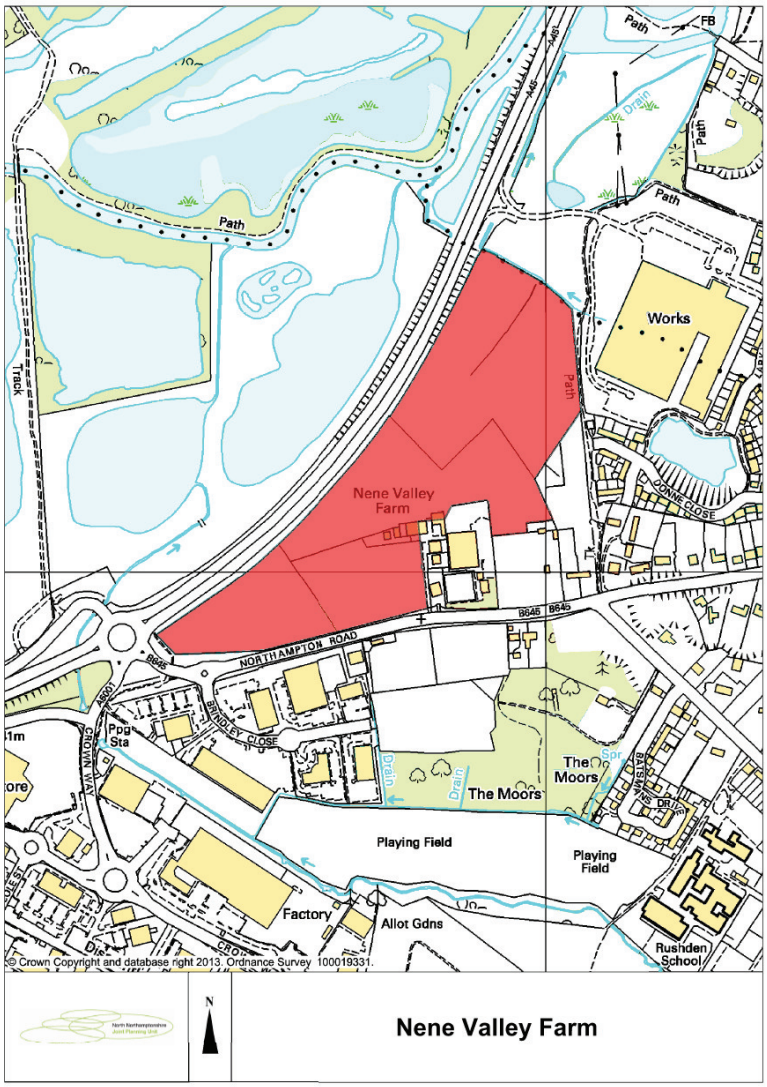
D. Nene Valley Farm, Northampton Rd, Rushden

4.25 **Site description**



The site is located on agricultural land adjacent to the A45 and east of the A45/B645 (Northampton Road) junction. It lies within the natural physical Rushden/Higham Ferrers boundary (i.e. the A45), sloping away from Northampton Road towards the A45, beyond which is located the River Nene. The southern extent of the site is defined by Northampton Road, the Rushden Town Bowls Club and several dwellings and gardens. Along the south side of Northampton Road, opposite the development site, there is a mix of commercial development, open space and a small number of residential properties. The eastern-most flank of the development area abuts a public footpath with an employment site beyond. Land adjacent to the north-east boundary consists of open space and includes a woodland area and gravel pit (Higham Ferrers Fishing Lake) that forms part of the Nene Valley Special Protection Area/Ramsar site. The site is currently designated as important open land of significance to the form and character of Rushden in accordance with 'saved' policy EN20 of the East Northamptonshire Local Plan adopted in 1996.

4.26 **Proposed land uses and scale of development**

The site of approximately 12ha will provide primarily for a mix of B1 (business) and B2 (general industrial) development together with open space and a small percentage of other employment uses where these are compatible with the intended primary uses.

4.27 **Key objectives**

The development should deliver:

- Employment and training opportunities which help to build a more diverse, dynamic and self reliant economy and support sustainable housing growth;
- Improvements to the road network made necessary by the development;
- Accessible green infrastructure which links into the Nene Valley sub-regional corridor, providing opportunities to enhance access to the countryside from Rushden and protect and enhance biodiversity assets;

- Direct and safe pedestrian and cycle links to the existing urban area and the enhancement of public transport;
- High quality landscape treatment to enhance the character of the site and ensure that it is satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding landscape; and
- A high quality development that minimises carbon emissions in accordance with policies in the Plan.

