
SECTION 4 - HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The population of the District increased from 51,613 to 61,062 between 1961-1981. By 1991 the population had risen to 67,686 indicating a virtual doubling in the rate of increase over the ten year period. By 1995, the population was estimated to have increased to 70,492.
- 4.2 The County Council's population projection for the period 1988 to 2006, suggested a slowing down in the rate of increase for the District, with a total population of 70,800 anticipated by the year 2006. The total population increase between 1988 and 2006, is expected to be 5,000. It is estimated that approximately 60% of this is attributable to natural increase, the remaining 40% arising from net inward migration.
- 4.3 All population forecasts are based on estimates of likely future trends. The District Council has suggested to the County Council that the Structure Plan forecast seems to have been based on an under assessment of the likely size of the future total population increase. Much depends, however, upon the degree to which the declining occupancy rate of the existing housing stock will contribute to the increase in housing requirement, whilst not at the same time increasing the total population.
- 4.4 Of all the land using activities which have to be provided for in any local plan, housing development has the greatest land requirement. The Local Plan has to ensure, therefore, that the locations chosen for new housing development satisfy a variety of different needs, whilst at the same time taking into account a whole series of environmental constraints.
- 4.5 Housing requirements vary from those of the existing population seeking new types of housing to meet their changing needs (which includes new households for single persons and young married couples, special forms of housing for elderly people) to the needs of newcomers (such as new workers in local employment and commuters).
- 4.6 The response to these differing needs should be the provision of a range of sites in a variety of locations, based on different types of housing by virtue of tenure, type of accommodation and price. Some groups of society have special needs e.g. disabled and elderly people. In addition, the local housing market may operate in an "economic climate" which has the effect of excluding the formation of new households by some of the local people, in the local area.
- 4.7 A local plan can only be directly concerned with making provision of land for a variety of purposes. Bringing to fruition a full range of housing to match local needs and demands, depends upon a series of development interests and agencies working together. The District Council performs the role of an "enabler" of development. It does this by using the expertise and skill of its Councillors and Officers, to play an active part in all aspects of housing provision. The role carried out extends far beyond the allocation of land for housing development purposes.

STRUCTURE PLAN POLICIES

- 4.8 The County Structure Plan includes residential development policies and indicates in broad terms, the scale of provision which is to be made for both the County as a whole and in each District. Provision for housing is made on the basis of need, associated with a projected level of population, together with an allowance for vacancies, replacement housing units and development constraints. It is considered that the pressures from net inward migration will reduce during the 1990's.
- 4.9 In the County Structure Plan for the period 1988-2006, there is a requirement for about 62,400 dwellings for the County as a whole, of which around 7450 will need to be provided within the District.
- 4.10 The development strategy contained within the County Structure Plan is one of urban growth and rural restraint. This is to be provided for by directing the majority of residential development to the towns. The reason for this approach is to capitalise on the availability of existing and committed infrastructure and investment. This strategy ensures the conservation of the countryside and rural settlements and the preservation of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

- 4.11 A summary of the housing provisions in the Approved County Structure Plan is listed below:
- (i) The requirement for housing in the County as a whole is 62,400 dwellings. The requirement for East Northamptonshire is 7450 dwellings.
 - (ii) A policy relating to new settlements is included to clarify the contribution such settlements might make towards meeting housing needs.
 - (iii) The requirement of 7450 dwellings in East Northamptonshire is to be distributed between urban and rural areas of the District. 6250 dwellings to be provided in the towns of Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Thrapston. The remaining 1200 dwellings to be provided in the rural areas.
 - (iv) The policy which distributes the 6250 dwellings among the individual towns of Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Thrapston has been deleted.

RECENT TRENDS

- 4.12 The size of the future population of the District will depend upon the rates of births, deaths and migration (people moving into or leaving the District).
- 4.13 Life expectancy is anticipated to continue rising and this will result in a "natural increase" in population.
- 4.14 Migration levels are difficult to predict because they depend upon many factors such as, availability and cost of housing, work opportunities, accessibility to regional centres, social and family links and broader financial considerations.
- 4.15 As well as an increasing population, the growth of which has accelerated over the last few years, there has also been a change in household size. The trend has been towards smaller households as a result of large numbers of young people setting up home earlier, higher divorce rates and the survival of elderly people over longer time periods.

ISSUES

- 4.16 A study has been carried out recently by both the University of Leicester and Nene College Northampton. This has examined the dispersal of population/employment from developed, urban and metropolitan areas, to medium small sized settlements and even to peripheral rural areas. This process has been termed "Counter-urbanisation". The District has provided the basis for a case study of this trend.
- 4.17 The Case Study has concluded that the counter-urbanisation process has deepened over the past 20 years. In the early 1970's, the District was characterised by an influx of young middle-class households into the larger more accessible villages. The newcomers originated from nearby towns but continued to work in these centres, even after moving to live in the villages.
- 4.18 By the late 1980's not only had this group become enlarged, but it was also being diversified by an influx of households of mature middle aged and elderly migrants. Many had originated from more distant locations, particularly the south-east. There was also evidence of people moving to the District from similar rural areas elsewhere. In areas like East Northamptonshire there now appears to be a growing number of households who shift around, what perhaps could be called the "urbanised countryside". This contrasts with the more usual patterns of urban to rural or rural to urban migrations, which have been identified over long periods.
- 4.19 Despite this in-migration of new households, the traditional rural pattern of selective out-migration of the young is still continuing. This suggests that the process of growth and change in the rural population (giving rise to the re-composition of rural communities) is a highly complex phenomenon. It also helps to make it clear, that the lack of affordable homes for local people cannot be solved by normal market forces alone.
- 4.20 The demand for low cost housing to meet local needs continues to grow. Many people have an income which is insufficient to support a mortgage, as the cost of houses influenced by the trends outlined above, prices them out of the market.

