Date	**25th July 2013**
Report Originator	Planning Manager
Title	**Joint Core Strategy – Rushden Sustainable Urban Extension**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider representations received on the emerging Joint Core Strategy (August 2012) regarding the location for a sustainable urban extension at Rushden and to agree a draft policy and broad location for the development area for further consultation prior to inclusion in the Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Joint Committee, at its meeting on 31st January 2013, considered a report on key issues arising from consultation on the emerging Joint Core Strategy (JCS). As part of that report, and in response to a number of representations, consideration was given to the role of Rushden and whether Rushden /Higham Ferrers ought to be treated as a single urban area for the purposes of the JCS. The Joint Committee concluded that Rushden should be categorised as a Growth Town and Higham Ferrers as a separate Market Town in the settlement hierarchy. In addition, it was agreed that a subsequent report should be prepared regarding the location of the urban extension; how this should be denoted in the JCS; and what the urban extension should incorporate/deliver.

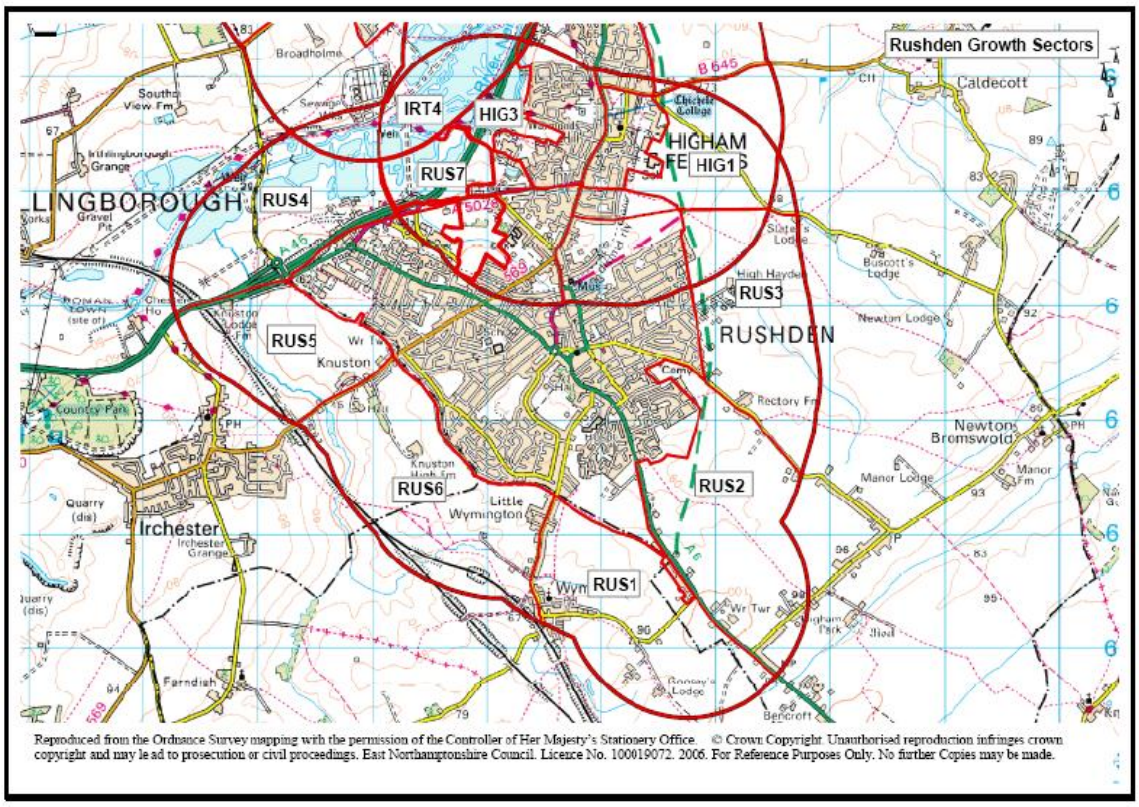
2.2 The emerging JCS (August 2012) indicated that if Rushden is to be a Growth Town it will be necessary to identify a new strategic location for development to enable the town to continue to expand. The emerging draft JCS (August 2012) identified Rushden East as the preferred direction of growth in draft Policy 23, draft Policy 29 and on the key diagram and referred to the draft Rushden Urban Extension Background Paper[1] (August 2012), which sets out the evidence base for this conclusion. The emerging JCS further indicates that the allocation of land for this development opportunity (i.e. the definition of the precise site boundary and quantum of development) should be taken forward by a relevant site specific development plan document.

2.3 The Background Paper refers to documents considered by East Northamptonshire Council's Planning Policy Committee on 18 June 2012 which included an assessment of alternative directions of growth as outlined on Map 1, below[2]. The Planning Policy Committee endorsed Rushden East (sector RUS3 on Map 1) as the preferred location for development. The Background Paper further indicates that a net figure of 2100 dwellings would be an appropriate scale of development for the urban extension but emphasises that this should not preclude a larger quantum of development. Rushden Town Council, in a letter of 23 July 2012, suggested that an indicative figure of 2500

[1] http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rushden%20UE%20background%20paper%20Aug%2012.pdf

[2] http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rushden%20UES%20update%20FINAL.pdf - East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden Update (June 2012)

dwellings would be appropriate. The urban extension would also include employment land, green infrastructure, community infrastructure (e.g. new primary school) and neighbourhood centre/ local shops.



