



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Planning Policy Committee – 22 July 2013

### North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review – Proposed strategic site allocations and development principles

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#### Purpose of report

To request direction by the Planning Policy Committee for the potential allocation of specific major development site allocations at Rushden in the emerging North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Review

#### Attachment(s)

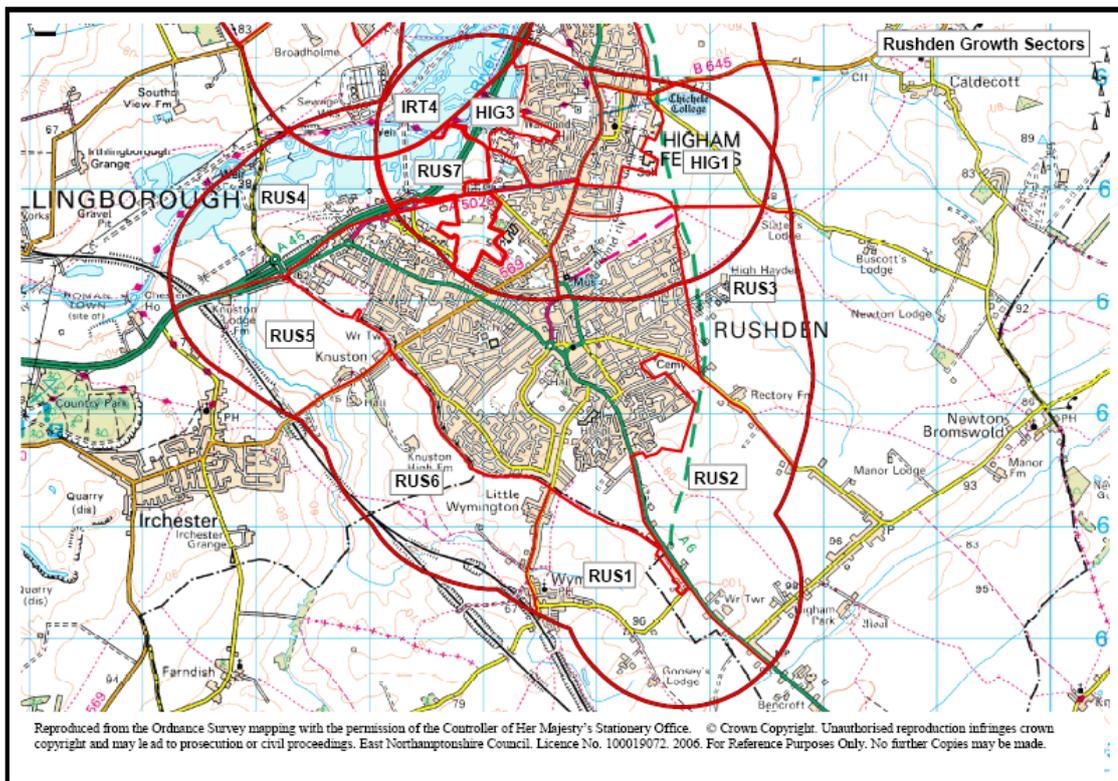
Appendix 1 – Rushden East – Draft site development principles and North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy review policy

Appendix 2 – Nene Valley Farm, Rushden – Draft site development principles and North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy review policy

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#### 1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 On 3 July 2012, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee (JPC) approved the “North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 Emerging Draft for Consultation”. This set out the initial draft Vision, Outcomes and policies for the emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and was subject to a 10 week non-statutory consultation between 6 August and 15 October 2012 (inclusive).
- 1.2 The Emerging Draft JCS document included policies proposing the allocation of several potential strategic development sites through the JCS review. In the case of East Northamptonshire, the following strategic sites were proposed:
- Irthlingborough West (draft policies 23 and 29)
  - Rushden East (draft policies 23 and 29)
  - Rockingham Motor Racing Circuit Enterprise Area (draft Policy 27)
- 1.3 The 3 July 2012 JPC meeting was preceded by a meeting of the East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) Planning Policy Committee on 18 June 2012. The Planning Policy Committee (18 June 2012) had resolved: “*That the following direction be provided as to the preferred location for a new strategic urban extension at Rushden:*
- *area RUS3 – for mixed use;*
  - *with area RUS4 – for employment use, should any additional employment land need to be allocated; and*
  - *area RUS7 retained as a green wedge” (Minute 51(3), 18 June 2012).*



1.4 A number of representations were submitted to the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU) regarding the proposed Rushden East urban extension (area RUS3, above) during the 10 week consultation for the emerging draft JCS (August – October 2012). Several additional/ alternative strategic site proposals were also received through the consultation, including Nene Valley Farm, Northampton Road, Rushden (within area RUS7, above).

## 2.0 Rushden East

2.1 Rushden Town Council and East Northamptonshire Council have both expressed support, prior to and during the consultation for the emerging draft JCS, for the designation of Rushden East as a strategic growth location through the emerging JCS review. This is fully explained in the Draft Rushden Urban Extension Background Paper (JPC, August 2012).

2.2 The emerging draft JCS (August 2012) does not, however, propose the allocation of Rushden East through the JCS itself, when adopted. Instead, the draft JCS “*proposed that the Local Plan should identify this [Rushden East] as a development opportunity to be taken forward by the Plan being prepared by East Northamptonshire Council*” (Draft Policy 29/ p46, emerging draft JCS, August 2012).

2.3 Nevertheless, the JPC has still expressed an intention to draft a set of development principles for Rushden East as a strategic site. It is anticipated that these will be presented to the JPC on 23 July 2013; so it is critical that East Northamptonshire Council formally considers these draft site development principles **before** they are formally endorsed by the JPC.

