

## **West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Spatial Options Consultation – Draft for Cabinet 14.09.21**

### **Introduction**

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is preparing a new strategic plan for the area. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) will set out a spatial vision for the area extended up to 2050. To address the key strategic priorities for West Northamptonshire the scope of the plan includes:

- **The spatial strategy** for the distribution of development.
- **Climate change resilience** – as a cross cutting theme that runs through the plan’s strategy and policies.
- **Place-shaping / sustainable development** – Key principles to ensure quality development and sustainable places.
- **Natural and built environment** - the protection and enhancement of natural/built and historic assets and achieving net biodiversity gain.
- **The housing requirement** – the number and type of new homes to be provided across West Northamptonshire and the proportion of the overall housing requirement that should be affordable.
- **Economic growth** – Targets for the provision of jobs and employment land in West Northamptonshire and guidance on the strategic locations for new employment land to meet the jobs requirement. New policy guidance for town centres and retail development.
- **Strategic infrastructure** – The key primary infrastructure projects that are required to deliver the strategy such as strategic transport schemes, utility networks and community facilities.
- **Health** - ensuring people can lead active lifestyles, including access to good quality open space, natural and semi natural greenspace and enjoy cleaner air.
- **Strategic development locations and opportunities** – Key strategic sites that are crucial to the delivery of the spatial strategy will be identified in the Plan.

The West Northamptonshire area is already covered by a joint plan. The West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) was adopted in December 2014 and covers the period up to 2029. The WNSP will review and, where appropriate, replace the strategic policies in the JCS covering an extended plan-period up to 2050.

Work on the WNSP was started by the predecessor councils and an issues consultation was held between August and October 2019 to establish the scope of the plan and the key issues it should address.

This spatial options consultation is the second stage in preparing the WNSP and the scope of the consultation includes:

- The **spatial vision** setting out the plan’s ambition for our economy, our communities and our environment.
- A set of **spatial objectives** to help achieve the vision.
- The **housing and economic needs** that we need to plan for
- A menu of potential **spatial options** that could be considered as part of the development strategy for the area.

We want to engage with stakeholders and communities across the area and work together to ensure that we prepare the best plan possible for a sustainable future. We are still at an early stage in plan preparation and the options being presented are potential rather than preferred, so this is a genuine opportunity to influence the outcome of the plan. Please get involved and sign up to be kept informed at all key stages of the process.

## **A Spatial Vision for West Northamptonshire**

The spatial vision is central to the strategic plan and it sets out the ambition for our economy, our communities and our environment. Place based visions are included for Northampton, Daventry, Brackley and our rural areas. The vision has been informed by feedback received during the issues consultation including consultation responses and workshops with stakeholders. It also reflects the context provided by West Northamptonshire Council's Corporate Plan and the collective vision for making West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.

### **Spatial Vision**

'In 2050 West Northamptonshire will have played a leading role in the success of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. We have a thriving **economy** with increased productivity. There has been significant growth in innovation and high value sectors, but we also have a balanced economy that provides jobs for all our residents.

Our **people** live in vibrant and sustainable communities with ready access to the services and facilities they need. Quality housing is available to meet the needs of everyone. Our residents have improved educational attainment and have the skill levels necessary to adapt to a changing economy. Health outcomes have improved for all and the take-up of active and healthy lifestyles is widespread. Everyone benefits from living in one of the best-connected places in the UK.

Our **environment** has been enhanced by sustainable growth with a net gain in biodiversity, enhanced natural capital, and green space that is accessible to all. Our valued landscapes have been preserved and enhanced and high quality design has delivered neighbourhoods that people are proud to live in. Above all West Northamptonshire has led the way in the transition to a low carbon economy, has achieved net zero targets, is resilient and continues to adapt to climate change.'

**Northampton** will be the principal urban area at the heart of West Northamptonshire and a key centre in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. The town will continue to be the focus for sustainable housing and economic growth which is supported by infrastructure to ensure a high-quality environment for residents and visitors. As a leading centre for culture, commerce, leisure, education and health it will be a place where history, innovation and regeneration go hand in hand.

Whilst retaining its roots as an historic market town, **Daventry** will be a sub-regional centre of growing importance, with a successful town centre and strong commercial core. Local economic strengths in engineering and sustainable construction will have developed and innovative start-up businesses will thrive. Daventry will be well-connected, community focussed and benefit from an accessible green network integrated into the fabric of the town.

The rural service centres of **Brackley** and **Towcester** continue to prosper providing services, facilities and employment opportunities for the wider rural area. Whilst continuing to accommodate sustainable growth the distinctive character of the towns and their heritage and environmental assets will be protected and enhanced.

Our **rural areas** will provide a network of vibrant, well-connected villages supporting a wider choice of homes, employment opportunities, and services at a scale consistent with local needs. The countryside will support a thriving rural economy, with enhanced natural capital and distinctive local landscapes.'

### **Consultation Question:**

- 1. Is this vision appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire up to 2050? Are there any changes you would like to see?**

### **Spatial Objectives**

To ensure our vision is realised, the following 16 spatial objectives have been identified. These have been shaped by the responses received to the issues consultation but also reflect the priorities set out in the council's corporate plan. The objectives have been grouped under the priority which they most closely relate to. WNC's corporate plan has 6 priorities, 5 of which are directly relevant to the strategic plan.

### **Corporate Plan Priority - Green and Clean – Environment and Wellbeing**

#### **Strategic Plan Objectives:**

#### **Objective 1 - Climate Change**

To support the transition of West Northamptonshire to a net zero carbon area, and deliver effective adaptation to and mitigation for the impacts of climate change by:

- Securing radical reductions in carbon emissions
- Promoting sustainable design and construction in all new development
- Ensuring strategic development allocations are located and designed so as to be resilient to future climate change and the risk of flooding
- Encouraging renewable and low-carbon energy production in appropriate locations
- Ensuring new development promotes the use of sustainable travel modes

#### **Objective 2 - Green Infrastructure and Natural Capital**

To conserve natural habitats and species, provide net gains in biodiversity and enhance West Northamptonshire's network of natural capital and green infrastructure by improving existing areas and designing green and blue infrastructure into development.

#### **Objective 3 - Landscape**

To protect and enhance West Northamptonshire's distinctive landscape character especially those valued landscapes which have been designated as special landscape areas.

### **Objective 4 – Heritage**

To conserve and where possible enhance West Northamptonshire’s heritage assets and their settings, recognising their contribution to local distinctiveness, a sense of place, quality of life and economic success.

### **Corporate Plan Priority: Improved Life Chances – Health, Social Care and Families**

#### **Strategic Plan Objectives:**

### **Objective 5 – Education and Skills**

To raise educational achievement and the skills base of our communities through supporting the development of our learning infrastructure and strengthening links between local businesses and local schools, Moulton and Northampton Colleges, the University of Northampton and Silverstone University Technical College

### **Objective 6 – Health and Well-being**

To promote health and wellbeing through high quality development which supports independence, encourages active and healthy lifestyles, supports social interaction and creates inclusive and safe communities.

### **Objective 7 - Infrastructure and Development**

To protect and enhance local services and to ensure social, physical, green and technological infrastructure is adequately provided to meet the needs of people and business in a timely and sustainable manner in response to regeneration and new development in West Northamptonshire.

### **Corporate Plan Priority - Connected Communities – Transport and Connectivity**

#### **Strategic Plan Objectives:**

### **Objective 8 - Connections**

To reduce the need to travel, shorten travel distances and prioritise sustainable travel as an attractive option across West Northamptonshire by maximising and promoting the use of alternative travel modes. To facilitate the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles, combat congestion, reduce carbon emissions and address social exclusion for those who do not have access to a private car. To support the improvement of strategic public transport connections across the area.

### **Objective 9 - Protecting and Building Urban Communities**

To ensure new development in urban areas actively supports and links new and existing communities physically and socially, to achieve social cohesion, maintain or improve the existing residential amenity and address the areas of deprivation.

## **Corporate Plan Priority - Thriving Villages and Towns – Place Shaping and Homes**

### **Strategic Plan Objectives:**

#### **Objective 10: Supporting Town Centres**

To support the regeneration of our Town Centres responding positively to their distinctive character, heritage and environmental assets to create attractive centres that are resilient and provide a range of functions such as leisure, culture, the visitor economy and high quality urban living.

#### **Objective 11: Housing**

To provide an appropriate range of housing in sustainable locations, of high quality environmental and design standards, including those relating to designing out crime, to meet the needs of all sections of our changing population, including affordable, housing for the younger generation and housing for older persons, vulnerable people and those with specialist housing needs.

#### **Objective 12: Supporting Rural Communities**

To protect and support rural communities to ensure they thrive and remain vital.

## **Corporate Plan Priority: Economic Development – Growth and Prosperity.**

### **Strategic Plan Objectives:**

#### **Objective 13: Economic Advantage**

To strengthen and diversify West Northamptonshire's economy by taking advantage of our internationally well-placed location, strategic transport network and proximity to London and Birmingham. To maximise the opportunities for sustainable economic growth and investment offered by our strategic location in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.

#### **Objective 14: Specialist Business Development**

To support and develop opportunities for specialist employment clusters and business development focused on a low carbon economy and new technologies.

#### **Objective 15: Rural Diversification and Employment**

To support rural diversification and rural employment opportunities, in particular those related to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, and other forms of economic development which are appropriate in scale and nature to their location.

#### **Objective 16: The Visitor Economy**

To facilitate tourism and leisure related growth creating a distinct offer within West Northamptonshire building on our rich heritage.

### Consultation Question:

2. **Are the above spatial objectives appropriate for guiding development and growth in West Northamptonshire? What changes or other objectives would you like to see?**

### Housing and Economic Development Requirements

A Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) has been undertaken which sets out the number of dwellings and the amount of employment land to be provided up to 2050. This document is available here;

[West Northamptonshire Housing and Economic Needs Assessment](#)

The identified needs are set out in the tables below;

#### Employment

<b>Employment Land Demand-Supply Balance 2020-2050 (Ha) Supply/demand balance</b>	<b>Daventry</b>	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>South Northants</b>	<b>West Northants</b>
Office Total Supply	N/A	10.60	81.5	92.10
Office Total Recommended Needs	Included in Industrial	11.40	10.6	22.00
<b>Office (Need) / Surplus</b>	<b>Included in Industrial</b>	<b>-0.80</b>	<b>70.90</b>	<b>70.10</b>
Industrial Total Supply	55.69	36.40	63.70	155.79
Industrial Total Recommended Needs	82.30	59.60	61.50	203.40
<b>Industrial (Need) / Surplus</b>	<b>-26.62</b>	<b>-23.20</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>-47.62</b>

Table 1 Employment Needs and Supply, GL Hearn Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2021

For West Northamptonshire as a whole the HENA identifies an unmet need for industrial land of around 48 hectares. However, the HENA recognises that there is uncertainty about strategic warehousing demand which may require additional provision above the 48ha shortfall identified in the study. Having regard to the length of the plan period i.e. up to 2050, the HENA recommends that the requirements for strategic warehousing are revisited through a separate study or plan update which incorporates wider sub-regional issues of logistics demand and supply. Further explanation of employment needs is provided in the Employment background paper. [LINK](#)

## Housing

	<b>Daventry</b>	<b>Northampton</b>	<b>South Northants</b>	<b>West Northants</b>
<b>Total Need (per annum)</b>	348	1288	503	2,139
<b>Plan period Need (2020-2050)</b>	10,440	38,640	15,090	64,170

Table 2 Housing Needs, GL Hearn Housing and Economic Needs Assessment 2021

Using the standard method prescribed by national policy the HENA identifies an annual housing need of 2,139 dwellings for West Northamptonshire. Over a plan period of 2020-2050 this would equate to 64,170 dwellings. The HENA also looks at the relationship between housing need and economic growth to establish whether housing growth above the standard method would be justified to support economic growth potential. In this respect the HENA concludes that the standard method housing requirement is the preferred housing need figure as there is not a clear economic need to increase above this.

Alongside the housing need identified in the HENA, it is also important to consider existing commitments. This is factored into the employment needs above. For housing, as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, approximately 33,860 dwellings are expected to come forward by 2050. This figure comprises sites allocated in the adopted JCS, part 2 local plans for Daventry and South Northamptonshire, and the emerging part 2 local plan for Northampton, and other commitments consisting of planning permissions and windfalls. This is explained in more detail in the housing background paper [LINK](#) however the WNSP needs to make provision for approximately 30,310 dwellings.

Much of the work undertaken on the HENA was completed in 2020. Revised affordability ratios were published earlier in 2021, which when applied to the standard method for calculating local housing need, result in a marginal increase in the annual need figure of 33 dwellings per annum from 2139 to 2172. This is not considered to materially affect the key findings of the HENA.

### Consultation Question:

**3. Do you agree that the findings of the HENA housing and/or economic needs of the area?**

**Yes/No**

**If not, please provide evidence as to what you think the housing and economic needs of the area should be.**

### Spatial Strategy Options

At this stage in the plan preparation process, we are not identifying individual spatial strategy options that can necessarily accommodate all of West Northamptonshire's growth over the next 30 years. Nor is any one of the options identified likely, in isolation, to form the eventual long-term spatial strategy for the area. The preferred spatial strategy is likely to comprise elements of one or more of the options presented in this consultation which,

when combined together, will most effectively deliver the required housing and jobs growth set against the priorities of the plan and its spatial vision for West Northamptonshire to 2050.