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

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 This section of the report summarises and comments on the representations made in response to consultation on the emerging JCS (August 2012) in respect of the proposed direction of growth for the urban extension. It also indicates how the broad location should be denoted on the key diagram and sets out a proposed policy and written text for inclusion in the JCS.

The location of the proposed Rushden urban extension

3.2 Several representations, referred to below, were received in respect of the various, alternative potential directions of growth illustrated on Map1, above.

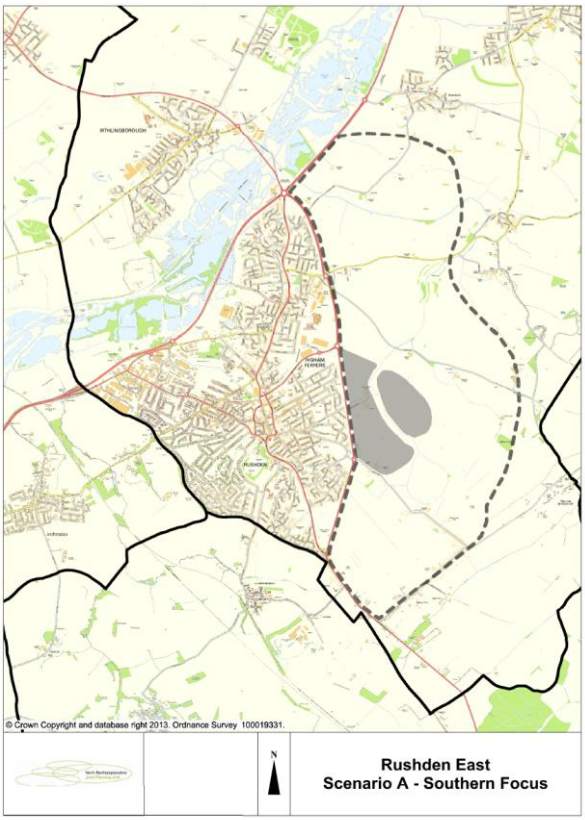
3.3 *Irchester/Knuston (Rushden West: RUS5/RUS6)* – Concerns were raised in respect of the potential impact that traffic from a sustainable urban extension in this location might have on Irchester and possible coalescence between Rushden and Irchester. Reference was also made to a local petition opposing development beyond the village boundary at Irchester in response to a recent (2012) planning application. No representations were, however, submitted by land owners or developers promoting development within this sector.

3.4 *Land East of A6* – Rushden Town Council is supportive of growth between the roundabouts at the junction with Newton Road and the roundabout at the junction with

John Clarke Way, in the form of a mixed-use sustainable urban extension accommodating the majority of the town's new homes and jobs in the plan period. Higham Ferrers Town Council objected to land at Duchy Farm (East of Higham Ferrers) as a possible location for residential development and has concerns about the potential impact on the capacity of the highway network, schools and medical facilities arising from growth at Rushden.

3.5 Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Parish Council expressed dismay at the proposed expansion of Rushden to the east. It is concerned about the potential visual impact of development on rural settlements and additional traffic on the narrow C119 (Upper Higham Lane). Stanwick Parish Council also expressed serious concerns centred on the possible proximity of development to Stanwick, Newton Bromswold and Chelveston; the need for infrastructure; the loss of high grade agricultural land; the potential impact on Stanwick Lakes and the protected grass verge along Higham Road, Stanwick; connectivity and safety issues related to the A6; highway capacity at the Chowns Mill roundabout; and increased traffic on rural roads (especially Stanwick and Chelveston)

3.5 The Duchy of Lancaster submitted a report[3] which summarised work undertaken to appraise land to the east of Rushden and Higham as a potential location for a sustainable urban extension. The aim of this high level appraisal was to understand issues relating to accessibility, topography, landscape, land use and ownership that may inform the most appropriate location for an urban extension of up to 2500 dwellings in the period up to 2031. The appraisal assessed the following 3 options:



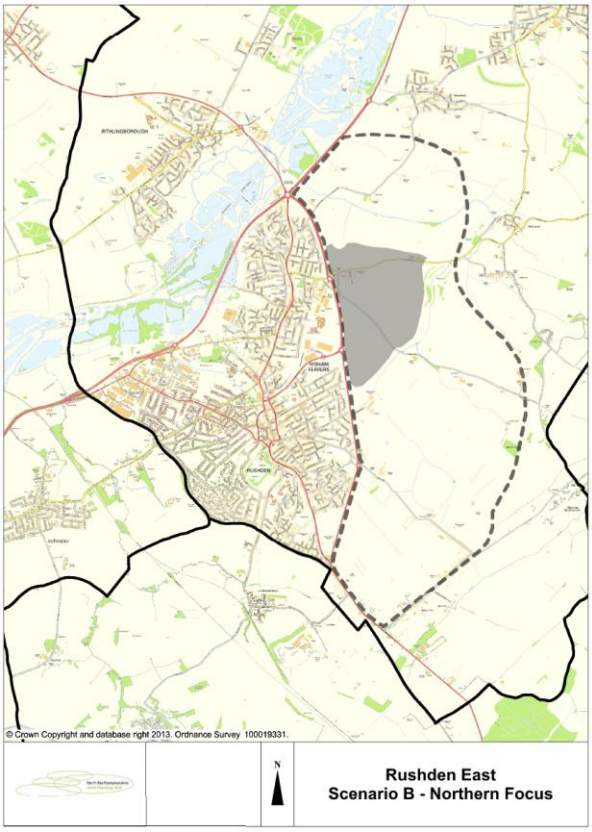
3.6 ***Option A – southern focus (Rushden East: RUS3) on land between John Clark Way and Newton Road.***

