NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

SCOPING REPORT UPDATE

AUGUST 2011

North Northamptonshire
Joint Planning Unit

Contents

Executive Summary
Non Technical Summary 1

1. INTRODUCTION 3
Background 3
The CSS Review and Development Contributions SPD 4
What is Sustainability Appraisal? 5
Purpose of the Scoping Report 5

2. PLANS AND PROGRAMMES INFLUENCING THE PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL 8

3. BASELINE INFORMATION 8
The Impact of the Credit Crunch 9
Settlement Pattern and Transport Links 9
The Economy 11
Retail and Leisure Provision 14
Population 15
Deprivation 16
Housing 17
Health 18
Crime 19
Education 19
Biodiversity 20
Landscape 22
Cultural Heritage 23
Air 23
Water 24
Soil and Land 25
Minerals and Waste 26
Energy and Climate Change 28

4. SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK 30
Development of Framework 30
Sustainability Framework and Objectives 31
Appraisal method 32
Monitoring 33

5. NEXT STEPS 34

APPENDICES
1. **Plans and programmes influencing the Plans and SA**
2. **Baseline Data**
3. **Retail Rank**

4. Housing Data
5. Heritage and Culture
6. Agricultural Land Classification
7. Audit Trail of the Sustainability Objectives and Decision Aiding/ Sub Questions
8. Sustainability Framework, Appraisal Questions and Indicators
9. Example structure and content of the SA report
10. Consultees
11. Consultee Responses 2009 and 2011

Website References:
Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study (River Nene Regional Park website) - http://www.riverneneregionalpark.org/

Environment Agency Flood Maps - http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31656.aspx

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2009 Scoping Report was prepared in adherence with ODPM guidance 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' and the replaced by sustainability appraisal criteria set out in the CLG Plan Making Manual.

This SA is consistent with the sustainability appraisal criteria set out in the CLG Plan Making Manual, however the methodology used is similar to that set out in the earlier ODPM for the purposes of consistency with earlier stages of the SA.

The report addresses a range of baseline information for the borough in order to gain the widest understanding of opportunities and issues which may impact upon development.

Baseline information has been gathered in the past for the 2005 Scoping Report and again for the draft 2009 report, therefore many of the topics had already been addressed, these were refreshed with the most up to date information available following consultation with key stakeholders and infrastructure providers.

This baseline data aided the development and subsequent refinement of the Sustainability Objectives; of which North Northamptonshire have 21. These cover a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues in relation to sustainability.

To ensure that the Scoping Report was comprehensive and robust, public consultation took place, both in 2009 via the database (a full list of consultees can be found at appendix 10) and 2011, directly to the statutory consultees and via the NNJPU website. Responses from both rounds of consultation were received from a number of organisations; three of which were the statutory consultees. Changes recommended within responses have all been incorporated into the report and a full list of amendments are set out in Appendix 7 and 8.

Now the report is complete, the sustainability appraisal objectives will be fed into the Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy and all other Development Plan Documents as part of the Local Development Framework. The objectives will be used in all documents to help sustainably appraise policies set out in all documents.

NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Sustainable Development

1 The aim of sustainable development is to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In defining sustainable development the Government has prepared a Sustainable Development Strategy with a number of priorities for action:

- Sustainable consumption and production
- Climate change and energy
- Natural resource protection and environmental enhancement
- Sustainable communities

The Local Development Framework

2 This sets out the vision, strategy, and policies for planning and controlling land use in the North Northamptonshire Area. Sustainable development must be at the core of planning and Sustainability Appraisal is the tool to help improve the sustainability of plans as they are prepared.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

3 The purpose of SA is to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations into the preparation of the plan. It is an ongoing process that includes a number of key stages where both statutory and public consultation takes place. SEA specifically considers the effects of the development plan documents on the environment. It must predict and evaluate the measures required to offset any adverse effects identified.

4 SEA and SA are separate processes but, in line with Government Guidance, an integrated approach to the two has been taken in this report.

The SA Process

5 Government guidance sets out a staged approach to the SA process:

- Stage A – Setting the Context and Objectives, Establishing the Baseline and Deciding on the Scope
- Stage B – Developing and Refining Options
- Stage C – Appraising the Effects of the plan
- Stage D – Consulting on the Draft Plan and Sustainability Appraisal Report

SA Scoping

6 This report represents the first stage in meeting the SEA requirements and informing the Review of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS). It has been prepared for consultation and it asks interested people and organisations whether the Sustainability Appraisal and objectives are correct. There are a number of questions, at the end of this section, asking whether consultees know of any other information that should be taken into account and whether

there could be any improvements to the proposed framework for assessing this and future Development Plan Documents?

Sustainability Framework

7 This framework and objective build on the previously adopted CSS framework taking into account any changes in policy direction or advice given. The framework of objectives and decision-aiding questions provides a way in which the sustainability effects of a development option or policy can be described or compared. Comments about whether each option or policy is likely to assist or conflict with each SA objective are recorded in detailed tables. Where any significant conflicts are identified possible measures to offset adverse effects will be considered – this could be a different option or a change in the wording.

8 The results of the SA will be reported for public consultation at the same time as each stage of the CSS.

Next Steps

9 Now the report is complete, the sustainability appraisal objectives will be fed into the Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy and all other Development Plan Documents as part of the Local Development Framework. The objectives will be used in all documents to help sustainably appraise policies set out in all documents

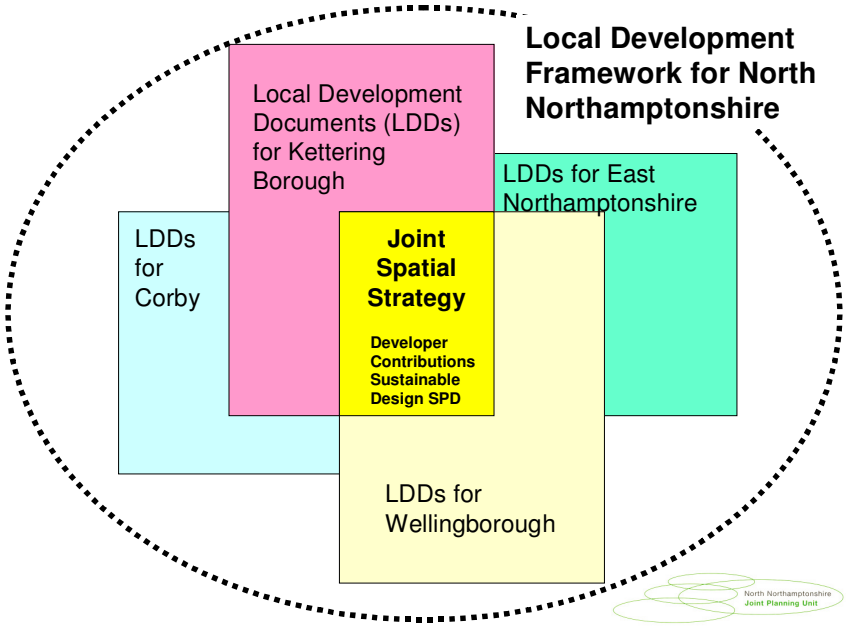
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 Northamptonshire was identified by the Government as an area for major new development over the next 20 to 30 years. This is as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area identified in the Sustainable Communities Plan published in February 2003 (www.odpm.gov.uk/communities/plan). The broad proposals are set out in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy (MKSM Strategy). This, published by the Secretary of State in March 2005, proposes that North Northamptonshire should accommodate around 52,000 new homes and 44,000 jobs between 2001 and 2021.

1.2 The growth proposals coincided with the introduction of a new planning system that replaced County Structure Plans with Regional and Sub-Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Plans with a range of documents that will collectively make up a Local Development Framework (LDF). Details of the documents that will make up the LDF, and the timetable for their production, are set out in the Local Development Schemes (LDS) for North Northamptonshire.

1.3 In view of the scale of growth proposed, the councils have agreed that there should be a comprehensive set of planning documents for North Northamptonshire. This will be called the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework.



THE CSS REVIEW

1.4 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is mandatory for Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Sustainability Appraisal helps planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing plans.

1.5 The Review of the CSS is being led by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. The review is being carried out primarily in response to recommendations in the Inspectors Report[1] of the currently adopted CSS[2]. The major aspects that will be covered by the Review are infrastructure provision and the need to 'roll' the Plan forward to 2031 in line with PPS 12.

[1] Report to the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, Report of the Examination in to the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, 12 May 2008
[2] North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, June 2008

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL?

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

1.6 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a statutory requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The main aim of SA is to ensure that the Review preparation process improves the contribution that the CSS makes to the achievement of sustainable development.

1.7 When preparing Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents planning authorities must also conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2001/42/EC on the 'assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment' (the 'strategic environmental assessment' or SEA Directive).

1.8 The requirement to carry out a SA and SEA are distinct, however both can be satisfied through a single appraisal process. SA is an integral part of good plan-making and should not be seen as a separate activity. It is an iterative process that identifies and reports on the ***likely significant effects*** of the plan and the extent to which implementation of the plan will achieve the social environmental and economic objectives by which sustainable development can be defined. This document has been prepared in the spirit of this integrated approach.

PURPOSE OF THE SCOPING REPORT

1.9 This report has been prepared by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit, which provides strategic planning advice for the Boroughs and Districts of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire. It has been produced in accordance with the guidance contained in *Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, November 2005* and *Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM, September 2005.*

1.10 The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development and focus planning policy on the achievement of sustainable patters of development in line with the overarching aim of planning set out in the national Planning Policy Statement 1. The process of Sustainability Appraisal seeks to integrate social, economic and environmental issues into policy making and should ensure that decisions about Development Plan Documents objectives and policies promote the achievement of sustainable development.

