

Rural England Prosperity Fund

West Northamptonshire

Evidence Base



Priority Focus

The Rural Fund sits within the UKSPF priorities of:

SPF Priority	Capital Funding Focus
Community and Place	Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy
Supporting Local Business	Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy

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REPF Project Examples

Introduction

This report sets out evidence to inform the development of West Northamptonshire's response to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (referred to as the 'Rural Fund').

West Northamptonshire has been allocated £1,367,953 under the Rural Fund.

This evidence base provides information on the rural economy and draws on a review of existing activity, local data and policies for the area.

The evidence base pinpoints the key needs of the rural economy and identifies opportunities to respond to the Rural Fund objectives. This will support the strategic decision making process to inform the allocation of funding and development of West Northamptonshire's Rural England Prosperity Fund Investment Plan addendum.

This report includes:

- An introduction to the Rural UK Shared Prosperity Fund and how it will work alongside the UKSPF programme
- Evidence of opportunities and challenges across the Community and Place and Supporting Local Business priority themes
- Emerging implications and approach to West Northamptonshire's Rural England Prosperity Fund Investment Plan addendum.

The Rural Fund

The Rural Fund is a rural top-up to UKSPF allocations aimed at supporting activities that specifically address the particular challenges that rural areas face such as lower productivity rates, poorer connectivity and poorer access to key services.

The fund will seek to overcome challenges faced in rural areas aimed at improving productivity and strengthening the rural economy and rural communities.

The Rural Fund objectives sit within the UKSPF investment priorities for:

- Supporting Local Business
- Community and Place

The Rural Fund provides capital funding to:

- Support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy
- Support new and improved community infrastructure, providing essential community services and assets for local people and businesses to benefit the local economy

Rural Urban Classifications

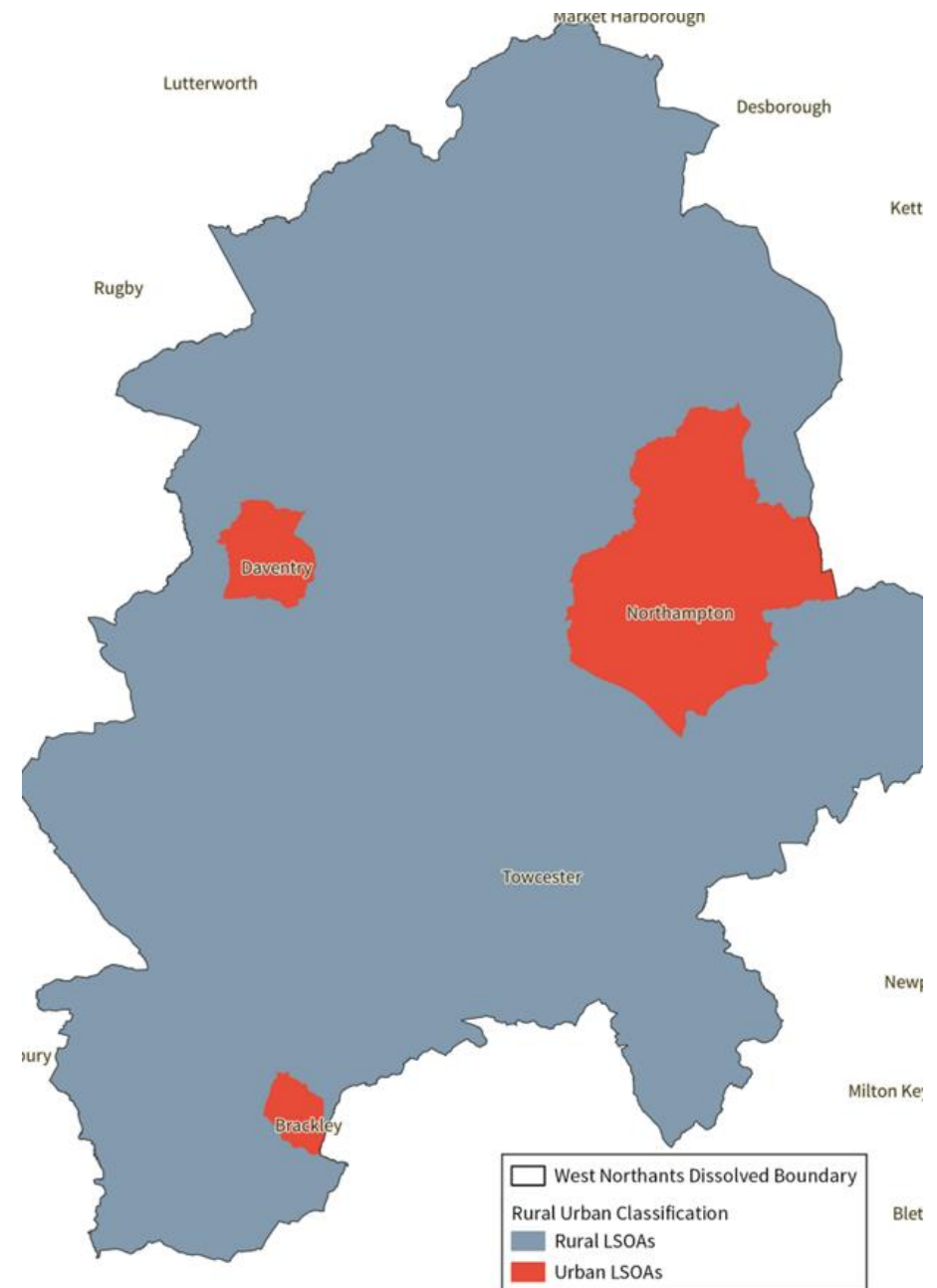
Rural areas are defined using the Census 2011 definition of rural and urban areas. This classifies rural areas as having a population of under 10,000.

To be eligible for funding projects must be in a rural area. This includes:

- Towns, villages and hamlets with populations below 10,000 and the wider countryside
- Market or ‘hub towns’ with populations of up to 30,000 that serve their surrounding rural areas as centres of employment and in providing services.

The map shows the LSOA areas which have been classified by ONS as rural areas and those which have been classified as urban areas

For the REPF the definition of rural for funding purposes is consistent with the LEADER and Local Growth Programmes in the Rural Development Programme for England.



Rural Urban Classifications

According to the Rural-Urban classification, **Daventry** is comprised of urban and rural LSOAs. Rural areas include the villages of Long Buckby Wharf, Norton, Newnham, Braunston and Staverton. These all contain populations of less than 10,000 people. Daventry is classified as a market town and has a population lower than 30,000 and therefore most of Daventry would be eligible for REPF funding.

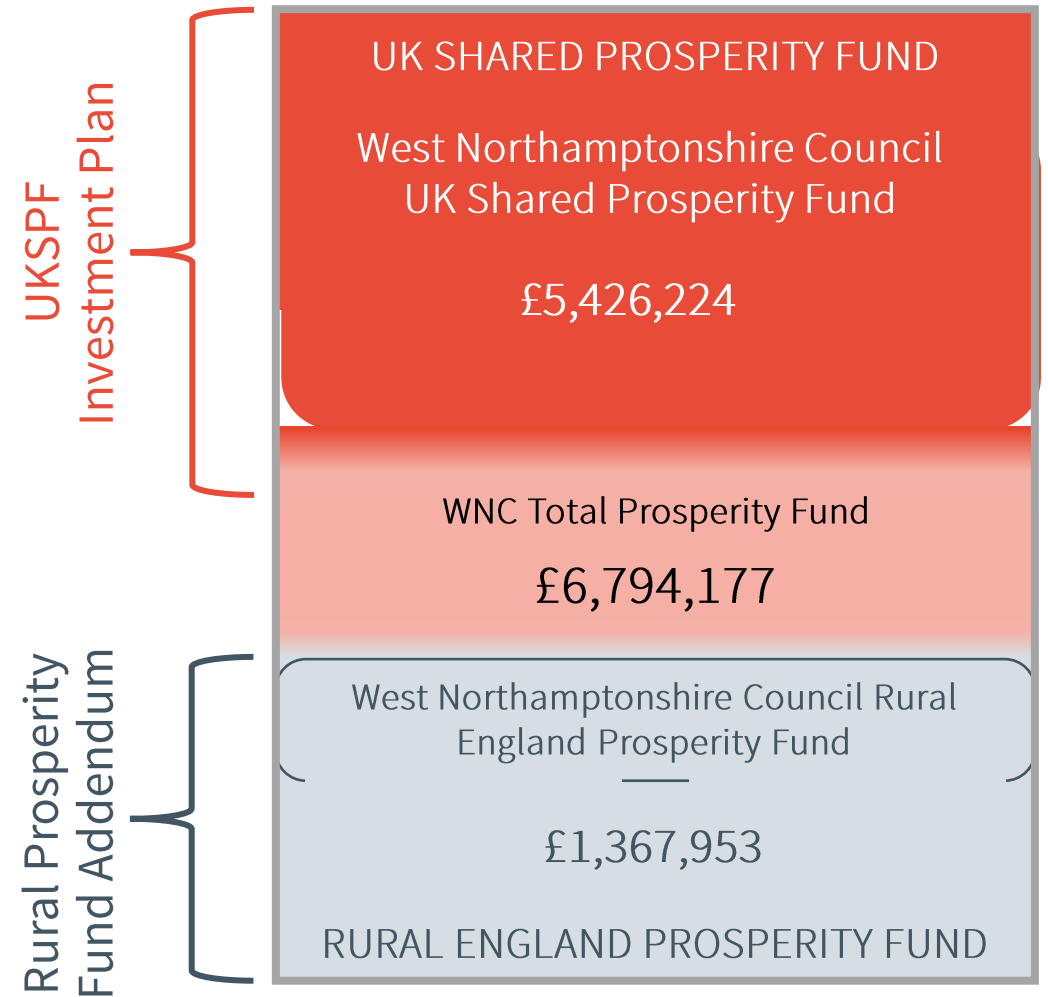
The market town **of Brackley** is also identified as an urban area, but again as it has a population under 30,000 and so it would be eligible for REPF funding

Northampton town is classified as a “major town” by ONS. It has a population which exceeds 30,000 and so this area would **not be eligible for funding**.

DEFRA is currently working on a boundary map to confirm areas which will be eligible for funding. This will not include Northampton borough and some of the area which borders it but the exact boundary will be confirmed.

Funding Breakdown

- Rural Fund Allocation = **£1,367,953**
- Funding period - April 2023 to March 2025
- 100% capital funding
- Not yet clear if Local Authorities can decide the spending profile over two years



Aligning with UKSPF with the Levelling Up Agenda

The Rural Fund aligns with the UKSPF priorities of Community and Place and Supporting Local Businesses.

The Rural Fund also relates specifically to the Levelling Up White Paper Missions:

- Mission 1 – Living Standards
- Mission 9 – Pride in Place

Building Pride in Place and Increasing Life Chances	
Community & Place	Supporting Local Business
Mission 9. By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.	
Mission 7. By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by five years	Mission 1. By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Mission 8. By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.	
Mission 11. By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.	Mission 2. By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.

Key Policies



Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>West Northamptonshire Corporate Plan 2021-2025</p>	<p>Aspires to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. Aims to create a sustainable recovery, building back better and harnessing the strengths of West Northants’ people, businesses and places to create an inclusive and productive area.</p> <p>There are six priorities underpinning the strategy: green and clean, improved life chances, connected communities, thriving towns and villages, economic development, and robust resource management.</p>	<p>This policy aligns to several interventions including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital funding for net zero infrastructure • funding the development and promotion of a visitor economy • investing in digital infrastructure in local community facilities • funding for local arts, culture and heritage activities • funding impactful volunteering and social action projects.
<p>West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan – Spatial Options Consultation - Draft for Cabinet (2021)</p>	<p>The draft spatial vision in consultation is ‘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’.</p> <p>There are 16 draft spatial objectives which will directly support the 6 Corporate Plan priorities: climate change, green infrastructure and natural capital, landscape, heritage, education and skills, health and wellbeing, infrastructure and development, connections, protecting and balancing urban communities, supporting town centres, housing, supporting rural communities, economic advantage, specialist business development, rural diversification and employment, the visitor economy.</p>	<p>The draft spatial vision aligns closely to the interventions proposed by rural UKSPF including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital investment for net zero infrastructure • diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites, • developing and promoting the visitor economy • creating and improving local rural green spaces • funding improvements to existing cultural, historical and heritage institutions • active travel enhancements • funding volunteering and social action projects.

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>A Proposed Plan to Support Northamptonshire’s Rural Land Based Enterprises</p>	<p>Identifies the challenges facing rural businesses including threat to infrastructure from increased flooding, food insecurity amongst the agricultural sector, poor public transport, lack of community infrastructure and planning restrictions around farm diversification and modernisation. There is need for rural businesses to reduce carbon emissions, increase digitisation and make sure communities are self-sustaining and wealth-generating in a globalised world.</p> <p>Priority activities identified include adapting to climate change via land management mitigation techniques and land developed to energy crops; establishing specialist, affordable rural land based business advice and skills training; increased sustainable food production; increased number of tourism businesses and staycations infrastructure; pursuing innovation through digital connectivity, renewable energy and a circular economy</p>	<p>This policy is aligned with interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversification of farm businesses outside agriculture • investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites. • funding small scale investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure • providing digital infrastructure • rural circular economy projects • funding the development and promotion of a visitor economy

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
West Northamptonshire Sustainability Strategy	<p>Outlines five strategic milestones: developing a plan around mapping initiatives to sustainable development goals; partnership and collaboration between individuals, businesses and institutions; sustainability pledges; developing indicators for success; reporting and stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>Supported interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding small scale investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure • funding for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation.
West Northamptonshire Anti-Poverty Strategy 2022-2025	<p>Aspires for West Northamptonshire to be fairer and more inclusive, where everyone is able to live their best life, prosperous and fulfilling, free from poverty and inequality. It focuses on three key priorities: supporting people who are struggling in poverty now, preventing people from falling into poverty in the first place, continuing to use strategic influence to get a better deal for communities in West Northants.</p>	<p>This goal aligns closely to the interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proposing funding for impactful volunteering or social action projects which development social and human capital.
Vision for Northamptonshire Rural Enterprise (2021)	<p>The vision identifies the potential for the rural economy to sustainably grow, and add value to the wider local, regional and national economy. Key rural sectors that act as the focus for the Vision include farming, forestry, food and tourism.</p> <p>Aspired strategic goals of the Vision are defined as the growth of business within the rural economy, strengthening the rural communities, as well as the safeguarding, and protection, of native assets to promote a sustainable, healthy, natural and green economy.</p> <p>To achieve these goals, and to create a vibrant future, five priority areas that need to be tackled are highlighted as: the climate crisis, business support and skills, local food systems, rural tourism and innovation.</p>	<p>This policy is aligned with interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diversification of farm businesses outside agriculture • developing and promoting the visitor economy • investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including R&D sites.

Local Policy Context

Local Policy	Summary of Policy	Aligned to Rural England Prosperity Fund interventions
<p>A proposed plan to support Northamptonshire’s Rural Land-Based Enterprise (2021)</p>	<p>Designed to ensure opportunities for future rural development activities are not missed in the county, by outlining targeted support for businesses which produce food, and manage Northamptonshire’s land-based environment. This strategy is presented over three separate documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A Proposed plan to support Northamptonshire’s rural land-based enterprises. 2) Vision for Northamptonshire’s Rural Enterprises 3) Northamptonshire's Rural Development Strategy Evidence Base Document 	<p>This policy is align to interventions including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital investment in micro and small enterprises for net zero infrastructure and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation.
<p>Rural Northamptonshire- A Plan (September 2016)</p>	<p>Developed in partnership with key representatives of sectors important to the rural economy, the forward thinking Rural Plan addresses four key themes. These include: improved and efficient infrastructure and housing, economic growth through dynamic and innovative rural business, promoting and supporting the social environment including skills and jobs, and finally, protecting the natural environment and enhancing the support of sustainable development.</p> <p>From these themes, a number of priorities have been identified for rural areas, whereby intervention and support would aid further sustainable growth.</p>	<p>This policy aligns with interventions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • growing the local social economy and supporting innovation including community businesses and R&D sites, • providing digital infrastructure • rural circular economy projects • capital finding for net zero and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture.

