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# **Northampton Local Plan (Part 2): Sustainability Appraisal of Options Consultation Paper**

Prepared by LUC  
August 2016

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# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Northampton Borough Council commissioned LUC in September 2013 to carry out the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the emerging Northampton Local Plan (Part 2).
- 1.2 This SA Report sets out the findings of the SA of the Options Consultation Paper, which is to be issued for public consultation between Wednesday 21 September and Wednesday 2 November 2016.

## The Plan Area

- 1.3 Northampton is the county town of Northamptonshire and is predominantly urban in nature and is therefore the focus of employment, retail, culture and development. The Borough lies adjacent to Daventry to the north west, Wellingborough to the east and South Northamptonshire lies to the south.
- 1.4 The Borough is one of the smaller administrative areas in Northamptonshire covering approximately 80km<sup>2</sup>. The River Nene rises in the west of Northampton and there is a confluence **of two of its tributaries in the Borough's central area**. Northampton was selected in the mid 1960's for expansion under the New Towns Act and the administrative area is the same as the designated area for expansion. The boundary is drawn tightly around the urban area of Northampton, but large open spaces associated with the River Nene and its tributaries exist together with many parks. Planned expansion has led to a population of over 200,000 and the town is continuing to grow as the major employment, residential, shopping and recreational centre for Northamptonshire. The combination of easy access (including by the M1 and the London Midland rail service) and its central position in England makes the town attractive to business and increasingly to tourists.

## Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)

### West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy

- 1.5 The West Northamptonshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee adopted the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2014. This document sets out the planning strategy for the administrative areas of Daventry District, South Northamptonshire District, and Northampton Borough until 2029. Now that the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is adopted, each of the three administrative areas are commencing preparation of the following documents which together with the Joint Core Strategy will complete their Local Plans:
  - Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (DPD) (Local Plan (Part 2)).
  - Gypsy & Traveller Sites DPDs.

### Northampton Local Plan (Part 2)

- 1.6 The Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) will build on the general development strategy and include detailed development management policies. It is proposed that the main scope of the Local Plan (Part 2) should be as follows<sup>1</sup>:
  - Site specific allocations including residential and employment uses.

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<sup>1</sup> Northampton Borough Council Local Development Scheme September 2015

- Detailed development management policies against which planning applications will be determined.
- Identification, phasing and implementation of local infrastructure (for example the Northampton Northern Orbital Road).
- Boundaries of retail centres.
- Historic conservation, open space and nature conservation policies and designations.
- Policies map.

1.7 Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) will cover the entire Borough of Northampton including the Northampton Central Area. The Local Plan (Part 2) will need to be consistent and in conformity with the adopted Joint Core Strategy, and will therefore cover the same period up to 2029. It will make smaller-scale site allocations for housing, employment, retail and open space.

### Northampton Central Area Action Plan

1.8 The Northampton Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) was adopted in January 2013. The CAAP provides more focused planning policies for the Town Centre and its surrounding area. It contains development plan policies for the Central Area. Some of the CAAP policies have now been superseded by recent development and/or changes in legislation, such as recent changes regarding permitted development rights, and therefore need to be updated. It is proposed that the new Local Plan (Part 2) will contain those CAAP policies which remain up to date and any CAAP policies which need updating. Once adopted, the new Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) will supersede the Central Area Action Plan

### Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Local Plan

- 1.9 In addition to the Local Plan (Part 2) a separate subject specific Development Plan Document (DPD) will be prepared setting out allocated sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in Northampton Borough and associated development management policies. This DPD will cover the entire Borough of Northampton and will cover the period up to 2029.
- 1.10 This SA Scoping Report does not apply to the Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople DPD, which will be subject to a separate plan preparation and assessment process.

## Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 1.11 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, SA is mandatory for Development Plan Documents. For these documents it is also necessary to conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (European Directive 2001/42/EC), which was transposed into UK law by the **Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (2004 SI 1633), known as the 'SEA Regulations'**. Therefore, it is a legal requirement for the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) to be subject to SA and SEA throughout its preparation.
- 1.12 The requirements to carry out SA and SEA are distinct, although it is possible to satisfy both using a single appraisal process (as advocated in the National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>), whereby users can comply with the requirements of the SEA Regulations through a single integrated SA process – this is the process that is being undertaken for the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2). **From here on, the term 'SA' should therefore be taken to mean 'SA incorporating the requirements of the SEA Regulations'**.
- 1.13 The SA process comprises a number of stages as shown in **Figure 1.1**.

