



HIGH HAYDEN

GARDEN COMMUNITY



March 2023

PLANNING STATEMENT

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Limited and BDW Trading Limited (“the Applicants”), in support of an outline Planning Application for a sustainable urban extension comprising mixed-use development (“the Proposed Development”). This statement has been updated to accompany an update to the Planning Application and is a replacement to that submitted previously in November 2020.
- 1.2. The outline Planning Application was registered by East Northamptonshire Council (as was) on 11 November 2020 and assigned reference: 20/01453/OUT (“the Planning Application”).
- 1.3. On 1 April 2021 North Northamptonshire Council was created as a unitary authority bringing together the former East Northamptonshire Council and other relevant authorities.
- 1.4. North Northamptonshire Council (“NNC”) has jurisdiction over planning for development. NNC has responsibility for a number of relevant other areas including highways, education, drainage and heritage.
- 1.5. A full description of the proposal is provided in the section titled The Proposed Development.
- 1.6. The land is located to the east of the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers (“the Site”). To the north east are the villages of Caldecott and Chelveston and to the east are the villages of Newton Bromswold and Yelden.
- 1.7. The Site has frontages to the A6 and to Newton Road (south) and Newton Road (north).
- 1.8. A site location plan is contained at **Appendix 1**. This site location plan has been submitted with the Planning Application.
- 1.9. The approximate gross area for the Site is 197.95 hectares.
- 1.10. The Site forms part of the area of land identified as the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE) under Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, which was adopted in July 2016.
- 1.11. The SUE, together with other sustainable urban extensions to Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby are key building blocks for growth in North Northamptonshire during and beyond the plan period to 2031. These large mixed-use developments are an opportunity to create well planned and managed new neighbourhoods that integrate physically and socially with the existing towns.
- 1.12. The Proposed Development of the Site is known as High Hayden Garden Community being the majority of the land within the SUE.

- 1.13. The main purpose of this Planning Statement is to:
- Describe the Proposed Development, the Site and surrounding area;
 - Set out the planning context for the Site and the development;
 - Assess the conformity of the proposal with relevant development plan policy and guidance;
 - Review the technical surveys underpinning the proposal;
 - Assess the benefits of the Proposed Development;
 - Consider the approach to planning conditions and planning obligations; and
 - The main planning issues supporting the Proposed Development.
- 1.14. A list of Planning Application documentation is contained in the letter prepared by Savills which accompanies this updated submission to the Planning Application.
- 1.15. The Planning Application was updated as a result of, and submitted following, extensive discussions with stakeholders on planning considerations for many years; dating back to developing the vision of Rushden as a growth town which formed part of the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.
- 1.16. Since the submission, the Applicant has received feedback from officers at the Council and its relevant advisors. The layout has been updated and new plans submitted, therefore further assessment of the updated proposals has been made and the Environmental Statement has been supplemented with additional information. The development description remains the same.
- 1.17. The conclusion in this statement is that the Proposed Development complies with relevant development plan policies and that planning permission should be granted, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.

2. Background

Site Location

- 2.1. The Site constitutes a large area of mainly greenfield land with some buildings, associated with the current agricultural and livery uses. It is situated on the eastern edge of Rushden and to the south east of Higham Ferrers.
- 2.2. The A6 runs in a north-south direction along part of the west boundary of the Site, with Higham Ferrers and Rushden beyond. To the east, the Site is adjoined by agricultural land. Roads named Newton Road run along part of the north-east and south-west boundaries (respectively referred to as Newton Road (north) and Newton Road (south)).
- 2.3. The Site is approximately 9.4 miles east of Wellingborough, and 13 miles north of Bedford. The nearest train station is Wellingborough which offers regular services to London St Pancras, Corby, and Nottingham.
- 2.4. The A6 provides a direct link to Bedford to the south, and Kettering to the north. The A45 is located to the north. The A6 and A45 intersect at the Chowns Mill Roundabout. The A45 offers good transport links and leads to other established towns such as Northampton to the south and Thrapston and Peterborough to the north east.

Site Description

- 2.5. The Site is mainly characterised by open fields and paddocks, featuring managed hedgerows with a few large trees. Some of the fields are currently used for grazing and crops, including rapeseed.
- 2.6. The Natural England Agricultural Land Classification map for the East Midlands (August 2010) suggests that the Site features Grade 3 'Good to Moderate' quality land. The supporting soil and agricultural land quality survey (Ref: Soils and Agricultural Quality of Land East of Rushden, Northamptonshire) further identifies the agricultural land within subgrades 3a and 3b.
- 2.7. There are a limited number of existing buildings within the Site boundary, comprising agricultural buildings at Rectory Farm and a stables and livery complex with paddocks at Lodge Farm.
- 2.8. The Site has several road access points, including an access east off the A6/John Clark Way roundabout and accesses associated with the existing farmsteads off the southern Newton Road.
- 2.9. The highest point on the Site is in the southern most corner which is proposed for green infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure and Blue Infrastructure

- 2.10. The existing blue and green network relating to the Site provides an opportunity for enhancement via internal footpaths and cycle paths proposed throughout High Hayden Garden Community. This is to encourage sustainable transport modes and reduce reliance on the private car, allowing for links with the wider countryside and the existing towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers.

- 2.11. The Site is currently crossed by three existing public footpaths which link up with the surrounding areas. These are named UK2, UK3 and UK4. Two of these, UK2 and UK3, extend over the A6 and provide pedestrian access links to Rushden and Higham Ferrers. UK3 runs along a footbridge over A6 providing access for both for pedestrians and cyclists, UK2 crosses at the A6/John Clark Way roundabout. These routes within the Site are incorporated into the masterplan.
- 2.12. Public footpath UK4 is situated near the southern boundary, providing pedestrian access to Newton Bromswold east of the Site. Part of the route from the Newton Road (south) is proposed to be diverted such that the route can be located within green infrastructure within the masterplan.
- 2.13. An extract plan from the Definitive Map is contained at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.14. The closest Sustrans cycle route to the Site (Route 71) can be accessed via a cycle path from John Clark Way. Route 71 provides a safe cycle route from Irthlingborough up to Thrapston, following the contours of the river Nene.
- 2.15. Local attractions including Stanwick Lakes and Rushden Lakes are easily accessible by walking or cycling via the greenway links.
- 2.16. The East Northamptonshire Greenway is a walking and cycling route within the Nene Valley. The Greenway is being developed in phases to help connect East Northamptonshire's communities to a central route that will run from Wellingborough Railway Station in the south and to Peterborough railway station in the north and vice-versa. The nearest part of the Greenway to the Site, located within Rushden and Higham Ferrers along part of the dismantled rail line, is already in place and is connected to the Site via public footpath UK2.
- 2.17. The Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning indicates that the Site is mainly located within a Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest probability of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is included as part of the Environmental Statement.
- 2.18. Three ordinary watercourses are located east of Rushden within the Site boundary, labelled WC01, WC02 and WC03. These have been modelled as part of the FRA.
- 2.19. These are to be strengthened to manage flood risk and drainage from the Proposed Development as part of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) via a series of attenuation basins located throughout the Site to manage and control flows. The drainage basins are predominantly proposed adjacent the existing watercourse within the central green corridor through the Site.

Landscape Character

- 2.20. The Site is gently undulating in landscape terms, typical of the landscape to the east of Rushden and Higham Ferrers. Broadly, the field pattern to the north and centre of the Site is geometric and varies from small to medium in scale, whilst the field pattern to the south is less geometric, with a greater variance in size.
- 2.21. Natural England has produced profiles for England's National Character Areas ('NCA'), which divides England into 159 distinct natural areas, defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity.

- 2.22. The Site lies across two areas; Northamptonshire Vales (NCA 89) and Yardley Whittlewood Ridge (NCA 91).
- 2.23. The Northamptonshire Vales NCA is described as an open landscape of gently undulating clay ridges and valleys with occasional steep scarp slopes. The Yardley Whittlewood Ridge NCA is a low and gently undulating limestone plateau commonly referred to locally as the Ridge.
- 2.24. Neither the Site, nor the landscape adjoining it, is covered by any statutory designations for landscape character or quality.
- 2.25. Approximately 1.7km to the north of the Site is the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits, a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site. There is no inter-visibility between the Site and the SSSI. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits is nationally important for its breeding bird assemblage of lowland open waters and their margins, wintering waterbird species, an assemblage of over 20,000 waterbirds in the non-breeding season and a rare example of wet floodplain woodland.
- 2.26. Yelden Meadows is located approximately 2.5km to the east of the Site and is designated as an SSSI for a good example of species rich unimproved neutral grassland.
- 2.27. There are no trees within the Site covered by a Tree Preservation Order, as confirmed by an online search.

Historic Context

- 2.28. The Rushden Conservation Area is located around 1.8km to the west of the Site and lies along the High Street at the centre of Rushden. It includes a number of listed buildings, most notably the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.
- 2.29. The Higham Ferrers Conservation Area is located around 2km to the northwest of the Site at the centre of the village. The conservation area contains a number of listed buildings, including the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Bede House and Chichele College, all of which are Grade I listed.
- 2.30. There is no inter-visibility between the Site and Rushden or Higham Ferrers Conservation Areas, with the exception of the spire of Church of St Mary the Virgin in Higham Ferrers.
- 2.31. There are no listed buildings within the Site's boundary, and other than those contained within the conservation areas discussed above, there is only one listed building within a 2km radius of the Site, which is the Grade II listed building at number 3 Allen Road.
- 2.32. There are no registered parks and gardens on or within the vicinity of the Site, and no scheduled monuments on or within the vicinity of the Site.
- 2.33. An archaeological survey has identified an area of numerous magnetic anomalies (likely debris). This includes a historic record of a B-17 heavy bomber crash landing in part of the Site during February 1945. The location of the debris, which is not a designated heritage asset, is proposed to be protected within the proposed memorial park in the masterplan.

Planning Application History

- 2.34. A range of planning applications and other types of application have been submitted on the Site. These are summarised in Table 1 below.
- 2.35. It is considered that only the Scoping Opinion request under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, submitted by the Applicants (reference: 17/01000/SCQ) is of relevance to this proposal.
- 2.36. The Scoping Opinion of ENC established the requirement and scope for the Environmental Statement. The Environmental Statement has been submitted with this Planning Application.

Table 1: Planning Application History

Description of Development	Reference	Date of Validation	Decision	Decision Date
Agricultural machine store at Lodge Farm Buildings	98/00016/PNA	1998	Permit	1998
Retention of stables and ménage at Lodge Farm Buildings	00/00862/RTN	2000	Permit	2001
Telecommunications equipment including 15m high mast	02/00030/PNA	2002	Permit	2002
Construction of general agricultural store at Lodge Farm Buildings	03/00492/PNA	2003	Permit	2003
Residential development at Lodge Farm Buildings	03/00760/OUT	2003	Withdrawn / Declined	2004
Installation of a telecommunications base station comprising a 20m high ICB tower, 3 antennae, 1 transmission dish and ancillary development for a temporary period of 12 months on Hayden Road	03/00924/TMP	2003	Permitted	2003
Retention of a 20m high Airwave MM02 Ltd Mast, radio equipment housing and ancillary development to serve the Northamptonshire Constabulary at High Hayden Farm	04/02070/FUL	2004	Permitted	2004
Creation of ménage with all-weather riding surface and fencing at Lodge Farm	06/02193/FUL	2006	Permit	2006
Siting of temporary dwelling in association with livery stables at Lodge Farm	06/02225/FUL	2006	Permit	2006

Description of Development	Reference	Date of Validation	Decision	Decision Date
Formation of an all-purpose spur road in the north western sector of the roundabout junction between John Clark Way and the A6 with modifications to the central island, circulatory carriageway, off-side kerb lines, street lighting, and markings and northbound approach to existing junction to provide Vehicle and pedestrian access to Ferrers School development site	08/01271/FUL	2008	Refused	2009
Formation of an all-purpose spur road in the north western sector of the roundabout junction between John Clark Way and the A6 with modifications to the central island, circulatory carriageway, off-side kerb lines, street lighting, and markings and northbound approach to existing junction to provide Vehicle and pedestrian access to Ferrers School development site	08/01271/FUL	2009	Allowed on Appeal	2009
For permanent consent to replace temporary consent EN/06/02225 in respect of dwelling at Lodge Farm	09/01761/FUL	2009	Withdrawn / Declined	2010
Dwelling for livery stables, permanent consent to replace temporary consent EN/06/02225/FUL Retrospective (resubmission)	10/00957/FUL	2010	Permit	2010
Scoping Opinion: Outline planning for a Sustainable Urban Extension to the east of Rushden	17/01000/SCQ	2017	Query/ Consultation Answered	2017

Wider Development

- 2.37. High Hayden Garden Community will commence delivery of the overall SUE under Policy 33 of the adopted North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.
- 2.38. There is development proposed in the wider area which is of relevance.
- 2.39. Table 2 below provides a summary of relevant development in the wider location.

