

# East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (2011-2031) Examination

## **Matter 12 – Natural Capital**

Matter Statement by North Northamptonshire  
Council

March 2022

Introduction	
Matter 12 – Question 1: Is Policy EN7 relating to green infrastructure (GI) corridors consistent with the JCS and the Framework? Does some of the policy and supporting text repeat JCS Policy 19?	
Matter 12 – Question 2: Does Policy EN7 relate to suggested local corridors and is this clear? Is the intention that only the suggested local corridors are shown on the Policies Map? Are the corridors shown effectively on the Policies Map? Are their boundaries clear? Are they affected by any of the proposed allocations in the Plan and how is this dealt with?	
Matter 12 – Question 3: Are criteria a to d requirements of development proposals and is that clear? Is criterion c related to the additions/improvements to the corridors listed in the second paragraph of the policy and where contributions would be spent?	
Matter 12 – Question 4: Is criterion d intended to seek financial contributions from developers? Is this approach justified? Is it clear which schemes would be expected to contribute, how the contributions would be calculated and where the monies would be spent? Is the supporting text at paragraph 5.12 of the Plan intended to be part of the Policy?	
Matter 12 – Question 5: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?	
Matter 12 – Question 6: What is the relationship/cross over of Policy EN7 with Policy EN8 Greenways in terms of contributions?	
Matter 12 – Question 7: Is Policy EN8 relating to the greenway consistent with the JCS and the Framework?	
Matter 12 – Question 8: Is it clear that the greenway is made up a number of components? Are these shown effectively on the Policies Map? (see Initial Question 12 c and d and the Council's response including MM05a).	
Matter 12 – Question 9: What are the implications for landowners/developers/local residents of the greenway designation?	
Matter 12 – Question 10: Does the Policy seek financial contributions from developers? Is this approach justified? Is it	

clear which schemes would be expected to contribute, how the contributions would be calculated and where the monies would be spent?	
Matter 12 – Question 11: Is the text at footnote 62 intended to be part of the Policy?	
Matter 12 – Question 12: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?	
Matter 12 – Question 13: What is the relationship/cross over of Policy EN8 and Policy EN7 green infrastructure corridors in terms of contributions?	
Matter 12 – Question 14: Is Policy EN9 regarding the designation of local green space consistent with the JCS and the Framework?	
Matter 12 – Question 15: Do the criteria for designation reflect the guidance at paragraphs 101, 102 and 103 of the Framework? Do they repeat the Framework? How do they 'define an enhanced local interpretation of the Framework' and is this justified?	
Matter 12 – Question 16: Why are the NPs considered to be the most appropriate mechanism for designating individual sites? (paragraph 5.22 of the Plan) What is the approach to local green space in areas without NPs?	
Matter 12 – Question 17: What is the justification for the gross site area restriction in criterion c? Is it consistent with the Framework? How is the existing main built up area of the settlement defined?	
Matter 12 – Question 18: Is Policy EN10 regarding the enhancement and provision of open space consistent with the JCS and the Framework?	
Matter 12 – Question 19: What is the justification for the threshold of 10 or more dwellings?	
Matter 12 – Question 20: To ensure Policy EN10 is effective should Tables 6,7 and 8 be included within the policy? Are they likely to be updated/become of date within the Plan period?	
Matter 12 – Question 21: How will 'insufficient access' to existing open space within the local area be determined in practice? (paragraph 2 of the Policy) Has this been addressed by MM08?	
Matter 12 – Question 22: How will financial contributions be determined and is it clear where the monies will be spent? Where is this set out?	