This broad location (shaded in dark grey on the map to the left) was supported by Bletsoes and Bidwells, representing several landowners. They note that the development would enable the two towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers to retain their distinct identities whilst providing a gateway development and enabling linkages across the A6 to the existing town centre and town of Rushden. The Duchy report, however, identified several concerns, as follows:

- Fragmented land ownership;
- Accommodating existing uses and restricting development between these two junctions is likely to push the extent of development further east;
- Moulton College would not be integrated within the urban extension;
- 2 access points would be required from the A6;

[3] Potential Growth to East of A6 at Rushden/ Higham Ferrers (WSP, October 2012)

- A northern access would require land in the ownership of the Duchy;
- It would not make good use of the proposed access from John Clark Way as development would only be located to the south of this road;
- It would be a stand-alone settlement; and
- There is little opportunity for creating good pedestrian and cycle links to Rushden or Higham Ferrers.



3.7 ***Option B - northern focus (Higham Ferrers South East: HIG1) on land between John Clark Way and Chelveston Road.***

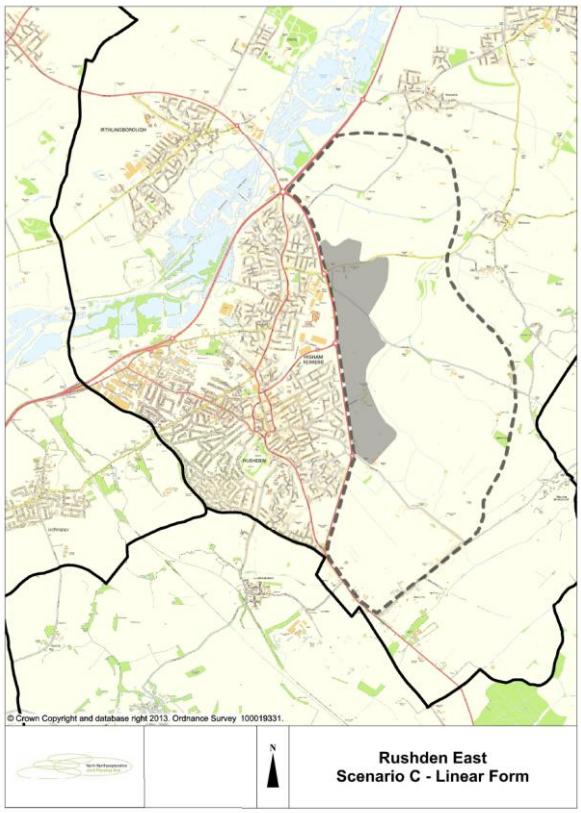
The Duchy report suggests that this broad location (shaded in dark grey on the map to the left) would:

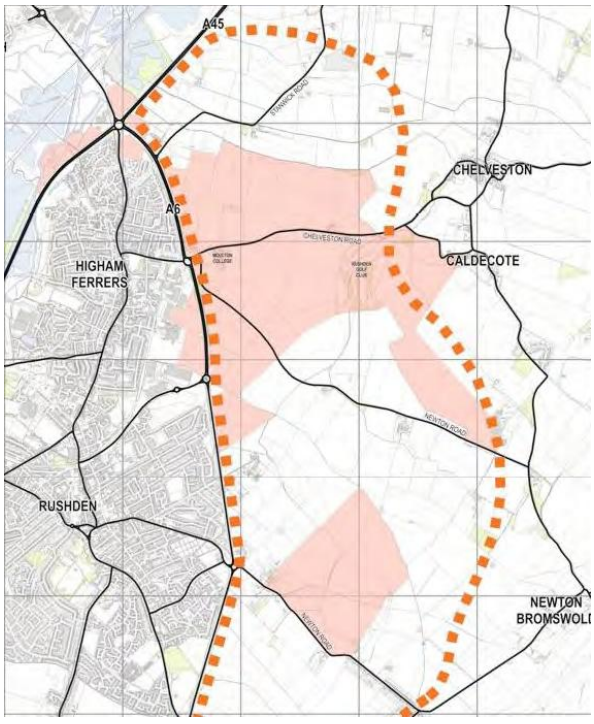
- Be on land which is largely in single ownership, is unconstrained and is available;
- Include few existing uses, resulting in less overall land-take;
- Enable Moulton College to be integrated with the development;
- Include two access points from the A6, the northernmost of which requires land in the ownership of the Duchy;
- Make better use of the new access from John Clarke Way with double sided development;
- Potentially result in better integration with the urban area than would option A but would still be a largely stand-alone development;
- Provide an excellent opportunity for creating good pedestrian access and cycle links to Rushden and Higham Ferrers via Duchy land to the west of the A6 and possible use of the railway line to link to Rushden town centre; and
- Enable further expansion to the south.