<sup>2</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal-and-how-does-it-relate-to-strategic-environmental-assessment/>

### Figure 1.1: Main stages of Sustainability Appraisal

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects

Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report

Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options for the Local Plan (Part 2) and the SA report

Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the Local Plan (Part 2)

- 1.14 Stage A, the Scoping Stage, has been completed. An SA Scoping Report was published for public consultation in April 2016. The responses to the SA Scoping Report have been taken into account in the SA of the Options Consultation Paper. A full statement of the consultation comments will be presented in the full SA Report of the Draft Local Plan (Part 2) at the next stage of plan preparation.
- 1.15 This SA Report forms part of Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects.

### Structure of this SA Report

- 1.16 This chapter has described the background to the production of the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) and the requirement to undertake SA and other assessment processes. The remainder of this report is structured into the following sections:
- **Chapter 2** identifies the key environmental, social and economic issues and problems in Northampton of relevance to the Local Plan (Part 2) and considers the likely evolution of those issues without its implementation.
  - **Chapter 3** presents the SA Framework that is being used for the appraisal of the Local Plan (Part 2) and the method for carrying out the SA of the Options Consultation Paper.
  - **Chapter 4** sets out the findings of the SA of the Options Consultation Paper.
  - **Chapter 5** summarises the consultation process on the Options Consultation Paper and this SA Report, and the next stages in the preparation of the Local Plan (Part 2).



## 2 Key sustainability issues

- 2.1 The work carried out at the Scoping stage identified a number of 'sustainability issues' that are relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan (Part 2) and the accompanying SA.
- 2.2 The sustainability issues and their likely evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2), are presented in **Table 2.1**.
- 2.3 The information in **Table 2.1** shows that, in general, the current trends in relation to the various social, economic and environmental issues affecting Northampton would be likely to continue without the implementation of the Local Plan (Part 2) although the policies in the adopted Core Strategy will go some way towards addressing many of the issues. In most cases, the Local Plan (Part 2) offers opportunities to directly and strongly affect existing trends in a positive way, through an up-to-date plan which reflects the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), building on the Joint Core Strategy policies.
- 2.4 **Table 2.1** shows, in the final column, where the sustainability issue is reflected in the SA objectives that make up the SA Framework that will be used to carry out the SA (see Chapter 3). It can be seen that many of the issues are relevant to a number of SA objectives, indicating the cross-cutting nature of many of the issues identified. This suggests that, if a key sustainability issue is addressed by the Local Plan (Part 2), a number of SA objectives will be achieved.

**Table 2.1: Key Sustainability issues for Northampton and likely evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)**

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
<p>Due to uncertain levels of funding, the delivery of <b>affordable housing</b> in Northampton is forecast to be challenging.</p>	<p>Pressures to deliver affordable housing are likely to continue regardless of the adoption of the Local Plan (Part 2), although the adopted Joint Core Strategy already includes policies seeking to address these pressures, including Policy H2: Affordable Housing, which states that affordable housing will be provided as a proportion of the total number of dwellings to be delivered on an individual site basis. Within the Northampton Related Development Area, 35% of sites with 15 or more dwellings are to be affordable. While such policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there is an opportunity to define policies that would address the delivery challenges facing Northampton.</p>	<p>SA objective 1 SA objective 6</p>
<p>There are a number of communities within Northampton that are characterised by <b>deprivation</b>.</p>	<p>The adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to create more prosperous communities such as Policy RC1: Delivering Community Regeneration and Policy RC2: Community Needs, that aim to ensure that all members of the community have access to improved services, community facilities and infrastructure. While such policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there is an opportunity to build on this overarching policy through more specific development management policies, and by seeking to deliver development that meets the needs of the more deprived communities in the Borough.</p>	<p>SA objective 1 SA objective 2 SA objective 3 SA objective 4 SA objective 5 SA objective 6</p>
<p><b>Life expectancy</b> in Northampton is lower than national averages, and there are significant differences in life expectancy between the least and most deprived communities in the Borough.</p>	<p>The adopted JCS includes a number of policies that seek to address health issues within the JCS area, including encouraging healthy lifestyles such as walking and cycling, and provision for health centres as an essential component of new local communities. The Local Plan (Part 2) offers opportunities to provide more specific detail and proposals at the local level.</p>	<p>SA objective 4</p>
<p>There are high levels of <b>crime</b> within the Borough – particularly violence and sexual offences.</p>	<p>The Local Plan (Part 2) is unlikely to affect the levels of crime directly. However, by providing for development opportunities that generate jobs, affordable housing, and community facilities within more deprived</p>	<p>SA objective 5</p>