## 3.0 Nene Valley Farm, Northampton Road, Rushden

3.1 The emerging proposal for the allocation of Nene Valley Farm as a strategic employment site will represent a significant addition to the emerging JCS review. The ENC Planning Policy Committee (18 June 2012) had previously expressed a view that area RUS7 should be retained as a green wedge (Minute 51(3)), thereby continuing to endorse the “Important Open Land” (1996 Local Plan saved Policy EN20) designation.

- 3.2 Subsequently, however, East Northamptonshire Council's formal response to the emerging draft JCS (authorised by the Planning Policy Committee, 1 October 2012) included a specific reference to Nene Valley Farm. The Council's response specifically put forward an argument that Nene Valley Farm ought to be considered a potential "other strategic site" (JPU, [representation reference ED096](#), October 2012).
- 3.3 Furthermore, the site was also promoted by French House Ltd through the emerging draft JCS consultation (JPU, [representation reference ED067](#), October 2012). Representatives of French House Ltd are actively promoting the allocation of Nene Valley Farm and are currently working towards the preparation of a masterplan for the comprehensive development of the site.
- 3.4 The JPU is currently working with key stakeholders (ENC, County Highways and the County Council's Nature Improvement Area Officer) in drafting site development principles for the possible allocation of Nene Valley Farm as a strategic employment site through the JCS review. It is anticipated that these will be presented to the JPC on 23 July 2013; so it is critical that East Northamptonshire Council formally considers these draft site development principles **before** they are formally endorsed by the JPC.

#### **4.0 Site development principles**

- 4.1 The emerging JCS review proposes an overarching set of development principles that should be taken into consideration in developing site specific development proposals through the Local Plan, or in masterplanning for development of the site. **Appendix 1** includes a set of issues that any site specific policy or other proposals should address.
- 4.2 The JPU has prepared a standardised format for setting site development principles for proposed strategic site allocations through the emerging JCS review. The site development principles for Nene Valley Farm (**Appendix 2**) incorporate the following information:

- **Site description** – key landscape features, existing access points etc
- **Proposed land uses and scale of development** – site area etc
- **Key objectives** – vision for site development
- **Key constraints** – statutory designations, safeguarding areas etc
- **Key infrastructure** – highways improvement, landscaping etc, necessary to enable development to be implemented
- **Place shaping requirements** – site design principles
- **Policy** – site specific development criteria
- **Site location map**

- 4.3 The site development principles will provide a mechanism (or "policy hook"), by which specific policies or projects may come forward. The relative detail for Rushden East and Nene Valley Farm reflects the stage in the process that each site/ area is at. While site specific proposals for Nene Valley Farm are well advanced, the implementation of Rushden East is likely to entail significant land assembly issues; therefore the urban extension will be expected to come forward for development later in the Plan period (i.e. after 2021).

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The emerging JCS review is expected to bring forward certain site specific proposals; i.e. development sites of such a scale to be considered "strategic". Rushden East was already included within the initial JCS "Emerging Draft for Consultation" (August 2012), given that this represented a clear aspiration of Rushden Town and East Northamptonshire Councils.
- 5.2 Significantly, however, the 2012 consultation also revealed additional potential strategic site proposals. These included proposals for the development of a strategic

employment site at Nene Valley Farm. The JPU is currently drafting site development principles for Rushden East (Appendix 1) and Nene Valley Farm (Appendix 2). These are being brought to the attention of this Planning Policy Committee, in order that Members are able to give a clear direction in respect of the draft development principles in advance of the next JPC meeting (23 July 2013).

- 5.3 Members are asked to consider the draft site development principles for Rushden East and Nene Valley Farm (appendices 1 and 2, respectively). Consideration should be given to the draft text and what (if any) additions or changes should be made, prior to securing agreement for this through the JPC on 23 July 2013.

## **6.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

## **7.0 Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications.

## **8.0 Risk Management**

- 8.1 It remains important that the JPU and its partners (including ENC) continue to maintain momentum in taking forward the strategic element of the Local Plan (i.e. JCS review). Delays to the preparation of the Local Plan will result in the District (particularly the south of the District) not having an up-to-date, robust detailed planning policy framework to defend against any unwanted development.

- 8.2 The existing North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (adopted June 2008) continues to define the overall strategic policy framework for this area. However, the progression of the JCS review will enable increased material planning “weight” to be given to the emerging draft JCS policies. This is particularly significant where site specific proposals are being promoted or taken forward through the emerging JCS review.

## **9.0 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 None

## **10.0 Corporate Outcomes**

- 10.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Good quality of life: Sustainable Development, High quality built environment, Improved housing
- Effective partnership working – Strong strategic partnerships
- Strong community leadership – A proactive and listening Council

## **11.0 Recommendation**

- 11.1 It is requested that Members consider and endorse:

- The draft site development principles for Rushden East (Appendix 1).
- The draft site development principles for Nene Valley Farm (Appendix 2).

- 11.2 Member agreement to the draft text is sought, in advance of the forthcoming JPC meeting. Members’ comments and views regarding the draft text will be verbally reported to the JPC on 23 July 2013.

*(Reason – to ensure that East Northamptonshire Council continues to take a lead in taking the JCS review, the strategic element of the Local Plan, forward)*

<b>Legal</b>	Power: <b>Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Localism Act 2011</b>				
	Other considerations: None				
<b>Background Papers:</b> North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 Emerging Draft for Consultation (JPC, August 2012); Urban Extensions Study Rushden Update (JPC, June 2012); Draft Rushden Urban Extension Background Paper (JPC, August 2012) Draft Background Paper on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites (JPC, August 2012); Planning Policy Committee papers (ENC, 18 June 2012) North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee papers (NCC, 3 July 2012)					
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<b>Date:</b> 12 July 2013					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)