All of the options in this consultation paper are being presented as potential options rather than preferred options at this stage. In all cases further technical work is required before the preferred spatial options are agreed. The feedback received to the spatial options consultation will play a key role in the eventual choice of the preferred spatial strategy.

Each of the spatial options has been subject to a sustainability appraisal to consider their potential environmental, social and economic effects. The findings of the appraisal can be viewed here [LINK](#).

### **Spatial Option 1 - Growth at Northampton as the Principal Urban Area**

This option would continue to focus further growth at Northampton in a continuation of the existing development strategy for West Northamptonshire and in recognition of Northampton's current categorisation as the principal urban area.

Northampton, as the former county town, is by far the largest town in West Northamptonshire with a population of 224,610 (2019) which equates to approximately 55% of the total population in the new council area. The town is the area's main centre for employment, housing, retail, leisure and services.

The location of the town, in the centre of England, with excellent connectivity to the strategic road network and rail connections via the Northampton loop, have aided its growth as an important economic centre including high performance engineering and high-end shoe manufacture. Other economic sectors that are well represented in the town include business administrative and support services, financial and insurance activities, storage and distribution and manufacturing. The importance of the town as a focus for economic growth can be expected to increase in the context of the government's ambitions for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

Northampton has experienced significant housing growth, particularly since its designation as a New Town in 1965. This planned expansion has increased the population to over 200,000 and the town continues to grow through the strategic urban extensions and other allocated sites which are identified in existing and emerging local plans.

The existing JCS directs approximately two-thirds of the total planned growth to the principal urban area of Northampton (including the Northampton Related Development Area). Whilst it is recognised that some of the planned growth has not come forward as quickly as anticipated, looking over a plan period up to 2050 it is reasonable to consider the potential for further growth at Northampton in recognition of its status as the principal urban area and a sustainable location for growth.

The focus of this option would be further strategic scale housing growth at Northampton principally in the form of new sustainable urban extensions. Such development has previously been justified as it would continue to focus growth in Northampton as the location with the highest concentration of jobs, housing need, services and sustainable

transport connectivity, to ensure that development helps to meet the needs of existing and future communities in a sustainable manner.

The emphasis would be on growing existing communities and those locations previously determined to be the most sustainable locations for strategic scale growth. Clearly, assessment would be required to identify the scale of what might be appropriate in each location.

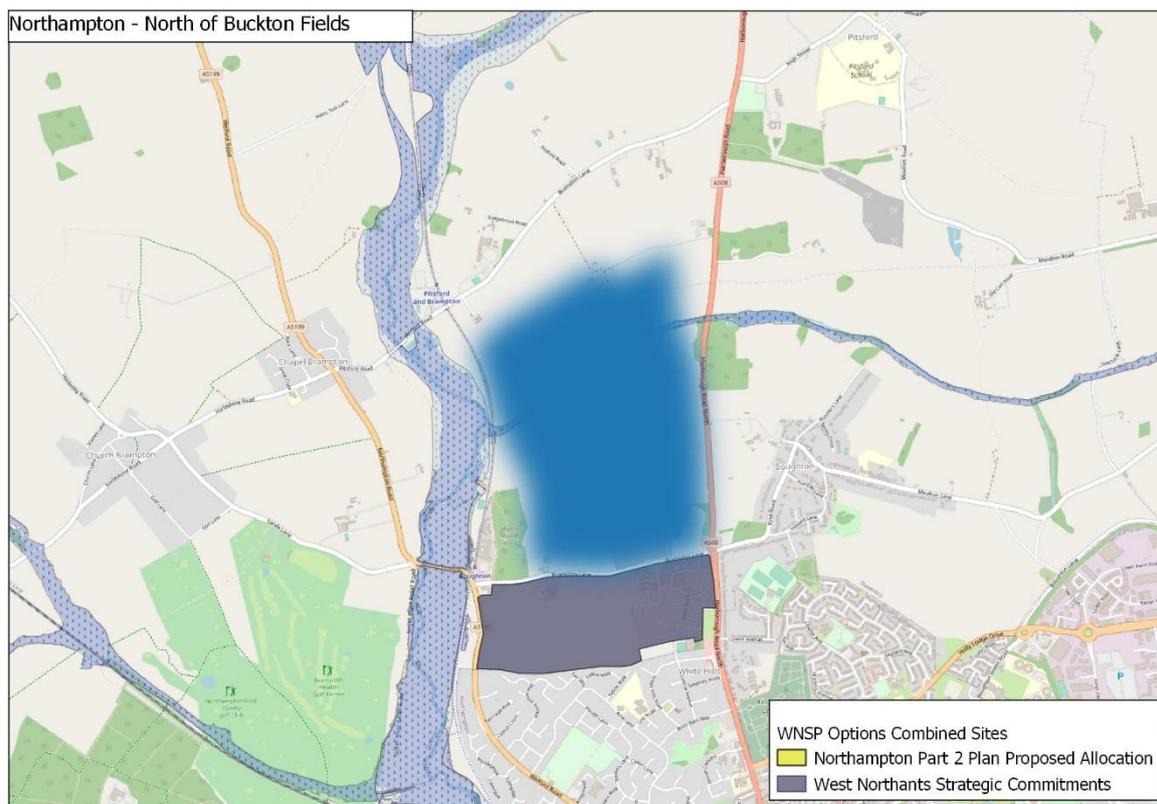
In terms of meeting employment needs a number of sites are being promoted along the M1 corridor in close proximity to Northampton. Based on an initial assessment of these sites through the SLAA, three potential options are included in this consultation paper at M1 junctions 15, 15A and 16.

In seeking to meet development needs, opportunities to reuse suitable previously developed land and vacant and under used buildings within the existing urban area Northampton would continue to be maximised without undermining the quality of the environment. High quality urban design and sensitive regeneration could have the potential to support higher densities in appropriate locations. The potential for town centre living as part of a vibrant mix of uses in the central area of Northampton and other local centres will be further explored. Based on past trends it is currently expected that windfall development in the urban area will contribute around 300 dwellings per annum up to 2029. If this rate were to continue for the remainder of the plan-period then around 6,000 additional dwellings would be delivered in the existing urban area.

It is recognised that there are a number of constraints to further growth at Northampton which will require further consideration and investigation as part of the development of the preferred spatial strategy, these include:

- The capacity of existing infrastructure networks, particularly the local and strategic highway networks;
- The impact of growth of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area.
- The impact of growth on the landscape fringe and the character of adjoining villages, particularly in those areas identified as being of high to medium landscape sensitivity.

## Spatial Option 1a - Northampton North – North of Buckton Fields - Residential



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An area situated to the north of the Buckton Fields sustainable urban extension (SUE) and east of the A508 Harborough Road with the potential to deliver approximately 2000 dwellings. Part of the site may also be suitable for local employment uses. The principal access for the area would be from the A508.

### Strengths

The area is located close to the principal urban area of Northampton and immediately to the north of the Buckton Fields SUE, with the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and would be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Moulton Park and planned employment provision at Kings Heath.

The area could benefit from a cycle link to Northampton and is close to established and regular bus services particularly along the A508. Options to improve public transport services could be explored.

Development in this area could support the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital, a new road linking the A5199 and the North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road would also provide improved access to the Moulton Park employment area.

## **Weaknesses**

Heritage constraints could affect the capacity of this option and would require careful assessment and mitigation. These include a scheduled monument known as Boughton Bowl Barrow, and the Boughton conservation area to the east of the A508 which includes the registered park and garden of Boughton Hall.

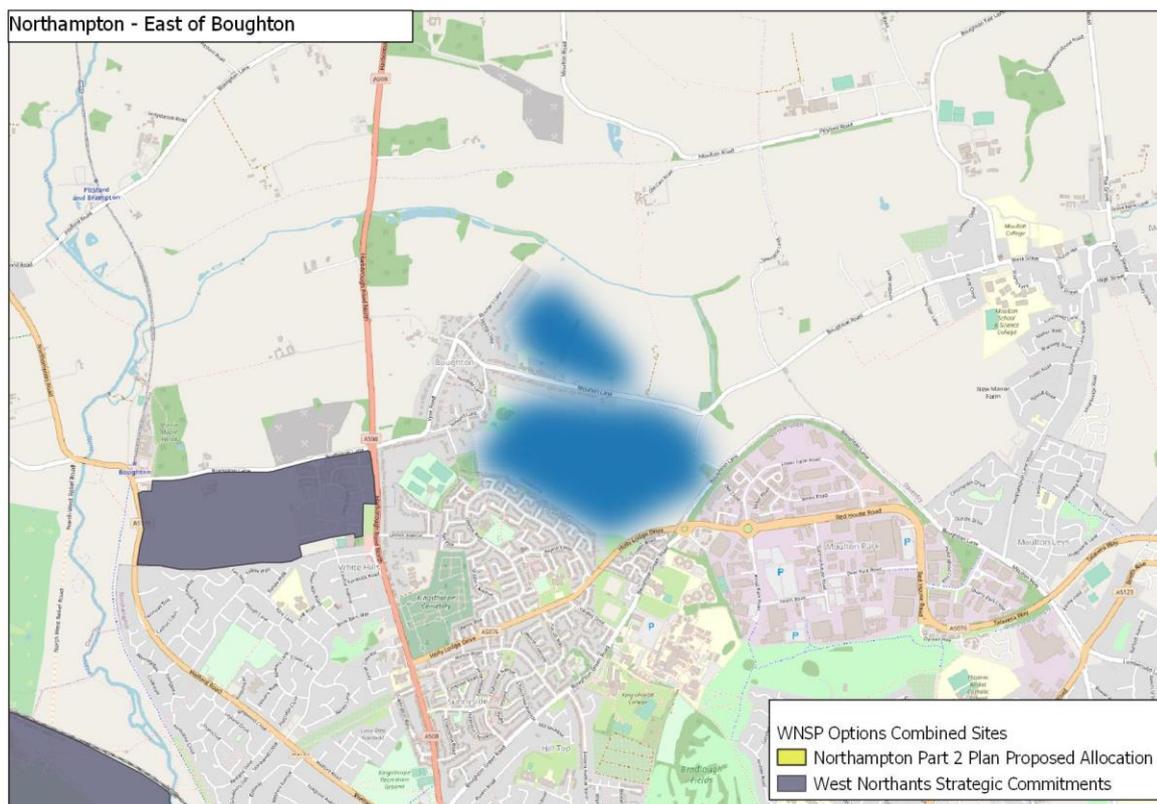
The potential impact of development on the character and setting of the villages of Boughton and Chapel Brampton would require careful consideration to avoid physical and visual coalescence. The area has also been identified as having a medium to high landscape sensitivity and as such careful consideration would be needed of the design and location of development.

As with all options at Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

The area includes the Boughton Quarry site which now operates as a hardcore recycling facility. The suitability of this part of the option for redevelopment would require further investigation.

The proposed route of the northern orbital road could also affect the capacity of this option with the expectation that development would be contained within the line of the preferred route.

## Spatial Option 1b - Northampton North – East of Boughton - Residential



An area situated to the east of Boughton and north of the A5076 with the potential to deliver approximately 1500 dwellings. The principal access for the area would be from the A5076 Holly Lodge Drive with secondary access from Moulton Lane.

### Strengths

The area is located adjacent to the principal urban area of Northampton with the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and would be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Moulton Park.

There is potential to improve public transport and cycle connectivity into Northampton,

Development in this area could support the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital, a new road linking the A5199 and the North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road would also provide improved access to the Moulton Park employment area.

### Weaknesses

Heritage constraints could affect the capacity of this option and would require careful consideration and mitigation. Boughton conservation area lies to the west of the option which includes the registered park and garden of Boughton Hall. The scheduled monument of the Church of St John the Baptist also falls within the area.

Two areas of local green space lie to the west of the option and Boughton Green local green space falls within the option. These spaces would need to be retained and protected.

The potential impact of development on the character and setting of the village of Boughton would require careful consideration and would need to demonstrate how the separate identity of the village could be safeguarded. Part of this option is designated as a green wedge in the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan Part 2 which requires proposals to maintain the physical and visual separation between settlements.