Table 2: Recent Developments and Potential Developments

Location	Description of Development	Reference	Date of Validation	Decision
Knights Farm, 223 Newton Road, Rushden	Hybrid planning application comprising: A. A full application for the delivery of access and on-site spine roads, associated access junction arrangements onto the A6 and drainage infrastructure; and B. An outline application with all matters reserved aside from access for a phased development of up to 500 homes, employment development of around 5,700m ² , public open space and associated infrastructure	NE/21/01124/ OUT	July 2021	Yet to be determined
Land East Of A6 And Roundabout At Bedford Road Rushden	Outline: Erection of up to 450 dwellings, a community / retail / and or health facility, improvement works to the existing A6 / Bedford Road roundabout including provision of shared pedestrian / cycle access, parking, landscaping, drainage features, open space, and associated infrastructure (All matters reserved except access from the A6 / Bedford Road)	NE/22/00851/ OUT	July 2022	Yet to be determined

Location	Description of Development	Reference	Date of Validation	Decision
Rushden and Higham Rugby Club	The demolition of existing rugby club and erection of up to 150 dwellings, open space, and associated works, with all matters reserved other than access.	19/01975/OUT	January 2020	Approved, 1 December 2020
Land to the west of the A6, Higham Ferrers	Outline planning permission - with all matters reserved except access - for up to 300 dwellings (including 30% affordable housing).	18/01648/OUT	August 2018	Approved, 1 December 2020
New Rugby Club House, etc, Land East of A6	Erection of new rugby club house with four playing pitches and provision of new access road from existing roundabout, including creation of new pedestrian crossing and 3m wide shared footway and cycleway on adjacent highway (Resubmission of 19/01974/FUL)	20/01174/FUL	September 2020	Yet to be determined
New Rugby Club, Land East Of A6	Erection of a new rugby club with four playing pitches and provision of new access road from existing roundabout and a new pedestrian crossing and 3m wide shared footway / cycleway on adjacent highway.	19/01974/FUL	January 2020	Application withdrawn on 24 April 2020.
Football Facility – Northamptonshire County FA	Change of use from agricultural to provide a full sized football pitch and pavilion with changing facilities and community / office accommodation and a car park.	19/01318/FUL	August 2019	Approved, 13 September 2021.

Location	Description of Development	Reference	Date of Validation	Decision
Special Education Needs (SEN) School – Land Between Newton Road and Chelveston Road, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire	The erection of a new 145 place secondary school for pupils with Special Education Needs with associated access, sports facilities, playground, hard and soft landscaping, car and cycle parking, substation and other associated infrastructure	19/02011/FUL	December 2019	Approved, 11 June 2020.
Hybrid application – Redevelopment of Federal Estates land off Newton Road, Higham Ferrers	Redevelopment of Federal Estates land off Newton Road, Higham Ferrers to create 120 dwellings with associated infrastructure and highway works, battery storage area, landscaping, acoustic fencing and bunding	19/01781/FUL	November 2019	Approved, 30 March 2021

- 2.40. The Applicants have a detailed understanding of the Site characteristics and wider area following survey and assessment work and undertaking local engagement over the course of eight years.
- 2.41. This extensive fact finding and consideration of options has informed the masterplanning and parameter plans for the Proposed Development, as amended under the Planning Application.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1. High Hayden Garden Community provides a unique opportunity to deliver a highly sustainable, mixed-use development, through the delivery of quality homes, new employment opportunities, community and recreational facilities and landscape assets.

3.2. This Planning Application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration except for access.

3.3. The proposed access points are located off the southern Newton Road and off the A6 / John Clark Way roundabout.

Description of the Proposed Development

3.4. The description of the Proposed Development for the Planning Application is:

Outline Planning Application for a Sustainable Urban Extension comprising residential development of up to 2,200 dwellings (Class C3), residential institution (Class C2), up to 110,000 square metres of employment development (Classes B2 (General Industrial), B8 (Storage and Distribution), E (comprising Office, Research and Development of Products or Processes and Industrial Processes)), two local centres, two primary schools, one secondary school, details of the principal accesses from A6 / John Clark Way roundabout and Newton Road, secondary vehicular and non-vehicular accesses, public open space including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, cemetery, allotments, noise mitigation features, drainage, primary sub-station utilities apparatus and associated engineering works, demolition of existing buildings, earthworks and ground remodelling (All Matters reserved except access)

3.5. The description of the Proposed Development can be broken down into the following aspects:

- Up to 2,200 dwellings including affordable homes and homes for the older population;
- Provision of up to 110,000 square metres of employment development (Use Classes B2, B8, E (office, research and development of products or processes and industrial processes));
- Provision of two local centres (E (office, shops, financial and professional services, café or restaurant, clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres)), C2, C3, F.1 (community space) F.2 (Local Community uses), pub / drinking establishment(s), hot food takeaway(s));
- Provision of two primary schools and one secondary school;
- Open spaces and landscaping (including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), a town park, water meadows, playing areas, playing fields, wildlife habitat areas, green wedges);
- A cemetery;
- Two allotments;
- Noise mitigation features;
- Drainage works including Sustainable Drainage Systems and surface water attenuation features;
- Access points including accesses off Newton Road (south) and the A6 / John Clark Way roundabout;
- Vehicular and cycle parking including electric charging points;
- Pedestrian, cycle, vehicular and bus routes with associated street lighting and furniture along with the diversion and/or upgrade of existing public rights of way;

- Provision and/or upgrade/diversion of services including water, sewerage, telecommunications, gas and electricity including the installation of a new primary sub-station utilities apparatus and associated engineering works; and
 - Infrastructure including the demolition of all existing buildings, earthworks and ground remodelling.
- 3.6. The Proposed Development is based upon the identification of parameters to ensure there is sufficient flexibility for the scheme to evolve as development proceeds over a period of approximately 15 years. The following parameter plans were submitted for formal consideration as part of the Planning Application and updated to reflect engagement:
- Land Use Parameter Plan
 - Access and Movement Parameter Plan
 - Building Heights Parameter Plan
 - Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan
- 3.7. The parameter plans identify elements of the scheme which are fixed at this point, and will form the framework for the development within which the Proposed Development can be delivered and against which future Reserved Matters applications will be assessed.
- 3.8. An Indicative Masterplan has been prepared and refined over a number of years and submitted with the Planning Application.
- 3.9. The northern part of the Site is proposed for mixed-use employment development accessed off the A6 / John Clark Way roundabout.
- 3.10. Policy 33 also requires green spaces and community facilities, including two new primary schools, land reserved for a secondary school, primary health care, a new community centre, land for a new cemetery and other local community facilities such as allotments. These are included within the Indicative Masterplan and on the Land Use Parameter Plan.
- 3.11. A mix of such uses are proposed, including schools, sports pitches, community centre, retail uses, a public square and playing fields, with a sports pavilion and car parking. This is intended to be a central hub, offering a range of services and facilities, encouraging community growth within the development. This central hub will be accessed via a range of footpath and cycle connections through the Site and is also located on the main spine road.
- 3.12. Two primary schools are proposed within the Site. The first is to be located within the central hub, being two forms of entry (2FE). The second is directly to the south of the proposed employment area and the local centre. This school will be accessed via the main spine road running through the development. This school is proposed to be two forms of entry (2FE) but with the ability to expand to three forms of entry should the pupil yield arising from the Proposed Development and the wider SUE exceed that currently forecast.
- 3.13. A serviced site will be provided for a secondary school on Site, close to the first primary school and adjacent the sports area.

- 3.14. A cemetery and allotments are proposed in the southern corner of the Site, with further allotments located within the northern neighbourhood.
- 3.15. The Proposed Development will be phased with the first phase being off Newton Road (South) and the build continuing northward. The employment land is identified as an open phase allowing it to come forward in line with market demand.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 3.16. A request for scoping under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 was submitted to ENC (as was) in May 2017. The submission comprised a Scoping Report prepared by Bidwells. This report provided context, a proposed methodology and scope for assessment of the Proposed Development under the EIA Regulations. Ten areas were covered such as socio-economic, transport and various environmental considerations.
- 3.17. The Proposed Development which was the subject of the scoping request was up to 2,500 dwellings, approximately 29 hectares of employment land and various supporting infrastructure.
- 3.18. The formal scoping opinion of ENC was published dated 29 June 2017. This followed consultation by ENC with relevant stakeholders, including statutory consultees. A meeting to discuss the approach to preparation of the environmental impact assessment was held between ENC and Bidwells in September 2017.
- 3.19. On 16th May 2017, The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 came into force and replaced the 2011 Regulations.
- 3.20. As the scoping request was submitted prior to the 2017 Regulations coming into force, the scoping opinion was provided in accordance with the 2011 Regulations. This approach is in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out in Regulation 76(2)(a) of the 2017 Regulations.
- 3.21. The Environmental Statement (ES) as updated has been prepared with regard to the 2017 Regulations.
- 3.22. The submitted ES sets out detailed information to assess the significance of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Development. This ES contains the findings and the information of the EIA, together with the information and data collected during the assessment. The ES comprises Volume 1: Environmental Statement Main Text and Figures; Volume 2: Appendices; and, the Non-Technical Summary. This has been co-ordinated by Savills with contributions from the wider consultant team.

Pre-Application Discussions

- 3.23. Directly in line with the aspiration of the National Planning Policy Framework early engagement was undertaken with stakeholders. Discussions between East Northamptonshire Council (as was), the Applicants and other relevant stakeholders were held on an ongoing basis since prior to the adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. Over eight years of engagement has informed the development of the masterplan and Planning Application documentation.
- 3.24. A Statement of Community Engagement has been prepared by Engage Planning which describes parts of this engagement such as the public exhibition of plans which was held in June 2019. This has been submitted as part of the Planning Application and remains unchanged.

- 3.25. A Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Design which describes the evolution of the Proposed Development arising from the engagement process. This has been updated to reflect progress made over the course of the Planning Application to date.
- 3.26. Discussions held prior to adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and beyond this, lead to the submission of a formal request to ENC for pre-application advice in May 2019. This request was submitted by Bidwells and comprised a letter and various relevant plans.
- 3.27. ENC undertook consultation on the pre-application request with relevant stakeholders, including statutory consultees. This included the following:
- ENC Environmental Services and Protection
 - NCC Rights of Way Officer
 - NCC Lead Local Flood Authority
 - Historic England
 - The Commission for Dark Skies
 - Sport England
 - The Environment Agency
 - NCC Highways
 - Highways England
 - NCC Growth and Infrastructure
 - NCC Archaeology
 - NCC Ecology
 - The Ramblers
 - NHS England
 - Natural England
 - NCC Social Services
 - ENC Housing Strategy
- 3.28. Responses were received by ENC during June to August 2019. A series of meetings were held to discuss matters raised by consultees including those of ENC, NCC and both Rushden and Higham Ferrers Town Councils.
- 3.29. Stakeholders have had formal opportunity to comment on the emerging proposals under the EIA Scoping in 2017, pre-application discussions in 2019 and public exhibition of plans held in 2019. A formal consultation was subsequently undertaken as part of the Planning Application itself and amendments have been made as part of this updated Planning Application submission as referenced above. Beyond these formal opportunities there have been ongoing discussions where stakeholders have had a platform to express views to both the Applicants and to ENC.

4. Development Plan Policy and Material Considerations

4.1. This section assesses the Proposed Development against development plan policy and material considerations. There has not been adoption of any relevant development plan policy since validation of the Planning Application in November 2020.

4.2. The Site forms part of the Rushden East SUE allocated under Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and is therefore expected to be brought forward for strategic-scale mixed-use development.

4.3. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

4.4. Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, states:

“In dealing with an application for planning permission or permission in principle the authority shall have regard to

(a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application,

(aza) a post-examination draft neighbourhood development plan, so far as material to the application,

(aa) any considerations relating to the use of the Welsh language, so far as material to the application;

(b) any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application, and

(c) any other material considerations.”

4.5. The Development Plan relevant to this part of East Northamptonshire District, comprises:

- North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031
- East Northamptonshire District Local Plan 1996, saved policies.
- Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- Rushden Neighbourhood Plan
- Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031

4.6. These development plan documents are reviewed in turn below.

North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031

- 4.7. The Joint Core Strategy was adopted in July 2016 and forms part of the Development Plan for the District. This covers areas including Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, and Wellingborough. The following policies from this document are considered to be of relevance to this proposal:
- 4.8. Policy 1 states that when considering development proposals the Local Planning Authority will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF.
- 4.9. Policy 2 refers to the protection, preservation and enhancement of the historic environment. A Historic Environment chapter is within the Environmental Statement.
- 4.10. Policy 3 seeks to support development that is sensitive to the landscape setting, retaining and enhancing the distinctive landscape character. A Landscape and Visual Amenity chapter is included within the Environmental Statement.
- 4.11. Policy 4 refers to achieving a net gain in biodiversity and sets out measures to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. An ecology chapter is included within the Environmental Statement. Various ecological reports have informed this including a biodiversity net gain calculation and assessment of the proposal under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 4.12. Policy 5 sets out that development should contribute to reducing the risk of flooding, and protect and improve the quality of the water environment. A hydrology, hydrogeology and water quality section is included within the Environmental Statement.
- 4.13. Policy 7 requires development to support and enhance community services and facilities, where appropriate. The delivery of community services and facilities will need to be evidence led. Policy 33 includes aspects of community provision which are incorporated in the vision and masterplan for the development.
- 4.14. Policy 8 sets out various place shaping principles which new development should seek to comply with. There are a number of aspects to this policy which have influenced the masterplaning and a number of aspects will be picked-up in subsequent reserved matters applications.
- 4.15. Policy 9 requires development to incorporate measures to ensure high standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions. This applies to the non-residential floorspace and to the residential development.
- 4.16. Policy 10 refers to the need for development to be supported by the timely delivery of infrastructure, services and facilities. The application is supported by assessment of utilities and wider infrastructure requirements and the travel planning measures that will be put in place.
- 4.17. Policy 11 details the network of urban and rural areas and the distribution of development across these areas. Rushden is identified as a Growth Town and is the focus for infrastructure investment and higher order facilities to support major development.