Matter 12 – Question 23: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?	
Matter 12 – Question 24: Is there any cross over/duplication with the contributions sought under EN7 green infrastructure corridors, and EN8 the greenway?	
Matter 12 – Question 25: Is Policy EN11 regarding the enhancement and provision of sport and recreation facilities consistent with the JCS and the Framework?	
Matter 12 – Question 26: The Policy applies to new strategic employment and housing development of 500 or more dwellings or 5 hectares of employment land which are beyond the scope of the Plan since they are considered by the JCS. Is Policy EN11 justified and effective in this context?	
Matter 12 – Question 27: Is the approach to open space and sport and recreation facilities in the Plan based on robust and up-to-date evidence relating to need (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision? (see Initial Question 10 and the Council’s response). Is the Plan positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in this regard?	
Matter 12 – Question 28: Is it effective to include the playing pitch demand calculator at Table 9 in the Plan (it is not referred to in the Policy)? Are the demand figures likely to be updated/become of date within the Plan period?	
Matter 12 – Question 29: Should the accessibility standards in Table 7 be in the Policy itself?	
Matter 12 – Question 30: Is the approach to contributions from both housing and employment development justified and effective?	
Matter 12 – Question 31: What is the relevant legislation referred to in paragraph 3 of the Policy and where is this explained?	
Matter 12 – Question 32: What is the ‘other qualifying development’ referred to in paragraph 3 of the Policy? Are these the major developments referred to in paragraph 5.36 of the Plan? How are these defined?	
Matter 12 – Question 33: What is the threshold for the employment development? How will the contributions be calculated and where will the monies be spent?	

Matter 12 – Question 34: Have the requirements of the Policy been viability tested?	

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This statement sets out the Council's response to Matter 12: Natural Capital, questions 1 - 34, in respect of the following issues:

- Whether the Plan has been positively prepared and whether it is justified, effective and consistent with national policy and the JCS in relation to the natural capital.

1.2. The statement also addresses any representations which the Council considers are of particular significance or concern, where this is the case the relevant respondent number and comment id are provided.

1.3. All documents referred to in this statement are either hyperlinked, or refer to specific references contained in the Index of Submission Documents which can be accessed as follows:

1.4. [https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12227/index\\_of\\_evidence\\_base\\_and\\_supporting\\_documents](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12227/index_of_evidence_base_and_supporting_documents)

## 2. Matter 12 – Question 1: Is Policy EN7 relating to green infrastructure (GI) corridors consistent with the JCS and the Framework? Does some of the policy and supporting text repeat JCS Policy 19?

2.1. Policy EN7 is consistent with the JCS and the Framework, in that the proposed local corridors have been evidenced and identified to create accessible connections that support health and wellbeing, which are key objectives of the NPPF (para 8).

2.2. Green infrastructure corridors are proposed, not just to provide accessible links, but also to enable and support healthy lifestyles through providing safe and accessible connections in accordance with paras 92 (c) 93 and 98 of the NPPF.

2.3. The JCS provides the opportunity for the Part 2 Plans (para 7.6) to identify local corridor locations through more detailed local studies, including a local spatial analysis report undertaken (Ref D-02). Whilst there is some implicit repetition of JCS Policy 19, the explanatory text to Policy EN7 it also provides further local detail relating to funding contributions and off-site opportunities, which are set out in the policy.

2.4. Policy EN7 and its criteria a-c are specific to green infrastructure corridors, whereas Policy 19 of the JCS is a more strategies policy, providing guiding principles for the delivery of green infrastructure as a whole.

## 3. Matter 12 – Question 2: Does Policy EN7 relate to suggested local corridors and is this clear? Is the intention that only the suggested local corridors are

**shown on the Policies Map? Are the corridors shown effectively on the Policies Map? Are their boundaries clear? Are they affected by any of the proposed allocations in the Plan and how is this dealt with?**