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
	communities, some of the causes of crime can be addressed. In addition, it is possible through good design of developments to reduce the opportunities for crime, for example through appropriate lighting, natural surveillance of pedestrian routes, security measures, and so on.	
There are low levels of <b>education</b> attainment in Northampton; it is important that a local skilled workforce is available for <b>employment in Northampton's expanding industries.</b>	The greatest influence on educational attainment in the Borough is the provision of high quality teaching and supportive community and family environments. Planning has a role to play by facilitating the delivery of educational establishments and capacity to meet anticipated growth in demand for places, and that the educational establishments are of a high standard of design and easy and safe to access. The adopted JCS supports the role of the University of Northampton as well encouraging links between training, employment and skills development for the local workforce as highlighted in Policy E6: Education, Skills and Training. While such policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), opportunities may exist to build on this overarching policy by helping to address the specific education and skills gaps in Northampton by facilitating proposals for appropriate educational facilities.	SA objective 3
Northampton has a thriving local <b>economy</b> with emerging sectors, it is vital that this supported.	The adopted JCS already includes policies that enable the economy to expand, such as Policy E1: Existing Employment Areas, which supports the retention and development of industrial estates in the county, and Policy E2: New Office Floor Space. The overall quantum of jobs is determined through the adopted Joint Core Strategy. Without the smaller site allocations to be included in the Local Plan (Part 2) there may be less certainty about the delivery of that employment land and therefore this could undermine current trends. Similarly, the Local Plan (Part 2) offers opportunities to deliver the quantum and range of housing needed to support the economy and its expanding workforce.	SA objective 6 SA objective 7
Northampton has many <b>cultural and recreational assets</b> comprising of natural assets, parks and open space, sporting facilities, cultural establishments, and the	The adopted JCS already includes policies that encourage recreation, including Policy E7: Tourism, Visitor and Cultural Industries, which supports tourism, visitor and cultural development. While such policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there	SA objective 2 SA objective 7 SA objective 9

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
quality of the built environment. These need to be protected and enhanced.	is an opportunity to build on this overarching policy to ensure local cultural and recreational places and spaces are protected and accessible.	SA objective 10 SA objective 11
<b>Car dependency</b> is high within the Borough, particularly for commuting, even over short distances. The use of <b>sustainable modes of transport</b> needs to be encouraged.	The adopted JCS already includes policies encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport such as Policy C1: Changing Behaviour and Achieving Modal Shift, which will prioritise schemes that provide access to walking, cycling and public transport and Policy C2: New Developments, which seeks to maximise travel choice from non-car modes. While such policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there is an opportunity to tailor policies that would address private vehicle use within the Borough, and encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport at the local level. This would also help to address health and obesity issues.	SA objective 2 SA objective 3 SA objective 4
<b>Climate change</b> is likely to increase temperatures, affect biodiversity, increase hazards from fluvial flooding, increase the frequency of summer droughts, increase the frequency and severity of gales and present increased threats to property and air quality in Northampton. <b>CO<sub>2</sub> emissions</b> in the Borough have been decreasing but this trend needs to continue if it is to contribute to international and national carbon reduction targets.	Climate change is likely to have ongoing effects regardless of the adoption of the Local Plan (Part 2), although the adopted Joint Core Strategy already includes policies seeking to respond to this issue, and these could continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2). These policies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy S10: Sustainable Development Principles, which requires development to improve environmental performance, be energy efficient and adapt to climate change; and</li> <li>• Policy S11: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy, which requires development in sustainable urban extensions to contribute to reducing carbon emissions, maximising energy efficiency including the use of decentralised energy, to be sensitively located to minimise any adverse impacts on communities and the built and natural environment, new residential development (including mixed use) to achieve the zero carbon standard, and for all non-residential development over 500m<sup>2</sup> of a minimum of 'very good standard' in BREEAM.</li> </ul> The Local Plan (Part 2) provides opportunities for further policy to be developed with respect to extreme weather events, such as high	SA objective 2 SA objective 3 SA objective 8