- 4.18. Policy 15 encourages connectivity within and around settlements through improving access from the edge of towns, creating safe, direct and convenient crossing points, creating sustainable means of transport, expanding existing Green Infrastructure networks, and by ensuring well connected and integrated street networks. The SUE seeks better connectivity across the A6 to the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers and wider connectivity to the east to open countryside.
- 4.19. Policy 22 seeks to deliver economic prosperity, delivering a net increase of 31,100 jobs throughout the district over the plan period. The Proposed Development will provide land for employment development with the northern part of the Site and there will be employment opportunities in other areas such as the local centre, schools, etc.
- 4.20. Policy 23 provides the distribution of new jobs throughout North Northamptonshire. For East Northamptonshire District, the net growth target for all sectors is 7,200 jobs. This policy specifically states that the target is for all sectors and hence covers the range of business and commercial uses such as offices, industrial and logistics. Limb b) of the policy states that employment development of a scale and mix identified within commitments and approved master plans will be supported at the SUEs and strategic sites.
- 4.21. Policy 24 provides support for development of logistics, including large scale strategic distribution. A criteria is provided for the assessment of logistics proposals. Logistics is included as part of the proposed employment area. This is purposely designed to provide access to the A6 and beyond and planned within a landscaped setting.
- 4.22. Limb a) of the policy seeks smaller employment units where strategic distribution developments are proposed. The explanatory text to this policy explains that strategic distribution serves the national warehouse and distribution market and for the purposes of the plan, it refers to individual units of over 100,000 square feet (9,300 square metres). This is likely to apply to the SUE. Smaller employment units are defined in the explanatory text as new floorspace in units of less than 9,300 square metres gross floor area. This should be possible in the more detailed planning for the northern employment area.
- 4.23. Paragraph 8.19 of the plan states:
- “This Plan recognises the opportunities provided by the logistics sector, notably its importance to the economy and creation of significant office based jobs (B1 sector) as ancillary uses. The early delivery of B8 units on strategic sites can pump prime developments, and contribute to the early delivery of infrastructure to act as a catalyst for delivering smaller employment units suitable for small and medium sized enterprises (see paragraph 8.7). In considering proposals for strategic distribution (see paragraph 8.20) in locations where there is also a market demand for smaller units, the local planning authorities will seek to negotiate a mix of unit sizes and employment uses, with a proportion of new floorspace in units of less than 9,300sqm GFA. Proposals should be accompanied by information on market conditions, including the potential occupier market and the likely occupier property requirements taking into account an assessment of demand and supply. A delivery strategy should be provided by the applicant to demonstrate how these additional employment uses will be brought forward alongside the main B8 element of the scheme.”*
- 4.24. This is explicit support for delivery of logistics development in North Northamptonshire. The emphasis on the early delivery of B8 units on strategic sites to pump prime development and contribute to the early delivery of infrastructure to act as a catalyst for delivering smaller employment units suitable for small and medium sized enterprises is relevant for this Planning Application.

- 4.25. East Northamptonshire District and North Northamptonshire are within the 'Golden Triangle' for logistics. This is an area which contains and is in close proximity to distribution centres and supply chain companies.
- 4.26. Policy 28 provides housing targets across North Northamptonshire. Within East Northamptonshire District the requirement is 8,400 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2031. This equates to an average of 420 dwellings per annum.
- 4.27. Policy 29 sets out the distribution of new homes across North Northamptonshire. The spatial strategy includes delivery of the Rushden East SUE with Rushden being identified as a Growth Town. The policy states that local planning authorities will work proactively with landowners, developers and other partners to ensure the timely delivery of the Sustainable Urban Extensions.
- 4.28. Policy 30 relates to housing mix and tenure, setting out policy on market and affordable housing provision, housing type, mix and standards. A statement on housing is provided within this planning statement which assesses the various relevant aspects.
- 4.29. Policy 33 identifies land to the East of Rushden as a location for a sustainable urban extension to include around 2,500 dwellings and provision for an appropriate level of job opportunities, ancillary facilities, services and open space.
- 4.30. This policy relates to identification of Rushden as a Growth Town which in part is driven by evidence identifying the decline in employment opportunities locally and a need to address out-commuting. Table 3 below assesses the Proposed Development against the detail of Policy 33.

Table 3: Assessment Against Policy 33

Policy 33 Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension	Compliance	Comments
Land to the East of Rushden is identified as the broad location for a sustainable urban extension to include around 2,500 dwellings and provision for an appropriate level of job opportunities, ancillary facilities, services and open space.	Compliance	The Site location forms part of the area of land for the SUE. The proposal is for up to 2,200 dwellings.
Rushden East will be a sustainable and attractive development that helps meet the long-term aspirations for economic growth; offers a high quality of life for new and existing residents and enhances the image of the town as a whole. It will be a new distinctive neighbourhood with its own separate identity but well-connected and integrated with the town as a whole.	Compliance	The vision and masterplanning for the development will deliver place-making for new homes, employment and community facilities.

Policy 33 Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension	Compliance	Comments
<p>A masterplan will be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority. The masterplan will define development boundaries and policy expectations for inclusion in the Part 2 Local Plan covering Rushden or the preparation of a planning application for development of the Sustainable Urban Extension.</p>	<p>Compliance</p>	<p>ENC more latterly NNC has prepared a Masterplan Framework Document for the Sustainable Urban Extension and undertaken consultation on this document. This was included as an appendix to the Local Plan Part 2 and has been the subject of an examination hearing in front of the Planning Inspector. NNC has made changes to the document and intend to remove it from LLP2. Engagement between the Appellant and NNC and their advisers is that the masterplanning under the Planning Application is consistent with the masterplan framework plan within the Masterplan Framework Document.</p>
<p>In order to avoid piece-meal development, the preparation and agreement of the masterplan is a prerequisite before any planning applications are granted planning permission. Any such planning applications will need to take into account the requirements of the Habitats Regulations Assessment legislation. Any development proposals must be consistent with the masterplan and must not in any way prejudice the implementation of the whole development.</p>	<p>Compliance</p>	<p>The Planning Application includes assessment under the Habitats Regulations.</p> <p>The proposal is consistent with the Masterplan Framework Document and will not prejudice delivery of the wider SUE. Delivery of this development, which is the majority of the SUE, will commence delivery as envisaged in policy and required in the spatial strategy.</p>
<p>The masterplan should meet the policy requirements set out in this Plan, including the need to be informed by a project level Habitats Regulations Assessment (to ensure the protection of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area), and incorporate the following specific local requirements (see limbs a) to l) below).</p>	<p>Compliance</p>	<p>The Planning Application includes assessment under the Habitats Regulations. This includes provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace on the Site.</p>
<p>a) Around 2,000-2,500 homes including affordable homes and homes for the older population.</p>	<p>Compliance</p>	<p>The Site location forms part of the area of land for the SUE. The proposal is for up to 2,200 dwellings.</p>

Policy 33 Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension	Compliance	Comments
b) Good connections by all modes across the A6 to the rest of Rushden and to Higham Ferrers, in particular the town centres and other key service and employment destinations.	Compliance	The proposal includes improved pedestrian and cycling connections across the A6 at the John Clark Way roundabout, at the bridge crossing over the A6 connecting to Deacon Park and at the southern Newton Road roundabout. This has been based on detailed assessment of the Site and the context and informed by a SpaceSyntax exercise.
c) A mix of employment opportunities that will make a significant contribution to delivering an enhanced balance between new homes and jobs in Rushden, including offices and industrial premises as well as local centre, small-scale business space and dwellings suitable for home working or business start-ups.	Compliance	The Proposed Development includes employment land which will deliver a mix of business and commercial development. There will be wider employment opportunities arising from the local centres, schools, etc. Delivery of the SUE is expected to take c.20 years and jobs will be provided during the construction phase.
d) The opportunity for further development beyond the current scale of development through safeguarding land and access opportunities.	Compliance	The masterplan includes for provision of access to adjoining land within the SUE in addition to potential for further connections to land to the north east near Newton Road (north).
e) A sensitively designed environment responding to the existing landscape character and features, including how the edge of the Site is treated.	Compliance	The masterplan is informed by survey and assessment work including landscape and visual impact assessment to achieve a landscape-led masterplan.
f) A permeable and well-connected grid of streets and new links to connect with the wider Greenway network.	Compliance	The masterplan includes a clear and legible network of streets and pedestrian / cycle routes, including an improved connection to the East Northamptonshire Greenway via Public Footpath UK2.
g) Appropriate green space, and other mitigation measures as may be required to mitigate impacts on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area, This should include the provision of a new and attractive destination open space.	Compliance	The green and blue infrastructure proposed under the Planning Application is some 22% of the gross site area. including Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace as a destination green space and mitigation of the impacts of the Proposed Development on the Special Protection Area.

Policy 33 Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension	Compliance	Comments
h) Green spaces with the imaginative use of water to both manage drainage and make them more attractive.	Compliance	Existing watercourses are sensitively protected and enhanced within the masterplan. A key feature of which is the central green corridor including the watercourse and proposed surface water attenuation features.
i) A clear physical separation from the villages of Caldecott, Chelveston and Newton Bromswold but with footpaths and cycle ways to connect them to the new area.	Compliance	<p>The masterplan includes green and blue infrastructure to the northern and eastern boundaries providing a sensitive interface to the countryside beyond and separation to the villages.</p> <p>Public footpaths UK2 and UK4 will be enhanced within the Site giving connectivity to the east of the Site.</p>
j) An energy strategy to ensure that the highest viable amount of heat and energy used within the development is generated on-site from renewable or low-carbon sources.	Compliance	The Planning Application includes an assessment of the sustainability of the development including use of renewable or low-carbon energy sources. Enhanced provision will need to be subject to viability consideration.
k) Green spaces and community facilities including two new primary schools, primary health care, new community centre, land for a new cemetery and other local community facilities such as allotments.	Compliance	All of these community facilities are provided within the masterplan.
l) Land reserved for a new secondary school.	Compliance	Land is identified in the masterplan for a new secondary school. This follows engagement with ENC and education officers at the former Northamptonshire County Council as education authority.

4.31. It can be seen from Table 3 that the proposal fully complies with Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4.32. The assessment on other policies of the plan shows that the proposal complies with policy overall.

East Northamptonshire District Local Plan 1996, saved policies.

4.33. Some policies within the adopted Local Plan Part 2 1996 were replaced by the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (adopted July 2011). The remaining saved policies are clearly dated and will in due course be replaced by the emerging new Local Plan Part 2.

4.34. Policy RL3 (Recreational Open Space Provision by Developers) seeks to ensure that developers provide at least 2.43 ha of open space in settlements per 1,000 population. Since this time guidance has been updated at the national level such as Fields In Trust.

4.35. Policy RL4 (Children's Play Areas) builds on Policy RL3, requiring children's play areas to form part of the open space provision set out above.

4.36. It is worth noting that the Site is not situated within the area covered in the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan and therefore the policies from this document which replaced those of the Adopted Local Plan 1996 are not relevant to this application.

4.37. Whilst the remaining relevant saved policies of the 1996 Local Plan are dated with there being more recent policy and guidance, it is considered that the Proposed Development accords with the relevant saved policies.

Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

4.38. The Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted July 2017. This is the land-use planning strategy for minerals and waste related development in the county. It provides the basis for investment in new minerals and waste development in Northamptonshire, and where in the county it should go to.

4.39. The Site is not identified as being a mineral location or waste location in this plan. The Site is not identified for safeguarding for limestone, sand or gravel and the Site is not identified for prevention of certain land-uses which conflict with a minerals and/or waste allocation.

Rushden Neighbourhood Plan

4.40. The Rushden Neighbourhood Plan (RNP) was made on 4 June 2018 which is more recent than adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The plan periods are the same being 2011 to 2031.

4.41. Only part of the Site, albeit the majority, falls within the boundary of the RNP as some falls within the adjoining Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan. This is due to the location of the parish boundaries.

4.42. In the examination of and making of the RNP, the Examiner and ENC have confirmed that the plan has passed the 'basic conditions' test under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). One of the basic conditions is that the neighbourhood plan has to be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority or any part of that area.

- 4.43. The vision in the RNP includes embracing the opportunities created by Rushden Lakes and Rushden East developments, to strive towards a town that balances the needs of its people with jobs and infrastructure and to use Rushden Lakes and Rushden East as a catalyst for growth. The aim being to achieve real economic progress to sustain Rushden's status as North Northamptonshire's 'fourth town'.
- 4.44. Delivery of the SUE will help to deliver this aim.
- 4.45. Policy H1 seeks to restrict development outside of the settlement boundary unless it is an allocated site or within the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension.
- 4.46. Policy H2 and H3 deals with the location of new housing development in addition to the Rushden East SUE. The allocated sites are known about in the wider planning for the area.
- 4.47. Policy H4 is about market housing type and mix following on from the new housing development sites.
- 4.48. Policy H5 requires self-build housing in the urban area of Rushden and on the housing allocations under Policy H2 and H3 to include opportunities for self-build homes. This does not apply to the Rushden East SUE.
- 4.49. Policy EN1 requires new developments to be of high quality design and sets out the design principles to be adhered to. These are similar to the approach to place-making contained within the Joint Core Strategy.
- 4.50. Policy EN2 sets out that new developments must incorporate hard and soft landscaping measures, which positively contribute to the surrounding area and retain existing wildlife. Regard must also be had towards site drainage. Again this is similar to the approach for place-making across North Northamptonshire.
- 4.51. Policy EN3 states that development proposals that conserve or enhance Rushden's Greenways will be supported. Masterplanning for the Site is landscape-led protecting and enhancing public rights of way and providing better connectivity to the East Northamptonshire Greenway via Public Footpath UK2.
- 4.52. Policy EN4 requires development to improve the quality of the public realm with the creation of safe and attractive public spaces. This is part of the vision for development of the Site, subject to consideration of the details through reserved matters.
- 4.53. Policy EN5 seeks developer contributions toward public realm improvements where appropriate and in accordance with relevant legislation. The approach to planning obligations is covered later in this statement.
- 4.54. Policy EN6 seeks enhancements and improvements to the visual approaches to the town at the 'Gateway Sites' identified on the policies map, from development proposals within the vicinity of these locations. The John Clark Way roundabout and the southern Newton Road roundabout, both on the A6 to the east of the town, are identified on the policies map as Gateway Sites under Policy EN6.
- 4.55. Both of these highway junctions are proposed for improvement to enhance connectivity between the SUE and the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers.