- 3.1. Policy EN7 relates to local corridors as set out in para 5.14 of the explanatory text, this relates to both existing and proposed new opportunities. Policy EN7 provides additional direction to support the delivery and enhancement of the green infrastructure corridors in East Northants. However, it is considered this could be made clearer through a Proposed Modification to the policy by adding the word “*Local*” to the policy heading and the first sentence of the second para reworded as ‘*Local*’ Green Infrastructure corridors’
  - 3.2. The Policies Map only shows those additional proposed green infrastructure corridors (ie shown as i)- viii) as the designated green infrastructure corridors referred to in the opening sentence of Policy EN7 are already shown on the JCS Policies Map (Appendix 1).
  - 3.3. To provide further clarity it is proposed that the opening sentence to Policy EN7 should make clear that this part of the policy relates to designated corridors identified on the JCS policies map (Appendix 1).
  - 3.4. The mapping of the local corridors is indicative they are very narrow whereas in practice the path that they take will be wider to take into account the features in the landscape and opportunities. In addition, the Part 2 Plan Policies Map will merge with the other policies in North Northamptonshire to give a comprehensive policies map that will show the strategic as well as local corridors.
  - 3.5. It is not considered that the local corridors impact on any of the proposed allocations, rather they will enable development to link into the local corridors to improve the provision and nature connectivity in the area.
- 4. Matter 12 – Question 3: Are criteria a to d requirements of development proposals and is that clear? Is criterion c related to the additions/improvements to the corridors listed in the second paragraph of the policy and where contributions would be spent?**
- 4.1. Criteria a-d are requirements of development proposals. A Proposed Modification could be added to the policy wording to make this clear could be by adding the words “*through development proposals*” to the second sentence of Policy EN7 as follows: “These corridors will be protected and enhanced *through development proposals* by:”
  - 4.2. Criterion c) should be applied to both the designated green infrastructure corridors shown on the JCS Policies Map (Appendix 1) and those additional opportunities set out in the second para of Policy EN7, as shown on the Part 2 Plan Policies Map. The criterion states that contributions be sought to facilitate appropriate additions to the network (ie those opportunities set out in

the second para of Policy EN7) as well as to improve the quality of the Green Infrastructure network (ie the designated network).

**5. Matter 12 – Question 4: Is criterion d intended to seek financial contributions from developers? Is this approach justified? Is it clear which schemes would be expected to contribute, how the contributions would be calculated and where the monies would be spent? Is the supporting text at paragraph 5.12 of the Plan intended to be part of the Policy?**

5.1. It is justified to require developers to contribute towards off site GI where they are unable to achieve this on site. Part of creating places is providing all the necessary social and environmental infrastructure alongside the built infrastructure to ensure sustainable development. If developers are unable to meet this onsite, then there needs to be a mechanism that this can be done off site to allow them to meet the policy requirements.

5.2. All major schemes (9 plus units) would expect to contribute proportionally, the projects will be set out within the natural capital investment plan which is currently being completed for North Northamptonshire. The contributions would be calculated depending on the projects located nearest to the proposed development and the cost identified for these to ensure that the scheme is deliverable. Para 5.12 is set out to provide explanation Policy EN7, to set the parameters for securing contributions. A Proposed Modification could be made to incorporate the objective of para 5.12 into the policy wording.

**6. Matter 12 – Question 5: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?**

6.1. The implications of the Policy have been viability tested in the [East Northamptonshire Local Plan Viability Assessment](#) (January 2021), (Ref B-13).

6.2. The key findings set out under paragraph 1.7 of the Viability Assessment for open space/ sports provision state that appraisals undertaken incorporate sufficient undeveloped space to facilitate the provision of open space and incorporate allowances for a package of Section 106 obligations which can include financial contributions.

6.3. Paragraph 2.51 of the Viability Assessment provides a summary for Policy EN7 which also concludes that the appraisals incorporate sufficient gross area to allow for the provision of additional open space and Section 106 obligations which can be used in part to fund other Green Infrastructure. Appendix 1 includes a policy review which sets out the policy requirements and policy costs.

**7. Matter 12 – Question 6: What is the relationship/cross over of Policy EN7 with Policy EN8 Greenways in terms of contributions?**

7.1. The Greenway is a separate strategic Green Infrastructure project and therefore there are some synergies with Policy EN7 on local green infrastructure.

7.2. The Greenway is locally distinctive, it is a wider asset to North Northamptonshire. It is recognised that there is a cross over in the request for contributions to ensure delivery and meeting policy requirements. However, it is considered that Policy EN8 is distinct in its ask with a forward plan associated with the delivery of the route.

