

<b>Template for production of information and evidence for the Plan Document</b>	<b>Theme:</b>	<b>Development</b>
	<b>Subject:</b>	Commercial

**Neighbourhood Plan Vision:**

**Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:**

<p>For the next 20 years Higham Ferrers will be:</p> <p><b>A sustainable, vibrant, thriving community:</b> <i>Strongly based on its history with an emphasis on its individuality, which encourages growth that supports its market town heritage.</i></p> <p><b>A community which encourages attractive, high quality development:</b> <i>Including new housing, commercial property and community facilities within a compact market town environment.</i></p> <p><b>A community that is inclusive:</b> <i>With safe access to its town centre and excellent links to adjacent housing estates, the surrounding countryside and the regional transportation network.</i></p> <p><b>An attractive town centre:</b> <i>With increased vitality and activity that attracts variety of new businesses to create a thriving High Street and encourage tourism.</i></p>	<p><b>SERVICES:</b> To enhance residents' quality of life by improving leisure, educational, health and environmental services</p> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT:</b> To promote some housing and commercial development to meet the needs of residents and to attract visitors, thereby providing a degree of growth and employment opportunity whilst retaining the historic character of the town</p> <p><b>DESIGN:</b> To conserve and enhance the town's heritage and environmental features and promote visually attractive and sustainable design in all new developments</p> <p><b>ACCESS:</b> To improve transport links within the town's boundary and to the surrounding countryside; provide better parking and safer access to the town centre for residents and visitors.</p>
<b>NOTE</b>	
The most relevant parts of the vision and objectives for the subject are shown in red above	
The Plan aims to deliver the vision and objectives in partnership with residents, other stakeholders and all necessary statutory authorities	
The Plan must be compatible with EU obligations, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), human rights, etc	
Sustainable solutions are required for all the subjects in order to satisfy the Vision and Objectives	

**Source documents:**

Subject Name	Date	Originator/Author
East Northamptonshire Local Plan (saved policies only)	1996	East Northamptonshire Council (ENC)
Three Towns Plan	Sept 2006	ENC
Three Towns Preferred Options: Summary of Consultation	April 2007	ENC
North Northamptonshire Spatial Strategy	June 2008	North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (NNJPU)
Planning Obligations Framework and Guidance	March 2011	Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)
National Planning Policy Framework	March 2012	Dept. for Communities & Local Government
Flood Risk Management Study Final Report	March 2012	URS for NNJPU
North Northamptonshire Interim Housing Statement	2013	NNJPU
Higham Ferrers Neighbourhood (HFNP) Issues Survey	June 2012	Higham Ferrers Town Council
HFNP Issues Survey - Results	Oct 2012	Higham Ferrers Town Council
HFNP - Community Plan	Aug 2013	HFNP Steering Group
HFNP - Public Consultation on Development Options	Sept 2013	HFNP Steering Group
HFNP - Public Consultation on Development Options - Results	Dec 2013	HFNP Steering Group

## 1. Brief background/history on the subject:

Describe briefly background and history of when things happened  
Write the information/evidence here:

# East Northamptonshire Development Plan Documents

East Northamptonshire Council initially split its district into three key areas, each with its own Development Plan Document. This was to reflect the diverse nature of our district and to allow for appropriate development in each area.

The three areas were titled, the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) the Raunds Area Plan (RAP) and the Three Towns Plan (TTP). The three documents all started with the same evidence base, the Local Development Framework (LDF) evidence base, however as the RNOTP went through its examination process, further evidence was presented which relate solely for the RNOTP.

Following the RNOTP's examination, it was decided by Councillors that the TTP and RAP would be combined to make a Four Towns Plan (FTP). Work is currently progressing on the FTP

Commercial land within Higham Ferrers has within the 3 town plan been identified as Ferrers School and Station rd, however both these areas are now to be developed as Residential. Higham Ferrers has seen a large amount of residential growth over the last few years but there has not been the same increase in jobs or employment in order for the town to be become a sustainable location employment land needs to be allocated. Economic growth is vital to ensure that the town growth can be balanced in a more sustainable manner and will also stimulate the local housing market

The North Northants Joint Planning unit has identified 2 areas close to Higham Ferrers for commercial development  
Nene Valley Farm Rushden  
Rushden East Sustainable urban extension

Both these areas are close to Higham Ferrers and could provide employment to the town

The results of the Neighbourhood Plan identified that growth of housing is concentrated to the south of the parish in association with Rushden East this for between 600 to 750 houses

## 2. Source evidence on the subject:

- National Planning Policy Framework view or Policy on the subject
- Local Plan Policy - Core Strategy view or comments on the subject
- Any available statistics that should be considered
- Any other authoritative source, view or comments on the subject i.e. best practice or leading practitioners view
- Sustainable solutions are required across all subjects and themes

Write the information/evidence here:

East Northamptonshire had Atkins commission a Employment land review in Late 2006. The core elements of study comprise a thorough assessment of current supply and demand, having regard to local and regional property market conditions

A SWOT analysis was completed and the finds as thus

### **STRENGTHS**

*Several strategic roads service the District, including the A6, A45 and A14, offering good road access to nearby locations (such as Kettering, Corby, Peterborough, Northampton etc.).*

*Above average GVA per head compared to the national average.*

*Low unemployment rate, and the labour market is running at close to full capacity*

