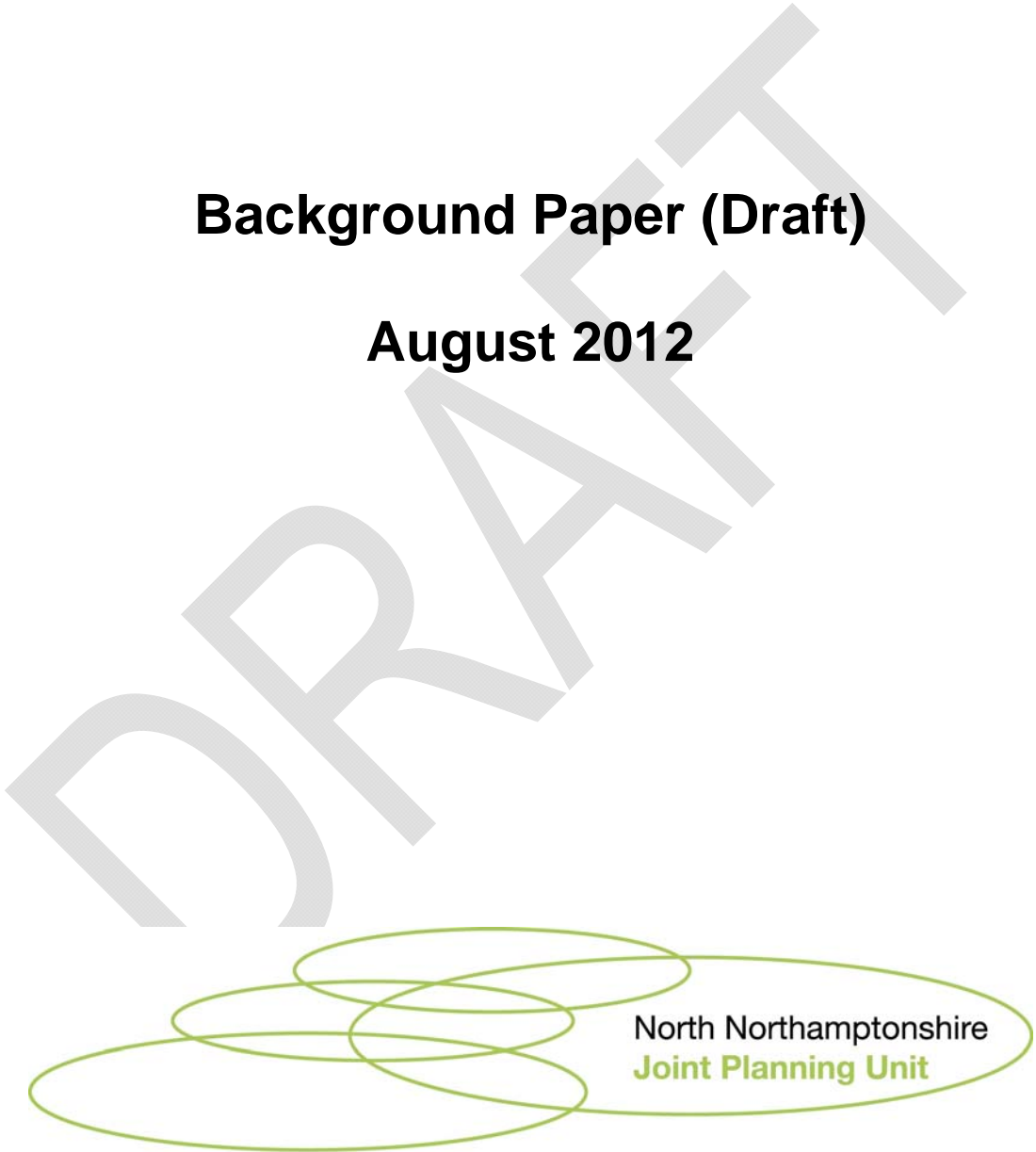


Rushden Urban Extension

Background Paper (Draft)