**8. Matter 12 – Question 7: Is Policy EN8 relating to the greenway consistent with the JCS and the Framework?**

8.1. Yes, it is a locally distinctive policy that provides more detail to the local Green Infrastructure corridors policy.

**9. Matter 12 – Question 8: Is it clear that the greenway is made up a number of components? Are these shown effectively on the Policies Map? (see Initial Question 12 c and d and the Council’s response including MM05a).**

9.1. Policy EN8, figure 8 and the Policies Map when read together show that the Greenway is made of component areas, this is set out in the explanatory text at para 5.16. These are shown effectively on the Policies Map as distinctive areas of search for routes to link in together to make the wider network accessible.

9.2. However, as indicated in the Council’s response to the Inspector’s initial questions (Ref EXAM-09) A Proposed Modification has been suggested (MM05a) (Ref EXAM-17) to Policy EN8 to provide clarity.

**10. Matter 12 – Question 9: What are the implications for landowners/developers/local residents of the greenway designation?**

10.1. The greenway is a collaborative process with landowners to identify suitable routes, in the main, using the rights of way network, that can be upgraded as necessary. Developers are required to link in with the greenway when there are nearby options. This helps them meet other policy requirements on connectivity through sustainable transport modes.

10.2. Residents will benefit from having the greenway network through enhancements to leisure, local commuting and increased access to open space. This can assist in delivering and supporting communities through providing opportunities for enhancing health and social well-being.

**11. Matter 12 – Question 10: Does the Policy seek financial contributions from developers? Is this approach justified? Is it clear which schemes would be expected to contribute, how the contributions would be calculated and where the monies would be spent?**

11.1. Policy EN8 seeks financial contributions from developers, as appropriate, to enhance the Greenway or to deliver local connections as part of their layout plans.

11.2. A Local Infrastructure Plan has been prepared for East Northants (Ref B-09), this sets out a schedule of requirements in respect of green infrastructure together with approximate costs for identified projects.

**12. Matter 12 – Question 11: Is the text at footnote 62 intended to be part of the Policy?**

12.1. Footnote 62 is intended to form part of the explanation of Policy EN8. However, it is considered that a Proposed Modification could be provided to insert the explanation directly into the Policy.

**13. Matter 12 – Question 12: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?**

13.1. The implications of the Policy have been viability tested in the [East Northamptonshire Local Plan Viability Assessment](#) (January 2021), (Ref B-13).

13.2. The key findings set out under paragraph 1.7 of the Viability Assessment for Open space/ sports provision state that appraisals undertaken incorporate sufficient undeveloped space to facilitate the provision of open space and incorporate allowances for a package of Section 106 obligations which can include financial contributions. Paragraph 2.51 provides a summary for Policy EN8 which highlights that financial contributions would be sought from a small number of developments. Appendix 1 includes a policy review which sets out the policy requirements and policy costs.

**14. Matter 12 – Question 13: What is the relationship/cross over of Policy EN8 and Policy EN7 green infrastructure corridors in terms of contributions?**

14.1. Policy EN8 is part of the network of local and strategic Green Infrastructure corridors and as such they are interlinked. It is not expected that development would contribute under both policies, it will be dependent on the spatial location of each development and the options within the local area.

**15. Matter 12 – Question 14: Is Policy EN9 regarding the designation of local green space consistent with the JCS and the Framework?**

15.1. Policy EN9 is consistent with the JCS and the NPPF. Paragraph 3.89 of the JCS states that green areas identified through local assessments as being of particular importance to the local community may be designated for special protection as Local Green Space (LGS) through the Part 2 Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans. Paragraph 101 of the NPPF enables Local Green Space to be designated through local and neighbourhood plans and paragraph 102 sets out criteria for when the designation should be used.

15.2. [Background Paper 3 – Local Green Spaces](#) – Assessing and quantifying an “excessive tract of land” explains the approach to the designation of Local Green Space in the Local Plan Part 2. The Part 2 Local Plan does not designate LGS but provides a local interpretation of the NPPF criteria. Section 2 of Background Paper 3 explains the evolution of the approach to LGS which concluded that the LGS would be designated through Neighbourhood Plans but that the Local Plan Part 2 would provide more detailed policy direction for designating LGS through Neighbourhood Plans.