3.8 ***Option C – linear form (RUS3/HIG1) on land between Chelveston Road and Newton Road.***

The Duchy report suggests that this option, which is shaded in grey on the following map extract, would:

- Incorporate land owned by the Duchy at the northern end of the site with some potential land assembly issues towards the south;
- Include the retention of some uses which may reduce the efficiency of the development form in the southern area;
- Provide for the integration of Moulton College with space to expand;





- Include 3 access points from the A6 with better traffic distribution and connectivity to the existing urban area. The two access points at the northern end require land within the ownership of the Duchy ;
- The efficient use of new connections into the development;
- Opportunities for further expansion to the east, south and potentially to the north;
- Development that is less intrusive into the rural landscape to the east;

3.9 The Duchy report queries a number of findings of the 2006 Urban Extensions study and concludes that the proposal in the emerging JCS to identify land only to the east of Rushden is not supported by a robust evidence base. As a minimum, a wider "Area of Search" ought to be identified followed by further appraisal leading to a Concept Plan. The report highlights land in the ownership of the Duchy (the dark shaded land east of the A6 on the map to the left) and identifies this as critical in the delivery of an urban extension. It further notes that the key access into the development from the John Clark Way roundabout will need to pass through Duchy land. The report highlights the challenge of creating good pedestrian and cycle links. It concludes that the only good opportunity to create a high quality link, which may also provide a bus route, is in conjunction with proposed residential development to the west of the A6 adjoining The Ferrers Specialist Arts College.

. **JPU analysis and response to the options included in the Duchy paper**

3.10 As noted in paragraph 2.1, above, the Joint Committee has concluded that Rushden should be categorised as a Growth Town and Higham Ferrers as a Market Town in the emerging settlement hierarchy. The northern development focus (option B) in the Duchy report is, however, largely located to the north of John Clark Way and adjacent to Higham Ferrers whilst the linear development form (option C) also includes land

adjacent to Higham Ferrers. Neither of these options would therefore accord with the preferred strategy of focusing development at Rushden. The southern focus (option A) on land between John Clark Way and Newton Road, however, accords with sector RUS3 (see Map1, above) and would meet the aim of Rushden Town Council to embrace growth to the east of Rushden whilst avoiding development adjacent to Higham Ferrers in accordance with the wishes of Higham Town Council.

3.11 Notwithstanding the local aspirations regarding the respective spatial development strategies for Rushden and Higham Ferrers, the Joint Planning Unit has appraised all 3 options against the criteria used to assess sites in the Draft Background Paper on Strategic Housing and Employment Sites. The assessment, included in Appendix 1 of this report, uses a 'traffic light' system to identify where potential conformity and conflicts with the criteria arise in order to identify issues where further work would need to be undertaken and enables the comparative merits of each option to be compared against the other options. The colours used in the assessment have the following meaning:
Green – no negative impact identified;
Orange – some issues/impact;
Red - major negative impact. Where an issue is highlighted in red, however, it does not necessarily imply that the particular constraint could not be mitigated or overcome; and
Blue – information unavailable

3.12 The JPU assessment in Appendix 1 is summarised in the following table. It indicates that the only clear difference between the sites relates to 'availability'. Option B is understood to be largely in single ownership (Duchy of Lancaster and whilst option A is being actively promoted by agents acting on behalf of the main landowners, the area is in multiple-ownership which could result in land assembly issues. Similarly, the land in option C is in multiple-ownership. In respect of other issues there are some differences which are, however, not sufficiently marked as to result in a difference in the colour code. For example, the A6 is a significant barrier to connectivity in respect of all 3 options. The draft Urban Structures Study[4] assessed the integration capacity of sectors of land on the edge of Rushden and Higham Ferrers with areas graded 'A' and 'E' denoting sectors with the best and least integration potential respectively. Whilst land between John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts (option A) was graded C/D the area between John Clark Road and Chelveston Road (option B) was considered to be better (though not significantly better) integrated with the existing urban area and was assessed as grade C.

Criteria	A	B	C
Proximity to services	Y	Y	Y
Proximity to a trunk/principal road junction	G	G	G
Connectivity to the existing urban area	Y	Y	Y
Access infrastructure	G	G	G
Capacity of the highway network	Y	Y	Y
Utilities	Y	Y	Y
Impact of an existing notifiable installation, including pipelines, on the development	G	G	G
Impact on existing sports and recreation facilities, including allotment land	Y	Y	Y
Impact of existing noise or odour (major road, railway, domestic waste disposal site or	Y	Y	Y

[4] http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1273

other source) on the development.			
Impact of the development on neighbouring land uses	Y	Y	Y
Impact on biodiversity	Y	Y	Y
Impact of the development on a protected species or on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance	Y	Y	Y
Impact on visual landscape	Y	Y	Y
Impact on heritage	G	G	G
Impact on listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens)	G	G	G
Impact on the existing form of the settlement	Y	Y	Y
Flood risk	G	G	G
Impact on the use of previously developed land	R	R	R
Impact on the quality of agricultural land	R	R	R
Impact on the stock of minerals	G	G	G
Availability	R	G	R
Deliverability	B	B	B
Total quality	B	B	B
SHLAA category	B	B	B

3.13 Overall, the JPU assessment does not indicate that any particular option is significantly more sustainable than either of the other two options. Based on the work undertaken to date, therefore, the JPU accepts the Duchy's conclusion that there does not appear to be any technical planning reasons to suggest that option B is less sustainable than option A. In these circumstances, however, it is considered that the strong support from Rushden Town Council and East Northamptonshire Council for growth to be accommodated to the East of Rushden should be given considerable weight in determining a preferred option. Equally, however, it will be important to ensure that the concerns raised by other Councils (see para 3.4/3.5, above) are addressed.

3.14 The assessment indicates that the key constraint in respect of option A (Rushden East) relates to land ownership. Deliverability will clearly be a key consideration as work progresses. However, whilst the land is currently in multiple-ownership, agents acting on behalf of several key land owners are promoting Rushden East as the location for the urban extension and whilst this issue will impact on the time required to bring land forward for development, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the urban extension will be deliverable within the Plan period to 2031.

