



Developing a settlement hierarchy for the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

Background Paper

FINAL REPORT

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (CSS)/ “Core Strategy”, was adopted in June 2008. The Examination Inspector, while finding the Core Strategy overall to be a “sound” Development Plan Document (DPD), identified certain criticisms (Report to the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, 12 May 2008¹), e.g.:
- “...concerned about the amount of development proposed for the smaller towns and settlements of North Northamptonshire when compared for the total at Kettering” (paragraph 25); and
 - “...failure to provide a firm long term infrastructure foundation. Through an early review a mechanism needs to be found to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is put in place to give certainty to the housing and employment provision” (paragraph 142).
- 1.2 The Joint Planning Unit (JPU) responded by setting underway a review of the Core Strategy, a process which was formally 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 2008² (February – March 2009). This consultation specifically focused on matters such as taking the Core Strategy forward to 2031, delivery mechanisms and, notably: “**Reassessing the future roles and functions of the towns and villages**” (Regulation 25 Consultation document, paragraph 4.2).
- 1.3 The Regulation 25 consultation was followed by a series of workshops and public consultation events during 2009-11. This culminated in the “Planning Issues in North Northamptonshire” consultation (10 February – 28 March 2011)³. The various workshop and consultation events held during 2009-11 identified a range of concerns in respect of the current Core Strategy (Issues Consultation Background Paper, February 2011⁴), i.e.:
- The rural area is diverse, and the broader policy approach in the adopted core strategy will need to be revisited to ensure that different issues and opportunities are fully addressed in policy terms.
 - A number of villages operate in clusters; i.e. one village may not have a shop but people travel for day to day items to the neighbouring one which does.
 - The current approach to development in rural areas, as set out in Core Strategy Policy 1, has been criticised as not being flexible enough to meet development needs in the rural areas.
 - Villages have different needs and distinctive characters, making the current ‘one size fits all’ approach difficult.

¹ <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/FINAL%20N%20NORTHANTS%20CSS%20REPORT.pdf>

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1371/made/data.pdf>

³ <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Issues%20Paper%20web%20version.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Consultation%20and%20Engagement%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

- 1.4 When the current Core Strategy was under preparation, the intention was for site specific DPDs to set out a more detailed hierarchy. With the exception of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP), however, these have not been progressed as envisaged. At the time of the RNOTP Examination, the former Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) and the Inspector raised concerns about the generalised and strategic nature of some of the policies within the RNOTP. It was necessary, during the Examination, to explain to GOEM and the Inspector that the “*Joint Core Spatial Strategy is a higher level Plan than a core strategy covering an individual district. It concentrates very much on delivery of major growth in the urban core*” (Response to representations received from the Government Office for the East Midlands, 25 April 2008⁵, paragraph 2.3).
- 1.5 Subsequent changes to the planning system, through the 2011 Localism Act and recent national policy amendments, have introduced concepts such as neighbourhood planning. These changes may make it inappropriate to specify too much detail or be overly prescriptive. Equally, it must be recognised that not all rural communities will be interested in the concept of neighbourhood planning.
- 1.6 The JPU has acknowledged these criticisms with the current settlement strategy. It was considered to be too generic to allow for differences in village character and locational pressures; and not proactive enough to recognise the regeneration needs and growth opportunities of individual market towns (North Northamptonshire Joint Committee Report, 24 November 2011, paragraph 5.10). In responding to these concerns, the JPU has specified that the review of the current settlement hierarchy will form a critical aspect of the broader Core Strategy Review.

Reasons for reviewing the settlement hierarchy

- 1.7 The review of the settlement hierarchy within the adopted Core Strategy is being undertaken in response to a range of issues, not just criticisms of the current spatial strategy. There are a broad number of reasons that this is deemed to be a necessary aspect of the emerging Core Strategy Review:
- Only 13 out of nearly 130 settlements across North Northamptonshire have a defined “spatial strategy” in the adopted Core Strategy;
 - A number of (in some cases, quite significant) settlements have no designation at all in the adopted Local Plan hierarchy (i.e. current Core Strategy and/ or saved old-style Local Plan policies);
 - The Issues consultations/ workshops have firmly emphasised a need for greater focus upon rural development issues;
 - Changes to national planning policy since adoption of the current CSS, most notably the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasises that: “*Local planning authorities should set out the **strategic priorities** for the area in the Local Plan [the ‘Local Development Framework’ has been re-titled the ‘Local Plan’ in the new NPPF] (paragraph 156);*

⁵ http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/ENC_response_to_GOEM_25_April_2008.pdf

- The NPPF provides further direction in respect of what Local Plans⁶ should do, including “*indicate broad locations for strategic development*” (paragraph 157), i.e. those settlements or locations where new development is likely to be focused.
- 1.8 The NPPF sets out four tests of soundness (paragraph 182), including that Local Plan documents (in this case, the Core Strategy review) need to be **justified**; i.e. “*the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence*”.
- 1.9 This document has been prepared in accordance with this aspect of national planning policy. For example, it focuses upon alternative approaches in respect of the scope of the settlement hierarchy. Of course, the NPPF requires the local planning authority to seek out and evaluate **reasonable** alternatives (paragraph 182). In this instance, a decision **not** to define a settlement hierarchy would not represent a reasonable alternative; as the settlement hierarchy is a critical mechanism which underpins the spatial development strategy at the local level, thereby providing a “*practical framework within which decisions...can be made*” (NPPF Core planning principles, paragraph 17).
- 1.10 This document will form an important part of the evidence base for the emerging Core Strategy review. It is essential, in order to ensure that the Core Strategy review will pass its Independent Examination; i.e. meet the NPPF “soundness” tests. To be “sound” the Core Strategy review should be **Positively prepared, Justified, Effective and Consistent with national policy** (NPPF, paragraph 182). This document will underpin the Core Strategy, in respect of ensuring that the spatial strategy will be justified; i.e. founded on proportionate evidence (NPPF “soundness” tests, paragraph 182).
- 1.11 In this case, the settlement hierarchy review is a response to particular criticisms of the current Core Strategy; that a more detailed or locally relevant settlement strategy would ensure a more robust Core Strategy in the future. Defining a settlement hierarchy is an important means by which the Core Strategy may be made comprehensible, by setting a consistent spatial strategy for a group of settlements which have common characteristics, functions or relationships with their surrounding hinterland.

Key stages in reviewing the settlement hierarchy

- 1.12 This paper will follow a series of stages/ steps in building up an appropriate settlement hierarchy for the Core Strategy review. These stages are:
- **Stage 1 – Existing settlement hierarchy, as set out in current (adopted) Development Plan Documents (DPDs)**
 - **Stage 2 – Existing evidence base documents, which will inform this paper and/ or the Core Strategy review as a whole**
 - **Stage 3 – Defining the scope of the settlement hierarchy to be included within the Core Strategy review**

⁶ The current Core Strategy and its emerging replacement form a single Development Plan Document (DPD) within the overall Local Plan for the area

- **Stage 4 – Possible alternative approaches – retention of existing settlement hierarchy (approach 1) or comprehensive review of current hierarchy (approach 2)?**
- **Stage 5 – Possible alternative approaches – simplified settlement hierarchy (approaches 3 or 4)**
- **Stage 6 – Conclusions and recommendations: preferred approach**

1.13 Subsequent sections of this paper will address each of these stages, in turn. It is emphasised that it is not the intention of this document to widely repeat existing sources of information. Rather, this pulls together most existing work, identifying any omissions and putting forward a specific set of recommendations which should be used to inform the Core Strategy review.

2.0 Stage 1 – Existing settlement hierarchy

2.1 It should be noted that the current Core Strategy contains only a limited settlement hierarchy. This covers the 12 towns within North Northamptonshire, plus King's Cliffe. The settlement roles, as defined by the current (2008) Core Strategy are set out in Table 1 (p24), which accompanies Policy 1⁷.

Current settlement hierarchy, as defined by the 2008 Core Strategy

2.2 The current network of settlements, whose roles and functions are defined in the Core Strategy, is set out in Table 1, below.

| Category | Settlements | Current Core Strategy Policy/ Table reference | Source |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Growth Towns | Kettering | Policies 1 and 12 | Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM), adopted March 2005 ⁸ ; Core Strategy Policy 12 |
| | Corby, Wellingborough | Policies 1 and 12 | MKSM; Core Strategy Policy 12 |
| Smaller Towns | Rushden | Policies 1 and 12 | MKSM; Core Strategy Policy 12 |
| | Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Rothwell | Policy 1 | MKSM |
| Rural Service Centres | Oundle, Raunds, Thrapston | Policy 1 | MKSM |
| Local Service Centres | King's Cliffe | Policy 1 | North Northamptonshire Market Towns and Rural Regeneration (Entec, May 2004) ⁹ |

2.3 Predominantly, the current settlement hierarchy was taken from the MKSM, and incorporated into the 2008 Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has, however, expanded upon this through the following:

- Subdivision of Growth Towns in respect of town centre strategies, with Kettering defined as a potential sub-regional centre (Policy 12/ Figure 14);
- Subdivision of Smaller Towns, with Rushden defined as a fourth main town centre (Policy 12/ Figure 14);
- Designation of King's Cliffe as a Local Service Centre (Entec study, paragraph 7.2).

⁷ <http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Adopted%20CSS%20Final%20Proof.pdf>

⁸ http://www.shapeyourfuture.org.uk/documents/BD7_MiltonKeynesandSouthMidlandsSub-regionalStrategy_March2005.pdf

⁹ <http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/North%20Northamptonshire%20Market%20Towns%20and%20Rural%20Regeneration.pdf>

2.4 The 2004 Entec study assessed a range of larger villages, putting forward specific recommendations for developing a strategy for the location of growth in the rural area (paragraph 6.4):

- “...a policy approach that enhances the role of King’s Cliffe and Wollaston as local service centres, by directing additional development to these settlements”; and
- “...beyond the Rural and Local Service Centres larger villages/ small towns with a good range of services should be considered as the focus for development for local needs, e.g. Broughton, Woodford, Bozeat, Irchester and Brigstock”.

2.5 The recommendation that King’s Cliffe be designated a local service centre was taken forward into the current Core Strategy. Critically, however, while the Entec study also recommended that Wollaston be designated a Local Service Centre this was not taken forward into the Core Strategy.

Settlement hierarchy for other villages, as defined by site specific Development Plan Documents (Appendix 1)

2.6 With the exception of King’s Cliffe, the current settlement hierarchy for villages across North Northamptonshire is defined through the adopted District level site specific Development Plan Documents (DPDs). These are:

- Corby Borough Local Plan (adopted 1997)¹⁰ – Policies P1-P4;
- East Northamptonshire District Local Plan (adopted November 1996)¹¹ – Rushden Strategy Statement, Policy RU2;
- Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (adopted July 2011)¹² – Policy 1;
- Kettering Borough Local Plan (adopted 1995)¹³ – Policies RA3-RA4;
- Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) Local Plan (adopted 1999)¹⁴ – Policies G4-G5.

2.7 In the case of East Northamptonshire, the majority of villages are designated in the recently adopted Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP). In this case, therefore, East Northamptonshire has a broadly comprehensive up to date settlement hierarchy for much of the District. In addition to the RNOTP, a development strategy for the Avenue Road development, between Rushden and Newton Bromswold, has been retained through “saved” Local Plan Policy RU2.

2.8 Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough all retain settlement hierarchies from their old (1990s) Local Plans. In addition to King’s Cliffe (defined as a Local Service Centre in the current Core Strategy), the following other service villages (also known as “Limited Development Villages”) have been identified:

¹⁰ <http://www.corby.gov.uk/site-page/corby-borough-local-plan-1997#1997>

¹¹ http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Ru_Strategy_Statement.pdf

¹² <http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/rnotp>

¹³ http://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/All_Saved_Policies-July_2011.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/4344/local_plan-saved_policies_document

- Corby – Gretton, Weldon (Corby Borough Local Plan, Policy P1(V));
- East Northamptonshire – Nassington, Warmington (RNOTP Policy 1(3));
- Wellingborough – Earl’s Barton, Finedon, Wollaston (BCW Local Plan, Policy G4).

2.9 The vast majority of other villages (approximately 70 across North Northamptonshire) are defined as “Network” or “Restricted Infill” villages. A number of “Restraint” villages, predominantly those with particular historic conservation interest are also identified (e.g. Rockingham, Fotheringhay), where development is generally limited to conversion and/ or re-use of existing buildings with new development strictly controlled. Other smaller settlements, farmsteads or groups of properties are considered as being “open countryside”.

2.10 In the case of most villages, these retain their status through existing adopted DPDs; i.e. RNOTP and older Local Plans. In the case of East Northamptonshire however, the former Local Plan settlement hierarchy for the south of the District (i.e. non-RNOTP area), has **not** been saved as part of the development plan. A number of other villages also currently lack any specific designation/ classification in the development plan. These are defined by the following typologies:

- Villages not covered by a saved development plan policy, e.g. Chelveston, Ringstead, Stanwick;
- Villages which may be considered as forming part of the nearby urban area – Barton Seagrave (Kettering), Crow Hill (Irthlingborough);
- New villages – Little Stanion¹⁵, Mawsley.

Overview and conclusions

2.11 Overall, the majority of villages are covered by either the recently adopted RNOTP or older saved Local Plan policies. Inevitably, the vast majority of villages fall within the intermediate restricted development/ infill category. However, a significant number of villages do not have any development plan status, which means it is a necessity that the existing hierarchies are reviewed and updated.

