket), while the rural workshops noted the service role of larger villages; also observing concerns that many services are under threat (e.g. buses, Call Connect).

3.7 The function of “out of centre” retail hubs at Crown Way/ Brindley Close (Rushden) and Warth Park (Raunds) was also considered by the relevant workshops. The Raunds workshops (6th December 2017 and 20th February 2018) considered the implications of the Asda (Warth Park) store for the town. While this was broadly welcome, it was noted that its potential impact upon the town centre should be monitored. Similarly, workshops for Higham Ferrers (14th February 2018) and Irthlingborough (4th April 2018) noted that Rushden

⁴ https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/760/planning_policy_committee

⁵ Planning Policy Committee, 23rd April 2018, Item 9: https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/853/planning_policy_committee

Lakes (adjacent to the Crown Way/ Brindley Close hub) provides the main retail draw and has been positive for the respective towns.

3.8 The list of potential local centres was expanded, in response to the various findings of the stakeholder workshops. The following locations, highlighted through the various workshops, have been assessed for their suitability as local centres (Table 2, below):

- Crown Way/ Brindley Close, Rushden;
- Fletton hub, Glapthorn Road, Oundle;
- Oundle Wharf;
- Warth Park, Raunds;
- Brigstock;
- Easton on the Hill;
- King's Cliffe;
- Nassington;
- Warmington; and
- Woodford.

Table 2				
Location	Address/ street name	Key local services/ facilities	Commentary	Recommend- ation
Rushden	Crown Way/ Brindley Close	Convenience retailing (Lidl, Waitrose), comparison retailing and pub (Needle and Awl)	Long established retail hub, with potential for further expansion (e.g. current proposals for Aldi at Rushden Gateway). This location could be considered to meet some criteria for a local centre; in terms of the range of convenience services offered. However, it is situated some distance (at least 0.5km) from residential development (although the consented scheme to the east of Brindley Close should be noted) and its direct link with Rushden Lakes (footbridge) mean that it functions as an adjunct to Rushden Lakes, rather than a local service hub in its own right.	No local centre designation, as functionally part of Rushden Lakes
Oundle	Fletton hub, Glapthorn Road	Town Council offices, café, GP surgery, library, police station	The Glapthorn Road/ Fletton Hub, is a long established community service hub. It has various main town centre uses (offices, café, library), but no retailing or other convenience services. The area was identified as a hub for community facilities in the previous Local Plan	No local centre designation, due to lack of any convenience retailing

Table 2				
Location	Address/ street name	Key local services/ facilities	Commentary	Recommend- ation
			(RNOTP), although it is considered that the lack of convenience retailing indicates that the location does not fulfil the criteria for a local centre	
Oundle	Oundle Wharf, Station Road	Micro-brewery, restaurant, cycle hire, offices	Oundle Wharf is recognised as a tourist hub/ gateway to the Nene Valley, but is not considered to be a convenience/ service hub. It was assessed in response to ideas discussed during the stakeholder workshops that the location could have a greater retail focus.	No local centre designation – tourist location, rather than convenience service hub
Raunds	Warth Park (London Road/ Michael Way)	Convenience retailing (Asda), service stations, fast food outlets (McDonalds; KFC), office spaces (Enterprise Centre), football ground	Warth Park was initially developed as a distribution hub in the 1990s, followed by the development of a service station on the A45 in the early 2000s. Expansion of the site has taken place since 2012 (Phase 2), such that the location hosts convenience retailing, takeaways, business units (Enterprise Centre) and leisure (Raunds Town FC) uses; pertinent with a local service centre function.	Local centre designation
Brigstock	Hall Hill/ High Street	Convenience retailing (Coop), pubs, garage services, hairdressers; village hall and primary school in close proximity	Between the centre of the village (Market Cross) and High Street, a range of local services and facilities front the main street. This nucleated hub (albeit partially linear) hub is considered to function as a local centre for services.	Local centre designation
Easton on the Hill	n/a	Various facilities distributed around the built up area of the village	Easton on the hill hosts a number of services, facilities and businesses throughout the village. These are distributed around the village (approximate centre Blue Ball pub); there is no single service hub within the village.	No local centre designation – dispersed services/ facilities
King's Cliffe	n/a	Various facilities distributed throughout the built up area of the village	King's Cliffe is considered to be the best served village in the District. This was reflected in its designation as a local service centre in the previous (2008) Core Spatial Strategy/ Local Plan Part 1. While the village continues to	No local centre designation – dispersed services/ facilities