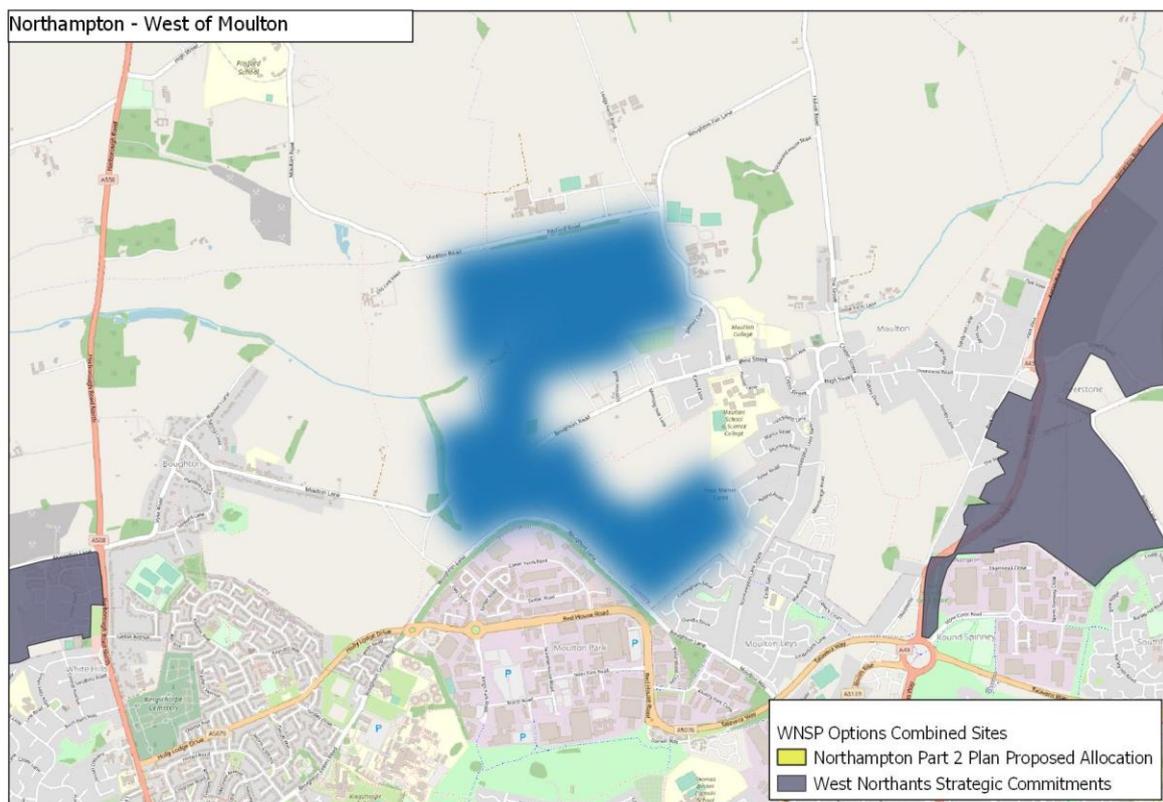
The area has also been identified as having a medium to high landscape sensitivity and as such careful consideration would be needed of the design and location of development.

As with all options at Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

A small area of the option falls within flood zone 3 which would constrain the extent of the area to be developed and appropriate flood risk management measures would be required

The proposed route of the northern orbital road, specifically the proposed spur to Moulton Park could affect the capacity of this option.

### **Spatial Option 1c- Northampton North – West of Moulton - Residential**



An area situated to the west of Moulton, north of Boughton Lane and south of Pitsford Road with the potential to deliver approximately 3000 dwellings. There are a number of potential access points for this option including Boughton Lane, Boughton Road and Pitsford Road.

### **Strengths**

The area is located adjacent to the principal urban area of Northampton with the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and would be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Moulton Park.

There is potential to improve public transport and cycle connectivity into Northampton,

Development in this area could support the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital, a new road linking the A5199 and the North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road would also provide improved access to the Moulton Park employment area.

This option has the potential to support improvements to the educational facilities offered by Moulton College and the delivery of new sports and leisure facilities for the local community.

### **Weaknesses**

Heritage constraints would require careful consideration, specifically Holly Lodge, which is a listed building within the option together with nearby assets such as Moulton conservation area, and the remains of the Church of St John the Baptist which is a scheduled monument.

Two areas of local green space lie adjacent to the option. These spaces would need to be retained and protected.

The potential impact of development on the character and setting of the village of Moulton would require careful consideration and would need to demonstrate how the separate identity of the village could be safeguarded. Part of this option is designated as a green wedge in the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan Part2 which requires proposals to maintain the physical and visual separation between settlements.

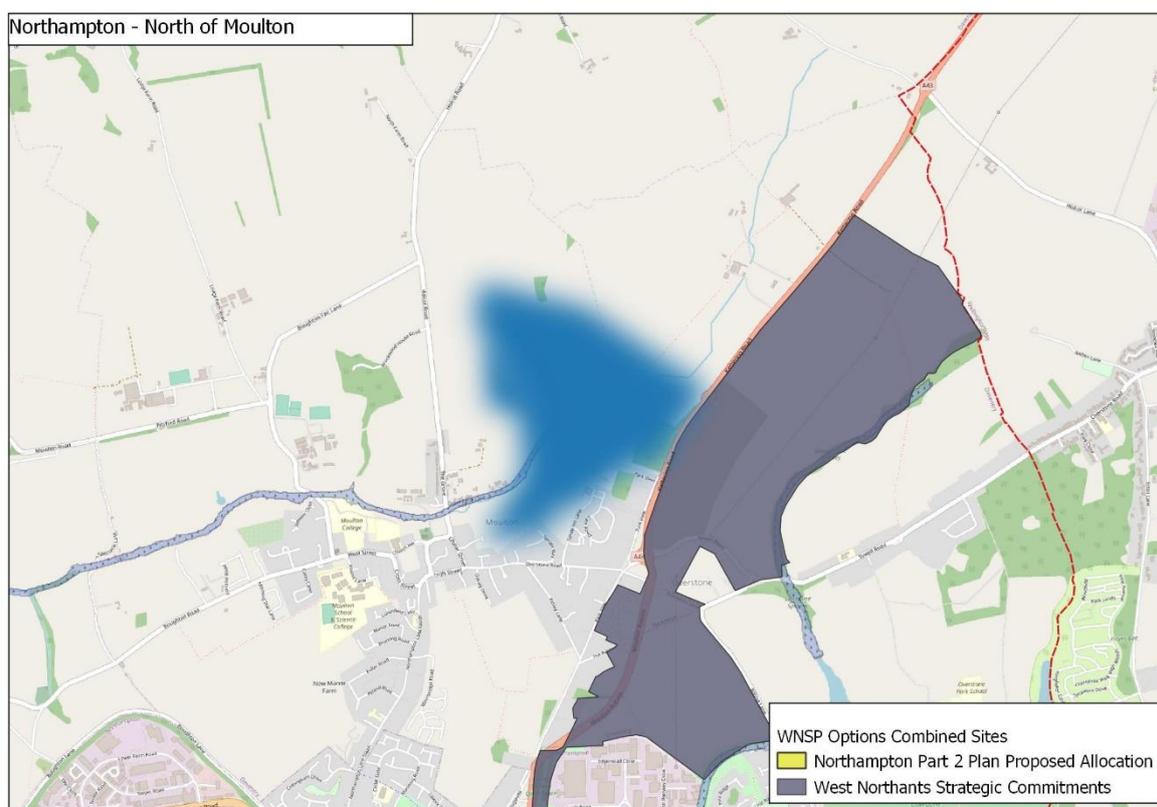
The area has also been identified as having a medium to high landscape sensitivity and as such careful consideration would be needed of the design and location of development.

As with all options in Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

A relatively small area of the option falls within flood zones 2 and 3 which would constrain the extent of the area to be developed and appropriate flood risk management measures would be required.

Current access opportunities are from relatively minor roads on the local road network. The provision of the Northampton Northern Orbital and the proposed spur to Moulton Park would improve the accessibility of the option. Conversely, the proposed route of the proposed spur to Moulton Park could affect the capacity of this option.

## Spatial Option 1d - Northampton North – North of Moulton - Residential



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An area situated to the north east of Moulton and west of the A43 with the potential to deliver approximately 1600 dwellings. The principal access to the option would be from the A43 Kettering Road.

### Strengths

The area is located adjacent to the north-west of Moulton village and as such it is not immediately adjacent to the principal urban area of Northampton. The A43 provides a strategic road connection to Northampton and the option could be seen as a potential extension of the Northampton North SUE which is located to the east of the A43. The option has the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and those planned in the Northampton North SUE. Development of this option could be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Moulton Park and Round Spinney.

There is potential to improve public transport and cycle connectivity into Northampton.

Development in this area could support the delivery of the Northampton Northern Orbital, a new road linking the A5199 and the North West Relief Road between Kingsthorpe and Chapel Brampton with the A43 north of Moulton. The new road would also provide improved access to the Moulton Park employment area.

## Weaknesses

As the site is located to the north of Moulton village it is more remote from the existing Northampton urban area than other options. The potential impact of development on the character and setting of the village of Moulton would require careful consideration and would need to demonstrate how the separate identity of the village could be safeguarded.

The area has also been identified as having a medium to high landscape sensitivity and as such careful consideration would be needed of the design and location of development.

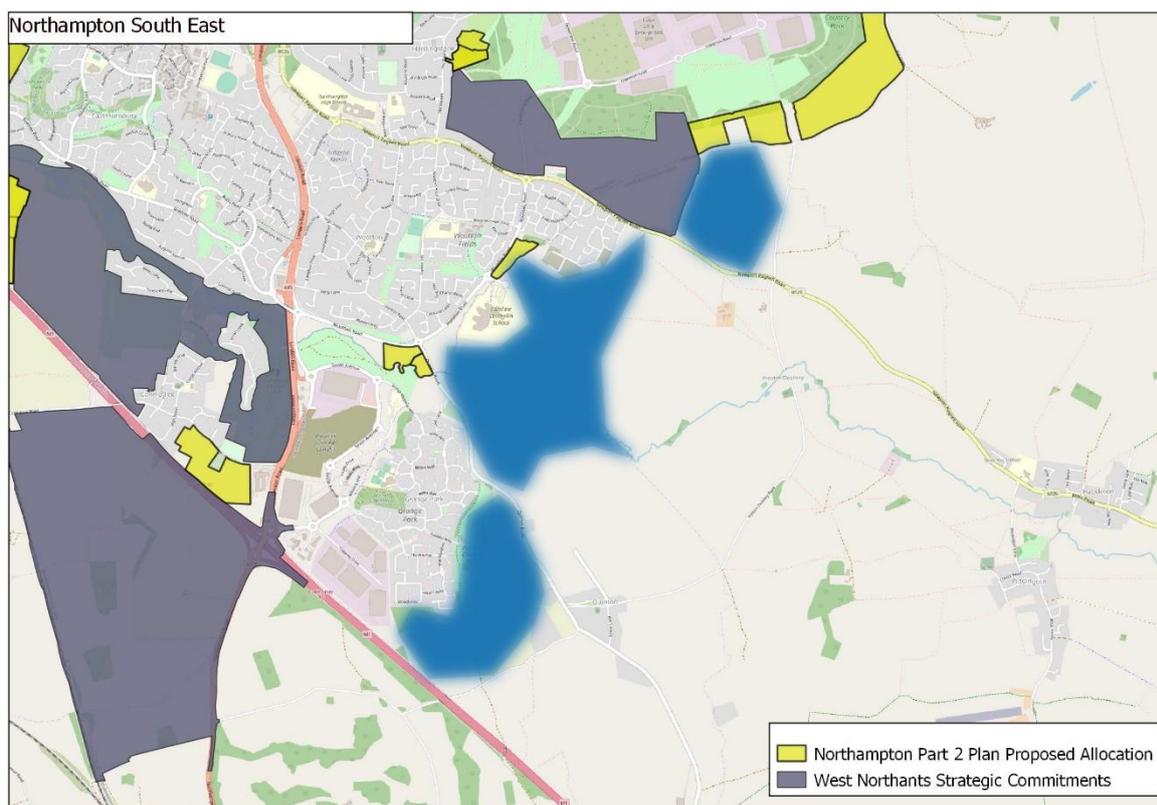
There are no on-site heritage designations, but Moulton conservation area is close to the south-western edge of this option and as such the impact of development on the setting of the conservation area would need to be assessed.

As with all options at Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

A relatively small area of the option (approximately 10%) falls within flood zones 2 and 3 which would constrain the extent of the area to be developed and appropriate flood risk management measures would be required.

The proposed route of the northern orbital road could affect the capacity of this option with the expectation that development would be contained within the line of the preferred route.

## Spatial Option 1e - Northampton South-East - Residential



An area situated to the south-east of the existing Northampton urban area adjoining Grange Park and Wootton with the potential to deliver approximately 3000 dwellings. Key access points for this option would be from the Newport Pagnell Road for the northern and central area, and from the Wootton Road for the central and southern area. The southern area of the option could also gain access from the Quinton Road.

### **Strengths**

The area is located adjacent to principal urban area of Northampton with the potential to connect new communities to the established services and facilities in Northampton and would be of a scale to provide local facilities on site to meet the needs of future residents. The area is well located in relation to employment opportunities at Brackmills, Grange Park and the consented Northampton Gateway strategic rail freight interchange.

The option presents opportunities to deliver net biodiversity gain and through an appropriate landscape framework present a more sensitive edge to the countryside in this part of Northampton. Development would need to retain and enhance existing open spaces such as Foxfield country park.

There are no overriding physical or environmental constraints that would prevent development. The option is being actively promoted by landowners and developers and would be deliverable in the plan period.