- 4.56. Policy T1 states that permission will only be granted if development does not result in a significant residual impact on any aspect of the transport network. The policy encourages infrastructure to facilitate use of electric vehicles including charging points. Every dwelling will be provided with EV charging points, as well as there being a central location for charging points.
- 4.57. Policy EJ1 supports proposals for small starter units or incubator business floor space. There is no target or range provided but rather general support. There is potential for such space within the employment offer at the Site depending on the details in due course.
- 4.58. Policy EJ2 supports new employment floorspace in appropriate locations which would not affect local amenity. There is no target or range and no explanation of where appropriate locations are considered to be. The Proposed Development of the Site includes an employment area planned strategically with access and landscaped buffers.
- 4.59. Policy CL2 requests that development proposals of a net gain of 15 or more dwellings or a site area over 0.42 hectares will be required to provide suitable amenity space, in accordance with East Northamptonshire Council's Open Space Supplementary Planning Document. The Proposed Development of the Site includes open space and amenity space as part of the vision and masterplanning for this part of the SUE.
- 4.60. Policy CL5 supports new outdoor sports and recreation facilities. The Proposed Development of the Site includes new outdoor sports and recreation facilities as part of the vision and masterplanning for this part of the SUE. Such facilities are intended not to compete with other facilities proposed in the location especially by Rushden Town Council.
- 4.61. Policy CL7 offers support for new community facilities. It sets out that such facilities should be designed to ensure that they are accessible for all. Masterplanning for the Site includes land for a range of facilities commensurate with this scale of development.
- 4.62. In summary, the RNP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area which includes the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. The Proposed Development of the Site complies with relevant policies in both plans.
- 4.63. As part of the Neighbourhood Plan update, Rushden Town Council have asked the community to nominate Local Green Spaces and Local Heritage Assets. Nominations will be reviewed and considered to become part of the Neighbourhood Plan Update. This does not affect the development plan status of the sustainable urban extension.

Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031

- 4.64. The Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood Plan (HFNP) was made on 11 April 2016 which is prior to adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy in July 2016. The plan periods are the same being 2011 to 2031.
- 4.65. Only the northern part of the Site falls within the boundary of the HFNP as some falls within the adjoining RNP. This is due to the location of the parish boundaries.
- 4.66. The neighbourhood plan states (page 21) that all policies have been framed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the emerging North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy.

4.67. Page 23 of the HFNP states:

“Further development for limited housing, employment and community facilities could be provided adjacent to Rushden East within the Higham Ferrers boundary. Consultation with the community indicates that modest growth in this location associated with the urban extension would be supported. The master planning of Rushden East will require considered thought over an extended period to refine the proposals, however, the principle of utilising John Clarke Way Roundabout as one of the main accesses would seem to be fixed. In order to facilitate the achievement of a properly master planned urban extension of Rushden, the identification of a proposed future direction of growth for Higham Ferrers associated with Rushden East with guidance on development criteria will assist in this master planning process.”

4.68. This shows that preparation of the HFNP accepted the emerging SUE under the Joint Core Strategy. The HFNP looks to identify modest growth and identifies a proposed future direction of growth for Higham Ferrers associated with the Rushden East SUE.

4.69. Figure 7 in the HFNP is the location plan for Land East of Ferrers School and Higham East. A purple asterix indicates the growth of Higham Ferrers / Rushden East. The location of this is east of the A6 / John Clark Way roundabout within the broad location of the Rushden East SUE within the Joint Core Strategy.

4.70. Policy HF.H3 Higham East (Future Growth) supports comprehensive masterplanning for access and infrastructure associated with Rushden East from the A6 / John Clark Way roundabout within the neighbourhood plan area.

4.71. Subject to the demonstration of future need for housing, employment and community facilities required by Higham Ferrers, or in the event of other housing sites not being delivered, additional land will be provided within a future growth area ‘Higham East’, as identified on the Proposals Plan.

4.72. The Proposals Map in the HFNP shows the purple asterix which indicates the growth at Higham Ferrers / Rushden East. The location of this is east of the John Clark Way roundabout on the A6. This appears to be the same location as shown in Figure 7. This is within the broad location of the Rushden East SUE within the Joint Core Strategy.

4.73. Policy HF.CD1 deals with the delivery of infrastructure and facilities for development of 11 dwellings or more.

4.74. Policy HF.CD2 deals with protection and enhancement of community facilities. Support is expressed for new community facilities. Masterplanning for the Site includes land for a range of facilities commensurate with this scale of development.

4.75. Policy HF.DE1 is about achieving high quality design. New development will be expected to be of a high quality design and must preserve and enhance the settlement of Higham Ferrers. Masterplanning for the Site seeks to follow best practice in place-making taking a lead from relevant policies include in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4.76. Figure 9 in the neighbourhood plan identifies character areas in the built-up area of Higham Ferrers. This does not seek to deal with the new SUE then emerging in the Joint Core Strategy or with the proposed additional development under Policy HF.H3 Higham East.

- 4.77. Policy HF.DE2 is about protecting heritage assets and their setting. The proposal for the Site has assessed all designated and non-designated heritage assets and seeks to minimise impact where relevant.
- 4.78. Policy HF.DE3 is about creating access to the green infrastructure network. The proposal for the Site includes a green and blue infrastructure strategy and in particular connectivity to public rights of way and to the East Northamptonshire Greenway.
- 4.79. Policy HF.TC1 seeks mitigation at the Chowns Mill A45/A6 junction. This junction has recently been upgraded by National Highways. The Proposed Development includes a transport assessment and where appropriate, proposed off-site mitigation.
- 4.80. Policy HF.TC2 states that new development proposals must demonstrate how it can be serviced by suitable ducting to enable more than one service provider to provide a fibre connection to individual properties from connection chambers located on the public highway, or some alternative connection point available to different service providers. An infrastructure strategy will be worked through to ensure digital connectivity for the Proposed Development.
- 4.81. Policy HF.TC3 states that all new developments shall have layouts that provide safe and convenient routes for walking, cycling and for disabled users. Masterplanning for the Site has been prepared based on evidence and engagement and assessment under SpaceSyntax to ensure most appropriate connectivity between the Proposed Development and the two towns. Layout is a reserved matter for future consideration.
- 4.82. Policy HF.TC4 requires new development to provide sufficient on and off-street parking. This is a matter for the detail of reserved matters in due course.
- 4.83. In summary, the HFNP was made prior to adoption of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy but nonetheless it acknowledges and accepts the then emerging allocation of the Rushden East SUE.
- 4.84. The HFNP includes a proposal for additional growth accessed off the John Clark Way roundabout. The Proposed Development of the Site complies with relevant policies in this neighbourhood plan.

Assessment Against the Development Plan

- 4.85. The above assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Development comprising part of the Rushden East SUE complies with all relevant policies within the Development Plan for this part of North Northamptonshire.
- 4.86. The Proposed Development is in line with the wider policy aspirations of the Development Plan; in particular the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, which identifies Rushden as a Growth Town and a broad location for a Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE). More specifically, it identifies land to the east of the A6 as the location for the Rushden East SUE. This Site forms part of the Rushden East SUE in the location identified. The Joint Core Strategy considers Rushden East SUE to be the most sustainable option for the future development of Rushden. The Proposed Development is considered to fully accord with Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy as identified in Table 3.

- 4.87. The Joint Core Strategy provides policy support for new employment development in North Northamptonshire. Policy 23 states that the target for new job creation is for all sectors and hence covers the range of business and commercial uses such as offices, industrial and logistics. Policy 24 provides support for development of logistics, including large scale strategic distribution. The employment part of the Proposed Development, includes an emphasis on B8 use, which complies with this policy framework.
- 4.88. This mixed-use development of the Site, would deliver the widest possible benefits to the area including the towns of Rushden and Higham Ferrers. This is fully in compliance with the ambitions of sustainable development in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

Materials Considerations

- 4.89. There are a number of documents that are “material considerations” in the context of Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 that may be referred to by the decision-taker for this planning application. These are set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.90. An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021. The policy requirements of the NPPF are material to the consideration of applications for planning permission. The chapters and paragraphs of most relevance to this application are outlined below.
- 4.91. Paragraph 2 in the introduction states:

“Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements.”

Achieving Sustainable Development

- 4.92. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out the overarching objectives of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:
- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

4.93. Paragraph 10 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the NPPF which, at Paragraph 11, is defined for decision-making as: “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.”

Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

4.94. Paragraph 60 states the importance of land coming forward where needed to support to Government’s overarching objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.

4.95. Paragraph 65 states that for major developments, at least 10% of the homes should be available for affordable home ownership.

4.96. Paragraph 73 sets out local authorities should identify suitable locations for new settlements or extensions to existing towns where they can help meet identified needs in a sustainable way.

Sustainable Transport

4.97. Chapter 9 focuses on promoting sustainable transport. Paragraph 106 requires planning policies to support a mixture of uses to minimise the number and lengths of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities and provide high quality walking and cycling networks. Paragraph 107 provides guidance on parking facilities and the need to take into account:

- a) The accessibility of the development;
- b) The type, mix and use of development;
- c) The availability and opportunities for public transport;
- d) Local car ownership levels; and
- e) The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for changing plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles

4.98. Paragraph 110 specifically relates to draft site allocations and the need to ensure that sustainable transport modes are promoted; the safe and suitable access for all users; and the mitigation of any significant impacts from the development on the transport network or highway safety. Paragraph 111 requires that development should be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or residual cumulative impact on the road networks. Paragraph 112 therefore indicates that all applications should:

- a) give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use;

- b) address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;
- d) allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and access by service and emergency vehicles; and
- e) be designed to enable charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.

4.99. Paragraph 113 indicates that all proposals which would generate a significant amount of movement should provide a travel plan and be supported by a transport assessment.

Efficient Use of Land

4.100. Chapter 12 focuses on the efficient use of land. Specifically, Paragraph 124 supports development which takes into account:

- a) the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- b) local market conditions and viability;
- c) the availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- d) the desirability of maintaining an area’s prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- e) the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

Achieving Good Design

4.101. Chapter 12 provides guidance on achieving well-designed places. Paragraph 130 requires that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 4.102. Paragraph 132 suggests that there should be early discussions between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of the emerging scheme and that views should be considered from the local community. Paragraph 130 further adds that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to improve the character and quality of the area.

Climate Change

- 4.103. Chapter 14 deals with the challenge of climate change. Paragraph 154 sets out that development should be planned in a way that avoids increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, and which helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through its location, orientation and design. Paragraph 155 requires that new development must comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply (unless it is not feasible or viable); and take into account landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 4.104. Chapter 15 addresses the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Paragraph 180 indicates that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following (relevant) principles:

If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused; and

Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 4.105. Chapter 16 states when considering the impact of proposals, great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. This is explained in more detail in the assessment part of this statement.

- 4.106. In December 2022 the Government published changes to the NPPF and this is currently the subject of consultation. The proposed changes to the NPPF do not affect the development plan status of the sustainable urban extension.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.107. On 6 March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued its Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) web-based resource, which is updated regularly. The PPG provides detailed guidance on the implementation of the NPPF and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Parts have been updated to reflect the new NPPF and the application responds to the new advice and guidance.

Changes to the Current Planning System

- 4.108. The Government has launched a consultation on a revision to the NPPF. '[Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy](#)' and its supporting documents cover key elements of the planning system and Government's proposed planning reforms. The consultation began on 22 December 2022 and runs until 2 March 2023. The Government is expected to publish a revised NPPF in spring 2023.
- 4.109. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is progressing through Parliament and might become an Act of Parliament in 2023. Provisions relevant to the planning system within the Bill are not considered relevant to the development plan status or material considerations for the determination of the Planning Application.
- 4.110. There has been mention of a pending Planning and Infrastructure Bill but at the time of updating this Planning Statement, this has not been published. Should a Bill be published this can be assessed for any relevance to determination of the Planning Application.

The Oxford – Cambridge Arc

- 4.111. The Oxford – Cambridge Arc is located between Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire taking in Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and parts of Buckinghamshire.
- 4.112. The Government and local partners, including local authorities, identify this area as being nationally significant and capable of delivering new development and investment in infrastructure.
- 4.113. Following its response to the National Infrastructure Commission's report on the Arc in October 2018, the Government re-affirmed its long-term economic ambitions for the Arc in a joint declaration with local partners in a document in March 2019.
- 4.114. North Northamptonshire is within the Arc and this SUE comprising new homes, new jobs and new infrastructure will contribute towards delivery of the ambition for the Arc.
- 4.115. Government has recently further affirmed commitment to the Oxford-Cambridge Area through an award of funding to a Pan Regional Partnership. The vision and objectives for this partnership have yet to be published.

Emerging East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2

- 4.116. The Local Plan Part 2 is the District-wide site specific statutory development plan, prepared by the former ENC to guide the determination of planning applications. It supports the strategic policies of the Joint Core Strategy and it covers the same period of 2011 to 2031. When adopted, the Local Plan Part 2 Plan will form part of the development plan for East Northamptonshire District.

4.117. The Local Plan Part 2 was submitted for examination in March 2021. The examination hearings commenced in April 2022 and concluded in May 2022. The Planning Inspector provided a post-hearings letter dated 10 July 2022 on the next steps following the hearing sessions. This includes actions undertaken by NNC which are intended to result in consultation on modifications to the submitted plan.

4.118. Within the post-hearings letter is the following direction from the Planning Inspector in respect of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (Policy EN33):

“The Masterplan Framework Document (MFD) for the Rushden East SUE is too detailed for inclusion within the Local Plan. In its current form it does not provide sufficient flexibility and could constrain the future development of the Site and is not, therefore, effective. Consequently, as discussed at the hearing session and set out in the action points (49-62), the ‘blue box’ planning/development plan document (DPD) requirements of the MFD should be reviewed with a view to incorporating them within a revised Policy EN33. Policy EN33 would be strengthened by the inclusion of these planning requirements. I have received a first draft of the revised policy and will liaise with the Council via the Programme Officer regarding the detailed wording in due course.

“More detailed design matters should be retained within the MFD or potential supplementary planning document (SPD). For the avoidance of doubt, the MFD/SPD would not form part of the Local Plan but should be progressed separately. There is no requirement in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for the masterplan to be included within the Local Plan.”

4.119. Consultation on modifications to the plan are pending which are expected to result in changes to draft policies within the submitted plan including to Policy EN33. The masterplan framework document is to be taken out of the plan.

