Borough of Wellingborough Site Specific Proposals and Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents

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1. INTRODUCTION

The New Planning System

1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has introduced radical changes to preparing development Plans (see ODPM website [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)). The Borough of Wellingborough Local Plan will be replaced by a Local Development Framework (LDF).

1.2 The LDF is a portfolio of different Local Development Documents (LDDs). These various documents which will be prepared over the next few years for Wellingborough are shown below. The documents for which this issues paper is being prepared are highlighted in pink.

1.3 The timetable for preparing the various parts of the LDF is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This is available to view at the Council offices or on the website at [www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/LDSSept05.pdf](http://www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/LDSSept05.pdf). The Core Spatial Strategy is being prepared jointly for Kettering, Corby, East Northants and Wellingborough by a North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. This unit has also prepared a joint

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Image of a file folder with different documents inside, including:
- Local Development Scheme
- Core Spatial Strategy
- Site Specific DPD
- Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan
- Wellingborough Urban Extension(s) Area Action Plan(s)
- Annual Monitoring Report
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Adopted Proposals Map
- Supplementary Planning Documents

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Borough Council of Wellingborough
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Details of these documents are also available from the council or at www.nntogether.co.uk/library/docdetail.asp?docid=2.

**Borough of Wellingborough Site Specific Proposals and Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan DPDs**

1.4 This document is attempting to set out the issues and options for two documents. The site specific document is set out in section 2 of this paper and the Town Centre in section 3.

1.5 The Site Specific Proposals section sets out the issues and options which relate to particular sites or locations across the whole borough. The final document will include policies for proposals that relate to specific parts of the borough, including both land allocations and site specific development control policies. These specific sites will be identified on the Proposals Map.

1.6 The Town Centre Area Action Plan will include policies and proposals to enhance the role of the town centre as the focus for the commercial, civic and cultural life of the borough. It will only relate to an area defined as the town centre.

1.7 This is the first stage in the production of these plans. Your views and comments are needed to help us to ensure that we have identified all the relevant issues and identified the options that there may be. These options will then be assessed before we produce our preferred options documents later on in 2006. There will then be further opportunity for your views to be considered before the plans are prepared in 2007. The plans will be subject to an examination by an independent inspector thereafter.

**What has already been decided?**

1.8 The Government’s national policy and the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) already set the scene for this part of the Country. The amount of development that will take place has been agreed in the RSS and is therefore not open for debate. This says that 52,100 new homes and 43,800 new jobs should be provided in North Northamptonshire between 2001 and 2021 and that 34,100 of these homes should be located in the towns of Kettering, Corby and Wellingborough. A total of 12,800 of the new homes should be located within the Borough of Wellingborough. The RSS also indicates that the area should take account of the prospect of a further 28,000 additional dwellings needing to be provided in the years 2021 to 2031.

1.9 The Regional Spatial Strategy is being developed further by the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy. The ‘preferred options’ document is available at www.nntogether.co.uk/library/docdetail.asp?docid=63 and is subject to consultation until 27th January 2006. The preferred strategy for North Northamptonshire is one that focuses development on the growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough to benefit the area as a whole and that assists regeneration of these towns and the smaller towns. Rural
needs will be met by focusing growth and infrastructure provision on key service centres. A comprehensive transport network that enhances North Northamptonshire’s sub regional role and links the growth towns, smaller towns, service centres and villages together will support the development strategy. The objective is to move towards greater self containment for the towns, whilst the rural areas meet locally identified needs.

1.10 The Site Specific and Town Centre DPDs will need to be in accordance with the Core Spatial Strategy. It is important to remember that at this stage the Core Strategy is still in draft form and that any changes to it may have an impact on how the Site Specific and Town Centre DPD documents develop.

Sustainable Development

1.11 The key component that underpins policy at all levels is the concept of sustainable development. The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life for future generations. The Government’s five guiding principles of sustainable development, set out in ‘Securing the Future – delivering the UK sustainable development strategy’ are:

- **Living within Environmental Limits** – respecting the limits of the planet’s environment, resources and biodiversity – to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.
- **Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society** – meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.
- **Achieving a Sustainable Economy** – building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.
- **Promoting Good Governance** – actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people’s creativity, energy, and diversity.
- **Using Sound Science Responsibly** – ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

1.12 The Government’s short definition of sustainable communities is that they are ‘places where people want to live and work, now and in the future’. Key points for measuring this are that such communities should be ‘active, inclusive and safe, well run, environmentally sensitive, well designed and built, well connected, thriving, well served and fair for everyone’.
Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.13 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. When preparing these 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’ (known as the ‘strategic environmental assessment’ or SEA Directive).

1.14 The requirement to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal and a Strategic Environmental Assessment are distinct. However, recent government guidance suggests that it is possible to satisfy both through a single appraisal process. Reference to Sustainability Appraisal should therefore be taken to include the requirements of the SEA Directive.

1.15 The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to promote sustainable development through better integration of sustainability considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. Sustainability Appraisal 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.

1.16 The first stage of the Sustainability Appraisal is the preparation of a Scoping Report which sets out the appraisal methodology and programme, presents a characterisation of the area and identifies key sustainability issues. The Scoping report is produced concurrently with this issues paper and shares the same consultation period.

The Community Plan

1.17 The Local Development Framework should be a key component in the delivery of the Community Strategy setting out its spatial aspects. The Wellingborough Community Plan sets out to improve the social economic and environmental conditions in the Borough. It brings together the needs, interests and aspirations of local people. It requires local councils, other public sector providers like the police, health organisations and schools and colleges to work together with local businesses and the voluntary and community sectors. This is delivered through the local strategic partnership, known as the Wellingborough Partnership.

1.18 The vision for Wellingborough is:

_The place to be. At the heart of Northamptonshire where we are proud to be. The place where all have high aspirations, all are encouraged to achieve them and the potential is realised for the_
whole community. The place where we lead in quality businesses and the environment. The place where communities are sustainable, healthy, safe and prosperous.

Wellingborough - an excellent place where:

- everyone respects each other, their moral and ethical values, and all are equal in an active, culturally diverse and cohesive community
- businesses prosper and wealth is generated
- learning and job opportunities meet the needs of all
- the environment, both natural and built, is continually enhanced
- there are open spaces and leisure facilities for all
- good transport links exist throughout the area
- all services are accessible
- the prime location is used to advantage
- life expectancy is high
- local health services serve individual needs
- everyone feels safe

The Borough of Wellingborough

1.19 The Borough of Wellingborough is an area of 163 sq km situated in the eastern half of Northamptonshire and lies about 65 miles from both London and Birmingham. It is located in the most southern tip of the East Midlands Region.

1.20 The population of the Borough is 73,100\(^1\) and approximately 47,000 live within the urban area and the rest in the rural areas of the Borough. The urban area is surrounded by 19 villages which range in size from Earls Barton (population 5353) and Irchester (population 4807) to Hardwick (population 70) and Strixton (population 32). Much of the Borough remains essentially rural and is primarily comprised of gently undulating farmland.

1.21 Wellingborough benefits from good road connections and has a number of key transport corridors. The A45 provides an east-west route and leads directly to junctions 15, 15A and 16 of the M1. The A509 provides a north-south route, which links to the A14 (M1-A1) link providing linkages to the M1 and M6 as well as the East Coast Ports.

1.22 Wellingborough’s railway station is on the Midland Mainline linking it to London, Nottingham, Leicester, Derby, Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester. The average journey time to London (St Pancras) is 50 minutes and the station is served by at least 2 trains per hour.

1.23 Further details about the Borough and its characteristics can be found in the Scoping Report.

\(^{1}\) Mid-2003 Population Estimates (Office for National Statistics)
Section 2

Borough of Wellingborough Site Specific Proposals
Development Plan Document
Issues and Options
2. BOROUGH OF WELLINGBOROUGH SITE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Spatial Objectives

2.1 The following are draft objectives for this development plan document and will be refined throughout the consultation process:

1. To locate development where it will provide the opportunity for people to satisfy their day-to-day needs for employment, shopping, education and other services locally or in locations which minimise the need to travel and where there are modes of transport available in addition to the motor car.

2. To locate development where it will ensure the maximum use of previously developed land and minimise the loss of countryside and the best and most versatile agricultural land.

3. To provide for 12,800 new dwellings between 2001 and 2021 of sufficient variety in terms of sites, sizes, types, tenures and affordability to meet the needs of the population.

4. To ensure that the provision of new housing is accompanied by the creation of 13,800 new jobs to meet indicative employment needs to 2021 and that housing and employment growth takes place in balance.

5. To provide for the development of employment land on a variety of sites to support an increased diversity of employment opportunities and attract high quality investment and skilled jobs.

6. To create new and distinctive sustainable communities which are active, inclusive and safe, well run, environmentally sensitive, well designed and built, well connected, thriving, well served and fair for everyone.

7. To ensure that the new growth brings opportunities to enhance existing services, facilities and infrastructure for the benefit of existing and new communities.

8. To promote the vitality and viability of Wellingborough town centre and make provision for a range of shopping services.

9. To ensure that the borough’s built and natural heritage is protected and enhanced.

10. To prevent the coalescence of settlements.

11. To provide a network of multifunctional greenspace which secures a net gain in biodiversity, provides for the sporting and recreational needs of the population, promotes healthy lifestyles and enhances the quality of the natural and built environment.

12. To reduce the risk of flooding by ensuring the appropriate location and design of new development, having regard to the likely impact of climate change.