¹⁵ In the case of Little Stanion, it is necessary to determine whether this ought to be designated as a separate village, or part of Corby urban area, although similar circumstances already exist in the case of Great Oakley.

3.0 Stage 2 – Existing evidence base documents

- 3.1 As described above, current national policy (NPPF) explains the critical importance of a robust evidence base in supporting all elements of the overall spatial development strategy for a District or sub-region (in this case, North Northamptonshire). In the case of assessing the roles and relationships between different settlements and defining a settlement hierarchy, there already exists a substantial range of documents at both the District and North Northamptonshire levels.
- 3.2 This second stage in the process of defining a settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire involves reviewing the existing evidence base documents produced at the North Northamptonshire, District and more local levels. These documents all focus upon the roles and relationships between different settlements; both town centres and individual settlements as a whole.

North Northamptonshire documents

- 3.3 The first Core Strategy was informed by a range of documents which examined the relationships between settlements, together with their individual roles and functions. The following table sets out the key documents that informed the first Core Strategy, together with more recent papers which will underpin the emerging Core Strategy review.

| Document Name | Author/ Partner | Date |
|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Independent Assessment of the Retail Strategy for North Northamptonshire and the Implications of the Rushden Lakes Proposals http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/FINAL%20Report%20050412.pdf | GVA | April 2012 |
| North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update 2010 http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/FINAL%20REPORT%20-%20ISSUED%2011%2002%2011.pdf | Roger Tym & Partners | February 2011 |
| North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Review – Rural & Small Towns Workshops Feedback Report http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rural%20Areas%20&%20Small%20Towns%20Workshop%20Report.pdf | NNJPU/ Northamptonshire ACRE | February 2010 |
| North Northamptonshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) http://nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1093 | Roger Tym & Partners | February 2009 |

| Document Name | Author/ Partner | Date |
|---|--|-------------|
| Response to Representations made to 'Preferred Options for North Northamptonshire' – Update on Retail Issues – Final Report | Roger Tym & Partners | July 2006 |
| http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/North%20Northants%20Centres%20Update%20-%20FINAL%20REPORT%20July%202006.pdf | | |
| North Northamptonshire Town Centres – Roles and Relationships Study – Main Report (Final) | Roger Tym & Partners | August 2005 |
| http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/MAIN%20REPORT%20Aug%202005.pdf | | |
| North Northamptonshire Market Towns and Rural Regeneration | North Northamptonshire Partners/ Entec UK Ltd | May 2004 |
| http://nnjpu.org.uk/docs/North%20Northamptonshire%20Market%20Towns%20and%20Rural%20Regeneration.pdf | | |
| North Northamptonshire Centres Project: Final Report | North Northamptonshire Partners/ DTZ Piedad Consulting | May 2004 |
| http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Town_Centres_Final_Report.pdf | | |

- 3.4 Of these documents, the Entec report, “Market Towns and Rural Regeneration”, included a range of recommendations which were taken forward into the first Core Strategy. Specifically, the Entec study included an assessment of a range of larger villages across North Northamptonshire, towards defining those which perform a local service role (Table 5.1).
- 3.5 More recently, the first SHLAA (February 2009) considered a range of larger villages where potential development land has been put forward. Again, this list represents a range of villages which could be considered to be appropriate to accommodate additional larger scale development, beyond minor development and infill schemes.

Corby Borough Council documents

- 3.6 During 2008-9, Corby Borough Council were working towards the production of a detailed site-specific DPD for the Borough. This necessitated ensuring that the evidence base at the Borough level was up to date. To this end, the Borough Council prepared its Rural Strategy in-house during 2008-9.
- 3.7 The Rural Strategy¹⁶ was published in April 2009. This reviewed the various villages within Corby Borough, including the future roles for Gretton and Weldon (defined as “Limited Development Villages” in the 1997 Local Plan). The Rural Strategy did not

¹⁶ <http://fs-fileshare-eu.s3.amazonaws.com/corby/imported/EnvironmentAndPlanning/Planning/Documents/Rural%20Strategy%20april%202009%20FINAL.doc>

highlight any potential for change for the Corby villages, or signify that the villages contain the attributes associated with providing a locally significant service role. It concluded that the rural areas of Corby are well served by the town and within the Borough the focus is on regenerating the urban area which will have benefits for the immediate rural areas and villages (paragraph 3.8).

East Northamptonshire Council documents

- 3.8 East Northamptonshire contains six towns, of greatly varied character. The relationships between settlements are far more varied and complicated than that for Corby, which consists of a single urban core surrounded by a limited number of outlying villages. Accordingly, East Northamptonshire Council has undertaken a range of studies and analyses over the past 6-7 years which have been utilised to inform both the first Core Strategy and recently adopted RNOTP.

| Document Name | Author/ Partner | Date |
|--|---|---------------|
| Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Settlement_Hierarchy_Defining_Category_A_and_B_Villages.pdf | ENC | January 2009 |
| East Northamptonshire Rural Potential Study 2003-7 http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Rural_Potential_Study.pdf | ENC | January 2008 |
| Local Development Framework Working Party Meeting – 7 December 2006: Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan – Summary Responses http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Feedback_Summary_Response.pdf | ENC | December 2006 |
| Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Planning in East Northamptonshire http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.aspx?downloadID=267 | Baker Associates/ Countryside Agency | January 2006 |
| East Northamptonshire Council Rural Strategy http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/East_Northamptonshire_Council_Rural_Strategy.pdf | ENC/ Atkins | November 2005 |

| Document Name | Author/ Partner | Date |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| “Design for the Future” – Growth Options for the District http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Growth_Options_for_the_District.pdf | ENC | April 2004 – August 2005 |
| “Design for the Future” Discussions Papers | ENC | |
| “Design for the Future” – Your Aspirations (September 2005) | ENC | |
| East Northamptonshire Capacity Assessment http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Technical_Report_for_Growth_Options_for_the_District.pdf | ENC/ DTZ Piedad Consulting | March 2004 |
| | | |

- 3.9 The roles of villages and sometimes complicated relationships between these formed a key element underpinning the RNOTP throughout its preparation. To begin with, the “Design for the Future” consultations during 2004-5 emphasised the need to find “*a future for all existing communities, however small, and making sure that all people within them have reasonable access to services, jobs, housing and leisure*” (p2, Growth Options for the District, April 2004).
- 3.10 The evidence base was strengthened through the Rural Strategy (November 2005) and, in particular, Baker Associates’ “Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Planning in East Northamptonshire” (January 2006). The latter studied the relationships between villages across the north of the District closely and recommended that Nassington and Warmington, in addition to King’s Cliffe, Oundle and Stamford, also perform a local service role as part of a network of villages.
- 3.11 Following the first round of RNOTP Independent Examination Hearing Sessions (October 2008), the Inspector concluded that: “*The Council have provided further information on the background to identification of a settlement hierarchy...and I am now satisfied with regard to the justification for the choice of the smaller service centres but this is not the case with regard to the distinction between category A and B network villages*” (Inspector’s Note on further work required in order to establish that the DPD is sound, paragraph 9, 31 October 2008). In practice, this entailed the preparation of a further study to justify the division between Category A and Category B Network villages, the latter effectively functioning as a “Restraint Village” category.
- 3.12 The resultant “Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages” paper provided a full reassessment of the villages and update of the 2003 rural services study. This was found by the Inspector “*to be a thorough and comprehensive piece of work. It fully justifies the categorisation of*

settlements” (Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan Inspector’s Report, paragraph 3.125, 8 July 2009¹⁷).

- 3.13 The RNOTP Inspector also questioned East Northamptonshire Council’s justification for not including other larger villages (i.e. Brigstock, Easton on the Hill and Woodford) as smaller service centres within the rural part of the district, in addition to King’s Cliffe, Nassington and Warmington (Inspector’s Report, paragraph 3.123). Although he accepted this justification in 2009, it is now considered that the status of these other large villages within the District ought to be revisited as a part of the wider Core Strategy review.
- 3.14 Nevertheless, the more recent evidence documentation covering East Northamptonshire Council relates exclusively to the RNOTP area, given that this was prepared to meet specific requirements of the Independent Examination of that DPD. As such, the predominantly urban southern part of the District (Four Towns Plan area) does not have up to date evidence in respect of village services. **It will be necessary therefore, as part of the evidence base, to undertake a comprehensive study of village services and facilities for the Four Towns Plan area.**

Kettering Borough Council documents

- 3.15 Subject to the emerging Core Strategy Review, Kettering Borough Council has decided to continue with the preparation of its Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document (LDD), recently consulted on (“Options Paper” consultation, 12 March – 23 April 2012¹⁸). This will explore the allocation of land for housing, employment, retail, leisure and community facilities and will contain policies relating to specific areas such as Rothwell, Desborough and Burton Latimer town centres and topics such as affordable housing, protection of the open countryside and protection of environmental assets¹⁹.
- 3.16 **Rural Masterplanning Report** – During 2011 Kettering Borough Council undertook two studies, which will be important in informing both the Site Specific Proposals LDD and emerging Core Strategy review. The first of these, the Rural Masterplanning Report²⁰, was completed in August 2011. This is intended to “*take a holistic look at each of the Borough’s villages needs, aspirations, opportunities for improvement, potential capacity for future development and, crucially, to ensure that any new development in villages respects and enhances the qualities of that village which make it special*” (Rural Masterplanning Report, paragraph 1.3).
- 3.17 In other words, the Rural Masterplanning project was designed to provide a village by village assessment. This recognises that all villages are different, having vastly varied

¹⁷ http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/downloads/Report_on_the_Examination_into_the_East_Northamptonshire_Rural_North_Oundle_and_Thrapston_Development_Plan_Document.pdf

¹⁸ http://consult.kettering.gov.uk/portal/development_services/sspldd/sspldd?pointId=1546312

¹⁹ http://www.kettering.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?categoryID=494&documentID=1409

²⁰ http://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/masterplanning_part_1.pdf;
http://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/masterplanning_part_2.pdf

local needs, aspirations and characteristics. Its role is therefore to provide systematic, detailed profiles for each village within Kettering Borough.

- 3.18 **Settlement Boundaries** – The Rural Masterplanning project was accompanied by the Settlement Boundaries Background Paper (September 2011)²¹. This provided a narrow focus; i.e. to assess the approach to dealing with development in the countryside; specifically the issue of whether settlement boundaries should be drawn or whether a criteria based policy should be used. It also assesses the key characteristics of each settlement across Kettering Borough (section 1.0), and whether it would appropriate to continue to define settlement boundaries in each case.
- 3.19 Critically, the Settlement Boundaries paper identifies larger villages within the Borough that have a number of services and facilities. Specifically, these villages are Broughton, Geddington and Mawsley. Accordingly, these may be identified as potential service villages in an enhanced Core Strategy review settlement hierarchy. A further village, Wilbarston, is described as a: “Larger village with some services and facilities”, although these are more limited than the other larger villages within the Borough.
- 3.20 Overall, Kettering Borough Council has an up to date, comprehensive evidence base, which may be utilised in preparing detailed spatial development strategies for individual settlements. It should be noted that this work also looks closely at the Kettering urban area, as well as the other towns within the Borough (Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell).

Borough Council of Wellingborough documents

- 3.21 As with Kettering, the Borough Council for Wellingborough is also keen to progress its Site Specific Proposals DPD. This will relate to the whole of the Borough with the exception of the town centre, which is covered by a separate Town Centre Area Action Plan. The Site Specific Proposals DPD will include policies and proposals that relate to specific areas of land across the Borough of Wellingborough. Land for particular uses, such as housing and employment, will be allocated whilst areas that should be retained as open space will be identified.
- 3.22 To this end, the Borough Council has prepared a bespoke Rural Settlement Hierarchy paper²², specifically intended to inform policies to ensure that development to be provided for in the rural areas is distributed between villages in a sustainable fashion. It reviews the earlier Local Plan hierarchy, finding that four villages within Wellingborough Borough have a limited service role. These are Earl’s Barton, Finedon, Irchester and Wollaston.

Local documents – Conservation Area Appraisals, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements

- 3.23 At the level of individual settlements, a number of more local studies have been completed or are under preparation. These all highlight the individual character of these localities, although the specific roles of Conservation Area Appraisals, Parish

²¹ http://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/Settlement_boundary_paper.pdf

²² http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/5061/village_settlement_heirarchy_paper

Plans and Village Design Statements (VDSs) vary greatly. While Conservation Area Appraisals and VDSs focus upon the built environment, Parish Plans are far broader in scope, covering a broad range of community issues and concerns.

- 3.24 Corby Borough Council, despite being a predominantly urban area, has 10 designated Conservation Areas. Two villages, East Carlton and Rockingham, have their entire built up area covered by a designated Conservation Area. Both also have in place up to date Conservation Area Appraisals, which have informed the Borough Council's proposal to maintain a "Restraint Village" category in order to protect these two particular historic locations (Rural Strategy, April 2009).
- 3.25 East Northamptonshire Council has the largest rural hinterland (and number of villages) of all Districts within North Northamptonshire. As such, it also has a large number of villages with designated Conservation Areas. In 2007, the Council's Policy and Resources Committee (Minute 253, 10 December 2007) agreed a phased priority programme for undertaking Conservation Area Appraisals. These provide additional support in identifying particularly sensitive locations, where a "Restraint Village" designation may be appropriate.
- 3.26 Kettering Borough Council has reviewed all relevant Conservation Area Appraisals, Parish Plans and VDSs and incorporated the key findings into the Rural Masterplanning Report. In this case, the Masterplanning project provides a single resource base, through which the range of local evidence is summarised and published in a comparative format for individual settlements.
- 3.27 A range of Parish Plans have been prepared at community level. Where these have been successfully undertaken, they may provide additional local evidence regarding growth aspirations at the community level. Indeed, in many cases these should form the initial stage in developing a Neighbourhood Plan if this is seen as a way forward by the local community. Parish Plans provide a valuable, locally derived evidence base which should complement the various District level documents for Parishes where these have been prepared.