4.120. The draft vision states within the plan as submitted in part states that East Northamptonshire will be the heartland of small and medium sized enterprises, based on regenerated and thriving market towns with an enhanced role for Rushden as the District’s Growth Town.

4.121. Draft Policy EN7: Green Infrastructure corridors, includes The Greenway. The proposal provides for an enhanced connectivity to the Greenway.

4.122. Draft Policy EN10: Enhancement and provision of open space. This sets out proposed standards for new open space. Discussions have taken place with ENC to inform the masterplan for the Site in this regard.

4.123. Draft Policy EN11: Enhancement and provision of sport and recreation facilities. This sets out proposed standards for new sport and recreation facilities for new strategic development. This has been discussed with ENC and with the Town Councils. An appropriate range and location for such facilities on the SUE is proposed as part of the masterplan.

4.124. Draft Policy EN12: Design of Buildings. This is more relevant for the detail of the Proposed Development through reserved matters applications submitted in due course.

4.125. Draft Policy EN13: Designated Heritage Assets. This been considered in the assessment of such assets which are to be protected in the masterplan.

4.126. Draft Policy EN14: Non-Designated Heritage Assets. This has also been considered in the assessment of such assets for the masterplan.

- 4.127. Draft Policy EN21: Impact test thresholds for retail development. This states that an appropriate impact assessment will be required at Rushden where the retail floorspace exceeds 280 square metres. There will be two local centres in the Proposed Development to serve the expanding population and this should not trigger an impact assessment.
- 4.128. Figure 15: Rushden Local Centres identifies Rushden East but it does not purport to identify the exact location or number of local centres in the SUE. This is set out within the Masterplan Framework Document and detailed within the planning application.
- 4.129. Draft Policy EN28: Housing mix and tenure to meet local need. This states that all housing developments will be expected to provide a suitable mix and range of housing, including a range of size, type and tenure (as set out in Policy 30 of the Joint Core Strategy) that recognise the local need and demand in both the market and affordable housing sectors.
- 4.130. Draft Policy EN29: Specialist and older persons housing provision. This states that to help meet future requirements for specialist housing; including retirement housing for older persons the Local Planning Authority will seek to ensure that a proportion of its overall housing provision will address the identified needs of an ageing population within the District.
- 4.131. Draft Policy EN30: Extra care accommodation. This states that at Rushden East and elsewhere provision should be made to address specialist housing provision by inclusion of extra care accommodation to meet identified need.
- 4.132. Policy EN31: Supporting older persons' accommodation need. This states that retirement housing, supported housing and, where a need can be identified, care homes schemes will be encouraged, provided that the proposal has good access to local facilities and public transport services.
- 4.133. A Housing Needs Assessment had been prepared on behalf of ENC. This is described in more detail later in this statement, and is of relevance to draft policies EN28 to EN31.
- 4.134. Draft Policy EN32: Self and custom build housing. This states that on sites of 50 or more dwellings, 5% of the plots should be made available on site as serviced building plots to enable the delivery of self and custom build properties, subject to appropriate demand being identified. This matter is assessed later on in the housing statement section. 5% of the dwellings in the Proposed Development would be disproportionate and not based on evidence of need.
- 4.135. Draft Policy EN33: Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension. This seeks to define the development boundaries for the delivery of the SUE building upon the allocation within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This policy is the subject of pending changes through the examination into the submitted plan. The Proposed Development which is the subject of the Planning Application complies with the draft policy wording. Delivery of development on the Site, being the majority part of the SUE, will deliver on the policy intentions for the SUE.
- 4.136. Engagement between the Appellant and NNC and their advisers has resulted in agreement that the masterplanning under the Planning Application is consistent with the masterplan framework plan within the Masterplan Framework Document. Whilst the MFD is to be taken out of the submitted Local Plan Part 2, the consensus on masterplanning is a positive outcome of close engagement over the course of the Planning Application to date.

4.137. The emerging Local Plan Part 2 does not alter policies within the Joint Core Strategy. There are pending changes to the submitted plan and overall it is considered that the Proposed Development under the Planning Application will continue to comply with the direction of planning policy.

4.138. **National Design Guide**

4.139. The National Design Guide, published October 2019 and updated in January 2021, is planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places.

4.140. The National Design Guide addresses the question of how we recognise well designed places, by outlining and illustrating the Government's priorities for well-designed places in the form of ten characteristics.

4.141. The focus of the guide is on good design in the planning system, so it is primarily for local authority planning officers, councillors, planning applicants and their design teams as well as people in local communities and their representatives.

4.142. The Design and Access Statement which forms part of the Planning Application documentation includes an assessment of the Proposed Development against this Design Guide.

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

4.143. There are several SPD and Guidance Note documents that have informed this Planning Application. Supplementary planning documents add further detail to the policies in the development plan. Some of the SPD/Guidance has been prepared to add detail to past development plan policy in that they have not been prepared to add detail to the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.

4.144. SPDs can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Northamptonshire Place and Movement Guide

4.145. The Northamptonshire Place and Movement Guide was adopted by NCC in 2008 (although not an SPD) and therefore it is rather dated. Nonetheless NCC use this as a guide for commenting on development proposals. ENC have regard to this guidance being a material consideration within East Northamptonshire District.

Biodiversity SPD for Northamptonshire

4.146. The Biodiversity SPD was adopted in February 2016 and sets out how biodiversity is to be integrated into the development process.

4.147. This SPD is designed to be used by those considering and applying for planning permission in Northamptonshire. It may also be a useful reference for those developing planning policy and making site allocations.

4.148. Figure 3 in the SPD shows the Nene Valley Improvement Area and the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA.

- 4.149. The Planning Application is supported by a broad range of ecological survey and assessment work led by Wood Plc. This includes calculation of biodiversity net gain.
- 4.150. Current planning policy requires a net gain in biodiversity without stating a target. A biodiversity calculation undertaken by WSP (previously Wood) is part of the Planning Application.

Trees and Landscape SPD

- 4.151. The Trees and Landscape SPD was prepared jointly by the Borough Council of Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Council.
- 4.152. This SPD was adopted in February 2013 and sets out the Councils' approach to landscape design and tree matters which affect new developments, and promotes high quality, well maintained landscapes and open spaces.
- 4.153. The Proposed Development has been informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment and arboricultural survey and assessment. A green and blue infrastructure strategy underpins the masterplan. Trees and hedges are protected in the masterplan where possible as this assists with protection of the current natural capital and supports the character of new places.

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPD

- 4.154. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPD was adopted in February 2016 and seeks to help Local Authorities and developers to ensure that development has no significant effect on the SPA in accordance with the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations.
- 4.155. The ecological surveys and assessment work includes assessment under the Habitats Regulations. The Proposed Development includes provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. ENC as the responsible body will undertake an appropriate assessment under these Regulations.

The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document – Addendum to the SPA SPD: Mitigation Strategy

- 4.156. This addendum was adopted on 21 November 2016. Paragraph 1.5 of the addendum states:

“Sites that already have planning permission will not be required to pay any additional mitigation sum, unless they are resubmitted for consideration. Due to its size Rushden East will provide its own Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and is therefore not considered to fall in the remit of this mitigation, however if suitable space is not provided within that development, this will need to be reassessed. Other large scale development, that have the scope to deliver SANGs, are unlikely to be required to meet the standard contribution as a bespoke project level HRA will be required and the mitigation identified in that assessment will need to be delivered.”

- 4.157. As the Site is part of the SUE, the masterplan provides a SANG and it is therefore not considered to fall in the remit of other mitigation proposed in the SPD.

North Northamptonshire Sustainable Design SPD

- 4.158. The Sustainable Design SPD was adopted in March 2009 and hence it is rather dated. This SPD sets out design guidance for individual development proposals. A statement on sustainability and energy is submitted as part of the Planning Application.

Domestic Waste Storage and Collection SPD

- 4.159. The Domestic Waste Storage and Collection SPD was adopted in July 2012 and sets out guidance for addressing domestic waste issues in new residential development schemes.
- 4.160. A waste strategy for the Site beyond the construction phase will be agreed with NNC.

Open Space SPD

- 4.161. The Open Space SDP was adopted in November 2011 and sets out ENC's approach to providing open space within new developments in addition to a series of provision standards, general design principles and details of how financial contributions will sustain, improve and maintain open space.
- 4.162. This document is rather dated and there have since been updates at the national level including Fields in Trust. Discussions have been held with ENC (as was) to inform the masterplan for the Site which includes strategy for open space and sports pitch provision.

Developer Contributions SPD

- 4.163. The Developer Contributions SPD was adopted in June 2006 and seeks to provide guidance on developer contributions. Site specific discussions will take place with NNC in respect of the approach to the Proposed Development.

Northamptonshire Planning and Health Protocol

- 4.164. The purpose of this document (March 2020) is to bring together local authority planners and health and social care commissioners and providers to ensure comments on planning policy documents and planning applications are received and taken into account during the planning process.
- 4.165. For both the Local Plan Making Stages and the Planning Application Process, the document outlines what needs to happen and by whom, to ensure that health partners are fully engaged with the planning process and that local planning authorities uphold their commitment to ensuring that health and wellbeing is fully considered in plans and decision making.
- 4.166. Policy 33 of the Joint Core Strategy includes various community facilities required of the SUE and these are proposed as part of the masterplan for the development.

Conclusion on Material Considerations

- 4.167. There is a significant range and depth of material considerations of relevance to a strategic-scale development proposal. These considerations vary in age and relevance and some are emerging and will remain material considerations for example the NPPF. Some are emerging and are likely to become development plan policy such as the Local Plan Part 2.

- 4.168. Where new development plan policy is adopted prior to determination of the Planning Application, it is appropriate for the Applicants and NNC to discuss relevant considerations which might inform the shaping of planning conditions and planning obligations.
- 4.169. SPD and guidance is not part of the development plan. The extent to which the above is relevant to the Proposed Development being part of the Rushden East SUE is for the decision-taker in respect of the Planning Application.
- 4.170. Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development is sustainable development which complies with relevant development plan policies. There are no material considerations which indicate that a decision on the Planning Application should be taken other than in accordance with development plan policy. This means that planning permission should be granted subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.

5. Technical Assessment

- 5.1. An aim of the Applicants in preparing and updating the Planning Application is to demonstrate a technically robust proposal taking a lead from pre-application discussions including the EIA Scoping and responses to the application.
- 5.2. Being technically robust and subject to planning conditions and planning obligations, will help to ensure the delivery of sustainable development as part of the Rushden East SUE.
- 5.3. The Applicants' have a full consultant team in place dealing with matters ranging from ground conditions through to transport planning.
- 5.4. This technical assessment is a relatively brief overview of the survey and assessment work. For full details, each report and section of the Environmental Statement (ES) should be referred to.

Agricultural Land and Soils

- 5.5. Wood Environment and Infrastructure UK Limited has assessed the potentially significant effects of the Proposed Development with respect to soils and agricultural land quality for the ES.
- 5.6. The majority of the Site comprises arable agricultural fields separated by hedgerows and trees.
- 5.7. A table in the ES provides a breakdown of the land area for the Grade 3a (BMV), Grade 3b (non-BMV) and Non Agricultural.
- 5.8. The majority of The Site is Grade 3a BMV agricultural land with pockets of non-BMV Grade 3b agricultural land in the northern, central and south eastern areas of the Site.
- 5.9. The soil descriptions from the detailed ALC survey identified calcareous clayey slowly permeable soils across the majority of the Site with patches of non-calcareous clayey slowly permeable soils.
- 5.10. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the Proposed Development to prevent the loss of soil resources (through the design of the scheme to remove top soils and subsoils and reuse these within the Proposed Development) and reduce the reduce potential for damage to soil structure. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the remediation strategy.

Air Quality

- 5.11. The impact to air quality at existing and proposed sensitive human receptors has been assessed. The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar is located alongside the A45 road to the north of the Site. Impact to air quality at this designated site has been considered in 'High Hayden Garden Community Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment'.
- 5.12. The assessment considers both the impact of dust and traffic emissions arising from the Proposed Development on sensitive receptors during the construction and operational phases.

- 5.13. A construction phase assessment undertaken in line with Institute of Air Quality Management concluded that there will be no residual effects to sensitive human receptors from construction phase activities when appropriate mitigation is taken into account.
- 5.14. Increases in concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter as a result of increased traffic flows were negligible and therefore impacts were deemed not significant.
- 5.15. Under the Planning Application the Environmental Protection team has provided planning conditions seeking to control construction times and for provision of a construction management plan and hence do not object to the Proposed Development. In respect of air quality, the comments are to secure more detail of sustainable travel, air quality improvements and traffic reduction. The transport assessment and the air quality assessment have both been updated and provided under the Planning Application.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 5.16. WSP (was Wood) have undertaken assesses potentially significant effects of the Proposed Development with respect to ecology, which encompasses terrestrial and aquatic ecology and ornithology.
- 5.17. The ecological assessment has been based upon the results of desk study and field surveys, but also relevant published information (for example on the status, distribution, sensitivity to environmental changes and ecology of the ecological features scoped in to the assessment, where this information is available), professional knowledge of ecological processes and functions and through discussions with stakeholders such as Natural England, the North Northants Badger Group and NNC.
- 5.18. A list of the biological surveys carried out to inform the ecological assessment is provided in the ES. This covers a period from 2015 to date, in particular with updated surveys in 2021 and 2022.
- 5.19. A detailed assessment of the residual effects of the Proposed Development in respect of various habitats and species is provided including the Upper Nene Gravel Pits SPA/Ramsar/SSSI.
- 5.20. A biodiversity calculation has been undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development and shows that a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved. It is expected that a planning condition and/or planning obligation will control details of the ecological mitigation and biodiversity net gain.
- 5.21. The former Ecological Adviser at the County Council has provided planning conditions in respect of ecology and biodiversity and hence does not object to the Proposed Development. A meeting was held with Natural England in 2022 during which the approach to the SANG was agreed.

Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Water Resources and Flood Risk Assessment

- 5.22. Stantec UK Limited has undertaken assessment in to hydrology, hydrogeology and water resources and prepared the flood risk assessment and drainage strategy.
- 5.23. Under the Planning Application the Local Lead Flood Authority has provided planning conditions in respect of surface water drainage and hence do not object to the Proposed Development.
- 5.24. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the drainage strategy.

Ground Conditions

- 5.25. Betts Geo has undertaken an assessment of the ground conditions for the ES. This covers the soils, geology and hydrogeology, within and surrounding the Site. A Phase 1 Geo-environmental Desk Study and a ground investigation report have been prepared.
- 5.26. The ES chapter identified and assesses the potential activities associated within the Proposed Development that could affect and result in contamination of soils and/or groundwater has been undertaken. Where necessary, proposed mitigation measures are identified to eliminate or minimise potential effects. Potential effects are considered to represent reasonable worst-case conditions.
- 5.27. On the basis that mitigation measures are implemented appropriately, it is considered there will be no significant residual effects on ground conditions during either the construction or post completion phase of the Proposed Development for the development parcels.
- 5.28. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the remediation strategy.
- 5.29. The Environment Agency, Anglian Region, has provided planning conditions in respect of ground conditions and hence do not object to the Proposed Development.

Historic Environment

- 5.30. An assessment of the potential effects on the historic environment from the Proposed Development has been undertaken.
- 5.31. There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 5.32. There are a number of designated heritage assets within the wider study area, in particular the Grade I listed churches of St Peter in Newton Bromswold (NHLE 1371900) and St Mary the Virgin in Yielden (NHLE 1137357); the scheduled monument of Yielden Castle (NHLE 1013520), and the Grade II* listed Church of St John the Baptist in Caldecott (NHLE 1040380).
- 5.33. A full list of identified heritage assets within the study area is presented in a gazetteer and illustrated in Figures contained within the ES.
- 5.34. In addition to the EIA scoping exercise, there has been continued consultation with Northamptonshire County Council Archaeology Service. This has informed the scope of the archaeological evaluation conducted to date, as well as future requirements for archaeological mitigation.
- 5.35. An archaeological programme will be agreed in a Written Scheme of Investigation to be approved by the Northamptonshire County Archaeologist.
- 5.36. Effects on heritage assets off site are confined to St Mary's Church, Higham Ferrers. On the Site effects are confined to below ground archaeology which is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.37. Section 16 of the NPPF requires consideration of the potential impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.

- 5.38. The setting of the Church of St Mary contributes to its heritage significance, both through its location within the historic core of Higham Ferrers and through an appreciation of views of the spire from within the settlement and in longer distance views from beyond the settlement. The latter include a view from Chelveston Road on the approach to Higham Ferrers; incidental views from Newton Road across agricultural fields and the Higham Ferrers Business Park; from the south-east, on the approach to Higham Ferrers along Rushden Road in which the spire can be seen at a distance in glimpsed views only; and in glimpsed views from the south and north in which the spire is seen alongside modern development on the east side of the town.
- 5.39. During both the construction and operation phases, there would be effects on the setting and, therefore, the heritage significance of St Mary's Church. Given the distance and the intervening built environment, these impacts would be visual, affecting: views from the church spire; views of the church spire from the western ends of Newton Road/Upper Higham Road and Newton Road/Rushden Road, and the stretch of the A6 on the south-eastern edge of Higham Ferrers; and views of the church spire from public rights of way within the Site.
- 5.40. The magnitude of change would be greatest during the later phases of construction, when at height working, vehicle movements and site lighting will be seen along with the nearly complete Proposed Development in these views.
- 5.41. These construction phase impacts will be temporary and those relating to construction activity will be reversible. This will involve a minor adverse change to the historic interest of the church, affecting the sense of approach to a historic market town and the understanding of a former agricultural landscape, whilst its historical context within the historic core of Higham Ferrers will remain substantially intact. Architectural and archaeological interests of St Mary's will be unaffected. In EIA terms, this represents a low magnitude of change, which to an asset of high heritage significance would result in a moderate adverse effect, which would be significant.
- 5.42. During the operation phase, impacts will be less than those in the later phases of construction due to the removal of construction related equipment which would be seen in juxtaposition with and in views from St Mary's Church. However, the retention and use of the development will still represent a low magnitude of change to the historic interest of the church.
- 5.43. As previously, this would affect the sense of approach to a historic market town and the understanding of a former agricultural landscape. A low magnitude of change to an asset of high heritage significance would result in a moderate adverse effect, which in EIA terms would be significant.
- 5.44. A low magnitude of change in EIA terms, to the heritage significance of an asset, is considered to represent less than substantial harm in the context of NPPF.
- 5.45. Less than substantial harm inevitably covers a broad range. In this case, the fact that a low magnitude is defined in the ES as resulting from minor changes where historical context remains substantially intact would place this toward the lower end of this range.

- 5.46. This harm, being at the lower end of the range of less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which include the following:
- The provision of market housing, affordable housing and specialist housing.
 - The provision of employment development generating jobs.
 - The creation of gross value added to the local economy.
 - A net gain in biodiversity.
 - The proposal will link into a number of local and strategic footpaths and cycleways that will facilitate non-car movements.
- 5.47. Assessment of heritage effects, including residual harm to a heritage asset, arising from the Proposed Development should be considered in the context of the benefits of the proposal described in section 7 of this statement. This is material to determination of this planning application by reference to paragraphs 194-203 of the NPPF.
- 5.48. A number of below ground archaeological sites will be excavated as part of the proposed mitigation, which is considered to be an adverse effect. Whilst archaeology on this Site is non-designated heritage asset a number of steps have been taken to reduce impacts. Reasonable provision has been made to preserve archaeology in situ within the Proposed Development where possible, for example within the SANG. Where this is not possible then a programme of archaeological recording will be undertaken under a planning condition. Completion of the excavations will result in the generated evidence being made publicly available. This effect should be considered in the context of the public benefits described above.
- 5.49. The former County Archaeological Advisor has proposed planning conditions and hence does not object to the Proposed Development.

Landscape and Visual

- 5.50. In landscape and visual assessments, a distinction is drawn between landscape effects (i.e. effects on the character or quality of the landscape, irrespective of whether there are any views of the landscape, or viewers to see them) and visual effects (i.e. effects on people's views of the landscape, principally from residential properties, but also from Public Rights of Way and other areas with public access).
- 5.51. CSA Environmental has undertaken an assessment of the areas from which views of the Proposed Development would be possible, and this has shown the main areas likely to be affected are principally (but not wholly) to the east of Rushden and Higham Ferrers and within 1km of the Site boundary.

- 5.52. The aspects of the development which would most influence the landscape and visual effects resulting from it include its extent (the Site covers an area extending for around 3km from north to south and around 1.5km from west to east at its widest point), the proposed employment buildings in the northern part of the Site which could be up to 20m in height, the proposed buildings in the central part of the Site which could be up to 15m in height, and the landscape proposals, which are extensive and would help to integrate and screen the new buildings over time as the planting matures.
- 5.53. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the landscape strategy.

Noise and Vibration

- 5.54. Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited has undertaken an assessment of the potential effects of noise and vibration during the demolition and construction works upon sensitive receptors for the ES. The potential effects from noise on completion and operation of the development from fixed mechanical plant and changes in road traffic noise as a result of the development is also assessed.
- 5.55. The assessment of the noise and vibration effects during the construction and operational phase of High Hayden Garden Community has been established in accordance with published guidelines and best practice. To inform the assessment, comprehensive baseline environmental noise surveys were undertaken during September 2016. The measured noise levels over the weekday and weekend period were comparable.
- 5.56. Given the lapse of time from the original baseline survey and now, a check on noise monitoring was undertaken in September 2022 adjacent to the A6 using CRTN shortened measurement procedure, together with short-term measurements adjacent to Newton/Rushden Road to the south of the Site and Newton/Upper Higham Lane to the north. Comparison with the 2016 measurement data indicated noise levels were within +/- 2dB of those measured in 2016 and therefore considered comparable.
- 5.57. Although the development is predicted to result in some increases in road traffic noise on the local road network, they are predominantly less than 1dB and not exceed 2dB at sensitive receptor locations, when compared to the without development scenario. On this basis the overall effect is considered insignificant.
- 5.58. The masterplan includes sufficient set-back from the A6 to allow for the traffic road levels and any potential future dualling of the A6.
- 5.59. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the mitigation strategy.

Transport and Travel Planning

- 5.60. Waterman Infrastructure and Environment Limited has prepared the transport and travel planning assessment work with proposed mitigation measures. The update to this has been a collaboration between Waterman and David Tucker Associates.
- 5.61. Demolition and construction of the Proposed Development would generate traffic on the local highway network. To effectively manage this, a construction traffic management plan will be developed and implemented, which would set out measures to minimise construction traffic and any disruption. As part of this, construction traffic routes, access and egress to the Site would be agreed with the Highway Authority.

- 5.62. The Proposed Development, once completed and operational, would provide permeability and connectivity across the Site through the provision of roads, footpaths and public open space. In addition, the development would include the provision of secure cycle facilities for residents within the development and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.63. A Framework Travel Plan is submitted with the Planning Application which sets out the measures to be implemented in order to promote sustainable travel, with an aim to encourage more people to use sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport.
- 5.64. The Travel Plan will be promoted and supported by the appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator who would champion the use of sustainable modes of transport and seek to support a change in modal shift away from single occupied cars.
- 5.65. It is expected that a planning condition will control details of the mitigation strategy.

Conclusion

- 5.66. This summary shows that a full range of technical matters have been surveyed and assessed whilst taking into consideration the preparation of the masterplan for the Site as being part of the SUE.
- 5.67. The technical work has informed the environmental statement prepared under the EIA Regulations.
- 5.68. It is considered that subject to planning conditions and planning obligations, the technical assessment collectively underpins a technically deliverable development.
- 5.69. A construction environment management plan will be prepared and controlled by a planning condition.

6. Housing Statement

- 6.1. The Planning Application is an outline Planning Application with all matters except for access reserved for future consideration. The Proposed Development will be undertaken through multiple phases over a period of more than 10 years.
- 6.2. Over such time planning policy and guidance and evidence which underpins policy will evolve. This will be at the national level and more locally. It is important for the outline planning permission to set the planning framework for delivery of the Proposed Development in the future.

Overall Housing Requirements

- 6.3. In respect of the provision of housing, this can be considered as one of the benefits of delivery of the SUE.
- 6.4. The NPPF emphasises that local planning authorities should plan to boost significantly the supply of housing. It requires an evidence-based approach to identifying and meeting the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as is consistent with policies in the NPPF.
- 6.5. Currently, the most up to date policy on housing of relevance to the Site is within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031.
- 6.6. Policy 8 sets out the place shaping principles for development in North Northamptonshire, dealing with matters such as layout and design.
- 6.7. Policy 28 sets out the housing requirements in terms of the amount of new housing required over the period to 2031. For East Northamptonshire District this is 8,400 dwellings which equates to an average of 420 dwellings annually.
- 6.8. Paragraph 9.14 confirms that the delivery of the plan is largely reliant upon the timely delivery of the sustainable urban extensions and other strategic housing sites (defined as sites of at least 500 dwellings). Policy 29 states that local planning authorities will work proactively with landowners, developers and other partners to ensure the timely delivery of the sustainable urban extensions and other strategic housing sites.
- 6.9. Table 5 provides a breakdown of planned housing delivery in named settlements. In East Northamptonshire District, only Rushden is identified as a Growth Town. Overall the town is identified as having a housing requirement of 3,285 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2031. This requirements includes the SUE of which the Site is part.
- 6.10. Annex A of the plan provides the breakdown of housing land supply in the plan period. The estimated completions at Rushden East SUE was for commencement of delivery in 2020/21 at 100 dwellings followed by a consistent delivery of 150 dwellings each year in the period to 2030/31. The total estimated delivery in the plan period to 2031 for the Rushden East SUE in this annex is 1,600 dwellings.

6.11. NNC have published a schedule of sites included in the five year housing land supply calculation amended as of 8 January 2020. In respect of the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension this identifies delivery of 75 dwellings in 2022/23, 100 dwellings in 2023/24, 125 dwellings in 2024/25 and then 150 dwellings each year to 2030/31. The total supply in the plan period to 2031 is shown as 1,200 dwellings and post-2031 it is 1,300 dwellings, being a total of 2,500 dwellings.

6.12. The Applicants will work with NNC in respect of the projected delivery from the Proposed Development comprising up to 2,200 dwellings out of the overall allocation under Policy 33 of around 2,500 dwellings.

Housing Mix and Tenure

6.13. Policy 30 in the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy deals with housing mix and tenure. This policy is in part based on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update, published in January 2015. The SHMA provided an update on general housing and older persons' housing requirements of the 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment for North Northamptonshire.

6.14. Table 6 of the plan is required tenure as percentage of new housing during the plan period. For East Northamptonshire District (as was) this comprising the following:

- Social and affordable rent – 36.0%
- Intermediate tenures such as shared ownership – 5.2%
- Private rent – 8.0%
- Owner occupation – 50.8%

6.15. Paragraph 9.33 states that the extent to which the needs of different housing tenures, identified in table 6, are accommodate in specific development schemes will depend on the viability of development and the mix of housing available in the locality.

6.16. NNC has a Housing Needs Study for the SUE prepared by Opinion Research Services.

6.17. This study provides evidence for the size and tenure of dwellings required and considers wider issues around housing need in the SUE if 2,500 dwellings are delivered in the area.

6.18. Figure 1 in the study shows the identified size mix for the SUE based upon those who are unable to afford market housing without housing benefits support; those households who are unable to afford social rents without housing benefit support will be unable to afford any housing without housing benefit. This analysis of data has required interpretation in the planning policy context.

Affordable Housing

6.19. Policy 30 seeks the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing in developments having regard to the viability of the development scheme and the objective of creating inclusive and mixed communities.