Do you think that the above objectives provide the right context for the Site Specific Proposals Development Plan Document?
HOUSING

Introduction

2.2 The population of the Borough increased by 6.98% between 1991 and 2001. This rate of growth was considerably higher than the 2.44% increase in the population of England as a whole. Historically, housing development has been concentrated in the town of Wellingborough. Several of the larger villages have, however, also seen significant development. In recent years the increase in housing in the rural area has occurred primarily as a result of the redevelopment of industrial or commercial buildings and, to a lesser extent, development on sites allocated in the Local Plan.

2.3 At the time of the 2001 Census there were 30082 households in the Borough. The number of households in owner occupied, socially rented and privately rented accommodation was approximately 71%, 20% and 5% respectively. The equivalent figures for England and Wales were 68%, 19% and 9%. The number of households in the Borough living in semi-detached, detached and terraced dwellings was approximately 35%, 26% and 29%. The equivalent figures for England and Wales were 32%, 23% and 26% respectively. Only 0.6% of households were accommodated in flats or maisonettes compared with an average of 19.2 per cent for England and Wales as a whole.

URBAN HOUSING

The Scale of Development

2.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8) requires provision to be made for 12800 houses in the Borough during the period to 2021. The emerging North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy indicates that a mixture of brownfield and greenfield sites will be required to deliver this scale of growth, including sustainable urban extensions to the east and north west of the town of Wellingborough. Whilst the majority of the growth will be directed to the town, up to 1210 of the 12800 dwellings should be distributed to the villages.

Existing Commitments

2.5 The following table indicates the number of housing completions in the town since 2001 together with the number of existing planning permissions, Local Plan allocations that did not have planning permission at March 2005 and a windfall allowance for previously developed land and buildings that are not specifically identified in a plan but unexpectedly come forward for housing development. The table indicates a need to find additional land for about 6100 dwellings.
### RSS Requirement 2001 - 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completions (April 2001 to March 2005)</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Windfall’ Allowance</td>
<td>375**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitments on sites under construction or not yet started</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Plan sites without planning permission (March 05):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leys Road/Highfield Road</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Street</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrow’s Bush</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear of 86-92 Finedon Road</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwick Road</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Farm Way/Shelley Rd</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor Road</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough East</td>
<td>2875***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>245****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>5485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESIDUAL REQUIREMENT</strong></td>
<td>6105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This figure is based on the assumption that 1210 of the 12800 dwellings to be provided within the Borough will be built in the rural area.
** The windfall figure is derived from the existing Local Plan and is based on an assumption that past trends will continue into the future.
*** An outline planning application for part of the area allocated in the Local Plan has been submitted. The accompanying masterplan includes provision for 3200 dwellings together with a reserved area for 525 dwellings and capacity for further development within the area allocated in the Local Plan. In addition, a development brief for that part of Wellingborough East known as Land East of Eastfield Rd includes provision for an indicative total of 350 more dwellings.
**** A development brief for this site is in preparation. The draft scheme includes provision for approximately 245 dwellings.

## The Selection of Sites for Development

### 2.6

The above table indicates a need to find additional land for about 6100 dwellings. The Site Specific Proposals DPD will seek to make the best use of previously developed land in order to aid urban regeneration and protect the countryside for its own sake. The selection of sites will be based on a search sequence that is recognised in national planning guidance (PPG3: Housing) and the Regional Spatial Strategy. In brief, this sequential approach involves giving priority to the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, followed by other sites in the urban area not identified as land to be protected for amenity purposes and then by the provision of urban extensions to the east and northwest of the town as indicated in the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

### 2.7

An Alteration to the existing Local Plan, adopted in 2004, resulted in the allocation of a number of housing sites in the town, including those referred to in the above table. The allocation of these sites was based on a search sequence and a sustainability

Borough Council of Wellingborough
assessment and took account of changes made in national planning policy since the adoption of the Local Plan for the Borough in 1999.

**ISSUE 1:**
Should the existing Local Plan allocations be reviewed as part of the Site Specific Proposals DPD?

**OPTIONS:**
A: Review one or more of the sites. If so, which sites and what changes in planning policy have occurred since the site was allocated in 1999 to warrant this?

B: Seek to save these allocations in order to preclude the need to review them as part of the Site Specific Proposals DPD.

2.8 The Borough Council is undertaking a review of its existing urban capacity study in order to determine the potential of the urban area to accommodate new residential development on previously developed land. The capacity will be identified through sources such as the subdivision of existing housing, flats over shops, previously developed land and buildings, the conversion of commercial buildings, intensification of the existing urban area and assessing land allocated in the Local Plan for employment uses.

**Aspirational Sites**

2.9 As part of this issues and options paper stakeholders are also invited to put forward sites for further consideration and possible inclusion in the plan. These aspirational sites should be submitted with a map extract highlighting the location and area of the site. Any site-specific proposals that we receive during the consultation process will be assessed against sustainability and locational criteria prior to the emergence of the Preferred Options document.

**ISSUE 2:**
Should any other sites within the town be allocated for housing development? (please indicate the location and area of the site(s) on a map).

**Urban Extensions**

2.10 The emerging North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy has identified the general location for urban extensions to the east and north-west of the town. The residual requirement of 6105, referred to in the above table, will need, where possible, to be provided on any additional and appropriate sites that emerge through either the urban capacity study or consultation on this issues and options paper. In accordance with the sequential approach, development that cannot be accommodated within the urban area
will be directed to the urban extensions. Work is expected to commence on an Urban Extensions Area Action Plan during the Spring of 2006 in order to determine a planning framework for the delivery of these areas of development. It is intended to undertake early community involvement on the Area Action Plan in order to identify the key issues. If you would like to be kept informed of progress in relation to the development of this Area Action Plan please let us know so that we can add your name and address to our database.

Phasing

2.11 Phasing provides a broad indication of the preferred order and timescale for the release of sites. The Regional Spatial Strategy indicates that housing provision within the Borough over the period 2001 to 2021 should be made at the following annual average rates:

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>595</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>12800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.12 Monitoring of housing completions indicates that, on average, less than 300 dwellings have been completed each year since 2001. It therefore appears likely that the level of completions for the period to 2006 will be approximately half of that envisaged in the Regional Spatial Strategy. The existing Local Plan includes phasing and associated monitoring policies for the release of sites in the urban area. The following table includes those sites that are allocated in the urban area in the existing Local Plan on which development has yet to commence (March 2005) together with the phase or phases within which development is currently scheduled to take place. This phasing will, however, need to be revised in order to deliver the quantum of development in the Regional Spatial Strategy whilst ensuring that new infrastructure is coordinated with housing development and that previously developed land is brought forward along with greenfield sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leys Road/Highfield Road</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John Street</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrow’s Bush</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear 86-92 Finedon Rd</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwick Park</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ISSUE 3:
What changes can be made to the release of land set out in the above table to ensure that housing development can be brought forward at the annual average rates in the Regional Spatial Strategy?

### OPTIONS:
- **A:** Accelerate the planned rate of development at Wellingborough East and Park Farm Way/Shelley Road.
- **B:** Plan for the early release of the proposed urban extension to the north west of the town to supplement development on other sites.

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### RURAL HOUSING

#### The Scale of Development

**2.13** The emerging Core Strategy indicates that the overall scale of development in the rural area should continue at a rate no higher than that experienced in recent years and should not therefore exceed 1210 dwellings between 2001 and 2021. During the four years up to March 2005 a total of 381 dwellings were built and at the end of that period planning permission existed for a further 201 dwellings that had not been completed.

2.14 In total, 582 dwellings have therefore either been built since 2001 or currently have planning permission. This means that land still needs to be found for up to 628 dwellings in the rural area or approximately 40 units per year between now and 2021.
ISSUE 4:
How much housing should be built in the villages?

OPTIONS:
A: Provide for the maximum scale of growth (1210 dwellings) identified in the Core Spatial Strategy.

B: Provide for less housing in the villages and a corresponding increase in the town – if so, how much new housing should be built in the villages and why?

Aspirational Sites

2.15 As yet, we have not identified any new sites and indeed this may not be necessary in some villages, particularly where development is, for example, to be precluded or restricted to small infill developments. As part of this issues and options paper, however, stakeholders are invited to put forward sites for further consideration and possible inclusion in the plan. These aspirational sites should be submitted with a map extract highlighting the area of the site. We have already received numerous requests to include additional land within the village policy lines and these areas, together with any other site-specific proposals that we receive during the consultation process, will be assessed against sustainability and locational criteria prior to the emergence of the Preferred Options document.

ISSUE 5:
Which sites should be allocated for housing?

Affordable Housing

2.16 Affordable housing is defined as low cost market and subsidised housing that will be available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy houses generally available on the open market. It has become increasingly difficult for people on low to modest incomes to gain access to such housing and this is reflected in detailed needs surveys undertaken in a number of villages in the Borough.

2.17 There are particular difficulties associated with securing the provision of affordable housing in rural areas. The existing Local Plan includes a policy (H8) which indicates that the Borough Council will negotiate for the provision of affordable housing:

- On sites of 1 hectare and above or where 25 or more dwellings are proposed in settlements with a population of 3000 or more (i.e. Earls Barton, Finedon, Irchester, and Wollaston); and
- On sites of 0.5 hectares and above or where 15 or more dwellings are proposed in settlements with a population of less than 3000
2.18 In practice, however, few planning applications are submitted for development on sites of sufficient size to trigger a requirement for affordable housing in the rural area.