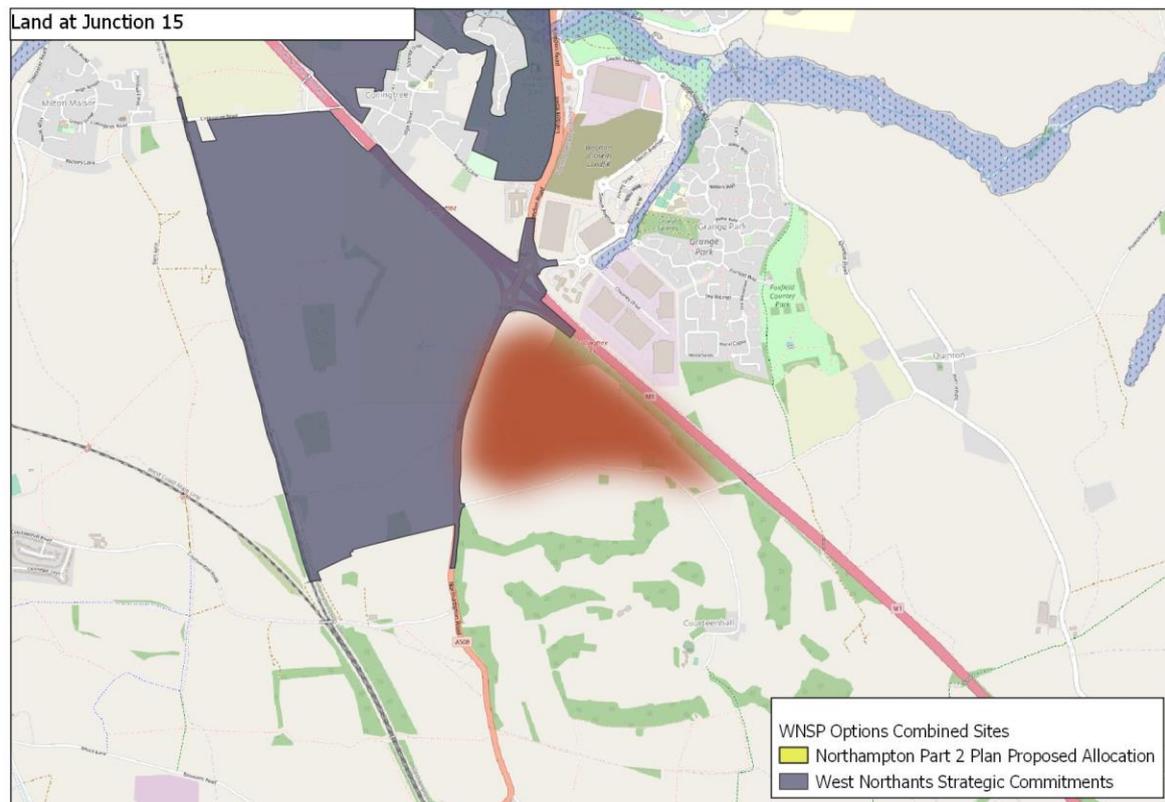
### **Weaknesses**

Parts of the option fall within flood zones 2 and 3 which would constrain the extent of the area to be developed and appropriate flood risk management measures would be required. The design of development would also need to acknowledge the presence of 2 high pressure gas pipelines which cross the area.

Further consideration will be required on the impacts of development on the capacity of both the local road network and the strategic road network especially the A45.

As with all options at Northampton further consideration will be required regarding the potential impacts of development on the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SPA, including potential mitigation of the loss of functionally linked land.

## Spatial Option 1f - South of M1 Junction 15 - Employment



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An area situated to the south of Junction 15 of the M1 and Grange Park on the southern edge of the Northampton urban area. The area could come forward for employment use across an area of approximately 68ha. Access could be gained from the A508 to the west of the site taking advantage of the highway improvements related to the adjoining Northampton Gateway development.

### Strengths

The area benefits from access to the M1 at Junction 15 and is located in a strategically significant position for logistics with connectivity to the UK's motorway network.

The area is in close proximity to the existing employment site at Grange Park to the north of the M1 and adjoins the consented Northampton Gateway strategic rail freight interchange immediately to the west. Development of this area could be seen as a logical expansion of existing and proposed employment development in this area.

The option is close to the Northampton Related Development Area including planned residential development at the Northampton South and Northampton South of Brackmills SUEs and therefore has ready access to a potential labour market.

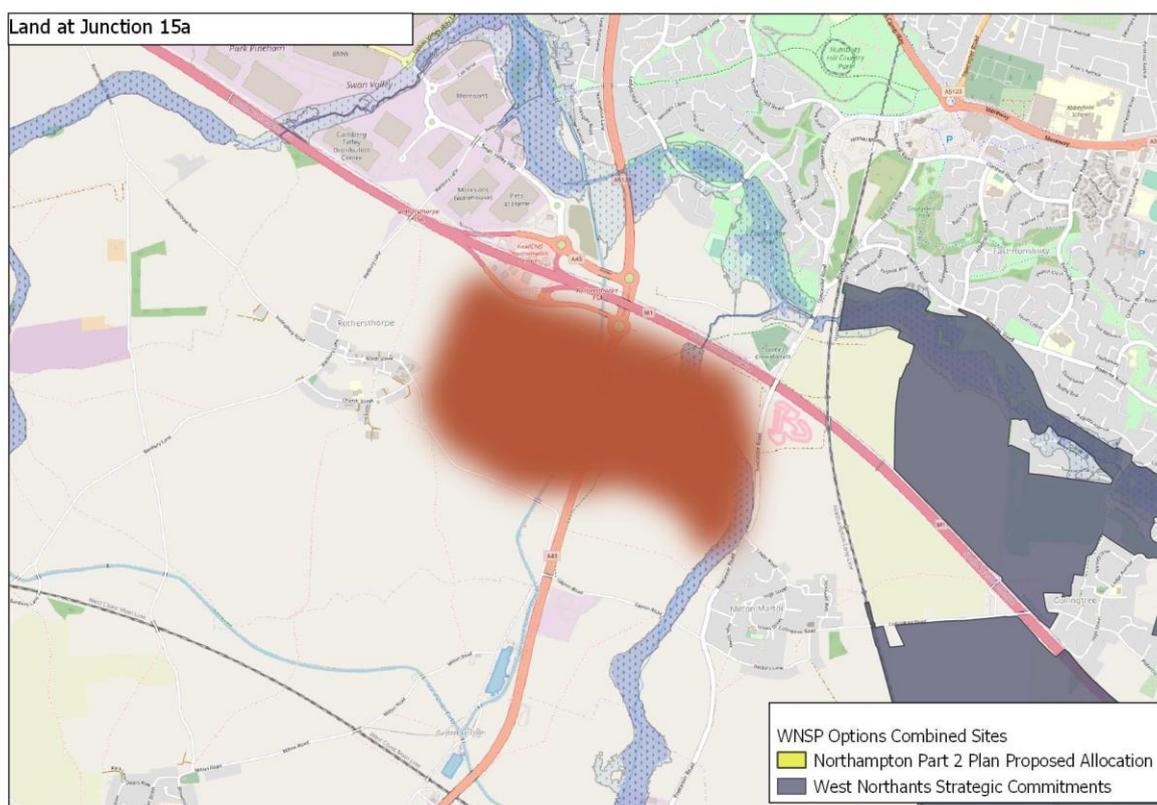
## Weaknesses

The option is close to the grade II listed Courteenhall historic park & garden which lies to the south, and the impact of large scale employment development on the setting of this important heritage asset would require careful consideration.

A portion of the area (approx. 10%) falls within flood zone 2 and parts of the site may also be affected by surface water flooding. This could reduce the capacity of the site and would need to be thoroughly assessed and effective flood risk management measures will be required.

Public rights of way that cross the area will need to be retained (diverted) and the impact on them mitigated.

## Spatial Option 1g - South M1 Junction 15a – Employment



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An area situated to the south of junction 15a of the M1 and to the east and west of the A43. The option has the potential for employment development across an area of approximately 65 hectares. Access could be gained via the existing roundabout on the A43 to the south of the junction with the M1 and would necessitate improvements to the existing junction arrangements.

## Strengths

The area benefits from access to the M1 at Junction 15a and is located in a strategically significant position for logistics with connectivity to the UK's motorway network.

The area is in close proximity to the existing employment site at Swan Valley to the north of the M1.

The option is close to the Northampton Related Development Area including planned residential development at the Northampton South SUE and therefore has ready access to a potential labour market.

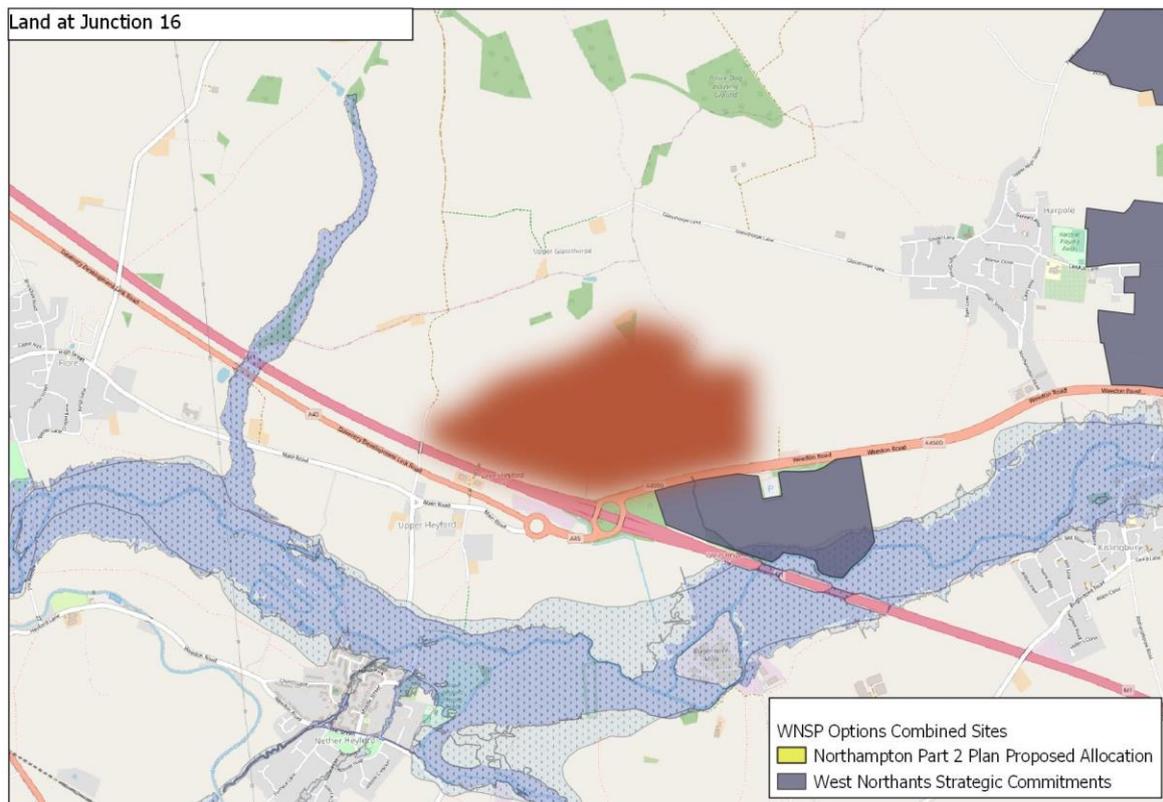
### **Weaknesses**

The western portion of this option is in close proximity to the village of Rothersthorpe, whilst the eastern portion is near to Milton Malsor. Both villages have designated conservation areas and the design and layout of any development would need to be carefully considered to reduce the potential of physical and visual coalescence with the villages and to avoid any adverse impacts on the conservation areas. The Grand Union canal runs through the western part of this option. The canal is also designated as a conservation area and is also identified as a local wildlife site. Development would have the potential to impact on the significance and setting of the designated heritage asset.

A portion of the area (approx. 25%) falls within Flood Risk Zone 3 and parts of the site may also be affected by surface water flooding. This could reduce the capacity of the site and would need to be thoroughly assessed and effective flood risk management measures will be required.

Public rights of way that cross the area will need to be retained (diverted) and the impact on them mitigated.

## Spatial Option 1h - Land at M1 Junction 16 - Employment



An area situated to the north of the A4500 Weedon Road and junction 16 of the M1 which has potential for employment development of around 55 hectares. Access could be gained from the A4500 utilising the recently constructed roundabout which serves the Panattoni Park employment area.

### Strengths

The area benefits from access to the M1 at Junction 16 and is located in a strategically significant position for logistics with connectivity to the UK's motorway network.

The area is in close proximity to the strategic employment site known as Panattoni Park which is currently under construction to the south of the A4500. This option could be seen as a logical extension to this strategic employment area.

The option is close to the Northampton Related Development Area including planned residential development at the SUEs to the west and south-west of Northampton and therefore has ready access to a potential labour market.

There is potential to improve existing bus services along the A4500 to ensure that the option is well served by public transport.

## **Weaknesses**

The option is within a special landscape area as identified in the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (Part 2) and employment development, which would inevitably involve large buildings, could have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the area. It is noted that the Planning Inspector who held the examination of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy concluded that development north of the A4500 '... would have a significantly detrimental impact on the local landscape.'

The village of Harpole is relatively close to the north east of this option and development could be harmful to the rural setting of the village, part of which is designated as a conservation area.

Public rights of way that cross and adjoin the area will need to be retained (diverted) and the impact on them mitigated.

## **Northampton East**

Three parcels of land situated on the eastern edge of Northampton, between the town and the village of Ecton have been promoted previously through the call for sites process. Although the sites adjoin the urban area of Northampton they are located entirely within North Northamptonshire Council's area.