6.20. In respect of the sustainable urban extensions in North Northamptonshire, Policy 30 seeks 20% of the total dwellings in phases to be developed by March 2026 to be affordable housing, with provision to be made for a review of the viable level of affordable housing in later phases.

- 6.21. The precise proportion and tenure mix of affordable housing will take into account the need identified in the SHMA toolkit or more up to date local assessment agreed with the local planning authority and the viability of the development.
- 6.22. Paragraph 9.36 states that the sustainable urban extensions, with their major infrastructure costs, are committed to deliver up to 20% affordable housing. Policy 30 sets an aspirational figure over the plan period. This takes account of scheme-based evidence, together with the viability appraisal and the evidence of housing needs, to set out a flexible approach to affordable housing recognising that up front infrastructure costs of the sustainable urban extensions may affect affordable housing delivery in the early phases, but this is likely to improve over the lifetime of the plan. This approach is aimed at maximising the contribution that individual developments make to meeting the needs set out in Table 6, without making otherwise acceptable schemes unviable and reflects the fact that viability and the definition of affordable housing may change over the plan period.
- 6.23. Paragraph 9.37 states that where a robust viability assessment indicates that a development cannot meet the Policy 30 targets in full, the local planning authority will negotiate with the developer to agree an appropriate scale of provision. Where the scale of infrastructure provision at larger sites necessitates a lower percentage of affordable housing in the early phases of the development, provisions should be made to provide additional affordable housing as viability improves over time.
- 6.24. ENC officers (as was) have considered the Housing Needs Study and that based on the policy requirement of 20% affordable homes for sustainable urban extensions, the tenure split of the affordable housing should be 70% affordable housing for rent and 30% low cost home ownership.
- 6.25. Officers consider that 35% of all affordable homes should be provided as 3 bed+. This should comprise 30% as 3 beds and 5% as 4 bed+ properties. The Housing Needs Study found that among those surveyed from the housing register only a very small proportion were looking for one bedroom properties with the predominant requirement being for two and three bedroom properties.
- 6.26. Officers have suggested a reduced requirement for one bed flats in favour of these larger properties in order to meet these aspirations. The provision of 3 bed homes in particular allows progression for families from the smaller size properties.
- 6.27. NNC Officers have suggested the following range in bed sizes for the affordable homes based on their interpretation of the Housing Needs Study and taking into account an overall development of 2,700 dwellings and 20% affordable housing provision:
- 1 bed (extra care, bungalows and houses) – 19%
 - 2 bed (extra care, bungalows, flats, houses – 46%
 - 3 bed (bungalows, houses) – 30%
 - 4+ bed (houses) – 5%
 - Total – 100%

- 6.28. The Applicants expect to hold discussions with NNC in respect of development viability based on up to date evidence in order to agree the approach to affordable housing provision as part of the Proposed Development. This will in part inform the amount, mix and type of dwellings for the affordable housing provision.

Housing for Older People

- 6.29. Limb f) of Policy 30 states that proposals will be encouraged for market and affordable housing provision to meet the specialised housing requirements of older households including designated, sheltered and extra care accommodation and other attractive housing options to enable older households to down-size to smaller accommodation. The sustainable urban extensions and other strategic developments should make specific provision towards meeting these needs.
- 6.30. The Housing Need Study identifies a need for around 2,414 specialist older person additional housing across East Northamptonshire District, comprising owned and rented sheltered and extra care accommodation.
- 6.31. Based on the Housing Needs Study, Officers have factored in a requirement for specialist older person housing, to be delivered through the provision of an extra care scheme in the SUE. This will require land to be identified within a suitable part of the overall land area for the SUE, which extends beyond the Proposed Development.

Accessible Housing

- 6.32. Limb c of Policy 30 states that new dwellings must meet Category 2 of the proposed National Accessibility Standards as a minimum and the local planning authority will negotiate for a proportion of Category 3 (wheel-chair accessible) housing based on evidence of local needs.
- 6.33. Officers have stated that they expect 5% of all affordable homes to be delivered as accessible homes, under Category 3. The evidence for this is set out in the Housing Needs Study and Officers consider that this need cannot be wholly met through the provision of specialised older person housing.
- 6.34. ENC's housing register (as was) indicates that 8% of all current applicants in the Rushden East study area require an adapted home (4% are under the age of 60). The provision of bungalows will also provide a general need to meet older persons housing requirements and to provide a broader range of accommodation types across the SUE as a whole. Bungalows are suggested as the primary form of accessible homes to be provided.

Space Standards

- 6.35. Limb b of Policy 30 states that the internal floor area of new dwellings must meet the National Space Standards as a minimum in order to provide residents with adequate space for basic furnishings, storage and activities. In both affordable and market sectors, adaptable housing designs will be encouraged in order to provide flexible internal layouts and to allow for cost-effective alterations (including extensions) as demands and lifestyles change.
- 6.36. Future reserved matters applications will provide the detail of the housing mix, types and standards in the planning policy context.

Custom Build Housing

- 6.37. Limb g of Policy 30 states that proposals for individual and community Custom-Build developments that are in line with the spatial strategy will be supported. The sustainable urban extensions and other strategic developments should make available serviced building plots to facilitate this sector of the market.
- 6.38. Custom build housing are the appropriate form of provision for an SUE. However, there is no policy or guidance on the number of plots to be made available.
- 6.39. NNC has a self-build and custom-build register which is a requirement under the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.
- 6.40. Under the Act a serviced plot of land means a plot of land which satisfies such requirements about utilities and other matters as may be specified.
- 6.41. Custom-build is defined as projects where individuals or groups work with a specialist developer to help build their new home.
- 6.42. Three Dragons prepared a Custom and Self-build Demand Assessment Framework, published in December 2018 for ENC. This post-dated adoption of the Joint Core Strategy.
- 6.43. In order to understand whether the register for custom and self-build provides a true reflection of demand, Three Dragons, with the support of the Right to Build Task Force, developed an alternative model for determining underlying longer-term demand for custom and self-build at local level.
- 6.44. Table 1 in the report identifies demand for custom and self-build dwellings across the District at 53 dwellings per year during years 1-5 and 58 dwellings per year during years 6-15. The demand for intermediate sale dwellings is identified as 5 dwellings per year during years 1-5.
- 6.45. The Applicants are willing to discuss the evidence of need for custom-build housing relevant to this part of East Northamptonshire District such that an area(s) for serviced building plots can be identified for custom-build housing.

Conclusion

- 6.46. The Housing Strategy Team, former East Northants Area, has provided a consultation response to the Planning Application of no objection subject to planning conditions and/or planning obligations on matters such as delivery of affordable housing, such as the amount, location, design, etc
- 6.47. Notwithstanding this planning conditions and planning obligations at the outline Planning Application stage will need to provide the framework for such matters in the context of development viability.

7. Benefits of the Development

- 7.1. The Proposed Development complies with relevant development plan policy and will deliver on the vision, outputs and policy within the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy as well as the NPPF. The proposed strategic mixed-use development proposed means that it will deliver multiple benefits in terms of: new jobs, homes, transport infrastructure, open space assets, community facilities and natural habitats. Thus, creating a high quality, cohesive and distinctive new community.
- 7.2. The Proposed Development is sustainable development for which the presumption in favour applies under the NPPF. Limb c) of paragraph 11 of the NPPF applies in that the local planning authority should approve the development without delay being in accordance with the development plan. The exercise is not one of assessment of adverse impacts against the benefits under limb d) ii. of paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 7.3. Notwithstanding application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is relevant to consider the benefits that will arise from the development.
- 7.4. The Applicants have placed high quality design and place-making at the forefront of their considerations in full accordance with the NPPF. The Design and Access Statement sets how the approach to the Proposed Development reflects a balanced approach that evolves from the surrounding context of the Site to create a unique sense of place. The Statement of Community Engagement sets out the approach taken on the engagement undertaken in relation to the Proposed Development and how these have impacted positively on the submitted proposals.

Provision of Housing

- 7.5. The development of up to 2,200 dwellings as part of a mixed-use sustainable urban extension will bring benefits of supply of new housing within the District. A wide range of new homes will be provided to meet local housing need. This is part of the vision for the Growth Town of Rushden.
- 7.6. New homes are a core element to the mixed use approach to the Proposed Development. It is only through the delivery of new housing types that the other benefits (e.g. employment, SANG, sports facilities) can be achieved and the sustainable credentials of the location realised. The sustainable co-location of homes, jobs and services represents a highly sustainable approach by:
- Ensuring the co-location of homes with employment and other uses so the agglomeration effects can be realised;
 - reducing the need to travel by providing homes in close proximity to jobs and services;
 - supporting the vitality and viability of Rushden and Higham Ferrers town centres; and,
 - providing homes that will be well connected via public transport.
- 7.7. Policy 28 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires delivery of 8,400 dwellings in East Northamptonshire District during the period 2011 to 2031. This equates to an average of 420 dwellings per annum for the District. It is anticipated that this Site will deliver approximately 150 dwellings per annum, therefore making a significant contribution to the District's annual requirements.

- 7.8. Limb a) of Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires around 2,000-2,500 homes including affordable homes and homes for the older population. This policy objective will be delivered and bring benefits of choice in the housing market for a range of new homes.
- 7.9. Part of Limb g) of Policy 30 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires sustainable urban extensions (not just Rushden East) and other strategic developments to make available serviced plots for custom build to facilitate this sector of the market. This will be delivered in a future phase of development subject to details to be worked through and agreed in settlement of the S.106 agreement.
- 7.10. The Proposed Development not only assists NNC in meeting the annual average housing requirement across the plan period but, in a way that provides positive benefits to both the existing and new residents that small schemes would not viably be able to provide. For example, community facilities and school provision. The Site is under the control of national house builders who are in a position to deliver the Proposed Development. Both Taylor Wimpey and BDW have a track record of delivering strategic urban extensions within Northamptonshire as well as nationally.
- 7.11. The Planning Application provides all of the social infrastructure necessary to enable the remainder of the SUE to come forward. Thus ensuring a comprehensive delivery of the wider SUE.
- 7.12. The delivery of new housing overall, including a range of tenures and types, is a benefit that should be given significant weight.

Provision of Affordable Housing and Specialist Housing

- 7.13. A proportion of affordable housing as defined under Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF will be provided within the proposed new homes. This definition might be the subject of changes as a result of consultation on the Planning White Paper and relevant associated documentation and initiatives by the Government and hence this will be discussed between the Applicants and ENC.
- 7.14. Part of limb d) of Policy 30 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires 20% of total dwellings in phases of sustainable urban extensions to be developed by March 2026, with provision to be made for a review of the viable level of affordable housing in later phases.
- 7.15. The Applicants recognise the issue of housing affordability locally and will work with NNC through the Planning Application process to agree a response at High Hayden Garden Community that is appropriate and reflects the specific circumstances of the Site. The approach is anticipated to be a topic for further discussion under the Section 106 negotiations. Consideration will be given to the need identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Toolkit, the Housing Needs Study for this SUE and the viability of the Proposed Development.
- 7.16. The evidence and policy includes specialist housing and NNC Officers have suggested that extra care should be provided on the SUE. It is assumed that this will be provided on other land within the SUE and no provision is made within the Proposed Development.
- 7.17. The provision of affordable housing and specialist housing as part of the overall place-making in this SUE is a benefit that should be given significant weight.

Provision of Employment

- 7.18. The creation of employment development, two local centres, schools and wider community uses will deliver a range of new job opportunities.
- 7.19. The Proposed Development will deliver a Strategic Employment location through a sustainable mixed use response. It will deliver new jobs benefitting the local and sub-regional economies along with transformational investment into Rushden. The proposed employment mix builds upon inherent strengths and demands as well as meeting identified needs. Thus helping to redress the balance of jobs to homes in Rushden as a whole.
- 7.20. This will include the creation of construction jobs and the associated supply network for the duration of the build which will be more than fifteen years. Proposed heads of terms for the S.106 agreement includes potential for measures to identify the provision of goods and services from local suppliers, the provision of local employment opportunities and training and apprenticeships.
- 7.21. Limb c) of Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy requires a mix of employment opportunities that will enhance balance between new homes and jobs in Rushden, including offices and industrial premises as well as local centre, small-scale business space and dwellings suitable for home working or business start-ups. These are part of the Proposed Development and will deliver the benefits of employment development and job creation which should be given significant weight.
- 7.22. A survey for the House Builders Federation (HBF) and the Construction Industry Training Board indicates that, on average, the construction of a new dwelling requires the input of 1.5 people in the construction workforce each year. If it is assumed that an average of 160 new homes at HHGC are completed each year, then the housing development would directly support 240 full time equivalent jobs in construction over the delivery period.
- 7.23. The provision of 110,000m² of employment floorspace will provide local employment opportunities for the new residents, including those in the additional dwellings that will come forwards as part of the SUE. Across the wider HHGC, the assessment indicates a potential employment capacity for some 3,000 jobs, supporting a balance between new housing and job opportunities.
- 7.24. It is considered that the overall increase in the number of households and population will have a positive impact at the District level, with discernible benefits including the provision of additional housing to assist towards housing targets and to provide an important source of additional dwellings to meet housing needs in the form of open market and affordable housing.

Gross Value Added Through Development

- 7.25. GVA is a measure of the contribution to the economy and is used as a headline indicator to monitor economic performance at regional and national level (GVA per head of population). It can also be used at the project level to provide an indication of the overall GVA that could be added into the economy. The Proposed Development would represent a direct additional contribution to the economy of each year some £132 million upon completion (present day value). Economic circumstances could vary the rate at which companies take up available space. Nonetheless, the proposal will ultimately yield a beneficial effect for employment opportunities, providing a number of high quality facilities in a strategic location.