August 2012

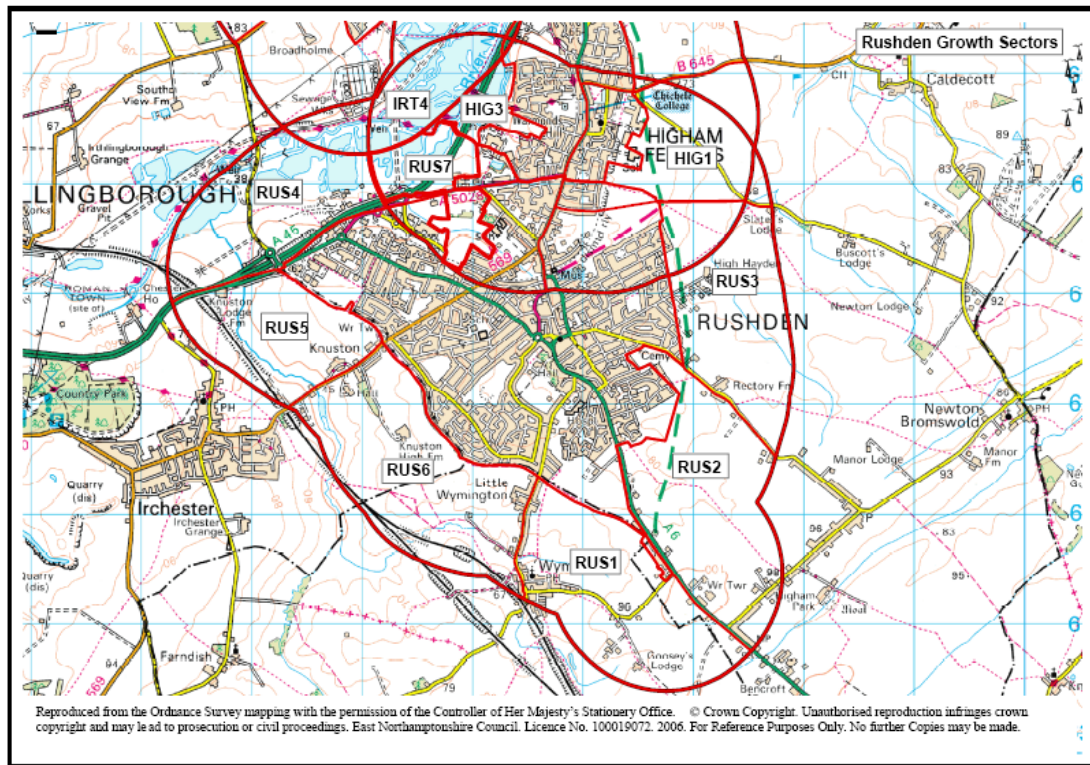


1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A key issue that has been considered through the emerging North Northamptonshire Core Strategy review is the status and spatial development strategy for Rushden. Rushden is the fourth largest town within North Northamptonshire, having a population of over 29,000. The adjacent town (Higham Ferrers) has a population of around 7,600, giving a combined population of nearly 37,000 for the Rushden/ Higham Ferrers urban area (East Northamptonshire Council – 2010 population estimate).
- 1.2 The 2005 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM)¹ did not identify Rushden as a “Growth Town”; unlike Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. Instead, Rushden was designated a “Smaller Town” (MKSM, Northamptonshire Policy 1).
- 1.3 The imminent revocation of the East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009) has provided an opportunity to comprehensively review the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire. This includes the future role and status of Rushden, a matter which has been given significant consideration throughout the emerging Core Strategy review. The current Core Strategy seeks to make North Northamptonshire more self-sufficient. It sets out a framework within which the component parts of North Northamptonshire work closely together to secure more investment and a greater range of services and facilities than they would do by working alone.
- 1.4 The early part of the Core Strategy review process involved a series of “Place Shaping” workshops (September 2009). These focused upon revisiting the vision for North Northamptonshire, including the spatial strategy for Rushden (together with the neighbouring towns; Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough). The need to accommodate growth was recognised as important for the future, in order to deliver “...high quality employment opportunities to increase the economic base of the District...regeneration and new investment...to positively shape the type of growth...so that it improves the well-being of our residents” (North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop, 23rd – 25th September 2009 – Outcomes Report, p35).
- 1.5 The workshops also emphasised a desire to secure a: “New economic role for Rushden which reinvents its small/ specialist business culture for 21st century to complement bigger businesses in sub-region” (Outcomes Report, p35). Rushden is considered to be a sustainable location for meeting these development aspirations and can benefit from the new jobs and investment that development brings, including the additional population to support existing facilities and the town centre.
- 1.6 Taking forward this earlier “visioning” work, the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee (JPC) has now endorsed the designation of Rushden as

¹ <http://www.n-compass.org/documents/Milton%20Keynes%20&%20South%20Ec%20Strategy.pdf>

a “Growth Town” (JPC Minutes, 12 January 2012²). Following this, East Northamptonshire Council’s Planning Policy Committee (18 June 2012) considered options for, and provided a direction as to, the preferred location for a new strategic urban extension at Rushden as area RUS3 (Rushden East: East of A6 Bypass, between John Clark Way and Newton Road) for mixed use; with area RUS4 (Rushden North West: North of A45, towards Ditchford Lakes/ River Nene) for employment use.



Map 1: Potential directions for growth at Rushden (source: Urban Extensions Study, August 2006)

1.7 East Northamptonshire Council’s decision was subsequently incorporated into a provisional set of policies which was endorsed for consultation by the JPC (3 July 2012). This paper will set out and explain the background to the decision to identify land to the east of the Rushden as a strategic urban extension. It covers the following matters:

- The current spatial development strategy for Rushden, as set out in the adopted North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS);
- The emerging Core Strategy review, focusing upon the evidence base and key decisions leading to the identification of Rushden East as a strategic urban extension (SUE);
- Consideration of alternative growth directions; and
- Consideration of the likely scale of development for Rushden East SUE.

- 1.8 This Background Paper has not yet been considered by the JPC or ENC. It is provided in draft to help inform discussion on the emerging JCS proposals for Rushden.

