

PART TWO

SPECIFICATION

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE RETAIL CAPACITY UPDATE

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 North Northamptonshire (NN) covers the local authority areas of Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire. The partner councils collaborate through a Joint Planning and Delivery Unit (JPDU), reporting to a Joint Planning Committee (JPC) (established by the Secretary of State in 2005) and Joint Delivery Committee. Subject to legislation, NN will become a unitary authority in April 2021.
- 1.2 NN has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country¹ and the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), adopted in July 2016, sets out our ambition to continue to deliver a nationally important scale of growth, with a minimum 35,000 new homes and 31,100 jobs between 2011 and 2031.
- 1.3 The update of the JCS will be known as the NN Strategic Plan. The need to update the JCS was considered by the JPC at its meeting on 25th July 2019. Public consultation on the NN Strategic Plan is timetabled to start in 2021 but background technical work and evidence gathering will be progressed by the NN JPDU in the meantime.
- 1.4 The retail strategy in the JCS is set out in Policy 12 *Town Centres and Town Centres uses*, which was informed by the 2014 North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update². The strategy distinguishes between the northern and southern functional sub-areas of NN as set out in figure 15 of the JCS overleaf.

¹ With 3 of the districts among the top 20 authorities nationally in terms of household growth 2001-11 (ONS).

² North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update, Peter Brett Associates October 2014

Employers Requirements

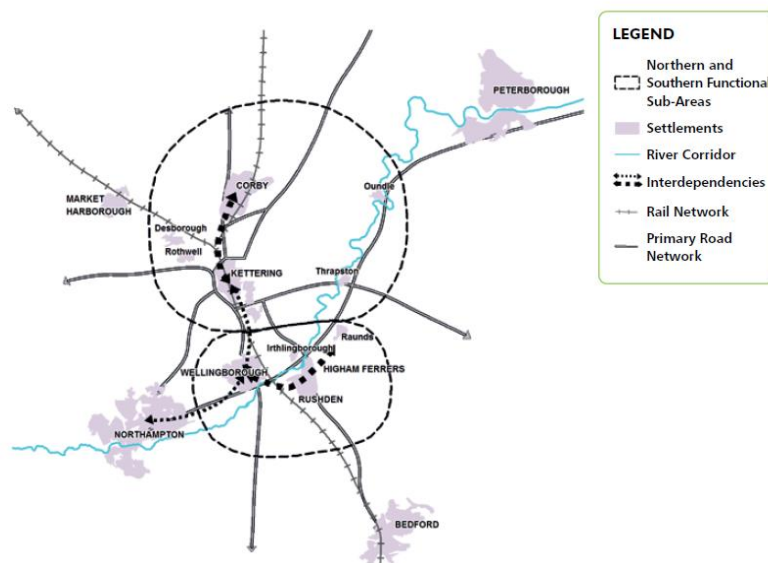


Figure 15: Functional sub-areas of North Northamptonshire

- 1.5 The JCS retail strategy seeks to maintain and regenerate Kettering and Corby town as the focus of higher order facilities and retail investment serving growing communities in the north of NN, including a minimum increase of 12,500 sqm net comparison shopping floorspace in each of Corby and Kettering town centres by 2031.
- 1.6 In the South of NN, the retail strategy recognises that the Rushden Lakes retail and leisure development will account for most, if not all, of the forecast additional comparison spending in the southern area and will also divert some trade from existing shopping locations. Policy 12 sets out the need to adapt and diversify Wellingborough and Rushden town centres to operate successfully alongside the permitted out of centre retail and leisure development at Rushden Lakes.
- 1.7 It should be noted that the Rushden Lakes development has evolved since the Secretary of State's original consent. Further information is contained in the latest East Northamptonshire Council report in relation to the latest planning application known as 'Rushden Living'³.
- 1.8 JCS para 5.34 indicates that the need for additional expenditure in the southern area of NN will be monitored and reviewed when the Rushden Lakes development has commenced trading and trading patterns have "bedded down". The first phase of Rushden Lakes started trading in July 2017, so it is appropriate to now undertake this monitoring.
- 1.9 The 2017 s106 agreement in relation to the revised leisure scheme at Rushden Lakes (Phase 2: leisure building to include a cinema, other leisure units and retail units, retail units and cycle hire facilities⁴) includes a contribution for "an updated

³ https://publicaccess.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/online-applications/files/15363F0BE79BC02612D4929FD41EE2BE/pdf/19_01092_FUL-COMMITTEE_REPORT-418838.pdf

⁴ Phase 2 planning application reference: 16/01662/FUL

Employers Requirements

assessment of the likely impact of the Revised Leisure Scheme Development on Wellingborough Town Centre: a) to identify whether at 2021, the impact Threshold has or is likely to have been exceeded at Wellingborough Town Centre; b) using a methodology to be agreed between the owner and BCW". This is to be undertaken in 2021, 2 years after first occupation. It is considered that a 2020 NN retail capacity update should be undertaken in the meantime to ensure that there is a comprehensive, up-to-date evidence base for the whole of North Northamptonshire for the NN Strategic Plan and to inform town centre strategy development.