LEADER

The LEADER scheme was part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Money from the programme was given to Local Action Groups (LAGs) so that they can award grants locally to businesses and organisations that apply for it. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) managed the LEADER scheme nationally on behalf of Defra and made payments to successful applicants.

LEADER funded farmers, growers, foresters, other local rural businesses and rural community organisations to help:

- create jobs;
- develop and grow rural businesses; and
- support the rural economy.

Grants were typically limited to a maximum of 40% of the project's total eligible costs. However, some types of projects could get higher rates.

The minimum grant that could be applied for is £5,000. The maximum grant amount was typically up to £100,000.

To be successful, applications had to contribute to one or more of Defra's 6 priorities for LEADER, which were to:

- increase farm productivity;
 - support micro and small businesses and farm diversification;
 - boost rural tourism;
 - provide rural services;
 - provide cultural and heritage activities; and
 - increase forestry productivity
- The grant amount depended on:
- the type of project;
 - the size of the business; and
 - the costs involved

LEADER Programme Evaluation

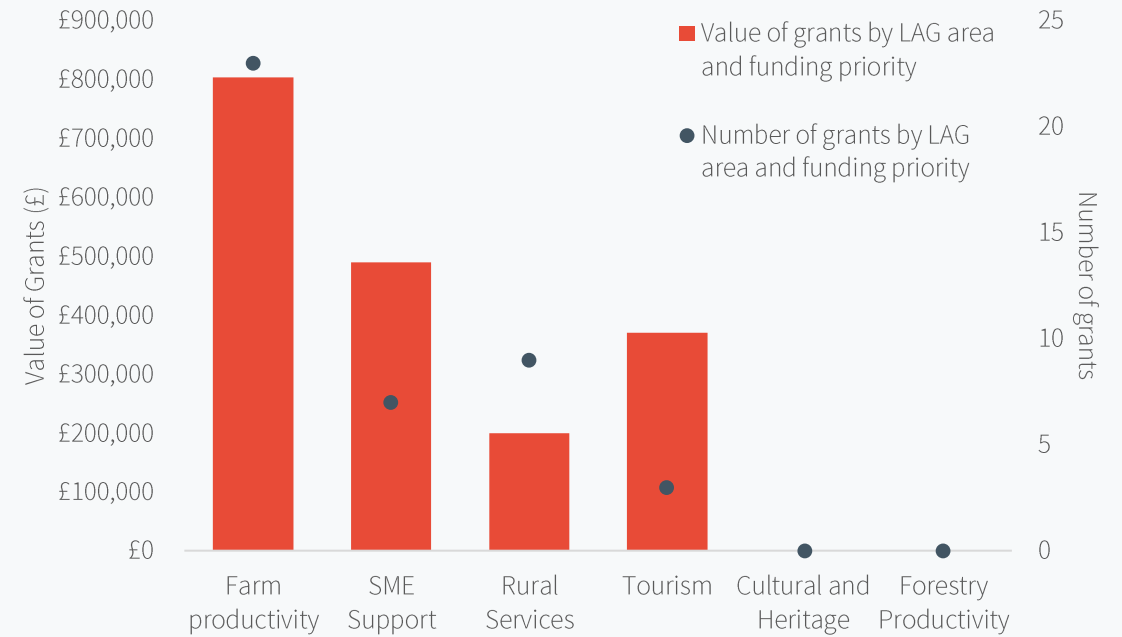
42 grants were given in the North and West Northamptonshire area in total. With a total of £1,864,135 given in grant funding.

The majority of this was given to farm productivity projects, where £804,332 was administered to 23 projects.

Tourism projects were given a relatively larger amount per project with £370,134 administered to 3 projects.

Cultural and Heritage, and Forestry productivity projects were not provided with any grant funding.

Value and Number of grants by funding priority



Performance against programme aims by LAG area

Priority	Northants
Number of projects	42
Number of businesses benefitting in total (this includes those directly receiving a grant, those benefitting from equipment supported via a grant via a grant via contracting services and those benefitting as a supplier to businesses receiving a grant)	193
Total number of FTE jobs (achieved and expected to be created in the future)	84

Community & place



Demographics

In 2020, there were 407,000 people living in West Northamptonshire, of these 176,400 (43%) live in the rural area. This total population has increased by 4% since 2015 and **the rural population has increased by 7%**. The trend reflects the growth seen across each of the following age groups:

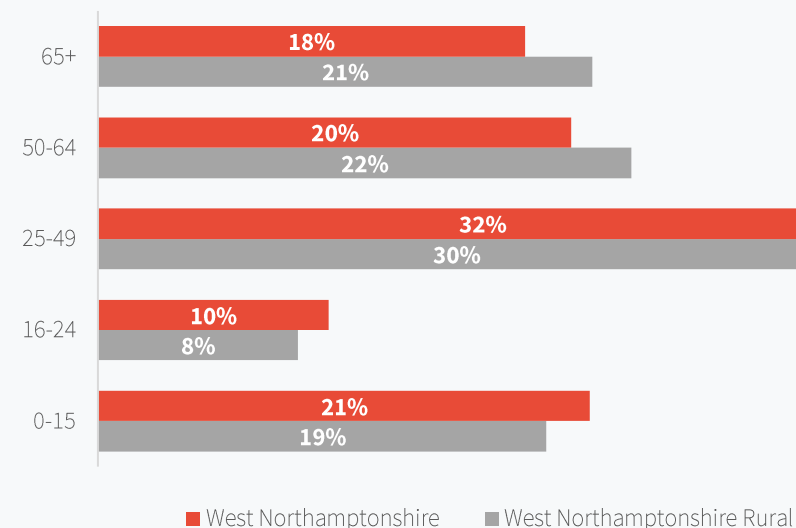
- **0-15** (+7% at District Level, 6% at rural level)
- **16-64** (+6% at District Level, 5% at rural level)
- **65+** (+12% at District Level, 12% at rural level)

East Northants, South Northants and Daventry, the most rural districts in the county, made up 37% of the districts total population which was significantly higher than the national average. Rural areas only made up a total of 17% of the national population.

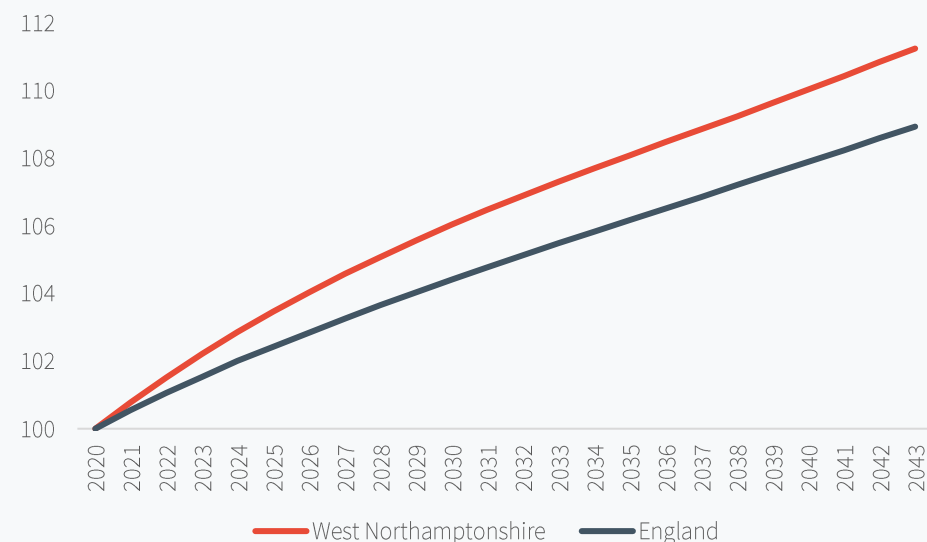
To 2043, West Northamptonshire is expected to experience faster population growth (11%) than England (9%). Broken down by age group, this reveals:

- **0-15** will stagnate at 0% (versus -2% nationally)
- **16-64** will increase by 5% (versus 3% nationally)
- **65+** will increase by 45% (versus 40% nationally)

Demographic split



Population change (2020-2043)



7%
pop.
Growth
2015-2020

107k
Working
age pop.
2020

61%
Working
age pop.
2020

10%
BAME
compared
to 15%
nationally

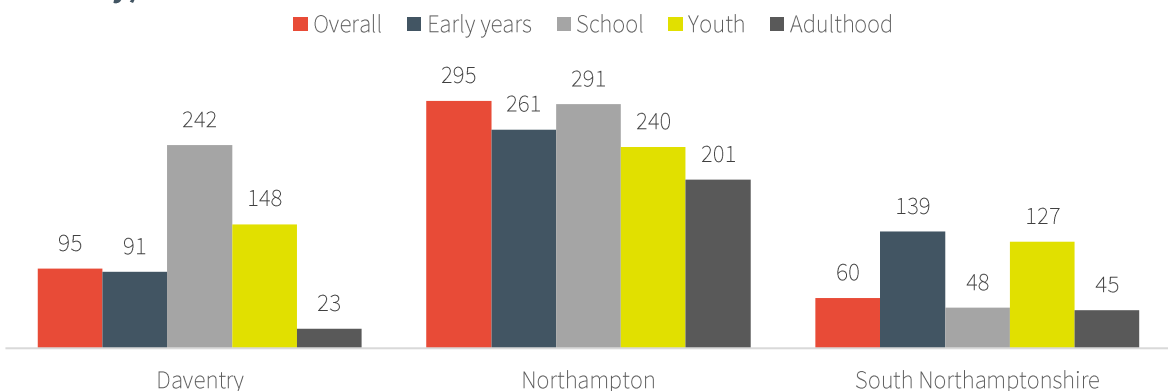


Deprivation and Mobility

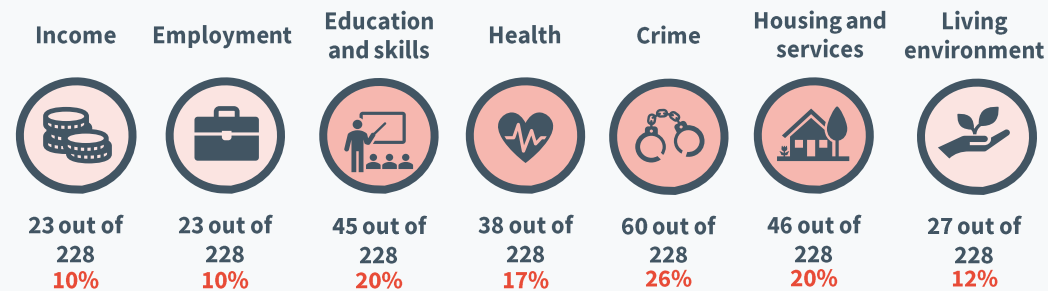
29% of LSOAs in West Northamptonshire are in the top 40% most deprived nationally, with pockets of deprivation seen around Daventry and Northampton. Overall deprivation is concentrated in Northamptonshire and parts of Daventry. Looking at individual domains of deprivation, barriers to housing and services is a significant driver of deprivation in West Northamptonshire with 52% of LSOAs among the 40% most deprived nationally.

Northampton has low overall social mobility, ranking at 295 out of 324 local authorities. On the other hand, Daventry and South Northamptonshire have above average social mobility overall, ranking at 95 and 60 out of 324 local authorities respectively. However, in Daventry, social mobility is relatively poor for those at the school life stage (242 out of 324 local authorities).

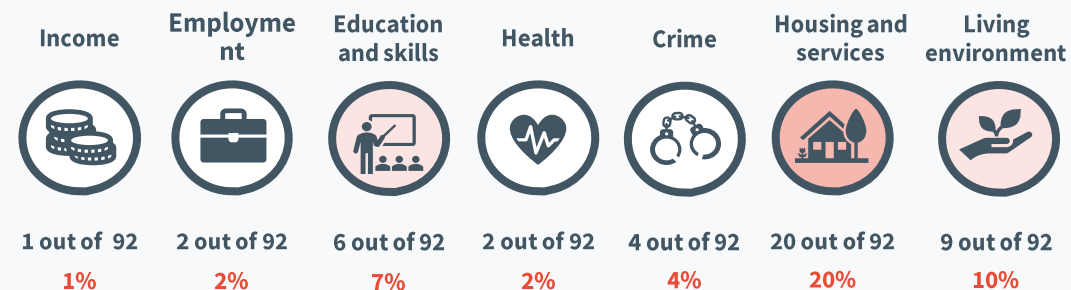
Social mobility ranking in West Northamptonshire (higher value indicates lower social mobility)



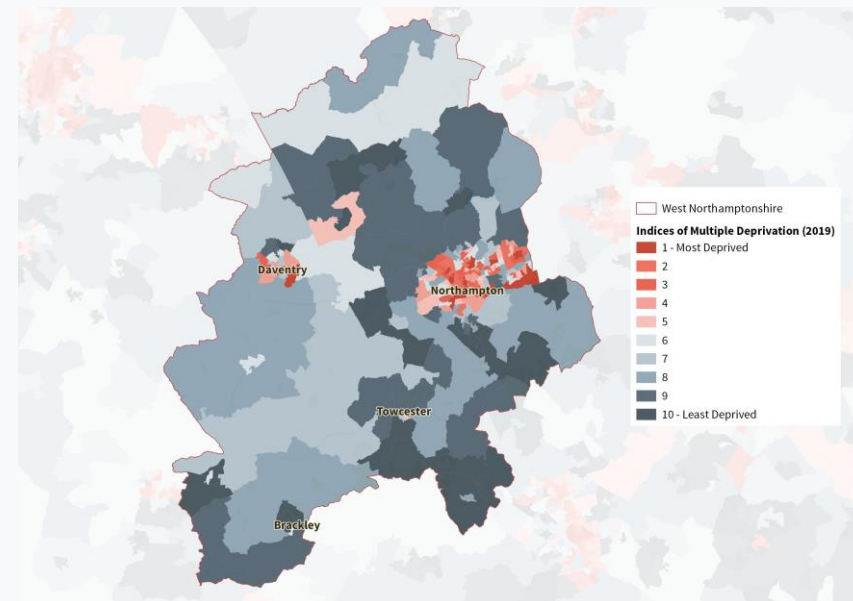
LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived nationally in West Northamptonshire (2019)



LSOAs in the top 20% most deprived nationally in Rural West Northamptonshire (2019)



Overall deprivation in West Northamptonshire, 2019



Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019; Social Mobility Index, 2017



Cost of Living Crisis

The Centre for progressive policy has created the Cost of Living Crisis Vulnerability Index to gain a greater understanding of which places will be worst hit without further government support.

Indicators include: food insecurity, fuel poverty, child poverty, universal credit claimant count, economic inactivity (working age population), low pay, median earnings and housing affordability ratio.