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2.0 The current spatial development strategy for Rushden (North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, adopted June 2008)

- 2.1 The current CSS/ “Core Strategy”, was adopted in June 2008. This identified Rushden as a “Smaller Town”, incorporating the “Spatial Framework” from the MKSM.
- 2.2 The adopted CSS defines the spatial development strategy for Rushden as:
- “Regeneration and modest growth...within the urban core” (paragraph 3.8);
 - “...providing secondary focal point [for development] within the urban core” (Table 1/ Policy 1);
 - “...to consolidate its position as fourth main town centre and be a focus for new employment development” (Table 1);
 - “No specific ‘growth strategy’ but town centre development encouraged” (Figure 14), whereby: “Development of an appropriate scale that enhances the retail offer of Rushden town centre will be supported” (Policy 12).
- 2.3 The CSS recognises that Rushden “will continue to accommodate significant new housing, due to the level of existing commitments within the urban area” (paragraph 3.80). Accordingly, the town is **not** identified as a location for a smaller sustainable urban extension (paragraphs 3.80/ 4.31). Instead, the current Core Strategy specifies that these will be brought forward at Desborough, Rothwell, Irthlingborough and Raunds.
- 2.4 This adopted spatial development strategy reflects the findings of the earlier East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough (August 2006)³. Urban Extension Studies were prepared for the Growth Towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough in 2005 as part of the evidence base for the current Core Strategy. East Northamptonshire Council then utilised this methodology to prepare similar urban extension studies for the six towns in the district, in 2006.
- 2.5 The 2006 Urban Extensions Study concluded that: “The built up area of Rushden is contained within the road network and the District and County boundary. It is expected that the majority of growth will be contained within the urban boundary and use predominantly brownfield land and previous greenfield permissions. Consequently there is no need to identify a direction of growth at this stage” (Section 5.0).

³ http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Urban_Extensions_Study_Report_-_Rushden_Higham_Ferrers_and_Irthlingborough.pdf

- 2.6 Overall, the current Core Strategy did not anticipate significant new development in or around Rushden, beyond the substantial level of development already allowed for through the earlier (1996) District Local Plan and windfall developments on previously developed land within the urban area (i.e. sites coming forward in accordance with CSS Policy 9).

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3.0 Emerging Core Strategy review – evidence trail

3.1 The Core Strategy review commenced in February 2009. The initial stage in the Core Strategy review process, was the statutory consultation under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 (February – March 2009). This consultation focused on the scope of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Review and matters including:

- “Reassessing the future roles and functions of the towns and villages”;
- and
- “Identifying the location and phasing of housing and employment development” (Regulation 25 Consultation document, paragraph 4.2).

3.2 The statutory “Regulation 25” consultation was followed by a series of consultation and workshop events. At each stage in the Core Strategy review process new documentation has been produced, providing a broad and comprehensive evidence base.

North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop, 23-25 September 2009

3.3 The “Place Shaping” Workshops formed the first stage in preparing the revised JCS. This workshop sought to embed a place shaping agenda into the review and understand the characteristics of settlements and local aspirations, following the statutory Regulation 25 consultation.

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop – 23 rd -25 th September 2009 – BRIEFING NOTES	NNJPU/ CABE	Sept 2009	Page 17	Should housing growth be directed to all large centres, or should one or two towns take the majority of further growth to create a major centre to balance the influence of Northampton?
http://www.nnjp.org.uk/docs/Workshop%20Briefing%20Notes.pdf				
North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop – 23 rd -25 th September 2009 – OUTCOMES REPORT	NNJPU/ CABE	Sept 2009	Page 14; Appendix 2 (p35); Appendix 6 (p55)	Rushden’s role in economic growth; small/ specialist business culture to complement bigger businesses; What can we do/ develop next?
http://www.nnjp.org.uk/docs/Outcomes%20Report.pdf				

North Northamptonshire Core Strategy Review – Small Towns Workshop, 6 February 2010

3.4 In order to define the scope and future role for the “Small Towns” (including Rushden), a stakeholder workshop event was held in Irthlingborough (February 2010). This considered the relationship between different towns, regeneration, potential for change and further work needed to define their future roles through the Core Strategy Review.

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review – Small Towns Workshop Briefing Manual	NNJPU	February 2010	Page 3; p10	Is Rushden different in needs and potential to the other ‘small’ towns? Limitations on where further development could go without making some big decisions – need to go across the district boundary, or across the A6.

<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Briefing%20Pack.pdf>

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review – RURAL & SMALL TOWNS WORKSHOPS FEEDBACK REPORT	NNJPU	April 2010	Para 3.5-3.8; para 3.20; p16 (para 6.1)	Rushden acts as the main settlement being the biggest of the small towns; largest by far and fuller consideration of its role as the fourth main centre in North Northamptonshire is essential. Actions: consider the future role of small towns/ town centre hierarchy i.e. role of Rushden as 4 th main town.
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<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rural%20Areas%20&%20Small%20Towns%20Workshop%20Report.pdf>

3.5 The Place Shaping and Small Towns Workshop events (September 2009 and February 2010 respectively) initially introduced the concept/ possibility of additional growth at Rushden. Both events considered the possibility of expanding the town across East Northamptonshire’s district boundary (i.e. into Wellingborough or Bedford Boroughs) or across the A6, thereby bringing forward the concept of allowing significant future development at Rushden.

North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop 2: OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT (16-18 March 2010)

3.6 A further round of workshops was held during March 2010. This took forward the ideas and concepts arising from the previous events, and sought to translate these into overall strategic spatial options for North Northamptonshire.