- 4.21 The design, density and character of new development is a major cause for concern. High land costs and the demands of the growing number of households, is resulting in the "cramming in" of much new development and reductions in residential amenity.
- 4.22 In some villages the design of housing schemes bears little relationship to the character of the settlement and would be more in keeping with the suburbs of urban areas.

SETTLEMENT POLICY ISSUES

- 4.23 The District Council for many years consistently objected to the County Council's insistence upon classifying settlements on the basis of a hierarchy, particularly where this related to the rural area of the District.
- 4.24 The hierarchical approach to settlement classification was considered inappropriate. This view was put forward by the District Council to the Structure Plan Examination in Public to Alteration No. 1, held in Autumn 1990.
- 4.25 In approving Alteration No. 1 of the Structure Plan, the Secretary of State took these views into account and removed the list of villages.
- 4.26 The distribution of the housing allocations among individual settlements in this Local Plan takes into account the needs, potential and characteristics of each settlement.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 4.27 The District Council's housing aims are set out in the Housing Strategy Statement. This is submitted to the Department of the Environment each year, as part of Housing Investment Programme submission. The housing strategy for the period 1995/96 can be summarised as follows: " to encourage the attraction of the maximum resources possible, from as many sources as possible, to both encourage new development and maintain and improve the quality of existing dwellings. Addressing housing need within the District, and ensuring the enrichment of peoples day to day lives."
- 4.28 The housing objectives of this Plan are to:
- (i) identify an adequate supply of housing land which will accommodate a wide range of house types and sizes in suitable locations to meet the District's housing needs;
 - (ii) provide scope to meet specialised housing demands and local needs arising from all the age groupings and income levels of the local population;
 - (iii) give priority to releasing land for housing development in the larger towns and those villages with a good service base. This will be achieved within the overall urban area/rural area housing requirement figures, of the County Structure Plan;
 - (iv) ensure that development on sites allocated in the Plan takes place at a satisfactory and systematic rate;
 - (v) ensure that development of land allocated for residential development and the associated increase in population, does not outstrip the increase in new jobs provided locally;
 - (vi) prevent sporadic and haphazard development in the areas of rural restraint and the open countryside;
 - (vii) ensure a high standard of layout and design in new development schemes; and
 - (viii) identify and protect potential long-term development areas for consideration beyond the Plan period.

HOUSING POLICIES AND PROPOSALS**Housing Land Allocations****POLICY H1**

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR UP TO 8075 DWELLINGS BETWEEN 1988-2006. OF THIS TOTAL 6875 DWELLINGS WILL BE LOCATED IN THE URBAN AREAS OF HIGHAM FERRERS, RUSHDEN, IRTHLINGBOROUGH, OUNDLE, RAUNDS AND THRAPSTON. THE REMAINING 1200 DWELLINGS WILL BE IN THE RURAL AREA

- 4.29 The table below indicates how the provision will be made. Since 1988 there have been a number of completions of new dwellings which count against the overall Structure Plan figure. In addition, there are also sites where planning permission has been granted and development has not yet commenced. Also there are sites which have been identified in earlier local plans, but which have not yet been the subject of planning applications. The new allocations made in this Plan represent the extra land needed to meet the Structure Plan housing requirement over and above the contributions made by completions, existing planning permissions and land identified in earlier local plans.

HOUSING UNITS FOR EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 1988-2006

Settlement	Completions 1988 - 95	Committed Units mid 95	Allocations not subject to phasing	Total	Allocations subject to phasing
Higham Ferrers	178	678	100	956	0
Irthlingborough	265	495	50	810	100
Oundle	244	121	150	515	0
Raunds	344	261	0	605	0
Rushden	1049	729	800	2578	230
Thrapston	330	615	210	1155	300
Urban Area	2410	2899	1310	6619	630
Rural Area	527	456	280	1263	0
District Total	2937	3355	1590	7882	630

THE ABOVE TABLE HAS A BASE DATE OF 1995 TO REFLECT THE RESULTS OF THE "HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY STUDY, 1995".

FOOTNOTE. The above table and this footnote need to be considered jointly with policy H2, policy H3, and the footnote to the wording of policy H2. As at 1995, the total number of dwellings completed, committed and provided for in allocations which are not subject to phasing, totals 7882. Therefore, other things being equal, 30% of the dwellings identified as allocations which are subject to phasing, could come forward at any time between now and the end of the Plan period. It is unlikely that the remaining 70% of dwellings identified as allocations subject to phasing, will come forward before 2006, unless future annual housing land availability studies are able to demonstrate a decline in the total of completed and committed dwellings in comparison with the 1995 figures. The latter could occur if lapses of planning permissions were to increase in the future.

Although the table reveals that total housing provision in the rural area exceeds "1200 dwellings" by 5.25%, the extra number of dwellings is still considered to be in general conformity with the County Structure Plan. In addition, owing to likelihood of lapses of some planning permissions, it is not anticipated that in excess of 1200 dwellings will actually be completed in the rural area of the District, during the Plan period.