**16. Matter 12 – Question 15: Do the criteria for designation reflect the guidance at paragraphs 101, 102 and 103 of the Framework? Do they repeat the Framework? How do they ‘define an enhanced local interpretation of the Framework’ and is this justified?**

16.1. The criteria for designation do reflect the guidance contained in paragraphs 101, 102 and 103. In particular they provide local detail in relation to the criteria set out in paragraph 102. [Background Paper 3 – Local Green Spaces](#) provides a justification for the approach taken. Sections 3 and 4 of Background Paper 3 explain how the criteria in paragraph 102 of the NPPF have been refined to provide more detailed local policy and direction. This is done through providing a local interpretation of ‘reasonably close proximity’ and through defining an ‘extensive tract of land’. Background Paper 3 sets out the methodology used to define an ‘extensive tract of land’ as set out in criterion c of EN9.

16.2. Policy EN9 doesn’t repeat the NPPF, it provides a local interpretation to provide guidance to Neighbourhood Plans identifying Local Green Space.

**17. Matter 12 – Question 16: Why are the NPs considered to be the most appropriate mechanism for designating individual sites? (paragraph 5.22 of the Plan) What is the approach to local green space in areas without NPs?**

17.1. The approach to Local Green Space was considered through the preparation of the Plan. Section 2 of [Background Paper 3 – Local Green Spaces](#) explains that consideration was given to designating LGS through the plan or setting out detailed criteria through the Local Plan Part 2 to allow for

the designation of sites through Neighbourhood Plans. Paragraph 2.4 of Background Paper 3 explains that it was agreed by the Planning Policy Committee that the preferred approach was for LGS to be designated through Neighbourhood Plans with the Local Plan Part 2 setting out more detailed policy direction for designating LGS through Neighbourhood Plans.

17.2. Through the report presented to the Planning Policy Committee it was considered that the requirement of paragraph 102 of the NPPF, that LGS should only be designated where it is 'demonstrably special to the local community', would be difficult to meet through the Local Plan Part 2 and that Neighbourhood Plans are the most appropriate mechanism for demonstrating that this requirement has been met.

17.3. There are some 'made' Neighbourhood Plans in the East Northants area which designate Local Green Space. In areas without Neighbourhood Plans LGS has not been designated, however if communities within these areas wish to identify and protect green areas which are of importance, they can do so by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

17.4. Response reference 37/05 considers the policy and reasoned justification unsound as it places designation of LGS only within the Neighbourhood Plan process. The Council has responded to this representation in the [Regulation 19 Representations by Section](#) spreadsheet, as set above and in this response, Neighbourhood Plan are considered the most appropriate mechanism for identifying LGS and the approach set out in EN9 of setting out detailed criteria to give direction to Neighbourhood Plans is considered to be appropriate.

**18.Matter 12 – Question 17: What is the justification for the gross site area restriction in criterion c? Is it consistent with the Framework? How is the existing main built up area of the settlement defined?**

18.1. Section 4 of [Background Paper 3 – Local Green Spaces](#) provides the justification for the gross site area restriction in criterion c. This explains the methodology for developing criterion c. Criterion c is consistent with the NPPF as it provides local clarification to the requirement that LGS is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

18.2. The existing main built up area of the settlement is defined using the settlement boundary where one has been defined, most areas with 'made' Neighbourhood Plans define linear settlement boundaries on the policies map. Where a settlement boundary has not been defined then the main built up area would need to be defined using the settlement boundary criteria set out in the Spatial Development Strategy section of the Local Plan Part 2.