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Workshop 2: OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT – 16 th - 18 th March 2010 – BRIEFING PAPER	NNJPU/ CABE	March 2010	Page 7	Place issues: Long term growth options for Rushden and Higham Ferrers would need to cross A6 bypass and/ or administrative boundaries with Wellingborough and/ or Bedfordshire (river valley a constraint to north)
http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Briefing%20Paper%20(Read-Only).pdf				
NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT CORE STRATEGY REVIEW – Options Development Workshop 16 th -18 th March 2010 – OUTCOMES REPORT	NNJPU/ CABE	Sept 2010	Page 13; p15; p17; Appendix 4	Current strategy is still relevant but Rushden could play a bigger role; need to explore capacity/ desirability of accommodating development, particularly around Rushden; taking forward common elements where there is widespread support – enhanced role for Rushden. Separation of Rushden/ Higham from surrounding areas by road/ administrative boundaries therefore connectivity needs to be considered and whether this acts as a constraint to growth.
http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/March%20workshop%20Outcomes%20Report.pdf				
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 22 September 2010	NNJPU	Sept 2010	Para 3.4; 6 (Rec 1)	Outline options that emerged from workshop discussions based on having <i>four</i> main centres (Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden); feedback from the March 'Place Shaping' Workshop reported to JPC

<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/1814/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

- 3.7 The “Options” workshop event emphasised the general support for Rushden being given an enhanced role through the Core Strategy review. Recognition was given, however, to the development constraints affecting the town most notably the A6 acting as a strong physical boundary.
- 3.8 The outcomes of the workshop events (2009-10) and their translation into four spatial options (“Core Strategy Plus”; “Twin Poles”; “Northern Focus” and “External Links”) **all** considered Rushden as being a fourth main centre. The repeated theme has been that Rushden should have an enhanced or expanded role in the emerging Core Strategy review.

“Planning Issues in North Northamptonshire” consultation (January – March 2011)

3.9 The 2009-10 series of workshop events fed directly into the “Issues” consultation during early 2011. The “Issues” consultation paper was approved by the Joint Planning Committee on 20 January 2011 and published shortly after for consultation. As part of this consultation, the JPU ran consultation workshops in each of the towns in North Northamptonshire including sessions in Rushden and Higham Ferrers, to obtain further place specific information and feedback on local aspirations.

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
Planning Issues in North Northamptonshire – Have your say on how our places should be planned	NNJPU	Jan 2011	Page 8; page 15 (Market Towns and Role of Rushden)	Rushden acknowledged to be fourth main town. Should Rushden play a bigger role in the new Plan and how will this relate to change at Wellingborough? Should Rushden grow and, if so, in which direction?

<http://www.njpu.org.uk/docs/Issues%20Paper%20web%20version.pdf>

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review: ISSUES CONSULTATION BACKGROUND PAPER: PREVIOUS CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT	NNJPU	Feb 2011	Page 15	Areas covered, set out below, build on and reflect key policy areas that have arisen from workshops to date, e.g. market towns and Role of Rushden
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<http://www.njpu.org.uk/docs/Consultation%20and%20Engagement%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

East Northamptonshire Council – Planning Policy Committee, 28 March 2011	ENC	March 2011	Minute 450	Some local concern about extending development at Rushden east of A6 bypass where new settlement could develop separately from main town; Rushden running out of brownfield sites in town centre – sites currently allocated for employment use could be re-allocated for housing with employment uses re-located
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http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Item_1_Planning_Pol_minutes_28.3.11.pdf

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 23 June 2011	NNJPU	June 2011	Item 5, para 3.5; Appendix 1, section 5	Consideration needed as to what enhancing role of Rushden will entail re distribution of development and whether its fourth main town role needs to be reflected by directing greater level of housing development to town/ whether there is capacity. Implications will be assessed through testing spatial options/ local concern that development should not go beyond A6 at Rushden.

<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cmis5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2026/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

3.10 The “Issues” consultation (early 2011) reveals that, while there is general support for an enhanced role for Rushden, there are implications in terms of spatial planning (i.e. the need to consider possible future directions for growth). The consultation identified some concerns by East Northamptonshire Council and Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council regarding the possibility of Rushden’s expansion to the east, beyond the A6 Bypass. Any future development proposals will need to take account of these local concerns.

Developing options and the vision for the Core Strategy review (June 2011-July 2012)

3.11 The early phases of consultation repeatedly revealed a desire for an enhanced role for Rushden. Three of the four spatial options considered (“Core Strategy Plus”; “Twin Poles” and “External Links”) are all likely to require some sort of strategic development around Rushden. Following the “Issues” consultation, the NNJPU has been moving towards agreeing the Plan vision, outcomes, structure and draft policies. These have been given consideration by the various meetings of the JPC, from September 2011, through to July 2012.

3.12 During the course of 2011-12, the overall spatial options were progressively developed, by the NNJPU, into an initial set of draft policies which were reported to the JPC on 3 July 2012. Despite the earlier concerns raised through the “Issues” consultation regarding the possibility of new development to the east of the A6, this nevertheless has repeatedly been identified as one of the more appropriate locations for growth at the town:

- September 2011 – specified as a possible location for growth (JPC papers, 8 September 2011)
- November 2011 – Urban Structures Study identified land east of A6 as area of highest potential integration (JPC Appendix 3iv, 24 November 2011)

- 11 January 2012 – Outline planning permission granted for residential development of four houses (all matters reserved except access), Land adjacent to The Croft Alexandra Road Rushden (reference 11/01871/OUT)
- 12 January 2012 – JPC supported designation of Rushden as a Growth Town, with proposals for significant growth (2000 dwellings plus substantial additional employment land)
- February 2012 – Approach to East Northamptonshire Council by agent acting on behalf of principal owners of land at Knights Farm, High Hayden Farm and Rectory Farm
- June 2012 – East Northamptonshire Council's Planning Policy Committee identified Rushden East (East of A6 Bypass, between John Clark Way and Newton Road) as the preferred location for a mixed use strategic urban extension, with further employment strategic employment land within sector RUS4 (west of Skew Bridge, north of A45); see section 4.0 below
- 3 July 2012 – Draft policies reported to the JPC, including proposed designation of Rushden East as a mixed-use Sustainable Urban Extension (Policy 29)
- 10 July 2012 – Rushden Town Council endorsed development of mixed use sustainable urban extension east of A6 Bypass, including around 2500 new homes, and further provision for new employment opportunities