Table 2				
Location	Address/ street name	Key local services/ facilities	Commentary	Recommend- ation
			be well served, these are distributed throughout the built up area; no single hub.	
Nassington	n/a	Various services/ facilities (e.g. post office, pubs, butchers) dispersed along Station Road	Station Road (east end of Nassington) is where most services/ facilities are located. However, these are dispersed along the route of that road; there is no local hub of services or facilities.	No local centre designation – dispersed services/ facilities
Warming- ton	n/a	Various facilities distributed around the built up area of the village	Warmington hosts a number of services, facilities and businesses throughout the village. These are distributed around the village; there is no single service hub within the village.	No local centre designation – dispersed services/ facilities
Woodford	High Street/ The Green	Pub, takeaway, hairdresser, post office, nursery	Woodford hosts a range of services and facilities, typical to a village of its size. Some services, such as the GP surgery and social club, are situated at the edge of the village. However, the High Street and village centre (The Green) do provide a linear hub of local services and facilities.	Local centre designation

3.9 Table 2 provides brief qualitative assessment for other locations within the District, over and above those considered in 2015 as local centres. The analysis at Table 2 relates to the range of services and facilities available; expanding the assessment for the remainder of the District (to include the RNOTP area).

4.0 Typologies of local centres

4.1 The initial (2015) assessment of potential local centres in the south of the District (the Four Towns area) noted that, with the exception of Grangeway shopping precinct and the proposed Rushden East local centre, proposed local centres are of a linear form, fronting onto a single highway. In the case of Grangeway, the area is a clearly defined discrete area of town centre uses, between 147 and 179 Grangeway. For Rushden East, the situation for the proposed local centre would be defined through the emerging development masterplan⁶.

⁶ https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/11671/draft_masterplan_framework_document_-_january_2020

4.2 Two distinctive typologies of local centre were identified in the assessment at Table 1, above:

- **Linear local centres** – fronting onto a single highway; and
- **Nucleated local centres** – fronting onto a square, or more than one highway.

4.3 These typologies would have implications for how local centres ought to be denoted on the policies map. On the basis of the character of proposed local centres, the 2015 assessment found it to be inappropriate to attempt to delimit these by way of a full polygon/ zonal boundary. Instead, it was determined that the following notations on the policies map should be applied:

- **Linear notations** – Linear local centres;
- **Point notations** – Nucleated local centres.

4.4 Local service centres within the urban areas (Rushden and Raunds) form a combination of linear and nucleated service centres:

- **Linear local centres** – High Street South and Wellingborough Road, Rushden;
- **Nucleated local centres** – Grangeway shopping precinct; 2-12 Blackfriars; Rushden East; Warth Park (Raunds).

4.5 Local service centres in the four large villages (Brigstock, Ringstead, Stanwick and Woodford) are all linear in character. All are centrally located within the respective settlement, but in all cases these consist of single street frontages; on the High Street or other main street.

5.0 Setting robust “local centres” policy criteria

5.1 The assessments at section 3.0 and 4.0 above should allow for a list of local centres to be defined in the Local Plan Part 2. It is necessary to understand the implications of local centres for managing the development of main town centre uses in local/ neighbourhood facilities hubs; i.e. local centres.