2.19 A further policy in the Local Plan (H9) indicates that affordable housing may be permitted on ‘exception’ sites located within or adjoining villages where planning permission would not normally be granted for development. This policy is intended to enable the provision of an identified local need for affordable housing that cannot be met in any other way, provided that the development is served by adequate facilities and is of a small scale which can be accommodated without causing undue harm to the form, character and setting of the village. During the lifetime of the Local Plan, however, no affordable housing has been built on exceptions sites. A local housing strategy consultation event in 2003 concluded that landowners are reluctant to sell land if they consider that, at a future date they may be able to obtain planning permission for market housing.

2.20 The Government is currently engaged in a review of national planning policy on housing. In part, the aim of this review is to provide a policy framework that will secure an increase in affordable housing. One proposal that has been consulted on is that affordable housing provision in rural areas could be supported by allocating land solely for affordable housing within or adjoining existing villages on sites that would not otherwise be released for housing.

**ISSUE 6:**
Should the plan seek to allocate sites specifically for affordable housing where there is an identified need?

**OPTIONS:**
A: Allocate sites where this would be in accordance with any changes in national planning policy (see above).
B: Do not allocate sites specifically for affordable housing.

**THE ROLE OF RURAL SETTLEMENTS**

2.21 Within the rural areas of the Borough it is essential to achieve sustainable forms of development and provide for the needs of the rural population. The old village community where everyone lived and worked locally and supported local facilities no longer exists. The gradual loss of facilities and jobs means that people in rural areas now travel further than in the past. If they do not have access to a car residents may encounter problems getting to work, shops, schools and other facilities. In addition, rural housing is often beyond the reach of residents who wish to remain within the local community.

2.22 The journey patterns of village residents to various services and work can also be very different. Market towns, such as Wellingborough, are generally significant destinations for convenience shopping but are of less importance for non-food shopping,
leisure and cultural services. Patterns of travel for education tend to be more localised whilst the range of destinations for work can be quite dispersed.

2.23 The emerging North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy categorises settlements into a hierarchy according to their functions and development potential, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Settlements Included</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth towns</td>
<td>Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough</td>
<td>Major growth and intensification. Three centre retail and leisure strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller towns</td>
<td>Rushden, Irthingborough, Burton Latimer, Desbouough, Rothwell</td>
<td>Rushden ahead in retail hierarchy. Others to take secondary role in terms of retail but regeneration and diversification to bolster local service role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Service Centres</td>
<td>Raunds, Thrapston, Oundle</td>
<td>Secondary role in terms of retail but regeneration and diversification to bolster service role for wider rural hinterlands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Service Centres</td>
<td>Kings Cliffe</td>
<td>Preferred focus for meeting locally identified rural needs and supporting existing services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Villages</td>
<td>All others</td>
<td>Dependent on the identified service centres or the growth towns for services. Overall policy of development restraint, supporting existing services and providing improved transport links to the service centres. Meeting locally identified needs on a small scale. Development in some of these villages could provide for the needs of a wider group of villages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.24 All of the villages within the Borough are therefore categorised as ‘Network Villages’. The Core Spatial Strategy indicates that the detailed plans to be prepared by the districts may identify further categories based on local evidence of relationships and service use, or on local form and character.
ISSUE 7:
Where should new housing in the rural area be located?

OPTIONS:
A: Rely upon a policy that will include ‘local needs’ criteria against which individual planning applications for housing development within the villages will be determined on an individual basis.

B: Restrict growth solely to named villages that offer a relatively good supply of local services and are located along corridors that provide good public transport links to a nearby town or offer the potential for such links. If yes, to which villages should development be directed?

C: Direct development primarily to named villages that offer a relatively good supply of local services and are located along corridors that provide good public transport links to a nearby town or offer the potential for such links but also allow for some development in other villages where there is a proven local need. If yes, to which villages should development be primarily directed?

D: In addition to A, B or C, include named villages where, owing to the exceptional quality of their form and character, development will not normally be permitted. If yes, which villages should be included within this category?

DEFINING VILLAGE BOUNDARIES

2.25 The existing Local Plan uses ‘village policy lines’ in order to clearly differentiate between the open countryside, where development is generally precluded, and villages where some development will be permitted. Village policy lines generally relate closely to the existing built up area. They are currently drawn for all the villages with the exception of the ‘Restraint Villages’ of Easton Maudit, Strixton and Sywell old village where, owing to the close visual relationship between the settlement and the countryside, village policy lines are considered inappropriate. The village policy lines can be viewed on the website at localplan.wellingborough.gov.uk and at our Croyland Abbey offices.
ISSUE 8:  
How should village boundaries be defined?

OPTIONS:  
A: Use ‘village policy lines’ to define all village boundaries.

B: Use ‘village policy lines’ to define village boundaries with the exception of ‘restraint villages’ (i.e. those villages where there is a particularly close visual relationship between the settlement and the countryside). If yes, which settlements should be defined as ‘restraint villages’?

C: Replace the ‘village policy line’ with a written definition of the village confines.

TRAVELLERS

2.26 In order to plan and provide for mixed communities it is essential to meet the needs of the whole community. At present there are two sites for travellers within the Borough at Gypsy Lane, Irchester and Kangaroo Spinney, Wellingborough. The Countywide Traveller Unit has commissioned a study, into the need for further provision across the county. Consideration will need to be given to the findings of this study following its publication.

THE ECONOMY

Introduction

2.27 The town of Wellingborough forms the focal point of the economy of the Borough. Industrial and commercial development is primarily located on several estates at Park Farm, Denington Road, Finedon Rd, Ise Valley and Irthlingborough Rd. In addition, land directly north of the A45 (Prologis Park) is currently being developed for distribution. Aside from Prologis Park, however, there is little employment land currently available although further extensive supply is planned to the east of Wellingborough (WEAST) on land allocated in the Local Plan. The stock of office space is limited, accounting for about 7% of all employment floorspace, and is located mainly in the town centre. The WEAST proposals, however, provide for additional office space to the east of the railway station.

2.28 Within the rural area, residents generally travel to the neighbouring towns to work. There are some, though limited opportunities in the villages, including employment on industrial estates at Earls Barton, Irchester and Wollaston, and on long established employment sites in the countryside at Finedon Sidings and Sywell Aerodrome.

2.29 Approximately 63% of residents of the Borough live and work within the area. There are, however, strong employment links with Northampton, with over 12% of residents working there, whilst approximately 12% of working residents of East Northamptonshire
are employed in Wellingborough. The local unemployment rate is currently low and is similar to the national figure of 2.3%. Average weekly earnings at £348 are slightly above those in North Northamptonshire but are about 10% below the national average.

2.30 Manufacturing, whilst in decline, continues to perform an important role in the local economy, accounting for approximately 22% of the 33000 jobs in Wellingborough. In contrast, about 12.5% of employment in Great Britain is in manufacturing. Wellingborough has strong transport links with over 75% of the country’s population located within about two hours drive time. One consequence of this accessibility is that the logistics sector has developed into a major part of the local economy. The main source of growth in recent years, however, has taken place in public and local services provision. The knowledge-based sector of the local economy now accounts for nearly 11% of total employment. Whilst this figure grew by over 23% between 1998 and 2003 the percentage of the workforce employed in this sector remains below the national average.

The Scale and Type of Employment Land that is Required

2.31 The North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy includes an ambitious target for the creation of 13800 new jobs in the Borough during the period to 2021. The Strategy aims to build on the area’s existing strengths, including warehousing and distribution, whilst encouraging higher value added activities, such as offices and research and development. Wellingborough has a long-term opportunity to take advantage of its position between Oxford and Cambridge by providing good quality, competitively priced employment space for businesses linked to the research capabilities of these universities. One of the key resources that the town possesses that will help to stimulate knowledge-based businesses is the Wellingborough Innovation Centre. Plans will also need to be put in place to increase access to training and develop the required skills.

2.32 The North Northamptonshire Employment Land Futures Study ([http://www.nntogether.co.uk/library/docdetail.asp?docid=64](http://www.nntogether.co.uk/library/docdetail.asp?docid=64)) concluded that the planned scale of growth in the Borough will require the provision of about 99ha of land for strategic distribution (78ha) and offices (21ha). Owing to continued decline in manufacturing, there will not be a need to increase the overall amount of general industrial land, although there is likely to be some demand for new development of this type. The Site Specific Proposals DPD will, however, need to ensure not only that provision is made for an appropriate scale of industrial and commercial development but that this is provided on sites that are of a high quality, well located and attractive to the market. The emerging Core Spatial Strategy indicates that a ten-year land supply should be identified with monitoring mechanisms to trigger a review.

Existing Industrial Estates

2.33 In determining the amount of land to be provided, account needs to be taken of the possible loss of existing employment sites to other uses. The existing Local Plan includes a policy that safeguards the industrial estates of Denington, Finedon Road, Park Farm, Ise
Valley and Leyland. The location of these estates is shown on the map included in Appendix 1. The emerging Core Spatial Strategy further indicates that suitably located and commercially attractive employment land should be retained unless it is no longer required to meet employment needs.

**ISSUE 9:**
Which of the existing industrial estates referred to above should be retained for employment purposes?

Are there any other existing employment areas that ought to be safeguarded (please specify any areas that you think should be protected)?

What measures, if any, need to be taken to ensure that existing employment areas meet market requirements?