1.11 There are slight differences in the process for the appraisal of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in the Local Development Framework (LDF), reflecting the statutory importance of each document type. The step-by-step process for each type of

planning document is explained in the ODPM (2005) guidance (see page 38 for DPDs and page 58 for SPDs).

1.12 A Sustainability Appraisal Report is required to support each DPD and SPD in the Local Development Framework. These reports will explain how the objectives of sustainability have been taken into account in the preparation of each planning document.

1.13 The NNJPU Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlines the documents that will be prepared for the Local Development Framework. The LDS details the programme of production of these documents and can be viewed on-line at the NNJPU website: www.nnjpu.org.uk

1.14 SA involves five stages and the preparation of three key reports. It is important to remember however that these are not necessarily distinct stages. Below is a simplified diagram of the process based upon current government guidance. The scoping stage draws together information that is relevant to the SA process, and set out how the SA of the review will be undertaken. The main components to the Scoping Stage (Stage A) of the SA are:

Baseline

1.15 Baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring of effects and helps to identify key sustainability issues. Information about trends, where available, are collected to inform prediction of effects.

Strategy, policies, plans and programmes

1.16 International, European, national and regional level strategies, policies, plans and programmes that are relevant to the Review are identified and relationships to the review and the SA process are understood.

Key Sustainability Issues

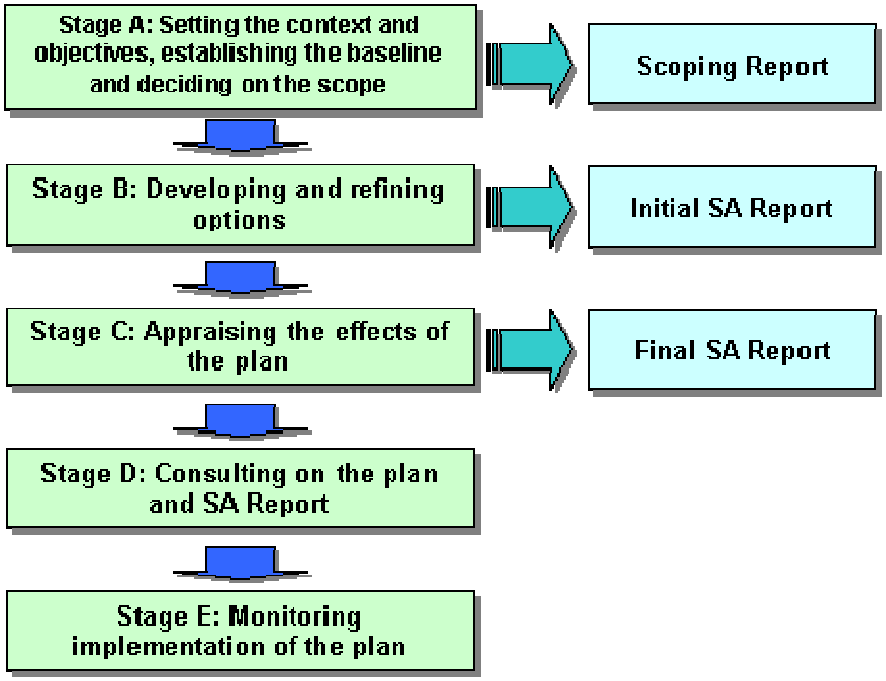
1.17 The key sustainability issues are highlighted drawing on the baseline information and the strategies, policies, plans and programmes review.

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

1.18 A SA framework was developed for the currently adopted CSS. This framework and scoping report would ultimately be used for testing all DPD and SPD across North Northamptonshire.

1.19 Therefore we have used as our starting point the approach undertaken for the SA of the adopted CSS.

Figure 1. The approach to SA and the key reports prepared



1.20 This scoping report has been produced to cover the scope of all DPDs and SPDs to be included in the North Northamptonshire LDF**.**

SA/SEA Consultation

1.21 This report represents one of the first stages in the review of the joint Core Spatial Strategy for North Northamptonshire. The comments arising will be reviewed and taken into consideration so that the sustainability objectives set out in the SA framework can be finalised for appraising reviewed policies.

1.22 It has been prepared for consultation with the designated consultation bodies (Natural England, Environment Agency and English Heritage) and other bodies and groups who may have an interest. It is available on the NNJPU's website - www.nnjpu.org.uk .

Considerations for Consultees

1.23 This report presents the proposed SA framework which consists of the sustainability objectives for the North Northamptonshire Area and the decision aiding questions. This is covered more extensively in section 4 and appendices 7 and 8.

1.24 The Local Development Framework is also subject to Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) under the European Habitats directive[3] that protects habitats and species of European ecological importance [Natura 2000 sites – comprising Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)]. HRA is carried out in 3 stages, the first of which is initial screening to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required.

[3] 92/43/EEC – on the conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna

Although HRA/AA screening is reported separately, it will be carried out prior to the appraisal of options for the CSS.

2.0 PLANS AND PROGRAMMES INFLUENCING THE CSS AND SA (TASK A1)

2.1 A review has been undertaken of all the plans and programmes influencing the review of the CSS and SA. The results are summarised in a table included as Appendix 1. This review considered guidance at international, European Union (EU), regional and local level. Note has been made of any targets or specific requirements included within them. This is considered to comply with the requirements of the SEA Directive.

3.0 BASELINE INFORMATION AND IDENTIFYING SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES AND PROBLEMS (TASK A2 AND A3)

3.1 This section of the SA report describes the main social, economic and environmental characteristics of North Northamptonshire. The initial collection of this data was undertaken as part of the evidence gathering for the currently adopted CSS. As part of the review and in order that the scoping report and SA can remain to be used for testing all DPDs and SPDs across North Northamptonshire, we have built upon the existing evidence and SA framework, taking into account any new information and trends.

3.2 The 2007 and 2009 Sustainability Appraisals have been used as a guide to implement this 2011 Scoping Report. The baseline information has been gathered and is presented by heading below and in Appendix 2, this covers 'Task A3' of the SA process in assessing the sustainability issues and problems that may occur with some data. There are naturally issues and impacts that arise from most indictors; however some present more contentious problems than others as the effects could be more severe, thus creating a cumulative effect upon other indicators.

3.3 During the course of scoping and developing the SA framework for the adopted CSS, sources of useful and relevant information in some areas was difficult to obtain. It was anticipated, during collection that this would improve over time, particularly as annual monitoring reports were to be prepared by each of the Local Authorities, as required under the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The first annual monitoring reports since the initial scoping report and SA have since been completed, and will form part of the baseline information, particularly in relation to trends.

3.4 Appendix 2 provides a table of baseline data highlighting trends, comparators, targets and Key sustainability issues, where available. The following should be

read in conjunction with the appendix. Together they provide an overview of the area and identify Key sustainability issues. They represent the information on the current state of the environment and the environmental characteristics of the area required by the SEA Directive.

3.5 As the review is taking place such a short time after the adoption of the CSS it is considered that whilst that there have been some changes to the baseline data, in most instances data and information remains unchanged. It has however still been included for clarity and ease. Where appropriate Key sustainability issues have been updated to reflect these changes.

3.6 Consultation on this document is seen as a key stage in identifying further sources of baseline data and of identifying the Key sustainability issues arising from it.

Recent Economic Conditions

3.6 The Scoping Report seeks to set out key baseline trends in North Northamptonshire, and the issues of these in the development of the Sustainability Appraisal. The current 'Credit Crunch' will have a significant impact on trends, particularly in relation to housing completions and employment and the economy. However, it is important to note that most monitoring data will not yet show these trends due to the time lag in information becoming available. Implementation of the growth proposed in the adopted CSS will be slowed down by current market conditions but the overall growth targets and the spatial strategy to deliver them remain in place. The North Northamptonshire Development Company (NNDC) is working with partners to secure the investment needed to sustain development activity in the area and to ensure that infrastructure and services are in place to enable high and sustainable rates of growth when the market recovers.

Key sustainability issues:

- Uncertainty over impact of recession on delivery of growth plans
- Need for investment to maintain development activity and ensure that conditions are right for growth as the market recovers

Settlement Pattern and Transport Links

3.7 North Northamptonshire incorporates the boroughs and districts of East Northamptonshire (Population 85,400), Corby (Population 55,200), Kettering (Population 89,500) and Wellingborough (Population 75,900). Cumulatively the area encompasses 986 square kilometres and has a population of 306,000 from mid 2007 estimates. East Northamptonshire (510 square kilometres) is the largest district in the area. North Northamptonshire is at the northern tip of the MKSM Growth Area, closely related to the Oxford to Cambridge arc that has been identified as having potential for economic growth of international importance. Adjoining districts in West Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire are also planning for major growth as part of the MKSM Growth Area whilst, immediately to the east, Peterborough is

part of the Peterborough/Cambridge/ Stansted Growth Area. North Northamptonshire lies in the East Midlands where the 'Three Cities' Sub-Region of Nottingham, Leicester and Derby has been identified by the Government as Growth Points.

3.8 North Northamptonshire is located on key strategic transport infrastructure in the form of the A14 'Trans European Route' providing linkages to the M1 and M6 as well as to the East Coast ports, other roads, including the A6, A605, A45 and A43 provide good transport linkages. East Midlands Trains with stations at Kettering and Wellingborough provide links south to London (average journey time from Kettering to St Pancras 64 minutes; Wellingborough 57 minutes with onward Eurostar trains) and north to the Three Cities (average journey time from Kettering to Leicester 26 minutes; Wellingborough 33 minutes) and beyond. The new station for Corby is due to be operational by Summer 2009, providing links south to London. There are several international airports within 70 miles of North Northamptonshire.