Issues arising through this examination of the existing evidence base

- 3.28 It is clear that there already exists an extensive evidence base, which may be utilised to inform the development of a settlement hierarchy for the Core Strategy review and/ or other District level DPDs. The following issues are noted:
- **Corby Borough Council** – 2009 Rural Strategy provides an updated assessment of settlement boundaries and review of settlement hierarchy taking into account the form and character of the settlements.
 - **East Northamptonshire Council** – Detailed evidence base developed over last 5/6 years, reflecting complicated relationships between rural settlements within Rural North of District. **However, an up to date evidence base is lacking for Four Towns Plan area, including assessment of village services at Caldecott, Chelveston, Crow Hill, Ringstead, Stanwick and other settlements in the south of the District.**
 - **Kettering Borough Council** – Detailed current/ up to date evidence base regarding both village appraisals (Masterplanning report) and settlement boundaries. The smaller towns (Burton Latimer, Desborough, Rothwell) are

already identified as a secondary focus for development in the current Core Strategy.

- **Borough Council of Wellingborough** – The bespoke Settlement Hierarchy paper provides a detailed, up to date and comprehensive review of the settlement hierarchy for the Borough.

- 3.29 Overall, the Four Towns Plan area (East Northamptonshire Council) represents the only part of North Northamptonshire where a published evidence base regarding village services and facilities is currently lacking. It is therefore essential that such a paper is completed in response to the findings of this initial assessment of the evidence base. This work is currently being undertaken by East Northamptonshire Council.
- 3.30 Substantial villages such as Mawsley (new village) and Stanwick do not form part of the settlement hierarchy as defined in adopted DPDs (i.e. current Core Strategy and old District level Local Plans). These omissions will need to be addressed through the emerging Core Strategy review, although it is recognised that recent work such as the Kettering Masterplanning project should go along way towards overcoming this.
- 3.31 It is also noted that at the District level, there may be some inconsistency between methodologies in respect of assessing the future roles, functions and relationships between settlements. In part, this reflects differing spatial strategies in the adopted Core Strategy; e.g. those villages within Wellingborough Borough fall within the defined “urban spine”, while most of East Northamptonshire falls outside this area.

4.0 Stage 3 – Defining the scope of the settlement hierarchy to be included within the Core Strategy review

- 4.1 As explained above, the current (2008) Core Strategy (Policy 1) defines specific spatial development strategies for just 13 out of 130 settlements across North Northamptonshire. Indeed, the settlement hierarchy in the current Core Strategy is largely taken forward from the 2005 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM), although the current Core Strategy also includes some additional spatial policies (see section 2.0), i.e.:
- Sub-division of “Growth Towns” (Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough) centres’, with Kettering identified as the predominant sub-regional town centre for North Northamptonshire;
 - Distinctive growth strategy for Rushden town centre, as opposed to other defined “Smaller Towns”;
 - Categorisation of King’s Cliffe as a Local Service Centre.
- 4.2 In order to define the extent (scope) of a settlement hierarchy for the Core Strategy review, it is necessary to consider the following questions, in respect of the 12 North Northamptonshire towns:
- Should the current Core Strategy approach be retained; or
 - Should the settlement hierarchy for towns be comprehensively reviewed, to reflect recent changes to the planning system introduced through the 2011 Localism Act and NPPF?
- 4.3 Previous (old-style) Local Plans have, conventionally, included 3-4 categories of village, based around size, local services, character and built form. In the case of East Northamptonshire this approach was continued through the RNOTP, which included three categories of village in addition to King’s Cliffe. It is necessary to determine what distinction should be made between villages, recognising the need to provide clear strategic guidance, but at the same time not stifle “localism” through over-prescription. In considering the established approach, the following questions need to be addressed in respect of the villages:
1. **Larger/ principal/ service villages** – which larger villages should be defined as Local Service Centres, service villages or principal villages in the Core Strategy review, in addition to King’s Cliffe?
 2. **Medium sized/ intermediate villages** – How far should the Core Strategy review go in defining specific roles for individual villages?
 3. **Restraint villages/ open countryside** – Should the Core Strategy review identify individual “Restraint Villages”, where specific development restrictions are defined or should these be designated open countryside?
- 4.4 The current Core Strategy Vision focuses upon creating a “*strong network of vibrant settlements with excellent transport connections*” (p19); i.e. a predominantly urban focus. Broadly, this reflects the 2005 Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional

Strategy, with its focus upon the Growth Towns (Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough). The Core Strategy review process to date has already raised four strategic options, all of which would have implications for the settlement hierarchy:

- **Option A: Core Strategy Plus** – concentrates on Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden and is about building a more integrated urban core as a distinct functional area less influenced by Northampton.
- **Option B: Twin Poles** – seeks greater economic self reliance for the Wellingborough and Rushden areas but sees a significant amount of housing growth in Corby and Kettering.
- **Option C: Northern Focus** – concentrates more on Corby and Kettering and providing a counterpoint to Northampton, with Wellingborough and Rushden becoming more dependent on Northampton.
- **Option D: Northampton Focus** – is about improving connectivity between Northampton and the urban core, recognising the dominant role of Northampton and planning for growth along key transport corridors, complemented by new rapid transit systems.

- 4.5 Through formal consultation events with key stakeholders (e.g. “Place Shaping” workshops, 2010; Issues consultation, February/ March 2011), technical studies (e.g. transport modelling) and various meetings of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee (JPC), these strategic directions have been assessed in detail. Most recently, an emerging approach was recommended to the JPC on 24 November 2011 JPC, which recommended a preferred approach. This takes forward elements of all spatial options but is most closely aligned to the Core Strategy Plus option in terms of the strategic policy direction. The distribution of housing and jobs is however more along the lines of the Northern Focus option, because of the greater potential for growth in Corby and Kettering compared to the southern functional area around Wellingborough and the Four Towns, predominantly Rushden (JPC Agenda Item 4, paragraph 5.3).
- 4.6 The 24 November 2011 JPC meeting highlighted the need to resolve “*the role of Rushden. A decision would have to be taken as to whether to separate it out from the smaller towns in North Northamptonshire and include as a secondary growth town*” (JPC Minutes, 24 November 2011). Accordingly, it is extremely likely that the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy would require some degree of modification, in order to address Rushden’s particular emerging aspirations.
- 4.7 While the JPC meeting on 24 November 2011 was not “quorate”, a number of issues were considered informally, although the emerging approach was not formally approved. However, the subsequent JPC meeting on 12 January 2012 agreed a draft settlement hierarchy.

Towns

- 4.8 In considering the roles of individual towns within North Northamptonshire, an extensive spatial strategy for each of these is already set out in Policy 1/ Table 1. Two specific options are therefore noted, for consideration within this paper:

- **Option T1** – Broadly retain the existing settlement hierarchy (with the notable exception of Rushden’s current “Smaller Town” designation), as defined by current Core Strategy Policy 1; or
- **Option T2** – Undertake a more comprehensive review of the entire settlement strategy?

4.9 As explained above, the NPPF requires that **reasonable** alternatives should be considered (paragraph 182). These alternative approaches are assessed in more detail below (Stage 4).

Larger/ principal/ service villages

4.10 As explained above, the decision to designate King’s Cliffe as a “Local Service Centre” in the current Core Strategy was taken with reference to an extensive evidence base, which unequivocally demonstrated that village’s importance as a local service hub in the rural north of the Plan area. In particular, reference is made to the 2004 Entec and 2006 Baker Associates studies, both of which clearly identify the particular importance of King’s Cliffe as a service centre.

4.11 Accordingly, the question is raised as to whether other larger or principal villages ought also to be classified as Local Service Centres or service villages in the Core Strategy review. Three alternative approaches should be considered:

- **Option S1** – Retention of King’s Cliffe as a Local Service Centre, but do not go beyond this level through the Core Strategy review (i.e. the “status quo”);
- **Option S2** – Retention of King’s Cliffe as a Local Service Centre and introduction of other smaller or “Limited Local Service Centres” through the Core Strategy review (as with Nassington and Warmington in the recently adopted RNOTP);
- **Option S3** – Identify a range of other Local Service Centres of equal status, in addition to King’s Cliffe.

4.12 As stated above, a key aspect of the current Core Strategy is that it is urban focused and does not address fully the wide variety of issues affecting rural areas. To date, the evidence gathering work which has taken place since 2009 for the emerging Core Strategy review (particularly the “Place Shaping” workshops and consultations) would indicate that Option S1 is not considered to be a reasonable or appropriate option in this case. Options S2 and S3 will, however, be considered within Stage 4 of this process.

Medium sized/ intermediate villages

4.13 Within adopted DPDs (i.e. the RNOTP and old-style Local Plans), the vast majority of villages fall within the intermediate “Restricted Infill” or “Category A” village classifications. This reflects the fact that for a long time development plans have generally focused upon small scale developments within the existing built form, in the case of the majority of villages.

4.14 An important aspect of the Core Strategy review relates to the roles and functions of clusters of villages (Issues Consultation Background Paper, February 2011). It is also recognized, however, that such relationships are often extremely complicated and

difficult to assess. The “Integrated Approach to Sustainable Rural Planning in East Northamptonshire” (Baker Associates, January 2006) represents an important example of a detailed local analysis of such relationships.

- 4.15 Nevertheless, in defining reasonable options, it is necessary to determine what is appropriately “strategic” to be covered by the Core Strategy review. It is likely that medium sized/ “Intermediate” villages will vary greatly in terms of size, facilities, services and character. Of course, the relationships between these villages will also vary greatly and, as such, the following approaches (options) have been identified:
- **Option I1** – Define a single intermediate or middle category for the majority of villages, anticipating that the more detailed relationships between these will be addressed either through District level site specific DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans prepared by individual, or groups of, parishes; or
 - **Option I2** – Attempt to identify groups/ clusters of villages which function together as a local unit.
- 4.16 The outcome of these alternatives is largely dependent upon the quality of the existing evidence base. Certainly, in the case of Kettering, there is already in place a detailed, up to date, evidence base regarding individual villages.

Restraint villages/ open countryside

- 4.17 The current Core Strategy sets out a specific requirement for District level DPDs to identify “Restraint Villages” where conservation and restraint over development are priorities due to the particular scale, form and character of the settlement (paragraph 3.14). The Restraint Villages category currently covers a range of villages including those which have national historic interest; notably Rockingham and Fotheringhay.
- 4.18 In undertaking the Core Strategy review, the following alternative approaches are noted:
- **Option R1** – The Core Strategy review should individually identify those villages which are deemed to be appropriately classified as “Restraint Villages”.
 - **Option R2** – Restraint Villages should be classified either through District level DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans, e.g. with reference to Conservation Area Appraisals where these have been prepared.
 - **Option R3** – Remove the “Restraint Village” designation altogether. Instead, Restraint Villages would be classified as “open countryside”, where relevant policies regarding the latter would apply.
- 4.19 It is noted that a range of Conservation Area Appraisals have already been prepared for some Conservation Areas across North Northamptonshire. These provide a critical opportunity to identify those villages with such a historic character, that are likely to be sensitive to new development proposals.
- 4.20 Overall, the range of options predominantly focus upon how far the emerging Core Strategy review ought to go in defining a robust settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire. While it is generally accepted that the current Core Strategy did not go into sufficient detail beyond defining a spatial development strategy for towns, a

fundamental question is nevertheless raised regarding how far it is appropriate for the Core Strategy review to go in defining a settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire.

5.0 Stage 4 – Possible alternative approaches – retention of existing settlement hierarchy (approach 1) or comprehensive review of current hierarchy (approach 2)?

5.1 There are two underlying issues that need to be addressed when considering alternative approaches for defining a settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire. These are:

- **Whether or not to fully revisit/ review the current settlement hierarchy/ roles, as defined by Core Strategy Policy 1/ Table 1?**
- **How far should the Core Strategy review go in defining a settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire; i.e. should District level/ site specific DPDs still have a role in respect of this?**

Towns

Options considered:

- **Option T1** – Broadly retain the existing settlement hierarchy (with the exception of Rushden’s current “Smaller Town” designation)
- **Option T2** – Undertake a more comprehensive review of the entire settlement strategy?

5.2 Views have emerged through recent JPC meetings and seminars (autumn 2011 and January 2012) regarding reviewing the settlement hierarchy for the Core Strategy review. Meetings of the JPC on 24 November 2011 and 12 January 2012 considered two alternative approaches²³, which closely relate to options T1 and T2 respectively.

5.3 Option T1 involves retaining the existing Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, albeit with Rushden re-designated a “Growth Town”. Otherwise, this approach would retain the distinction between “Smaller Towns” and “Rural Service Centres”, derived from the MKSM (2005).