*High level of entrepreneurial activity compared to surrounding areas and England & Wales.*

*Generally low levels of deprivation (although pockets of deprivation do exist in the south).*

*The vast majority (94%) of employment premises assessed were deemed to be in either a good or fair condition.*

*Strategically competitive location for major distribution*

### **Opportunities**

*The District is expected to experience significant population and employment growth as a result of being*

*located within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth area.*

*The "Rushden Lakes" site presents the opportunity to introduce good quality office accommodation into the District, which may stimulate further similar development.*

*Regeneration is occurring in Irthlingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Raunds and Thrapston which may present the opportunity to integrate new, good quality Bclass employment uses.*

*The opportunity exists to expand the banking, finance and insurance sectors, which are currently underrepresented despite performing well.*

*The site appraisal process identified approximately 50ha of opportunity land and 17 sites which presented the opportunity for 24-hour working.*

*Opportunities exist for rural diversification through farm building conversion to employment uses and farm activity diversification, contributing to sustainable development goals*

### **weakness**

*East Northamptonshire has a net out-flow of commuters (totalling over 12,000) to other locations outside the District*

*poor public transportation links within the district*

*there is a geographical bias in the employment structure towards the The south of the district*

*shortage of quality employment premises for small and medium enterprises including incubation facilities, offices and managed space*

*several employment sites in the district include areas of under utilised Or vacant land. Overall the site assessments identified over 20 ha of vacant land*

### **threats**

*The loss of labour through out-commuting to nearby centres resulting in an increasing dormitory role for the District.*

*Size and proliferation of large distributions parks*

*on going restructuring of the manufacturing sector Resulting in further relocations away from district*

*potential deterioration in jobs-housing (workforce) balance unless local av of jobs increase*

*Increasing pressure upon locally significant employment sites for transfer to higher value use*

*Over emphasis on the distribution sector as driver for consumption of scarce land resources for employment use*

### 3. View of relevant authorities:

- Recommendations from any commissioned studies or reports
- Comments or responses received from relevant authorities in relation to recommended development option or if the authorities have a preference for an alternative option.

Write the information /evidence here:

The Atkins study recommends that the range of employment sites av offer a sufficient choice and diversity for both indigenous and inward investment needs, with strong policies and strong supporting regeneration initiatives

The study concluded that there is a need to maximise the use of existing employment land resources in East Northants,

### KEY GAPS AND NEEDS

6.11 Our review has indicated that existing employment sites in the District efforts to facilitate the redevelopment and/or intensification of many existing employment sites (including the development of under-used land), the District will struggle to meet future business needs. This is reinforced when consideration is given of the need to diversify the local economy and of the District's role in meeting an element of the sub-region growth agenda.

6.12 Our estimates of future need amount to approximately 180,000 m<sup>2</sup> of additional employment floorspace (approximately 39 ha of land). Based on a range of economic and property indicators including our market appraisal, empirical business survey and employment / employment land forecasts, the study concluded that 180,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment floorspace is required to meet the range of needs identified for East Northants District. The rationale for this indicative requirement is based on the following components of employment need:

- (i) Facilitating the establishment and survival of new business ventures in the District;
- (ii) Enabling indigenous businesses to expand and relocate in accordance with their changing requirements;
- (iii) Providing sufficient choice and diversity to modern occupiers, developers and investors;
- (iv) Meeting the varied and complex needs of key growth sectors which offer significant opportunities in respect of the diversification of the local economy;
- (v) Enabling East Northamptonshire to contribute in party to the MKSM growth objectives;
- (vi) Facilitating inward investment; and
- (vii) Providing greater opportunities for reducing out-commuting from the District to other employment locations.

**4. Community views about the subject:**

- Original questionnaire view
- Community Plan action
- Feedback from latest questionnaire
- Any other comments, feedback or concerns received

Write the information/evidence here:

The development of commercial property around Higham Ferrers is being based outside of the town, the Rushden Lakes, if given the go ahead should provide good employment opportunities for Higham Ferrers and the surrounding towns, also commercial development is currently going ahead at Raunds / Wellingborough and Rushden, with some large distribution site's being built, while large industrial sites would be good for employment to have these built within Higham Ferrers may not be in the best interest of the town, however if no industry comes to the town then the town could become a dormitory town, however the town could attract good shops and night time facilities

Although separate towns, Higham Ferrers and Rushden are linked physically and therefore are almost identical in their locational characteristics. The A45 bypass and A6 bypass constrains the extent of development which is environmentally acceptable. Nevertheless, the location of Higham Ferrers and its development opportunities were recognised in the allocations made in the Higham Ferrers and Rushden Interim Land Use Statement (February 1989).

5. **Draft Policies:** These should flow from the vision and relevant objectives to ensure that development will respond satisfactorily to them. They need to relate to both National and Local Planning Policy and take account of the latest views of relevant authorities and the views of the Community.

N.B. The Policies from other Neighbourhood Plans that have similar issues could be helpful.

James Wilson will write the policies but it would be good to indicate the policy area that you think should come out of the information/evidence that you have found.

Indicate the policy area here:

Looking at all the information found from the 3 town plan, fast becoming the 4 town plan and the industrial developments happening around Higham Ferrers, it seems clear that the majority of employment opportunities are to be outside the town, this also for the surrounding towns.

Local small scale industry is req in the town, and we need to be aiming for this.