3.9 The settlement pattern of North Northamptonshire comprises the three largest towns, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough located on a north-south spine, with a chain of smaller towns related to the A6 corridor. The largest of these is Rushden with a population of 28,300 while the others all have populations in the range of 6,500 to 8,500. The Core Strategy identifies Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough as Growth Towns. Together with the A6 towns, they form what the Core Spatial Strategy terms the 'Urban Core' of North Northamptonshire. To the east of the area are the towns of Oundle (population 5,700), Raunds (8,500) and Thrapston (5,700) which are identified in the Core Strategy as Rural Service Centres. Together with the local service centre of King's Cliffe (population 1,200) they provide what is termed the 'Rural Service Spine' serving a large rural catchment. Outside these settlements North Northamptonshire is a predominantly rural area with over 100 villages dispersed into attractive countryside.

3.10 The countryside is a diverse mix of landscapes, each with its own distinctive visual, historic and ecological character. The northern and southern boundaries of North Northamptonshire are framed by river valleys; the Welland and the Nene. The Nene changes in character as it moves through the area, from a more urbanised west and a concentration of sand and gravel extraction, to a more tranquil rural north. Much of the northern half of the area lies within the Rockingham Forest; over 200 square miles of countryside in North Northamptonshire and Peterborough, recognised as a distinctive Countryside Character and Natural area. As with other parts of the East Midlands, North Northamptonshire has a low biodiversity offer with habitats fragmented or degraded as a result of settlement expansion, infrastructure developments and agriculture. However, the upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits in East Northamptonshire are being designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site due to their importance for migratory birds. The various Country Parks and sites of historic importance such as Rockingham Castle, Boughton House and Deene Park represent valuable leisure, tourism and cultural resources.

3.11 Travel patterns in North Northamptonshire are of a very localised nature (6.9 miles being the average trip distance), meaning the vast majority of trips are being taken within the boundaries of the area. Despite this fact, car-use dominates as a transport mode (72% of trips) in comparison to less than 4% of trips being made by cycle or bus. Apart from the flagship X4 which links Milton Keynes, Northampton, the Growth Towns and Peterborough, bus connections from North Northamptonshire do not provide attractive alternatives to car use, particularly in the rural areas. The dominance of car-use contributes to problems of congestion on both strategic routes such as the A14 and A45 and on the local road network, particularly in Kettering and Wellingborough town centres. Upgrading of the highway network, coupled with measures to manage demand for travel and to secure modal shift (from car use to public transport, walking and cycling) are fundamental to support the delivery of growth.

3.12 The adopted CSS (2008) is informed by the Transport Strategy for Growth (Northamptonshire County Council 2007), which looks at how transport impacts on key objectives such as the economy and jobs growth, social impacts and housing delivery, and has been used to draw up a prioritised list of transport interventions. Due to known constraints on current highways it is essential to seek improvements to enable the anticipated growth. It may not be possible to upgrade the highway network to accommodate all of the proposed growth. It will therefore be necessary for there to be a substantial reduction in the proportion of trips made by private car. The CSS aims for a modal shift away from car use and road freight haulage, towards more sustainable alternatives.

3.13 Development plan documents produced by the individual districts and borough council will aim to secure the necessary modal shift through implementing the strategic policies contained within the CSS, supported by the Sustainable Design SPD and Transport Strategy for Growth.

3.14 The requirement for transport infrastructure includes improvements and upgrading of strategic routes crossing North Northamptonshire, public transport works, including improvements to bus and rail services and town centre modal shift strategies in line with the Core Strategy.

Key sustainability issues:

- Strategic location and integrated transport links
- The challenge of meeting modal shift targets
- New passenger rail service/ station at Corby
- A number of small towns each with a separate identity
- No one dominant centre
- Role of large rural hinterland and its villages

The Economy

3.15 Between 2001 and 2005, the number of jobs in North Northamptonshire increased from 118,400 in 2001 to 123,100 in 2005, an increase of 4,700 jobs (ABI employee analysis, January 2007). The largest rises have been seen in

Kettering and East Northamptonshire. The number of jobs in Corby has remained fairly constant, whilst Wellingborough has seen a decline of almost 2000 jobs. The implications of the Credit Crunch will have obviously affected trends in the last year, although information from Cambridge Econometrics identified Corby as most likely to resist the impacts of the Credit Crunch.

3.16 The traditional economic base in North Northamptonshire has been located along the north-south corridor and has primarily focused on manufacturing, with strong links to the footwear industry. The neighbouring growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough form the focal point for the economy of their districts and for North Northamptonshire and its rural hinterland as a whole. Within East Northamptonshire, there is a more dispersed settlement pattern, with the population concentrated into 6 towns and reliance on the neighbouring growth towns and other centres for employment.

3.17 The adopted JCS seeks to maintain a broad balance between homes and jobs, diversify the economy, make and safeguard allocations for specific employment use classes, invest in education and training. The strategy is to create 47,400 net new jobs in the period 2001 to 202, of which B use jobs should comprise 23,590: Offices (B1) - 11,190; Strategic distribution (B8) - 9,440; and General Industrial (B2) - 2,960. North Northamptonshire is currently under performing against the targets in the adopted CSS.

3.18 In job creation terms East Northamptonshire and Kettering are the best performing Local Authorities, whereas in contrast, Corby and Wellingborough have under-performed. At present, Corby has the best jobs/housing balance at 1.1 jobs/dwelling. The SNEAP identifies that there will be a jobs gap of 18,900 in North Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2021 without additional interventions from the public sector. The 2009 Annual Monitoring Report demonstrates that there is a significant amount of committed employment land, which could deliver these targets, however quality and viability are significant issues. In Corby the key issue is deliverability e.g. both Stanion Lane Plantation and Seymour Plantation have extant planning consents but development has not commenced. As well as securing sufficient jobs, the JCS strategy is to diversify the economy into higher-value activities (that generate wealth and higher paid jobs.) This will mean focusing on potential growth sectors such as knowledge-based industries, advanced manufacturing, low carbon technologies and precision engineering. This would allow a shift away from the recent reliance on strategic distribution, although this remains a growth sector and will continue to be important to the North Northamptonshire economy.

3.19 A substantial body of work has already been undertaken to inform future strategic economic and employment land policies and priorities in the county. The Sustainable Northamptonshire Economic Action Plan[4] (SNEAP) establishes a preferred economic vision for the county and sets out a series of actions to transform the local economy to achieve the county's ambition for long-term sustainable growth. The SNEAP identifies six core themes of cross-

[4] NEL et al, draft Strategic Northamptonshire Economic Action Plan (April 2008)

cutting activity that will form future priorities for transformational change. These six themes are: Employment Land & Premises; Town Centre Regeneration; Education & Skills; Enterprise & Innovation; Transportation; Building the Brand.

3.20 Most recently the Strategic Employment Land Assessment (SELA) published in December 2009 [5] builds upon this and previous studies to set out an assessment of recent economic performance and the progress to meet the job requirements in the JCS, and subsequent jobs and floorspace requirements in the period to 2026 and beyond. The SELA takes a strategic approach to identifying future needs for employment land and jobs growth. It sets out the preferred economic scenario for economic growth, as well as the quantum of development land required to achieve this. The SELA identifies the measures required to ensure that an appropriate range of employment sites are made available to meet employment forecast requirements.

3.21 The SELA sets out that such is the strength of the Strategic Distribution sector in North Northamptonshire that high levels of market demand will continue. As referred to in the CSS Inspectors Report, it is important that the role of Strategic Distribution is fully considered. This sector can unlock sites for higher value employment, provide high skilled employment and achieve high standards of environmental performance and sustainability

3.22 Manufacturing decline has been much more substantial than forecast and the most growth has been in Strategic Distribution (warehousing). Corby, with its strong industrial heritage has a high proportion of manufacturing. The SELA reports that nearly a third of Corby's labour force is employed in the manufacturing sector compared to only 10% in Northampton. A positive message should be presented that this provides a strong platform from which to grow a more soundly based and resilient economy. However, the decline in manufacturing has obvious implications for Corby's economy. This trend is likely to lead to higher rates of unemployment and herald potential for significant transformation of the Boroughs older and poorer quality industrial areas. Non B-use jobs growth (e.g. including retail, hotels and food and drink, social care and health, educational and non-residential institutions) are lagging behind regional and national trends.

3.23 These studies are based on the housing growth in the adopted CSS being delivered by 2021, and the rate of growth continued post 2021.In response to the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies, the JPU has published a Statement of Intent, setting out that the housing targets in the CSS will not be delivered by 2021, the trajectory will be stretched. As a consequence, the jobs targets will need to take into account this slowing down in housing growth, and the overall reduction in levels of housing in the period to 2031.

3.24 The lack of University presence in North Northamptonshire has been identified as a barrier in delivering higher value employment and not addressing the skills shortage that exists. Low skill levels will have significant implications for

[5] Atkins et al, draft Strategic Employment Land Assessment (June 2009)

attracting particular industries that require a certain level of skills. Up skilling the existing and future population and creating stronger links between new businesses and the skills/FE sector will be important elements of future economic strategy.

3.25 The quality of existing industrial estates is an important consideration in attracting inward investment. Furthermore, the ability of existing businesses located on these estates to expand to more suitable premises and sites is an important issue. The current and future role of existing Industrial Estates and the opportunities they present will be important both in relation to economic development and opportunities for urban restructuring and regeneration.