5.4 The JPC has already given provided some direction in respect of the settlement hierarchy for towns. The November 2011 and January 2012 JPC meetings gave clear direction that Members would be keen to see a fundamental revision of the current settlement hierarchy (i.e. Option T2, above). Table 2 (below) shows the proposed

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<http://cmis.northamptonshire.gov.uk/CMIS5Live/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=IPm4a%2fUnW4maELnEZ%2fp87E7JpGC1Qr5gFPwyk5a9hFcb%2fWHE7A9YtA%3d%3d&mCTIbCubSFfXsDGW9iXnlq%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&kCx1AnS9%2fpWZQ40DXFvdEw%3d%3d=hFflUdN3100%3d&uJovDxwdjMPoYv%2bAJvYtyA%3d%3d=ctNJFF55vVA%3d&FgPIIEJYlotS%2bYGoBi5olA%3d%3d=NHdURQburHA%3d&d9Qj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFF55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFF55vVA%3d&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCPMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFF55vVA%3d>

revision to the settlement hierarchy in respect of the 12 towns (and certain larger villages) across North Northamptonshire.

| Table 2: Town roles, as agreed by Joint Planning Committee, 12 January 2012 | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Category | Towns | Roles | Implications |
| Growth Towns | Corby, Kettering, Rushden, Wellingborough | To provide the focus for major coordinated regeneration and growth in jobs, housing and comparison retail development. | Greatest share of new employment, retail and leisure development. Main locations for new housing through urban capacity and sustainable urban extensions. Improved transport choice and linkages between neighbouring towns. The focus of new infrastructure and the removal of constraints on housing delivery |
| Market Towns | Desborough, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rothwell, Thrapston | To provide a strong service role for their local community and wider rural hinterland | Scale of new development related to infrastructure provision and regeneration needs. Expansion and diversification of employment opportunities. Improved transport choice and links to Growth Towns. Regeneration and diversification at Desborough, Irthlingborough, Raunds and Thrapston. Consolidation of Oundle and Rothwell town centres' offer. |
| Complementary Centres | Burton Latimer, Higham Ferrers, Earl's Barton, Irchester | To provide a localised convenience and service role, with growth pressures directed to the nearest growth town. | Strong development management will be required to ensure that major development pressures are not easily diverted to these complementary centres in the absence of SUEs coming forward at the related growth towns. Improved transport choice and linkages with the growth towns. |
| | | | |

5.5 In summary, this revised strategy incorporates:

- Rushden's aspirations that it should play a more significant role in North Northamptonshire;
- Removal of the artificial regional/ MKSM distinction between "Smaller Towns" and "Rural Service Centres";
- Introduction of a new distinction between freestanding Market Towns and those which are closely related to a nearer larger centre/ Growth Town.

5.6 To a large extent, the debate has already taken place, between options T1 (retention of the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy for towns) and T2 (a fundamental overhaul of the current settlement hierarchy). It is clear that Option T2 is the preferred settlement hierarchy, reflecting the Joint Planning Unit's "place shaping approach" to the Core Strategy review. This focuses on local aspirations and seeking to understand how places function and how they should change (Issues Consultation Background Paper, February 2011).

- 5.7 Questions arise over the distinction between Market Towns and Complementary Centres; the latter including the large villages of Earl's Barton and Irchester. These are both, however, predominantly urban in terms of built form and are closely related to nearby Growth Towns (Wellingborough and Rushden respectively).
- 5.8 Overall, the preferred approach in respect of defining a settlement hierarchy for the towns is to comprehensively reassess the current Core Strategy approach (Policy 1/ Table 1). The new "Settlement roles" approach has been largely developed through reference to the "place shaping" consultation events during 2009-11; itself a reflection of the Government's emerging "Localism" agenda. The likely abolition of the East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009) during 2012, under the provisions of the 2011 Localism Act, provides a key opportunity for this.

Larger/ principal/ service villages

Options considered:

- **Option S1** – Retention of King's Cliffe as a Local Service Centre, but do not go beyond this level through the Core Strategy review
- **Option S2** – Retention of King's Cliffe as a Local Service Centre and introduction of other smaller or "Limited Local Service Centres" through the Core Strategy review
- **Option S3** – Identify a range of other Local Service Centres of equal status, in addition to King's Cliffe

- 5.9 The need to define a more comprehensive list of local service centre villages has been recognised as a criticism of the current Core Strategy. However, it is a matter for consideration; whether to retain King's Cliffe as the primary "Local Service Centre" but also to identify other "Limited Local Service Centres" (Option S2), or whether to define further Local Service Centres, of equivalent status to King's Cliffe (Option S3).
- 5.10 The JPC has already provided some direction in respect of this matter. The November 2011 and January 2012 JPC meetings gave clear direction that Members would be keen to identify further additional Local Service Centres, in addition to King's Cliffe (i.e. Option S3).

Table 3: Local Service Centres, as agreed by Joint Planning Committee, 12 January 2012

| Category | Settlements | Roles | Implications |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Local Service Centres | Brigstock, Broughton, Easton on the Hill, Finedon, Geddington, King's Cliffe, Mawsley, Nassington, Ringstead, Warmington, | To provide focal points for community infrastructure and development to meet local needs in the rural area | King's Cliffe to provide secondary focus for the rural north east. The scale of development will be led by locally identified employment and housing requirements and the need to support existing services. Improved accessibility from these centres to larger centres and related villages. |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | Wilbarston, Wollaston, Woodford | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|

5.11 This list largely reflects the recent evidence base documents prepared at a District level. Particular reference has been made to the following documents:

- Corby Borough Council Rural Strategy (April 2009);
- Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (East Northamptonshire Council, January 2009);
- Kettering Borough Council Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Background paper: Settlement Boundaries; table, section 1.0 (September 2011)
- Borough Council of Wellingborough Site Specific DPD – Preferred Options Background Report: Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010).

5.12 A number of matters raised and/ or recommendations are noted in respect of these evidence base documents:

1. Gretton and Weldon are both identified by Corby's Rural Strategy as larger villages with potential for limited infill development, although neither is proposed for further additional development given the close relationship of both to Corby (paragraphs 3.6-3.7). Effectively this approach would represent a step down from the current Local Plan "Limited Development Village" (i.e. service village) classification.
2. Brigstock, Easton on the Hill and Woodford are proposed as additional Local Service Centres within East Northamptonshire, alongside King's Cliffe, Nassington and Warmington, in accordance with the findings of East Northamptonshire Council's 2009 Settlement Hierarchy paper.
3. Kettering Borough Council wishes to pursue a Localism approach, by assessing the character of settlements on a purely individual basis through the Rural Masterplanning project. However, the Settlement Boundaries paper identified specific larger villages which have a population >1000 and a significant range of local services; i.e. Broughton, Geddington and Mawsley.
4. Wellingborough's Settlement Hierarchy paper identified Earls Barton, Finedon, Irchester and Wollaston as having a limited service role. However, the 12 January 2012 JPC meeting accepted, at the time, that Earl's Barton and Irchester could be designated as Complementary centres, rather than Local Service Centres, due to their close proximity and relationships with nearby Growth Towns. Complementary centres were considered as a possible means of distinguishing between those villages which perform a service centre role, and those larger villages of an urban character/ smaller towns within the defined "Urban Core" (adopted Core Strategy, policies 1 and 4) that are closely related/ adjacent to the larger urban areas.

5.13 In most cases, the existing evidence base has enabled Local Service Centres/ service villages to be clearly identified. Nevertheless, a small number of issues have been identified, which may need to be addressed through this paper and/ or further evidence gathering.

- The Four Towns Plan area incorporates a rural hinterland around Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Raunds and Rushden; including larger villages such as Stanwick and Ringstead. East Northamptonshire Council is preparing a bespoke Settlement Hierarchy/ local services study for the Four Towns Plan area, which will supplement this paper. The evidence recently gathered through the latter project strongly indicates that Ringstead has a Local Service role.
- Kettering Borough Council's Settlement Boundaries paper identifies Wilbarston as a "larger village with some services and facilities". This was assessed as a possible "Principal village" (JPC, 3 July 2012, Item 6 Appendix 3), although the range of services (primary school, shop and pub only) are such that it should not be considered a "Principal village".
- The Wellingborough Settlement Hierarchy study has also identified Bozeat as having a broad range of services, although the paper does not recommend that this village be classified as having a local service role. Further justification may be necessary if a challenge is made in respect of this matter.

5.14 The list of potential Local Service Centres/ service villages, considered by the JPC in January 2012, has been informed through clear direction and guidance provided by the existing evidence base. While King's Cliffe has previously been identified as being a primary Local Service Centre in the current Core Strategy (Option S2), consideration has also been given to whether the other service villages should be given equal status (Option S3).

5.15 The JPC has expressed a preference that all Local Service Centres be given equal standing in the Core Strategy review (Option S3), with no distinction between primary Local Service Centres (i.e. King's Cliffe) and other, secondary Local Service Centres.. The main advantage of this approach is that it simplifies the range of different categories within the Settlement Hierarchy. As is the case of the current distinction between Smaller Towns and Rural Service Centres, in reality the spatial development strategies for both are extremely similar.

Medium sized/ intermediate villages

Options considered:

- **Option I1** – Define a single intermediate or middle category for the majority of villages, anticipating that the more detailed relationships between these will be addressed either through District level site specific DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans
- **Option I2** – Attempt to identify groups/ clusters of villages which function together as a local unit

5.16 It remains extremely likely that the majority of villages across North Northamptonshire would fall within an "intermediate classification"; i.e. between service villages/ local service centres and the restraint village/ open countryside category. Evidence gathered at the District level includes specific recommendations regarding the range of villages which are likely to fall within this category.

- 5.17 Currently, the RNOTP and old-style District Local Plans have identified approximately 70 villages classified as “Category ‘A’ Network Villages” or “Restricted Infill Villages” respectively. These vary greatly and include large villages with a significant range of services; e.g. Bozeat (Wellingborough), Cottingham & Middleton (Corby), Pytchley and Wilbarston (Kettering), and Titchmarsh (East Northamptonshire). At the opposite end of the scale, are a number of villages with extremely limited or no local services, or with <100 residents.
- 5.18 Two broad approaches have been identified in respect of the varied range of “Intermediate” villages. One is to include these within a single category (Option I1), which would then enable more detailed classifications to be identified through either site specific DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans. The other is to provide more detailed policy direction in respect of individual clusters of settlements (Option I2).
- 5.19 It is noted that the vast majority of Intermediate villages are situated within the Rural North area of East Northamptonshire. In this case, the vast majority have a clearly defined spatial development strategy within an up to date adopted DPD; i.e. the RNOTP (July 2011). The supporting evidence base for the RNOTP, specifically the Entec study (May 2004) and Baker Associates study (January 2006), includes detailed assessments of the relationships between villages. A further issue is the relationship between villages around the periphery of North Northamptonshire and towns and villages in close proximity, including the market towns of Stamford and Market Harborough together with service villages such as Ketton and Wansford.
- 5.20 The “cluster” approach (Option I2) could be accommodated through defining cluster zones, possibly centred upon a particular service village. In some cases, Parish Plans may provide further local evidence regarding the functioning of village “clusters”. Nevertheless, this approach is still likely to present many complications and difficulties, given that the wider relationships with settlements outside North Northamptonshire will also need to be taken into consideration.
- 5.21 Overall, it appears that Option I1 would present the more straightforward approach. This has key advantages, in particular that:
- It has already been adopted for the majority of intermediate villages, through the recently adopted RNOTP;
 - More detailed work in defining clusters/ networks of related villages could be undertaken through Neighbourhood Plans, at a community level;
 - It is already supported by an extensive evidence base, including this document.

Restraint villages

Options considered:

- **Option R1** – The Core Strategy review should individually identify those villages which are deemed to be appropriately classified as “Restraint Villages”.
- **Option R2** – Restraint Villages should be classified either through District level DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans.
- **Option R3** – Remove the “Restraint Village” designation altogether. Instead,

Restraint Villages would be classified as “open countryside”.

- 5.22 A significant number of villages with particular historic interest or character are classified as “Restraint Villages” through the RNOTP or earlier Local Plans. The current Core Strategy requires that: “*Development plan documents will identify Restraint Villages...*” (paragraph 3.14). The majority of these fall within the RNOTP area of East Northamptonshire and are designated Category B Network Villages (Policy 1(4)/ paragraph 4.10).
- 5.23 Currently designated Restraint Villages include villages such as Fotheringhay and Rockingham, which have particular historic interest. The principal question is whether the Core Strategy review should specifically identify individual Restraint Villages (Option R1), or whether this should be undertaken through District level or site specific DPDs. Furthermore, it is noted that a spatial strategy of development “Restraint” could **only** be applied through a relevant DPD and not through Neighbourhood Planning.
- 5.24 The NPPF explains the role and functions of Local Plan documents (in this case, the Core Strategy review). These roles include a requirement that Local Plans should: “*...identify land where development would be inappropriate, for instance because of its environmental or historic significance*” (paragraph 157). It may be argued that this provision could, implicitly, allow for the designation of Restraint Villages, either through the Core Strategy review or District-level DPDs.
- 5.25 The Government’s specific intentions, as set out in HM Treasury’s Plan for Growth (March 2011)²⁴ are that: “*Neighbourhood plans will be able to shape development, but not to block it*” (paragraph 2.16). This is further explained by the NPPF, which states that: “*Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies*” (paragraph 184). In other words, it would be contrary to emerging national planning policy (NPPF, together with the “presumption in favour of sustainable development”, March 2011) to try and use Neighbourhood planning as a means to apply development restraint at the local level.
- 5.26 If it is decided to proceed with a Restraint Village category, it is essential that this does not effectively preclude future development opportunities, in the event that a community, village or group of villages wishes to bring forward specific local development proposals through a Neighbourhood Plan or similar. This is especially significant if Restraint Villages are, instead, to be classified as “open countryside” (Option R3).
- 5.27 Of course, a Neighbourhood Plan proposal seeking to bring forward major development in a particularly historic or sensitive location would probably be unacceptable, given that this could be seen as undermining the strategic policies within the Local Plan. Similarly, such an approach would be unlikely to satisfy NPPF policies regarding conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment (sections 11 and 12 respectively).