**19.Matter 12 – Question 18: Is Policy EN10 regarding the enhancement and provision of open space consistent with the JCS and the Framework?**

19.1. It is considered that Policy EN10 is consistent with the JCS which includes a generic policy, Policy 7, for retention and enhancement of open

space. EN10 provides the local standards pursuant to this based on locally gathered evidence. A Background Paper 4 Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure, has been prepared to set out the context (Ref D-11)

19.2. Policy EN10 is also consistent with the NPPF, paragraph 93 a) of the NPPF, states that policies should plan positively for open space and indeed to achieve sustainable development, paragraph 8 of the NPPF, one of the social objectives is that open space provision meets the current and future needs of the community. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF requires planning policies to be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space and opportunities for new provision and states that information gained from the assessment should be used to determine what open space is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate. The approach to provision of open space set out in Policy EN10, based on the assessment of open space undertaken, is therefore consistent with the NPPF.

19.3. An SPD on Open Space and Green Infrastructure is proposed to be written to apply across the North Northamptonshire authority. This will deal with many matters including thresholds, standards, contributions and maintenance in a harmonised way. This will provide further detail to the requirements of Policy EN10.

**20. Matter 12 – Question 19: What is the justification for the threshold of 10 or more dwellings?**

20.1. The justification for 10 dwellings is based on a development threshold above which Section 106 agreements would normally be entered into with a developer. The NPPF defines major development as housing developments of 10 dwellings or more, the Policy threshold therefore relates to major developments. The Local Plan Part 2 Glossary defines infill or windfall development as smaller scale, minor development, typically up to 10 dwellings in the urban area so the threshold also corresponds with this definition.

20.2. Whilst developments under 10 dwellings will have a small impact on open space it is considered that the viability, as outlined in paragraph 5.30 of the explanatory text of the Part 2 Plan, would impact on the deliverability of small sites. Further, the small amount of open space required on a pro rata basis for such development is not considered efficient or practical in its delivery.

**21. Matter 12 – Question 20: To ensure Policy EN10 is effective should Tables 6,7 and 8 be included within the policy? Are they likely to be updated/become of date within the Plan period?**

21.1. Tables 6, 7 and 8 are provided from the 2017 KKP study, as referenced in para 5.26 of the explanatory text. This study is likely to be updated within the plan period. Therefore, reference to these within criteria and standards may well change. The explanatory text is deemed appropriate

for ensuring developments meet the necessary criteria for now and any future updates can be referenced accordingly.

- 21.2. For clarity a Proposed Modification could be prepared to the wording of Policy EN10 to relate to the tables 6-8, by adding at the end of the second para the wording “*or, alternatively, the most up to date information available, as provided by the latest published study*”.

**22. Matter 12 – Question 21: How will ‘insufficient access’ to existing open space within the local area be determined in practice? (paragraph 2 of the Policy)**

**Has this been addressed by MM08?**

- 22.1. It is considered that this has been addressed by MM08 in that the word *access* is proposed to be removed and replaced by an emphasis on identifying whether there is insufficient open space within the local area. Whether there is insufficient open space identified within the local area will be assessed using the quality, accessibility and quantity standards set out in tables 6, 7 and 8 at the time of an application.

**23. Matter 12 – Question 22: How will financial contributions be determined and is it clear where the monies will be spent? Where is this set out?**

- 23.1. The preference is for open space to be provided on site, if financial contributions are required the Council has a Developer Contributions SPD (2006) which provides a calculation for open space contributions. The Council intends to prepare an Open Space and Green Infrastructure SPD which will replace the calculations contained in the 2006 SPD and will set out how contributions will be determined.

- 23.2. Contributions will be calculated based on the quantity standards for the scale of development proposed. The cost for provision will be based on the location of the proposed development and the plans to meet the need for the area. The KKP Open Space Assessment identifies projects which could be provided within settlements.

- 23.3. Early discussion with the local authority will ensure that financial contributions are considered early in the process.

**24. Matter 12 – Question 23: Have the implications of the Policy been viability tested?**

- 24.1. The implications of the Policy have been viability tested in the [East Northamptonshire Local Plan Viability Assessment](#) (January 2021), document reference B-13.