Document name	Author/partner	Date	Relevant page/paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 8 September 2011	NNJPU	Sept 2011	Section 3.0; Appendix 1	Spatial options – Potential further SUEs (or a larger number of smaller sites) at smaller towns, including Rushden; potential strategic employment sites at Rushden/ Higham Ferrers (land East of the A6 and at Rushden Lakes)

<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2059/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 24 November 2011	NNJPU	Nov 2011	Para 5.13; Appendix 3iv	Considered that Rushden could be recognised as Growth Town but not of same scale/ significance as Corby, Kettering and (subject to confirmation of local growth ambition) Wellingborough. USS areas of highest potential integration – south towards railway & east of A6.
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<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2067/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 12 January 2012	NNJPU	Jan 2012	Para 1.11; draft vision;	ENC suggested town could accommodate substantial growth (up to 2000 dwellings plus significant employment land). Necessary to quantify potential growth/ agree likely locations, to enable consultation with infrastructure providers/ transport modelling. Agreed vision – enhanced role for Rushden

<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2070/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee – 12 January 2012 (Minutes)	NNJPU	Jan 2012	Page 2; p3	Rushden should be either a growth town or a supporting growth town. Endorsed draft vision/ outcomes set out at Appendix 2 of the report as basis for consultation.
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<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/cm5live/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/2072/Committee/414/Default.aspx>

- 3.13 Overall, the evidence base, including the emerging Urban Structures Study, has identified the most appropriate potential locations in terms of their capacity for integration with the existing urban area. These locations include land east of the A6. In spite of this, previous concerns raised by local residents (arising from the 2011 “Issues” consultation) regarding proposals for the expansion of Rushden to the east of the A6 need to be acknowledged.
- 3.14 The evidence base which has been developed through the Core Strategy review process supports the potential for development of a new strategic urban extension at Rushden, potentially to the east of the A6. Ongoing dialogue is being undertaken with the landowners and site promoters.

4.0 Considering alternative growth directions

- 4.1 A critical element in the preparation of a “sound” Core Strategy review is that the plan needs to be “Justified”; i.e. it “*should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence*” (NPPF, paragraph 182). This paper represents a means by which the potential alternative locations for development at Rushden may be assessed.
- 4.2 Alternative locations for the development of a strategic urban extension at Rushden were considered by East Northamptonshire Council’s Planning Policy Committee on 18 June 2012. A total of 10 possible directions of growth for the Rushden/ Higham Ferrers urban area were considered (7 for Rushden and 3 for Higham Ferrers; see Table 1 below). Of these, 5 potential growth sectors were considered to be “reasonable alternative” locations for development, and these were considered by the Planning Policy Committee (Map 1, p3 above):
- Rushden East – East of A6 Bypass, between John Clark Way and Newton Road (RUS3);
 - Rushden West – Between A45 and Irchester Road/ Knuston (B569), as far as Midland Main Line Railway (RUS5);
 - Rushden South West – Between Irchester Road/ Knuston (B569) and Wymington, as far as Midland Main Line Railway (RUS6);
 - Higham Ferrers South East – Between John Clark Way (Rushden) and Chelveston Road (B645) (HIG1);
 - Higham Ferrers North East – Between Chelveston Road (B645) and A45 (HIG2).

Table 1: Rushden/ Higham Ferrers urban area: alternative directions of growth considered

UES Reference	Direction	Location	Site reference, if applicable (SHLAA/ SELA)	Key positive attribute(s)	Key negative attribute(s)	Summary/ overview	Discount (Y/N)
RUS1	Rushden South	Between Wymington and south of Bedford Road (A6)	N/a	Good connectivity to Rushden town centre via Wymington Road (emerging USS)	Development would lead to coalescence with Wymington. Contrary to adopted Bedford Borough Core Strategy	Expansion to south would entail full/ fundamental review of Bedford Borough Core Strategy. This would need to run concurrently with the NNCS Review and would be likely to lead to major delays in the process.	Y
RUS2	Rushden South East	East of A6 Bypass, between Bedford Road and Newton Road, towards Avenue Road "ribbon" development	SHLAA 2164 (2012); SELA E16 (2009)	Most land in single ownership/ actively promoted. Represents logical extension to urban area, linking to Avenue Road ribbon development/ "settlement".	Extremely poor connectivity to town	Development would effectively form new settlement, as connectivity to Rushden is very poor	Y