²⁴ http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_growth.pdf

5.28 The draft settlement hierarchy recently agreed by the Joint Planning Committee (12 January 2012) retains the Restraint Village category; i.e. reflecting the current development plan approach across North Northamptonshire. Corby, East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough Councils have all prepared evidence base documents, indicating a number of villages which ought to fall within the restraint village category.

| Borough/ District | Proposed Restraint Villages | Main source | Commentary |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|
| Corby | East Carlton, Rockingham | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Historic villages whose built form is entirely covered by a Conservation Area. This confirms that conservation is a high priority in these villages in comparison to others in the Borough (Rural Strategy, paragraph 10.9). Both East Carlton and Rockingham ²⁵ now have up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisals (March 2008/ June 2009 respectively), which provide detailed character information. |
| East Northamptonshire | See Appendix 2 | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (adopted July 2011); Four Towns Plan – Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (March 2012) | The RNOTP (Policy 1(4)) defines a number of “Category B Network Villages”. These either have particular conservation interest (e.g. Fotheringhay) or a scattered built form (i.e. no obvious/ defined built up area). Similar recommendations are made in respect of villages within the Four Towns area (Caldecott, Chelston Rise and Newton Bromswold), based predominantly upon the overall scoring for each potential Restraint Village. |
| Kettering | No villages | Kettering Borough Rural Masterplanning Report (August 2011) | A number of Restraint Villages are currently designated in the 1995 Local Plan. However, the recent Rural Masterplanning project proposes to discontinue the Restraint Village designation, instead assessing each village on its particular character, built form and services. Nevertheless, four small villages/ hamlets are proposed as “open countryside” in policy terms (Brampton Ash, Dingley, Orton, Pipewell). |
| Wellingborough | Easton Maudit, Hardwick, Strixton, Sywell Old Village | Background Report – Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) | The Rural Settlement Hierarchy reviewed the status of Restraint Villages currently designated by the 1999 Local Plan. This proposed that Hardwick should be classified as an additional Restraint Village. The report specifies that “ <i>these four Villages will be seen as ‘open countryside’ where further development is severely limited</i> ” (paragraph 4.5). |

5.29 Effectively, Corby and East Northamptonshire both propose to retain a distinct policy approach in respect of Restraint Villages. East Northamptonshire draws a distinction between open countryside “settlements” (e.g. Luddington in the Brook, Wigsthorpe) and Restraint Villages in the current RNOTP. Kettering, whose old Local Plan currently retains such a distinction, has proposed through the Rural Masterplanning Project, to

²⁵ <http://www.corby.gov.uk/node/25600>

remove this but to retain the designated “open countryside” villages/ hamlets from the 1995 Local Plan. Wellingborough proposes to retain the Restraint Village category but, in practice, to treat these villages as if they are “open countryside”.

- 5.30 The evidence base reveals that the four Districts are proposing differing approaches in respect of Restraint Villages. Indeed, East Northamptonshire Council already has a recently adopted settlement strategy for the majority of villages (RNOTP Policy 1). Effectively, these clear differences rule out the designation of specific Restraint Villages through the Core Strategy review, without an explicit defined policy (Option R1). Accordingly, a decision needs to be taken in respect of:
- **Whether the Restraint Village category should be maintained in some form, with provision made for the designation of Restraint Villages in District level/ site specific DPDs (Option R2)? Or**
 - **Whether the Restraint Village strategy should be discontinued in the Core Strategy review (Option R3) and, if so, where should the distinction between villages and open countryside be drawn?**
- 5.31 In many respects, the designation of Restraint Villages is a difficult matter to address through the Core Strategy review. Restraint Villages have long been an important element of rural planning policy, in all cases having been defined in old-style Local Plans during the 1990s. The current Core Strategy (paragraph 3.14) expressly continues this approach, by explicitly requiring the designation of Restraint Villages, based on the scale, form and character of the settlement.
- 5.32 It is recognised that the Core Strategy review provides an opportunity to reconsider this approach. The evidence indicates that it is difficult to provide a single North Northamptonshire wide spatial strategy, given that each District/ Borough has taken slightly differing views in respect of this, thereby effectively ruling out Option R1. The decision still needs to be taken however, as to whether the Restraint Village designation itself should be maintained.
- 5.33 **Impact of the NPPF** – As said, the current approach to Restraint Villages differs between the constituent local planning authorities. For example, East Northamptonshire and Kettering both retain adopted development plan policies with a firm distinction between Restraint Villages and open countryside. In the case of Wellingborough, however, Restraint Villages are treated in practice as if they are open countryside.
- 5.34 Recent changes to current national policy, introduced through the NPPF, tend to endorse the Borough Council of Wellingborough’s approach. The current approach in respect of residential development in open countryside, as set out in the NPPF, states that: “*Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as...where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting*” (paragraph 54).
- 5.35 NPPF paragraph 54 closely reflects the current spatial strategy for “Category B Network Villages” (i.e. Restraint Villages) in the recently adopted RNOTP (Policy 1(4)). The RNOTP specifies that “*Category B Network Villages do not have a defined village*”

planning boundary”, although: “*There will still be scope for development that involves the re-use of buildings, which in most cases will be redundant agricultural buildings*” (paragraph 4.10). By contrast, in “open countryside” locations general residential development will not normally be permitted (paragraph 4.11).

- 5.36 Effectively, if the Restraint Village category is discontinued (Option R3), in practice the NPPF applies the same policy direction as is currently utilised in the RNOTP (the most recently adopted DPD within North Northamptonshire) for Category B Network Villages. In this scenario, therefore, the Wellingborough approach could be applied and it would no longer be critical to distinguish between Restraint Villages and open countryside locations.

Overview

- 5.37 The Joint Planning Committee has already put forward a number of recommendations in respect of the defining a settlement hierarchy/ spatial development strategy. In summary, this revised approach is summarised as follows:

- Comprehensive review of current settlement strategy, largely a product of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005) and East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009);
- Comprehensive review of three categories of towns (Growth Towns, Smaller Towns and Rural Service Centres), in recognition of proposed abolition the Regional Plan through the 2011 Localism Act;
- Establishment of alternative settlement hierarchy, which better reflects the growth aspirations of towns and the relationships between these;
- Re-designation of Rushden as a Growth Town and defining a new category of Complementary Centres, i.e. those settlements which are physically/ functionally related to adjacent Growth Towns (e.g. Burton Latimer, Higham Ferrers);
- Continuation of earlier three category approach to villages, i.e. Local Service Centres, intermediate/ “Restricted Infill” and Restraint Villages, previously introduced through old-style (1990s) Local Plans.

- 5.38 The revised approach still includes a significant range of settlement categories (**at least six**). This reflects the range of evidence base documents, all of which are based on a presumption of at least three categories of town, plus three village categories.

6.0 Stage 5 – Possible alternative approaches – simplified settlement hierarchy (approaches 3 or 4)

- 6.1 Throughout the process, it is recognised that the definition of a suitable, robust settlement hierarchy is an essential aspect of setting out the overall spatial strategy. A range of evidence is essential to define common characteristics and features of settlements/ groups of settlements, itself critical in underpinning the overall spatial strategy, both the current Core Strategy and its emerging replacement.
- 6.2 The importance of a robust settlement hierarchy in setting a meaningful spatial development strategy is recognised in all DPDs. If the current Regional Plan is also taken into account, a comprehensive settlement hierarchy consists of a large number of settlement categories.

| Document | Grade | Classification | Examples |
|---|-------|---|--|
| East Midlands Regional Plan (March 2009) | 1 | Principal Urban Areas | Leicester, Nottingham, Northampton |
| | 2 | Growth Towns/ Growth Points | Corby, Grantham, Hinckley, Kettering, Loughborough, Wellingborough |
| | 3 | Sub-Regional Centres (other) | Daventry, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray |
| MKSM (March 2005)/ North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (June 2008) | 4 | Smaller Towns | Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Rothwell, Rushden |
| | 5 | Rural Service Centres | Oundle, Raunds, Thrapston |
| | 6 | Local Service Centres | King's Cliffe |
| District level DPDs (RNOTP, old-style District Local Plans) | 7 | Smaller Service Centres/ Limited Development Villages | Earl's Barton, Finedon, Gretton, Nassington, Warmington, Weldon, Wollaston |
| | 8 | Category A Network Villages/ Restricted Infill Villages | Most villages |
| | 9 | Category B Network Villages/ Restraint Villages | Easton Maudit, Fotheringhay, Grafton Underwood, Rockingham |
| | 10 | Hamlets/ open countryside | Brampton Ash, Dingley, Knuston, Luddington in the Brook, Wigsthorpe |

- 6.3 Currently, at least 10 separate settlement categories are identified from the Regional Level down. The recent passage of the Localism Act (November 2011) and proposed abolition of the Regional Plan have provided a significant opportunity to fundamentally review the settlement hierarchy. As stated, for many years most settlement strategies have consisted of at least three town classifications and three village categories.
- 6.4 The need to provide a more extensive settlement hierarchy was highlighted as a priority early during the Core Strategy review process, in order to provide a clearer policy direction in respect of rural areas (i.e. most settlements, which are not classified in the current Core Strategy). Accordingly, it has generally been accepted that the Core Strategy review needs to set out a more extensive settlement hierarchy than the current approach.

The impact of the Localism Act (November 2011) and NPPF (March 2012): a potential alternative approach

- 6.5 Since the start of the process in 2009, it has been generally accepted that the Core Strategy review needs to go further than at present to categorise settlements. That said, it is not necessarily appropriate to set out a detailed settlement hierarchy, containing at least 6-7 categories of settlement. The Localism Act has now introduced Neighbourhood Plans as a new level of development plan document. The NPPF explains that: “*Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes...can use neighbourhood plans to:*
- *set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications; and*
 - *give planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders for specific development which complies with the order*” (paragraph 183).
- 6.6 Critically, the NPPF also specifies that: “*Neighbourhood plans **must** be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan*” (paragraph 184); i.e. the current Core Strategy, emerging Core Strategy review and District level DPDs (e.g. RNOTP). It is therefore necessary to consider moving from a more prescriptive spatial strategy/settlement hierarchy to a more enabling approach, in accordance with the spirit of localism.
- 6.7 Inevitably, an alternative approach will involve a greatly simplified settlement hierarchy. This will need to be sufficient to define a meaningful spatial strategy, while moving away from a prescriptive approach. Ensuring a settlement hierarchy that is meaningful and “fit for purpose” is essential, in order to avoid a charge that the Core Strategy review “*is...silent or relevant policies are out-of-date*” (presumption in favour of sustainable development, paragraph 14). One such approach is suggested as follows (Appendix 4).

| Category | Settlements | Roles | Implications |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| Growth Towns | Corby, Kettering, Rushden, Wellingborough | Focus for services and infrastructure for North Northamptonshire and location for major growth | Significant new strategic level development; site specific allocations at Core Strategy level |
| Market Towns | Burton Latimer, Desborough, Higham Ferrers, Irthlingborough, Oundle, Raunds, Rothwell, Thrapston | Service role for wider rural hinterland | Some potential strategic site allocations at Core Strategy level. Some Market Towns function as freestanding service centres. Others (e.g. Burton Latimer, Higham Ferrers) are closely related to adjacent Growth Towns, sharing a range of services. |

| Category | Settlements | Roles | Implications |
|---|---|--|---|
| Principal/ larger/ local service villages | Brigstock, Broughton, Easton on the Hill, Finedon, Geddington, King's Cliffe, Mawsley, Nassington, Ringstead, Stanwick, Warmington, Wollaston, Woodford | Some (albeit limited) development opportunities, although focused primarily upon meeting local needs and aspirations | Most Principal villages have a significant range of local services, but vary greatly in character/ function. Some, e.g. King's Cliffe operate as local service centres for a wider rural hinterland. Others are more urban in character and closely related to a larger urban centre. Potential for smaller land allocations in District level DPDs/ Neighbourhood Plans. Focus on development to meet local needs or aspirations. Should not necessarily be seen as suitable for larger scale growth. |
| Network/ other/ smaller villages | Majority of villages (full details within Appendix 4) | Small scale, "organic" growth, primarily focused on meeting local needs | Range from villages with a significant range of services/ some development opportunities which may be able to accommodate some level of "organic" growth. Others, e.g. Fotheringhay, Rockingham, have particular historic/ conservation significance, such that new development opportunities are likely to be extremely limited. Potential for smaller land allocations through Neighbourhood Plans, to meet specific local needs or aspirations. |

Distinguishing between Principal and Network villages

6.8 Those villages within the "Principal/ local service village" category have been identified with reference to key current evidence base documents. The following provide clear direction as to which villages ought to be included within the category:

- Corby Borough Council Rural Strategy (April 2009);
- Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (East Northamptonshire Council, January 2009);
- Kettering Borough Council Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document – Background paper: Settlement Boundaries; table, section 1.0 (September 2011)
- Borough Council of Wellingborough Site Specific DPD – Preferred Options Background Report: Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010).