5.2 The draft local centres policy, incorporated into the 1st draft Local Plan Part 2 (EN22), was developed with reference to earlier (2015) evidence base gathered for the former Four Towns Plan. This evidence base was then expanded by way of feedback from the stakeholder workshops (May 2017 – April 2018).

5.3 It is important for the policy criteria address common characteristics of all defined local centres, while providing sufficient flexibility and recognising the varied characteristics of each. The policy framework will need to accommodate the various requirements for the different localities, for which the designation of one or more local centres has been proposed:

- “Made” Neighbourhood Plans are already in place for Rushden and Raunds, and the large villages of Brigstock and Stanwick; although none of these Plans includes local centres designations;
- For Rushden East, specifics about the proposed local centre (JCS Policy 33) will be laid down in the development masterplan;
- In the case of Ringstead, a local centres policy could be utilised to inform the preparation of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan;
- In other cases the local centres policy should provide additional policy direction in addition to adopted JCS and/ or Neighbourhood Plan policies, setting specific development management criteria for the designated local centres.

5.4 A start point in setting detailed policy criteria is to consider the hierarchy of centres defined by the JCS (Policy 12):

- **Growth Towns (including Rushden town centre)** – Focus upon adaptation and diversification so that the town centre can continue to function in a complementary way to the Rushden Lakes development;
- **Market Towns (including Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough and Raunds town centres)** – Focus upon the role of Market Towns in providing mainly convenience shopping and local services;
- **Local centres** – In addition to the town centres, to meet day to day needs of residents (Policy 12(g)).

5.5 The assessment above has noted two distinctive typologies of local centres. The majority are linear; i.e. convenience retailing, pubs and leisure uses on a single street. However, some local centres are more nuclear or courtyard-style in layout (e.g. Grangeway, Rushden). Likewise, these occur in either of the following locations:

- Urban areas – locations identified at Rushden and Raunds; and
- Large villages (Brigstock, Ringstead, Stanwick and Woodford).

5.6 In the case of the urban areas (in this case, Rushden and Raunds), national policy requirements mean that there may be circumstances where appropriate sustainable development proposals for uses such as neighbourhood convenience retailing, offices, pubs or other leisure facilities in out of centre locations (i.e. within the existing urban area) would not meet the requirements of the national sequential test (NPPF paragraph 85). Although the NPPF explicitly exempts offices or other small scale developments in **rural** areas from national requirements to undertake sequential and/ or impact tests (paragraph 88), no similar exemption exists for equivalent uses in out of centre locations within urban areas.

5.7 Nevertheless, the NPPF does specify that the sequential test requirements apply for “*main town centre uses which are neither in an existing centre nor in accordance with an up-to-date plan*” (paragraph 86). Therefore the designation of local centres would avoid the sequential test requirements for main town centre uses within, or closely related to, these locations.

- 5.8 As stated, the NPPF also applies exemptions for small scale developments of main town centre uses in rural areas. The assessment above (Table 2) has found that four of the large villages (Brigstock, Ringstead, Stanwick and Woodford) host hubs of local services and facilities (defined main town centre uses); namely convenience retailing/ post office, fast food takeaways, village hall/ social club and/ or pubs. These differ from the other villages, where local facilities are isolated and/ or dispersed.
- 5.9 Local centres differ from the larger town centres within the hierarchy of centres, in that these primarily offer a focus for convenience community, retail and leisure uses. These serve an adjacent residential locality and would not normally provide services which draw from broader catchments.
- 5.10 To be defined as a local centre, the range of facilities must typically function to serve the immediate neighbourhood. Applying these criteria, out of centre or out of town hubs of main town centre uses (e.g. retail parks) which serve a wider area **cannot** be regarded as local centres, even where these attract the predominant quantum of footfall.
- 5.11 The policy for local centres would need to set both the criteria by which these are defined, together with thresholds regarding appropriate ranges of uses. Criteria must be easily applicable, to ensure that local centres can continue to function as such, and do not become a “proxy” for larger out of centre/ town retail developments. Accordingly, the draft Policy EN22 proposed that the following thresholds be applied within the relevant policy for the development of appropriate (i.e. convenience) main town centre uses:
- **Minor** developments; i.e. no more than 1000m² floorspace (the standard threshold for major planning applications); and
 - “Edge of local centre” is within 200m of the designated location; compared to the national standard of 300m from the primary shopping area of a town centre.
- 5.12 It is considered that these thresholds should allow for developments appropriate for local centres to be effectively managed. Policy criteria must be robust and meaningful, so as to set a distinctive framework for managing development in and adjacent to the local centres.
- 5.13 The draft Policy EN22, setting relevant thresholds and a proposed list of local centres, was “tested” through the 1st draft Local Plan Part 2 consultation (November 2018 – February 2019). No objections were received, in principle, regarding any of the proposed local centres (Planning Policy Committee, 1st April 2019, Item 6⁷). However, representations were received relating to the detailed policy wording (i.e. development management criteria), together with proposals for other local centres; e.g. Easton on the Hill. Overall, there were no “in principle” objections to either the concept of designating “local centres”, nor the list of proposed local centres.