3.26 Although the consequences of the Comprehensive Spending Review are unclear, it is evident that there will be significantly less funding available to support public sector interventions, and it is likely that there will need to be substantial private sector support to deliver a step change in job creation within North Northamptonshire. Stakeholders have identified that plan making and the public sector need to positively support private sector job creation, and clarity and site identification in the JCS could support this.

3.27 In order to create sustainable communities, business support activity including the provision of appropriate facilities and promoting inward investment, will be essential to support the required level of employment growth. In line with the step change in dwellings due to be constructed, it is expected that the number of jobs created will also increase.

Key sustainability issues:

- Importance of manufacturing and storage and distribution
- Opportunities for growth in knowledge based industries
- Opportunities as part of Motorsport Valley
- Limited office space with slow take up
- Competition from and dominance of Northampton for office space
- Diversification of the economy

Retail and Leisure provision

3.28 North Northamptonshire's unique location and regional and sub-regional linkages make it vulnerable to competing retail centres, where investment and expansion are being aggressively targeted. Competitors include Northampton to the west, Bedford and Milton Keynes to the south, Peterborough to the east and Leicester to the north, whose size of retail offer and consequent retail ranking greatly exceeds the offer in individual North Northamptonshire centres and have seen recent significant improvements in their retail offer. These centres also compete for leisure and entertainment sectors. Kettering provides the main retail offer with over 800,000 square metres of retail floorspace, with a range of stores in the town centre and on the edge of town

such as the Kettering Venture Park and serves as a focus for services and facilities for the town as a whole and its wider rural hinterland.

3.29 Using Experian Retail Rankings (Experian 2008), Kettering, the main retail centre in North Northamptonshire has declined from 180th in 2001 to 264th in 2008 and Corby from 323rd in 2001 to 352nd in 2008. In contrast, Wellingborough has improved from 351st in 2001 to 282nd in 2008.

3.30 However, it is important to note that the retail offer in Corby has recently been significantly enhanced by the completion of the Willow Place development. Corby town centre saw 9,977 m2 of floorspace completed in the 2007-2008 monitoring period (CBC AMR 2008). Corby Borough Council have resolved to approve a planning application for Phase 2 of Corby town centre redevelopment. This significant regeneration and improved retail offer should address previous issues where by residents in and around Corby often travelled to alternative destinations such as Stamford for shopping or employment.

3.31 Out-of-town retail parks are also located in Wellingborough, Corby and Rushden and increase the retail and leisure provision to serve catchment populations. These retail parks can, however compete with existing town centres in certain instances.

3.32 Smaller centres in North Northamptonshire have more local roles and serve local needs. There are differences between centres, with some ailing and others buoyant.

3.33 North Northamptonshire's leisure facilities and community and cultural activities incorporate facilities that serve wider catchments including a Cinema, Theme Park (Wicksteed Park) and Leisure Village in Kettering, Corby Golf Club ,Wellingborough's Castle Theatre and The lighthouse Theatre, Kettering. The 50m Swimming Pool in Corby is due to open in Summer 2009 and will be a major asset serving North Northamptonshire and beyond. There are also a range of leisure centres and clubs and organisations that serve local needs. There are, however, gaps in the provision of leisure and cultural facilities and Tourism remains peripheral to the economy. The existing environmental infrastructure and assets, including high quality landscape, various Country Parks and prominent sites of historic importance such as Rockingham Castle, Boughton House and Deene Park, represent a valuable leisure, tourism and cultural resource.

3.34 The adopted CSS specifies the need to develop a balanced network of centres approach. Retail development will be concentrated within existing town and district centres as identified in development plan documents. The sustainable urban extensions will include local centres of an appropriate scale with convenience shops and facilities such as medical centres and schools to meet the day-to-day needs of residents. They will not provide significant convenience and comparison shopping provision or other facilities serving a wider area that would be better located in the town centre.

Key sustainability issues:

- Tourism remains peripheral to the economy
- Network of centres meeting day to day needs of residents
- Individual town centres in North Northamptonshire relatively are weak compared to competing centres
- Requirement to strengthen and enhance all the Town Centres
- Access to facilities from rural areas, new development could take opportunity to support rural economy.
- A concentration of cultural facilities and tourism activities can act as a magnet for visitors.
- Concentrating tourism development within town centres provides the potential to support wider regeneration and sustainable development objectives.Interdependency of cultural and tourism services
- New facilities being multifunctional and centrally located with good access
- Linking in tourism to town centre regeneration schemes
- Stagnation of town centres
- Role of smaller towns

Population

3.35 As referred to earlier, North Northamptonshire is home to over 306,000 people (figure at mid 2007). They are a diverse group; 20% are 15 years of age or under, 62% are of working age and 18% are of retirement age. Of these people, the majority are white (95%). The largest ethnic group in 2006 is Asian or Asian British making up 2% of the population across North Northamptonshire. In Wellingborough however they represent 5.1% of the population. The next most significant group is Black or Black British who make up 1.2% of the population across the whole area and 2.9% of Wellingborough. The majority of the population who state a religion describe themselves as Christian. The greatest non Christian groups are in Wellingborough where 3.4% describe their religion as Hindu and 0.9% as Muslim. The area has seen population growth that is higher than the national and regional average and with the anticipated growth this is likely to continue. Latest population estimates suggest the population of North Northants will increase by 99,400 people between 2001-21, with Corby forecast to experience the largest share of this at 33,000 additional inhabitants. This forecast is consistent with the fact the town is planned to receive the largest share of new housing provision across North Northants to 2021. At 2021 the forecast population of North Northants is 384,400, this representing an increase of c.45% compared to 2001 levels (285,100). In common with national trends, life expectancy is increasing, resulting in a growing elderly population, there are 55,578 people over retirement age.

3.36 Due to planned growth for North Northamptonshire and the commitment to delivering a vibrant and sustainable community for the new and existing population there will need to be significant investment in a broad range of hard and soft infrastructure that will accommodate the increasing aging population.

Key sustainability issues:

- Need to plan for different ethnic groups
- Population growth above national and regional averages
- Increasing elderly population

Deprivation

3.37 Pockets of deprivation exist in North Northamptonshire, primarily located in and around the growth towns. From the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Corby has 10 of the 50 most deprived areas in Northamptonshire, an improvement from 12 in 2004, however this still includes the 4th, 5th, 6th and 10th most deprived. Wellingborough has one area that has improved taking them from 6 down to 5 areas and Kettering remains on 4 areas. Smaller pockets of deprivation do, however, exist in the smaller towns and also in the rural areas, where due to the spatial dispersal of settlements people can experience difficulties in accessing services and facilities and fully participating in the labour market, particularly if not having access to a car.

3.38 In terms of the overall districts deprivation score, Corby and Kettering have both improved from 2004 rising from 60 to 66 and 218 to 226 respectively (where 1 is the worst and 354 is the best). East Northamptonshire has remained stable with a ranking of 268 (2004) to 269 (2007). Wellingborough is the only district to have gone down the rankings from 189 in 2004 to 179 in 2007.

Key sustainability issues:

- Pockets of deprivation in growth towns
- Corby most deprived wards
- Rural deprivation linked to access to services and facilities

Housing

3.39 In 2008 there are 134,813 dwellings within North Northamptonshire. Owner occupation rates are high (at 2003), over 70% in all areas, which is above both the national and regional averages. The social rented sector is more dominant in Corby, around 28% of the total compared with around half this level in the other local authority areas.

3.40 Over a third of properties in North Northamptonshire are within Council Tax band A (the lowest tax band) compared with a national average of 25%. The proportion of dwellings in the highest tax band (E to G) is below the national average in North Northamptonshire - 10% as against a national average of 18%.

3.41 The total proportion of owner occupied housing does not vary much between the four districts: the lowest proportion of overall market housing is in East Northants (76% of the total) and the highest is Wellingborough (84%). However that does not tell the whole story, as the proportion of owner occupied (buyer) demand is much higher in East Northants (52%) than anywhere else and the next highest is Corby (45%).

3.42 Whilst affordability of market housing in North Northamptonshire is favourable compared to the national average; affordable housing remains an important issue. The towns of Kettering and Wellingborough have significant affordable housing needs. There is also an identified need in rural areas, particularly in the villages to the north of the area.

3.43 Between 2001 and 2007 there have been 739 affordable dwellings built in North Northamptonshire - 276 in Wellingborough, 234 in Kettering and 229 in East Northamptonshire.

3.44 NCC household forecasts predict an increase in numbers of all types of households, with particular increases amongst the one person households, which are predicted to increase by 57% between 2006 and 2021, from 37,500 to 59,000.

3.45 Rates of house building within North Northants have rose steadily between 2005 and 2008, with 1947 completions in 2005/06 to 2193 in 2007/08, this representing an increase of c.13% overall. Kettering Borough Council delivered the most dwellings over this period (1829). However, early data received from the local authorities suggests that the credit crunch is biting, with sharp falls recorded in the level of housing activity (both commencements and completions) between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

3.46 Housing Market Assessments have been undertaken for the area, which are enshrined in the adopted CSS with targets of 30% in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough and 40% in East Northamptonshire. Further work is currently being undertaken to address the viability of achieving these targets.

3.47 Just under two-thirds of North Northants households live in an area classified as urban. Just under a quarter live in towns and fringes, about 10% in villages and less than 1% in hamlets. The rural housing need in North Northamptonshire is at its highest levels in East Northamptonshire due to the rural nature of the District, however regular Housing Needs Surveys undertaken in conjunction with all four Local Authorities have shown a significant demand for affordable housing in rural areas throughout North Northamptonshire.