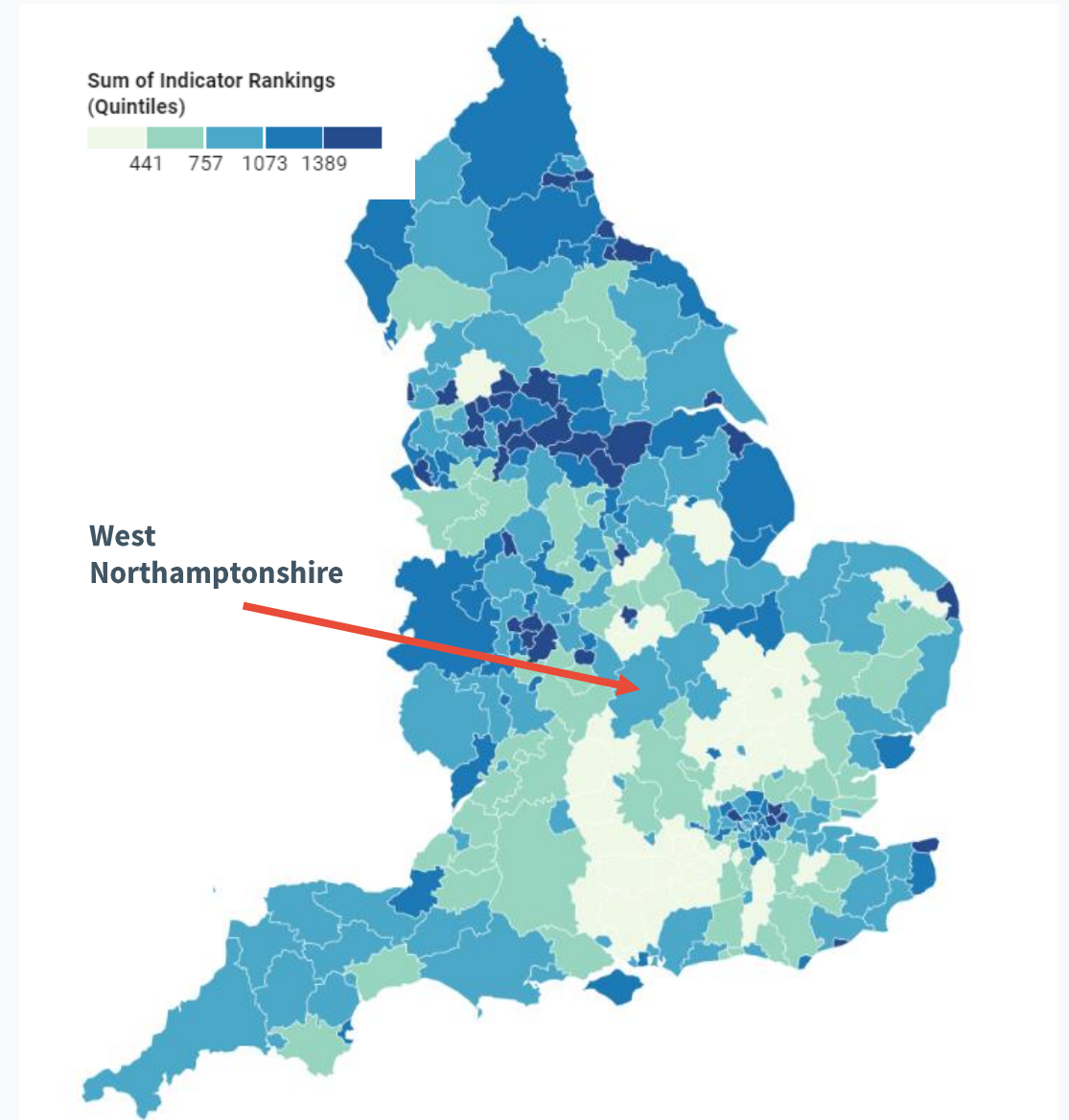
This is highly relevant given that rising energy, food, and housing costs have emerged as some of the most significant drivers of general inflation at this point of the crisis.

The index takes into account:

- a place's relative risk of more people being pulled into poverty; and
- the relative risk of those who were already hard up being pushed into destitution.

West Northamptonshire has a score of 818 which puts it in the middle of the rankings compared to the UK (161st position out of 307)

In rural West Northamptonshire there are higher levels of existing levels of deprivation relative to work-based vulnerability.



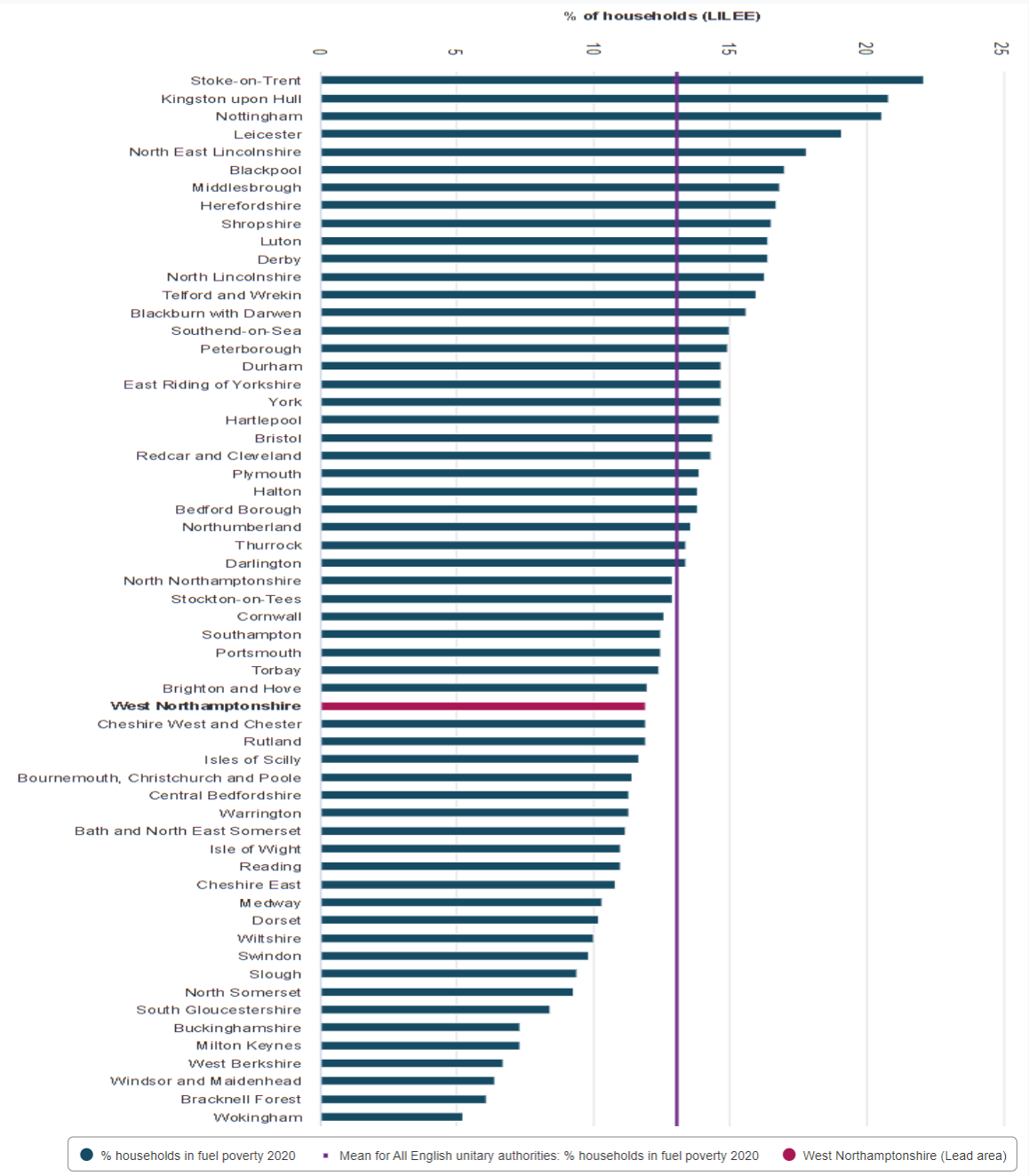
Fuel Poverty

Since 2021 (2019 data) the Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) indicator considers a household to be fuel poor if: (i) it is living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D, E, F or G as determined by the most up-to-date Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Rating (FPEER) methodology; and (ii) its disposable income (income after housing costs (AHC) and energy needs) would be below the poverty line.

The Government is interested in the amount of energy people need to consume to have a warm, well-lit home, with hot water for everyday use, and the running of appliances. Therefore, fuel poverty is measured based on required energy bills rather than actual spending. This ensures that those households who have low energy bills simply because they actively limit their use of energy at home,

Fuel poverty statistics are based on data from the English Housing Survey (EHS).

In 2020, 11.9% of households in West Northamptonshire were experiencing fuel poverty. This is at a similar level to the national average of 12%.



Health and Wellbeing

West Northamptonshire residents' life expectancy is broadly in line with the national average:

- Male (80 versus 79 nationally)
- Female (83 versus 83 nationally)

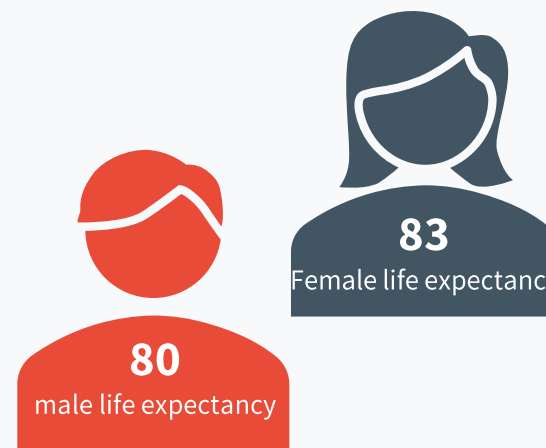
The Northamptonshire CCG is in line with the national average for the prevalence of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

Each wellbeing measure is graded on a ten-point scale, so an improvement of 1 point would be equivalent to a 10% improvement. Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire performed better than the national average across wellbeing measures in 2020.

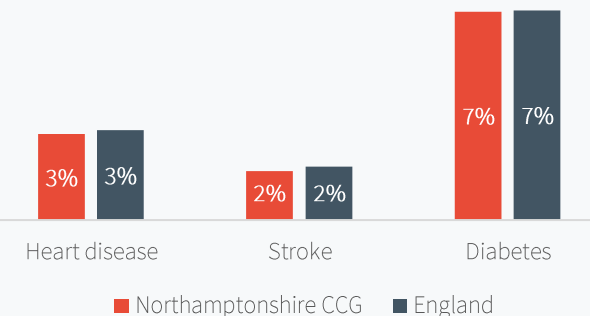
Over the last five years, Daventry saw improvements in happiness and life satisfaction levels, despite them falling nationally, while anxiety increased at a slower pace.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOP) for 2019, shows that 10.8% of older people living in West Northamptonshire were living in poverty, this is lower than the national average of 14.2%

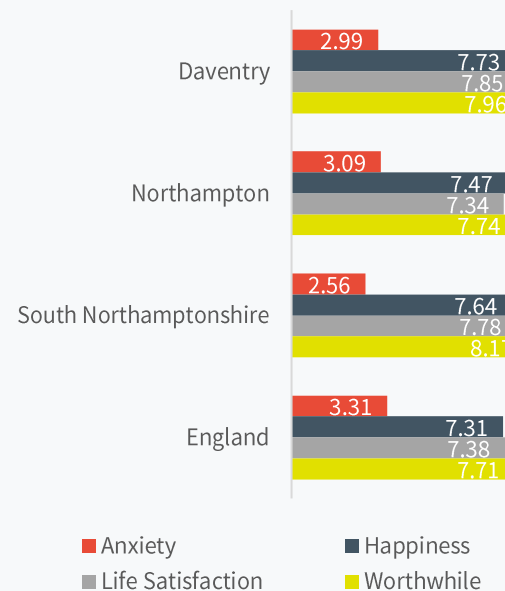
2011 data for the proportion of people aged 65 and over who are living alone in West Northamptonshire is 29.4% which is lower than the national average of 31.5%



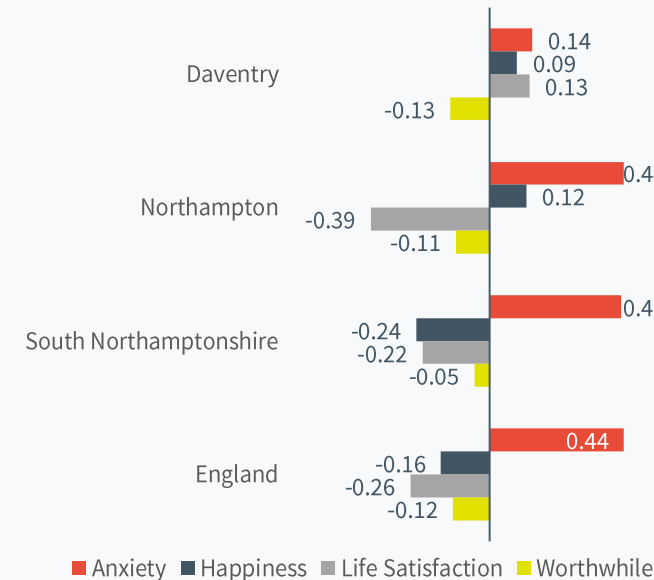
Prevalence of Disease, 2020/21



Levels of Wellbeing, 2020



Changes in Levels of Wellbeing, 2015-2020



Source: Life Expectancy Estimates, ONS, 2019/20; NHS Digital, 2020/21; ONS Personal Well-being Estimates, 2020

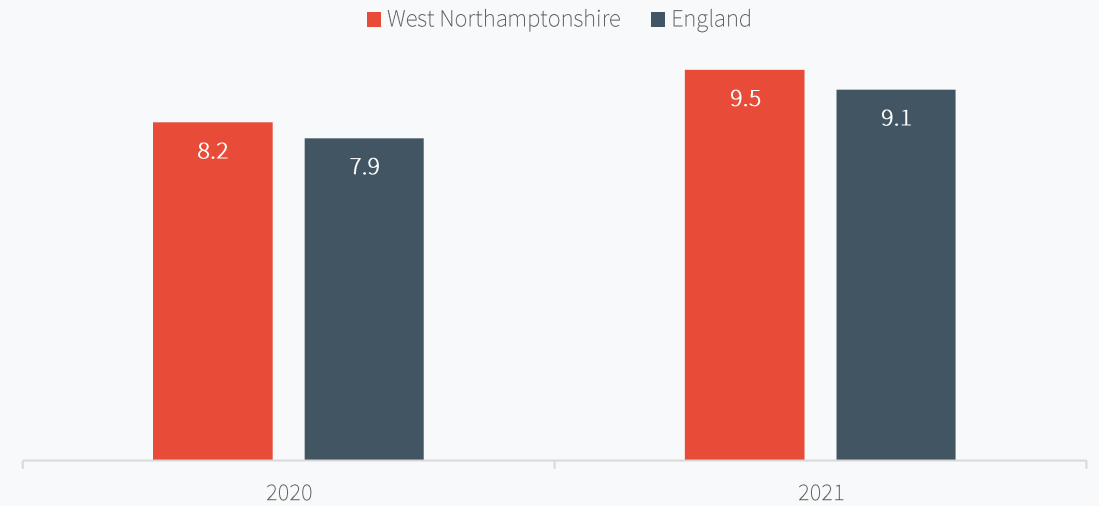
Housing

The average house price in West Northamptonshire in 2021 was £275k, which is 3.5% lower than the national average. Relative to earnings, housing affordability tracks above the national average, with a house price ratio (income relative to local house price) of 9.5 (compared to 10 nationally).