4.28 **Key constraints**

The development is expected to increase congestion on the A45 during peak periods, particularly at the A6 Chown's Mill roundabout (Higham Ferrers). Additional pressure on the A45/B645 junction and town centre junctions within Rushden and Higham Ferrers is also anticipated. Transport improvements necessary to deliver a sustainable development at Nene Valley Farm will need to be identified through a transport assessment.

There are several dwellings adjacent to the site and the need to ensure that the amenity of these properties is not diminished will be a key consideration. This may be delivered through measures such as noise attenuation, which will need to be implemented to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.

The land is located within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, as defined in the Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework. An assessment will therefore need to be undertaken of the viability and need to undertake prior extraction of the mineral resource in accordance with the adopted Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Policy CS10).

A gas main traverses the site, running much of its length, from northeast to southwest. Accordingly, the easement standards associated with this will need to be defined and incorporated into the development.

The hedgerows and trees within the development area and the water body along the north-east boundary form potentially important habitats and landscape features. Where possible, these should be retained, reinforced and linked into a network of green infrastructure.

4.29 **Key infrastructure**

Key infrastructure requirements will include:

- Junction improvements to ensure that there is no deterioration of the highway network arising from the development;
- Structural landscaping, biodiversity enhancement and accessible green infrastructure which enhances connectivity between Rushden and the Nene Valley sub-regional corridor;
- New pedestrian and cycle links to improve connectivity;
- Improvements to public transport provision;
- Sustainable drainage systems; and
- Other specific infrastructure as detailed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Notwithstanding the above, it will be necessary to review infrastructure requirements at the planning application stage in order to take account of the most up to date information on infrastructure needs.

4.30 **Place shaping requirements**

Access: Vehicular access should be from Northampton Road (B645).

Key strategic links to the surrounding area: To encourage a modal shift away from the car it will be essential to enhance connectivity with the established Rushden and Higham Ferrers urban areas. Improved access will be required for pedestrians and cyclists between the site and existing development to the south of Northampton Road allowing for improved access to residential areas, Rushden town centre, Higham Ferrers town centre and the retail outlets close to the A45/Northampton Road junction.

Along the easternmost flank of the site there is a public footpath (UK 10) which forms part of an existing link between Northampton Rd and a footbridge over the A45 to the north of the site and provides an established pedestrian access between the existing urban area and the Nene Valley sub-regional corridor. A link between the site and this public footpath must be provided in order to enhance access between Rushden and the countryside and to secure improved connectivity with the residential development to the east.

The existing bus service along Northampton Road is infrequent and there is no bus stop within close proximity to the site. Proposals must therefore incorporate suitable measures to enhance public transport provision.

Strategic landscaping and green infrastructure: High quality strategic landscaping should be utilised to enhance the character of the development and reduce its visual impact. The site is located within the designated Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area where the aim is to improve ecological connectivity and enlarge existing biodiversity assets. Existing landscape features should be retained, where possible, and reinforced. They should be integrated with sustainable drainage systems into a network of green infrastructure which provides for informal recreation and acts as a wildlife corridor linking Northampton Road with the woodland area and gravel pit (Higham Ferrers Fishing Lake) to the north-east of the development area. There are likely to be some species that are able to cross the A45 and the green infrastructure should therefore provide natural habitat similar to that within the neighbouring Nene Valley.

Landmark buildings: Key landmark buildings which will add to the quality of the development must be provided, particularly at the A45/Northampton Road junction. This is essential in order to maximise the local landscape benefits of the scheme and contribute towards the highest quality of development.

Delivery: Proposals will need to accord with a detailed masterplan agreed with the local planning authority. This must include phasing proposals to deliver a comprehensive scheme.

4.31 **Policy**

Land at Nene Valley Farm, Rushden is allocated for employment and open space, as shown on the Policy Map. Development will primarily consist of a mix of B1 (business) and B2 (general industry) employment together with open space and a small percentage of other employment uses where these are compatible with the intended primary uses.

Proposals must:

a. Be compatible with an approved masterplan that forms part of a planning permission;

b. Provide for vehicular access into the site solely from Northampton Road;

c. Incorporate appropriate measures to ensure that there is adequate capacity in the surrounding highway network to accommodate traffic generated by the development;

d. Include a substantial, publically accessible, green infrastructure corridor which enhances connectivity between Northampton Road and the River Nene sub-regional corridor. This green infrastructure corridor must provide natural habitat for species within the surrounding area together with opportunities for informal recreation and access to the countryside;

e. Encourage modal shift through the provision of safe and convenient links for pedestrian and cyclists to the wider area;

f. Include a high quality, landmark building(s) at the A45/Northampton Road/Crown Way roundabout, as a gateway to Rushden;

g. Provide other specific and justified infrastructure requirements as set out in the North Northamptonshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan; and

h. Comply with all other relevant policies in the Core Strategy and be planned and implemented in a comprehensive way that is linked to the delivery of the necessary infrastructure.