3.48 Nearly a third of all households contain an older person, and most of that third contain older persons only. Nearly all older person households contain one or two people, with the majority being one-person. This will be an increasing issue for the area over the next 20-30 years and the needs monitored in order to support the aging population.

3.49 The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, March 2008, sets out the requirements for future pitches between 2007 and 2017. There is a need for a further 41 residential pitches, 10 transit pitches and 6 plots for travelling show people.

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3.51 Additional data on housing provision, completions on greenfield land and previously developed land and affordable housing is given in Appendix 4.

Key sustainability issues:

- Need for affordable housing, including gypsy and traveller accommodation
- Viability of achieving Housing Needs Assessment targets
- Implications for development of rural economy
- Delivering household growth in current economic climate
- Growth in one person households
- Live-work units in rural areas to sustain rural communities and reduce the need to travel
- Need for rural housing with a range of house types and sizes

Health

3.52 Kettering has the only General Hospital in North Northamptonshire, although Wellingborough (Isebrook) and Rushden (Memorial) also have local hospitals, which provide some services. The General Hospital serves a wide catchment area and is a key facility for the neighbouring growth towns of Wellingborough and Corby, an example of the inter-relationships between these settlements. The larger towns and rural areas close to the main urban areas have good access to health facilities. Villages to the north of North Northamptonshire look increasingly towards Stamford and Peterborough for their needs.

3.53 Cumulatively over 69% of residents in North Northamptonshire describe their health as good (2001 Census). Although lower than the County average this is higher than the East Midlands and National averages.

3.54 Corby has the highest percentage of residents with long-term illness (18.4%), although it is lower than regional and national averages, it is higher than the County average of approximately 15.5%. It also has the lowest life expectancy for people born between 2001 and 2003 - 74.2 years for males and 79.2 for females. In contrast, East Northamptonshire has the lowest percentage of residents with a long-term illness and highest percentage who describe their

health as good. Life expectancy is 77.3 years for males and 81.5 for females born between 2001 and 2003.

3.55 North Northamptonshire has a high rate of teenage pregnancies (2005). The in Corby and Wellingborough, both with rates higher than the national rate. The rates in Kettering and East Northamptonshire have decreased since 2002.

3.56 The Active People Survey, conducted for the first time in 2005/06 showed that the highest exercise participation rates are in Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire (26.5%) and lowest in Corby (17%), against a national average of 20%.

3.57 Following the Governments publication of the Health and Social Care Bill in January 2011 the future shape and nature of the NHS has changed and as a result local rather than a county-wide strategy will be applied. This strategy will reflect the commissioning intentions of GPs working in localised groups of consortia and the dissolution of Primary Care Trusts (PCT) as an entity within the NHS by 2013.

3.58 The approach to social services within the county is to help support vulnerable people to remain in their own homes throughout their lifetime. The three key areas for this to occur are:

- The promotion of Lifetime Homes Standards
- The development of ExtraCare Facilities.
- The physical design of the new developments

Key sustainability issues:

- Reliance on Kettering General Hospital
- High rates of teenage pregnancies in Corby and Wellingborough
- Inequalities in health, linked to social exclusion
- Low active lifestyles in Corby and Kettering
- Care at home; design of developments to accommodate this

Crime

3.59 The level of crime within communities is an issue for concern for all people in North Northamptonshire in both rural and urban locations. Crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots are generally concentrated in towns and can be linked to the pockets of deprivation that exist in Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. Although rural areas experience less crime overall, it is no less important. Although crimes of different types occur in both rural and urban areas, rural areas provide different types of targets, such as farms for burglary. .

3.60 Rates of crime in North Northamptonshire are lower than the national average and is below the County average.

3.61 Overall, there was a 4% reduction in the number of recorded crimes between 2006/07 and 2007/0 (28,953 to 27,879). The largest recorded falls were in the categories of vehicle interference, theft of motor vehicles and burglary. There was a slight increase in recorded theft/handling; the most prominent offences during this time were theft/handling and violence offences.

3.62 In broad terms Wellingborough has the highest rates of crime in North Northamptonshire and East Northamptonshire the lowest, reflecting the issues above.

Key sustainability issues:

- Rates of crime lower than the national and county average
- Use planning (including providing relevant infrastructure) and design to reduce opportunities for crime and the fear of crime and anti-social behavior.
- Rates of crime are declining across North Northamptonshire and the prevalent types of crime alter over time .
- Crime and fear of crime have been identified as factors which influence the levels of both health and social inclusion of local populations
- Crime can be a cause of economic decline if not adequately addressed.

Education

3.63 The majority of North Northamptonshire operates a two-tier schools system where pupils transfer from Primary to Secondary School, although the area around Oundle and Thrapston has a three-tier system where pupils move from Lower to Middle School, and from there to Upper School.

3.64 Individually some schools are operating at capacity and it is primarily the more rural schools that show the greatest spare capacity. Higham Ferrers and Rushden are indicated to have problems by 2008 - a site is reserved for a primary school at the southern end of Rushden. At secondary level Rothwell is effectively at capacity and will need an extension to the College. Kettering, Irthlingborough, Oundle and Thrapston are expected to require additional capacity to serve the planned growth. In Corby, there is presently a high number of primary surplus places and secondary surplus places have risen with the opening of the Corby Business Academy.. In addition a new primary school opened in Oakley Vale in September 2008. In all places due to the reduction in housing completion rates the need for additional places should continued to be monitored.

3.65 There is no University within North Northamptonshire, although the Tresham Institute has campuses at Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough and approximately 16,000 students study locally at University College Northampton and the Tresham Institute. Work by NNDC and partners is currently underway to secure a University presence in North Northamptonshire. Moulton College opened a new centre (2006) at Higham Ferrers for teaching construction and other vocational subjects. Cambridge, Cranfield, De Montfort, Leicester and Nottingham Universities are located

within 1 hour's drive of Corby. The lack of a University within North Northamptonshire contributes to the lack of high-tech and knowledge based industries and also accentuates out-migration to these facilities. The new £30million campus in Corby is due for completion in summer of 2011 with the first intake of students in the September.

3.66 There are more adults with no qualifications in North Northamptonshire than the national average and there are fewer people than the national average educated to degree level or above. Corby and Wellingborough have the least skilled population.

3.67 Housing growth will generate a demand for education provision at all levels, including childcare, early years provision,primary and secondary levels. Improving childcare and early years provision further and higher education will be vital in creating a sustainable growth area.

Key sustainability issues:

- Lack of a university
- Out-migration to surrounding competitor areas
- Increase offer for further and higher education
- Capacity of schools
- Skills and qualifications shortage
- Provision of childcare and early years provision for sustainable development

Biodiversity

3.68 The wildlife of North Northamptonshire comprises those plants and animals that have managed to survive recent landscape changes and development; however Northamptonshire as a whole has lost more plant species in the last 50 years than any other county in England.

3.69 Changing agricultural, forestry and river-management practices, urban expansion, road development, mineral extraction, pollution, water abstraction and climate change have had a dramatic effect on the countryside. There has been a steady decline in the areas that can be defined as semi-natural habitats of wildlife importance. Those areas that have survived are often small and have a fragmented distribution. The following key statistics exemplify the most recent changes across Northamptonshire:

- Since 1947 over 64% of the Ancient Woodlands have been lost;
- Between the mid 1980s and the mid 1990s around 10% of the surviving wildlife-rich meadows have disappeared;
- Since 1900 more than 99% of semi-natural neutral grassland has been destroyed;94 species of plant, 8 species of lichen, 3 species of mammal, 14 species of bird, 16 species of butterfly, 13 species of moth and 3 species of grasshopper became extinct.

3.70 Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study (River Nene Regional Park website) identifies the designated nature conservation sites across North Northamptonshire. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), and County Wildlife Sites (CWS). Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are also included. These are broadly concentrated along the Rivers Nene and Ise and across the Rockingham Forest Character Area. Just over 2.1% of North Northamptonshire (2008) is designated as SSSI - an increase from 0.98% in 2005. This is due to the designation of the Upper Nene Valley gravel pits which stretches across the southern part of North Northamptonshire. This is a lower figure than the average area per English county of 6.8% (2005).

3.71 The Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target is to have 95% of the SSSI area in favourable or recovering figure by 2010. In North Northamptonshire the figure is 90% (2005). The condition of many of the CWS is unknown as many sites have not been surveyed for 10 years. A resurvey of these sites is ongoing.

3.72 The Biodiversity Action Plan for Northamptonshire (BAP)(2008) identifies a range of priority habitats and species in the county, subdividing them by broad habitat types, which collectively comprise the biodiversity resource.

- Ancient and/or Species Rich Hedgerows
- Eutrophic Standing Water
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Fens
- Lowland Meadows
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land
- Ponds
- Reedbed
- Rivers
- Traditional Orchards
- Wet Woodland
- Wood-Pasture and Parkland

- Otter
- Water Vole

3.65 The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits that have been designated as a SSSI have also been put forward for a further designation as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC).

Key sustainability issues:

- Limited biodiversity resource
- Protection of key wildlife sites remains a priority
- Lack of up-to-date data relating to all County Wildlife Sites
- Potential international designation of an SPA in the Nene Valley
- Fragmentation of habitats and loss of ancient woodland

- The need to create new habitats (particularly to reduce fragmentation) to contribute to linkages between existing habitats
- Opportunity for creation and enhancement through both mineral site restoration and new development proposed by the growth agenda
- Opportunity to contribute to positive management of existing Local Wildlife sites
- Importance of maintaining ancient woodland areas

Landscape

3.66 The Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study (River Nene Regional Park website) 2006 provides a suite of core environmental datasets that will inform, develop and enhance sustainable planning and management in North Northamptonshire, helping to ensure that development is related to its cultural, natural and visual landscape character. The Environmental Character Assessment (ECA) represents the top tier of a series of character assessments that have been developed as part of the Northamptonshire ECS. This provides a framework for more detailed character assessments that give an objective description of the North Northamptonshire landscape, as well as a series of strategies and guidelines to help direct future landscape change and landscape management. The Study incorporates the current landscape character, the biodiversity character and the historic character of North Northamptonshire and recognises the local distinctiveness of all areas and negates the need to designate Special Landscape Areas or other local landscape designations.