*Housing in Urban Areas***POLICY H2**

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LAND IN THE TOWNS AS FOLLOWS:

TOWN	MAIN SITES	ESTIMATED DWELLINGS
HIGHAM FERRERS	1. WHARF ROAD	100
IRTHLINGBOROUGH	2. ADDINGTON ROAD	50
	3. FINEDON ROAD	100
OUNDLE	4. GLAPTHORN ROAD	150
RUSHDEN	5. NEWTON ROAD	100
	6. BARRINGTON ROAD	330
	7. BALMORAL AVENUE	280
	8. BEDFORD ROAD	320
THRAPSTON	9. HUNTINGDON ROAD	250
	10. MIDLAND ROAD	40
	11. LAZY ACRE	170
	12. BRIDGE STREET SOUTH	50

FOOTNOTE: In the period 1988-1995 the residential development situation in East Northamptonshire was somewhat unusual. Housing completions were of a high level, notwithstanding the recession. In addition, housing land supply and commitments were in excess of Structure Plan requirements and in particular there were proposals in the Deposit Plan for substantial land releases in the larger towns and villages of the District. This led to a Statement of Non Conformity and subsequent objection from the County Council which was upheld by the Local Plan Inquiry Inspector. A continuation of the completion rate achieved in recent years, coupled with an anticipated increase in development pressures following the completion of the A14, could lead to a rapid take up of existing commitments and allocated sites, thereby leading to pressure for the release of additional land in the latter part of the Plan period. Such pressure, if met, would distort the county-wide strategy of the Structure Plan and even, if the scale of over commitment were substantial, the regional guidelines set out in the Government's Planning Guidance Note No.8 "Regional Planning Guidance for the East Midlands Region". In these circumstances phasing the release of allocated sites is preferable to an arbitrary or incremental approach.

Policy H3 now spells out the circumstances in which phasing may be required. These are as follows:

- (i) If housing land supply and development rates exceed expectations, as has occurred in the recent past;*
- (ii) If access/infrastructure deficiencies or site assembly difficulties, prevent the early release of sites;*
- (iii) Where housing development is not matched by a take up of employment land allocations leading to an increase in out-commuting, contrary to the objectives in the Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note No.13 on "Transport".*

As one or more of the above circumstances relate to the numbered sites 3, 5, 7 (5.2 hectares of the total area only), 9 and 12 above, they will be the subject of phasing under policy H3. Planning permission for development of these sites will only be granted during the plan period, if it can be clearly demonstrated that this will not result in the total number of dwellings specified in Policy H1 being exceeded.

- 4.30 Most new housing development in the towns will take place on green field sites. This is because there is insufficient capacity to meet all the housing needs by utilising redevelopment opportunities, re-using land which is currently in other uses, or development of infill plots.

- 4.31 Planning permission for residential development is likely to be granted provided the proposals comply with all the other policies of this Plan. Some of the planning permissions will be for housing which has not been identified in advance by the District Council, in this Plan. Such sites are known as "windfall sites". They can range from small infill sized plots to residential estates. They may occur on land currently in non-residential use. (Also see policies H5, H7, H8 and H9). It is not possible to predict the level of windfall sites which will materialise and is not intended to make any allowances for them, in meeting the Structure Plan housing requirement for the District. They will, however, be closely monitored to ensure that they do not result in the creation of a significant housing over commitment in the Plan period. If excess housing development is found to be taking place, phasing may be used to regulate the position. If windfall sites cannot be satisfactorily phased the cumulative effect of these and their impact on the overall housing strategy will be material factors in the consideration of planning applications on such sites. (Also see policy H3).

Housing Land Supply

POLICY H3

THE RELEASE OF HOUSING LAND WILL BE PHASED IN THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES, NAMELY:

- (I) IF HOUSING LAND SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT RATES EXCEED EXPECTATIONS IN TERMS OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO 8075 DWELLINGS IN THE PERIOD 1988-2006;**
- (II) IF ACCESS/INFRASTRUCTURE AND SITE ASSEMBLY DIFFICULTIES PREVENT THE EARLY RELEASE OF SITES;**
- (III) IF THE RATE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN A PARTICULAR SETTLEMENT OR IN THE DISTRICT AS A WHOLE IS NOT MATCHED BY A SUFFICIENT TAKE UP OF LAND ALLOCATED FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES, THEREBY LEADING TO AN UNACCEPTABLE INCREASE IN OUT-COMMUTING**

- 4.32 Although recent growth pressures have slowed over the last two years as the economy of the nation has become depressed, economic trends tend to occur in cycles. This plan covers the period up to 2006 and it is likely that economic fortunes will change before then, once the economy recovers. This, together with the development pressures that are likely to result from the completion of the A14 (A1-M1 link), could lead to all of the land earmarked for development being used up before 2006.
- 4.33 The need to provide infrastructure and other services in association with new development is referred to in the Settlement Strategy Statements. These requirements will ensure a degree of informal phasing without the need to implement specific policies. However, it may be necessary to introduce formal phasing controls. These would be needed for example, if development on identified sites proceeds quickly, or a large number of "windfall sites" come forward.
- 4.34 Furthermore, the general strategy of balancing population growth with the supply of new jobs may also give rise to the need to consider whether phasing should be introduced to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan.
- 4.35 If a reasonable balance is not achieved between the growth of the local population and the creation of new jobs, the result will either be an increase in commuting or the creation of excessive development pressures. The former would occur if population increased at a rate faster than local jobs were being created. If local jobs were created at a rate faster than the growth in the local population, the latter process is likely to occur.
- 4.36 This policy gives scope to bring forward proposals to phase the release of land for housing should development trends indicate the desirability of doing this.
- 4.37 The situation will be monitored closely and steps will be taken to introduce policies to phase the release of housing land within particular parts of the District if it is felt that local trends warrant taking action of this kind. The take-up of housing land will continue to be monitored on an annual basis by the District Council.