- 1.10 Town centres across North Northamptonshire have changed significantly since the 2014 Retail Capacity Update, some of this likely to be as a result of growth in online shopping and following the opening of the Rushden Lakes development. The town centre strategy work will need to understand and respond to these issues. Kettering Borough Council has reported that one market reaction to the decline of the High Streets has been seen through landlords for the larger usually vacant retail units submitting applications for a sub-division of those units. Proposals have also been made to reduce or remove storage rooms and convert these spaces for residential use. The two most high-profile examples have been following the closure of New Look on Gold Street, Kettering (Refused) and Burton Menswear on High Street, Kettering (Approved). Reports are that more national chains are expected to fail in 2020/21, with the potential of further large units falling vacant.
- 1.11 Kettering Borough Council and the partner LPAs require evidence to guide the consideration of future applications as to whether the loss of further larger units in the High Street is likely to result in long-term decay and prevent future growth. Advice is needed as to whether applications of this nature should be resisted, to preserve the potential of the High Streets as active centres or whether the era of larger high street stores in our towns has passed. This would investigate what the current demand nationally is for unit sizes and more specifically in North Northamptonshire, in relation to the current market and the effect of Rushden Lakes. It should also consider the current local demand and requirement for storage/stock areas for retail requirements and whether a certain level of larger units should be retained in order to satisfy future demand.
- 1.12 A further consideration would be advice on the increase in the mix of uses that could be acceptable within Town Centre's generally and for individual units which would help maintain the core nature of retail streets or evolving leisure/assembly uses which would not detract from future retail occupation in those areas. Both Corby and Kettering have been successful in securing the Government's Town's Fund under the Housing Action Zone programme, one part of which offers grants for residential conversion.

2. Project brief:

- 2.1 Tenders are sought for the preparation of a 2020 NN Retail Capacity Update. The results will provide evidence for the NN Strategic Plan as it is developed, support the development of town centre strategies should the Local Planning Authorities or NN unitary wish to progress these and inform development management decisions. The work will comprise 3 distinct elements, which are set out below:

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1. An update to the 2014 North Northamptonshire (NN) [Retail Capacity Study](#). This will include a household survey⁵ of shopping patterns of residents of the NN catchment area and changes in circumstances since the 2014 update. This needs to be directly comparable to the previous survey work, but also pick up changes e.g. has the NN catchment expanded as a result of Rushden Lakes? In this respect, the consultant should engage with the operators of the main retail developments to see where customers are drawn from. It should also seek to be compatible with the methodology for the Retail Capacity update relating to Rushden Lakes Phase 2 referred to in para 1.9 and set out at [Appendix 1](#). This capacity update will be to 2041. The period to 2031 will be based on growth planned in the JCS and the period 2031-41 will be based on ONS population forecasts. Tenders should also identify costs of refining capacity estimates for 2031 to 2041 when revised demographic projections are available as part of work on the evidence base for the NN Strategic Plan.
2. Health checks of the 12 NN town centres (Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Rushden, Desborough, Rothwell, Burton Latimer, Oundle, Thrapston, Raunds, Irthlingborough, Higham Ferrers), covering the matters set out in [PPG Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 2b-006-20190722](#). These should assess changes compared to the health checks undertaken as part of the [2011 Retail Capacity Update](#) and any more recent information collated by the local planning authorities for individual town centres.
3. Recommendations on town centre strategies taking account of evidence of their current state of health and the opportunities that exist to accommodate a range of suitable development and support their vitality and viability. This should also address the implications of sub-dividing retail units and consider what impact this could have on retail capacity/strategy and the other issues identified in paras 1.9-1.12. This will also need to cover issues set out in PPG Paragraph: 004 Reference ID: 2b-004-20190722.

3. Governance and Project Management

- 3.1 The Retail Capacity update is being commissioned by Kettering Borough Council on behalf of the JPDU and partner councils. A contact list for the officers who will provide support will be supplied at the Inception Meeting. The project manager will be Simon James, Planning Policy Manager at the NNJPDU.

⁵ The last household survey was undertaken in 2010 to inform the [North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity](#), February 2011

Employers Requirements

4. Timescale

- 4.1 The programme will be agreed with the consultants, but an indicative programme is set out below.

