

East Northamptonshire Council

Equalities Impact Assessment – initial screening

SECTION: Planning Policy (Planning Services)

HEAD OF SERVICE: Trevor G Watson

COMPLETED BY: Michael Burton

WHEN: 9 January 2008

Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan – submitted 11 January 2008

East Northamptonshire Council is required to prepare a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) focussing on detailed planning issues within the District. The first of three such DPDs is the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP), which covers approximately 80% of the geographical area of the District. The RNOTP forms part of the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework (LDF) for East Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough Districts.

The Plan sets out the vision, strategy and detailed policies for the development, enhancement, regeneration and planned growth of Thrapston and Oundle Rural Services Centres, the development of King's Cliffe as a Local Service Centre and proposals for the sustainable development of rural communities associated with these service centres.

The Plan also identifies specific sites for housing, employment, recreation and other land uses and contains policies relating to specific areas where individual development, conservation or design criteria apply. All site specific information will be shown on the submitted Proposals Map, which will accompany the Plan.

Why is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?

In accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and anti-discrimination legislation), the Council needs to consider whether the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) will have an adverse impact upon equality within the following areas – age, disability, gender, race, religion/ belief and sexual orientation.

In practice, the Plan is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report, submitted alongside the RNOTP as a statutory requirement. This assesses the range of outcomes and policies set out in the Plan against sustainability outcomes and indicators. As part of the RNOTP process, the following socio-economic effects will need to be monitored:

- Improvements to accessibility from residential areas to key services, facilities and employment areas.

- Opportunities for all people to meet housing needs.
- Improvements to overall levels of physical, mental and social well-being and reduction in health disparities between different groups and different areas.
- Effect of supporting housing and employment development on improving social cohesion, creating a pleasant living environment and enhancing local character, with additional benefits for well-being and health.
- Valuing and nurturing a sense of belonging in a cohesive community whilst respecting diversity
- Improving overall levels of education and skills.
- Creating healthy, clean and pleasant environments for people to enjoy living, working and for recreation and to protect and enhance residential amenity.
- Reducing reliance on the private car through a modal shift to more sustainable transport modes.
- Maintaining or enhancing employment opportunities.
- Factors which are conducive to wealth creation, including infrastructure and the local strengths and qualities that are attractive to visitors and investors.
- Cumulative effect of supporting and fostering economic growth and employment opportunities and encouraging the tourism sector, as well as providing additional infrastructure within the Plan Area, increasing the appeal of the area for investors, visitors and residents.
- Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and market towns.

What the EIA involves

Plan policies are considered against matrices relating to disability and age, where the possibility of adverse impacts has been identified through the Sustainability Appraisal process. Individual RNOTP policies are considered against the Council's EIA template and any potential (or possible "Medium Impact") adverse impacts are highlighted.

Disability and Age EIA

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
DISABILITY AND/ OR AGE											
Policy 1 – Settlement Roles	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of local services/ facilities	Sustainable growth focussed on identified service centres – enhanced facilities for such groups in association with new developments	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with development strategy	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples’ groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P ¹	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 2 – Windfall Development	Neither age or disabled groups	High quality of design	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policies 3 and 4 – Phasing	Neither age or disabled groups	Sustainable growth (Oundle and Thrapston)	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 5 – Comprehensive Development	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of local services/	High quality of design, including enhanced access for those of limited mobility; provision of	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with well	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples’ groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