UES Reference	Direction	Location	Site reference, if applicable (SHLAA/ SELA)	Key positive attribute(s)	Key negative attribute(s)	Summary/ overview	Discount (Y/N)
RUS3	Rushden East	East of A6 Bypass, between John Clark Way and Newton Road	N/a	Good connectivity to Rushden town centre: Newton Road/ Hayden Road/ John Clark Way (emerging USS). Small scale development in this location already permitted: note recent consent for 4 No dwellings, Land adj The Croft, Alexandra Road (11/01871/OUT).	Little active promotion of land for development, though recent approach by Bletsoe on behalf of Knights Farm landowner	Good connectivity/ direct links to town centre; some recent moves to bring site forward	N
RUS4	Rushden North West	North of A45, towards Ditchford Lakes/ River Nene	SELA E4 (2009)	Contains Rushden Lakes/ Skew Bridge - major brownfield development opportunity. Principle of development for leisure and offices established since 2001/2.	Beyond Rushden Lakes/ Skew Bridge entire area is active floodplain/ designated SPA-Ramsar site/ SSSIs	Little developable land, with exception of Rushden Lakes/ Skew Bridge	Y
RUS5	Rushden West	Between A45 and Irchester Road/ Knuston (B569), as far as Midland Main Line Railway	SHLAA 1134 (2012); SELA W17 (2009)	Major development opportunity - potential rail access/ links to A45. Direct link to Rushden town centre (Irchester Road).	Significant development constraints, e.g. Podington Brook (flood risk), Knuston Hall (listed buildings)	Self contained strategic development opportunity with land south of Irchester Road (RUS6). Some constraints, though these could be overcome/ mitigated. Could enable development of new rail station to serve Rushden.	N

UES Reference	Direction	Location	Site reference, if applicable (SHLAA/ SELA)	Key positive attribute(s)	Key negative attribute(s)	Summary/ overview	Discount (Y/N)
RUS6	Rushden South West	Between Irchester Road/ Knuston (B569) and Wymington, as far as Midland Main Line Railway	SHLAA 1134 (2012); SELA W17 (2009)	Major development opportunity - potential rail access. Direct link to Rushden town centre (Irchester Road).	Significant development constraints, e.g. Podington Brook (flood risk). Potential for coalescence with Wymington; expansion into Bedford Borough contrary to their adopted Core Strategy.	Self contained strategic development opportunity with land north of Irchester Road (RUS5). Some constraints, though these could be overcome/mitigated. Could enable development of new rail station to serve Rushden.	N
RUS7	Rushden North	Nene Valley Farm and land east of Crown Way/ Brindley Close	SHLAA 989 (2012); SELA E7 (2009)	Well situated in relation to Rushden/ Higham Ferrers; within A45	Site currently designated green infrastructure (adopted CS Policy 5/ EN Local Plan Policy EN20). Also, flood risk affecting much of land south of Northampton Road.	Some developable land between A45/ urban area. However, would entail loss of key green infrastructure link between urban area/ River Nene and need to fundamentally review green infrastructure policies.	Y
HIG1	Higham Ferrers South East	Between John Clark Way (Rushden) and Chelveston Road (B645)	SHLAA 1069 (2012)	No obvious constraints; single landowner (Duchy). Opportunity (with land adjacent to Ferrers School) for larger scale development east of Higham Ferrers. Connectivity (via John Clark Way) with Rushden.	Strategic concerns re extensions to Higham Ferrers as opposed to Rushden	No obvious development constraints. Key development opportunity east of Higham Ferrers.	N

UES Reference	Direction	Location	Site reference, if applicable (SHLAA/ SELA)	Key positive attribute(s)	Key negative attribute(s)	Summary/ overview	Discount (Y/N)
HIG2	Higham Ferrers North East	Between Chelveston Road (B645) and A45	SHLAA 1068 (2012)	Single landowner (Duchy). Good connectivity with Higham Ferrers (Kimbolton Road/ Wykeham Road/ Stanwick Road).	Some constraints (e.g. Chelveston Brook - flood risk). Strategic concerns re extensions to Higham Ferrers as opposed to Rushden	Good connectivity with Higham Ferrers. Some strategic concerns, however re further major development at Higham Ferrers, as opposed to Rushden.	N
HIG3	Higham Ferrers West	Between RPC Containers (A45) and Patenall Way (King's Meadow)	SHLAA 1012 (2012)	Well situated in relation to Rushden/ Higham Ferrers; within A45	No developable land beyond former Wharf Road Allotments (already committed for development/ included in current land supply), as the remainder of this area has significant flood risk	Only developable land within area already committed for development/ included within current land supply	Y

- 4.3 The Planning Policy Committee also considered an update to the 2006 Urban Extensions Study for Rushden. While the majority of the document remains relevant, critically the 2006 Study did not consider sectors RUS5 (South West) and RUS6 (West), as both lie wholly outside the district. Accordingly, the update document assessed these potential directions for growth in addition to those within East Northamptonshire itself.

Document name	Author/ partner	Date	Relevant page/ paragraph reference	Theme/ Topic (summary)
East Northamptonshire Council Planning Policy Committee – 18 June 2012	ENC	June 2012	Section 7.0; para 9.2(3); Appendix 1; Appendix 3	Given proposals to designate Rushden as Growth Town through the emerging Core Strategy Review, where would be best location for future strategic urban extension?

http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Item_6_-_Core_Strategy_strategic_sites_rpt.pdf

http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Item_1_Planning_Policy_18.6.12_1_.pdf

East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden update	ENC/ NNJPU	June 2012		Detailed assessment in respect of sectors RUS5 (South West) and RUS6 (West)
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<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rushden%20UES%20update%20FINAL.pdf>

- 4.4 The 2012 Urban Extensions Study (Rushden update), together with other papers considered by the Planning Policy Committee on 18 June 2012, provide a comprehensive assessment for alternative directions of growth at Rushden. The Urban Extensions Study update and summary assessment (Table 1, above) were considered by the Committee, who considered the following issues:

- Coalescence of Higham Ferrers and Rushden – the need to focus future growth on Rushden alone, thereby ruling out HIG1 or HIG2 as potential directions for growth;
- Expansion west, into Wellingborough Borough – RUS5 and RUS6 fall wholly outside East Northamptonshire district; the Council are keen to see future growth specifically at Rushden, rather than Irchester/ Wellingborough.