3.15 In addition, whilst the land is largely greenfield, it is uncertain whether this includes best and most versatile agricultural land in category 3a. The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. The East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden Update[5] (June 2012), however, ranked all of the broad directions of growth around Rushden the same in terms of their impact on the quality of agricultural land - i.e. development in any direction would not lead to a loss of more than 1ha of grade 1 or 2 land but would lead to the loss of more than 1ha of grade 3, 4 or 5 land

[5] http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/docs/Rushden%20UES%20update%20FINAL.pdf

3.16 Whilst the work undertaken to date has not identified any constraint of a sufficient scale to preclude development at Rushden East there are other areas in addition to 'availability' where further work needs to be undertaken, most notably in respect of the criteria assessed as 'orange' in paragraph 3.13 above and summarised in Appendix 1.

3.17 Subject to these issues being addressed successfully, Rushden East should create a major opportunity for a high quality, cohesive and distinctive sustainable urban extension and is supported in principle by East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council. It will provide opportunities not only for residents of Rushden East but also the wider area through the provision of housing and employment opportunities, green infrastructure, services and facilities.

The broad location of the sustainable urban extension and the proposed policy and text

3.18 It is proposed that the JCS will identify the broad location for the urban extension and that the allocation of land and key site development principles, as noted in paragraph 3.1 above, will be included in a subsequent development plan document. Appendix 2 of this report therefore includes a draft policy and text for inclusion in the JCS whilst the key diagram in Appendix 3 identifies the broad location for the urban extension to the east of Rushden. Based on assessment work undertaken to date, the text includes a list of issues to be addressed in further detail as part of a subsequent development plan document. The list is solely for the purposes of guidance and is not intended to be exhaustive.

3.19 It is recommended that the broad location of the sustainable urban extension, the proposed policy and text, and background evidence should be subject to consultation over an extended period from mid-August to early October.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Planning Manager recommends that, as a basis for further consultation, the Joint Committee agrees:

1. **That Land East of Rushden, as shown on the key diagram in Appendix 3 of this report, be identified as the broad location for a sustainable urban extension in the Joint Core Strategy; and**
2. **The draft policy and text in Appendix 2 of this report for inclusion in the Joint Core Strategy.**

Contact Officer: Andrew Longley 01832 742359

Appendix 1
JPU assessment of options for a sustainable urban extension east of A6

Option A: Rushden East, Rushden		
Other references: Emerging Draft JCS ref ED051 and ED112. Sector RUS3 in the East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden Update (June 2012).		
Proposed development : Mixed use sustainable urban extension		
Site description: This area lies to the east of the A6 bypass between John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts, centred upon High Hayden Farm. There are several existing land uses within the area, predominantly different farm holdings (High Hayden Farm, Knights Farm, Rectory Farm etc), together with nurseries, allotments, a scrapyard and isolated dwellings.		
Criteria		**Comments**
Proximity to services	Y	Development of the scale proposed would include the provision of some new services and facilities as part of a comprehensive scheme. Whilst the area has good access to various facilities, using a 'straight-line' distance, the A6 is a major barrier which will increase journey times unless effective measures are taken to address connectivity.
Proximity to a trunk/principal road junction	G	Site adjacent to A6 with potential access via John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts.
Connectivity to the existing urban area	Y	Integration capacity assessed as grade C/D in the Urban Structures Study. A change of character of the A6 would be necessary. There may be some potential for the creation of a new connecting route into the roundabout with John Clark Way.
Access infrastructure	G	Two access points are achieveable off John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts - this would require relatively little infrastructure.
Capacity of the highway network	Y	Modelling indicates that a development on the east side of Rushden will put additional pressure on the A6, Chowns Mill and the local highway network. For traffic heading westbound, development focused at the southern end would probably reduce the impact on Chowns Mill but result in more traffic travelling through Rushden town centre to join the A45. Modelling has shown that a solution can be found at Chowns Mill but it is likely to need to be a grade separated solution. This is challenging as a development of this size would not be large enough to secure all the funding required and therefore other sources will have to be identified. In summary, capacity is limited but solutions can be found, subject to funding.
Utilities	Y	Full services would need to be provided to the site
Impact of an existing notifiable installation, including pipelines, on the development	G	Not within the specified consultation zone of a notifiable installation
Impact on existing sports and recreation facilities, including allotment land	Y	Development could lead to the loss of existing allotments to the east of the A6. These would need to be replaced/ relocated as part of any development scheme.
Impact of existing noise or odour (major road, railway, domestic waste disposal site or other source) on the development.	Y	The site is located immediately adjacent to the A6 - any development scheme would require appropriate mitigation measures.
Impact of the development on neighbouring land uses	Y	Generally compatible, subject to suitable mitigation measures.
Impact on biodiversity	Y	Area of medium biodiversity – no impact on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance. Presence of protected species unknown.
Impact of the development on a protected species or on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance	Y	
Impact on visual landscape	Y	Area of medium landscape sensitivity