- 4.38 *The need for housing land will be kept under review, so as to ensure that sufficient land is always available for development, in accordance with the policies of the most up to date Structure Plan and in order to maintain a five year supply of land.* It is Government policy that local planning authorities should take steps to ensure that land allocated for development in plans, is actually available for development. At all times there should be a five year supply of building land available.
- 4.39 The housing proposals of this Plan provide for planned development of additional housing in the District, which is consistent with the County Development Strategy of urban concentration and rural restraint.
- 4.40 Maintaining a five year supply of land will help to ensure that housing development is not permitted on appeal. This should reduce the number of proposals which have not been assessed on the basis of the site selection criteria, utilised during the preparation of this Plan.

POLICY H4

ON RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES OF MORE THAN 10 UNITS, A VARIETY OF DWELLING TYPES AND STYLES WILL NEED TO BE PROVIDED

- 4.41 When developing larger sites it may be desirable to incorporate a variety of densities to reflect differing housing needs. Planning applications will need to take into account the character of the site and its relationship with the surrounding area. Developers will be encouraged to provide some "affordable housing" for elderly people and those with special needs as part of residential development schemes on allocated sites. In order for this to be viable it may be necessary to "cross subsidise" in association with general housing which is intended to be sold at market prices.
- 4.42 Recent trends that have led to some high density schemes in order to maximise returns on costly development land. Overlooking, lack of private open space and poor overall appearance often results from the "cramming" of new development.
- 4.43 High density schemes may be acceptable as parts of larger developments. They should not, however, become the norm everywhere.
- 4.44 In order to provide for high standards of residential amenity, new housing schemes should meet high standards of design and layout. There must be generous provision of private amenity space which is not directly overlooked from neighbouring properties. All these matters must be addressed in development briefs, prepared for the larger sites. In addition, affordable and other special needs housing, residential densities, access and distribution road systems, landscaping, foul and surface water drainage, open and amenity spaces and any provision for local services will need to be considered.

POLICY H5

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT SCHEMES AND INFILL WITHIN THE EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILT UP AREAS OF THE TOWNS, PROVIDED THAT THERE IS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING LAND USERS OR THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING AREA

- 4.45 Opportunities are likely to occur within the built up areas of the towns for housing development on sites which may be in other uses at present. For example, on vacant or under-used land, as a result of redevelopment, or by the subdivision of existing property. Provided that there is no conflict with the other policies of this Plan, the environment is safeguarded and the scheme contributes to the character and appearance of the local area, planning permission is likely to be granted.

POLICY H6

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR CHANGES OF USE OF EXISTING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TO CREATE SPECIALISED ACCOMMODATION FOR ELDERLY, DISABLED AND YOUNG PEOPLE, OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS, PROVIDED THAT THERE IS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE FREE FLOW OF TRAFFIC. SCHEMES SHOULD BE WITHIN TOWNS OR LIMITED DEVELOPMENT VILLAGES AND LOCATED CLOSE TO SHOPS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES

- 4.46 The growing residential demands of specialised groups within the overall population, (combined with Government policies which encourage "care within the community" rather than the creation of schemes which are isolated in land-use terms) has led to increased pressure for changes of use of existing property.
- 4.47 So long as normal standards of development are met, the character and amenities of the general area are safeguarded and the scheme can satisfy the special need requirements, it is likely that planning permission will be granted. (Also see policies H8 and H23)

POLICY H7

WITHIN THE BUILT-UP RESIDENTIAL AREAS OF TOWNS, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR CONVERSION TO RESIDENTIAL USE OF NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES WHERE THESE ARE VACANT OR THEIR ORIGINAL USE IS REDUNDANT OR DETRACTS FROM THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, PROVIDED THERE IS NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

- 4.48 In recent years there has been a trend towards the change of use of factories and other buildings in non-residential use, to housing use. Factories have closed as a result of the contraction of traditional manufacturing industry, particularly in the boot and shoe industry, or due to relocation to modern premises that are more suitable for present day operations.
- 4.49 Buildings may be of architectural, historic or local interest and contribute to the character and appearance of the towns. The decline in housing occupancy rate and the growth in demand for small units for single persons or couples, can often be satisfied by converting buildings of this kind.
- 4.50 Schemes will need to be able to meet parking and access requirements and the buildings should also be suitable for conversion and re-use. It will also be necessary for there to be no adverse impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties. This policy would not enable ground floor commercial uses in town centres to be converted for residential use.

POLICY H8

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR THE CONVERSION OF DWELLINGS TO MULTIPLE OCCUPATION PROVIDED;

- (I) THERE ARE NO ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURS;**
- (II) THE PROPERTY TO BE CONVERTED OFFERS SUFFICIENT SPACE AND AMENITIES;**
- (III) THERE IS SUFFICIENT SPACE FOR ACCESS AND THE MANOEUVRING AND PARKING OF VEHICLES;**
- (IV) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT GENERATE EXCESSIVE TRAFFIC; AND**
- (V) THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT RESULT IN A CONCENTRATION OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION WHICH MAY LEAD TO A DECLINE IN RESIDENTIAL STANDARDS**

- 4.51 The subdivision of properties for flats and maisonettes helps to meet the increasing demands for small residential units and this policy ensures that there are safeguards to control developments of this form. Certain changes can occur without planning permission therefore this policy will only apply where permission is required. A concentration of multiple occupation in any area where residential standards are declining will be resisted.