**Industrial and Commercial Buildings Outside Established Industrial Estates**

2.34 The existing Local Plan also contains a policy (E4) that allows for employment sites outside industrial estates to be used for other purposes where they are incapable of adaption or development for an industrial or commercial use or where existing amenity, traffic or other environmental problems cannot be overcome. Implementation of this policy has resulted in a number of buildings, particularly traditional factories, being converted or redeveloped for other uses, especially housing. The scale of this loss equates to approximately 1ha per year, which, if extrapolated over the period to 2021, would result in a reduction of 20ha of employment land.
ISSUE 10:
Should existing industrial buildings outside industrial estates be retained for employment purposes?

OPTIONS:
A: Continue the adopted Local Plan policy of allowing employment sites outside industrial estates to be used for other purposes provided that they are incapable of adaption or development for industrial or commercial use or where existing environmental problems cannot be overcome.

B: Safeguard all employment sites outside industrial estates by introducing a presumption against development for alternative uses.

C: Delete the adopted Local Plan policy, enabling all employment sites outside industrial estates to be redeveloped for alternative uses.

Existing Commitments

2.35 The following paragraphs provide an indication of the type, scale and location of employment commitments in Wellingborough:

Completions
- Approximately 9.75 ha of land was developed between 2001 and 2004 for a variety of employment purposes.

Offices
- An outline planning application has been submitted for a major urban extension to the east of Wellingborough (WEAST). The submitted masterplan would, if approved, include provision for 22.35 ha for offices and light industrial purposes. Approximately 50% of this land would be included in a campus business park overlooking the River Nene and River Ise. East of the railway station, adjacent to the railway, (Station Island) the proposals include office development and high density mixed use residential and employment areas that will include offices together with light industrial and live-work units. Provision is also made for mixed-use development within a neighbourhood centre and local centres.
Storage and Distribution

- Land North of the A45, extending to approximately 30.5 ha, is currently being developed by Prologis for strategic distribution. In addition, the masterplan for the urban extension to the east of the town includes 25.25 ha of land for distribution to the north of Finedon Rd in close proximity to the railway and therefore able to provide opportunities for rail based transport uses.

General Industrial

- There is an estimated 55ha of land remaining for general industrial purposes. This includes 10.5 ha on Finedon Rd Industrial Estate and 11ha at Park Farm. Approximately 21ha of land is allocated for employment in the Local Plan (Policy U13) on the former Old Grammarians sports ground located to the North East of Finedon Rd Industrial Estate. In addition, a further 12.81ha is included in the masterplan for Wellingborough East on land directly south of Finedon Rd.

Aspirational Sites

2.36 The above figures, when compared with those in paragraph 2.32, suggest a possible shortfall of up to 22ha for storage and distribution but indicate that Wellingborough East could provide sufficient land to meet the requirement for office space. The plan must, however, ensure not only that there is sufficient provision of employment land but that sites are attractive to the market and in locations that will minimise the length and number of trips, especially by motor vehicles, and can be served by more energy efficient modes of transport (this is particularly important in the case of offices, light industrial development, and campus style developments such as science and business parks likely to have large numbers of employees). Development requiring access mainly to local roads should be located away from trunk roads, to avoid unnecessary congestion on roads designed for longer distance movement.

2.37 The Core Spatial Strategy indicates that the town centre is the preferred location for office development but recognises that certain types of business use (particularly research and development) may prefer more commercially attractive locations within the planned urban extensions to the east and north-west of the town or on other edge of town sites. At a site-specific level, strategic distribution normally requires flat sites that have excellent accessibility to the principal highway network.
ISSUE 11:
Do existing commitments (referred to in paragraph 2.35, above) provide land for office development of sufficient quantity and quality to meet the future needs of the Borough?

Are there any sites within the town centre or on the edge of the town and in sustainable locations that should be allocated for offices, including research and development? (please indicate the location and area of the site on a map).

Are there any sites on the edge of the town and in sustainable locations that should be allocated for storage and distribution? (please indicate the location and area of the site on a map).

Should any of the areas referred to in paragraph 2.35, above, as being for ‘general industrial purposes’ be allocated specifically for either offices or storage and distribution?

Rural Employment

2.38 Although the preferred development strategy outlined in the Core Spatial Strategy targets most development in the Borough to the town of Wellingborough, it also encourages local employment that creates vitality in the rural areas. Policies in the existing Local Plan seek to provide for employment opportunities by protecting a number of existing employment areas, shown on the map in Appendix 2, (Mallard Close/Baron Ave and Titeley Bawk Avenue in Earls Barton; Finedon Sidings at Little Harrowden; Land at Sywell Aerodrome; and Raymond Close/Williams Way in Wollaston) whilst safeguarding other employment sites except where they are incapable of adaptation or development for an industrial or commercial use or existing amenity, traffic or other environmental problems cannot be overcome. In addition, as part of this issues and options paper stakeholders are invited to put forward sites for further consideration and possible inclusion in the plan. These aspirational sites should be submitted with a map extract highlighting the location and area of the site. Any site-specific proposals that we receive during the consultation process will be assessed against sustainability and locational criteria prior to the emergence of the Preferred Options document.
ISSUE 12:
Which of the existing industrial estates referred to above should be retained for employment purposes?

Are there any other existing employment areas that ought to be safeguarded (please specify any areas that you think should be protected)?

What measures, if any, need to be taken to ensure that existing employment areas match market requirements?

Should any new sites within the rural area be allocated for employment? If so, please indicate the location and area of the site on a map.

ISSUE 13:
Should existing industrial buildings outside industrial estates be retained for employment purposes?

OPTIONS:
A: Continue the adopted Local Plan policy of allowing employment sites outside industrial estates to be used for other purposes provided that they are incapable of adaption or development for industrial or commercial use or where existing environmental problems cannot be overcome.

B: Safeguard all employment sites outside industrial estates by introducing a presumption against development for alternative uses.

C: Delete the adopted Local Plan policy, enabling all employment sites outside industrial estates to be redeveloped for alternative uses.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Introduction

2.39 Community facilities are a valuable resource for any community and are vital in providing a diverse range of recreation, leisure, social and community services. They include facilities such as medical centres, schools, places of worship and community centres.

2.40 The availability of a wide range of facilities in close proximity to homes is important in terms of quality of life and vitality of communities. They act as a focus for communities and their social activities and can help to create a sense of identity and belonging. In order for settlements to be sustainable it is important that they are well provided by and in close proximity to community facilities.
**Existing Community Facilities**

2.41 The Community Plan requires that plan policies are developed to ensure a range of community infrastructure and facilities are provided in accessible locations for all sectors of society. Current Local Plan policy (Policy L1) seeks to retain existing community facilities and allows the provision of new small-scale community facilities in the existing built-up areas of the town or the villages (Policy L2).

**ISSUE 14:**
Should the plan seek to protect existing community facilities?

**OPTIONS:**

A: Certain important community facilities should be identified on the Proposals Map and protected from being developed for non-community uses (if so which facilities?)

B: There should be a criteria-based policy similar to Policy L1 in the existing Local Plan (this would not be included in the Site Specific DPD)

C: A specific policy is not necessary. The plan should allow flexibility and changes in land use.
New Community Facilities

2.42 Government policy and guidance strongly supports the notion that the community as a whole should not suffer as a result of development proposals and it is reasonable to expect developers to contribute towards the costs of community infrastructure when the need for those facilities arise directly as a result of development. If development takes place without adequate provision being made for the replacement or improvement of lost or inadequate facilities, strain can be placed on the existing local infrastructure to the detriment of the local community and public resources are placed under greater pressure.

ISSUE 15:
Are there any new community facilities that are needed within the town or the villages?

Please provide details of what is needed and, if appropriate, where facilities should be provided.

TRANSPORT

Introduction

2.43 Transport and infrastructure, including roads, public transport (bus, rail and other forms), pedestrian and cycling schemes, need to be planned for and provided to meet the future needs of the Borough. For many people, cars are essential to meet their daily needs. The negative impact that this can have on the environment, our health, our safety and increasing congestion means that alternatives to the car should be promoted, and made more attractive and accessible. It is also important in this context to ensure that development is located appropriately so that work, shops, houses, schools etc. are all close together. Focusing development within the existing urban area of the Borough will encourage the provision of a good range of facilities and reduce the need to travel. Clustering rural development at specific villages may encourage better transport provision within the rural area; this is referred to in the section on the role of rural settlements.

The Local Transport Plan

2.44 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) prepared by Northamptonshire County Council is the strategic plan for transport investment across the county. The second LTP covering the
period to 2010/11 will be finalised in early 2006. It is important that the proposals of the LTP and the policies and proposals specific to Wellingborough support each other.

2.45 The LTP highlights various road and rail schemes for the Borough. The A509 between Wellingborough and Kettering will be gradually upgraded through the provision of the Isham bypass together with a possible southern link to Niort Way on the north side of Wellingborough and improvements to the west of the town, including the junction with the A45. A new interchange is planned at Wellingborough station and improvements to the bus network within the town and on inter-urban bus routes are proposed. The provisional LTP can be viewed at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/LTP2006-2011.htm.

Pedestrians and Cyclists

2.46 It is essential that the Site Specific Proposals DPD facilitates the provision of public transport as part of proposals for development in order to reinforce the effectiveness of the provision set out in the LTP. National planning guidance states that we need to identify the potential for improved interchange between different transport services and between public transport and walking and cycling; and negotiate for improvements to public transport as part of development proposals in order to reduce the need to travel by car and the level of parking at such sites.