3.67 An important feature of the character assessment process is that it is objective; no judgement is made of a particular landscape's value or quality. However, attention is given to identifying characteristics that are distinctive, rare or special. The project refers and builds on the Countryside Character and Natural Area approach developed by the then Countryside Agency and English Nature. These areas and a landscape assessment can be found at Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study (River Nene Regional Park website).

Key sustainability issues:

- Quality and distinctiveness of landscape has been eroded by some modern development
- Opportunity to improve the tourism offer, and the wider benefits of valued landscapes in terms of the image of the area and the health and well being opportunities.
- Value of landscape for the image of the area and attractiveness to new investment
- The ability of the landscape to provide a tranquil setting and 'dark sky' at night.

Cultural Heritage

3.68 Appendix 5 identifies Grade 1 listed buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Conservation Areas, and areas of Ridge and Furrow and other survival such as medieval deer parks. These appear to be fairly evenly spread across North Northamptonshire although there is a slight concentration of heritage and cultural assets around the Boughton Park and Geddington Chase area north-east of Kettering.

3.69 Important assets include; Rockingham Castle, Kirby Hall, Great Harrowden Hall, Boughton House, Apethorpe Hall, Lyveden New Build, Lilford Hall, Kirby Hall, Deene Park, and Fotheringhay Church and Castle. Boughton Park and Drayton Park are Registered Parks and Gardens (Grade 1) of strategic significance. Rockingham Forest is a major historic asset and the subject of ongoing research by the Rockingham Forest Trust. This area of former hunting forest has its origins in the Anglo Saxon period. There is also a large number of historic settlements in the area, such as Oundle, Higham Ferrers and the villages, with high quality townscape.

3.70 Iron working, with its origins in the Roman period and continuing to modern times, is a noteworthy feature of the area's heritage and culture. Modern industrial heritage is also critical to the character of the locality and is often undervalued.

3.71 The Northamptonshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLC)) (part of the Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study) provides a detailed analysis of the cultural dimension of the landscape. It allows for an understanding of the historic structure of the landscape and maps the dynamics of change over a long period of time; however there is little interpretation on sites to highlight the importance of the features.

Key sustainability issues:

- There is often poor interpretation of sites and monuments
- Aspects of more recent heritage are often overlooked or undervalued
- The vulnerability of the historic environment as a finite resource to change
- The capacity of historic settlements to accommodate significant development without damaging their historic character.
- Need to ensure that these resources are safeguarded and enhanced
- Potential value to tourism opportunities.
- The protection and enhancement of cultural heritage

Air

3.72 Currently air quality is regarded generally as being good. However latest progress reports have recognised that some pollutants (mainly nitrogen dioxide and small particles - PM10) may increase in future as a result of general increase in road traffic in the region and this will be kept under

close surveillance. Problems associated with traffic exhaust emissions are encountered in many traffic congested towns and cities in the UK and where air quality objectives are exceeded local councils are required to declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) to address the problems in order to protect health of local residents and others who work or visit the area. No AQMAs have been declared in North Northamptonshire**.**

Key sustainability issues:

- Some pollutants may increase to unacceptable levels as a result of road traffic growth.

Water Quality and Resources

3.73 Details of the areas at risk of flooding can be found on the Environment Agency website. Flooding is a sensitive local issue as a result of extensive flooding during Easter 1998, which resulted in extensive damage to property and loss of life in the County.

3.74 The hydrology of the area is dominated by the River Nene catchment, with this main river flowing south west to north east across North Northamptonshire. The greater part of the area is drained by a series of tributaries that flow into the Nene comprising the River Ise, Harpers Brook and Willow Brook.

3.75 At Corby the surface water drainage is inadequate and the sewage treatment works is already at process capacity, with increased flows from future development likely to exacerbate flooding problems downstream on the Willow and Gretton Brooks. In response, a Water Cycle Strategy (WCS) has been individually produced for Corby (Sept 2005 & November 2006) to identify the strategic water and sewerage infrastructure required to facilitate the growth agenda within the town. This document provides details as to when this infrastructure is needed and the associated costs of such works. Furthermore, it also advocates use of a developer checklist so as to ensure proposed developments comply with the strategy and facilitate its implementation. The study concludes that the growth proposed for Corby can be accommodated from a water cycle perspective, albeit development rates over and above the assumptions built into this study could not.

3.76 In January 2007 an Outline Water Cycle strategy was produced for North Northamptonshire to establish a strategic overview as to the capacity of the existing water and sewerage infrastructures in relation to the planned levels of growth identified within the CSS. This study was commissioned to understand and mitigate the potential effects of the growth agenda so as to not overwhelm existing infrastructure. This also provided a timeline which highlighted, at an early stage, any potential constraints which may affect delivery of the overall growth agenda (using the CSS trajectory as a guide), plus when and how this needs be addressed. In doing so, the study considered the practical implications of the planned growth in terms of all aspects of the water cycle. In terms of foul drainage, the study concluded that the sewerage system for Kettering, Rothwell and Desborough requires significant investment and

upgrade as well as general network improvements being required across all growth locations. With regards to sewage treatment, the study also recommends that additional treatment capacity is provided . With regards to Water Supply, this study identifies both an extension to the Wing Water Treatment Works and mitigation works at Rutland Water as critical to ensuring there is sufficient water capacity and service standards are maintained. There is an expansion scheme for Wing Treatment Works which will cater for water supply requirements for developments up to 2019. Furthermore, long-term water resources are identified as likely to be provided by the 'Trent transfer scheme' which is in the early stages of consideration, which proposes to import water from the west of the country to supply both Peterborough and the Fens, these actions reducing demand upon the local WTW at Wing and therefore releasing additional supply for North Northants. In summary, this study identifies Anglian Water to have the strategic plans in place to address water resource requirements across the area to 2031, albeit this is based on the premise a number of potential 'risks' do not materialise, i.e. the possibility of the Trent transfer scheme not materialising. Furthermore, any changes to the strategic levels of housing growth across the area to 2031 are also identified as a potential risk. Overall this study identifies no ultimate technical constraints to the proposed levels of growth across North Northants and recommends a further study to build on the initial outputs.

3.77 In September 2007 a wastewater capacity study was commissioned for North Northants to address the issues identified in the Outline Water Cycle Strategy (January 2007), notably capacity issues at Broadholme Sewage Treatment Works. This study identifies a preferred technical solution to the wastewater capacity issues, as identified through the outline strategy, which would not delay the growth agenda. This technical proposal identifies significant expansion of the Broadholme STW alongside the construction of new pumping stations plus the construction of a new trunk sewer running from Kettering up to Broadholme which picks up on the sustainable urban extensions at Kettering and Wellingborough.

3.78 This work is presently being taken forward through a Phase 2 Water Cycle Strategy which is being finalised by Halcrow. This builds upon the conclusions and recommendations of earlier studies and factors in the impacts of water efficiency initiatives (such as metering and implementation of the code for sustainable homes), through undertaking demand scenario analysis to assess the impacts of the growth agenda on water demand.

The Waste Water strategy will be appraised and developed by AW Services Ltd to determine the most cost effective and sustainable solution.

Key sustainability issues:

- Significant investment required in the management of run-off and flood risk and upgrading of waste water treatment capacity and sewerage networks.

Soil and Land

3.79 Northamptonshire Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Study (River Nene Regional Park website) shows the geology of the area. Northamptonshire's solid geology comprises almost entirely of sedimentary strata of the Jurassic Period. Overlaying the solid geology are deposits of glacial sands, gravels and till, whilst alluvial deposits can be found in the main valleys and tributaries of the Nene and Welland.

3.80 In Northamptonshire the Jurassic limestone and ironstone is well represented and has determined and influenced the form and appearance of settlements and buildings. These have been extensively quarried and have provided a rich source of building material which is reflected in the local vernacular. The iron rich strata have been worked since Roman times through to the 20th Century, particularly in the Rockingham Forest and Corby Area. The legacy of quarries, mining and associated industry has had a profound influence on the landscape. Reinstated mineral workings now characterise much of the agricultural landscape from Wellingborough to Corby.

3.81 Along the Nene Valley post-glacial gravels form a series of river terraces. They have provided a rich resource, and gravel extraction has been prolific along the Nene west of Thrapston. Much of the restoration has been water based with extensive lakes and wetland.

3.82 Appendix 6 identifies the agricultural land classification from the maps prepared by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, with the assistance of the Soil Survey of England and Wales 1974. This identifies that much of the soil within the area is classified as Grade 3. There are however likely to be significant areas of Grade 2 around Wellingborough and Kettering, with particular concentrations to the west of both settlements. There are also large parcels around Wollaston and south of Irchester, and there is an arc stretching from the south of Titchmarsh to the west of Clopton to Polebrook. Other patches exist around the villages of Tansor, Fotheringhay and Nassington.

3.83 The greatest concentration of vacant or derelict land is within Corby, as a result of its mining and steel manufacturing past. There is limited amount in Kettering and East Northamptonshire. Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire managed to reach the target of 60% of new housing on previously developed land set within PPG3 for the year 2007/08. PPG 3 also encourages housing densities over 30 dwellings per hectare. In 2007/08 over 80% of new housing development has been at 30dph or above.