POLICY H9

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE RESIDENTIAL USE OF UPPER FLOORS OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS WITHIN TOWN CENTRES PROVIDED THAT THERE IS NO ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE AMENITY OF ADJACENT LAND USERS

- 4.52 Upper storeys of commercial buildings which remain vacant in town centres represent an under-utilisation of these built environment resources. Where there is no undue adverse impact likely to be created, normal standards relating to parking and open space provision may be relaxed. This will be carried out in the interest of securing new uses for premises, which might otherwise remain vacant. This policy will help in maintaining the viability of town centres.
- 4.53 Whilst existing town centre housing units often do not provide accommodation for families, they fulfil an important supply of accommodation for young or single people. In addition, they help preserve the fabric of buildings, some of which may be of historic interest and would benefit from regular maintenance.
- 4.54 Grant may be available for converting under used larger dwellings to smaller units of accommodation for schemes to encourage living accommodation over shops, and for other conversion work to housing uses.

The Rural Area

POLICY H10

THE PROVISION FOR HOUSING IN VILLAGES IS MADE TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUAL SETTLEMENTS WITHIN A RURAL SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY SET OUT BELOW:-

RURAL SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION FOR EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 1988-2006

LIMITED DEVELOPMENT	BRIGSTOCK, KING'S CLIFFE, RINGSTEAD, WARMINGTON, WOODFORD, STANWICK
RESTRICTED INFILL VILLAGES	ALDWINCLE, APETHORPE, BARNWELL, UPPER BENEFIELD, BULWICK, CALDECOTT, CHELVESTON, CLOPTON, COLLYWESTON, COTTERSTOCK, DEENETHORPE, DENFORD, EASTON ON THE HILL, FINESHADE, GLAPTHORN, GREAT ADDINGTON, HARGRAVE, HARRINGWORTH, HEMINGTON, ISLIP, LAXTON, LILFORD, LITTLE ADDINGTON, LUDDINGTON, LUTTON, NASSINGTON, NEWTON BROMSWOLD, POLEBROOK, SLIPTON, SOUTHWICK,STOKE DOYLE, SUDBOROUGH, TANSOR, THORPE WATERVILLE, THURNING, TITCHMARSH, TWYWELL, WAKERLEY, WOODNEWTON, YARWELL
RESTRAINT VILLAGES	ASHTON, LOWER BENEFIELD, BLATHERWYCKE, DEENE, DUDDINGTON, FOTHERINGHAY, LOWICK, PILTON, THORPE ACHURCH, WADENHOE

- 4.55 The District Council has categorised the villages in the District, in accordance with the needs, potential and characteristics of individual settlements.

POLICY H11

PROVISION FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREA WILL BE MADE PRIMARILY IN THE LIMITED DEVELOPMENT VILLAGES. THE MAIN SITES SELECTED ARE SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP. ALL DEVELOPMENT MUST SATISFY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

- (I) **NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE SIZE, FORM, CHARACTER AND SETTING OF THE VILLAGE, OR ON ITS COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT;**
- (II) **LOCAL SERVICES ARE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- (III) **THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) IS PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS IRREVERSIBLE;**
- (IV) **OPEN LAND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AS BEING OF IMPORTANCE TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE WILL NOT BE LOST;**
- (V) **THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN TERMS OF ACCESS, PARKING AND MANOEUVRING CAN BE SATISFIED; AND**
- (VI) **BE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE VILLAGE**

4.56 New development in the Limited Development Villages will need to satisfy all the other policies of this Plan particularly in relation to layout, design, access, landscaping and open space/recreational provision. Any additional development which takes place within the confines of villages (see paragraph 4.58 below) will be considered to be "windfall". (Also see paragraph 4.31).

POLICY H12

IN THE RESTRICTED INFILL VILLAGES NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT IS OF A SMALL SCALE ON INFILL SITES WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE VILLAGE, AND PROVIDED THAT THE CRITERIA SET OUT BELOW CAN BE MET:

- (I) **THERE WOULD BE NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE SIZE, FORM, CHARACTER AND SETTING OF THE VILLAGE, OR ON ITS COMMUNITY AND LOCAL ENVIRONMENT;**
- (II) **LOCAL SERVICES ARE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE DEVELOPMENT;**
- (III) **THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND (GRADES 1, 2 AND 3A) IS PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS IRREVERSIBLE;**
- (IV) **OPEN LAND DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AS BEING OF IMPORTANCE TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE WILL NOT BE LOST; AND**
- (V) **THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL IN TERMS OF ACCESS, PARKING AND MANOEUVRING CAN BE SATISFIED**

4.57 Proposals for development may include individual or small groups of dwellings on infill sites, redevelopment or change of use of existing buildings. In addition, sites for residential development in some villages, are identified in the Settlement Strategy Statements.

4.58 The confines of the village is that area defined by the existing built-up area. Excluded will be free standing, individual or groups of dwellings, nearby farm buildings or other structures which are obviously detached from, or peripheral to, the main built-up area. Gardens, or former gardens on the edge of the village, within the curtilages, of dwellings do not fall within the confines of the village.

4.59 An infill site is considered to be a plot of land between dwellings, or other buildings, within an otherwise substantially built-up frontage and which has a frontage to the public highway and a depth similar to adjoining residential curtilages. Small scale will be taken to mean not more than four dwellings.