2.47 Cycling and walking are, in some instances, viable alternatives to the car and it is therefore important to encourage these activities by aiming to improve provision for them within the Borough. The existing Local Plan contains a cycle route and principle footpaths master plan for the town and indicates that developers will be required to implement parts of the network where they form part of any development proposals. As part of a subsequent cycling strategy adopted by the Borough Council, the network was extended to the rural areas to provide links with the villages and neighbouring towns. The
routes included in the Local Plan and Cycling Strategy are included on the maps in the appendices.

**ISSUE 16:**
What provision should be made for cycling and walking in the plan?

**OPTIONS:**
A: Continue to implement the network of cycle routes and footpaths shown on the maps in the appendices.

B: Extend/revise the network. If so, what changes/additions should be made to the cycle routes and footpaths shown on the maps in the appendices?

**RETAIL**

**Introduction**

2.48 National policy on retail (Planning Policy Statement – PPS6) focuses on a ‘town centre first’ approach, requiring local authorities to adopt a sequential approach when allocating sites for retail development. This means preference is to be given to town centre sites, followed by edge of centre sites and finally out of centre sites in locations with access by a choice of means of transport. This will ensure that development plans sustain and enhance the viability and vitality of existing centres.

**Out of Centre Developments**

2.49 The town centre is the main retail focus of the Borough. In addition, however, Wellingborough has two out-of-centre shopping developments at Victoria Park (including a supermarket) and Castlefield together with a further supermarket at the junction of Wilby Way and Northampton Road.

2.50 The current Local Plan also allocates an area at the Embankment for quasi retail uses such as workshops with a retail element, caravan and car/motorbike sales (which require large open display areas). This site is seen as appropriate for such retail elements that cannot be readily accommodated within either the industrial estates or the town centre. However, account has to be taken of the impact of proposals on the vitality and viability of the town centre.
2.51 Under PPS6, retail development (other than small scale local shops) that is now proposed out of the town centre must meet various tests: need, appropriate scale, that there are no appropriate sites within or on the edge of the town centre, that it will not have an adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre and that the site proposed is accessible by a choice of means of transport. The current local plan provides that if a site outside the town centre is justified it must be accessible, contribute to minimising travel costs and, wherever possible, be in close association with existing or proposed retail facilities.

**ISSUE 17:**
If retail proposals come forward on out of centre sites and meet the required tests noted above, what approach should be taken to their location?

**OPTIONS:**
A: A general policy based on accessibility, similar to the existing local plan.

B: Specific sites should be allocated – in which case which sites / areas are most appropriate?

**Local Centres and Village Shops**

2.52 It is recognised that for sustainable communities to succeed some level of retail uses must be provided close to where people live. A network of local centres is important in order to provide easily accessible shopping to meet people’s day-to-day needs, and should be the focus for investment in more accessible local services. The current Local Plan seeks to protect existing shops in local centres in the town and within villages as they maintain vitality and provide an important service for local residents. In many cases to succeed this needs to be supported by other strategies and/or may require a flexible approach in dealing with proposals such as conversions or extensions designed to improve the shop’s viability.

2.53 Local centres are defined in PPS6 as those that include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. They are, however, unlikely to be appropriate locations for large scale new development. It is possible for the local planning authority to impose indicative upper limits for the scale of development to be permitted in individual centres. In the rural area such an approach may reflect the differing roles of individual villages (refer to the section on the “role of village settlements”)

Borough Council of Wellingborough
ISSUE 18:
Should policies in the new plan seek to protect and encourage local retail provision in residential areas / villages?

What other strategies might be used to support this?

Do any of the current local centres need to be expanded to include other uses as well as shops? If yes, which areas and what type of services are required?

Should any existing local centres be redeveloped for other uses? If so, which ones?

Are there any areas of the town that need a local centre and currently are not provided with one?

Might indicative upper limits to the scale of development permissible in local centres / villages be useful?

THE ENVIRONMENT AND GREEN SPACES

Introduction
2.54 Environment is a term that covers many issues; it relates to natural, built and heritage assets across the Borough within the towns, villages and open countryside. The environment is the spaces all around us and the air that we breathe; it is vital to life and a good environment increases our sense of wellbeing and enhances the local economy. Respecting the limits of the environment is an essential element of securing sustainable development.

2.55 Without human intervention the Borough would be largely wooded, with substantial areas of wetland along the river valleys. People have, however, had a dramatic impact on the landscape by converting land to grassland and arable. In recent times extensive engineering work has been carried out on the rivers to reduce the risk of flooding: meandering rivers have been straightened and much of the typical riverine vegetation lost. The most dramatic impact in the Borough has occurred as a result of the sand and gravel extraction along the Nene Valley. This has created many large water-filled gravel pits at the expense of the wet meadows which once flanked the river. In biodiversity terms however this has also been a great success story as species have colonised these areas to such an extent that some have been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Areas designated as SSSIs however cover a small proportion of the borough as a whole. Less that 1% of Northamptonshire is currently designated as SSSIs compared to an average area per county of 6.8%.
2.56 The Borough has a rich built heritage and evidence of settlements stretching back 2000 years. Around 700 buildings have been listed as of special architectural or historic interest and there are eleven Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Much of the historic built environment is of high quality adding significantly to the character and identity of the area. The Borough has been fortunate in not having many modern estates with significant design problems, such as tower blocks, although there are some areas which could benefit from refurbishment or regeneration. Overall the built environment could be described as good and new development should respect and enhance local distinctiveness.

Green Infrastructure

2.57 The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies the provision of green infrastructure as an essential element of delivering sustainable communities. Green Infrastructure is defined below:

**Green Infrastructure** is defined as a network of multi-functional greenspace that contributes to the high quality natural and built environment required for existing and new sustainable communities. It consists of both public and private assets, with and without public access, and in both urban and rural locations together with those new assets needed to create a coherent ecologically robust linked network of greenspace.

2.58 Examples of green infrastructure within this Borough include:

- allotments
- amenity space
- green corridors including hedgerows, ditches, disused railways, verges
- parks and gardens
- commons and village greens
- children’s play areas
- natural and semi natural habitats
- playing fields
- cemeteries
- pocket parks
- country parks
- woodland
- historic parks and gardens
- nature reserves
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- County Wildlife Sites
- River and stream corridors
- Waterbodies including flooded quarries and flood retention ponds
- Land in agri-environmental management
- Public rights of way, cycleways and other recreational routes

2.59 The emerging Core Spatial Strategy identifies a green grid on the key diagram made up of all these types of spaces. The main issue for the Site Specific Proposals DPD is how we achieve this grid and how it connects to the local green space network. It will involve:
• Protecting existing natural and historic assets
• Enhancing and improving the management of existing green infrastructure
• Providing for the creation and management of new green infrastructure to meet identified needs

2.60 The current Local Plan identifies Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), and Sites of Nature Conservation Value (SNCVs) – now known as County Wildlife Sites (CWS) on the Proposals Map. This will continue to be the case in the new plan as this is a requirement of national policy and is the minimum necessary to protect assets that can not be replaced. Additional survey work is underway to identify any new sites which may have become important for wildlife since the Local Plan was prepared. These will be identified on the draft Proposals Map which will accompany the Preferred Options report. It is also likely that additional SSSIs will be notified in the Nene Valley and potentially a Special Protection Area (SPA) for birds. If these are confirmed they will be added to the Proposals Map.

2.61 The Regional Spatial Strategy and new national policy suggests that we should try to improve the amount and diversity of wildlife and natural areas. This is particularly important in an area such as ours which has relatively low levels of biodiversity.
ISSUE 20:
How should the plan seek to provide a net gain in biodiversity?

OPTIONS:
A: Seek financial contributions from developments to enhance existing sites
B: Ensure new developments create and manage new habitats
C: Encourage the planting of native species

If we are to create new habitats, what should the priorities be and where should they be created?

2.62 Wellingborough is fortunate in being relatively well provided with traditional open space within the town and some of the villages. The Council’s overall strategy for open space is contained in Places and Spaces – Public Open Space Strategy, Borough Council of Wellingborough, June 2005. Most dwellings within the Borough are within 250m of some form of open space. These areas are currently protected in the Local Plan as Environmentally Important Open Space (EIOS) in Policy G19 or Important Amenity Areas (IAA) in Policy L5. EIOSs are sites which are important to the character or structure of the settlement and IAAs are important for their recreational value. A distinction is made so that in particular circumstances IAAs can be redeveloped if they are no longer needed or they are to be replaced elsewhere. A recent study (Planning for Open Spaces Sport and Recreation, PMP, July 2005) showed that most people are content with the amount of open space we have and are generally satisfied with the quality of that space. There are, however, problems for the Council with maintaining open space to sufficient standards when there are limited resources.
**ISSUE 21:**
How should existing open spaces be protected?

**OPTIONS:**
A: All the open space currently identified as EIOS or IAA should continue to be protected by similar policies.

B: A new single designation should cover the protection of open space.