Key sustainability issues:

- Vernacular architecture using local materials (banded ironstone, limestone and Collyweston slate) is an important aspect of historic character and informs local distinctiveness
- High Quality Agricultural Land around Wellingborough and Kettering

- Limited supply of previously developed land (brownfield) land in some parts of the area
- Need to safeguard and enhance soils.
- Control of run off and addressing contamination issues.

Minerals and Waste

3.84 The levels of growth proposed for North Northamptonshire represents a potential concern not only in terms of future domestic waste arising, but also of increased arising of construction/demolition wastes and commercial/industrial wastes linked to the creation of employment for the new population.

3.85 Historically there has been a tendency to dispose of waste (with the emphasis very much on disposal rather than treatment) in former mineral workings. As most of these workings were located in rural areas the majority of waste was not disposed of, let alone treated, close to where it was generated. The strong move away from waste disposal to treatment, coupled with advancements in waste technologies and design, has resulted in waste management facilities being able to be incorporated with other forms of development (i.e. no longer rural-centred). They can therefore be better linked to where waste is actually generated.

3.86 The need to move away from reliance on landfilling and increase recovery and recycling of waste is a key component of sustainable waste management as set out in the adopted Northamptonshire Waste Local Plan (March 2006) and the emerging MWDF for the County. The growth creates an opportunity to specify measures to address not only construction/demolition waste arising as a result of the development work itself, but also to ensure best practice in the provision of initiatives to minimise the generation of domestic and commercial/industrial wastes, together with facilities to maximise the recovery and recycling of these wastes.

3.87 The main mineral resources present in Northamptonshire are sand and gravel, limestone and ironstone. Economically sand and gravel is by far the most important mineral resource that is found in the county. There are three main types of sand and gravel deposits: glacial and pre-glacial, found in the north-west and south-central parts of the county and post-glacial which are present in river valleys across Northamptonshire. Limestone (supplying crushed rock) is primarily found in the north and north-east of the county. Ironstone deposits are also found in large parts of central and east Northamptonshire but have minimal economic importance and are no longer extracted.

3.88 Whether extraction should be from the river valley or glacial areas has been a key issue in respect of mineral extraction in the county in the recent past and has led to a policy stance, set out in the Minerals Local Plan 1997 and its 2006 review, to move away from river valley extraction to more upland (glacial) areas of Northamptonshire.

3.89 Population and job growth has significant implications for both minerals and waste development. Minerals and waste facilities will be required to support development (through the supply of building materials and handling waste from construction) and throughout the community's life (e.g. provision of waste management facilities). Planning for minerals and waste should therefore seek to ensure the development of a sustainable waste management network and the provision of an adequate supply of aggregates.

3.90 Authorities in North Northamptonshire have made considerable progress with levels of recycling. Recycling of household waste in Corby has risen from 4% in 2002/3 to over 19% in 2007/8 and recycling in East Northamptonshire from 17% in 2002/3 to 30.6% in 2007/8.

Key sustainability issues:

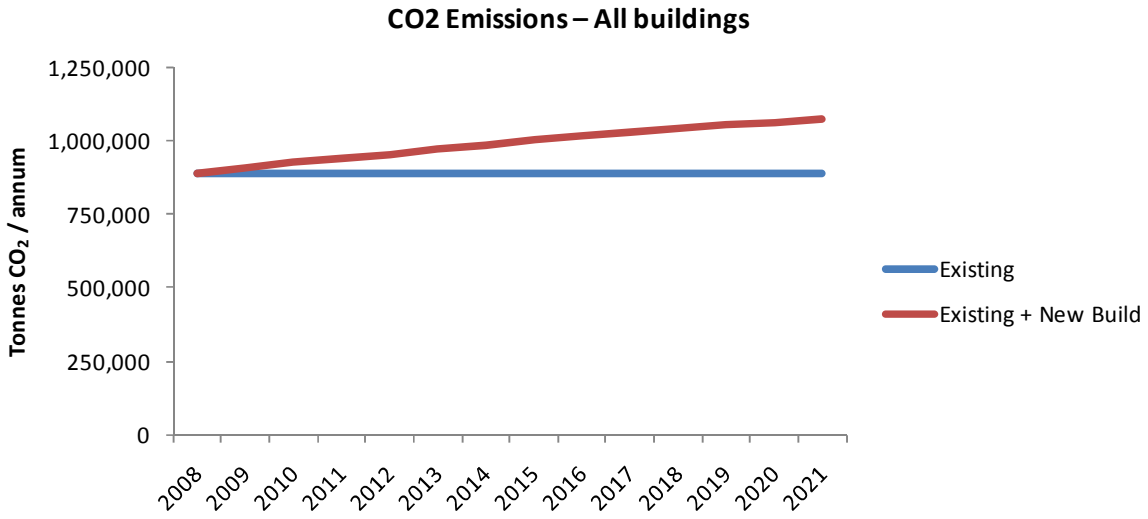
- Managing waste generated by growth in a sustainable manner
- Delivering the minerals required to meet apportionments in appropriate locations

Energy and Climate Change

3.91 The UK is facing a future of unprecedented change - greenhouse gas emissions are likely to cause our climate to warm faster that at any time in the last 10,000 years. Cutting back on emissions now and in the future will go some way to prevent the worst effects, but our past emissions mean that some degree of change is now inevitable. This change may be exacerbated by the growth proposed.

3.92 An Energy Study was carried out in 2009/2010 which examined the energy demands and carbon emissions for the four Local Authorities. The figure below gives the estimated Total Carbon Emissions to 2021.

Estimated Total Carbon Emissions to 2021



The table below shows the amount of renewable energy generated in 2005/06. Around two thirds of the capacity is generated from Burton Wold Wind Farm.

3.93 Burton Wold Wind Farm is Northamptonshire's first wind farm, consisting of 10 turbines with a maximum wind farm output of 20 megawatts. The ten turbines will produce around 47 million units of renewable electricity annually. This is the equivalent to around 10,000 homes, which is a quarter of Kettering Borough's households. Recently planning permission has been granted for an additional 7 turbines. The seven turbines will produce a maximum output of 16.1 megawatts. This is the equivalent to an additional 7,200 homes or approximately 20% of Kettering Borough's households. On completion the Burton Wold Wind Farm at 17 turbines will have an output of 26 megawatts providing the equivalent electricity for 17,000 homes, which is nearly 50% of Kettering Borough's households.

3.94 This project will also displace around 40,000 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide and 140 tonnes of Nitrogen Oxides from entering the atmosphere annually.

Renewable Energy Generation Capacity (MWe) 2005-2006
Source: Office of Gas and Electricity Markets, April 2006

	Generating Station Name	Biofuels	Onshore wind	Land fill Gas	CHP
Corby	Weldon Phase 1			4.600	
East Northants	Goosey Lodge Power Plant	5.000			
Kettering	Burton Wold Wind Farm Kettering General Hospital Petbow Generators Uk		20.500		0.22 0.036
Wellingborough	Sidegate Lane			1.360	
North Northamptonshire		**5.000**	**20.500**	**59.60**	**0.301**

3.95 Limited region wide date on carbon emissions is now available. The overall Country has seen a rise in emissions of 12.4% since 1990. The average carbon dioxide emissions per dwelling in Corby were approximately 5,500 kgCO2 per dwelling, East Northamptonshire, 4,800, Kettering 5,000 and Wellingborough, 5,200. This is lower than the average for the Region, at 5,800kgCO2 . Energy from renewable sources in the region account for only 100 MW, in 2004, that equates to approximately 2% of the Region's electricity consumption. The regional target by 2010 is to generate at least 337 MWe and by 2016 at least 3671MWe (RSS Policy 39).

3.96 In meeting the challenge of energy provision and climate change the adopted CSS has set ambitious targets for sustainable construction and renewable energy as set out in Policy 14 of the current CSS.

3.97 The emerging North Northamptonshire Energy Strategy will seek to resolve the data gap referred to in paragraph 3.90 above, and provide a coherent strategy for the area to meet its future energy needs in the most sustainable way possible.

Key sustainability issues:

- Lack of data
- The opportunity for renewable energy schemes
- The need to reduce emissions particularly related to traffic growth
- The need to adapt buildings to natural processes and climate change
- Energy demand from existing buildings
- Gap between demand and provision, particularly in renewable provision

Green Infrastructure

3.98 Green Infrastructure (GI) has a fundamental role to play in the delivery of sustainable communities and supports the Vision and all the Strategic Objectives of the adopted JCS, with particular emphasis on Green Living, The Environment, Quality of Life and Regeneration. GI also encourages a reduction in reliance on the use of the private car, providing increased opportunities for walking and cycling, and healthier lifestyles and enhances the green framework. Baseline information includes the RNRP 'Environmental Character and Green Infrastructure Suite' that has a base date of 2005. A partial update is planned in 2010, with a full update in 2015. The Suite provides further detail on the GI and environmental needs for the area.

3.99 A number of the GI projects (as identified in the Programme of Development) are linked to the housing growth; comprising related elements of a countywide green network of strategic and local corridors. These corridors are incorporated into the North Northamptonshire CSS and underpin Policy 5 - 'Green Infrastructure', which seeks "a net gain in Green Infrastructure…through the protection and enhancement of assets and the creation of new multi-functional areas of green space that promote recreation and tourism, public access, green education, biodiversity, water management, the protection and enhancement of the local landscape and historic assets and mitigation of climate change, along with green economic uses and sustainable land management[6]."