Impact on heritage	G	Area of low sensitivity. No statutory designations. Few historic/archaeological assets are identified through the Sites and Monuments Record, although there is some evidence of "ridge and furrow" farming around High Hayden Farm
Impact on listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens)	G	
Impact on the existing form of the settlement	Y	Proposals would need to assess and, where necessary, mitigate any potential impact on the rural setting of Newton Bromswold
Flood risk	G	Wholly within Flood Zone 1.
Impact on the use of previously developed land	R	Development is essentially greenfield
Impact on the quality of agricultural land	R	Will result in the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land – uncertain whether this is grade 3a or 3b
Impact on the stock of minerals	G	Not allocated for mineral extraction
Availability	R	Land within the broad location is in multiple-ownership. The area is, however, being actively promoted through the JCS review with agents acting on behalf of several landowners.
Deliverability - Likely market demand	B	Not assessed as part of the SHLAA
Total quality	B	Not assessed in the SELA
SHLAA category	B	Not assessed as part of the 2011 SHLAA. A number of constraints have been identified as part of this assessment. The sites east of the A6/Higham Ferrers included in the SHLAA were assigned to category 3 (i.e. there are significant constraints which need to be addressed)
Other considerations		
East Northamptonshire Council Planning Policy Committee and Rushden Town Council decisions (June and July 2012 respectively)	G	Strong support for development at Rushden East from East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council. As there are few development constraints (with the possible exception of land assembly), these views represent an important factor in favour of this location (i.e. "localism").
Public rights of way	Y	The area includes several public rights of way which would need to be incorporated into any development proposal, providing opportunities for developing a well connected green infrastructure network.

Summary of Assessment:	
Key positive factors	**Key negative factors**
The area is being actively promoted on behalf of several willing land owners as a location for a sustainable urban extension.	Land within the broad location is in multiple-ownership
Opportunity to deliver a locally endorsed development - an example of "localism" in practice	Crossing the A6 represents a key challenge in terms of delivering integration of the urban extension with the existing town
Adjacent to the principal road network with two clear points of vehicular access to/from the A6 bypass	Little detailed site assessment work (i.e. technical studies) has been undertaken to date.
Proposals will provide for housing and employment and be of a scale that will enable the provision of some on-site facilities and services	Limited highway capacity

Option B: Higham Ferrers South East, Newton Road/ A6 Bypass, Higham Ferrers		
Other references: Emerging Draft JCS ref ED051; Sector HIG1 in the the East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden Update (June 2012).		
Proposed development : Mixed use sustainable urban extension		
Site description: This area lies to the east of the A6 Bypass between the Chelveston Road and John Clark Way roundabouts, centred upon Newton Road, Higham Ferrers and Moulton College campus. The area consists predominantly of agricultural land and buildings and, notably, Moulton College (Higham Ferrers campus).		
Criteria		**Comments**
Proximity to services	Y	Development of the scale proposed would include the provision of some new services and facilities as part of a comprehensive scheme. Whilst the area has good access to various facilities, based on a 'straight-line' distance, the A6 is a major barrier which will increase journey times unless effective measures are taken to address connectivity.
Proximity to a trunk/principal road junction	G	Immediately adjacent to the A6 bypass with two potential access points from the Chelveston Road and John Clark Way roundabouts.
Connectivity to the existing urban area	Y	Integration capacity assessed as grade C in the Urban Structures Study. The A6 is a significant barrier, although this may be addressed through the removal of noise barriers and the creation of new access/links to John Clark Way and Ferrers School.
Access infrastructure	G	Two access points are achieveable off John Clark Way and Chelveston Road roundabouts and would require relatively little infrastructure
Capacity of the highway network	Y	Modelling indicates that a development at this location would put additional pressure on the A6 - particularly on some of the side roads off it, the Chowns Mill roundabout and the more immediate local highway network. Modelling has indicated that a solution can be achieved at Chowns Mill but it is likely to be a grade separated junction. This is challenging as a development of this size would not be large enough to secure all the funding required and therefore other funding sources will have to be identified. In summary, capacity is limited but solutions can be found, subject to funding.
Utilities	Y	Full services would need to be provided to the site
Impact of an existing notifiable installation, including pipelines, on the development	G	Not within the specified consultation zone of a notifiable installation.
Impact on existing sports and recreation facilities, including allotment land	Y	Includes Moulton College playing fields which, if affected by development, would need to be replaced.
Impact of existing noise or odour (major road, railway, domestic waste disposal site or other source) on the development.	Y	Located immediately adjacent to the A6. Development would need to include appropriate mitigation measures.
Impact of the development on neighbouring land uses	Y	Generally compatible, subject to suitable mitigation measures
Impact on biodiversity	Y	Area of medium biodiversity – no impact on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance. Presence of protected species unknown.
Impact of the development on a protected species or on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance	Y	
Impact on visual landscape	Y	Area of medium sensitivity
Impact on heritage	G	Area of low sensitivity with no statutory designations. The Sites and Monuments Record indicates some evidence of Iron Age settlement (east of Ferrers College) and Higham Ferrers Saxon settlement (around Duchy Farm)
Impact on listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens)	G	
Impact on the existing form of the	Y	Proposals would need to assess and, where necessary,

settlement		mitigate any potential impact on the rural setting of Chelveston and Caldecott
Flood risk	G	Wholly within Flood Zone 1.
Impact on the use of previously developed land	R	Development is essentially greenfield
Impact on the quality of agricultural land	R	Will result in the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land – uncertain whether this is grade 3a or 3b
Impact on the stock of minerals	G	Area not allocated for mineral extraction
Availability	G	Land is in single ownership (Duchy of Lancaster) and is being promoted for development.
Deliverability - Likely market demand	B	Not assessed as part of the SHLAA, although two smaller areas (SHLAA ref 1068 and 1069) were assigned to category 1 (poor marketability and/or viability)
Total quality	B	Not assessed as part of the SELA
SHLAA category	B	Not included in the 2011 SHLAA, although two smaller areas (SHLAA ref 1068 and 1069) were assessed and assigned to category 3 (i.e. there are significant constraints which need to be addressed)
Other considerations		
"Localism" – local views concerning the possibility of further significant development at Higham Ferrers	R	Locally expressed views have emerged through the JCS review process that further development should be focused exclusively upon Rushden, rather than Higham Ferrers. East Northamptonshire Council, Rushden Town Council and Higham Ferrers Town Council have all expressed views that further expansion of the urban area should be specifically focused at Rushden.