24.2. The key findings set out under paragraph 1.7 of the Viability Assessment for Open space/ sports provision state that appraisals undertaken incorporate sufficient undeveloped space to facilitate the provision of open space and incorporate allowances for a package of Section 106 obligations which can include financial contributions. Paragraph 2.51 provides a summary for Policy EN10 which highlights that financial contributions would be sought to enhance the quality and value of existing open space. Appendix 1 includes a policy review which sets out the policy requirements and policy costs.

**25. Matter 12 – Question 24: Is there any cross over/duplication with the contributions sought under EN7 green infrastructure corridors, and EN8 the greenway?**

25.1. It is not considered that there is any duplication between policies EN7, EN8 and EN10. The Policies address separate issues that will need to be considered for each application and the demand associated with any proposal coming forward will be assessed by the case officer.

25.2. There may be circumstances where there is some cross over with the contributions sought under Policies EN7, EN8 and EN10. Contributions sought towards open space may also contribute to meeting the requirements of Policy EN7 or EN8. The Open Space and Green Infrastructure SPD will provide further detail on the approach to securing developer contributions and these will need to be considered on a case by case basis taking into account the requirements of the three policies.

**26. Matter 12 – Question 25: Is Policy EN11 regarding the enhancement and provision of sport and recreation facilities consistent with the JCS and the Framework?**

26.1. Policy EN11 requires development to contribute to the provision and enhancement of sport and recreation facilities. The policy deals with requirements for both strategic development (which is defined in the JCS and set out in footnote 73 of the Part 2 Plan) and for all other qualifying development. It sets out an approach providing more local detail, for example in reference to the accessibility standards provided in Table 7 of the explanatory text, for delivery within East Northants.

26.2. The NPPF paragraph 92 requires planning policies to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, which enable and support healthy lifestyles. It continues, through para 98, to recognise the importance open space and recreation provision and sets out how policies plans should seek to deliver such provision.

26.3. Policy EN11 provides the local context and standards in relation to providing sport and recreation facilities in accordance with the strategic guidance referred to above.

**27. Matter 12 – Question 26: The Policy applies to new strategic employment and housing development of 500 or more dwellings or 5 hectares of employment land which are beyond the scope of the Plan since they are considered by the JCS. Is Policy EN11 justified and effective in this context?**

27.1. Whilst the JCS sets out strategic allocations as a Part 1 Plan it requires, in some allocations, details to be delivered through the Part 2 Plans. This is the case in respect of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension where Policy 33 provides general requirements, which it anticipates will be set out in greater detail through the Part 2 Plan, including masterplanning.

27.2. Similarly, the development of some 700 dwellings at Irthlingborough West is a commitment in the Part 1 Plan, which again requires local direction for policy delivery

27.3. The approach set out in Policy EN11 is therefore considered to be justified.

**28. Matter 12 – Question 27: Is the approach to open space and sport and recreation facilities in the Plan based on robust and up-to-date evidence relating to need (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision? (see Initial Question 10 and the Council's response). Is the Plan positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in this regard?**

28.1. It is considered that the evidence base provides an accurate assessment of sport facilities within the plan area. An open space and playing pitch strategy were undertaken to inform the development of plan policy, which was published in 2017 (Ref D-08). There have been no significant changes to the provision in the District since the publication of the study, therefore the baseline assessment and the standards derived from this are still considered to provide a reflection of need within the plan area.

28.2. The plan has been positively prepared with the evidence base having been collated, justified in that it considers the local needs within the area, effective in that it sets out the locally derived standards and sets out a delivery mechanism for securing the provision and contributions towards them and it meets the JCS and the NPPF requirements for setting out how development can meet these sustainability requirements.

**29. Matter 12 – Question 28: Is it effective to include the playing pitch demand calculator at Table 9 in the Plan (it is not referred to in the Policy)? Are the demand figures likely to be updated/become out of date within the Plan period?**

29.1. It is considered that the table should be referenced in Policy EN11 to make it clear that this is the procedure that needs to be followed when development proposals are considered, and where the demands have been

identified. A Proposed modification could therefore be made to the wording of Policy EN11 at the end of para 3 to refer to Table 9.