- 4.5 Recent evidence clearly demonstrates the emergence of opinion, notably from East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council, in favour of Rushden East (RUS3) as the preferred location for growth and the principles any development proposals should meet. A letter from Rushden Town Council (**Appendix 1**, 23 July 2012) endorses East Northamptonshire Council's earlier decision to identify Rushden East as the preferred location for a strategic urban extension.

5.0 Likely scale of development for Rushden East urban extension

- 5.1 Any new sustainable urban extension at Rushden will need to be of a proportionate scale to the existing town. In considering the extent of any future growth at the town, the report to the Joint Planning Committee on 24 November 2011 considering the role of Rushden should be noted: *“there is also a clear distinction between Rushden and the current three Growth Towns in terms of its current size - the Rushden-Higham Ferrers population is around 37,000 compared to around 50,000 – 55,000 at the Growth Towns. In terms of its current role, Rushden attracts only half as much comparison retail expenditure as Wellingborough and Corby and less than a third of Kettering’s; it is also less significant as an employment location (the Four Towns area has only around half as many jobs as the Growth Towns). Finally, although there appears to be some support for growth in employment and housing in the town, the scale of this would be modest compared to the plans at the Growth Towns and has yet to be tested with infrastructure providers”* (JPC Item 4, 24 November 2011).
- 5.2 This raises a question as to what represents an appropriate quantum of development for Rushden over the next 20 years (i.e. to 2031). There has been a significant level of development at Rushden over the past 15-20 years, including implementation of substantial land allocations from the 1996 District Local Plan, predominantly to the south of the town. For the decade 1 April 2001 – 31 March 2011, 1620 dwellings were completed. The proposed quantum of development is anticipated to reflect this rate of development. The table below defines a model by which the quantum of development to the east of Rushden may be established.

Table 2					
RUSHDEN: Forecast quantum of development	01/04/2001 - 31/03/2011		01/04/2011 - 31/03/2021	01/04/2021 - 31/03/2031	01/04/2011 - 31/03/2031
	Actual	Approx (to nearest 50)	10 year estimate	10 year estimate	20 year estimate
Completions to date	1621	1600			
Outstanding planning permissions (as at 31/03/2011)	498	500			
Under construction (as at 31/03/2011)	51	50			
Total outstanding planning permissions + units under construction	549	550			
Estimated delivery within urban area (SHLAA Category 1 sites, Roger Tym & Partners, February 2009)	562	550	550	550	1100
Rushden urban extension (completions minus estimated delivery within urban area)	1059	1050	500	1600	2100
Estimated completions (2011-31)			1050	2150	3200

- 5.3 If a similar rate of housing development to that of the previous decade is taken to be an appropriate level of development for Rushden, this would equate to approximately 3200 dwellings over 20 years (Table 2, above). Of course, a significant element of this figure would be met through windfall developments and the allocation of smaller scale (i.e. non-strategic) development sites within the urban area.
- 5.4 Roger Tym & Partners' 2009 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) provides a basis by which a quantum of deliverable land within the urban area may be established. Those sites identified as most likely to come forward (i.e. SHLAA Category 1 sites) could deliver an estimated yield of 562. This figure closely reflects that for outstanding planning permissions (not yet started) and units currently under construction (549 dwellings).
- 5.5 Comparing both figures, it is estimated that approximately 1100 dwellings could be delivered on sites within the urban area over the next 20 years. If this figure (1100) is subtracted from an overall figure of 3200 dwellings for the period 2011-31, this gives a balance of **2100 dwellings** which it is anticipated could be brought forward at Rushden East. This closely relates to the aspirational figures (2000-2500 dwellings) specified by East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council (**Appendix 1**).
- 5.6 The implications of this scale of development for the infrastructure of the town will be assessed with service providers as the JCS progresses. This will include consideration of the issues identified by the Town Council (see Appendix 1). Initial feedback from key infrastructure providers, i.e. the County Council, Northamptonshire Police and the NHS, has identified a need for

significant new investment in primary and secondary education, and local community facilities.

- 5.7 Based upon an assumption that an urban extension would include 2500 new dwellings, this would require the development of two new primary schools at Rushden, together with significant expansion at one or both of the two secondary schools (The Ferrers Specialist Arts College and Rushden Community College). The County Council and Northamptonshire Police also highlight an aspiration to develop a “community hub” in the town centre, replacing the existing library and providing accommodation for additional police and community officers. The NHS has identified a need for additional revenue funding to employ further GPs, although there is accommodation available at existing surgeries.

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6.0 Overview and conclusions

- 6.1 There exists a significant weight of evidence which has been gathered over the previous 3 years, through the initial consultation stages for the Core Strategy review. This paper sets out the sources for this emerging evidence base, identifying the key references in published documentation, in order to provide a clear audit trail by which Rushden East has come forward as the preferred direction of growth for the town.
- 6.2 In particular, documents considered by East Northamptonshire Council's Planning Policy Committee on 18 June 2012 have included an assessment of alternative directions of growth. The Committee unequivocally endorsed Rushden East as the preferred location for development. It is also critical to identify a suitable scale of development. Taking into account past completion rates, minus the estimated development capacity of likely sites within the urban area (i.e. Category 1 sites from the 2009 SHLAA), a net figure of **2100 dwellings** has been identified as an appropriate scale of development for the Rushden East urban extension. However, it is emphasised that this does **not** preclude a larger quantum of development. It should also be noted that any urban extension would also include a significant quantity of employment land, green infrastructure, community infrastructure (e.g. new primary school) and neighbourhood centre/ local shops.
- 6.3 The role of Rushden and the subsequent scale of development and locations for delivering this will be tested as the JCS is progressed. It is considered that this paper, with links to associated documentation, provides a useful resource in defining the evidence base for the role of Rushden and the potential for a Sustainable Urban Extension at Rushden East. It remains likely that detailed development proposals would be set out in the emerging Four Towns Plan (site specific development plan document).