Summary of Assessment:	
Key positive factors	**Key negative factors**
Adjacent to the principal road network with two clear points of vehicular access to/from the A6 bypass	Crossing the A6 represents a key challenge in terms of delivering integration of the urban extension with the existing urban area
The area is largely in single ownership and is being actively promoted.	Little detailed site assessment work (i.e. technical studies) has been undertaken to date.
Proposals will provide for housing and employment and be of a scale that will enable the provision of some on-site facilities and services	Concerns that this proposal would not accord with "localism", insofar as it represents significant further development at Higham Ferrers, against clearly expressed community aspirations. Furthermore, East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council have already expressed views that further expansion of the urban area should be specifically focused at Rushden.
There may be an opportunity to provide a new bus/pedestrian/cycle link along the old railway line north of Rushden town centre, through proposed residential development (land owned by the Duchy) in the vicinity of the Ferrers Specialist Arts College and across the A6 to Moulton college and the urban extension.	Limited highway capacity

Option C: Rushden East/ Higham Ferrers South East, A6 Bypass, Rushden/ Higham Ferrers		
Other references: Emerging Draft JCS ref ED051. Sectors RUS3/HIG1 in the East Northamptonshire Urban Extensions Study – Rushden Update (June 2012).		
Proposed development : Mixed use sustainable urban extension		
Site description This location lies to the east of the A6 Bypass, between the Chelveston Road, Higham Ferrers (B645) and Newton Road, Rushden roundabouts, centred upon the John Clark Way roundabout. The site consists of a range of uses, predominantly different farm holdings (High Hayden Farm, Knights Farm, Duchy Farm etc), together with nurseries, allotments, scrapyards and, notably, Moulton College (Higham Ferrers campus).		
Criteria		**Comments**
Proximity to services	Y	Development of the scale proposed would include the provision of some new services and facilities as part of a comprehensive scheme. Whilst the area has good access to various existing facilities, the A6 is a major barrier which will increase journey times unless effective measures are taken to address connectivity.
Proximity to a trunk/principal road junction	G	Site immediately adjacent to A6 Bypass, with three potential access points: Chelveston Road, John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts.
Connectivity to the existing urban area	Y	Integration capacity assessed as grade C (USS). The A6 is (inevitably) identified as a significant barrier, although this may be addressed through removal of noise barriers/ creation of new access/ links to John Clark Way and Ferrers School.
Access infrastructure	G	Three access points are achieveable off John Clark Way and Chelveston Road r'bouts - this would require relatively little infrastructure - and would spread the traffic impact of the development.
Capacity of the highway network	Y	Modelling done to date indicates that a development on the east side of Rushden would put additional pressure on the A6 and Chowns Mill. A longer linear development such as this would dissipate the traffic impact more widely on the local road network which may to a certain extent reduce the impact on Chowns Mill, however as it's operating at capacity now, any additional development in the Rushden area will still impact on the junction and therefore a solution will need to be found. Further investigation is required. In summary, capacity is limited but solutions can be found, subject to funding.
Utilities	Y	Full services would need to be provided to the site
Impact of an existing notifiable installation, including pipelines, on the development	G	Not within the specified consultation zone of a notifiable installation
Impact on existing sports and recreation facilities, including allotment land	Y	Development could lead to the loss of existing allotments to the east of the A6 and/or Moulton College playing fields. If necessary, these would need to be replaced/relocated as part of any development scheme.
Impact of existing noise or odour (major road, railway, domestic waste disposal site or other source) on the development.	Y	The site is located immediately adjacent to the A6. Development would need to include appropriate mitigation measures which, given the length of this boundary, are likely to be substantial.
Impact of the development on neighbouring land uses	Y	Generally compatible, subject to suitable mitigation measures
Impact on biodiversity	Y	Area of medium biodiversity – no impact on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance. Presence of protected species unknown.
Impact of the development on a protected species or on a site recognised for its wildlife or geological importance	Y	
Impact on visual landscape	Y	Area of medium sensitivity
Impact on heritage	G	Area of low sensitivity. No statutory designations. Few historic/archaeological assets are identified through SMR;
Impact on listed buildings, conservation	G	