Table 1 – Indicative Programme	
Date	Project element
18 th February 2020	Invitation to Tender published - KBC issues consultancy brief on behalf of NNJPDU on contracts finder.
24 th February 2020	Deadline for clarification questions (Clarification Deadline) (JPDU to respond by 28/2).
9 th March 2020	Deadline for submission of ITT responses by potential suppliers (Tender Response Deadline)
w/c 16 th March 2020	Provisional date for interviews
w/c 16 th March 2020	Tender Evaluation
w/c 23 rd March 2020	Award Decision
1 st April 2020	Proposed Contract Start Date
6 th April 2020	Inception meeting
April-May 2020	Household Surveys
June 2020	Interim Report including outputs from stage 2.1 (1) retail capacity/shopping patterns work.
July 2020	Draft Report for review
September 2020	Final Report 30 th September or earlier
30 th September 2020	Contract Expires

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Appendix 1: Methodology for the Retail Capacity update relating to Rushden Lakes Phase 2

Schedule 5 – Retail Capacity Update Methodology

Objective of Retail Capacity Update	Updated assessment of the likely impact of the Revised Leisure Scheme Development and the Main Scheme Development on Wellingborough Town Centre to identify whether at 2021 the Impact Threshold has or is likely to have been exceeded for Wellingborough Town Centre.
Notional Date of Retail Capacity Update	2 years trading from the first occupation of the Revised Leisure Scheme Development
Study Area	North Northamptonshire Catchment Area (NNCA) Study Area Zones as identified in the North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update October 2014.
Updated Household Telephone Survey of Shopping Habits at 2021	To inform the Retail Capacity Update a Household Telephone Survey will be undertaken 2 years after the first occupation of the Revised Leisure Scheme).
Updated Household Telephone Survey Methodology	The Updated Household Telephone Survey will be carried out adopting the same Methodology and Questions as set out in the Original Household Telephone Survey April 2010 (Appendix 4, North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update February 2011
Population data at 2021	Source: Experian ONS based Population data for each of the Study Area Zones
Expenditure data at 2021	Source: Experian expenditure data for each of the Study Area Zones
Expenditure Price Base	As per Experian expenditure data
Study Area Generated Expenditure at 2021	Population x Expenditure for each of the Study Area Zones
Special Forms of Trading (SFT) at 2021	SFT to be deducted from Total Available Expenditure based on latest Experian UK data adjusted for SFT sales from stores (i.e. latest equivalent to Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 13, Appendix 3, Figure 5)
Inflow	Assume no inflow of expenditure from outside NNCA
Available Expenditure at 2021	Study Area Generated Expenditure minus SFT
Identified Commitments	As identified at Table 8 and Table 10, Appendix 2, Retail & Leisure Assessment (Burnett Planning, August 2016) and referenced at paragraph 3.24 in Retail Policy Appraisal (WYG, November 2016)
Test the "No Development" Scenario	Apply the Available Expenditure at 2021 data to the Original Household Telephone Survey April 2010 results to establish the likely Study Area derived comparison goods turnover of Wellingborough Town Centre

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i.e. Without Rushden Lakes & Commitments at 2021	(and other centres/locations within the Study Area) at 2021 assuming no Rushden Lakes and Identified Commitments
Test the "Post Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" Scenario at 2021	Apply the Available Expenditure at 2021 data to the Updated Household Telephone Survey results to establish the likely Study Area derived comparison goods turnover of Wellingborough Town Centre (and other centres/locations within the Study Area) at 2021 with Rushden Lakes and Identified Commitments
Compare Wellingborough Town Centre (WTC) Comparison Goods Turnover at 2021 in the "No Development" & "Post Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" Scenarios	Identify if WTC's Comparison Goods Turnover at 2021 in the "Post Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" Scenario is less than 85% of WTC's Comparison Goods Turnover in the "No Development" Scenario
Outcome 1	If WTC's Comparison Goods Turnover at 2021 in the "Post Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" Scenario is more than or equal to 85% of WTC's Comparison Goods Turnover in the "No Development" Scenario - No further analysis is required as -15% Impact Threshold will not have been exceeded
Outcome 2	If WTC's Comparison Goods Turnover at 2021 in the "Post Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" Scenario is less than 85% of the "No Development" Scenario turnover – proceed to assess differences in zonal market shares/spending patterns to make informed judgments about the level of change in WTC's comparison goods turnover that can be attributed to "Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments". If more than -15% reduction in WTC's market share/comparison goods turnover is identified to be attributable to "Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" the Impact Threshold will have been exceeded. The intention of this stage of analysis is to ensure that the Impact Threshold relates only to "Rushden Lakes & Identified Commitments" and not to any other new developments that may be permitted and come forward post grant of the Revised Leisure Scheme Permission following referral to the Secretary of State