4.60 Proposals which come forward for housing developments which are not in conformity with the above criteria will be refused planning permission. The reason for this is that the development of numerous small housing estates, if permitted, would result in the "suburbanisation" of the Restricted Infill Villages which would then become little more than dormitory settlements to the nearby larger towns and cities. This would increase levels of commuting, make excessive demands on the rural road network, add to traffic congestion in towns and be wasteful of scarce non-renewable resources.

POLICY H13

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE RESTRAINT VILLAGES UNLESS IT IS FOR THE RE-USE OF BUILDINGS WHOSE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN ARE IN KEEPING WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS OR FOR A DWELLING REQUIRED FOR AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY OR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 4.61 This policy is in line with the overall policies of rural restraint and the need to protect the defined villages which have distinctive form and character. Conversions should respect the character and fabric of buildings, and should not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension. (Also see policies H16, AG4 and AG7).

POLICY H14

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DWELLINGS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE UNLESS REQUIRED FOR THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY

- 4.62 Only fully justified exceptions to the above policy will be permitted provided there is compliance with policies AG4, AG7 to AG9, and the environmental policies of this Plan.

POLICY H15

NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE WILL NOT BE PERMITTED

- 4.63 The District Council considers that there is no role for a new settlement in East Northamptonshire. There are development opportunities for expansion in the existing villages. There is no need, therefore, to direct development to a new settlement.

*Local Needs Housing***POLICY H16**

IN THE RURAL AREA PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET GENUINE LOCAL NEEDS (IDENTIFIED THROUGH A LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY) ON SITES WHERE THE CRITERIA LISTED BELOW CAN BE SATISFIED:

- (I) THE SITE MUST BE WELL RELATED TO AN EXISTING SETTLEMENT, IN TERMS OF ITS LOCATION, FORM, CHARACTER AND SETTING AND THE PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT MAY SERVE MORE THAN ONE PARISH;**
- (II) THE PROPOSAL MUST COMPLY WITH THE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S REQUIREMENTS PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF CONSERVATION, DESIGN, MATERIALS, ACCESS, DRAINAGE, LANDSCAPING AND OPEN SPACE PROVISION;**
- (III) IT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PROPOSAL MEETS A PARTICULAR AND IDENTIFIED LOCAL NEED WHICH CANNOT BE MET IN ANY OTHER WAY, INCLUDING AN ALTERNATIVE SITE WITHIN THE BUILT CONFINES OF THE SETTLEMENT; AND**
- (IV) A LEGAL AGREEMENT OR PLANNING OBLIGATION MUST BE ENTERED INTO IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE CONTINUED AVAILABILITY OF THE DWELLINGS TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS**

- 4.64 The District Council is concerned that in the villages of the District some local people are being denied the opportunity to remain in the area, due to the lack of accommodation which meets their needs.
- 4.65 This trend has been caused in part by the decline in private and public rented housing, high house prices which local people are unable to afford and a tendency for developers to concentrate on building large executive houses, to sell to newcomers to the area.

- 4.66 The purpose of the policy is to enable sites for affordable housing to be released as an exception to other policies for provision to meet general housing demand. Such rural affordable housing should therefore be regarded as additional to the provision in the Structure Plan for general housing. This is because the sites for exceptional use in rural areas would not normally be released for general housing. It is not practical to predict at the start of the plan period how much affordable housing will be released in these exceptional circumstances.
- 4.67 Affordable housing will be taken to mean housing costing less than those in housing need can afford to rent or purchase on the open market.
- 4.68 Affordable housing sites will generally be expected to be located adjoining the existing built development of the village. There may be circumstances, however, where a degree of separation may be acceptable if this is necessary for environmental reasons. In such cases, the site should still relate well to the form and character of the existing settlement. Sites may serve more than one parish to provide for concentrating this form of development where it can best meet the needs of sub-areas of the District. Of particular importance is the need to avoid the creation of remote groups of houses which may be disadvantaged by being divorced from the provision of local services and facilities.
- 4.69 The District Council's requirements, stipulated in criteria (ii) of the policy are set out in other policies of this Plan which deal with these issues in greater detail.
- 4.70 In order to qualify as exhibiting "local need" people would normally have to be existing residents of a local parish, requiring separate accommodation, or have long standing ties (e.g. elderly people returning to the village). In addition people whose work provides important services (who need to live closer to the local community) and people with the offer of a job in the locality who cannot take up the offer because of a lack of affordable housing, are also likely to exhibit local need. If "local need" has not already been identified applicants will be required to demonstrate this in association with the Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association, the Rockingham Forest Housing Association, the District Council, Parish Councils, a Village Trust, or similar organisation.
- 4.71 The granting of planning permission for an affordable housing scheme in accordance with this policy will not be an indication that consent will be forthcoming for the expansion of the site or the settlement for general housing needs. This policy gives scope only for specific identified need.
- 4.72 While cross-subsidy by the provision of high value housing on these "exception sites" will not be acceptable, there may be opportunities for cross-subsidy between sites allocated for development in the Local Plan and nearby "exceptions" site.
- 4.73 The type of housing proposed must be capable of management by the District Council, the Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association, the Rockingham Forest Housing Association, Village Trust or similar organisation. Applicants will be required to demonstrate that one of these organisations has expressed a clear interest in the scheme and that this could be controlled by a legal agreement, so that the housing continues to be made available to local people in the future. Any development of this kind will be considered to be "windfall". (Also see paragraph 4.31).