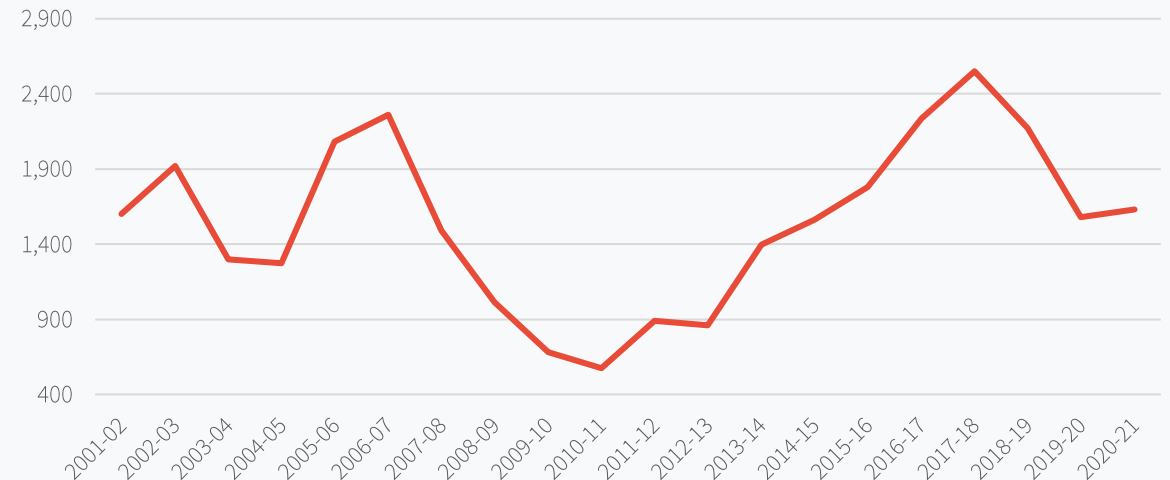
There has been a decline in the net additional housing stock over the past few years, peaking in 2017/18 with an additional 2,552 new houses compared to 1,632 in 2020/21.



Housing Affordability Ratio



Net Additional Housing Stock, West Northamptonshire



Source: DLUHC, Annual Net Additional Dwellings, 2021; ONS, Median House Price, 2022; Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2020; Ofcom Connected Nations, 2022

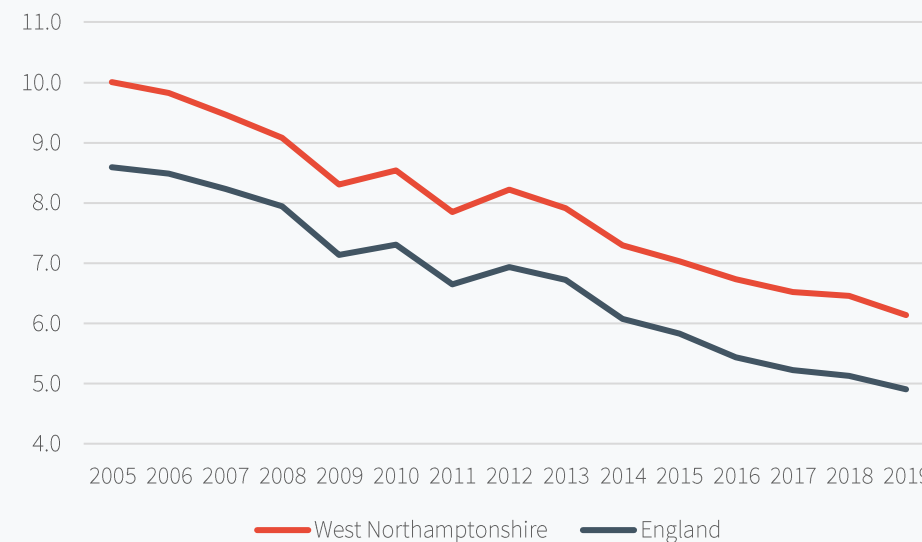
Sustainability

West Northamptonshire currently produces more CO2 emissions per capita (6.1) than the national average (4.9).

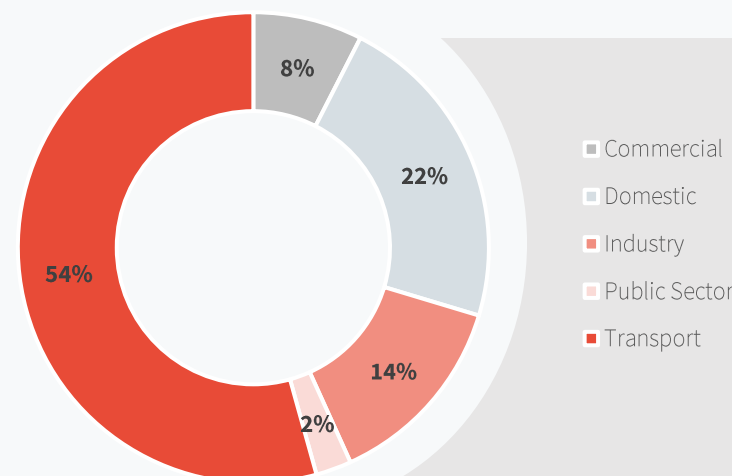
It has experienced a slow decline in CO2 emissions per capita over the past 5 years (-13% versus -16% nationally).

Domestic emissions make up 22% of total emissions and 54% is due to transport.

CO2 per capita



CO2 emissions (t) by source in West Northamptonshire



Source: BEIS, Local and Regional CO2 emissions

425k

green
energy
generated
(MW/h) 2020

231.6

Green
energy
generation
capacity MW
2020

6.1

Per capita
emissions (t)
2019

-13%

CO2 per
capita
change
2015-2019

Climate Action

c1,500 typical homes could be powered each year by the renewable energy produced in West Northamptonshire.

419.6 GWh of renewable energy is currently generated in West Northamptonshire each year. This is below the target set by the government advisors – the Climate Change committee and also lower than the Friends of the Earth’s target for West Northamptonshire.

A 2021 poll by YouGov showed that 62% of 764 people surveyed in West Northamptonshire wouldn’t mind a wind turbine in their area. Onshore wind produces the cheapest electricity, so wind farms will lead to reduced energy bills, greatest energy security, and cut carbon emissions.

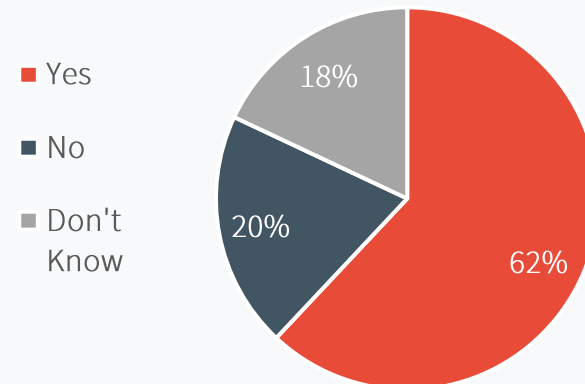
Heat pumps are green alternatives to the climate-wrecking oil and gas traditionally used to heat our homes.

There are currently 1,748 heat pumps in West Northamptonshire. To meet the 2030 target of the Climate Change Committee, 3,434 heat pumps should be installed per year in West Northamptonshire. Friends of the Earth believes West Northamptonshire could install 6,403 heat pumps per year to help keep homes warm and lower emissions.

Renewable Energy Generation



Do people in West Northamptonshire want a wind turbine in the area?



Heat pumps in West /Northamptonshire



Digital Infrastructure

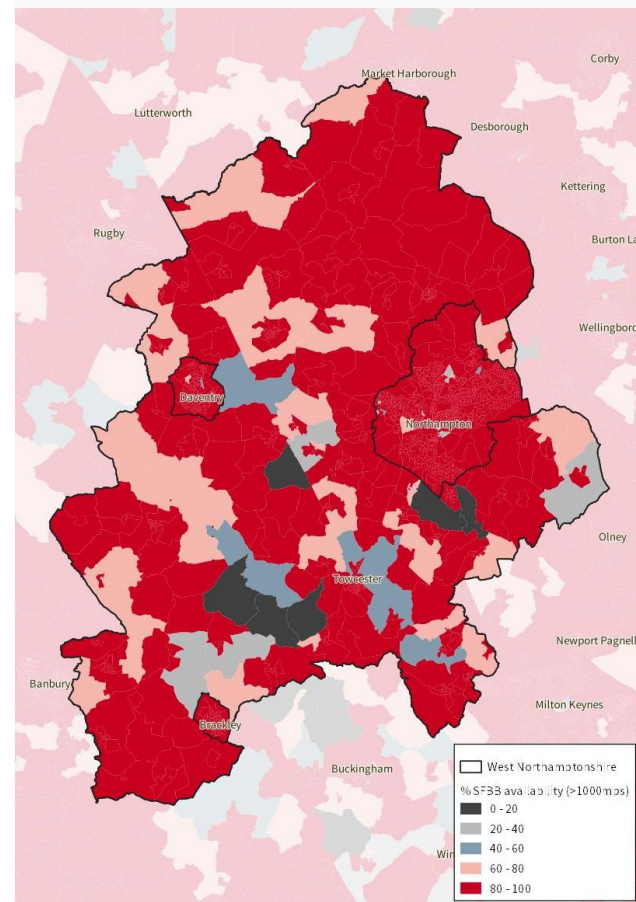
96% of premises in West Northamptonshire have access to superfast broadband (>30mbps) versus 95% nationally. However, outside the urban areas there are pockets of rural areas, including Towcester and rural Daventry, where premise coverage falls to less than 60%.

Only 23% of premises in West Northamptonshire have access to Gigabit available broadband (>1000 mbps) versus 37% nationally. However, coverage across the district markedly differs with pockets of urban areas with 60-80% coverage whilst rural areas such as Towcester and Daventry have less than 10% coverage. Improving broadband coverage is key to achieving the UK Government’s goal of 99% Gigabit coverage by 2030.

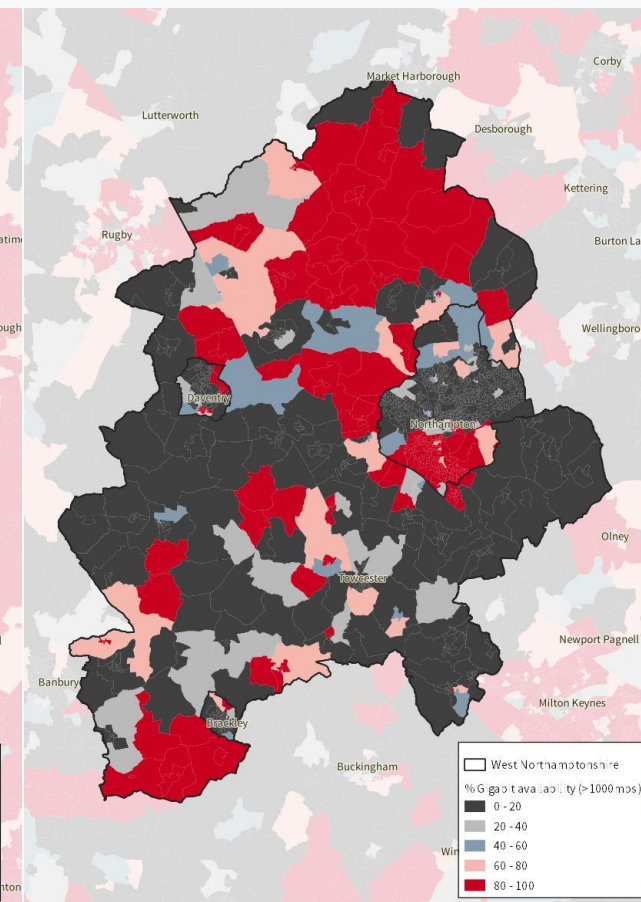
Northamptonshire’s Rural Evidence base acknowledges that Covid-19 has made more people likely to move to the countryside due to better air quality, work-life balance and the flexibility opened up by increased home-working. However, digital connectivity is an important factor underpinning this decision. Northamptonshire’s proximity to London and Oxford positions its to see increased migration from major cities but this will place greater pressure on increased housing stock and fast internet connections.

Improving digital infrastructure is important for businesses to operate, embrace digital technologies, respond to increasing home-working, and help attract and retain a working-age population.

Superfast Broadband Availability (2021)



Gigabit Broadband Availability (2021)



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Circular Economy

Currently, 47% of waste in West Northamptonshire is reused, recycled or composted.

Friends of the Earth believes West Northamptonshire should be more ambitious and aim to reuse, recycle or compost 100% of its household waste by 2030.

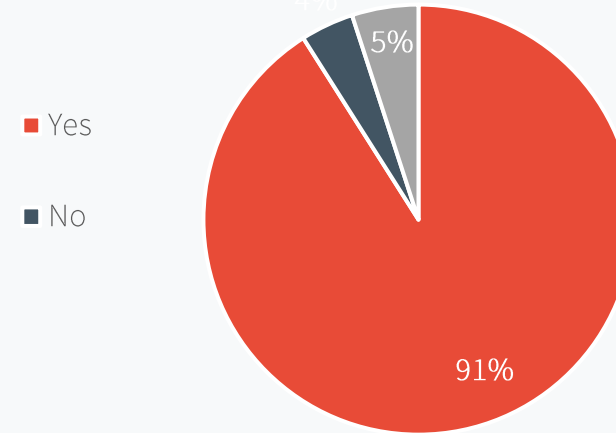
In 2021, YouGov polling showed that of 765 people surveyed in West Northamptonshire, 91% said they make an effort to recycle

Organisations such as TerraCycle offer free recycling programmes for hard to recycle waste. There are a number of recycling drop off points in West Northamptonshire.

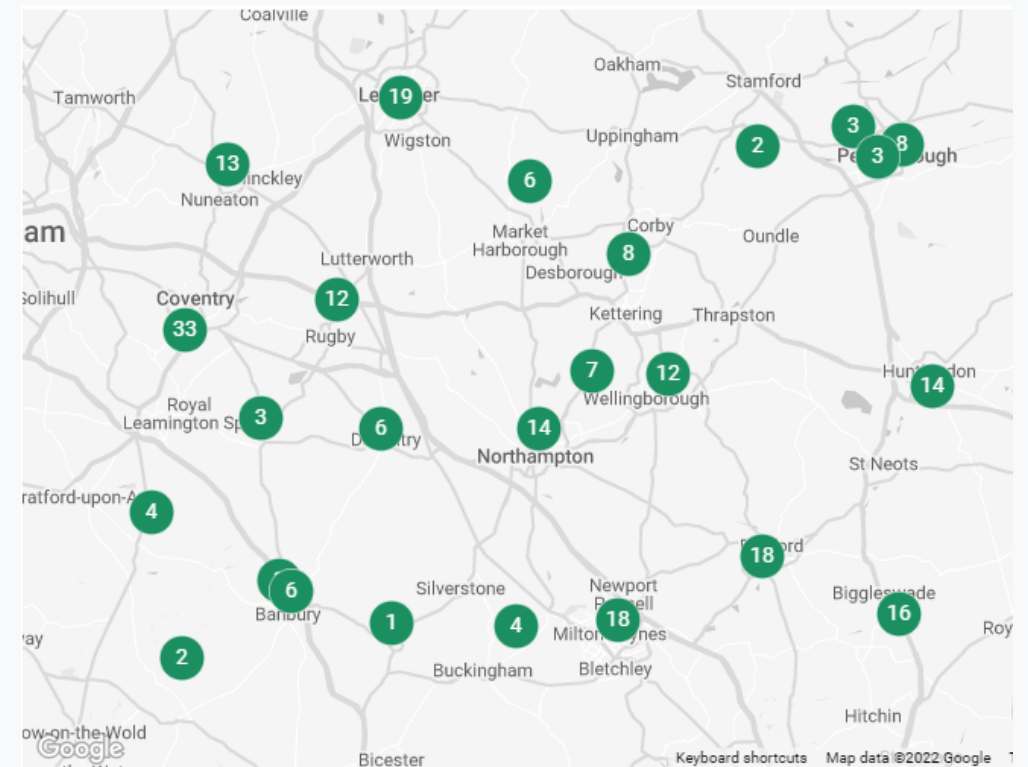
The Council also has a number of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) in; Brixworth, Daventry, Farthinghoe and Towcester

There is an opportunity to build on the provision of circular economy spaces for rural communities. For instance, “Mend and Repair café’s” provide opportunities, particularly for retired skilled individuals and the ageing population to upskill the younger generation and help the community become more sustainable.