6.9 In the case of the Four Towns Plan area, it is considered that Stanwick ought to be designated a Principal village, in addition to Ringstead. This reflects the fact that this is the largest village in East Northamptonshire (population approximately 2000) and has a significant range of services. As such, it is equivalent to other principal villages although it does not perform a local service role, given its proximity to nearby Market Towns (Raunds and Higham Ferrers).

6.10 A number of other larger villages have been considered as possible "Principal/ local service villages" in addition to those above (**Appendix 5**). These villages were all identified through the 2009 SHLAA and/ or 2004 Entec study. All have some development opportunities identified in the SHLAA, although the existing evidence demonstrates that these do not have a sufficient level of service or population to be considered principal villages.

- 6.11 The difference between the two categories of village is that in the case of Principal villages land allocations may be made in District/ Borough level site specific DPDs, although this may also be through Neighbourhood Plans if a Parish or community decides to pursue this. On the other hand, “other” villages would probably not have specific development sites allocated in site specific DPDs (Local Plan documents), although these may be made through Neighbourhood Plans or Development Orders.

Is it necessary to distinguish between Principal and Network villages?

- 6.12 The preferred approach to setting housing development targets will affect the extent to which a settlement hierarchy will be defined. Beyond the four Growth Towns and eight Market Towns (where strategic development will be focused), a question is raised as to how, or whether, an overall rural housing target should be set.
- 6.13 The current (2008) Core Strategy sets disaggregated housing targets for each Borough/ District (Policy 10/ Table 5). These targets *“include an indicative figure for the rural area of each district. This is based on a reduction on past rates of development but allows a degree of flexibility to meet local needs by realising development opportunities within village boundaries”* (paragraph 3.86). This matter was also extensively considered through the RNOTP Examination. At the time, the RNOTP Inspector questioned *“the justification for including an allowance for rural windfalls in the housing trajectory rural area during the first 10 years post-adoption”* (Inspector’s Report, Matter B/ p14).
- 6.14 The RNOTP Inspector concluded, in respect of the current “East Northamptonshire Rural” housing figure, that: *“It is evident that the CSS figure is a kind of residual figure to make up the district-wide provision. It is **not** a target to be met or a minimum”* (paragraph 3.40). The Inspector also concludes that: *“If the rural element was to be ‘ring fenced’ then significant additional allocations would have to be made by extensions to villages. That would not be a sustainable option and would not accord with the spatial strategy or its objectives”* (paragraph 3.40). He therefore accepted that: *“exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to justify the inclusion of an allowance within the housing trajectory for windfall sites in the rural settlements”* (paragraph 3.47).
- 6.15 The status of any rural housing target within the Core Strategy review directly affects the overall approach to defining a settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire. Consideration is being given to whether it is necessary to define specific Borough/ District level rural housing targets within the Core Strategy review. If no target is to be set, the argument may be put forward that this effectively removes the need to define a settlement hierarchy for villages, given that any development requirements would be met based upon local needs assessments in accordance with the spirit of “localism”.
- 6.16 Such an approach has advantages insofar as the overall spatial approach in this scenario would, in practice, be that **no development of a strategic development should take place outside the Growth Towns and Market Towns**. This would overcome concerns that by defining “Principal villages” through the Core Strategy review, implicitly these would need to accommodate some strategic growth in the event that development targets for the urban areas are not being met.

- 6.17 Conversely, however, the lack of a defined settlement hierarchy below the level of Market Towns fails to acknowledge the diverse range of villages across North Northamptonshire. Some villages (in particular, Earl's Barton), are urban in character and have a comparable level of service and population to several of the Market Towns. Others have limited or no services, or populations <100. There is a risk that the Core Strategy review might not be "Justified"; i.e. the plan would not be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence (NPPF, paragraph 182).
- 6.18 Overall, the Core Strategy review would need to address the question as to how far it is appropriate to go in simplifying the overall settlement hierarchy. It is necessary to consider the issues arising from the earlier Place Shaping/ Issues consultation events (2009-11), which repeatedly raised the issue that the Core Strategy review will need to take greater account of rural issues than its predecessor.

Where should the distinction between Network/ smaller villages and open countryside be made?

- 6.19 The question as to where a line ought to be drawn between defined settlements and open countryside exists in any settlement hierarchy. This represents a variation upon the question as to whether or not it is appropriate to include a "Restraint Village" category within the Core Strategy review. This matter has already been considered in section 5.0, above.
- 6.20 A simplified settlement hierarchy does allow for specific/ more detailed local spatial strategies to be developed at either a District/ Borough or "Neighbourhood" level. Nevertheless, a concern remains in respect of the bottom end of the scale; i.e. which settlements ought to be classified as "villages". This particularly applies where "Restraint Villages" or open countryside settlements are already designated in the Local Plan; currently a significant number of villages (over 20).
- 6.21 To some extent, the designation of Restraint Villages or hamlets as "open countryside" may conflict with the requirements of the Localism Act, in respect of Neighbourhood Planning. The recent CLG guidance note (A plain English guide to the Localism Act, November 2011)²⁶ explains that: "*Local communities will be able to use neighbourhood planning to grant full or outline planning permission in areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses, making it easier and quicker for development to go ahead*" (CLG guidance note, p12).
- 6.22 The guidance, reflected in the NPPF, also explains that: "*Provided a neighbourhood development plan or order is in line with national planning policy, with the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and with other legal requirements, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum*" (p12). Effectively, classifying Restraint Villages or villages as "open countryside" could, in practice, preclude many of the provisions of Neighbourhood Plans. Any proposal to allocate development land in Restraint or open countryside villages would, by definition, probably be contrary to the strategic vision (in this case, Core Strategy review).

²⁶ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1896534.pdf>

- 6.23 The critical issue, therefore, is where to draw a distinction between rural settlements (villages) and defined open countryside. A straightforward approach could be to base the decision around Parish areas, given that North Northamptonshire (with the exception of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough) is wholly Parished. The Localism Act defines Parish Councils as the default “qualifying body” (Localism Act, Schedule 9) for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs).
- 6.24 Appendix 2 identifies a significant number of villages which are designated as Restraint Villages/ open countryside in the development plan or proposed as such through recent studies/ evidence base documents. In all cases, these retain individual Parish Councils or Parish Meetings.

| Corby | East Northamptonshire | Kettering | Wellingborough |
|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| East Carlton | Ashton | Brampton Ash | Easton Maudit |
| Rockingham | Blatherwycke | Dingley | Hardwick |
| | Fotheringhay | Orton | Strixton |
| | Newton Bromswold | | |
| | Wakerley | | |

- 6.25 Rockingham village, despite having its own Parish Meeting, is effectively precluded from accommodating any significant **new** development by statutory land use designations. The village, virtually in its entirety, is covered by Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) designations: SAM 4156, 4184 and 13638. In this event, the SAM designation would override any local/ neighbourhood growth aspirations and in practice Rockingham could only be classified as a Restraint Village or “open countryside” in any development plan document.
- 6.26 Other Restraint/ open countryside settlements form part of Parish Councils which cover a group of villages. Details are set out below.

| Settlement | Parish Council | No of settlements served by Parish Council |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Achurch/ Wigsthorpe | Lilford-cum-Wigsthorpe & Thorpe Achurch Parish Council | 4 |
| Armston | Polebrook Parish Council | 2 |
| Lower Benefield | Benefield Parish Council | 2 |
| Caldecott/ Chelston Rise | Chelveston cum Caldecott Parish Council | 3 |
| Deene | Deene & Deenethorpe Parish Council | 2 |
| Duddington/ Fineshade | Duddington-with-Fineshade Parish Council | 2 |
| Knuston | Irchester Parish Council | 3 |
| Luddington in the Brook | Hemington, Luddington & Thurning Parish Council | 3 |
| Pipewell | Wilbarston Parish Council | 2 |
| Pilton | Pilton, Stoke Doyle & Wadenhoe Parish Council | 3 |
| Sywell Old Village | Sywell Parish Council | 2 |

- 6.27 With the exception of Duddington/ Fineshade, all other Restraint Villages fall within a Parish Council serving a larger or intermediate village. For example, Armston, Caldecott/ Chelston Rise, Knuston and Pipewell are all outlying settlements forming

part of a single Parish serving a larger nearby village (Polebrook, Chelveston, Irchester and Wilbarston respectively).

- 6.28 In other cases, settlements such as Achurch, Lower Benefield, Deene, Luddington and Pilton are all partners within a Parish serving a group of villages. Sywell Old Village has been identified as an individual character area which links two larger elements of Sywell of a more urban character, through work undertaken for Wellingborough.
- 6.29 In all such cases, it may be appropriate to retain a Restraint Village/ open countryside designation for such villages. This would effectively give some strategic direction, for Parish Councils looking to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan/ NDO, that new development is probably better directed to larger or other partner villages within the Parished group of villages.
- 6.30 Duddington and Fineshade are both classified as Category B Network Villages in the recently adopted RNOTP, equivalent to Restraint Villages. In this case, therefore, it remains essential that the Core Strategy review allows for Neighbourhood Planning in the case of Duddington with Fineshade Parish Council, as with those other villages with individual Parish Councils or Parish Meetings.
- 6.31 This matter is also considered in section 5.0 above (paragraphs 5.33-5.36). To a significant extent, provisions within the NPPF address this, through the implicit presumption in favour of development (including residential uses) that would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting (paragraph 55). As stated, this approach largely removes the distinction between Restraint Villages and open countryside that currently applies through the RNOTP and old-style District Local Plan policies.

Alternative approach – overview and conclusions

- 6.32 The process of reviewing the settlement hierarchy has, overall, identified four distinct approaches. Broadly, these are summarised as follows.
1. Retention of the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy (i.e. three categories of towns, plus four categories of villages), but definition of a more comprehensive settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire within the Core Strategy review, as opposed to District level/ site specific DPDs (Appendix 2).
 2. Comprehensive revision to the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, as recently endorsed by the JPC (12 January 2012), but retention of four categories of village; service/ larger, intermediate, Restraint Villages and hamlets/ open countryside settlements (Appendix 3).
 3. Greatly simplify the settlement hierarchy to four categories of settlement, in order to provide a basic framework for defining the overall spatial strategy; i.e. the “alternative” approach (Appendix 4).
 4. Reduction of the settlement hierarchy to three categories of settlement (Growth Towns, Market Towns and Villages) in order to maximise flexibility and avoid the implicit assumption that larger (“Principal”) villages should accommodate strategic growth in the event of non-delivery in the urban areas.
- 6.33 The definition of a comprehensive settlement hierarchy, consisting of at least seven categories of settlement, forms an important aspect of all Core Strategies adopted to

date. This is because previous national policy (former PPS12, adopted June 2008; replaced by NPPF, March 2012²⁷) required that: “**Every** local planning authority should produce a core strategy which includes...(1) an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop” (PPS12, paragraph 4.1). PPS12 also emphasised that: “It is essential that the core strategy makes clear spatial choices about where development should go in broad terms” (paragraph 4.5). To date, therefore, the settlement hierarchy formed an essential element in applying these aspects of national planning policy.

- 6.34 The Localism Act has introduced Neighbourhood Plans as effectively a new type of DPD, led at the community (i.e. Parish) rather than local planning authority level. A prescriptive settlement hierarchy has the great advantage that this provides a clear strategic direction for defining places where development should take place, thereby providing clear strategic direction for the preparation of site specific DPDs or Neighbourhood Plans.
- 6.35 It is recognised that an overly prescriptive/ detailed settlement hierarchy could potentially stifle Neighbourhoods or communities who wish to bring forward local development projects through the Neighbourhood Planning/ NDO route. This is particularly true in respect of the current “Restraint Village” designations, although these differ slightly between the four constituent local planning authorities.
- 6.36 A simplified (“alternative”) settlement hierarchy removes such a distinction, by reducing number of village categories to 1 or 2 and/ or including Restraint Villages within the Network/ smaller village category. By contrast, the traditional settlement hierarchy (3-4 grades of village) would ensure less of a sharp differentiation between the smaller villages where conservation is a priority (i.e. Restraint Villages) and hamlets/ open countryside.
- 6.37 The NPPF goes some way to addressing this issue, through its revision of national policy in respect of isolated dwellings in open countryside. If a Restraint Village category is to be maintained separately, it remains necessary for the spatial strategy to distinguish between these and “open countryside”. Otherwise, it would be more appropriate to include designated Restraint Villages from existing adopted Local Plan documents within the Network Village category. The Core Strategy review could then emphasise that there is a presumption that a strategy of development restraint should continue to apply given the particular historic conservation or built character of such villages, unless explicitly provided for through Neighbourhood Planning and in conformity with other policies.

²⁷ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/pps12lsp.pdf>

7.0 Stage 6 – Conclusions and recommendations: preferred approach

- 7.1 The assessment above has followed a number of key stages. The final section of this report will consider the issues which have arisen through this process. It will then make specific recommendations in respect of the preferred settlement hierarchy.