¹ P/P – Planning Policy

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
	facilities	facilities for young people in association with new developments	designed development schemes		sustainability indicators above						
Policy 6 – Green Infrastructure	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of green infrastructure	Enhanced environment. Improved cycle/ wheelchair access.	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with enhanced accessibility	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. Sustrans, Natural England, disability/ young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 7 – Transport Network	Disabled/ elderly/ young people without car access	Increased travel choice/ accessibility for groups without access to a car, particularly to the north of Plan area	Low impact/ medium risk – potential benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with enhanced accessibility	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – some concerns identified about effectiveness of policy in delivering sustainable transport. Local Transport Plan (NCC)	None – most transport imps delivered by other Plans/ providers; e.g. LTP, Core Strategy	Relevant consultees, e.g. NCC, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P & NCC	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 8 – Residential Parking Standards	Disabled/ car users (all age groups)	Increased travel choice/ accessibility. High quality design, including provision of sufficient	Medium impact/ low risk – need to provide sufficient disabled parking, while not	None	Policy enables NCC Parking SPG policies to be applied, including allowing for sufficient disabled/	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. NCC, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P & NCC	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
		disabled parking as part of new development projects.	encouraging un-sustainable patterns of car use		wheelchair parking						
Policy 9 – Flood Risk	Neither age or disabled groups	Healthy, fulfilled and balanced lifestyles. Ensure development in appropriate locations.	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 10 – Housing Density	Neither age or disabled groups	High quality design	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 11 – Housing Mix	Disabled/ all age groups	Fulfilling housing needs for the disabled and all age groups. High quality design	Medium impact/ low risk – provision of high quality housing for all	The Policy goes over and above minimum (Building Regs) housing req in providing for wheelchair accessible housing	Strategic Housing Market Assessment sets out housing need requirements for the District/ housing market area	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. RSLs, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P & Hsg	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 12 – Important Open Land	Neither age or disabled groups	High quality design	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 13 – Buildings of local interest	Neither age or disabled	High quality design	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
	groups										
Policy 14 – LSCI and LNRs	Neither age or disabled groups	Enhanced biodiversity	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 15 – Enhancing Biodiversity	Neither age or disabled groups	Enhanced biodiversity	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 16 – Wind Farms	Neither age or disabled groups	High quality design	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 17 – Parish Plans and Village Design Statements	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents of individual parishes/ villages	Parish Plans refer to local issues – accessibility; local housing needs, facilities for young people	Low impact/ low risk – policy will enhance the role of PPs/ VDSs in delivering local benefits	None	Policy will support implementation of PPs/ VDSs, including facilities for the disabled, elderly and young people	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. ACRE Parish Councils and local groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 18 – Considerate Construction	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – living near to new devt sites	Ensure highways and public access routes are kept clear, especially for wheelchair users/ people with limited mobility	Low impact/ low risk – policy seeks to minimise nuisance associated with construction process	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. env protection	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P & EP	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 19 – Affordable Housing Targets	Disabled/ elderly/ young	Affordable housing – overall targets	Low impact/ low risk – policy	None – the policy does not specify	Strategic Housing Market Assessment,	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. RSLs,	Monitor policies and review	3	P/P & Hsg	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
	people – residents	should include housing for different groups, e.g. first time buyers, elderly	identifies overall targets for affordable housing only	types of affordable housing	Residential land availability		disability groups	through monitoring framework if necessary			
Policy 20 – Affordable Housing Requirements	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents	Affordable housing – targets should include housing for different groups, e.g. first time buyers, elderly, disabled	Medium impact/ low risk – policy is based around housing need identified through SHMA	None	Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Policy identifies overall levels of affordable housing need, based on SHMA, including for the disabled/ aged	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. RSLs, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P & Hsg	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 21 – Rural Exceptions Housing	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents	Affordable housing – delivering of individual housing developments to meet particular local needs	Medium impact/ low risk – housing will be implemented where particular local needs are identified	None	Local housing needs survey, to identify specific housing needs for particular groups	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. RSLs, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P & Hsg	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 22 – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of sport/ rec facilities	Retention of existing facilities, enhancement of facilities for all potential user groups	Low impact/ low risk – policy will enhance provision of sport/ recreation facilities	None	Emerging Recreation/ open space strategy	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. Parish Councils, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
Policy 23 – Protected Employment Areas	Neither age or disabled groups	Diverse range of jobs and business opportunities	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 24 – Employment Sites Occupied by Single Businesses	Neither age or disabled groups	Diverse range of jobs and business opportunities	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Policy 25 – Town Centres	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – users of town centre facilities	Attractive and vibrant town centres; enhanced services within town centres for least mobile groups	Low impact/ low risk – policy will enhance overall quality of town centres as retail centres, accessible to less mobile groups	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 26-29 – Water Related Facilities along the River Nene	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of riverside services	Enhanced environment. Improved cycle/ wheelchair access along River Nene	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with enhanced accessibility	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. Sustrans, Natural England, disability/ young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 30 – Rural Buildings – General Approach	Disabled – rural business workers/ custers	Need to ensure appropriate accessibility for least mobile users	Medium impact/ Low risk – policies will need to accord with	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of	Reference to improved access could be	Relevant consultees, e.g. Building Control, disability	Monitor policies and review through monitoring	2	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
			building regulations access standards		policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	included, though in practice this is covered by many other policies	groups	framework if necessary			
Policy 31 – Replacement Dwellings	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents	Need to ensure appropriate accessibility for least mobile users	Low impact/ Low risk – policies will need to accord with building regulations access standards	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	None	Relevant consultees, e.g. Building Control, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 32 – Farm Diversification	Disabled – rural business workers/ custs	Need to ensure appropriate accessibility for least mobile users	Medium impact/ Low risk – policies will need to accord with building regulations access standards	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Reference to improved access could be included, though in practice this is covered by many other policies	Relevant consultees, e.g. Building Control, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Policy 33 – Lorry Parking	Neither age or disabled groups	Diverse range of jobs and business opportunities	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
Oundle – Strategy and Allocations (Policies OUN1 – OUN6)	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of Oundle services/ facilities	Sustainable growth focussed on identified service centres – enhanced facilities for such groups in association with new developments	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with development strategy	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Specific reference to disabled facilities?	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P ²	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Thrapston – Strategy and Allocations (Policies THR1 – THR5)	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of Thrapston services/ facilities	Sustainable growth focussed on identified service centres – enhanced facilities for such groups in association with new developments	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with development strategy	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Specific reference to disabled facilities?	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
King's Cliffe – Local Service Centre (Policies KCF1 – KCF2)	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of King's Cliffe services/ facilities	Sustainable growth focussed on identified service centres – enhanced facilities for such groups in association with new developments	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with development strategy	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Specific reference in KCF2 to disabled facilities?	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)