Alterations and Extensions

POLICY H17

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS PROVIDED THAT THE DESIGN AND MATERIALS ARE IN HARMONY WITH THE EXISTING DWELLING AND THERE IS NO ADVERSE IMPACT UPON THE AMENITIES OF THE EXISTING DWELLING AND NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 4.74 Many minor alterations and extensions qualify as permitted development and do not require the submission of a planning application (but may need approval under the Building Regulations).
- 4.75 Larger schemes require planning permission and alterations and extensions to listed buildings also require listed building consent.

- 4.76 The District Council is keen to encourage high standards of design in the execution of residential alterations and extensions. Equally important is the need to maintain a reasonable level of garden space around the dwelling. Schemes that result in an over development of the site are likely to be refused. Extensions of starter homes are likely to be resisted, to ensure that these properties are retained for the purpose for which they were developed. More stringent requirements apply to buildings in Conservation Areas; see policies EN12 to EN13 and EN16 to EN17 and EN19.

Residential Caravans, Travellers Sites and Temporary Dwellings

POLICY H18

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT NORMALLY BE GRANTED FOR TEMPORARY DWELLINGS EXCEPT FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE:-

- (I) THE DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION WHILST CONSTRUCTION IS BEING CARRIED OUT TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT DWELLING;**
 - (II) THE DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION WHILST EXISTING BUILDINGS ARE BEING ALTERED OR CONVERTED;**
 - (III) THE DEVELOPMENT IS REQUIRED TO MEET THE TEMPORARY NEEDS OF THE HOMELESS, ON SITES WHERE THERE WILL BE NO ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT; OR**
 - (IV) IT IS WITHIN THE CURTILAGE OF AN EXISTING DWELLING AND IS TO ENABLE AN ELDERLY OR INFIRM RELATIVE TO LIVE CLOSE TO THEIR FAMILY, AND WILL BE PROVIDED ONLY WHILE THE NEED EXISTS**
- 4.77 Temporary buildings may be necessary in special circumstances. Often this is to provide accommodation on a site whilst a new dwelling is under construction, or an existing dwelling is being altered or restored. In view of the growing problem of homelessness, the provision of temporary accommodation to meet a need identified by the District Council may be acceptable in certain exceptional circumstances.
- 4.78 Any such permission will be subject to conditions imposing strict time limits, and usually personal to the applicant.
- 4.79 Sites for residential caravans and mobile homes are not considered acceptable where permanent housing would not be allowed. Sites for touring caravans are considered under policy TO3.
- 4.80 Mobile homes can make a useful contribution to housing needs provided that development of this form does not create poor living conditions or have an adverse impact on the local area.

POLICY H19

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SITES FOR GYPSIES, TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE AND OTHER TRAVELLERS PROVIDED THAT:

- (I) THE SITE IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE MAIN ROAD NETWORK AND THE MEANS OF ACCESS THERETO MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL;**
- (II) THE SITE IS ACCESSIBLE TO SERVICES SUCH AS SHOPS, SCHOOLS, DRAINAGE AND MEDICAL FACILITIES;**
- (III) THERE IS NO DETRIMENTAL EFFECT UPON THE LANDSCAPE OR THE AMENITIES OF NEIGHBOURING LAND USERS; AND**
- (IV) THE SITE IS OF ADEQUATE SIZE TO ACCOMMODATE TRAVELLER'S VEHICLES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDINGS OR THE AMENITIES OF NEARBY LAND USERS**

- 4.81 In 1986 East Northamptonshire received "designated status". This was granted by virtue of the Secretary of State for the Environment's acceptance that the provisions of the 1968 Caravan Sites Act had been complied with in the District.
- 4.82 Two caravan sites for the accommodation of travellers, have been provided by private individuals. The numbers of pitches available on these sites is sufficient to meet the needs of travellers who habitually visit the area.
- 4.83 A further transit site has recently been completed at Gretton Brook Road, Corby, just beyond the boundary of the District. Whereas the County Council believes that some additional transit and permanent sites may be needed within the County, it is not anticipated that they will be provided in this District.

Agricultural Dwellings and Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

- 4.84 Agricultural dwellings and replacement dwellings in the countryside are considered in the Section entitled Agriculture. Policies AG7 to AG9 set out the District Council's policy for development of this kind.

Residential Development Guidelines

POLICY H20

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WHERE THERE IS A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS TOGETHER WITH LAYOUT, DENSITY, SERVICING, LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING WHICH IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 4.85 This policy applies to all new residential schemes and aims at securing a high standard of design extending from individual buildings to the total site layout. Where there is a high quality townscape or character of existing development which needs to be respected, the design of the new development should reflect or enhance that character. A high standard of landscaping and, where necessary, screening will be expected in all cases and this will need to comply with policies EN3 to EN5.
- 4.86 While the District Council recognises the need to make the most beneficial use of land which comes forward for development, it will be necessary to ensure that the densities of development do not result in cramming and a poor standard of layout.
- 4.87 Although this Plan has assumed an overall District wide density of 25 dwellings per hectare for determining the amount of land needing to be allocated, individual proposals will need to be considered in relation to the character of the surroundings, and the nature of the site.
- 4.88 There may be locations where individual design solutions would be appropriate. The intention of this policy is not to stifle individual flair, but to encourage high quality sympathetic development schemes. Repetition of standard designs and the application of "in vogue" detailing will not be encouraged. (The District Council's Residential Development Guidelines and the Guidelines for Landscaping are set out in Appendices 7 and 8.)
- 4.89 In negotiating the provision of open space, amenity, and recreation areas, the District Council will ensure that arrangements are made for their future ownership and maintenance. (See policies RL3 and RL4).