Stage 1

- 7.2 At an early stage in the Core Strategy review process, it was deemed necessary to review the existing settlement hierarchy. While the current Core Strategy contains a limited settlement hierarchy, many villages within East Northamptonshire are now designated through the recently adopted RNOTP (July 2011). The latter has introduced a further three categories of settlement in addition to those in the 2008 Core Strategy.
- 7.3 Elsewhere within North Northamptonshire; Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough Borough Councils have maintained a 4-5 tier settlement hierarchy. This includes three categories of village, still designated through saved policies from old-style (1990s) Local Plans. Several villages, e.g. new villages such as Little Stanion and Mawsley and a number of villages within East Northamptonshire (Four Towns Plan area), do not have any status in the adopted development plan. This has necessitated a comprehensive review of settlement hierarchies, across North Northamptonshire.

Stage 2

- 7.4 Since 2004, a number of key evidence base documents have been produced, both for North Northamptonshire and for individual Boroughs/ Districts. Generally, evidence produced over the past seven years, and particularly since 2009, is sufficient to set a detailed settlement hierarchy for the majority of North Northamptonshire. One notable evidence “gap” has, however, been identified. As the settlement hierarchy policies from the 1996 East Northamptonshire District Local Plan were not saved, it is necessary to review the status of villages within the Four Towns Plan area, in the south of the District.
- 7.5 In response, a detailed village assessment is currently being undertaken in respect of the Four Towns Plan area. This will make a number of recommendations in defining a local settlement hierarchy. Otherwise, a robust evidence base already exists for the remainder of North Northamptonshire.

Stages 3 and 4

- 7.6 The third stage in the process concentrates upon identifying the scope of any review of the settlement hierarchy. It examines whether to retain the current hierarchy, but extend this to include a greater number, if not all, of the villages across North Northamptonshire. The alternative considered is a more comprehensive review of the current hierarchy, based more closely around the relationship of individual towns between one another.

- 7.7 The JPC initially took a view that a comprehensive review of the current settlement hierarchy is necessary. At a recent meeting (12 January 2012), a revised settlement hierarchy was supported, consisting of:
1. Growth towns (Corby, Kettering, Rushden and Wellingborough);
 2. Market towns (freestanding towns within North Northamptonshire);
 3. Complementary centres (Burton Latimer, Earl's Barton, Higham Ferrers, Irchester);
 4. Local Service Centres (larger freestanding villages with a significant range of services);
 5. Limited Growth Villages (intermediate category; i.e. most villages);
 6. Restraint/ Historic Villages (particular conservation interest/ built form);
 7. Hamlets (open countryside).
- 7.8 The detailed assessment of existing evidence has revealed that the constituent Districts have slightly differing approaches, particularly in respect of their approach to designated Restraint Villages. It is considered that this could potentially lead to some difficulties in devising a North Northamptonshire wide strategy for Restraint Villages and/ or hamlets through the Core Strategy review which would be acceptable to all of the partner local planning authorities.

Stage 5

- 7.9 Given the anticipated difficulties in devising a consistent settlement hierarchy which is acceptable to all four North Northamptonshire District/ Borough Councils, it is necessary to consider an alternative approach; i.e. devising a simplified, less prescriptive, settlement hierarchy. Resulting from this, a three or four tier settlement hierarchy has been put forward as a possible alternative approach. This provides a great simplification of the settlement hierarchy, although the main issues associated with this relate to which of the larger villages ought to be designated "Principal" villages, and where the distinction between defined settlements (i.e. villages) and open countryside would need to be made.
- 7.10 The NPPF (paragraph 55) now allows for the conversion of rural buildings to residential use, even in isolated open countryside locations. In practice, this significantly removes the current policy distinction between Restraint Villages and open countryside. Nevertheless, the Core Strategy review will need to recognise that for established rural communities (i.e. through Parish Councils), Neighbourhood Planning could provide a mechanism by which some smaller scale local development projects may come forward, within an overall spatial strategy of rural restraint.

Recommendations

- 7.11 As explained above, the differing options are effectively divided into four separate approaches. The analysis above considers the advantages and disadvantages of the four approaches.

| Approach | Description | Key advantages | Key disadvantages |
|----------|--|---|---|
| 1 | Retention of the current Core Strategy approach, but expansion to define a more comprehensive settlement hierarchy for North Northamptonshire (Growth Towns, Smaller Towns, Rural Service Centres, Local Service Centres, Medium sized villages, Restraint Villages) | Minimal quantities of work are required. This approach would ensure continuity from the current sound spatial strategy and most existing evidence base documentation has been undertaken on the basis of this approach. | This approach may be seen as a "missed opportunity". The current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy is largely taken from the soon to be abolished Regional Plan and this approach would not take advantage of key provisions within the Localism Act. |
| 2 | Full revision to the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, but expansion to define comprehensive settlement hierarchy (Growth Towns, Market Towns, Complementary Centres, Local Service Centres, Medium sized villages, Restraint Villages) | This approach would enable the Core Strategy review to demonstrate that it is taking advantage of the new flexibility provided by the Localism Act. However, it would still provide continuity by prescribing a single direction/ consistent approach for the preparation of more detailed site specific DPDs/ Neighbourhood Plans. | This approach has been found to be overly prescriptive. Categories such as the current "Restraint Villages" could effectively preclude community or neighbourhood planning being undertaken at the local/ Parish level. |
| 3 | Simplified settlement hierarchy – four categories of settlement (Growth Towns, Market Towns, Principal Villages, Other Villages) | This approach provides increased flexibility and simplicity. It will provide a more enabling approach. While setting out the overall spatial vision (i.e. where new development/ growth should be delivered), it allows for Neighbourhood Plans/ site specific DPDs to develop these ideas further, at a locally distinctive level. | A key problem may be increased development pressure in larger/ defined "Principal" villages. Also, concerns remain over where the distinction between villages (those within the hierarchy) and open countryside ought to be defined. It is important to ensure that the spatial development strategy does not preclude Neighbourhood Planning in defined Restraint/ open countryside villages. |
| 4 | Simplified settlement hierarchy – three categories of settlement (Growth Towns, Market Towns and Villages) | This approach provides the greatest flexibility and simplicity. It will provide an enabling approach to future development within rural areas. It may imply that Neighbourhood Plans/ site specific DPDs should develop more detailed settlement hierarchies/ spatial strategies at a locally distinctive level. | The major criticism of this approach is that it is over-simplified and does not provide sufficient strategic direction. It is unlikely to reduce development pressures on larger villages simply by not mentioning them. It does not recognise the vast differences between villages across North Northamptonshire, which range from those of a comparable to Market Towns and villages with few/ no services or <100 population. |

7.12 The analysis has revealed that each of the main approaches above has certain drawbacks. That said, the particular issue surrounding a simplified settlement hierarchy (options 3 and 4), is where distinctions between "Principal" villages, Network villages and "open countryside" ought to be made. By contrast, options 1 and 2 (i.e. maintaining a detailed settlement hierarchy) could tend to be seen as overly prescriptive and generally not in accordance with "Localism".

7.13 Inevitably, it is necessary to compromise between setting an overly complicated or prescriptive settlement hierarchy (and therefore, spatial strategy), and ensuring that the Core Strategy review provides sufficient, meaningful strategic direction. Options 1 and 2 both involve retention of at least 6-7 categories of settlement. Option 4 reduces this to just three categories, although this does not recognise the vast distinctions between different villages or rural communities. **Accordingly, it is proposed that the simplified settlement hierarchy (option 3, above), as set out in Appendix 4, represents an appropriate compromise so is therefore recommended as the preferred approach in respect of defining a spatial strategy for the Core Strategy review.**

APPENDIX 1 – Existing settlement hierarchy (adopted DPDs)

| Settlement Designation | Relevant adopted DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Growth Towns | East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009); Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM) | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 Corby | | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 Kettering | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 Wellingborough |
| Other Main Towns | CSS (adopted June 2008) | | CSS policies 1 & 12 Rushden | | |
| Smaller Towns | MKSM; CSS | | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 Higham Ferrers Irthlingborough | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 Burton Latimer Desborough Rothwell | |
| Rural Service Centres | MKSM; CSS | | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 Oundle Raunds Thrapston | | |
| Local Service Centres | CSS | | CSS Policy 1 King's Cliffe | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant adopted DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|------------------|
| Other service villages | Adopted site allocations/ site specific DPDs | Corby Borough Local Plan (1997): "Limited Development Villages" (Policy P1(V)) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP), adopted July 2011: "Smaller Service Centres" (Policy 1(3)) | | BCW Local Plan (1999): "Limited development villages" (Policy G4) | |
| | | Gretton | Nassington | | Earl's Barton | |
| | | Weldon | Warmington | | Finedon | |
| | | | | | Wollaston | |
| Restricted development/ infill villages (no significant growth) | Adopted site allocations/ site specific DPDs | Local Plan: "Restricted Infill Villages" (policies P2(V) & P3(V)) | RNOTP: "Category A Network Villages" (Policy 1(4)/ paragraph 4.9); Local Plan (Policy RU2) | Local Plan for Kettering Borough (January 1995): "Restricted Infill Villages" (Policy RA3) | Local Plan: "Restricted Infill Villages" (Policy G4) | |
| | | Cottingham | Aldwincle | Ashley | Bozeat | |
| | | East Carlton | Apethorpe | Braybrooke | Ecton | |
| | | Middleton | Avenue Road | Broughton | Great Doddington | |
| | | Stanion | Barnwell | Cranford | Great Harrowden | |
| | | Great Oakley | Upper Benefield | Geddington | Grendon | |
| | | | | Brigstock | Great Cransley | Hardwick |
| | | | | Bulwick | Harrington | Irchester |
| | | | | Clopton | Loddington | Isham |
| | | | | Collyweston | Pytchley | Little Harrowden |
| | | | | Cotterstock | Rushton | Little Irchester |
| | | | | Deenethorpe | Stoke Albany | Mears Ashby |
| | | | | Denford | Sutton Bassett | Orlingbury |
| | | | | Easton on the Hill | Thorpe Malsor | Sywell |
| | | | | Glaphorn | Weston by Welland | Wilby |
| | | | | Great Addington | Wilbarston | |
| | | Harringworth | | | | |
| | | Hemington | | | | |
| | | Islip | | | | |
| | | Laxton | | | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant adopted DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | | Lilford | | |
| | | | Little Addington | | |
| | | | Lowick | | |
| | | | Lutton | | |
| | | | Polebrook | | |
| | | | Slipton | | |
| | | | Southwick | | |
| | | | Stoke Doyle | | |
| | | | Sudborough | | |
| | | | Tansor | | |
| | | | Thorpe Waterville | | |
| | | | Thurning | | |
| | | | Titchmarsh | | |
| | | | Twywell | | |
| | | | Wadenhoe | | |
| | | | Woodford | | |
| | | | Woodnewton | | |
| | | | Yarwell | | |
| Restraint Villages | Adopted site allocations/ site specific DPDs | Local Plan: "Restraint Villages" (Policy P4(V)) | RNOTP: "Category B Network Villages" (Policy 1(4)/ paragraph 4.10) | Local Plan: "Restraint Villages" (Policy RA4) | Local Plan: "Restraint Villages" (Policy G5) |
| | | Rockingham | Achurch | Grafton Underwood | Easton Maudit |
| | | | Ashton | Little Oakley | Strixton |
| | | | Lower Benefield | Newton | Sywell Old Village |
| | | | Blatherwycke | Warkton | |
| | | | Deene | Weekley | |
| | | | Duddington | | |
| | | | Fineshade | | |
| | | | Fotheringhay | | |
| | | | Pilton | | |
| | | | Wakerley | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant adopted DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Open Countryside villages/ hamlets | CSS; Adopted site allocations/ site specific DPDs | | CSS (Policy 9); RNOTP (Policy 1) | CSS (Policy 9); Local Plan (paragraph 15.66) | |
| | | | Armston | Brampton Ash | |
| | | | Luddington in the Brook | Dingley | |
| | | | Wigsthorpe | Orton | |
| | | | | Pipewell | |
| Settlements with no status/ designation | | Little Stanion | Caldecott | Barton Seagrave | |
| | | | Chelveston | Mawsley | |
| | | | Crow Hill | | |
| | | | Hargrave | | |
| | | | Newton Bromswold | | |
| | | | Ringstead | | |
| | | | Stanwick | | |

APPENDIX 2 – Approach 1: Retention of the current Core Strategy approach, but expansion to define a more comprehensive settlement hierarchy