Do people in West Northamptonshire make an effort to recycle?



Map of TerraCycle recycling drop off points in West Northamptonshire



Source: Data on the overall proportion on all household waste that was recycled, reused or composted in 2021 was sourced from DEFRA (2022) and the Welsh Government (2022)

Active Travel

Commuting by cycle is rare in West Northamptonshire. Census data from 2011 shows that 2% of people in West Northamptonshire commute to work by cycling.

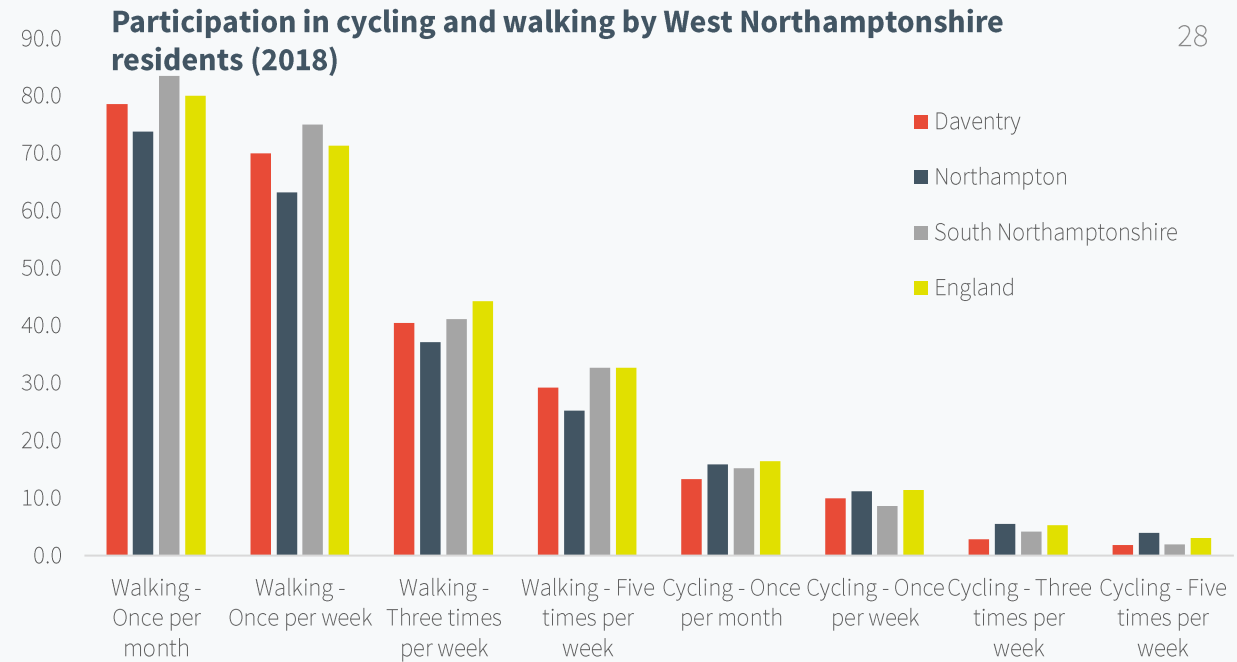
Data by Climate Action shows that 24% of commuter journeys could be by bike, as long as there's decent cycling infrastructure and an uptake in the use of e-bikes.

Green commute means travelling to work via low-carbon options, such as public transport, cycling or walking. 19% of people in West Northamptonshire currently choose greener ways to commute. Of those, 10% walk to work, 2% travel by bike and 7% use public transport.

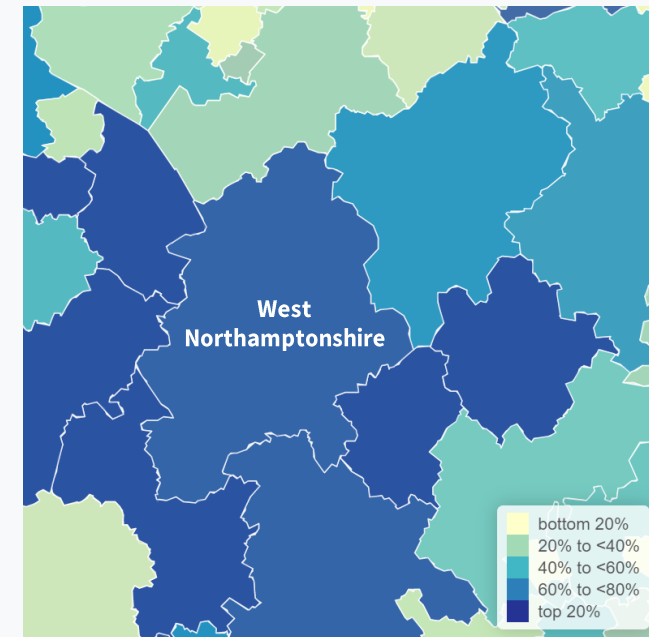
The Climate Change Committee (which advises government) has set West Northamptonshire and other similar local authorities a target of 40% of travel to be made by greener methods. Friends of the Earth set an aim for 60% of all travel for West Northamptonshire

Electric cars and vans help lower fuel costs and noise pollution, and avoid pumping out harmful pollutants. Local authorities can help make electric vehicles (EV) a more attractive choice for their residents by installing public charging points.

There are currently 157 public EV charging points in West Northamptonshire. This ranks it in the top 40% local authorities with an EV density of 39 per 100,000 people. According to government targets, West Northamptonshire should aim to install 2,046 EV charging points by 2030.



EV charging points per 100,000 people, October 2022



Source: Department for Transport, 2022; The Health Foundation National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey, Department for Transport, 2018, Method of Transport to work Census 2011

Arts and Cultural Participation

Data from the Active Lives survey shows the participation of adults (aged 16+) in a number of activities over the last 12 months.

Participation in arts and cultural activities in West Northamptonshire varies across Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire.

In particular, there is below national average participation in the majority of arts and cultural activities in Northampton.

Use of public libraries and participation in dance related activities are below the national average in Daventry and South Northamptonshire.

Participation in the last 12 months	Daventry	Northampton	South Northamptonshire	National Average
Spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or a craft	36.38%	32.95%	36.51%	34.67%
Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity	54.49%	48.14%	56.11%	52.22%
Used a public library service	28.11%	36.93%	31.59%	35.01%
Attended a museum or gallery	44.33%	43.09%	49.35%	46.50%
Dance	16.91%	18.66%	20.72%	21.15%
Creative or artistic dance	3.94%	4.70%	5.66%	4.70%

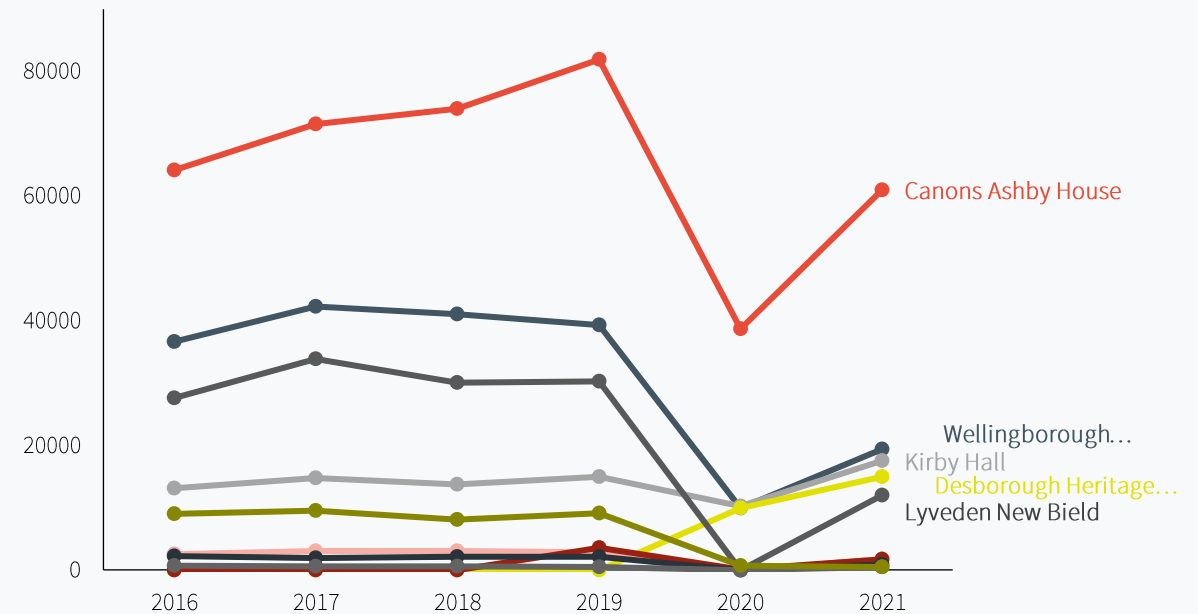
Visitor Attractions

Data from Visit Britain shows that the most visited attraction in West Northamptonshire is the Canons Ashby House in Daventry, which received 60,982 visits in 2021. This is followed by Wellingborough Museum with 19,434 visits and Kirby Hall which received 17,510 visits.

Each of the visitor attractions which reported their data experienced a decline in visitors due to COVID-19 and the impact of the national lockdowns.

The provision of “visitor attractions” in an area not only benefits local residents, who have a pride in place and engagement with their area. It benefits children and young people who visit with school or family members for educational purposes.

These attractions also bring non-residents to West Northamptonshire for leisure and tourism purposes, with the spend of the “purple pound” benefitting local businesses.



Attractions	District	2021	% change in 2018 to 2019	Charging
Canons Ashby House	Daventry	60,982	11%	Yes
Wellingborough Museum	Wellingborough	19,434	-4%	No
Kirby Hall	Northampton	17,510	9%	Yes
Desborough Heritage Centre	Kettering	15,000	-	No
Lyveden New Bield	Peterborough	11,995	1%	Yes
Kirby Muxloe Castle	Northampton	1,742	-8%	Yes
Lampport Hall and Gardens	Northampton	1,704	-	Yes
Harrington Aviation Museum	Northampton	962	-2%	Yes
Wollaston Museum	Wellingborough	492	-8%	No
78 Derngate	Northampton	470	12%	Yes

Data Analysis Summary: Community and Place

Challenges



Ageing population. A rapidly growing ageing population will bring challenges of health and social care needs. This is more acute in the rural parts of West Northamptonshire



Housing supply and affordability issues limit West Northamptonshire's ability to attract and retain working age residents. Housing and services deprivation is particularly acute in rural West Northamptonshire



Low social mobility among adults and young people will limit life chances and progression opportunities. Rural areas show deprivation in education and skills.



Above average CO2 emissions will present a challenge to achieving net zero by 2050. This can be improved through active travel measures.



Access to digital infrastructure. Rural areas have low broadband coverage, especially in Towcester and Daventry. There is a need to improve digital infrastructure

Opportunities



High life expectancy and positive health outcomes will support quality of life and presents an opportunity to capitalise on a large population of older residents to support activity, i.e. volunteering



Large capacity for green energy generation will be key to tackling the climate challenge and encouraging innovation and investment in clean energy.









Need for youth clubs and investment in children's facilities. Including sports pitches and volunteering opportunities. This will help the youth stay out of crime, raise aspirations and improve youth social mobility.



Utilising and promoting rural greenspaces. The abundance of green and open space in rural West Northamptonshire provides an opportunity to use this natural capital as a promotional incentive for attracting visitors and tourists to the area.

Implications for the Rural Fund

Community and Place Interventions	Identified through the Data	Rationale for including
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15		There is low coverage of digital infrastructure in in rural areas, including Towcester and rural Daventry. Speed of broadband can be improved across all areas
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11		The data shows a need for increased EV charging points and community energy schemes. It would improve net zero infrastructure for rural communities (village halls etc.) and support rural tourism activity.
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3		There are an abundance of green spaces in rural West Northamptonshire. These can be better utilised and promoted for festivals and activities creating pride in place and increasing tourism
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer Corresponding with E4		
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6		
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7		Improvements can be made to increase cycle usage and commute to work through greener methods. There are few EV charging points at present.
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects.		Recycling rates can be increased. Mend and repair café's would help improve the circular economy and sustainability for West Northamptonshire
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9		This would help to increase social mobility amongst youth groups, increasing and improving aspirations and prospects and strengthening the employment sector for West Northamptonshire going forward, providing reason for the younger demographic to stay in West Northamptonshire for the longer term.

Community and Place Workshop

A workshop was held on the 3rd October to discuss the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Community and Place theme.

54 stakeholders attended the workshop.

Hatch presented the challenges and opportunities emerging from the data analysis.

Attendees provided feedback on the needs, opportunities and interventions to be selected under the Community and Place theme. Individual comments were captured via virtual “post it notes” which are presented in the following slides.

Community and Place Workshop

+ What are the main **needs** in rural areas of West Northamptonshire to meet the objectives of the Community and Place priority?

Transport is a major issue - making it difficult for the ageing population to access key services
Boddington

Food poverty - compounded by poor transport, higher prices in local shops (if they exist)

Transport poverty in all rural areas, cost of access to supermarkets and shops is higher than cost of shopping

Transport issues can impact access to work opportunities

Food security is a huge issue and impact the cost of living crisis

Rural broadband is an issue - but may be difficult to support with the amount of funding available

Lack of infrastructure for cycling - and other active travel measures - this will help to reduce CO2 emissions

Need to retain younger / working age population - can an overall strategy be considered for this?

Rural strategy / vision document - can these be shared more widely to all

Community and Place Workshop

+ What are the main **opportunities** in rural West Northamptonshire to address the objectives of the Community and Place priority?

community hub for EV charging points as homeowners in the area have challenges to access this at home

Establishing rural hubs for jobs for the younger demographic



Community and Place Workshop

+ Which other types of interventions might be relevant in addressing identified needs and opportunities?

**support for
cultural/historic/
heritage
institutions -
visitors to the
rural area**

There is an opportunity for some of this funding to be used as match funding towards improving community sports pitches. This funding can help bring in significant partnership funding through the Football Foundation. There's a significant shortfall in the former South Northants LA area

**Rural circular
economy -
especially given
food poverty -
opportunity for
composing etc.
local community
hubs**

Survey: Community and Place

- + There were 33 responses to the survey
- + Survey suggested that 42% of funding should be spent on the Community and Place theme
- + 3 survey respondents felt that 100% of the funding should be given to the Community and Place theme
- + 21 responses provided information on how they thought the funding should be split between the community and place interventions (see average proposed split column)
- + There were 12 projects submitted for the Community and Place theme

Intervention	Average Proposed Split %	Number of projects
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	13%	2
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	20%	8
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	14%	5
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. Corresponding with E4	8%	3
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6	4%	2
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	16%	7
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects. New Intervention	14%	5
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	10%	8

Survey: Community and Place

Challenges

Improve transport and infrastructure connectivity to connect new generations to education and work opportunities

Improve bus frequency, connectivity and reliability

Better promotion of historic locations - better signage which will lead to more tourism

Lack of investment into high quality community sports facilities Poor availability of community sports facilities available daytime, evenings and weekends Poor quality of current Council facilities, especially grass football pitches

Climate change

Make better use of green spaces to attract people to the area

Social isolation caused by poor travel infrastructure, dependence on use of private motorized transport contributing to CO2 emissions

Poor digital connectivity and broadband affordability

High rural poverty and need to improve quality and type of housing stock, as well as energy efficiency of homes

Poor active travel infrastructure

Better education and work opportunities to allow the new generation to stay in the county

Access to employment and skills development

Climate Change - Implementing change that protects and enhances our green and natural environment for the long term and not taking decisions for short term economic gain that lead to irrevocable damage to the planet and a deterioration in wellbeing of residents.