⁷ https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/949/planning_policy_committee

- 5.14 One representation regarding the detailed policy wording related to the thresholds, and a need to be consistent with the impact test assessment thresholds set out at draft Policy EN21. Accordingly, an additional criterion, cross referencing EN21, was agreed by the Planning Policy Committee on 1st April 2019.

6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

- 6.1 This background paper explains the iterative process; criteria for designating local centres, where these should be designated and finally how the policy framework has been developed. This paper initially considers how “local centres” should be defined and the main characteristics for these. It goes on to assess potential locations, in order to provide a definitive list of such centres for development management purposes. Finally it considers suitable uses and criteria for managing appropriate uses within, and in close proximity to, the local centres.
- 6.2 An initial assessment of potential local centres in the south of the District (“Four Towns” area) was undertaken in 2015. This was expanded and refreshed for the whole District following the launch of the Local Plan Part 2 (January 2017); by way of the Regulation 18 consultation (January – March 2017) and subsequent stakeholder workshops (May 2017 – April 2018). This assessment process has found that the following local centres fulfil the criteria for designation as local centres:

Rushden:

- **High Street South** – Linear local centre;
- **Wellingborough Road** – Linear local centre;
- **Grangeway shopping precinct** – Local centre;
- **2-12 Blackfriars** – Local centre;
- **Rushden East** – Local centre;

Market towns:

- **Warth Park (London Road/ Michael Way), Raunds** – Local centre

Rural areas (large villages):

- **Hall Hill/ High Street, Brigstock** – Linear local centre;
- **High Street, Ringstead** – Linear local centre;
- **Church Street/ High Street, Stanwick** – Linear local centre;
- **High Street/ The Green, Woodford** – Linear local centre.

- 6.3 Draft Policy EN22 will be refined and amended in accordance with detailed representations received during the consultation (November 2018 – February 2019). Notwithstanding, with the exception of detailed changes to the wording of Policy EN22, it is anticipated that the list of local centres above and policy thresholds at paragraph 5.11 (above) should be applied. In the case of Rushden, an additional cross reference to impact test thresholds (draft Policy EN21); such that the following thresholds should apply:

- Convenience retailing – defined as minor development; i.e. 1000m^2 gross floorspace;
- Rushden – impact test assessments required where developments exceed 280m^2 gross floorspace;
- Raunds – impact test assessments required where developments exceed 100m^2 gross floorspace; and
- “Edge of local centre” defined as 200m from a defined local centre.

6.4 The list of local centres, policy thresholds and development management criteria will be incorporated into the submission version Policy EN22. It is considered that this document provides a robust explanation and justification for the “local centres” policy. It recognises the position of local centres within the hierarchy of centres and provides a mechanism for managing appropriate uses in and around these locations.

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