APPENDIX 1

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RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

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Dear Andrew

Background

The amount and distribution of development in North Northamptonshire will be set out in the emerging *Joint Core Strategy*, with Rushden being identified in that document as a *Growth Town*. We accept that growth at the town must accord with the quantum identified in the Core Strategy, albeit site-specific allocations and development principles will be set out in the *Four Towns Plan* separately prepared by East Northamptonshire Council. The homes and jobs targets for the town will be specified in the Core Strategy.

Rushden Town Council is keen to ensure that it influences the growth of the town in the forthcoming plan period. The Town Council estimates that Rushden has lost in excess of 6,000 jobs in the last twenty five years with the gradual demise of the shoe and allied industries within the town. To this end, and following our meeting in March, we have been giving careful consideration to the potential directions of growth at Rushden. You will appreciate that, at this point in time, the quantum of housing and employment growth at Rushden in the forthcoming plan period remains uncertain. We have, therefore, assumed growth in the order of 2500 new homes, with provision for additional employment opportunities. To redress the current imbalance of employment within the area and the proposed growth, Rushden would require an additional 10,000 jobs. .

Directions of growth

The Town Council has identified two guiding principles which we expect the Core Strategy to facilitate:

1. A substantial Green Corridor should remain to the south-west of the town, separating Rushden from Irchester and Wymington. This is important in order to prevent settlement coalescence and to ensure that Rushden retains its identity and sense of place. Should development to the south-west be deemed necessary and appropriate, then careful consideration will need to be given to landscape, drainage, ecology and other constraints to avoid any harm by way of coalescence.
2. Growth should occur in a coordinated manner to the east of the A6, between the roundabouts at the junction with Newton Road and the roundabout at the junction with John Clarke Way, in the form of a mixed-use sustainable urban extension accommodating the majority of the town's new homes and jobs in the forthcoming plan period
3. A further employment area north of the A45 and Ski Club Roundabout to Ditchford Lane and bounded by the Nene Valley SSI utilising the already existing good road network, should also be brought forward.

Infrastructure investigations & design principles

Directing substantial development to the east of Rushden will have a number of potential effects which we expect to be investigated and resolved at the earliest stages of the forward planning process. In particular:

Deliverability

- (i) Matters of land ownership and development viability must be assessed at an early stage to confirm that a major development in this location can be delivered and phased in an acceptable manner;
- (ii) Site suitability in terms of high-level constraints (including heritage, ecology, drainage, utilities and so forth) must be capable of resolution or mitigation;
- (iii) The nature, quantum, commercial viability and market attractiveness of land allocated for employment must be based on robust evidence in order to ensure timely delivery, to ensure growth to redress the employment imbalance highlighted above.

Mix of uses & land budgeting

- (iv) The definition of an appropriate mix of uses must be carefully considered against the JPU's evidence base. In particular, in addition to new homes of the order currently being assumed, the Town Council would expect to see:
 - a. significant additional employment opportunities;
 - b. supporting new school provision at both primary and secondary levels;
 - c. increases in primary healthcare capacity, whether as an extension to the Harborough Way Medical Centre or additional on-site surgery provision;
 - d. significant recreational open space facilities, including the opportunity to relocate some of the current sports and leisure facilities.
 - e. cemetery provision
- (v) The new eastern settlement edge should be subject to a landscape and visual impact assessment, with associated landscape mitigation measures to ensure an appropriate urban-rural transition;

- (vi) A demographic and needs assessment should be made to inform the extent of any special needs accommodation necessary on the site (elderly persons, community care, and so forth)

Transport & movement

- (vii) The effect on north/south movements along the A6 must be investigated;
- (viii) A clear strategy must be set out to prevent the A6 from being a barrier to movement and integration between the town and its urban extension;
- (ix) Accessibility to the town centre from the east must be appropriately provided for, both for motorists and by non-car based modes;
- (x) The appropriateness, viability and deliverability of a new A6 eastern relief road should be investigated as part of a holistic accessibility solution

Special considerations

A solution to queuing at the A6/A45 Chowns Mill roundabout will need to be agreed, and implemented, prior to the first occupation of any part of the site.

The Town Council considers that, in order to foster integration and to provide wider sustainability benefits, new convenience retail provision should be located on existing Council owned land, rather than within the urban extension. This land should therefore be included in any site-specific allocation or masterplanning document.

Summary

We have carefully considered the above principles against the *National Planning Policy Framework* and are confident that they comply with national policy and constitute sustainable development. Accordingly, we invite the JPU to proceed with the evidence gathering and investigations we have identified as being necessary. We intend to remain positively engaged in the process moving forward, and would therefore appreciate a further update meeting with you prior to the informal public consultation on the draft JCS next month.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne Prodger
Town Clerk