Rural tourism in West Northamptonshire is absent. There is no public awareness of what is on offer in rural Northamptonshire and the focus is entirely focused upon major attractions in Northampton

Survey: Community and Place

Opportunities

Using community hubs to facilitate start-ups, upgrade community buildings and encourage co-working

Use strong food and drink offer to support tourism

Use heritage and provision of green space to strengthen tourism, leisure (visitor economy) and health outcomes

Encourage people to shop locally and convey the impact of doing so

Communal wind turbines

Strengthen small communities by giving small grant to rural start up to connect our school children with the work place by giving employers incentives to ensure that our towns thrive

The Provision of Active Travel Routes to enable residents of hamlets and villages to safely access the facilities available to residents of towns and major centres without having to rely on motorised transport. Reducing CO2 emissions from motorised transport, oil and gas fired heating.

Upgrade to village halls to encourage users of all abilities – indoor facilities and ramps

Solar panels and broadband access for community buildings

EV charging points in community hub locations

Capital equipment for sports facilities e.g. multi-use fenced area for sports

Building on thriving training providers such as Northampton and Tresham Colleges and UoN

Natural capital - green and rural areas, unspoilt countryside, canal network - an opportunity to improve well-being and promote visitor economy Heritage assets - protect and promote attractive network of historic buildings in rural village centres - an opportunity to regenerate and create sense of pride, local identity and belonging

Hybrid working - fewer commutes from rural WNC rural villages to Birmingham/MK/London - an opportunity for local businesses to meet the needs of homeworkers, providing hubs for working, lunching and meeting within rural village centres, increasing sense of community amongst those previously unable to contribute due to commuting lifestyle.

Better use of village halls and community spaces – providing activities. Funding for volunteer run community spaces, to enhance the space, better infrastructure both physical and digital

Alignment with Selected SPF Interventions

Interventions		Identified through the Data	Identified through workshops	Identified through the survey	UKSPF funding for WNC	
					Capital	Revenue
Community and Place	Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	✓	✓	13%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	✓	✓	20%	£0	£134,971
	Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	✓		14%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer Corresponding with E4		✓	8%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6			4%	£0	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	✓	✓	16%	£927,199	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects.	✓	✓	14%	N/A	N/A
	Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	✓		10%	£0	£134,971

Supporting local business



Economic output

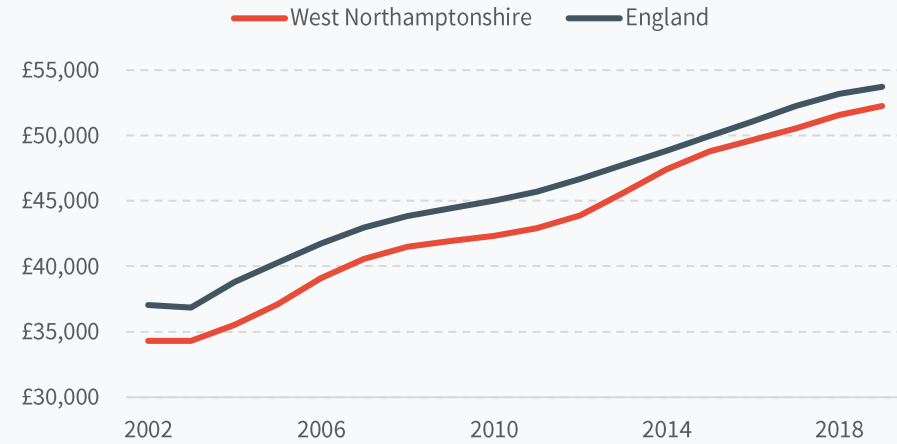
West Northamptonshire has historically faced a productivity challenge compared to the national average, with the gap for GVA per job filled staying constant over the past 5 years.

Productivity is lower compared to England, with GVA per job filled at £52k in 2019 compared to £53k nationally.

West Northamptonshire contributed £12.5bn to the UK economy in 2019, rising by 126% since 1998 compared to a 123% increase nationally. Of this, rural areas contributed £4.6bn (37%), rising by 107% since 1998. Since 2010, the gap between Rural GVA output, West Northamptonshire and England has widened.

The UK Competitiveness Index forecasts that West Northamptonshire will experience a GVA growth rate of 1.85 over the next 20 years, ranking 120th out of 360 localities and 1st out of the Northamptonshire local authorities.

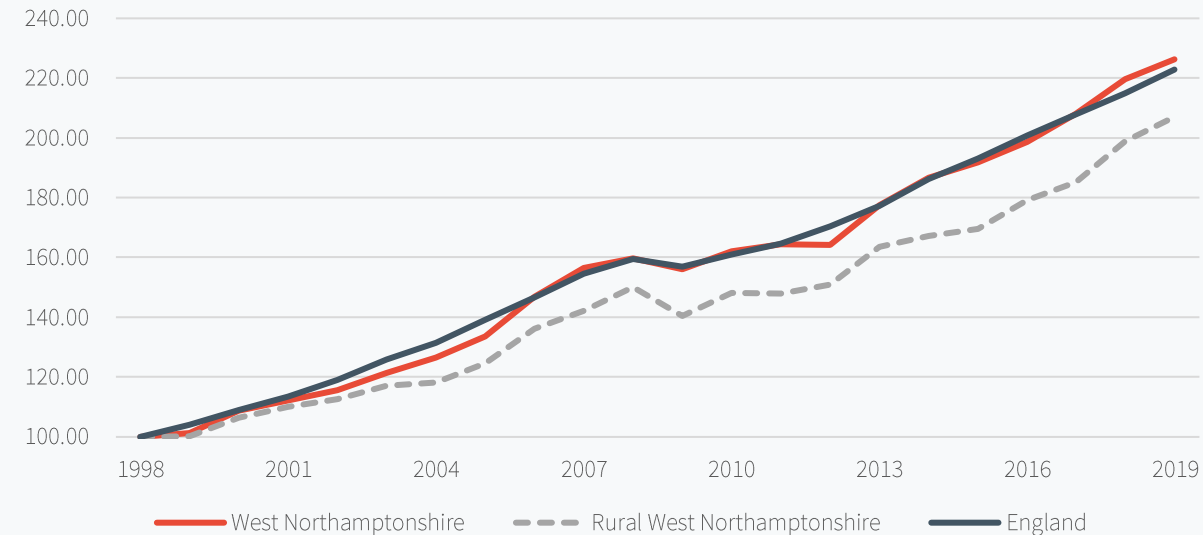
GVA per job filled, 2019



£52k
GVA per job filled 2019

£5.4m
GVA 2019

GVA index change (1998-2019)



Source: ONS, Gross Value Added (Balanced), 2019



Business Base

There are 21,000 businesses in West Northamptonshire with 10,200 in the rural area (48%). The business base in West Northamptonshire has increased by 11% since 2017 whilst rural West Northamptonshire has only witnessed 1% growth compared to 4% increase nationally.

There are a number of business specialisms including:

- Public administration (LQ of 3.0)
- Agriculture and forestry (LQ of 2.4)
- Professional, scientific and technical (LQ of 1.1)

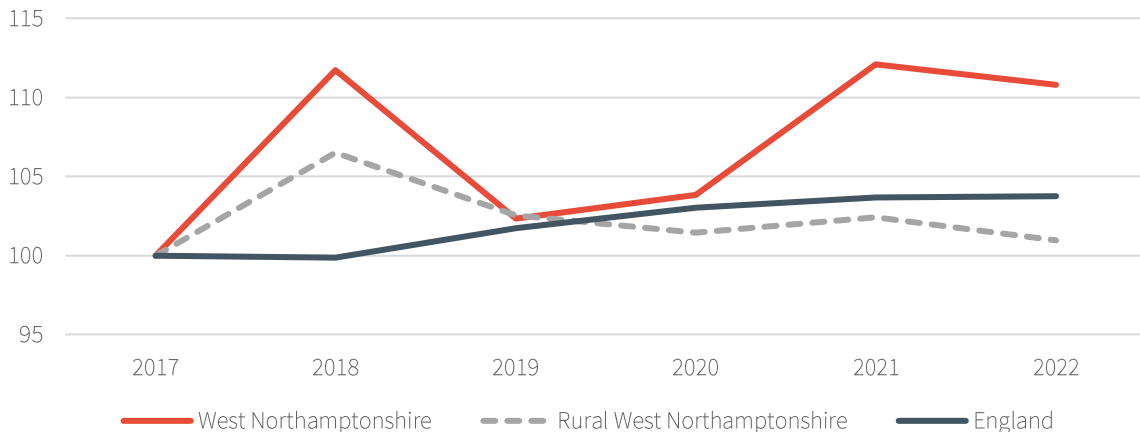
Despite low business growth, there are notably more businesses per 1,000 working aged adults in rural West Northamptonshire (95) compared to West Northamptonshire (84) and the national rate (76).

84
business density in West Northants

95
business density in rural West Northants

76
Business density in England

Business count index change (2016-2022)



Business specialism in West Northamptonshire (2017-2022)

Sector	West Northamptonshire			West Northamptonshire Rural		
	Total 2022	Change (%)	LQ ¹	Total 2022	Change (%)	LQ ¹
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	955	-1%	1.2	930	-1%	2.4
Mining, quarrying & utilities	95	6%	0.8	55	10%	1.0
Manufacturing	1,010	4%	1.0	575	0%	1.1
Construction	2,920	30%	1.0	1,380	21%	1.0
Motor trades	640	2%	1.1	360	1%	1.2
Wholesale	750	1%	0.9	405	-7%	1.0
Retail	2,160	120%	1.3	510	13%	0.6
Transport & storage (inc postal)	2,010	23%	1.9	510	7%	1.0
Accommodation & food services	915	21%	0.7	410	14%	0.7
Information & communication	1,160	-14%	0.7	645	-10%	0.8
Financial & insurance	335	5%	0.7	170	26%	0.7
Property	660	18%	0.8	385	15%	0.9
Professional, scientific & technical	2,890	-20%	0.9	1,770	-10%	1.1
Business administration & support services	2,270	34%	1.3	890	-4%	1.0
Public administration & defence	120	9%	1.9	90	-10%	3.0
Education	360	-9%	1.0	195	-7%	1.1
Health	660	-20%	0.8	265	-10%	0.7
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	1,150	4%	0.8	635	6%	1.0
Total	21,060	11%	1.0	10,170	1%	1.0

¹LQ refers to Location Quotient, a measure of how specialized/concentrated activity is in an area. It is based on the relative share of employment in an industry within an area compared to the share nationally. An LQ greater than 1 indicates relative specialization/concentration.

Business and Enterprise

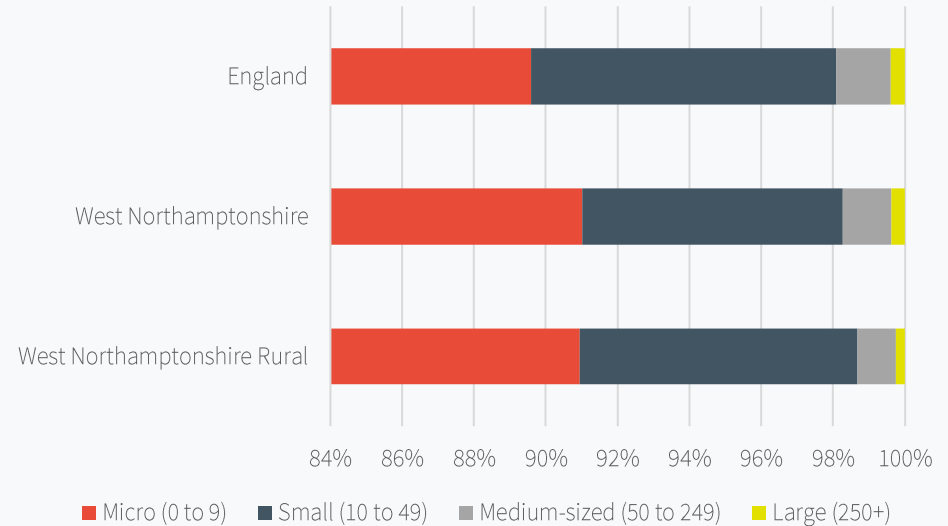
The majority of businesses in West Northamptonshire’s rural areas are micro businesses (91%) which is the same as the wider district. There are fewer small and medium businesses (8%) than the national average (10%).

West Northamptonshire has a level of entrepreneurship that is in line with the national average, at 10 business births per 1,000 working age people. Since 2016, self-employment has decreased faster than regional and national trends, with a 12% drop in self-employment compared to a 1% increase nationally.

There were 4,003 business incorporations in 2021 in West Northamptonshire compared to 3,320 during 2020. The largest incorporations were:

- Construction (270 business incorporations)
- Financial and professional services (267 business incorporations)

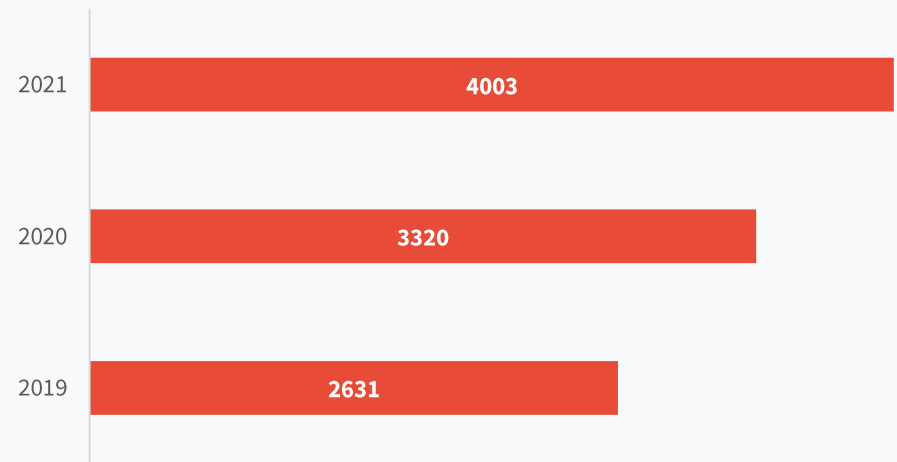
Business size



115 net births minus deaths (2020)