Net Gain in Biodiversity

- 7.26. There is currently no development plan policy which seeks a specific target for net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.27. Policy 4 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy states in part that a net gain in biodiversity will be sought and features of geological interest will be protected and enhanced.
- 7.28. At the national level the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity (paragraph 174 d). The Environment Act includes provision for a 10% net gain in biodiversity through new development but this has yet to be implemented with the expectation of transitional arrangements meaning any target might not come into force for some time.
- 7.29. Notwithstanding the absence of a specific target for net gain in biodiversity the Proposed Development will deliver a net gain in biodiversity through the creation of habitat which scores more highly under the methodology for calculating net gains. This is a benefit which should be given significant weight.
- 7.30. The green and blue infrastructure proposed under the Planning Application is some 22% of the gross site area including the: town park, playing fields, SANG mitigation, sports pitches, as an integral part of sustainable development. The high quality 'destination' open space (the SANG) will form the new green infrastructure which will be accessible for the new residents as well as the existing community. As a result of this the Proposed Development provides a positive biodiversity net gain calculation.

Highways

- 7.31. The Proposed Development is directly in line with the principles of the NPPF in transport terms. The mixed use nature of the Proposed Development has meant that the proposals have been designed to ensure that various uses are carefully located to ensure safety and the need to travel is minimised. Where the need to travel is necessary, the development will provide its own dedicated bus route linking the Proposed Development to Rushden and Higham Ferrers. A key benefit of the Proposed Development is the ability to link into a number of local and strategic footpaths and cycleways that will facilitate non-car movements.
- 7.32. The Parameters Plans include the provision of vehicular and pedestrian access into the adjoining land within the SUE facilitating the delivery of the SUE in its entirety. It is proposed that there will be a specific obligation within the S.106 agreement in respect of delivery of these points of access.

Mitigation Measures

- 7.33. There are various aspects of the Proposed Development which contribute towards place-making and will deliver a sustainable development. This includes the provision of green infrastructure for example the suitable alternative natural greenspace, allotments, the provision of blue infrastructure for example sustainable urban drainage, cemetery provision, wider publicly accessible play and sport pitch provision and community and education provision.
- 7.34. Such areas and facilities can be seen as mitigation in response to the impact of development but they also provide benefits for new residents and for existing residents in the location. Whilst the exercise for this Planning Application is not to assess adverse impacts against benefits as explained above and neutral weight is sometimes given to mitigation measures, it is nonetheless important to consider the benefits that mixed-use sustainable urban extensions provide.

8. Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations

8.1. The Applicants look forward to continuing to engage with NNC and relevant stakeholders in respect of planning conditions and planning obligations.

8.2. The Planning Application is an outline Planning Application with all matters except for access reserved for future consideration and hence this will need to be reflected in planning conditions and planning obligations.

Planning Conditions

8.3. It is relevant to note the national planning policy on planning conditions. Paragraph 56 of the NPPF, states:

“Planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Agreeing conditions early is beneficial to all parties involved in the process and can speed up decision making. Conditions that are required to be discharged before development commences should be avoided, unless there is clear justification.”

8.4. Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 21a-001-20140306 of the Planning Practice Guidance, states:

“Why are conditions imposed on a planning permission?”

When used properly, conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects. The objectives of planning are best served when the power to attach conditions to a planning permission is exercised in a way that is clearly seen to be fair, reasonable and practicable. It is important to ensure that conditions are tailored to tackle specific problems, rather than standardised or used to impose broad unnecessary controls.”

8.5. The mixed-use nature of the Proposed Development is to be undertaken by more than one party which means that phasing is relevant for planning conditions. Planning conditions should be drafted to allow for details to come forward for consideration by NNC on a phased basis.

8.6. Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 21a-008-20140306 of the Planning Practice Guidance, states:

“Can conditions be used to stipulate the sequence that development should be carried out in (phasing)?”

Where the circumstances of the application make this necessary and the 6 tests will be met, conditions can be imposed to ensure that development proceeds in a certain sequence. Conditions may also be used to ensure that a particular element in a scheme is provided by/at a particular stage or before the scheme is brought into use.

It is important that the local planning authority and the applicant discuss and seek to agree any such conditions before planning permission is granted. This is in order to understand how the requirements would fit into the planned sequence for developing the site, impacts on viability, and whether the tests of reasonableness and necessity will be met.”

- 8.7. The Applicant is working with NNC in the drafting of planning conditions. It is expected that pre-commencement of development planning conditions will need to be fully justified. We expect discussions to involve the length of time for submission of reserved matters and the scope of Planning Application documentation to be conditioned as approved.
- 8.8. The Town and Country Planning (Pre-commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018 are relevant as these Regulations apply to pre-commencement conditions imposed on a grant of planning permission on or after 1st October 2018.
- 8.9. Section 100ZA was inserted into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act by section 14(1) of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (“the 2017 Act”). Section 100ZA(5) provides that planning permission for the development of land may not be granted subject to a pre-commencement condition without the written agreement of the applicant to the terms of the condition.
- 8.10. Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that if the local planning authority grants planning permission it should be subject to a planning condition that sets the time limit within which the development must begin. The relevant time limit for beginning the development is not later than the expiration of 3 years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted, or; such other period (whether longer or shorter) as the local planning authority may impose.
- 8.11. Under section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where outline planning permission is granted for development consisting of or including the carrying out of building or other operations, it shall be granted subject to conditions to the effect that, in the case of any reserved matter, application for approval must be made not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of outline planning permission; and that, in the case of outline planning permission for the development of land in England, the development to which the permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, in the case of approval on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.
- 8.12. We look forward to discussions with NNC in respect of the period of time for submission of applications for approval of reserved matters beyond the standard three years from the grant of outline planning permission.
- 8.13. The northern employment area includes potential for office, research and development of products or processes and light industrial uses within new use Class E. Commercial, Business and Service. The Applicants are willing to discuss with NNC means by which to control such uses through a planning condition in order to address permitted changes to other uses under Class E.

Planning Obligations

- 8.14. It is relevant to note the national planning policy on planning obligations. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF, states:
- “Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.”*
- 8.15. The policy position here is that planning obligations should only be required where it is not possible to deal with unacceptable impacts of development, in other words mitigation, through a planning condition.

8.16. Paragraph 57 of the NPPF, states:

“Planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:

- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- b) directly related to the development; and*
- c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.”*

8.17. There are legislative requirements on planning obligations contained in The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. Regulation 122(2) of the 2010 Regulations states (in part):

“Limitation on use of planning obligations

122.— (1) This regulation applies where a relevant determination is made which results in planning permission being granted for development.

(2) A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is—

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
- (b) directly related to the development; and*
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.”*

8.18. It can be seen that (a) to (c) of the Regulations is identical to the planning policy guidance in the NPPF.

8.19. The development plan policy has been described and assessed in this planning statement. This includes relevant policy in respect of planning obligations. The Community Infrastructure Levy is not in force in East Northamptonshire District (as was) and there is no development plan document which directly deals with planning obligations for the SUE.

8.20. There are no up to date planning policies for the former East Northamptonshire District which set out the contributions from development of the SUE. Under policy in the NPPF it should not be assumed that development is viable.

8.21. In this regard, paragraph 58 of the NPPF is relevant. This states:

“Where up-to-date policies have set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable. It is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force. All viability assessments, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the recommended approach in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and should be made publicly available.”

8.22. It is anticipated that a legal deed will be negotiated and finalised under Section 106 Planning Obligations of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Applicants will look to agree heads of terms for planning obligations to inform preparation of the legal deed. The exact format for the deed will need to be discussed.

8.23. Without prejudice to further negotiations between the Applicants and NNC, the following areas are likely to feature in discussions about planning obligations:

Open Space / Green Infrastructure

- Public open space
- Public footpaths
- Play facilities
- Phasing of open space provision

Community Facilities

- Health care
- Cemetery Provision
- Community Building.
- Sports pitches and pavilion / changing facilities
- Community allotments
- Dual use of school pitches

Housing

- Affordable housing
- Custom build housing

Education

- Primary education (serviced sites and contribution)
- Secondary education (serviced sites and contribution)

Ecology

- Ecological mitigation
- SANG

Highway Works

- Off-site highway improvements

Sustainable Transport

- Public transport
- Provision of new / improved footpaths and cycleways
- Residential and commercial travel plans
- Travel plan co-ordinator

Management of Public Areas / Buildings

- Adoption of public footpaths and roads
- Management of open space, landscaping and play areas
- Management of public buildings
- Management body

Local Enterprise

- Local suppliers
- Local employment opportunities
- Training and apprenticeships

Adjoining Land

- Provision of access (subject to appropriate commercial arrangement)

Monitoring

- Monitoring Mechanism

Viability

- Viability review

8.24. This list is not exhaustive and discussions in respect of planning obligations will need to be informed by evidence on the need for obligations and need to be assessed against the policy and legislative tests.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Limited and BDW Trading Limited in support of an outline Planning Application for High Hayden Garden Community comprising mixed-use development.
- 9.2. Rushden is an established Growth Town. The Site forms part of the area of land identified as the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension under Policy 33 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, which was adopted in July 2016. The SUE was allocated to ensure Rushden was significantly expanded in accordance with its Growth Town status. NNC considered that the land identified as part of Policy 33 was the most sustainable option for future development. The national agenda for growth has been further reinforced through the National Planning Policy Framework..
- 9.3. The Planning Application has been prepared as a result of, and submitted following, extensive discussions with stakeholders on planning considerations for many years; going back to developing the vision of Rushden as a growth town which formed part of the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.
- 9.4. This Planning Statement has explained the background to the Site and the development plan policy. It has assessed the conformity of the Proposed Development with relevant development plan policy and guidance, reviewed the technical surveys underpinning the proposal, considered the approach to planning conditions and planning obligations and assessed the main planning issues supporting the Proposed Development.
- 9.5. The Proposed Development is sustainable development as described under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 9.6. The three overarching objectives of the planning system in the NPPF (paragraph 8) will be met through the grant of outline planning permission for the Proposed Development, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.
- 9.7. The Proposed Development will provide benefits covering the economic objective, the social objective and the environmental objective in the NPPF.
- 9.8. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, the NPPF has within it a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).
- 9.9. For decision-taking this means that local planning authorities should approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay. This limb c) of paragraph 11 of the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to this Proposed Development.
- 9.10. Planning legislation in the form of section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the determination of planning applications to be made in accordance with Development Plan Policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 9.11. This Planning Statement has explored material considerations which include emerging new policy guidance and it has found that there are no material considerations which indicate determination other than in accordance with the Development Plan.
- 9.12. The Proposed Development is in accordance with the adopted development plan. In particular the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, which identifies the Site and wider area as land for a sustainable urban extension to the east of Rushden.
- 9.13. The delivery of the SUE in East Northamptonshire District will help to deliver the vision and outcomes for the District and wider North Northamptonshire area as set out in the Joint Core Strategy.
- 9.14. The development by Taylor Wimpey UK Limited and BDW Trading Limited will deliver on the relevant policies within the Joint Core Strategy which have not been altered since this time through more recent development plan policy
- 9.15. The Proposed Development will in particular deliver the policy expectations of Policy 8 (place shaping principles), Policy 23 (distribution of new jobs), Policy 24 (logistics), Policy 28 (housing requirements), Policy 29 (distribution of new homes) and Policy 33 (Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension).
- 9.16. It has been demonstrated that the Proposed Development complies with relevant development plan policy and will deliver on the vision, outputs and policy within the former East Northamptonshire District and wider North Northamptonshire area. The Proposed Development is sustainable development for which the presumption in favour applies under the NPPF.
- 9.17. It is requested that planning permission is granted without delay, subject to planning conditions and planning obligations.

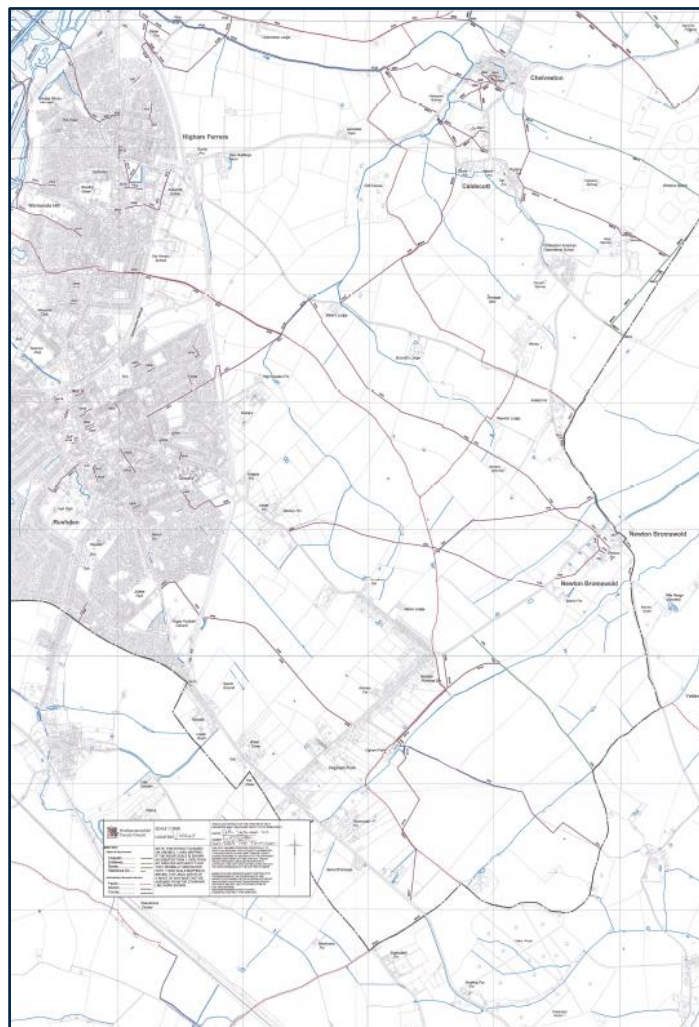
Appendices

Appendix 1 Site Location Plan



Appendix 2

Extract Plan From the Definitive Map





HIGH HAYDEN
GARDEN COMMUNITY



BARRATT
HOMES

Taylor
Wimpey