areas, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens)		although some evidence of "ridge and furrow" farming around High Hayden Farm and Iron Age settlement (east of Ferrers College)
Impact on the existing form of the settlement	Y	Proposals would need to assess and, where necessary, mitigate any potential impact on the rural setting of nearby rural settlements
Flood risk	G	Proposed development site wholly within Flood Zone 1.
Impact on the use of previously developed land	R	Development is essentially greenfield
Impact on the quality of agricultural land	R	Will result in the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land – uncertain whether this is grade 3a or 3b
Impact on the stock of minerals	G	Site is not located on land allocated for mineral extraction
Availability	R	Development may come forward through close working between the main landowners and their representatives. Bletsoe, Bidwells and Smiths Gore are acting on behalf of the main landowners, although other parts of the area (e.g. around Alexandra Road nurseries etc) are in multiple ownership so parts of this potential development may present significant land assembly issues.
Deliverability - Likely market demand	B	Not assessed as part of the SHLAA, although two smaller areas adjacent to Higham Ferrers (SHLAA ref 1068 and 1069) were assigned to category 1 (poor marketability and/or viability)
Total quality	B	Not assessed as part of the SELA
SHLAA category	B	Not included in the 2011 SHLAA, although two smaller areas adjacent to Higham Ferrers (SHLAA ref 1068 and 1069) were assigned to category 3 (i.e. there are significant constraints which need to be addressed)
Other considerations		
Public rights of way	Y	The area includes several public rights of way which need to be incorporated into any development proposal, providing opportunities for developing a well connected green infrastructure network. Footpath UK2, which crosses the A6 at the John Clark Way roundabout, represents an key opportunity for enhanced linkages between the site and the existing urban area.
"Localism" – local views concerning the possibility of further significant development at Higham Ferrers	R	Locally expressed views have emerged through the JCS review process that further development should be focused exclusively upon Rushden, rather than Higham Ferrers. East Northamptonshire Council, Rushden Town Council and Higham Ferrers Town Council have all expressed views that further expansion of the urban area should be specifically focused at Rushden.

Summary of Assessment:	
Key positive factors	**Key negative factors**
Adjacent to the principal road network with three clear points of access to/ from the A6 Bypass	Little detailed site assessment work (i.e. technical studies) has been undertaken to date.
Proposals will provide for housing and employment and be of a scale that will enable the provision of some on-site facilities and services	Crossing the A6 represents a key challenge in terms of delivering integration of the urban extension with the existing town
Public rights of way crossing the site provide key opportunities for developing an integrated green infrastructure network. In particular, suitable crossing arrangements will enable access to Ferrers College and the health centre (160 Newton Road).	Concerns that this proposal would not accord with "localism", insofar as it represents significant further development at Higham Ferrers, against clearly expressed community aspirations. Furthermore, East Northamptonshire Council and Rushden Town Council have already expressed views that further expansion of the urban area should be specifically focused at Rushden.

There may be an opportunity to provide a new bus/pedestrian/cycle link along the old railway line north of Rushden town centre, through proposed residential development (land owned by the Duchy) in the vicinity of the Ferrers Specialist Arts College and across the A6 to Moulton college and the urban extension.	Land within the broad location is in multiple-ownership
	Limited highway capacity

Appendix 2
Draft policy and text
Proposed Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension

A. In order to provide for significant expansion at Rushden in accordance with its status as a Growth Town a broad, strategic location for a sustainable urban extension to the east of the A6, on land between the John Clark Way and Newton Road roundabouts, has been identified as shown on the key diagram. Rushden East represents the most significant new strategic development proposal over and above those already consented or identified in the 2008 adopted Core Spatial Strategy. The land is considered to be the most sustainable option for the future development of Rushden and provides a major opportunity for a high quality, cohesive and distinctive sustainable urban extension. Whilst the A6 bypass forms a significant barrier between the proposed urban extension and Rushden, innovative solutions will be examined in order to create a development which is permeable and well-connected to Rushden and the facilities offered by the existing urban area.

B. The broad location contains several farm holdings and is predominantly in agricultural use. Other land uses include nurseries, allotments, scrapyard and some isolated dwellings. Whilst Rushden East is being actively promoted by several key landowners, other land remains outside of their control and it is therefore envisaged that the urban extension will be brought forward for development later in the Plan period.

C. Whilst a broad location for development is shown on the key diagram, the allocation of a more precise development boundary will be included in a site-specific development plan document. The following list, though not intended to be exhaustive, indicates that the site-specific plan should identify:

- the boundaries of the site;
- existing built and natural environmental assets which need to be conserved or enhanced;
- the quantum of development and mix of uses to be provided on the site;
- the form/layout of the urban extension in so far as this is judged to be necessary as part of the development plan document;
- access points;
- existing land uses to be retained or, where more appropriate, replaced;
- opportunities to develop a well designed edge to the development and a sensitive transition to the adjoining countryside;
- key infrastructure requirements;
- other opportunities that accord with the policies of the development plan and can contribute towards the regeneration of Rushden;
- measures to ensure that the development is well connected and integrated with the existing urban area of Rushden;
- opportunities for the provision of strategic green infrastructure including links both to the countryside and within the development area itself;
- possible opportunities for the long-term expansion of the urban extension beyond the Plan period;
- measures to mitigate the potential impact of the development on the principle and local road network, including the A6 and A45; and

- other site constraints which need to be addressed in order for development to take place. Examples may include noise attenuation measures made necessary as a consequence of the proximity to the A6 and contamination associated with the scrapyard to the south of Alexandra Road.

D. A masterplan for the development of the site should be prepared and submitted as part of a planning application. This will be an important tool in demonstrating how the site can be brought forward in a comprehensive manner and how the proposals will accord with the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the policies in this Plan. In addition, there is an expectation that the masterplan will be supported by comprehensive 'design coding' of the development.

E. Policy

Land to the East of Rushden is identified on the key diagram as the location for a sustainable urban extension to include an indicative 2,000 – 2,500 dwellings and provision for an appropriate level of job opportunities, ancillary facilities, services and open space. A site specific development plan document will facilitate more detailed work with a range of stakeholders and the local community in order to allocate land for development and further develop specific policy and key principles for the site.

Appendix 3
Joint Core Strategy Key Diagram
Proposed broad location for Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension
(indicated by a brown, broken line)