-12% change in self-employed

Business incorporations, 2019-2022



548 Business inc. 2022 (to date)

42.8% 5 year business survival rate

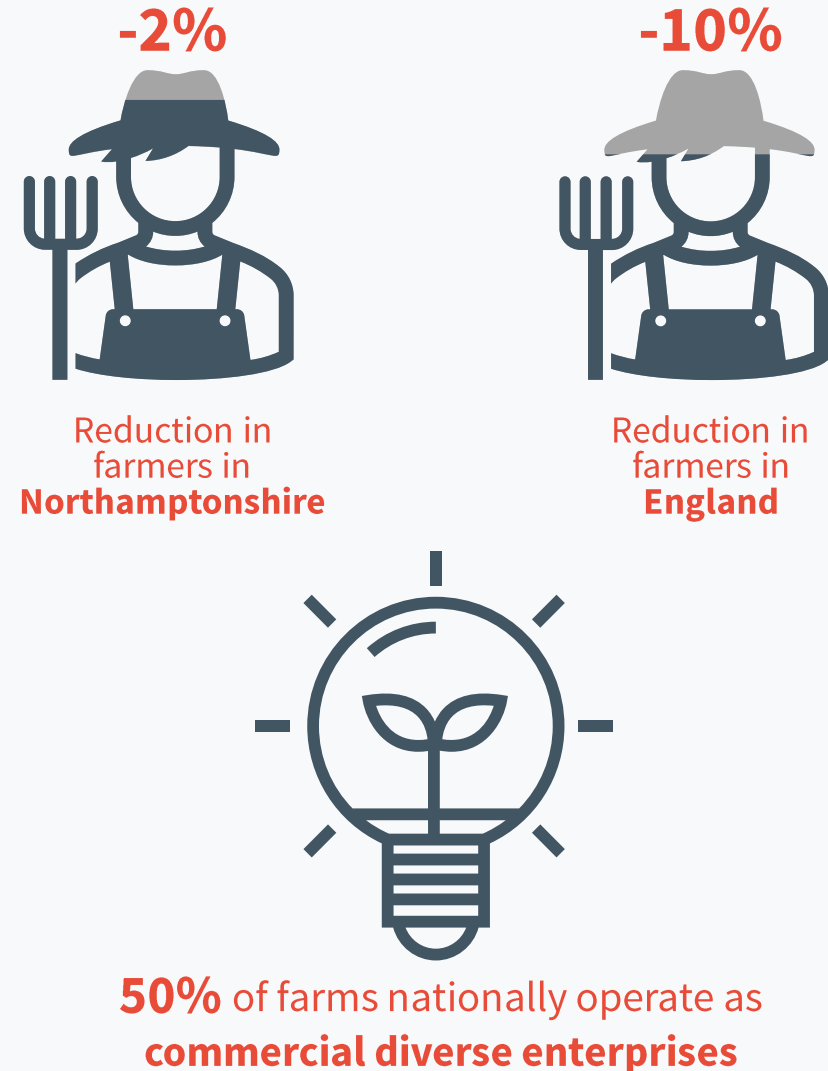
Source: ONS Business Count, 2021; Companies House, 2019-2022; ONS Business Demography, 2021

Farming

The Northamptonshire Evidence Base acknowledges that farming has a long history in Northamptonshire. However, over the last 20 years the industry has experienced changes in the district, including:

- 37% reduction in dairying as a farm type, allied with a 70% decrease in total dairy cattle since 2010 (versus 45% nationally)
- Farmed woodland has doubled and is 4% of the land area, comparable to England as a whole
- Farmers as a proportion of the labour force has fallen by 2% since 2000 compared to 10% nationally
- Nationally, 50% of farms now operate at some level of commercial diversification enterprise such as alternative energy generation or using soil for carbon sinks (absorption)

These changes indicate the shift in how farming and the agriculture sector operates in West Northamptonshire. With the loss of Basic Payment by 2027 and the growing shift towards carbon reduction, supporting rural businesses through farm diversification and investing in equipment, technology and infrastructure is key to protecting this important industry.



Innovation

Since 2004, approximately 169 R&D, smart and innovation, and knowledge transfer projects have been funded in West Northamptonshire.

Of these, over 90% have been funded in the top 3 sectors:

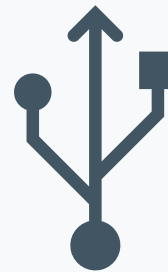
- Manufacturing, Materials & Mobility (40%)
- Responsive Technology (33%)
- Clean growth and infrastructure (12%)

As a proportion of the 248 Innovate UK projects funded in Northamptonshire since 2004, West Northamptonshire makes up 68% of total projects. This is higher than the proportion of businesses in West Northamptonshire compared to the total business base across the Northamptonshire region (56%).

Projects funded by Innovate UK since 2004, West Northamptonshire

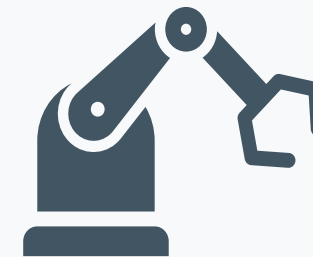
Sector	Total projects	%	Funding (£)
Manufacturing, Materials & Mobility	68	40%	13,335,302
Responsive Technology	56	33%	3,838,678
Clean Growth & Infrastructure	21	12%	2,464,864
Ageing Society, Health & Nutrition	9	5%	967,866
AI & Data Economy	8	5%	1,265,823
Connect	3	2%	2,100
Global	3	2%	505,346
Strategy	1	1%	50,010
Total	169	100%	22,429,989

40%



Responsive technology

33%



Manufacturing

12%



Clean growth & infrastructure

Labour market stock

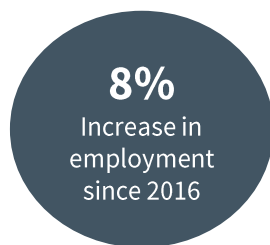
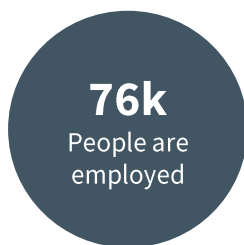
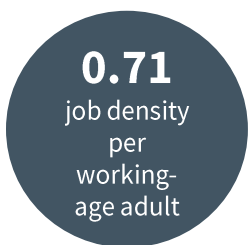
In 2021, there were 226,000 people employed in West Northamptonshire, an employment increase of 12% since 2016 compared to a 4% growth in England.

Of these, 76,000 were employed in the rural area (34%). Rural employment has increased at a slightly slower rate of 8% since 2016 but still exceeds England.

Sector specialisms in the rural area include:

- Transport & Storage (LQ of 2.3)
- Motor trades (LQ of 1.7)
- Arts, entertainment and recreation (LQ of 1.5)

West Northamptonshire’s rural area has a job density of 0.71 per working aged resident compared to 0.90 in West Northamptonshire and 0.84 nationally, indicating a lower level of employment opportunity whilst highlighting the labour supply imperative.



Employment count (2016-2021)

Sector	West Northamptonshire			West Northamptonshire Rural		
	2021 Total	Change (%)	LQ	2021 Total	Change (%)	LQ
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	900	-10%	0.3	125	67%	0.1
Mining, quarrying & utilities	1,500	20%	0.6	450	50%	0.5
Manufacturing	18,000	0%	1.1	8,000	0%	1.4
Construction	9,000	0%	0.8	4,000	14%	1.1
Motor trades	6,000	33%	1.5	2,250	29%	1.7
Wholesale	12,000	-8%	1.5	2,500	-38%	0.9
Retail	19,000	19%	0.9	7,000	40%	1.0
Transport & storage (inc postal)	22,000	16%	1.9	9,000	13%	2.3
Accommodation & food services	11,000	-15%	0.7	5,000	-17%	0.9
Information & communication	6,000	33%	0.6	3,000	50%	0.9
Financial & insurance	10,000	25%	1.2	700	75%	0.3
Property	2,500	11%	0.6	1,250	25%	0.8
Professional, scientific & technical	15,000	-6%	0.7	8,000	14%	1.1
Business administration & support services	29,000	38%	1.4	7,000	-13%	1.0
Public administration & defence	9,000	29%	1.0	1,750	40%	0.6
Education	16,000	14%	0.8	6,000	20%	0.9
Health	28,000	12%	0.9	5,000	0%	0.5
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	11,000	10%	1.1	5,000	25%	1.5
Total	225,900	12%	1.0	76,025	8%	1.0

Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, 2021; Annual Population Survey, 2020

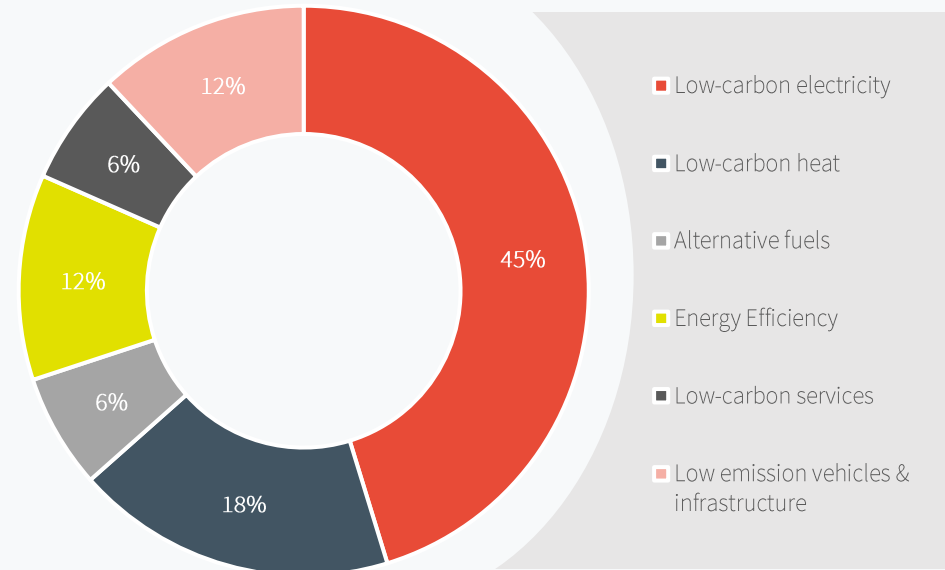
Low Carbon employment

The Local Government Association estimates that by 2050 there will be 1.2m total jobs in the low carbon and renewable energy sector.

The East Midlands will be home to 8% of these jobs. Of this, West Northamptonshire is estimated to host 10% (9,372). These green jobs are expected to be predominantly within the low carbon electricity sector (45%).

This will have implications for green skills and business support to enable residents and businesses to access the opportunities presented by low carbon in West Northamptonshire.

Employment by Low Carbon Sectors in West Northamptonshire, 2050



Data Analysis Summary: Supporting Local Business

Challenges



Low business growth. Whilst West Northamptonshire has experienced above national average growth in its business base, rural areas have lagged behind and not been able to benefit from the boost in business attraction.



Digital cold spots in rural areas threatens future business investment and deters people from living and working in areas such as Towcester and Daventry.



Declining self-employment. This reflects increased presence of PAYE opportunities and their associated job security, as well as low levels of entrepreneurialism linked to business and skills support.



Low job density. There are fewer job opportunities for working-aged residents in rural areas than wider West Northamptonshire. This creates challenges for attracting and retaining working aged people. There are also issues around travel to access jobs.

Opportunities



Business Support provision. A strong business support ecosystem will help grow rural area's business base by providing knowledge exchange, networking and access to new markets e.g. newly launched ExploreWN app will support businesses across West Northamptonshire to reach customers.



Create an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Supporting entrepreneurship through tapping into rural areas' high business density will grow the business base whilst boosting high quality local employment and counteracting the decline in self-employment.





Recently announced cost of living support programme will work with local people and partner organisations in an effort to counteract external pressures of inflation and the rising cost of living for vulnerable people.



Strengthening green innovation through farm diversification will capitalise on West Northamptonshire's high capacity for green energy generation and high projected growth in low-carbon jobs.

Implications for the Rural Fund

Supporting Local Business Interventions	Identified through the Data	Rationale for Including
<p>Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses</p>		<p>This is a highly important business and employment sector for Rural West Northamptonshire. With the loss of Basic Payment by 2027 and the growing shift towards carbon reduction, supporting rural businesses through farm diversification and investing in equipment, technology and infrastructure is key to protecting this important industry.</p>
<p>Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community businesses • cooperatives and social enterprises • research and development sites <p>Corresponding with E26</p>		<p>Creation of multi-functional rural business hubs providing shared workspace and networking opportunities for rural businesses would help to revitalize key areas of West Northamptonshire and support the local high street. This intervention also aligns strongly with enhancing the rural visitor economy and providing EV charging points for businesses.</p>
<p>Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local attractions • trails • tourism products more generally <p>Corresponding with E17</p>		

Supporting Local Business Workshop

A workshop was held on the 3rd October to discuss the Rural England Prosperity Fund and the Supporting Local Business theme.

37 stakeholders attended the workshop.

Hatch presented the challenges and opportunities emerging from the data analysis.

Attendees provided feedback on the needs, opportunities and interventions to be selected under the Supporting Local Business theme. Individual comments were captured via virtual “post it notes” which are presented in the following slides.

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ What are the main **needs** to address in West Northamptonshire to meet the objectives of the Supporting Local Business priority?

Availability of labour is an issue - poor transport links, especially with national networks

Businesses struggling with energy price increases

Useful to review examples of rural development schemes - ERDP, RDPE, LEADER, RDAs - includes examples of Farm regeneration and diversification

<https://www.leader-programme.org.uk/>

farmers have to play a part in villages - it is a very important sector. The county and farming sector is known for producing sheep products

Transport - is key for farm diversification (tourism etc) - and struggle for people to work in the sector due to access

Incidence of rural stress, particularly suicide in the farming sector is particularly high - is this something that can be considered here?

How will this fund be delivered going forward - how to collaborate and work together to ensure the fund

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ What are the main **opportunities** in West Northamptonshire to address the objectives of the Supporting Local Business priority?

Leather industry + food production is known for the area

On the farming side, would be good if we have examples of digital innovation that we could promote through our Digital Northants channels.

There are good models of managing and governance on RDPE and LEADER programmes many of the people on this call have this experience - Will , helen, Ken Emma and SEM - the Management and Administration is an important point that has been made

Supporting Local Business Workshop

+ Which other types of interventions might be relevant in addressing identified needs and opportunities?

Farming - does it need diversification? or is it a matter of better promotion?