In consultation with North Northamptonshire Council a technical assessment of the sites has been undertaken as part of the SLAA. The SLAA concludes that one of the sites, that is detached from Northampton and directly adjacent to Ecton village, is not an appropriate location for housing. Two of the sites are considered to be potentially developable, but it is recognised that there are constraints which would need further consideration, particularly coalescence with Ecton and the impact on the character and setting of the village, part of which is designated as a conservation area.

As the sites are within North Northamptonshire it will be for North Northamptonshire Council to decide whether they wish to take these sites forward through the update of their existing Joint Core Strategy (North Northamptonshire Strategic Plan). Any future consideration of these sites would be subject to further discussion with North Northamptonshire Council as part of the duty to cooperate.

### **Consultation Questions:**

- 4. Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Northampton, as the principal urban area, as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire?**

**Yes/No**

**Please provide comments to support your answer.**

- 5. Please provide any specific comments on the potential spatial options identified for Northampton ( Options 1a to 1h)**

## **Spatial Option 2 - Growth at Daventry**

Located towards the west of Northamptonshire close to its border with Warwickshire, Daventry is a traditional market town which functions as a sub-regional centre for its rural

hinterland. It has excellent road links with Rugby and Northampton via the A45 and A4500, and further afield to other centres in the East and West Midlands via the motorway network. Rail services are accessible from Long Buckby, which is located on the Northampton loop of the West Coast Mainline.

Daventry has a strong economic base, with well-defined employment areas on the western and north western sides of the town and a smaller area at the south eastern gateway. The Daventry country park is a popular and very accessible recreational facility, being located north east of the town centre. The town is further characterised by a well-defined network of green infrastructure.

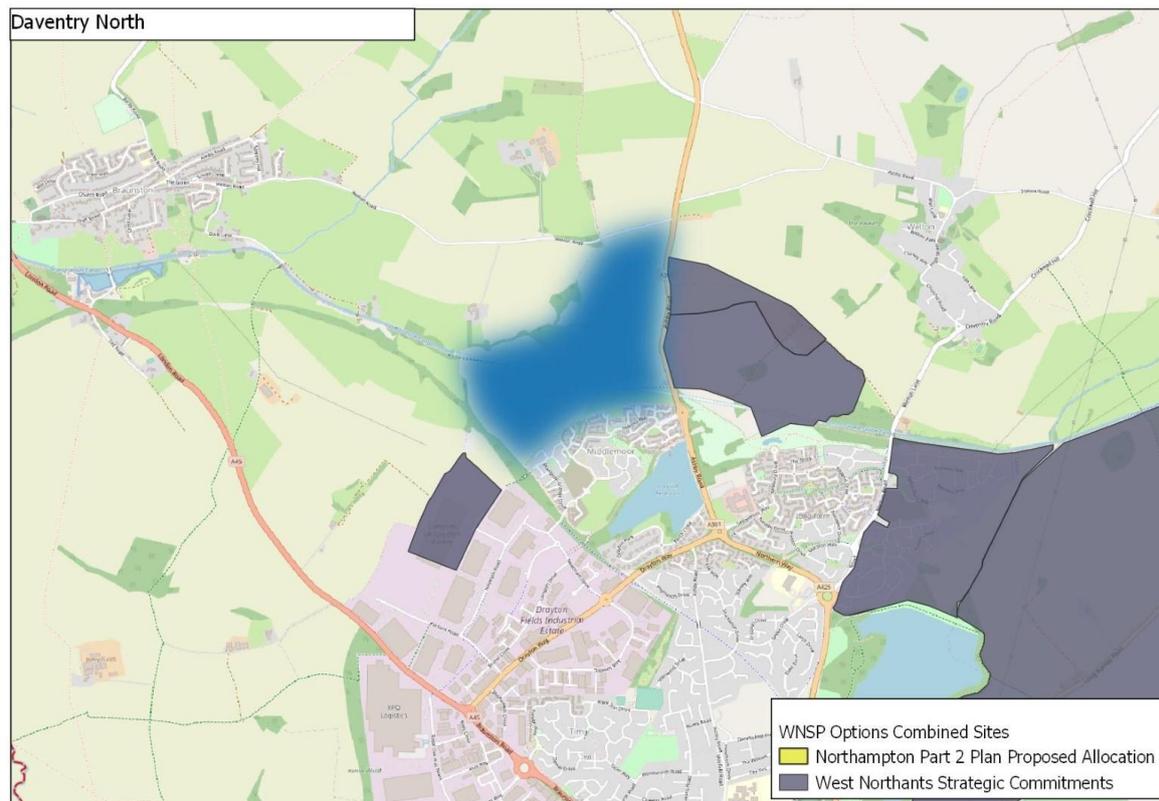
The town centre offers a range of convenience stores and local independent shops and services within its historic centre, with a small retail park located to the east of the town centre. The site of the former Daventry library is currently being redeveloped for leisure uses which will feature a cinema as its heart.

The town is relatively compact and has experienced modest growth in recent years with new employment development to the north west and housing growth to the north which has expanded the town outside its natural bowl of hills. Further growth is planned to the north east which will extend the town beyond the country park towards the A5, through an allocation for a sustainable urban extension in the JCS of around 4000 dwellings. Additional allocations of approximately 1200 dwellings to the south west and expansion of an existing commitment to the north amounting to around 250 dwellings, were made in the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Local Plan. Further small-scale development will take place within the town to consolidate existing employment sites with expansion planned to the north west and the south eastern gateway to the town, which is a focus for regeneration.

Having regard to the landscape and historic assets constraints affecting the Town the most feasible option for further strategic scale growth at Daventry is in the form of housing to the north of an existing residential area and expansion of employment areas north and west of the town. If this option was pursued, it would bring more development to a location that is already a focus for growth within West Northamptonshire. Proximity to existing residential and employment areas, relative ease of extending existing infrastructure and access to existing and planned services and facilities justify the consideration of this location as an option.

The option would result in further expansion of Daventry at the urban fringe, extending it beyond an already well-defined edge, eroding the largely rural character and reducing the gap between Daventry and Braunston. The landscape is a particular consideration as the land falls away to the west and North and this, which would require furthermore detailed assessment to establish the impact and form of development. There are additional heritage considerations for the housing element of the option owing to the proximity to the Canal and other important assets.

## Spatial Option 2a - North of Daventry - Residential



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An area situated to the north of Daventry town with the potential capacity for approximately 1200 dwellings. The option would be accessed via the A361 and could potentially be served by access arrangements presently being implemented for the adjacent Micklewell Park site.

### Strengths

The area is located adjacent to an existing residential area with a small number of services and facilities and also a fairly extensive employment estate. Further infrastructure (a primary school and local centre) is planned at Micklewell Park, which development in this location could access although it would be expected to provide some on-site infrastructure including primary education.

Development in this area would also benefit from a cycle link to Daventry town centre (and in the short term also to Braunston) via the former railway line and canal providing access to the services and facilities in the town by sustainable modes. Related to this the site could also access a network of green infrastructure situated on the northern edge of Daventry. This part of Daventry has a regular bus service that could serve development in this area.

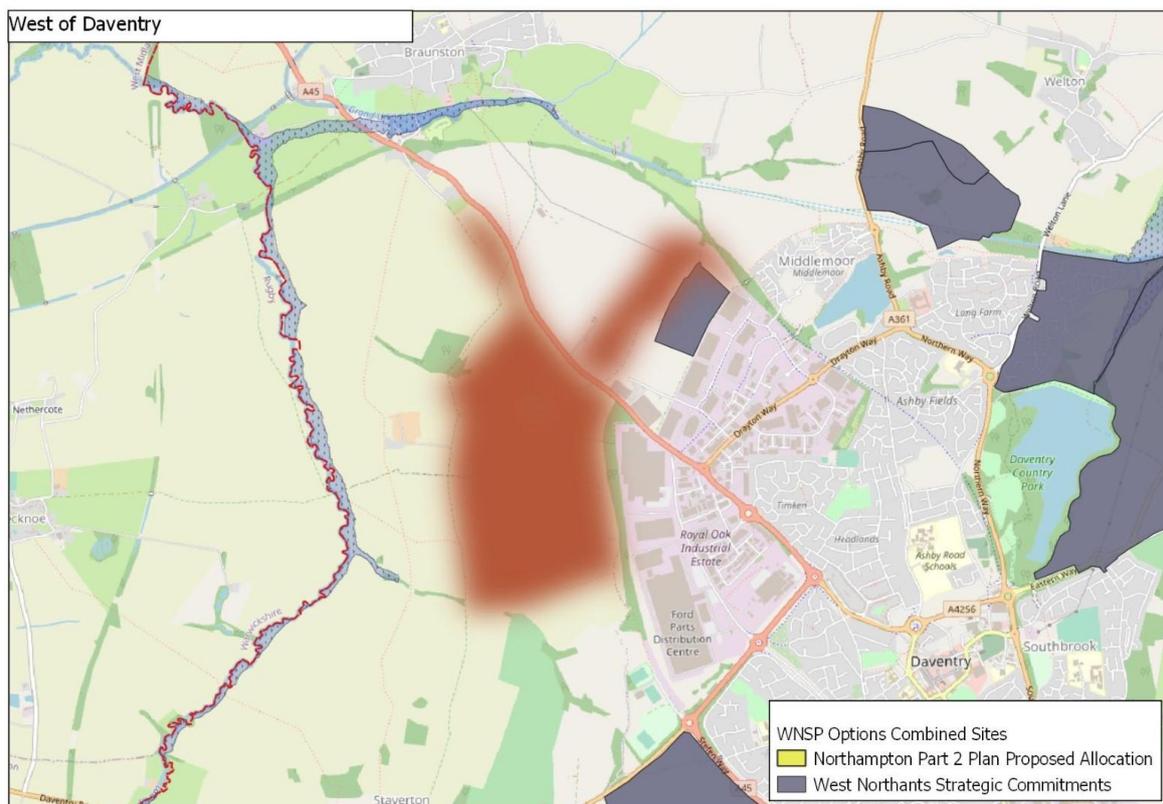
### Weaknesses

The Canal conservation area (situated on the line of the Braunston Tunnel) is a significant constraint that could impact the capacity of development and the routing of any internal infrastructure. Furthermore, the west entrance to the tunnel is grade 2 listed.

A further important constraint to development in this area is the topography, with the land falling away from the town where there is a relatively well-defined edge and this is likely to increase the visual impact of development on the local landscape and the views from Braunston. Development of this area could reduce the gap between Daventry and Braunston, and thus potentially contribute to coalescence with Braunston. Part of this area is identified as a green wedge in the Daventry part 2 local plan which requires proposals to maintain the physical and visual separation between settlements.

Middlemore Gorse, is an undesignated group of trees which may need to be retained.

### Spatial Option 2b - North and West of Daventry – Employment



An area situated to the north and west of Daventry which lies to the north of Drayton Fields industrial estate and to the west of Royal Oak industrial estate, this option would be accessed via the A361 and the A45. The area is promoted for employment by multiple landowners with a potential capacity of approximately 90 hectares.

### Strengths

The area is adjacent to existing industrial estates and therefore can link to existing infrastructure which includes public transport. There is a cycle link to Daventry town centre (and in the short term also to Braunston) via the former railway line.

## **Weaknesses**

Regarding heritage, there is a potential impact on the setting of All Saints Church in Braunston.

A further constraint is the topography of the area – the land falls away from the town where there is a relatively well-defined edge and this is likely to increase the visual impact of the site on the local landscape and the views from Braunston and also long distance views to the west where Kentle Wood, a local green space, currently defines the western edge of Daventry and provides a strong landscape feature because it is on the top of a slope.

Furthermore, development of this area could reduce the gap and result in coalescence with Braunston (part of site identified as green wedge in Daventry part 2 local plan) The topography could have impact on format of buildings in this option which could further increase the landscape impact.

A local wildlife site is situated to the south (not within site boundary) and the southern corner of the area forms part of the special landscape area.

There is a public right of way running through the western part of the option which also includes the Jurassic Way long distance footpath, its enjoyment would likely be affected by the development of this site.