29.2. The demand figures are likely to change and can be updated when changes occur through monitoring of the Plan, which is why it would be preferable for the table to sit outside of the Policy, and refer to Table 9, or the most up to date information available through a proposed Modification. This is essential to demonstrate the current needs when assessing planning applications.

**30. Matter 12 – Question 29: Should the accessibility standards in Table 7 be in the Policy itself?**

30.1. Table 7 may well be updated within the plan period, therefore reference to the table within the supporting text is deemed appropriate for ensuring developments meet the necessary criteria. However, so that any future updates can be referenced accordingly the additional policy wording referred to in Matter 12 Q28 above could be proposed as a modification to the Policy.

**31. Matter 12 – Question 30: Is the approach to contributions from both housing and employment development justified and effective?**

31.1. Contributions from both housing and employment development are justified to secure sustainable developments where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related or fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. Some employment schemes, particularly office schemes, can justify the requirement of sports contributions in the sense of health facilities such as a gym, that could be associated within an employment area.

31.2. Policy EN11 requires contributions from strategic housing and employment development, as indicated above. In respect of East Northants this relates primarily to the delivery of the SUEs at Rushden East and Irthlingborough West, where the comprehensive schemes will be delivered through masterplanning. It is appropriate and justified, given the scale of these proposals, that such schemes are required to mitigate their impact on local facilities by providing new facilities, and/or contributing to the upgrade of existing facilities. Contributions from both housing and employment development is justified to secure sustainable developments.

**32. Matter 12 – Question 31: What is the relevant legislation referred to in paragraph 3 of the Policy and where is this explained?**

32.1. The relevant legislation referred to in Policy EN11 should refer to relevant plan policies. The JCS provides a strategic policy, Policy 7 in relation to the provision of community services and facilities. Criterion d) of this policy refers to sports and recreation facilities. Para 5.25 of the Part 2 Plan explanatory text refers to this.

32.2. It is therefore proposed that a modification be made to the wording Policy EN11 para 3, to clarify the requirement with reference to the guidance set out in Policy 7 of the JCS.

**33. Matter 12 – Question 32: What is the ‘other qualifying development’ referred to in paragraph 3 of the Policy? Are these the major developments referred to in paragraph 5.36 of the Plan? How are these defined?**

33.1. Other qualifying development refers to non-strategic development. Policy EN11 explains through footnote 73, what the JCS defines as strategic. Non-strategic development would constitute proposals below this threshold and above the threshold of minor development, which is set out in the Part 2 Plan glossary.

33.2. The large-scale housing developments referred to in para 5.36 of the explanatory text relate to both strategic development and non-strategic development above the minor development threshold. A footnote could be added to the text to clarify this position.

**34. Matter 12 – Question 33: What is the threshold for the employment development? How will the contributions be calculated and where will the monies be spent?**

34.1. The threshold for employment development at the strategic level is set out in the JCS as 5ha or more of employment use. There is no lower threshold defined for non-strategic employment provision as such.

34.2. A Local Infrastructure Plan has been prepared for East Northants (Ref B-09), this sets out a schedule of requirements in respect of green infrastructure together with approximate costs for identified projects

34.3. Matter 12 Q22 provides a previous response in respect of how contributions are to be calculated.

**35. Matter 12 – Question 34: Have the requirements of the Policy been viability tested?**

35.1. The implications of the Policy have been viability tested in the [East Northamptonshire Local Plan Viability Assessment](#) (January 2021), document reference B-13.

35.2. The key findings set out under paragraph 1.7 of the Viability Assessment for Open space/ sports provision state that appraisals undertaken incorporate sufficient undeveloped space to facilitate the provision of open space and incorporate allowances for a package of Section 106 obligations which can include financial contributions. Paragraph 2.51 provides a summary for Policy EN11 which highlights that financial contributions would be sought to enhance the quality and value of existing

sports and recreational facilities. Appendix 1 includes a policy review which sets out the policy requirements and policy costs.