Key stakeholders have commented that:

- The existing locations of natural habitats should drive the locations of habitat restoration/creation. Protection and enhancement of existing habitat networks is as important as improving access and remedying local deficiencies
- Consideration needs to be given to means of GI delivery and ongoing management
- Planning at a landscape scale to retain biodiversity linkages will be critical to mitigating the effects of climate change
- Local Wildlife Site records must be maintained if they are to provide a comprehensive dataset of biodiversity and natural habitats[7].
- The enhancement of GI corridors needs to complement and link to the wider context. It should be recognised that the majority of biodiversity is not contained within the identified network of local corridors
- Partnership working to fund and deliver on GI is critical if it is to be placed on a level playing field with other infrastructure requirements
- GI provision should be achieved at an early stage in the overall development process[8].

[6] North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, (June 2008) , p35
[7] Wildlife Trust, Regulation 25 and SA Consultation Response (March 2009)
[8] Wildlife Trust, Core Spatial Strategy Consultation Response (2007)

- A key issue is the amount of ancient woodland and the loss of this habitat[9].

3.910 It is acknowledged that some of the issues raised here are cross cutting with biodiversity, water resources and particularly landscape, however green infrastructure has been identified through stakeholder consultations as an important theme for North Northamptonshire.

Key sustainability issues:

- Protection and enhancement of natural habitats, i.e Ancient Woodland and improving access
- Enhancement of GI corridors to complement biodiversity linkages
- Information on Wildlife Site
- Links to new build

[9] National Trust, Regulation 25 and SA Consultation Response (March 2009)

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

Development of Framework (Task A4)

4.1 A SA Framework was developed as part of the adopted CSS and is our starting point for providing a way of checking whether the proposed review is the best possible one for sustainability. This proposed Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Framework is based on that used for the adopted Core Spatial Strategy (CSS), updated to reflect comments made by stakeholders. Reasonable options for the development of North Northamptonshire will be formulated and then tested against the sustainability objectives included in the framework, to enable the most sustainable option to be identified.

4.2 The SA framework of objectives and decision-aiding questions will enable the sustainability effects of a development option or policy to be described and compared. Comments about whether each option or policy is likely to assist or conflict with each SA objective will be recorded in tables. Where any significant conflicts are identified possible measures to offset adverse effects will be considered.

4.2 To ensure consistency and comparability with the SA objectives and questions used for the SA of the adopted CSS the same were used as the basis for the SA framework. The review of the relevant strategies, plans, programmes and policies and the identification of the key sustainability issues facing the area (from the analysis of the baseline information) were used to ensure that the SA objectives and questions are fit for purpose. The table in Appendix 7 provides a further audit trail to show how the SA objectives and appraisal questions have changed from those used in the SA of the adopted CSS together with reasons why. The resulting SA framework is provided below.

4.3 In order to assist in the appraisal process a series of 'appraisal questions' has been identified for each SA Objective. This is to ensure that all the sub objectives identified as part of developing the SA Objectives are adequately covered. These questions are included in Appendix 8. It is anticipated that these general questions can be refined to be specific to each DPD or SPD.

4.4 Comments received on the Scoping Report will be reviewed and the SA Framework refined. The amended framework will then be used to assess the emerging options for the revised CSS. This assessment will be documented and reported for public consultation alongside each stage of the CSS review process.

Sustainability Objectives

SA TOPIC	SA OBJECTIVE
Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone	
Accessibility	To improve accessibility and transport links from residential areas to key services, facilities and employment areas, enhance access to natural environment and recreational opportunities
Housing	Ensure that new housing provided meets the housing needs of the area, provide affordable and decent housing for all
Health	Improve overall levels of physical, mental and social well-being, and reduce disparities between different groups and different areas
Crime	To improve community safety, reduce the incidences of crime and the fear of crime, a safe place to live
Community	Value and nurture a sense of belonging in a cohesive community whilst respecting diversity
Skills	To improve overall levels of education and skills
Liveability	To create healthy, clean and pleasant environments for people to enjoy living, working and recreating in and to protect and enhance residential amenity
Effective protection of the environment	
Biodiversity	To protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity,geodiversity wildlife habitats and green infrastructure to achieve a net gain and to avoid habitat fragmentation
Landscape	To protect and enhance the quality, character and local distinctiveness of the natural and cultural landscape and the built environment
Cultural Heritage	Protect and enhance sites, features and areas of historic, archaeological, architectural and artistic interest and their settings
Climate Change	Reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, impact of climate change (adaptation)
Prudent Use of natural resources	
Air	To maintain or improve local air quality
Water	Maintain or improve the quality of ground and surface water resources and minimise the demand for water
Natural Hazard	Reduce the impact of flooding and avoid additional risk
Soil and Land	Ensure the efficient use of land and maintain the resource of productive soil
Minerals	Ensure the efficient use of minerals and primary resources
Energy Use	To mitigate climate change by minimising carbon based energy usage by increasing energy efficiency and to develop North Northamptonshires renewable energy resource, reducing dependency on non-renewable resources.
Waste	To reduce waste arisings and increase reuse, recycling and composting
Maintenance of economic growth and employment	
Employment	Maintain and enhance employment opportunities and to reduce the disparities arising from unequal access to jobs
Wealth Creation	Retain and enhance the factors which are conducive to wealth creation, including infrastructure and the local strengths and qualities that are attractive to visitors and investors
Town Centres	Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and market towns

Appraisal Method

4.4 The SA framework provides a way in which sustainability effects can be described, analysed and compared. The methodology involves considering the content of the CSS against each SA objective. Comments about whether the content (options, policies and proposed actions) of the CSS are to progress or conflict with each SA objective will be recorded in tables. Where significant conflicts are identified, possible measures to offset adverse effects will be considered, with recommendations to amend the content accordingly. Professional judgement is used to make the assessment supported by baseline data where it is available.

4.5 The assessment of each element of the DPDs is graded according to 6 categories that are presented in the following key. The significance of effects is judged according to the individual methods of study and standards. For example, a predicted effect on biodiversity takes into account the relative potential effects on areas with international through to local value and considers aspirations covered in relevant plans and strategies. The appraisal describes the predicted effect, where possible, and considers short to long term; indirect/direct; cumulative; positive and negative effects. The method also allows reporting of neutrality or uncertainty.

4.6 The following symbols will be used to highlight impacts within the table:

✓✓ Positive Effect	Where the policy/document/option is certain to have a positive impact on the sustainability criterion/would resolve an existing sustainability problem
✓ Possible Positive Effect	Where the policy/document/option is likely to have a positive impact/ minor positive or indirect positive impact/no sustainability constraints
? Uncertain overall effect	Where the effect of policy/document/option on the sustainability criterion is uncertain, or where there are both negative and positive effects, thereby making the overall effect uncertain or lack of information
× Possible Negative effect	Where the policy/document/option is likely to have a negative impact/ minor negative or indirect negative impact/problematic because of known sustainability issues
×× Negative Effect	Where the policy/document/option is certain to have a negative impact on the sustainability criterion/ major negative impact/absolute sustainability constraints
- No direct relationship or no impact	Where there is no direct relationship between the document/policy/option and the sustainability criterion or it has a very minor or neutral impact

4.7 The Initial SA report will set out:

- Any revisions of the plan objectives as a result of the consultation process
- When the appraisal was carried out, by whom, and who was consulted
- The strategic options considered and how they were identified
- An appraisal of the options
- Proposed mitigation measures

4.8 The final SA report, together with this scoping report and the Initial SA report will make up the Environmental Report for the purpose of the SEA Directive.

Monitoring

4.9 At the time of putting together the information for this report, the first Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) under the joint CSS were also being collated. A number of indicators and targets were suggested under the currently adopted CSS. The consultation on this report and appendices seeks to identify holders of information and those that can help with the monitoring. The Review of the CSS gives the opportunity for comments on the existing monitoring information and the potential review of the existing indicators.

5 Consultation on Scope of Sustainability Appraisal (Task A5)

5.1 As required by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, the Scoping Report should be referred to the three statutory Consultation Bodies with environmental responsibilities:

- English Heritage
- Natural England
- Environment Agency

5.2 It is also desirable for other bodies with social and economic responsibilities to be consulted, as the Council considers appropriate. It is recommended that consultees are given 5 weeks to respond to the Scoping Report. There are no legislative requirements to consult the public with regards to the Scoping Report. This is confirmed in the DCLG Interim advice note on frequently asked questions (for Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks – April 2005).

5.3 To ensure that the Sustainability Appraisal will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the Core Strategy and other DPDs during the later stages of public consultation and examination, the Scoping Report in 2009 was sent to the following list of bodies.

- Natural England
- Highways Agency - Network Strategy East Midlands
- Environment Agency
- Government Office Of East Midlands
- East Midlands Regional Assembly
- Northamptonshire Heartlands PCT
- Corby Borough Council
- Kettering Borough Council
- East Northamptonshire Local Strategic Partnership
- Borough Council Of Wellingborough

A public consultation exercise was also carried out and a full list of consultees can be found in Appendix 10.

5.4 After this further consultation was carried out with major infrastructure stakeholders and their responses have been included as part of the update to the Scoping Report. The 2011 Draft Scoping Report was sent to the three statutory consultees and placed on the NNJPU website for any further public consultation.

5.5 Responses to the consultation have been noted and where applicable the report has been amended and updated. Responses were received from the

three statutory consultation bodies. A summary schedule of representations can found in Appendix 11.

Next Stages

5.6 The next stages in the SA process are to develop the Sustainability Appraisal for the Core Strategy as set out in Chapter 1, Figure 1. This will be written to coincide with the review of the Core Strategy and will go out for consultation at the same time as the options and emerging approach.