### **Consultation Questions:**

- 6. Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Daventry, as sub regional centre, as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire?**

**Yes/No**

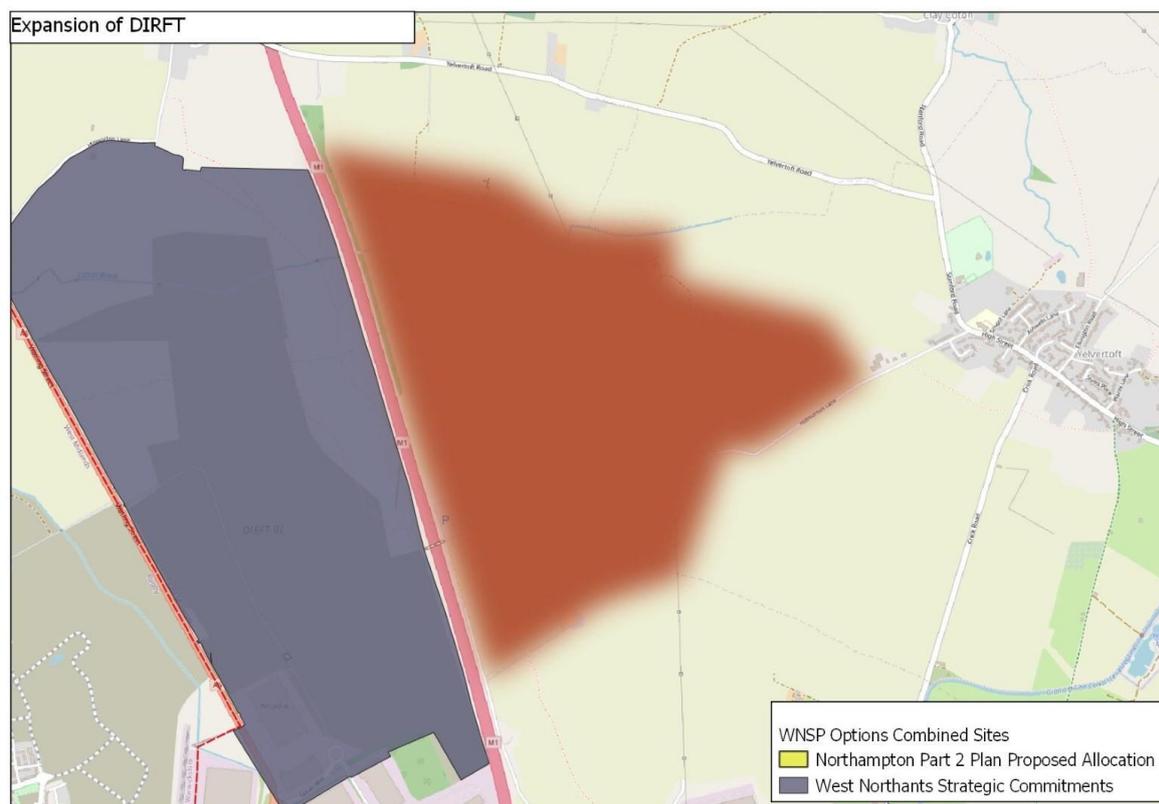
**Please provide comments to support your answer.**

- 7. Please provide any specific comments on the potential spatial options identified for Northampton (Options 2a and 2b)**

## **Spatial Option 3 – Employment Options at M1 Junction 18**

This location is strategically located at the heart of the road and rail network and is well placed in relation to the logistics “golden triangle”. Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT), recognised as being of international significance, has continued to expand and Phase 3 is currently under-construction. As a consequence of the strategic importance of this location it warrants further consideration as a potential area for growth, both in terms of specific expansion at DIRFT but also smaller scale expansion to help serve DIRFT and utilise the specific geographical strengths of the area in terms of the road and rail network. Furthermore, evidence undertaken for the Daventry Settlements and Countryside Part 2 Plan identified the potential for longer-term needs in this location as DIRFT phase 3 is built out which is further justification for exploring the potential for economic development in this area.

### Spatial Option 3a - Land to the East of DIRFT – Employment



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An option situated to the east of DIRFT with the capacity for approximately 106 ha of employment. The area would seek to connecting to the existing and infrastructure at DIRFT including the planned rail-freight terminal associated with DIRFT 3 and would require a new bridge crossing over the M1.

#### Strengths

The proximity to the existing DIRFT industrial area and the existing and planned rail-freight terminal will provide access to non-road logistics infrastructure. Proximity to DIRFT also enables further on-site infrastructure e.g. lorry parks, training centre etc to be accessed. Furthermore, proximity to the M1 and A5 allows for road-based connectivity.

The proximity to Rugby, including the Houlton SUE and Crick provide access to services and facilities.

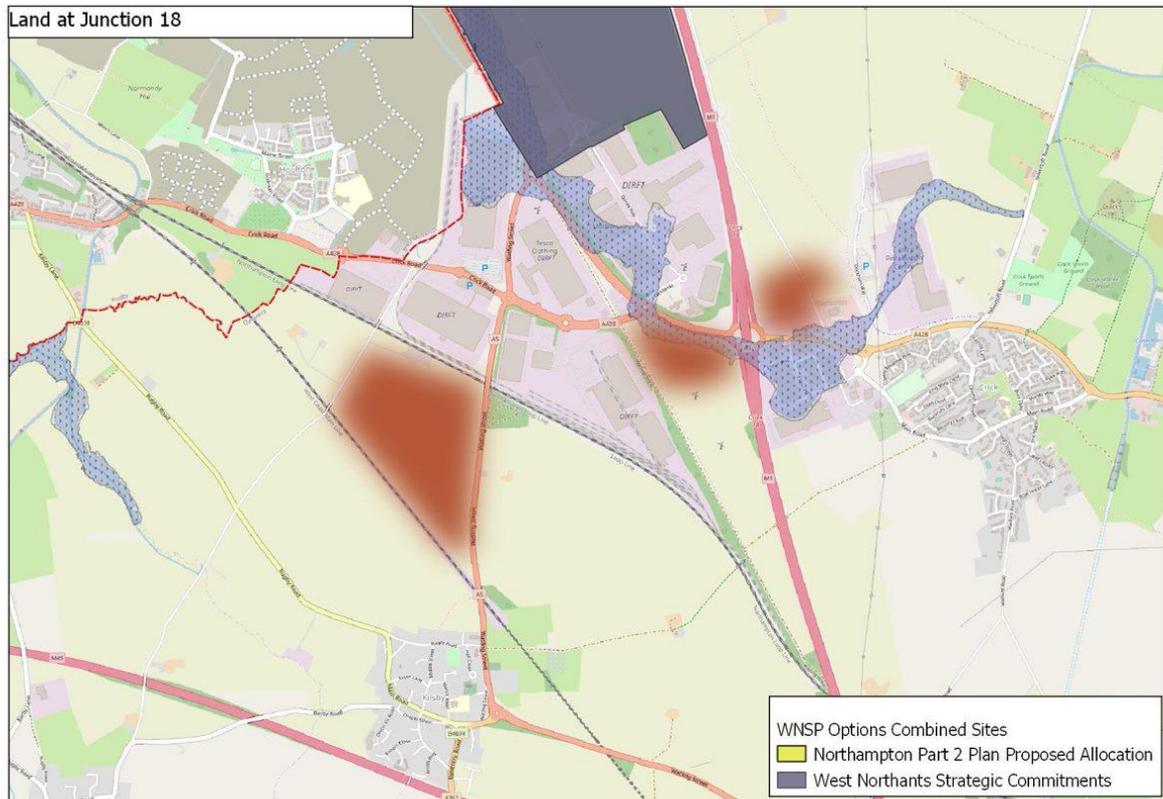
There is the potential opportunity to extend the existing Lilbourne Meadows to provide further natural habitat/biodiversity enrichment in this area.

#### Weaknesses

The potential impact on setting of surrounding villages, particularly Lilbourne, Yelvertoft and Crick and the impact on the local landscape are important constraints that this option will need to address.

The proximity to the labour market may also need further consideration but this could be addressed through further enhancements to infrastructure e.g. bus connectivity to Daventry, Northampton and Rugby.

### Spatial Option 3b - Land at M1 Junction 18- Employment



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Areas of land near to Junction 18 of the M1 and to the south of DIRFT which could come forward for employment use with a total capacity of approximately 63 ha. The various parts of the option would be accessed via the A5 and A428 respectively.

#### Strengths

The area benefits from good access to the strategic road network, A5, A14, M45, M6 and M1. There is also potential to access the DIRFT rail freight terminal.

The option is close to Rugby (including the new Houlton SUE), Kilsby and Crick which provide a potential labour market.

The areas within this option are also well-related to existing employment areas so could help support their expansion.

#### Weaknesses

Depending on building height and format there is potential for development to impact on the setting of Kilsby for the southern-most area. Although this area is self-contained,

it could be perceived as a southern extension of DIRFT which at the moment is wholly to the north of the freight line. There could result in issues of physical and visual coalescence with Kilsby. The southern end of this area is close to the listed Kilsby tunnel entrance. Development would have the potential to impact on the significance and setting of the designated heritage asset.

The area to the West of the M1 is adjacent to a scheduled monument which could affect the capacity of this area. This area is also an important buffer to help screen DIRFT from Crick and development will need to be concentrated adjacent to the A458.

Public Rights of Way that cross the area will need to be retained (diverted) and the impact on them mitigated.

**Consultation Questions:**

- 8. Do you agree that there is potential for directing further employment development at M1 Junction 18 as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire?**

**Yes/No**

**Please provide comments to support your answer.**

- 9. Please provide any specific comments on the potential spatial options identified at M1 Junction 18 (Options 3a and 3b)**

**Spatial Option 4 - Growth at the Market Towns – Brackley and Towcester**

This option would distribute further growth at the historic market towns of Brackley and Towcester in a continuation of the existing development strategy for West Northamptonshire and in recognition of these towns' current categorisation as rural service centres.

Located in the south western corner of Northamptonshire on its border with Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, **Brackley** has excellent road links to the urban centres of Northampton, Banbury, Bicester, Oxford and Milton Keynes and has experienced significant growth in recent years with allocations for over 1,700 dwellings made in the JCS to the north and east of the town along with complementary retail, employment uses and health care infrastructure. The town has a limited range of shops and services proportionate to its size.

Located 6 miles south east of Northampton and 7 miles north of Milton Keynes on the A5 and A43 like Brackley **Towcester** has also experienced significant growth over the last 20 years, most recently in the form of the Towcester South SUE which will see some 2,750 homes built to the south of the town. With local plan allocations in place for up to 67 hectares of mixed-use employment generating development to the north of the town. Like Brackley, Towcester currently offers a range of shops and services proportionate to its size.

The focus of this option would see further strategic scale housing growth at Brackley and Towcester and if this were pursued as an option, it would bring more development to locations already receiving a high level of growth and constitute an extension of the existing local plan strategies. Such development has previously been justified as it would continue to focus rural growth to locations with the highest concentration of jobs, affordable housing

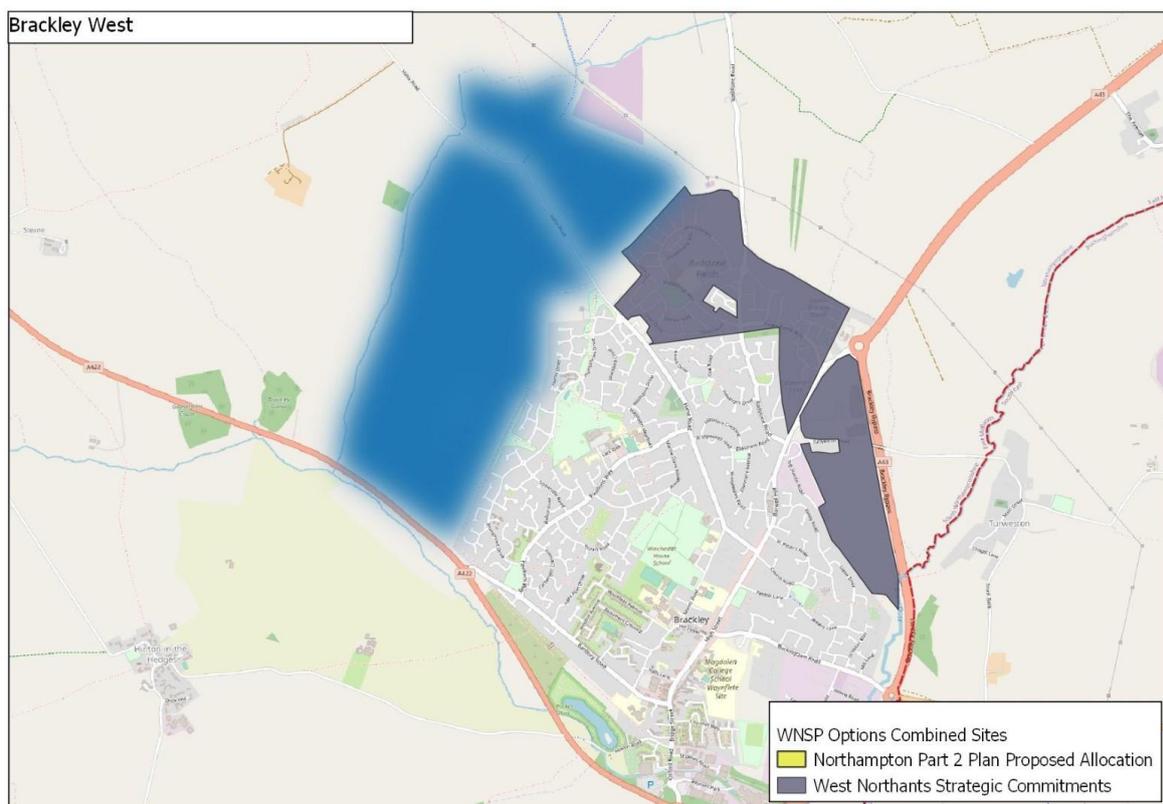
need and sustainable transport connectivity, to ensure that development helps to meet the needs of existing and future communities in a sustainable manner.

The emphasis would be on growing existing communities and those locations previously determined to be the most sustainable locations for strategic scale growth. Further assessment would be required to identify the scale of what might be appropriate in each location.

This option could result in further expansion of Brackley and Towcester at the urban fringe, with potential impacts on rural character and the relationship with the surrounding countryside and further detailed assessment would be required prior to taking this option forward.