C: Other types of green infrastructure should be covered by a similar policy (please identify particular sites or types of areas)

D: some sites currently protected as either EIOS or IAA should be developed for other uses (please identify which sites)

2.63 New open space has traditionally been provided as part of new developments. The existing Local Plan sets standards (Policy L7) for open space dependent on the number of dwellings to be built. Work commissioned by the Council in accordance with national policy suggests new standards based on the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. This approach is in accordance with national guidance in PPG 17. The suggested quantity and accessibility standards based upon an analysis of existing provision and consultation and surveys undertaken are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPG17 Typology</th>
<th>Existing Provision (per 1000 population)</th>
<th>Quantity Provision Standard (per 1000 population)</th>
<th>Recommended Travel Time</th>
<th>Estimated Equivalent Straight Line Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Public Gardens</td>
<td>0.7ha</td>
<td>0.7 ha</td>
<td>15 min walk</td>
<td>600m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Semi-Natural Space</td>
<td>1.77ha in urban area 0.36 in rural area</td>
<td>1.8 ha in urban area 0.38 ha in rural area</td>
<td>15-20 min walk</td>
<td>600-780m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenity Green Spaces</td>
<td>1.58ha in urban area 0.49ha in rural area</td>
<td>1.6ha in urban area 0.5ha in rural area</td>
<td>10 min walk</td>
<td>420m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for Children and Young People</td>
<td>0.62 play areas in urban area 0.43 play areas in rural area</td>
<td>0.625 play areas in urban area 0.5 play areas in</td>
<td>10 min walk</td>
<td>420m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Issue 22:
What are appropriate standards for open space?

**Options:**
- A: retain existing standards based on Policy L7 (ie an area requirement per dwelling)
- B: set standards based on the table above (highlighted in yellow)

### Issue 23:
How should new open space be provided?

**Options:**
- A: all housing developments should contribute to open space provision either on the site or off-site based on adopted standards
- B: all housing developments should contribute to open space if there is a deficiency in quality, quantity or accessibility of open space in the area based on adopted standards
- C: developments over an agreed threshold should provide open space on the site

#### 2.64
The current policy L7 relates to applications for 10 or more dwellings. This can mean that relatively small open spaces can be provided on development sites and these could be close to other existing open space. Small sites can be difficult to maintain and can be of questionable amenity value.

#### 2.65
If the Council agreed to accept financial contributions from developers in lieu of them providing open space within their sites the Council would need a policy on how to use that money.
ISSUE 24:
How should financial contributions for off-site provision of open space be spent?

OPTIONS:
A: on enhancing the quality of existing open space in the area (e.g. improving pitch quality or increased tree planting)

B: on increasing the variety of spaces available (e.g. changing an amenity area to a natural area if there was a deficiency in this typology in the location)

C: providing additional open space elsewhere within the town or village (if so what and where should the priorities be?)

D: improving access to existing open space (e.g. cycle routes)

E: specific open space projects in the area agreed with the developer (e.g. new playgrounds on existing open space)

2.66 Large new urban extensions will need to continue to provide new open space and sport and recreation facilities to serve the people living within those areas. They will also need to provide links to the countryside beyond. It is however unlikely that developers will be able to fund the additional resources necessary to provide the green grid referred to in the core strategy. Key players will need to coordinate efforts to attract long term funding. One of the important delivery mechanisms will be the River Nene Regional Project (River Nene Regional Park Feasibility Study, LDA Design, June 2004 is available on www.northamptonshire.gov.uk ).
ISSUE 25:
How should the plan contribute to achieving a connected network of greenspace assets across the borough?

OPTIONS:
A: financial contributions should be sought from developments towards green infrastructure across the borough as a whole.
B: financial contributions should be sought from developments towards green infrastructure across the whole of North Northamptonshire.

ISSUE 26:
Should the plan identify green infrastructure corridors (existing and proposed) within Wellingborough which link to those identified in the emerging Core Spatial Strategy? (Draft corridors are shown on the plan in the Appendix)

OPTIONS:
A: Yes, they should be identified on the Proposals Map
B: Yes, they should be identified on a Figure within the plan
C: No, they should be shown in a future Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
D: No, it will be sufficient to rely on other open space policies

The Countryside

2.67 The councils across Northamptonshire together with partners, including the Environment Agency, Countryside Agency, English Nature and English Heritage, have undertaken a project to identify different types of landscapes and what makes them distinctive. This has been based on assessments of the current landscape, historic character and the biodiversity character. The Core Spatial Strategy will include a policy requiring development to respect and enhance these character areas. It is suggested in the preferred options for the Core Spatial Strategy that the areas will be identified on the Proposals Map.
ISSUE 27:
How Should the Landscape Character Areas be identified?

OPTIONS:
A: On the Proposals Map
B: In a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

ISSUE 28:
Are other policies needed to supplement those in the Core Strategy to ensure the distinctiveness of the Character Areas is protected and enhanced?

OPTIONS:
A: There should be a separate policy on each Character area setting out its distinctive characteristics
B: It will be acceptable to rely on the policy in the Core Spatial Strategy supplemented with descriptive material in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
2.68 The Regional Spatial Strategy requires that growth should be planned so as to ensure the continued physical separation of Kettering, Corby and Wellingborough and to prevent coalescence with smaller towns and settlements. The Core Spatial Strategy is proposing to identify ‘Strategic Gaps’ in order to: protect the setting and separate identity of settlements; avoid coalescence; and maintain the openness of land between settlements. These ‘Strategic Gaps’ will need to be identified on the Proposals Map.

**ISSUE 29:**
The emerging Core Spatial Strategy is suggesting Strategic Gaps between:
- Kettering and Isham
- Northampton and Ecton/Earls Barton
- Wellingborough and Ecton/Earls Barton
- Wellingborough, the Harrowdens and Finedon
- Wellingborough and Irthlingborough
- Wellingborough and Rushden/Higham

Are the draft areas shown on the map in Appendix 2 appropriate?

2.69 The draft areas proposed are based upon the existing Areas of Restraint identified under Policy G3 of the existing Local Plan. They follow boundaries identifiable on the ground wherever possible.

**Cultural Heritage**

2.70 Conservation Areas are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ designated by the Borough Council. National policies cover development within them or which affect their setting. The current local plan identifies existing Conservation Areas on the Proposals Map and this will continue to be the case.

2.71 There are currently Conservation Areas within: Earls Barton, Ecton, Finedon, Great Doddington, Grendon, Isham, Mears Ashby, Orlingbury, Sywell, Wollaston and Wellingborough Town Centre. New Conservation Areas are proposed for Bozeat, Easton Maudit, and Hardwick with extensions at Ecton and Finedon. There will be separate consultation on these. There is a programme to prepare Conservation Area Character Appraisals for each of the areas.

2.72 The Proposals Map also currently identifies Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and this will continue to be the case in the new plan. Policies G11 – G15 of the current Local Plan relate to Conservation Areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. It is proposed that these will not be replaced in the new plan as they repeat national policy.
2.73 The current Local Plan identifies a policy for historic halls and gardens. Policy G20 permits development in the grounds of these halls if it is necessary for the conservation of the hall.

**ISSUE 30:**
Should there be a policy relating to development in the grounds of historic halls?

**OPTIONS:**
A: A policy similar to G20 should remain and the areas should be shown on the Proposals Map
B: It is sufficient to rely on national planning policy

2.74 The current Local Plan in Policy IR1 identifies Chester House, within the Parish of Irchester, as a site suitable for a heritage park. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument that includes a complete walled Roman town and a deserted medieval village. The farm also contains a complex of listed 17th and 18th century buildings. The site has been purchased by the County Council with Government support. Proposals for the site include the repair and restoration of the buildings, management of the site for its historic and wildlife value as well as the potential for research projects, an educational centre and community partnership projects.

**ISSUE 31:**
Should there be a site specific Policy for Chester Farm?

**OPTIONS:**
A: The existing Policy IR1 should remain unaltered
B: A new policy should relate to the site (if so what should the policy be seeking to achieve?)
C: It will not be necessary to have a site specific policy, it will be sufficient to rely on national policy.

**Flood Risk**

2.75 Government policy looks to local planning authorities to identify areas of flood risk, guide development to areas at least risk and include policies to reduce the risk of flooding and the damage that floods cause. A strategic flood risk assessment for the Borough has been undertaken by consulting engineers with the cooperation and support of the Environment Agency in order to provide a detailed and robust assessment of the extent and nature of the risk of flooding and its implications for land use planning. The assessment also examined the impact of climate change during the next 50 years. Areas
of flood risk will be indicated on the Proposals Map that will accompany the plan in order to identify areas where specific policies to minimise and manage flood risk will be applied.

2.76 Policy G2 of the existing Local Plan indicates that unless flood protection and mitigation measures appropriate to compensate for the impact of the development are provided, planning permission will be refused for development: within the floodplains as shown on the proposals map; or in other areas at risk of flooding; or which will increase the risk of flooding elsewhere; or result in problems due to additional surface water run off.

**ISSUE 32:**
Are the criteria listed in Policy G2 (above) still appropriate or are amendments necessary?
Section 3
Wellingborough Town Centre Area Action Plan
Development Plan Document
Issues and Options
3. WELLINGBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

Spatial Objective

3.1 The following is the draft objective for this development plan document:
To promote the vitality and viability of the town centre, exploiting the benefits of
enhanced growth of the town whilst retaining the best and most valued aspects of
its existing character

Do you think that the above objective provides the right context for the Town Centre Area
Action Plan?

The role of the town centre

3.2 Wellingborough, together with the other growth towns of Kettering and Corby faces
competition from a number of higher order centres that encircle North Northamptonshire:
Northampton, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Peterborough and Leicester. Within this context,
however, the North Northamptonshire Town Centres Roles and Relationships Study
(http://www.nntogether.co.uk/library/docdetail.asp?docid=62) concludes that at present as
a centre for retail and leisure “Wellingborough is relatively healthy for a town of its size…”
but there is “clear room for improvement in the town centre with key deficiencies being a
relative lack of high profile retailers, particularly in the clothing sector.”