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Growth Towns | East Midlands Regional Plan (adopted March 2009); Milton Keynes & South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSM) | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 | | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 | RP Policy 3(b); MKSM 1 |
| | | Corby | | Kettering | Wellingborough |
| Other Main Towns | CSS (adopted June 2008) | | CSS policies 1 & 12 | | |
| | | | Rushden | | |
| Smaller Towns | MKSM; CSS | | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 | |
| | | | Higham Ferrers | Burton Latimer | |
| | | | Irthlingborough | Desborough | |
| | | | | Rothwell | |
| Rural Service Centres | MKSM; CSS | | MKSM 1; CSS Policy 1 | | |
| | | | Oundle | | |
| | | | Raunds | | |
| | | | Thrapston | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Local Service Centres | CSS, CS Review (emerging) and site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) | |
| | | | Brigstock | Broughton | Earl's Barton | |
| | | | Easton on the Hill | Geddington | Finedon | |
| | | | King's Cliffe | Mawsley | Irchester | |
| | | | Nassington | | Wollaston | |
| | | | Ringstead | | | |
| | | | Warmington | | | |
| | | | Woodford | | | |
| Limited Growth Villages | CS Review (emerging) and site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) | |
| | | | Cottingham and Middleton | Aldwincle | Ashley | Bozeat |
| | | | Gretton | Apethorpe | Braybrooke | Ecton |
| | | | Little Stanion | Avenue Road | Cranford | Great Doddington |
| | | | Stanion | Barnwell | Great Cransley | Great Harrowden |
| | | | Great Oakley | Upper Benefield | Grafton Underwood | Grendon |
| | | | Weldon | Bulwick | Harrington | Isham |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | Chelveston | Little Oakley | Little Harrowden |
| | | | Clopton | Loddington | Little Irchester |
| | | | Crow Hill | Newton | Mears Ashby |
| | | | Collyweston | Pytchley | Orlinary |
| | | | Cotterstock | Rushton | Sywell |
| | | | Deenethorpe | Stoke Albany | Wilby |
| | | | Denford | Sutton Bassett | |
| | | | Glaphorn | Thorpe Malsor | |
| | | | Great Addington | Warkton | |
| | | | Hargrave | Weekley | |
| | | | Harringworth | Weston by Welland | |
| | | | Hemington | Wilbarston | |
| | | | Islip | | |
| | | | Laxton | | |
| | | | Lilford | | |
| | | | Little Addington | | |
| | | | Lowick | | |
| | | | Lutton | | |
| | | | Polebrook | | |
| | | | Slipton | | |
| | | | Southwick | | |
| | | | Stanwick | | |
| | | | Stoke Doyle | | |
| | | | Sudborough | | |
| | | | Tansor | | |
| | | | Thorpe Waterville | | |
| | | | Thurning | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | Titchmarsh | | |
| | | | Twywell | | |
| | | | Wadenhoe | | |
| | | | Woodnewton | | |
| | | | Yarwell | | |
| Restraint/ Historic Villages | CS Review (emerging) and site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) |
| | | East Carlton | Achurch | | Easton Maudit |
| | | Rockingham | Ashton | | Hardwick |
| | | | Caldecott | | Strixton |
| | | | Chelston Rise | | Sywell Old Village |
| | | | Lower Benefield | | |
| | | | Blatherwycke | | |
| | | | Deene | | |
| | | | Duddington | | |
| | | | Fineshade | | |
| | | | Fotheringhay | | |
| | | | Newton Bromswold | | |
| | | | Pilton | | |
| | | | Wakerley | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Open Countryside villages/ hamlets | CS Review (emerging) and site specific/ allocations DPDs | | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | |
| | | | Armston | Brampton Ash | |
| | | | Luddington in the Brook | Dingley | |
| | | | Wigsthorpe | Orton | |
| | | | | Pipewell | |
| Settlements with no status/ designation | | | | Barton Seagrave | Knuston |

Villages shown in Bold:

Status/ designation defined in recently adopted DPD (i.e. CSS or RNOTP)

APPENDIX 3 – Approach 2: Full revision to the current Core Strategy settlement hierarchy, but expansion to define more comprehensive settlement hierarchy

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Growth Towns | North Northamptonshire Core Strategy (CS) review | Corby | | Kettering | |
| Supporting Growth Towns | CS review | | Rushden | | Wellingborough |
| Market Towns | CS review | | North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee; 24 November 2011, 12 January 2012 | North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee; 24 November 2011, 12 January 2012 | |
| | | | Irthlingborough | Desborough | |
| | | | Oundle | Rothwell | |
| | | | Raunds | | |
| | | | Thrapston | | |
| Complementary Centres | CS review | | North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee; 24 November 2011, 12 January 2012 | North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee; 24 November 2011, 12 January 2012 | North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee; 24 November 2011, 12 January 2012 |
| | | | Higham Ferrers | Burton Latimer | Earl's Barton |
| | | | | | Irchester |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) | |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|------------------|
| Local Service Centres | CS review | | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) | |
| | | | Brigstock | Broughton | Finedon | |
| | | | Easton on the Hill | Geddington | Wollaston | |
| | | | King's Cliffe | Mawsley | | |
| | | | Nassington | | | |
| | | | Ringstead | | | |
| | | | Warmington | | | |
| | | | Woodford | | | |
| Limited Growth Villages | CS review or site specific/ allocations DPDs | | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) | |
| | | | Cottingham and Middleton | Aldwincle | Ashley | Bozeat |
| | | | Gretton | Apethorpe | Braybrooke | Ecton |
| | | | Little Stanion | Avenue Road | Cranford | Great Doddington |
| | | | Stanion | Barnwell | Great Cransley | Great Harrowden |
| | | | Great Oakley | Upper Benefield | Grafton Underwood | Grendon |
| | | | Weldon | Bulwick | Harrington | Isham |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | Chelveston | Little Oakley | Little Harrowden |
| | | | Clopton | Loddington | Little Irchester |
| | | | Crow Hill | Newton | Mears Ashby |
| | | | Collyweston | Pytchley | Orlingbury |
| | | | Cotterstock | Rushton | Sywell |
| | | | Deenethorpe | Stoke Albany | Wilby |
| | | | Denford | Sutton Bassett | |
| | | | Glaphorn | Thorpe Malsor | |
| | | | Great Addington | Warkton | |
| | | | Hargrave | Weekley | |
| | | | Harringworth | Weston by Welland | |
| | | | Hemington | Wilbarston | |
| | | | Islip | | |
| | | | Laxton | | |
| | | | Lilford | | |
| | | | Little Addington | | |
| | | | Lowick | | |
| | | | Lutton | | |
| | | | Polebrook | | |
| | | | Slipton | | |
| | | | Southwick | | |
| | | | Stanwick | | |
| | | | Stoke Doyle | | |
| | | | Sudborough | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | Tansor | | |
| | | | Thorpe Waterville | | |
| | | | Thurning | | |
| | | | Titchmarsh | | |
| | | | Twywell | | |
| | | | Wadenhoe | | |
| | | | Woodnewton | | |
| | | | Yarwell | | |
| Restraint/ Historic Villages | CS review or site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) |
| | | East Carlton | Achurch | | Easton Maudit |
| | | Rockingham | Ashton | | Hardwick |
| | | | Caldecott | | Strixton |
| | | | Chelston Rise | | Sywell Old Village |
| | | | Lower Benefield | | |
| | | | Blatherwycke | | |
| | | | Deene | | |
| | | | Duddington | | |
| | | | Fineshade | | |
| | | | Fotheringhay | | |
| | | | Newton Bromswold | | |
| | | | Pilton | | |
| | | | Wakerley | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|--|--|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Open Countryside villages/ hamlets | CS review or site specific/ allocations DPDs | | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | |
| | | | Armston | Brampton Ash | |
| | | | Luddington in the Brook | Dingley | |
| | | | Wigsthorpe | Orton | |
| | | | | Pipewell | |
| Settlements with no status/ designation | | | | Barton Seagrave | Knuston |

Villages shown in Bold:

Status/ designation as per recently adopted DPD (i.e. RNOTP)

APPENDIX 4 – Approach 3: Simplified settlement hierarchy – four categories of settlement²⁸

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|--|--|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Growth Towns | North Northamptonshire Core Strategy (CS) review | Corby | Rushden | Kettering (including Barton Seagrave) | Wellingborough |
| Market Towns | CS review | | Higham Ferrers | Burton Latimer | |
| | | | Irthlingborough | Desborough | |
| | | | Oundle | Rothwell | |
| | | | Raunds | | |
| | | | Thrapston | | |
| Principal/ larger/ service villages | CS review | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) |
| | | | Brigstock | Broughton | Earl's Barton |
| | | | Easton on the Hill | Geddington | Finedon |
| | | | King's Cliffe | Mawsley | Irchester |
| | | | Nassington | | Wollaston |
| | | | Ringstead | | |
| | | | Stanwick | | |
| | | | Warmington | | |
| | | | Woodford | | |

²⁸ Approach 4: "Simplified settlement hierarchy – three categories" involves merging "Principal/ larger/ service villages" and "Network/ smaller villages" categories

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Network/ smaller villages | CS review or site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) |
| | | Cottingham/ Middleton | Aldwinkle | Ashley | Bozeat |
| | | East Carlton | Apethorpe | Braybrooke | Easton Maudit |
| | | Great Oakley | Ashton | Brampton Ash | Ecton |
| | | Gretton | Avenue Road | Cranford | Great Doddington |
| | | Little Stanion | Barnwell | Dingley | Great Harrowden |
| | | Stanion | Upper Benefield | Great Cransley | Grendon |
| | | Weldon | Blatherwycke | Grafton Underwood | Hardwick |
| | | | Bulwick | Harrington | Isham |
| | | | Chelveston | Little Oakley | Little Harrowden |
| | | | Clopton | Loddington | Little Irchester |
| | | | Collyweston | Newton | Mears Ashby |
| | | | Cotterstock | Orton | Orlingbury |
| | | | Crow Hill | Pytchley | Strixton |
| | | | Deenethorpe | Rushton | Sywell |
| | | | Denford | Stoke Albany | Wilby |
| | | | Duddington | Sutton Bassett | |
| | | | Fotheringhay | Thorpe Malsor | |
| | | | Glaphorn | Warkton | |
| | | | Great Addington | Weekley | |
| | | | Hargrave | Weston by Welland | |
| | | | Harringworth | Wilbarston | |
| | | | Hemington | | |
| | | | Islip | | |
| | | | Laxton | | |
| | | | Lilford | | |
| | | | Little Addington | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| | | | Lowick | | |
| | | | Lutton | | |
| | | | Newton Bromswold | | |
| | | | Polebrook | | |
| | | | Slipton | | |
| | | | Southwick | | |
| | | | Stoke Doyle | | |
| | | | Sudborough | | |
| | | | Tansor | | |
| | | | Thorpe Waterville | | |
| | | | Thurning | | |
| | | | Titchmarsh | | |
| | | | Twywell | | |
| | | | Wadenhoe | | |
| | | | Wakerley | | |
| | | | Woodnewton | | |
| | | | Yarwell | | |

| Settlement Designation | Relevant DPD | Corby Borough Council (CBC) | East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) | Kettering Borough Council (KBC) | Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW) |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Open countryside | CS review or site specific/ allocations DPDs | Rural Strategy (April 2009) | Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan: Settlement Hierarchy – Defining Category A and B Villages (January 2009); Four Towns Plan - Defining a Settlement Hierarchy (draft, January 2012) | Site Specific Proposals Local Development Document - Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries (September 2011) | Background Report - Rural Settlement Hierarchy (October 2010) |
| | | | Achurch | Pipewell | Knuston |
| | | | Armston | | Sywell Old Village |
| | | | Lower Benefield | | |
| | | | Caldecott | | |
| | | | Chelston Rise | | |
| | | | Deene | | |
| | | | Fineshade | | |
| | | | Luddington in the Brook | | |
| | | | Pilton | | |
| | | | Wigsthorpe | | |

APPENDIX 5 – Initial list of larger villages assessed as potential “Principal”/ service villages

2009 SHLAA and 2004 Entec study ("Market Towns and Rural Regeneration") have identified a range of larger villages which are considered to form potential "strategic" villages. At the District level, a range of larger villages have been considered as having a significant population or range of services to be sustainable locations or provide the focus for future development within the rural area.

| Village | District | SHLAA (February 2009) | Entec (May 2004): Appendix D | CBC Rural Strategy (April 2009) | RNOTP: Settlement Hierarchy Paper (January 2009) | KBC Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries | Rural Settlement Hierarchy (BCW) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Cottingham/Middleton | Corby | Yes | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Gretton | Corby | Yes | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Stanion | Corby | Yes | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Weldon | Corby | Yes | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Aldwincle | East Northamptonshire | No | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Avenue Road | East Northamptonshire | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Barnwell | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Brigstock | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Bulwick | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | No | n/a | n/a |
| Collyweston | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Denford | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Easton on the Hill | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Glaphthorn | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Great Addington | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Islip | East Northamptonshire | Yes | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| King's Cliffe | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Little Addington | East Northamptonshire | No | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Nassington | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Polebrook | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Ringstead | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

| Village | District | SHLAA (February 2009) | Entec (May 2004): Appendix D | CBC Rural Strategy (April 2009) | RNOTP: Settlement Hierarchy Paper (January 2009) | KBC Background Paper: Settlement Boundaries | Rural Settlement Hierarchy (BCW) |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---|
| Stanwick | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Titchmarsh | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Warmington | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Woodford | East Northamptonshire | Yes | Yes | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Woodnewton | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Yarwell | East Northamptonshire | No | No | n/a | Yes | n/a | n/a |
| Broughton | Kettering | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | Yes | n/a |
| Geddington | Kettering | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | Yes | n/a |
| Mawsley | Kettering | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | Yes | n/a |
| Pytchley | Kettering | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | No | n/a |
| Wilbarston | Kettering | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | Yes | n/a |
| Bozeat | Wellingborough | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | No |
| Earl's Barton | Wellingborough | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |
| Finedon | Wellingborough | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |
| Great Doddington | Wellingborough | Yes | No | n/a | n/a | n/a | No |
| Irchester | Wellingborough | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |
| Wollaston | Wellingborough | Yes | Yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | Yes |