It is known that implemented and committed growth at both towns has already taken us to the limits of what is acceptable in some situations in terms of constraints and current infrastructure capacity. Further work is needed when considering this option to ensure that those constraints and infrastructure requirements and the ability of the towns and their hinterlands to absorb further growth is understood and any future growth to the existing market towns is appropriate.

### **Spatial Option 4a - Brackley North West Expansion - Residential**



An area extending to the north west of Brackley, including the current Brackley North SUE (Radstone Fields), these sites have been promoted as having a potential capacity to

deliver up to 3,000 dwellings and associated services including a potential 'sports hub' for Brackley.

Primary vehicular accesses could potentially be from the A422 as well as the Halse Road.

### **Strengths**

By virtue of its association with the rural service centre of Brackley this option provides potential sustainable access to key services that exist in the town along with existing employment opportunities in this rural service centre, albeit becoming increasingly remote from the town's core service and employment areas.

The expansion of the town to the north-west is unconstrained by specific heritage or landscape designations either on or in close proximity to it.

The opportunity exists for incorporating a sports hub within the wider scheme, providing improved leisure and wellbeing opportunities for residents of Brackley and the surrounding area, albeit remote from the existing core. The sports hub is identified as having potential for football or rugby union, tennis, squash, cricket and bowls facilities.

### **Weaknesses**

There are known secondary education and health service capacity constraints associated with the continued expansion of Brackley. The associated provision of these improvements would be required in conjunction with any further expansion to the town.

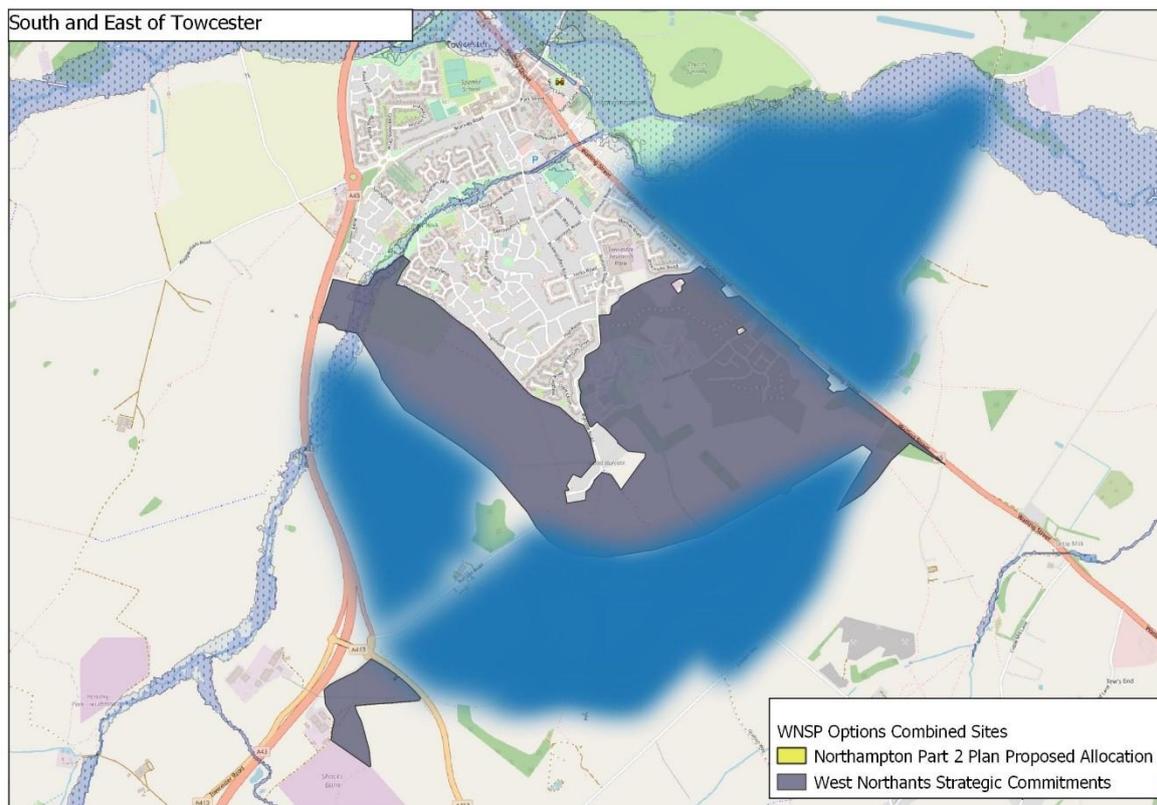
To enable vehicular access to the local road network (and full access to the strategic road network), the proposal is reliant on the provision of appropriate highway infrastructure on Halse Road, a rural country lane which is unlit and has no footpaths or road markings. Potential highway capacity constraints additionally exist on Banbury Road, Humphries Drive, Poppyfields Road and Radstone Road as well as other locations within Brackley, which will require appropriate remediation if suitable access to local services is to be achieved.

Whilst physically associated with the town of Brackley, further north-westerly expansion is increasingly remote from the town's core service and employment areas, adversely impacting upon the potential accessibility of these areas by sustainable modes, including walking and cycling. Expansion to the north west of Brackley could create an increased sense of coalescence with the hamlet of Halse.

The site includes a local wildlife site at its south western extent and a potential wildlife site to the north-west of the site. Consequently, ecological impacts are likely and would require appropriate mitigation.

Public footpaths and a bridleway traverse the site and would require retention within the overall scheme design, impacting on their existing use and enjoyment.

## Spatial Option 4b - Towcester South and Racecourse Expansion - Residential



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Sweeping around the south-westerly and southern extents of the existing Towcester South SUE and across to the eastern side of the town, incorporating Towcester Racecourse and its surrounds, these sites have been promoted as having a potential capacity to deliver up to 4,250 dwellings and associated services.

Primary vehicular accesses could potentially be from the Towcester Southern Relief Road (under construction and scheduled for completion in 2023), as well as the A5.

### Strengths

There would be a good relationship with the existing expansion of Towcester, which would form a natural continuation to it, whilst providing the potential for access to a range of key services along with existing and proposed employment opportunities that exist in this rural service centre, albeit increasingly remote from the town's historical core.

There is an opportunity to build on existing planning policy to create a coherent long-term sustainable future for Towcester Racecourse; thereby assisting in creating a legacy and quality of space and place that is environmentally, culturally, socially and economically unique and could bring associated benefits to the town.

## **Weaknesses**

The topography of the site will culminate in much of this possible expansion of Towcester being raised above the existing town, impacting on long distance views and an increased sense of built form within the open countryside, which could exacerbate the landscape impact. Further landscape work is needed to ensure that the sensitivities can be understood.

Whilst enabling access to the site, the Towcester southern relief road could additionally adversely impact the potential permeability of much of the proposed expansion with the rest of the town, especially by walking and cycling.

The area includes a local wildlife site and an ancient woodland and is situated in proximity to further local and potential wildlife sites and ancient woodland. Consequently, ecological impacts are likely and would require appropriate mitigation.

The racecourse site falls within a grade II\* registered park and garden and includes a grade I listed building, whilst additionally impacting upon the setting of the Towcester and Easton Neston conservation areas, as well as further listed buildings. Proposals would therefore need to ensure these heritage assets (along with archaeological and non-designated heritage assets) and their settings are appropriately considered.

The Grafton Way and network of public footpaths and bridleways traverse the site and would require retainment within the overall scheme design, impacting on their existing use and enjoyment.

## **Consultation Questions:**

**10. Do you agree that there is potential for directing further development at Brackley and Towcester, as rural service centres, as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire?**

**Yes/No**

**Please provide comments to support your answer.**

**11. Please provide any specific comments on the potential spatial options identified for Brackley and Towcester (Options 4a and 4b)**

## **Spatial Option 5 - New Settlements**

The options identified below at Long Buckby and north west of Milton Keynes have the potential to come forward as new settlements. In addition to these options the council is aware of further new settlement proposals that have been put forward through the previous call for sites and assessed in the SLAA. However, the council is also mindful that there might be additional new settlement options in the area that have not yet been identified that could contribute to meeting the housing needs of West Northamptonshire in a sustainable way. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that there are complexities relating to bringing new settlements forward and the need to assess all reasonable options. In this context the council have commissioned AECOM to undertake a specific study to look at new settlements in more detail.

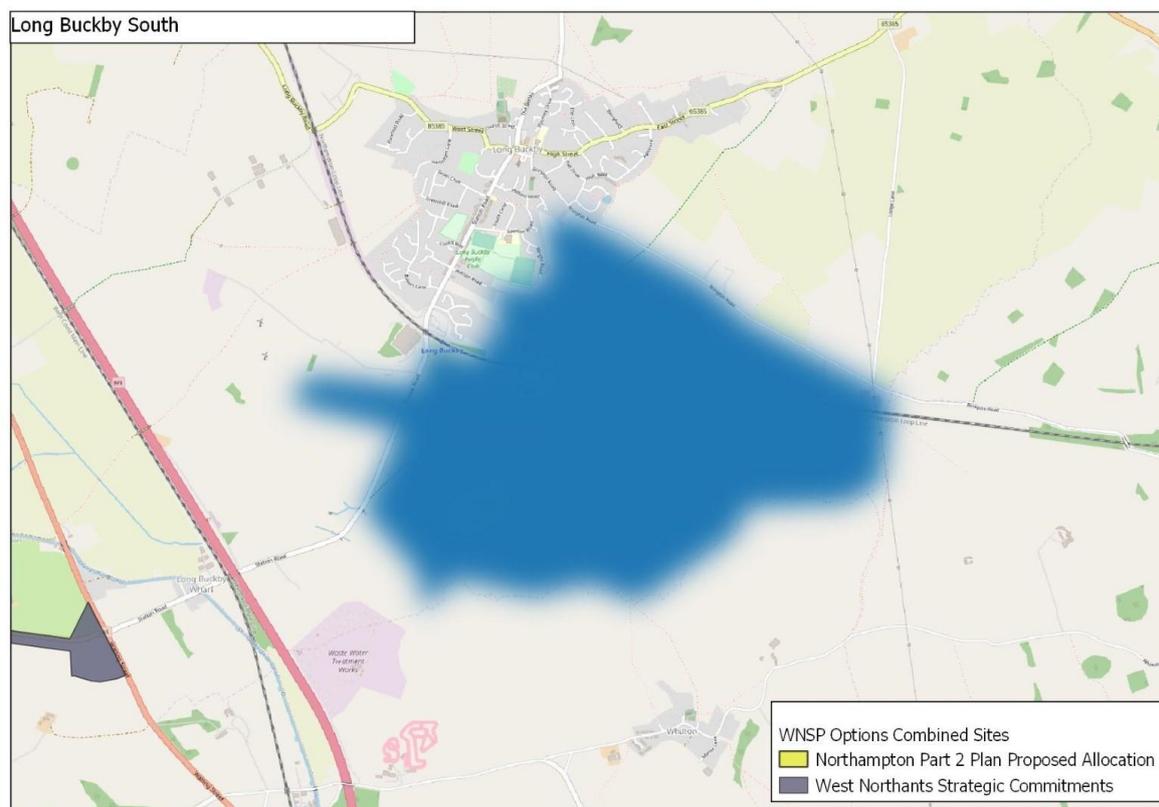
The study features a number of stages, firstly establishing appropriate areas of search for new settlements, then agreeing an appropriate framework for assessing those new settlement options before undertaking a comprehensive assessment of options for delivering sustainable growth through one or more new settlements. The study is progressing well but will not be finalised in time to support this spatial options consultation. If any potential new settlement options beyond those identified in this document are identified in the study as realistic new settlement options, including those promoted and identified in the SLAA, then these will be subject to further consultation as part of an additional regulation 18 consultation which could take place in early 2022.

### **Spatial Option 5a – Growth at Long Buckby**

Long Buckby is one of the larger rural settlements where land has been promoted for residential development. The presence of the railway station, which sits on the Northampton loop of the West Coast Mainline, allows access to nearby main towns, including Northampton, by sustainable modes.

Whilst further work on a specific new settlement study is underway and could be further consulted on in the future, the uniqueness of this location by virtue of the railway station, when compared to any other promoted new settlement, means that further large scale residential-led development warrants consideration at this stage as part of the spatial options for West Northamptonshire.

## Land to South of Long Buckby - Residential



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An area of land to the south of Long Buckby with a potential capacity of between 1280 to 5000 dwellings. The option would be accessed off Three Bridges Road however improvements would be needed to bridges under the M1, West Coast Mainline and Northampton loop line at Long Buckby Wharf. Further along the Three Bridges Road there might be improvements needed to the A5 junction.

Within Long Buckby, due to the historic street pattern further traffic management measures might be needed however this will need to be informed by transport assessment work. There is a daily bus service to Daventry that runs past the option that would need to be improved.

### Strengths

A key strength is the proximity to the railway station with direct routes into Northampton, Rugby, Coventry, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and London and would encourage modal shift.

Long Buckby is a primary service village and therefore benefits from a good range of services which would be accessible by walking and cycling however subject to its scale the option would be expected to provide a range of services and facilities to complement those in Long Buckby. Furthermore, the option is relatively close to Daventry which has a range of services, facilities and employment.

## **Weaknesses**

Depending on the scale of the option, an option at the lower capacity indicated might have limited ability to deliver associated infrastructure including that to be located on site, such as education but also the identified off-site highway works.