3.3 With the planned growth in North Northamptonshire and in many of the nearby
centres referred to above it is inevitable that unless floorspace for retail and other town
centre uses expands considerably, Wellingborough town centre will struggle to retain its
role as the focus for shopping and leisure activities in the town. Government policy
(Planning Policy Statement 6 Planning for Town Centres) is supportive of the retention of
this role, its key objective being to promote town centre vitality and viability by:
• Planning for growth and development of existing centres; and
• Promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres
and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

3.4 The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8, March 2005) states
that “the existing role of Wellingborough town centre should be strengthened through the
continued provision of a diverse range of quality comparison shopping that meets the
needs of both the town and its wider rural hinterland.” Comparison shopping is for those
items which are not obtained on a frequent basis - unlike, for example, food (referred to as
convenience shopping) - thus comparison shopping includes things like clothing, footwear,
household and leisure goods.

3.5 Clearly the strengthening of Wellingborough town centre required by the Regional
Strategy still leaves considerable flexibility as to how much more floorspace is required
and how this is provided. The North Northamptonshire Town Centres Study referred to

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earlier put forward a range of options as to how increases in floorspace might be distributed between the three growth towns and the smaller towns of the area. The Study recognised that at present half of the money available in the area to spend on comparison goods goes out of the area to the larger centres; although the draw of these larger centres will continue it was considered realistic to plan to reduce this loss to a little less than the half presently going out of the area.

3.6 The Preferred Options Report of the North Northamptonshire Spatial Strategy proposes more self containment for each of the growth towns of Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough, reducing the need to travel and ensuring that priority is given to identifying and delivering the quantity of new retail floorspace that will be required as a result of growth. The move towards greater self containment for North Northamptonshire as a whole, however, will also mean that the three towns must develop on a complementary basis.

3.7 In terms of complementary roles certain existing characteristics need to be recognised: Kettering does occupy a more dominant role in terms of retailing by comparison with either Wellingborough or Corby. Wellingborough on the other hand has a modern theatre and a larger office element. Kettering fulfils the central role in terms of hospital provision. All three towns have higher education provision (Tresham). There will be other existing specialisms that the reader may identify. It is also a matter of debate as to whether these distinctions must realistically or should remain the case over the longer term.

ISSUE A:
What particular specialism should Wellingborough town centre seek to fulfil to complement the other growth towns in North Northamptonshire? (It is given that this is within the context that all three growth towns will seek to be more self sufficient across the whole range of town centre uses).

OPTIONS:
A. A leisure, cultural, evening role based on its theatre, public houses, restaurants etc;
B. A shopping role (and, if so, what particular retail sectors might be most appropriate?);
C. A role based upon business activity;
D. Some other role.
Floorspace

3.8 Although precise floorspace predictions are difficult, the requirement for Wellingborough town centre to meet the preferred option of the Spatial Strategy is of the order of an additional 21,000 sq. metres of comparison floorspace between 2004 and 2021. This compares to existing town centre floorspace of approximately 28,000 sq. metres. Looking to the period 2004 to 2031 the figure rises to between 41,000 and 48,000 sq. metres.

3.9 The increased floorspace requirement is, however, not merely confined to comparison shopping. Government policy (PPS6) requires that, in the interests of a sustainable reduction in travel and to encourage vital town centres, the preferred location for retailing in general together with leisure, entertainment facilities, more intensive sport and recreation uses, offices, arts, culture and tourism should be the town centre. Plans must make provision for all such uses as appropriate for the town. This should include a range of complementary evening and night time economy uses, theatre, nightclubs, restaurants etc. In addition housing will be an important element in most mixed multi-storey developments, increasing the diversity of housing and providing for increased activity out of business hours. Thus it is not unreasonable to suggest that the total floorspace in the town centre will need to at least double between now and 2021 and that this should be viewed in the context of perhaps a similar increase during the subsequent 10 years.

ISSUE B:
How is the required growth in floorspace to be accommodated?

OPTIONS:
A. Redevelopment (and, if so, of what?);
B. Re allocation of uses / more efficient use of existing potential floorspace;
C. Expansion of the centre (and, if so, in what locations?).
D. If all needed floorspace cannot be accommodated by options A, B and C, what must be located out of centre and where should it go?

Existing Plans

3.10 Under provisions contained within the existing local plan, which can be viewed at localplan.wellingborough.gov.uk, two backland areas were identified for partial redevelopment – Midland Road and High Street. Some development has taken place to the rear of Midland Road but further proposals should assist in creating greater integration here. Consultation upon draft proposals for the High Street area has recently been carried out and the results will be fed into the overall conclusions arising from the current consultation.
3.11 Also earlier in 2005 consultation upon a draft Masterplan for the town centre, which can be viewed at www.wellingborough.gov.uk/downloads/Draft_Strategic_Framework.pdf, was carried out to gauge views upon a long term vision for the town centre. Some useful pointers were derived from this work which again will be carried forward into the overall conclusions. Bearing in mind, however, that the North Northamptonshire growth proposals have moved on rapidly since that project was initiated it will be useful for respondents to consider if the long term vision put forward in the masterplan remains valid and if not what needs to be re considered?

3.12 In the existing Local Plan, the key town centre objective is to maintain and enhance the centre as the focus for the commercial, civic and cultural life of the Borough. To do this - albeit in somewhat different circumstances than now – it was sought to provide for diversity of uses, ease of access/ parking and potentially attractive market town character. One aspect of this was to sustain a compact town centre with most retail uses being located relatively close together to allow ease of comparison and minimise shoppers’ walking distance. Primary Shopping Streets are identified in which there is a presumption in favour of their fullest use for shopping uses at ground floor/ street level. Secondary Shopping Streets should still have shopping as the main activity but be complemented by other uses such as eating places, pubs, estate agents, banks etc. Surrounding these core areas are Commercial Fringe areas in which a greater mix is encouraged: leisure uses, service uses etc as well as some shops and eating places. Some housing is also permissible in all areas but principally above street level.

3.13 This approach may be considered still appropriate for the future planning of the town centre but must be set in the context of the need for a doubling of the present floorspace. A possible modified approach may be to look to developing a structure based on specialist “quarters”. In addition to the overall provision of a range of comparison shopping that may be common to the town centres of the growth towns, one could look to areas of specialist shopping, a cultural quarter (based on the theatre, the heritage of the centre and new facilities such as the need identified in the North Northamptonshire Preferred Options for additional cinema provision), a sporting leisure quarter related to the new swimming pool and areas devoted to expanding the evening leisure economy with enhanced provision for eating, nightclubs etc.
ISSUE C:
Do proposals in the Local Plan and the Draft Masterplan, as described above, remain a valid approach to serve the town centre objective?

OPTIONS:
A. Existing policies and proposals do have continued validity.
B. Some modification of existing policies and proposals are necessary (in which case what changes should be made?);
C. An entirely different set of policies needs to be considered (suggestions).

Town Centre Environment

3.14 The need to ensure that Wellingborough town centre can adapt to changing demands and enhance its attraction in the face of developing competition, is not merely a question of quantitative provision: the quality of the environment is of vital importance.

3.15 To quote Government guidance (Planning Policy Statement 6) “It is essential that town centres provide a high quality and safe environment if they are to remain attractive and competitive. Well designed public spaces and buildings, which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable, are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre. Policies for the design of development for main town centre uses, regardless of location, and for development in town centres, should promote high quality and inclusive design, in order to improve the character and quality of the area in which such development is located and the way it functions.”

3.16 Clearly an important aspect of future planning policy will be to complement local licensing objectives and in particular to ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to managing the evening and night time economy.

3.17 Changes in consumer behaviour already suggest that increasingly people will be demanding high quality environments with ease and safety of usage from their town centres and if this is not available many will take their custom elsewhere.

3.18 What policies and proposals should be pursued to improve the town centre environment in the light of the anticipated growth of the town over the next twenty years and more will involve a very wide range of issues. These will include principles for the design and layout of new development, those areas where renewal or redevelopment is a priority (including issues of land assembly), landscape both hard and soft, the amount and design of car parking, design and maintenance of street furniture, signage and paving, pedestrian linkages between differing parts of the town centre, access in general to and from the town centre by foot, cycle, bus and car and, most critically, a detailed
implementation programme which is realistic in terms of likely resources and which will enable development to proceed in a logical and effective sequence.

3.19 The following specific issues may be most critical to the future environment of the town centre (note transport issues are dealt with in more detail below):

- In defining areas for redevelopment (refer to floorspace issues above), where should multiple (but accessible) levels of development be encouraged and should mixed use development / areas be the norm to make the most efficient use of land and engender activity throughout the day and evening? What uses in the town centre will be most complementary in this regard?
- What differing design principles (if any) might be appropriate in areas where specialist functions (refer the role of the centre, above) are to be encouraged?
- Is there a sufficient focus for the town (Market Square, Market Place?), how can this be improved and should alternative/additional squares be considered? What activities should these public squares be designed to accommodate: events, market, activities for children, quiet sitting, outdoor eating?
- How can the various parts of the town centre be better integrated? Is the aim of avoiding/offsetting inward looking development, maximising active street level frontages and avoiding blank frontages realistic (Swansgate)? How can the Castle area be better linked to the town centre? Are the linkages between the existing Primary Shopping Areas and areas such as Cambridge Street, High Street, Midland Road etc adequate / how can they be improved?
- Are the gateways to the town centre (Oxford Street, Broad Green, Cannon Street, Midland Road, London Road) sufficiently welcoming – how can these be improved? Additional town centre development/landmark building/public art? In the case of Midland Road, how can the linkages to the railway / WEAST be enhanced?
- What are the critical issues to address as priorities in the public realm: safety, litter, quality of paving, street furniture, public art? How can the Area Action Plan support these?
- How can the existing green spaces (Croyland Gardens, Tithe Barn Green, Broad Green, All Hallows churchyard, Swanspool Brook / Gardens, Castle Fields, Bassets Close) be made more a key part of the town centre? Are there opportunities to increase tree planting in the town centre?
- In the design of buildings including shopfronts, how can bland / standard designs be avoided and what aspects of local character should be reflected in better design.
- How should the best of the existing character of the town be conserved? Are there particular areas that should be given priority in this regard?
ISSUE D:
Are the specific issues listed above the most critical to be addressed in the plan?