² P/P – Planning Policy

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected by this	Outcome	Impact H/M/L	Areas of non-compliance	Evidence of compliance and sources of data	What improvements can be made	Who should be involved	Actions	Priority for Yr1,2,3	By who	By when
Nassington and Warmington – Smaller Service Centres (Policies NAS1, WAR1)	Disabled/ elderly/ young people – residents or users of village services/ facilities	Sustainable growth focussed on identified service centres – enhanced facilities for such groups in association with new developments	Low impact/ low risk – benefits for disabled/ different age groups associated with development strategy	None	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Specific reference to disabled facilities?	Relevant consultees, e.g. disability, young peoples' groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	3	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Brigstock Camp (Policy BC1)	Disabled groups	Possible alternative use to granted scheme for medium security hospital	Medium impact/ medium risk	Medium secure hospital is not preferred scheme for site	Sustainability Appraisal Report – no adverse impacts of policy when considered against sustainability indicators above	Reasons for devt proposal over granted scheme may need to be set out?	Relevant consultees, e.g. NHS, disability groups	Monitor policies and review through monitoring framework if necessary	2	P/P	1/ 2009 (adoption date)
Deenethorpe Airfield (Policy DA1)	Neither age or disabled groups	Healthy, fulfilled and balanced lifestyles	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Addington Park Industrial Estate	Neither age or disabled groups	Diverse range of jobs and business opportunities	None	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Gender, Race, Religion/ belief and Sexual Orientation

RURAL NORTH, OUNDLE AND THRAPSTON PLAN	Who is affected
GENDER	No adverse impact identified
RACE	No adverse impact identified
RELIGION/ BELIEF	No adverse impact identified
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	No adverse impact identified

The disability and age equality groups have particular needs, principally relating to accessibility. As such, therefore, it was appropriate to consider all policies in the RNOTP, to ensure that the Plan does adequately fulfil their needs. No adverse impacts have been identified in relation to other groups.

Accessibility to the document

One possible area of concern is the ability of the following groups to access the Plan document itself:

- Blind/ partially sighted;
- People who do not speak English as a first language.

The preamble to the document (p5) addresses this, stating that: “Every effort will be made to ensure this document is accessible to all. Please contact Planning Policy on 01832 742010 for assistance and further information.” This makes provision for an individual response to be made, including a home visit accompanied by a translator if required.

EIA Findings

It should be noted that the Sustainability Appraisal framework identifies the effect of individual RNOTP policies against a range of sustainability indicators, which implicitly include all communities which will be covered by an EIA. In all cases the Plan Policies show no direct “High Impact” upon any of the six “equality groups”.

Indeed, with the exception of disability, where there is a small possibility of adverse impacts resulting from policies in the Plan, there is no adverse impact upon gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. In practice, all communities need:

- Sustainable growth – decent, affordable housing, and employment opportunities;
- Improved travel choice – accessibility;
- Net gains in green infrastructure – recreation and biodiversity opportunities, improved health.

Given the particular needs of the elderly or disabled, it is appropriate to consider the impact of the Plan policies in detail, using the equalities matrix. Many policies aim to achieve “good design”, a key factor of which involves improved accessibility for all, including the least mobile groups. Certain policies have been identified as being particularly pertinent to the elderly or disabled, notably:

- **Transport and Accessibility policies (Policies 7, 8)** – These relate to parking standards and transport improvements, but are implemented through other documents, clearly identified in the document.
- **Housing policies (Policies 11, 19, 20, 21)** – These housing policies all address the particular issue of housing need. They relate to all groups, with the needs of particular groups addressed through detailed housing needs assessments.
- **Site Specific policies (Policies 27, 29; Oundle, Thrapston, King’s Cliffe, Nassington and Warmington Policies)** – All site specific policies refer to “good design” and address the need to achieve “sustainable growth”. In practice, meeting the needs of the whole community is an important element in achieving sustainability.
- **Rural Buildings policies (Policies 30, 32)** – Proposals for the conversion/ re-use of rural buildings will need meet accessibility criteria set out in the building regulations.

Policy BC1 (Brigstock Camp) is the only Policy that has the potential to be in conflict with disability legislation. This policy proposes an alternative use for the Brigstock Camp site, in the event that the extant planning permission for a medium secure hospital facility on the site. However, it is emphasised that Policy BC1 could only be implemented in the event that the hospital scheme does not materialise. As such therefore, in practice the Policy cannot be seen to conflict with anti-discrimination legislation.

Conclusions

Having considered the Plan policies against the Equalities Matrix, no adverse impacts from the Plan have been identified for any equality group. Indeed, many Plan policies will provide benefits for the whole community, a key factor in achieving sustainable development.