The option is likely to have an impact on the form and character of Long Buckby, the historic centre of which is designated as a conservation area.

The southern edge of the site is flood zone 3 which may affect layout and capacity of the site.

## **Spatial Option 5b - Growth at Milton Keynes North West/ Old Stratford**

This option would distribute a substantial level of growth to the south east of West Northamptonshire adjacent to the boundary with the Borough of Milton Keynes.

Whilst the option would see development on green field sites remote from West Northamptonshire's principal urban centres the council recognise the proximity of Milton Keynes and the economic, social and physical links that exist across the formal administrative boundaries and the strong functional relationship between the city and this part of our district and the wider area.

At the centre of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and with a population planned to be in excess of 335,000 by 2031, Milton Keynes is a regional centre which shares a boundary with West Northamptonshire in the area of Cosgrove and Old Stratford. Many people travel across West Northamptonshire and into Milton Keynes on a daily basis for access to work, shops, leisure, services, transport and other infrastructure that the city provides.

This relationship is a matter considered by Milton Keynes Council in their recently published [Strategy for 2050](#), a document that whilst recognising that it cannot allocate development outside of its boundaries, considers how development might work best across boundaries, especially when thinking about how people move around for work and their day-to-day needs today and in the coming decades.

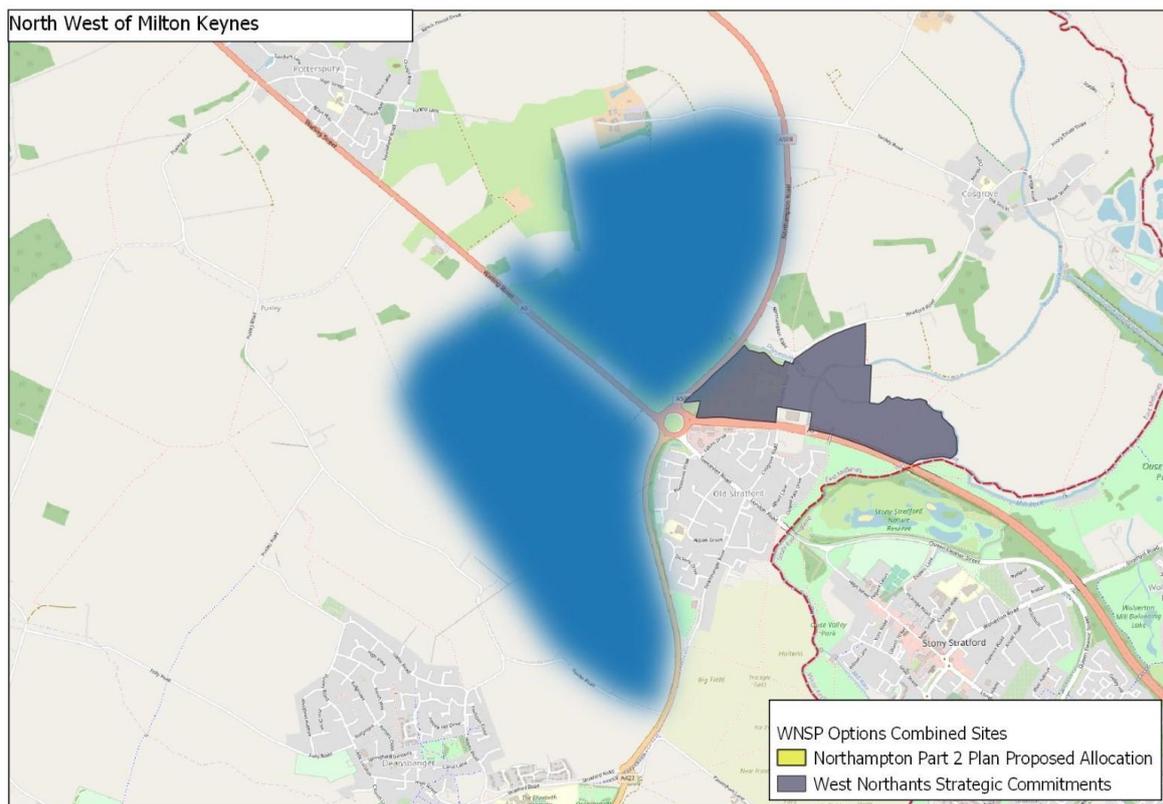
In 2017, a National Infrastructure Commission study of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc suggested that Milton Keynes could be re-established as "a development location of national significance, through the intensification and expansion of the town to a population of at least 500,000". The strategy for 2050 develops this and identifies the area around Cosgrove and Old Stratford as a potential green city gateway to Milton Keynes providing a sustainable development location accessed by sustainable transport measures, including a mass rapid transit network with potential infrastructure improvements.

West Northamptonshire Council will consider this and through this options consultation explore further the consequences of development in this location and the opportunities and constraints that present themselves and which cut across council boundaries, exploring the creation of high quality development and joined up infrastructure and services to benefit the residents of West Northamptonshire.

When considering development in this area further consideration will need to be given to the implication of growth on the A5 corridor, the A508 and A422 including their intersection at

the Old Stratford roundabout, along with its relationship to and potential impact on the nearby villages of West Northamptonshire including, Cosgrove, Deanshanger, Old Stratford, Passenham, Potterspurty and Wicken and the infrastructure and services that exist in the area.

### Milton Keynes North West (Old Stratford) Expansion - Residential



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Situated to the south east of West Northamptonshire in proximity to Old Stratford and the boundary with the Borough of Milton Keynes these sites have been promoted as having a potential capacity to deliver up to approximately 6,000 dwellings and associated services.

Vehicular access could be provided from the adjacent strategically connected highway network.

### Strengths

There would be a good functional relationship with Milton Keynes and the broad range of services this regional centre provides, whilst acknowledging the functional relationship that this part of West Northamptonshire has with adjacent authority areas and potentially linking with possible long-term aspirations for a mass rapid transport network, as part of a greater Milton Keynes.

## **Weaknesses**

The A5 trunk road, which constitutes part of England's strategic road network bisects the site. This, coupled with the site being bounded by the A422 and A508 at an existing strategic highway network pinch-point (Old Stratford roundabout which would require substantial upgrading), could result in barriers to permeability by walking and cycling with the consequence of the development and the surrounding area becoming vehicle-dominated.

Whilst having a good functional relationship with Milton Keynes, the proposed development is of disproportionate scale to the surrounding West Northamptonshire settlements, whose housing needs it will be required to serve, whilst creating a sense of built form and sense of coalescence with nearby villages including, Cosgrove, Deanshanger, Old Stratford, Passenham, Potterspury and Wicken, that are currently located within a rural extremity of West Northamptonshire.

The setting of grade II\* listed buildings at Furtho as well as the character and setting of nearby conservation areas could be affected and appropriate mitigation would be required. The site includes a potential wildlife site in proximity to Knotwood Fields Farm and abuts a potential wildlife site along part of its northern boundary. Therefore, ecological impacts are likely and would require appropriate mitigation.

A strategic oil pipeline (Buncefield to Blisworth) as well as flood zones are present within the site. These would require associated assessment and could impact upon achieving a desirable development density.

Public footpaths and bridleways run through the site, which would require retention within the overall scheme design and would impact on their use and enjoyment.

### **Consultation Questions:**

**12 Do you agree that new settlements have a potential role in delivering growth as part of the spatial strategy for West Northamptonshire?**

**Yes/No**

**Please provide comments to support your answer.**

**13 Please provide any specific comments on the potential spatial options identified for Long Buckby and Milton Keynes North West (Old Stratford) (Options 5a and 5b)**

## **Spatial Option 6 - Rural Areas**

A significant part of West Northamptonshire is rural in nature with a dispersed network of over 190 settlements ranging from larger, primary service villages (defined as the largest category of village in respective part 2 local plans) to significantly smaller scale hamlets. This area, and the settlements within it, play an important role in how the area functions, contributing to the wider health and wellbeing of the area, the rural economy and provides access to important local services and facilities. Furthermore, the rural areas contain a number of natural and cultural assets which include biodiversity, landscape and heritage, including a number of buildings and areas that are of national

importance. All of these assets play a key role in contributing to what is locally distinct and special about West Northamptonshire. Local communities are playing a crucial role in shaping their surroundings with a number of 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, reflecting the complex planning issues facing these areas.

Looking forward to 2050, it is important that these areas can continue to thrive through appropriate levels of growth, particularly given the affordability issues experienced across large parts of the area and to ensure local needs are met. However, the level of growth also needs to recognise the need to protect and enhance the special environmental and social characteristics of the rural area. It will also be important that the level of growth in the rural areas is supported by appropriate levels of infrastructure to ensure that communities continue to thrive and are sustainable locations for existing and future residents.

Turning to the level of growth, given how closely aligned the overall housing requirements are under the standard method to the requirements in the existing JCS, one approach is to apply this level of growth going forward. For the Daventry and South Northamptonshire areas the requirement was 2,360 dwellings in total which equates to 131 per annum over the period 2011 to 2029. Moving forward over a 30-year period this equates to 3,930 dwellings for each of the Daventry and South Northamptonshire rural areas, 7,860 dwellings in total.

For context, looking at past trends, i.e. housing completions, over the period 2011 to 2021 the Daventry area had 2,733 completions, 273 dwellings per annum and in South Northamptonshire 2,335 completions took place over the same period, 235 dwellings per annum. Over a 30-year period this would equate to 8,190 dwellings for the former Daventry area and 7,050 dwellings for former South Northamptonshire, 15,240 dwellings, almost half of the total Local Housing Need for the period to 2050.

However, some of these houses have been delivered on sites that came forward as a result of a lack of 5 year housing land supply, which may not have been supporting a plan-led approach and therefore the past completions rate is likely to be somewhat misleading as to what would be an appropriate level of growth. In establishing appropriate levels of growth for the rural areas it is acknowledged that they have performed very strongly, delivering more and at a faster rate than at Daventry and Towcester. However, we have seen with the JCS that this level of growth has been undermining the overall spatial strategy. It will be important that the level of growth in rural areas supports the overall spatial strategy to ensure any large-scale options pursued at the main towns are delivered. Furthermore, there is the potential to consider the role of new settlements to address some of the requirements for housing and economic development.

In deciding on an appropriate level of growth for the rural areas it will also be important to look at the implications of the HENA (Housing and Economic Needs Assessment) in terms of identified needs at a former district level and also local housing needs at a parish level. The NPPF (para 66) sets out that housing requirements for designated neighbourhood areas should be set out, which reflects the overall strategy for the pattern and scale of development and any relevant allocations. The method for calculating such a figure has not yet been determined but will be consulted on in the future as the plan develops further.

### **Consultation Question:**

**14 Please provide your comments on the approach the WNSP should take to development in the rural areas.**

#### **Land to the South of Market Harborough**

An area of land situated to the South of Market Harborough has been promoted previously through the call for sites process with a potential capacity of approximately 2000 dwellings.

Whilst the site is well-related to Market Harborough and would enable access for sustainable travel modes it does feature some notable constraints, part of the area is identified as special landscape area and it is relatively close to nearby scheduled monuments. Further historic assets exist in East Farndon and any development would need to protect against coalescence.

Given the relationship of the area with Market Harborough, it is acknowledged that development in this location could help to meet the housing needs of Harborough District. As part of fulfilling requirements related to the duty to cooperate, discussions have taken place with officers at Harborough District Council and at present, given they are in the formative stages of updating their local plan it is not possible to establish at this time whether there is a need for land in this area to come forward. However, mindful that the WNSP covers the period to 2050 it felt appropriate to acknowledge the long-term development potential in this area and the need to maintain constructive dialogue with Harborough District Council moving forward.

#### **Consultation Questions:**

**15 Are there any other spatial options that we should be considering? If so please provide details.**

**16 Are there any other comments you wish to make at this stage?**

#### **Call for Sites**

The development of the spatial options consultation has been informed by suggestions for strategic development locations submitted through a 'call for sites' held as part of the issues consultation in 2019. The 'call for sites' is being re-opened as part of the spatial options consultation. Whilst the focus of this plan remains on strategic sites, we will accept submissions in respect of any site of 0.5ha or more for either housing or employment. If you have any suggestions for new development locations, which were not previously submitted, then please submit these using the 'call for sites' form which is available on our website: [LINK](#)

#### **How to comment**

Comments on the spatial options can be made from **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October to midnight on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021**. Your views are important and will help shape the next stage of the plan.

You can make comments in a number of different ways, although the best way is likely to be online. Our consultation website has an interactive questionnaire that that you can use to submit your comments at:

[www.westnorthantsplan.inconsult.uk](http://www.westnorthantsplan.inconsult.uk)

If you would prefer to send us your written comments you can download a comment form from the website and return it by email or post to the following addresses:

**By email:**

[strategicplan@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplan@westnorthants.gov.uk)

**By post:**

Strategic Plan  
West Northamptonshire Council  
The Guildhall  
St Giles Square  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

**Next Steps**

The next stage in plan preparation will be to produce a full draft plan for consultation, which will include the preferred spatial strategy, strategic site allocations and policies to address the strategic priorities for the area. We are aiming to carry out the draft plan consultation in summer 2022. For further details of the stages in plan preparation and the expected timetable please view the local development scheme here [LINK](#)