OPTIONS:
A. These are the key issues to be addressed;
B. Some of these issues should be given greatest priority (specify);
C. There are other more important issues (specify) instead / to be added.

Please comment upon the detailed questions posed under each issue as appropriate.

3.20 With regard to the issue of conserving the character of the town centre, it should be noted that the core area centred on Market Place is designated a Conservation Area. Designation of a Conservation Area does introduce some additional controls relating, for example, to encouraging the use of traditional materials and quality of design. It is not, however, intended as a way of stifling change but merely to encourage higher design standards that respect the specific character of the designated area. The present designated area is limited in extent and an issue to be addressed in the plan is whether this area should be extended and if so what additional parts of the town centre are worthy of designation.

ISSUE E:
Should consideration be given to extending the existing Conservation Area?

OPTIONS
A. Yes – please specify which additional areas might be considered for inclusion and what are the important characteristics that lead to this conclusion;
B. No further extension of the Conservation Area.

Transport and Parking

3.21 The Government is seeking to reduce the need to travel, to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling and reduce reliance upon the private car, to facilitate multi purpose journeys and to ensure that everyone has access to a range of facilities. Good access to town centres is therefore essential.

3.22 Shoppers surveys undertaken as part of the town centre masterplan preparation (link as above) showed that 47% travelled to the town centre by car, 16% as a passenger in a car or taxi, 11% by bus, 19% on foot, 3% by cycle and 4% “other”.

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3.23 Clearly therefore the private car remains the dominant form of transport – although walking is an important element relative to many other similar town centres. It is also clear that, with the planned growth, unless significant progress is made to increase the use of non car modes of transport, congestion will create a disincentive to use the town centre.

3.24 The County Council as Highways Authority prepares the Local Transport Plan (LTP) setting out integrated transport strategies of targeted improvements to create more sustainable transport whilst accommodating growth. This document can be viewed at [www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/LTP2006-2011.htm](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Transport/TP/LTP/LTP2006-2011.htm). Its congestion strategy is based upon four key principles of: management of the existing highway network to optimise utilisation of existing capacity; manage demand for travel by private vehicles; high quality alternatives to car travel available to those who wish to use them; and where necessary, provision of high quality roads between and around major settlements to accommodate the remaining traffic. Provisions to be made within the town centre plan and the LTP should be complementary. Thus in making provision for development and land use in the town centre, the question arises as to what specific planning policies and proposals are needed to support the LTP strategy.

3.25 The following may be of particular relevance:

- Improved facilities for pedestrians (including disabled access) will be an essential pre requisite to a vibrant and healthy town centre environment. The town centre masterplan concluded that at present ease of walking around the centre is relatively good but could be improved particularly at night. Linkages between parts of the centre have been referred to earlier – in particular the link to the Castle Theatre area and between the open space networks and the town centre core. Are these key priorities? Should / can improved street lighting, cctv cameras and the design of development to eliminate unwelcoming areas after dark be used to increase personal safety or are other actions necessary as well?

- The cycleway and network defined in the local plan is discussed in the transport section of the Site Specific Proposals DPD. Having arrived at the town centre it will be important that adequate cycle parking facilities are provided in association with development. Should this be a fundamental requirement in lieu of some car parking?

- The town centre should continue to be the focus for the town-wide bus system. At present the main stopping point is in Church Street. Will this continue to be the most satisfactory location? The latter should be set in the context of the aspiration to develop a new transport interchange at the railway station and the possibility of new east-west routes linking WEAST, the railway, the town centre and the western parts of the town. If new town centre facilities for buses are required how will this be funded? To what extent should contributions towards support of the public transport system be sought in preference to additional parking? How can priority for buses be engineered in the context of increasing traffic levels in general?

- Even with significant increases in walking, cycling and the use of buses there will continue to be increases in car and commercial traffic. Plans within the LTP seek to improve the capacity of the present town centre one way system. For those unfamiliar
with this system is it difficult to negotiate and therefore a disincentive in attracting new shoppers to the town? Would improved signage help?

- Ease of access to car parking is identified as a key advantage for the town from surveys conducted in support of both the town centre masterplan and the North Northamptonshire town centres study referred to earlier. The present local plan seeks to limit additional parking to the minimum required and to ensure that all new parking provided is available for public use. Even continuing on this basis additional car parking will be required. As advised in Government Guidance in support of the Government’s Planning Policy Statement on town centres (PPS6), “Large amounts of surface car parking are likely to detract from the overall appearance of development and are unlikely to maximise the development potential of available land”. In the context of the need to double the floorspace of the town centre over the next twenty years, it is likely to be essential that additional parking is provided over or under development or in multi storey car parks – although this is clearly a more expensive option than surface parking. To what extent should additional parking be required from development and where / how should this be provided?

**ISSUE F:** Are the transport issues set out above those that should be of priority in the plan?

**OPTIONS:**
A. These are the key issues to be addressed;
B. Only some of these issues should be given priority (specify);
C. There are other more important issues (specify) instead / to be added.

Please comment upon the detailed questions posed under each issue as appropriate.

**Other Strategies**

3.26 In considering all of the issues so far discussed, account must be taken of the strategies being pursued by other stakeholders which, whilst they are not directly concerned with regulating physical development and the use of land, will nevertheless have a direct bearing upon how planning policies should be formulated.

**ISSUE G:** What other strategies will be most relevant to future planning policy for the town centre?

Please specify
Potential priorities

3.27 At the recent Summit organised by North Northants Together and Catalyst Corby to discuss the North Northamptonshire growth a town centre workshop listed those matters which participants saw as being the main priorities for Wellingborough town centre. These were, in no order of individual priority, as follows:

- new town square
- swimming pool
- cultural quarter
- office redevelopment / refurbishment
- new further / higher education campus
- improved gateways / public art
- larger retail units, refurbish Swansgate, department store, better range of fashion retailers
- develop Midland Road with a better link to the station
- better designed multi storey car park(s)
- improve one way system
- more street activity
- enhance green environment of town centre
- enhance shopfront design and architectural design in general
- leisure attraction

**ISSUE H:**
In view of the preceding sections of this town centre discussion, do you think this list is sufficiently comprehensive / too wide ranging? What priority would you give to those matters that you consider to be most important?

Please specify.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

As outlined in the introduction, this paper signals the beginning of the production of the Site Specific Proposals DPD and the Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD. It is very important that we hear your views.

It is also important that you let us know if we have missed out any issues or options.

A form has been produced to help you make appropriate comments on the issues and options paper and is included with this document. Further copies can be obtained from our website, our offices at Croyland Abbey or can be sent to you upon request.

All comments should be sent to the address below by 31st March 2006.

We will consider all comments received before deciding on the Council’s preferred options which will be published later on in the year.

Address: Planning Policy
Borough Council of Wellingborough
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Swanspool House
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APPENDIX 1

Wellingborough Town
Appendix 1 Schedule

Wellingborough Town
Location of Sites Referred to in the Issues and Options Paper

**Housing:**
Local Plan housing allocations without planning permission (March 2005):
1. Wellingborough East
2. Park Farm Way/Shelly Road
3. Burrow's Bush
4. Windsor Road
5. Leys Road/Highfield Road
6. Rear of 86/92 Finedon Road
7. St John Street
8. Hardwick Park

Mixed use development, including housing, identified in development brief:
9. High Street

**Employment:**
Existing industrial estates:
10. Park Farm
11. Finedon Road
12. Ise Valley
13. Leyland
14. Dennington

Local Plan employment allocations:
15. North East of Finedon Road Industrial Estate
16. Wellingborough East – North of Finedon Road
17. Wellingborough East – South of Finedon Road
18. Wellingborough East – North of A45 (Prologis Park)

**Retail:**
Existing out-of-centre shopping developments:
19. Victoria Park/Castlefields Retail Park

Quasi-retail uses:
20. The Embankment

Local centres:
21. Doddington Road
22. Berrymoor Road
23. Olympic Way
24. Grafton Close
25. Redhill Farm
26. Nest Farm Crescent
APPENDIX 2

Rural Area
Appendix 2 Schedule

Rural Area
Location of Sites Referred to in the Issues and Options Paper

Historic Conservation:
1. Chester Farm, Irchester

Employment:
2. Titley Bawk Avenue, Earls Barton
3. Mallard Close/Baron Avenue, Earls Barton
4. Finedon Sidings, Little Harrowden
5. Land at Sywell Aerodrome
6. Raymond Close/Williams Way, Wollaston
APPENDIX 3

Wellingborough Town Centre