Farmers need to diversify to survive

Visitor economy - tick this! This sector is important for West Northants

Leisure can support farming and they work in tandem - but transport also needs to support this for visitors and workers

Small industries that are not farming in the rural area - they need to be supported too

LEADER evaluation - social enterprise measures never came forward, low uptake on this. Farm diversification and supporting SMEs projects came through more - intervention 1 and 3 are more suited. LEADER case studies can provide more information on this - production processing and local retail

Active travel will not help the ageing population and their access to key services

I would keep the options open so grant applications can be developed to cover a number of the areas. Don't be overly precise so businesses can develop business plans for investment. Inclusive of many sectors would be sensible

Transport is key - but active travel may not be the right intervention - or this may not be the right pot

Focus on 1 & 3

Social enterprise in rural areas will be difficult to support without a wider regional or national support programme encouraging and supporting this - context is important

digital infrastructure is important

Transport impacting rural Daventry and south northamptonshire

Survey: Supporting Local Business

- + There were 33 responses to the survey
- + Survey suggested that 58% of funding should be spent on the Supporting Local Business theme
- + 8 survey respondents felt that 100% of the funding should be given to the Supporting Local Business theme
- + 17 responses provided information on how they thought the funding should be split between the supporting local business interventions (see average proposed split column)
- + There were 12 projects submitted for the Supporting Local Business theme

Intervention	Average Proposed Split %	Number of projects
<p>Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses.</p> <p>New intervention</p>	45%	8
<p>Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes; (1) community businesses, (2) cooperatives and social enterprises, (3) research and development sites</p> <p>Corresponding with E26</p>	26%	4
<p>Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as; (1) local attractions, (2) trails, (3) tourism products more generally</p> <p>Corresponding with E17</p>	29%	6

Survey: Supporting Local Business

Challenges

- Provision of business mentors and people who can support those who want to start or grow their business
- Access to finance to enable risk reduction, awareness of what funding and support is available locally/nationally. There is a lack of coherent support in the region.
- Access to shared spaces and shared resources
- Rising energy costs are creating uncertainty for businesses
- Lack of draw and footfall on high street
- The need to support diversification of farming and encourage aspects like AI
- Sustainable growth
- Transport links to areas of employment – need for better transport links between businesses, schools/education providers
- Matching skills of labour force to needs of business
- Availability of labour; both skilled and unskilled
- Food sustainability
- Digital connectivity
- Over-reliance on distribution warehousing and logistics sector stifling social mobility and opportunities for growth due to overreliance on low skilled jobs and labour. Lack of opportunities in creating technology and engineering careers that support the education sector.
- A lack of services in the rural areas such as shops, cafes, and even pubs.
- West Northamptonshire is already an area of low unemployment. Therefore, developments that cause damage to both the environment and quality of life of residents, are bringing no balancing value to the local community as labour has to come from outside of the West Northamptonshire area
- Accessibility to skills and building skills for the future in West Northamptonshire. As there are no local business investment in different careers there is no attraction for local young people to train in careers that keep them local to the community. Local people travel beyond the county to access jobs and careers adding to the transport infrastructure issues
- enhancing enterprise and innovation support services and delivery & stimulating community enterprise and improved service delivery
- realising the value of natural capital and ecosystem management
- harnessing mobility and digitalisation for goods, services and people
- enabling uptake of new technologies or improved use of data
- Decarbonisation
- connecting rural enterprise and the wider innovation system through new ways of collaborating

Survey: Supporting Local Business

Opportunities

- Look to Local Food Hubs to encourage sustainability and local food production and shortening food supply chains to meet net zero aims
- Creating new jobs in rural areas through R&D, digital and green jobs through broadband and technology, and support businesses, particular micro businesses, to go green.
- Supporting the development of a circular economy
- Supporting specific sectors e.g. food production, processing and retail
- Encourage AI in farming and use farm diversification into markets like staycation and holiday lets
- Promote sensitive regeneration of heritage and historic assets to celebrate attractiveness
- Building on thriving businesses and innovation including low carbon and visitor economy businesses
- Capitalise on proximity to other areas such as London, Milton Keynes, Cotswolds – potential for visitor economy
- Getting local retailers to work together, promotion of local businesses and town centres
- Supporting local food production, shortening food supply chains, assisting with net zero aims. Opportunities for local producer retail units and export opportunities (Made in Northamptonshire)
- Strong skills provision by colleges and University of Nottingham
- Promoting shop local
- The abundance of byways, bridleways and footpaths in this attractive rural area lend themselves to tourism, and more farm to fork food products, More local food production is vital to help with climate change.
- perception of "made in Northamptonshire" is very weak
- There needs to be a plan to attract other businesses than distribution to West Northamptonshire. West Northamptonshire needs to attract science, technology and engineering investment into the unitary authority and work with schools and colleagues to increase awareness of the skills base
- There is an opportunity to build awareness of what is on offer in West Northamptonshire to attract investment in our rural communities building on assets in West Northamptonshire such as the canal and other rural assets
- Improving business models, capabilities and networks, whilst enhancing enterprise and innovation support services and delivery
- Promoting a circular economy in rural products including food, hospitality and manufacturing outputs
- harnessing the opportunities of an ageing society and the need for clean growth
- strengthening supply chains and logistics or unlocking export potential
- Stimulating community enterprises and improved service delivery

Alignment with Selected SPF Interventions

Interventions		Identified through the Data	Identified through workshops	Identified through the survey	UKSPF Allocation for WNC
Supporting Local Businesses	Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses	✓	✓	45%	N/A
	Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • community businesses • cooperatives and social enterprises • research and development sites Corresponding with E26	✓		26%	£0
	Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local attractions • trails • tourism products more generally Corresponding with E17		✓	29%	£0

Implications Arising & Emerging Recommendations



Intervention Selection

The next two tables bring together all of our analysis to date to help select relevant interventions.

Our thinking is that the funding pot is relatively small and as a result funding should be targeted at a few interventions which will have the greatest impact.

Interventions shaded in **green**, we feel should be taken forward and these have been selected for the following reasons:

- The data review suggested that there was a specific need which should be addressed
- The priority was selected at the thematic workshops
- The intervention achieved a scoring of 16% or over in the survey

Interventions shaded in **red**, we feel should not be taken forward.



Interventions: Community and Place

Intervention	UKSPF Funding	Data Review	Thematic Workshops	Survey	Comment
Funding (capital grants) for investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities. Corresponding with E15	£0	✓	✓	13%	96% of premises have access to superfast broadband. Large amounts of funding have gone into this and a small amount of additional funding will make a relatively small difference
Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Corresponding with E11	£134,971 revenue	✓	✓	20%	Yes- came across strongly throughout all stages of analysis
Funding (capital grants) for creation of and improvements to local rural green spaces. Corresponding with E3	£0	✓		14%	Did not come across strongly at workshops.
Funding (capital grants) for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural heritage offer. Corresponding with E4	£0		✓	8%	Did not come across strongly through data analysis or survey.
Funding (capital grants) for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities. Corresponding with E6	£0			4%	Did not come across strongly at any stage.
Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7	£927,199 capital	✓	✓	16%	Yes – came across strongly throughout all stages
Funding (capital grants) for rural circular economy projects. New Intervention	n/a		✓	14%	Not identified through data analysis but did come across strongly elsewhere.
Funding (capital grants) for impactful volunteering and social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places. Corresponding with E9	£134,971 revenue	✓		10%	Did not across strongly through workshops or survey

Interventions: Supporting Local Business

Intervention	UKSPF Funding	Data Review	Thematic Workshops	Survey	Comment
Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas. Including capital funding for net zero infrastructure for rural businesses, and diversification of farm businesses outside of agriculture to encourage start up, expansion or scale up of these businesses where this involves converting farm buildings into other commercial or business uses. New intervention	n/a	✓	✓ ✓	45%	Yes – came across strongly at all stages, including the workshops and survey.
Funding (capital grants) for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation. This includes; (1) community businesses, (2) cooperatives and social enterprises, (3) research and development sites Corresponding with E26	£0	✓		26%	There seemed to be a consensus during the workshops and consultations that there was less demand for funding in this area under LEADER.
Funding (capital grants) for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as; (1) local attractions, (2) trails, (3) tourism products more generally Corresponding with E17	£0		✓	29%	There are other funds being spent on this nationally and therefore it may be less of a priority.

Recommendations on Funding

Annual spending profile – DEFRA has confirmed the annual split for the funding as tabled below. The benefit of more money being spent in Year 2 is that it allow time to plan for and deliver the funding.

Year 1	Year 2
25%	75%
£341,988	£1,025,965

Priority Spend: the survey suggested 58% should be spent on SLB and 42% C&P and consultations agree. The economy is fragile even at a national level and therefore investing in business support can help to boost the economy.

Supporting Local Business (SLB)	Community and Place (C&P)
60%	40%
£820,772	£547,181

Recommendation on Funding

Community and Place

We would advise that an equal split of funding is made to the following two interventions. If 40% of funding is directed towards this priority, this would amount to the following:

- Funding (capital grants) for active travel enhancements in the local area. Corresponding with E7 - **£273,591** (this would be on top of £927,199 UKSPF capital funding)
- Funding (capital grants) for investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups (Corresponding with E11) - **£273,591** (on top of £134,972 UKSPF revenue funding)

Supporting Local Business

If 60% of funding is directed towards this priority, this would amount to the following:

- Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas (see full description) –**£820,772**

REPF Project Examples



REPF Project Ideas

As part of the REPF Survey, stakeholders were given the opportunity to submit any project ideas that could be funded through REPF.

The stakeholders were asked to submit a project description, information on which REPF theme(s) and intervention(s) the project would align with, any information they could provide on potential outputs and outcomes and the cost and funding required.

20 projects were submitted by stakeholders, none of which provided information about costs or funding required.

More information about these projects is provided as follows. This only provides an indication of the supply side and types of projects which could be selected by West Northamptonshire Council for REPF funding.

Projects which align with the recommended interventions have been shaded in **green**.

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
Northamptonshire Football Association	Improvement to grass football pitches and multi-sport facilities	E3
Ngage Solutions/Bucks Business First	With my current role being LEADER programme manager and land-based business specialist working across the Northamptonshire area, I am often the go to person for many business and community groups looking at Rural Capital grants. As such, I know of 12 or so different projects/businesses looking to invest in developing their offer to customers and communities. Projects generally evolve around diversification of farm businesses into food and drink related activities, tourism destination development and also a green travel corridor. Various Supporting Local Business projects which have come forward to Ngage solutions over the past few weeks/months	E15, E3, E7, circular economy, E9, SLB1
JELLEY Distilleries Limited	A community hub and sustainably lead green space nestled in the heart of the beautiful Northamptonshire countryside, The Old Wood Yard is a truly hidden gem. With breath-taking views across our vineyard to the stunning Pitsford Reservoir beyond, this is a venue like no other which reflects the diverse, rich community and history that now makes up the modern West Northamptonshire area.	E15, E11, E3, E4, E6, E7, circular economy, E9, SLB1, SLB2, SLB3
Northamptonshire Britain's Best Surprise	Capacity. build for the sector via new DMO structure, better App / technology, online booking, county rebrand	SLB3
Tod Booth	Local museum and tourist information in Brackley	SLB3
Cecile Irvingswift	the renewal of the Brampton Valley Way. By making thebv w a proper cyclable route with all new signages for rural business, visitors attractions, wellbeing hub, volunteering group, school, social prescribing ...	E11, E3, E4,, E6, E7, circular economy, E9
Daventry Town Council	Investigate active transport to make transport focussed on need rather than timetables and investment in digital connectivity, so that poor connectivity (transport and digital) doesn't restrict businesses operating or growing.	SLB1
South Northants Active Travel Route Association (SNATRA)	An active travel route/shared use path between Crowfield and High Cross (Syresham) to provide safe access from the hamlet to the village, avoiding hazardous travel along the undersized B4525 and also to provide access to the proposed active travel route/shared use path between Brackley and Silverstone following the line of the A43.	E7
SEMLEP	Green Recovery and Innovation Programme https://www.semlepgrowthhub.com/grip/	SLB1, SLB2, SLB3
Geoff snell	On our farm we would like to expand our holiday cottage business To add three more eco friendly holiday cottages on the farm. Plus communal area, for meetings and parties etc.	E11, circular economy, E9, SLB1, SLB2, SLB3

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
The Kelmarsh Trust	The Kelmarsh Hall would be interested in funding to assist with having EV Charging stations available to visitors to the Hall and Gardens	SLB1
Syresham Parish Council	Our parish is presently divided and it is impossible to gain access between the two parts except by car or a public footpath across fields. The footpath, however, can not be used during certain parts of the year, during periods of heavy rainfall and when the farmer has cattle with calves in the field.	E7
Crick Parish Council	Regeneration of Community Hub Crick Old School to include better insulation, refurbishment and modernisation of kitchen position and equipment so that it would be capable of supporting a social enterprise and/or food and drink entrepreneurs looking to get accreditation for food production. Equipping kitchen/modernising kitchen equipment for increased energy efficiency. Creation of a co-working space alongside the fledgling community hub, which supports third agers and vulnerable members of the community.	E11, E4, E9
Hartwell Community Centre	Renewal of the Hartwell Community Centre (Replacement of the building) The building is now 32 years old - build in 1990 to a basic steel frame/breeze block construction. Anticipated life was 25-30yrs, therefore certainly by end of this decade, the building will not be fit for purpose The Hartwell Community Centre is the only community space in Hartwell/Salcey, and therefore provides VITAL facilities to the parish (onsite preschool, 7 youth clubs, 2 adult clubs) along with a significant playground. The building is starting to fail, and requires continuous investment to keep it operational - if the building was to become not fit for purpose, the preschool, and other offerings would immediately cease, creating a significant impact to the parish (employment and social/wellbeing/childcare) The community centre is more than just a social space. During the Covid19 pandemic, it was at the forefront in offering support to the parish - food bank / food parcels / meals on wheels etc). This was possibility the largest volunteer led effort in West Northants, and was recognised by Andrea Leadsome with a Community Champion award + Boris Johnson with a point of light award Any replacement building would strongly push the community support message . We would build upon the successes during covid, and provide a permanent "wellbeing focused" initiative (eg food bank) We intend to offer a library space / social cafe (not currently available in the parish), which would in turn offer employment possibility to the parish/beyond	E11, E3, E9
Elizabeth Bowen	Work with Moulton Agric College on farm machinery automation Open up the grant to farmers in WNC ...by application with specific measurable criteria. There are lots of small farm business's with discussed buildings ripe for capital investment. Do a bid PR campaign to attract applicants. Provide support by Louis and Econ team to help fill in the application form. Do not make complicated and offer on line and in paper as many farmers are not very technologically minded. (not another RPA digitalisation of forms gone wrong!)	SLB1, SLB2
Kevin Jeffery	Wind turbine(s) for villages	E11

REPF Project Ideas

Organisation Name	Project description	REPF Intervention
Blisworth Parish Council	<p>Transport infrastructure review along with understanding the HGV and traffic demands on rural road networks at peak transport times. This to support investment in the rural road networks, cycle ways and footpaths to which there is no a cohesive plan to address the increasing demands. Good example of a traffic infrastructure improvement project would be provision of pavements where none currently exist in rural areas. In Blisworth, we really need a pavement from the exit from the car park above the tunnel portal to the allotments. Lots of people walk this and I fear that one of these days there will be a nasty accident. Another project idea is much greater provision of public electric car charging points. For example there are none at all in Blisworth.</p> <p>With HMG policy to phase out petrol and diesel cars in relatively short order, there will be increasing demand for public car charging, particularly for people who do not have driveways and have to park their cars on the road</p>	E11, E7, E9
Stephen Clarke	<p>I would like to see the creation of an unbroken STN through: Northampton and its rural hinterland and back. The project elements: route development, transport hubs, low carbon vehicle development; feasibility study and demonstrators for EV and micro-mobility together with greater use of community transport, improved cycle paths and walking routes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help local people access services • Support the growth of the rural economy • Benefit physical and mental health via their rural economic regeneration and their unbroken sustainable transport network. 	E11, E7, circular economy, E9
Blisworth Parish Council	<p>A mapping of skills need across the county through local business infrastructure to understand the demands on education beyond warehousing and distribution. Also a plan to ensure that the county attracts other business into the county based on some of the key rural attributes that we have.</p> <p>Another possible project might be to review and improve the co-ordination/cooperation between Highways and the Council when developing road/traffic management plans to ensure that the views of, and impact on, rural communities and surrounding villages are better considered and represented.</p>	SLB3
The Mallows Company	<p>A reworking of the successful FEAST2 programme with a focus on rural Food and Drink businesses or Farm Diversification with access to capital funding (part matched), assessed by jobs created and safeguarded, new product development and business growth. Taking the lessons from FEAST2 and offering specific support to those businesses that will both enhance the local area (many farm diversifications with food and drink offer visitor opportunities) and reinvigorating local economies. The tailored support provides connections to learning (Northampton and Moulton Colleges, UoN, etc) and alerts to potential planning and development (growth) enquiries. In the West Northamptonshire area there is the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of gaps in the market and enhance the commercial offer across public and large organisation food and drink procurement. Some of this work is happening already but a commissioned project could be tailored to provide valuable information for WN officers about the sector and its impact. FEAST2 brings in voluntary mentors from the sector who are trained to model and encourage sustainable growth. We are negotiating with a Sustainability platform for free provision for West Northamptonshire food and drink businesses to access to demonstrate their journey towards sustainability.</p>	SLB1



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please visit www.hatch.com