Backland Development

POLICY H21

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR A DWELLING INTENDED TO BE SITUATED IN A GARDEN BEHIND OR IN FRONT OF AN EXISTING DWELLING, UNLESS:

- (I) **THE GARDEN IS CAPABLE OF ENABLING DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT THE LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY TO THE OCCUPIERS OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES; AND**
- (II) **THE DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF VEHICULAR ACCESS OR OPPORTUNITIES FOR ON-SITE PARKING TO AN EXISTING PROPERTY**

4.90 Tandem development of this form, having restricted access and resulting in conditions of adverse amenity for the existing occupiers of frontage dwellings will be resisted. In addition, there are often problems associated with the provision of private open space and the location of car parking areas.

POLICY H22

PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES INVOLVING SEVERAL DWELLINGS, PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA CAN BE SATISFIED:-

- (I) **THE LAND CAN BE DEVELOPED COMPREHENSIVELY WITHOUT PREJUDICING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY ADJOINING LAND;**
- (II) **ACCESS CAN BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS STIPULATED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL, WITH PROVISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY AND FURTHER EXTENSION TO SERVE ADJOINING AREAS WHERE NECESSARY;**
- (III) **THE SCHEME RESPECTS THE CHARACTER OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND OPEN SPACES IN THE AREA;**
- (IV) **LEVELS OF PRIVACY AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE AROUND NEW AND EXISTING DWELLINGS SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL;**
- (V) **THE SCHEME IS NOT OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT**

- 4.91 Development which involves the sub-division of the grounds or gardens of large older houses, can be acceptable in certain circumstances. This policy is intended to relate primarily to this type of opportunity, but it will be essential that other policies in the Plan are not compromised and that the amenities of existing residential areas are maintained.
- 4.92 Piecemeal development which prejudices the linking of separate land areas should be avoided and it must be possible to provide a proper access which can be used by the vehicles of residents, visitors, and for deliveries and services.
- 4.93 Backland development schemes are often based on plots which are awkward in shape and limited in size. For this reason it is of utmost importance for first class design solutions to be advanced, to ensure the maintenance of adequate levels of amenity. Detailed attention will need to be paid to landscaping, screening and fencing. In some instances single storey dwellings may often be the best solution. Access roads should not give rise to disturbance and noise that can arise if they are located too close to existing rear gardens or dwellings.
- 4.94 The District Council will be keen to ensure that where schemes are of a high density with limited provision of private open space, permitted development rights are controlled. Conditions may be imposed to remove these rights, to prevent virtual site coverage or the creation of overlooking problems.

Provision for Disabled Persons

- 4.95 ***The District Council will encourage the provision of an element of housing accessible to disabled people, where there is clear evidence of local need. It will be beneficial if sites for such provision are located close to shops, public transport and other community services and are relatively flat.*** Apart from meeting the residential needs of disabled people, some housing units should also be designed to be accessible to both able-bodied and disabled people alike. This will assist able-bodied people who may wish to entertain a disabled friend or relative on a regular basis.

- 4.96 Features such as level thresholds, wide doorways, a toilet at ground level and a staircase that can accommodate a stairlift, should be incorporated. (Also see policy TR8).

Hostels and Homes

POLICY H23

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES, HOMELESS OR ELDERLY PEOPLE IN THE FORM OF NEW HOSTELS AND HOMES, PROVIDED THE PROPOSAL DOES NOT RESULT IN AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT. SCHEMES DESIGNED TO MEET THESE NEEDS SHOULD BE WITHIN TOWNS OR LIMITED DEVELOPMENT VILLAGES AND LOCATED CLOSE TO SHOPS, PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES

- 4.97 The District Council is keen to ensure that specialised housing needs are provided in existing residential areas, whenever possible. This is so that the occupiers of the schemes can be integrated into existing communities and not isolated in self-contained separate developments. (Also see policy H6).

Commercial Development in Residential Areas

POLICY H24

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON RESIDENTIAL AMENITIES

- 4.98 The District Council is keen to ensure that residents should not be subjected to smell, dust, noise, traffic movements and parking problems which may result from commercial developments, if these are located in residential areas. Proposals for development of this type are likely to be refused planning permission.
- 4.99 Existing non-conforming uses will be encouraged to relocate to areas allocated for commercial development. (Also see policies EMP6 and EMP9).
- 4.100 Local services such as shops, surgeries, public houses, places of entertainment and places of worship, will also need to comply with this policy. (See also policies S3, S4, RL14 and CF2 to CF5).

POLICY H25

PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE USE OF DWELLINGS FOR NON-DOMESTIC COMMERCIAL PURPOSES WHERE THESE USES RESULT IN NOISE, DISTURBANCE, NUISANCE AND ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC, INCOMPATIBLE WITH A RESIDENTIAL AREA

- 4.101 In residential properties some forms of commercial use, ancillary to residential use, may be acceptable. Many problems often arise with developments of this nature. Where this results in a loss of amenity to neighbouring residents, the use will be resisted.
- 4.102 Non-commercial activities, carried out by householders on an intensive basis for friends or relatives, such as car repairs, panel beating, spraying, wood and metal working, boat and light aircraft construction can amount to a change of use for which planning permission may be required. This is unlikely to be granted if the activity is detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring residents. (Also see policies EMP6, EMP9, paragraphs 5.31-5.32, and 5.37-5.42.)