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
	temperatures or heavy rainfall, through the design of development. This in turn will help to make the public realm more attractive to use, supporting town centre businesses (e.g. retail) and the use of public transport (e.g. bus stations) etc.	
Despite being predominantly urban, Northampton has areas that are of high <b>biodiversity</b> value including The Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits which is designated as a SSSI, Ramsar and a Special Protection Area (SPA). There are areas with high <b>geodiversity</b> too.	Pressures on the natural environment are likely to continue regardless of the adoption of the Local Plan (Part 2), although the adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to address these pressures, particularly Policies BN1 to BN4, which relate specifically to green infrastructure, biodiversity, woodlands and the SPA. The Local Plan (Part 2) offers the opportunity to build on this overarching policy through more specific development management policies as well as considering geodiversity. It also offers opportunities to strengthen the green and blue infrastructure network of the town, by identifying and addressing where gaps exist, and essential components for establishing a resilient network for the future, and by incorporating biodiversity considerations into the design of developments (such as open space, green roofs, etc.).	SA objective 9
There are <b>areas and sites of significant historic importance</b> and aesthetic quality that should be preserved and enhanced including conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments, a historic battlefield and historic landscapes. In addition there are many non-designated heritage assets including archaeological remains. Heritage assets are continuously facing pressures for change, often indirectly, and from inappropriate development and activity affecting their setting and context.	The adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to protect and enhance the historic environment, including Policy BN51: The Historic Environment and Landscape. While that policy would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), opportunities to address the historic environment through specific development management policies and site allocations are likely to exist taking into account their impacts on the historic environment. Furthermore, the Local Plan (Part 2) will be able to be tailored to <b>Northampton town's</b> unique historic townscape and its landscape setting as opposed to the more rural landscape that characterises the other two authorities covered by the JCS.	SA objective 7 SA objective 10 SA objective 11
Seven <b>Air Quality</b> Management Areas (AQMAS) have been declared due to exceedances of NO <sub>2</sub> derived from road transportation.	The adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to protect and enhance air quality including Policy BN9: Planning for Pollution Control, which calls for maintaining and improving air quality, especially in poor air quality areas. While such policies would continue to apply in the	SA objective 4 SA objective 12

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
	absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there is an opportunity to tailor policies that could address the AQMAS, for example by encouraging walking, cycling and public transport rather than the private car, particularly for development locations that are close to or are likely to generate traffic on routes within AQMAS.	
The River Nene is important for both recreation and biodiversity, and therefore its <b>water quality</b> needs to be protected and enhanced.	The adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to protect and enhance water quality including Policy BN7A: Water Supply, Quality and Wastewater Infrastructure and Policy BN8: The River Nene Strategic River Corridor. While these policies would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there are opportunities to build on these overarching policies through site allocations that are selected following consideration of their impacts on the water environment through the SA. Local Plan (Part 2) will also enable consideration of phasing to be taken into account with respect to Wastewater Treatment Works capacity, and to encourage sustainable drainage and green/blue infrastructure that enables natural cleaning processes to take place (e.g. reed beds) whilst also serving as a habitat for wildlife.	SA objective 4 SA objective 9 SA objective 13
The River Nene flows through Northampton and is subject to <b>flooding</b> especially in light of climate change increasing the frequency of flooding	The adopted JCS already includes policies seeking to reduce flood risk in and around Northampton including Policy BN7: Flood Risk. While that policy would continue to apply in the absence of the Local Plan (Part 2), there is an opportunity to build on this overarching policy through more specific development management policies and site allocations that are selected following consideration of their risk of flooding particularly in those areas of the Borough that are the most vulnerable to flooding areas, such as St James and Far Cotton. Local Plan (Part 2) may also offer opportunities to encourage flood management through the green/blue infrastructure network and sustainable drainage systems.	SA objective 1 SA objective 4 SA objective 6 SA objective 14
Although largely urban land, pockets of <b>high grade agricultural land</b> exist around the edge of the town within the Borough boundaries.	Policy R2: Rural Economy in the adopted JCS already provides protection for the best and most versatile agricultural land. Local Plan (Part 2) offers opportunities for the existence of best and most versatile agricultural land to be taken into account when allocating sites for development. The Local Plan (Part 2) can also encourage the use of	SA objective 6 SA objective 15

Key Sustainability Issues for Northampton	Likely Evolution without the Local Plan (Part 2)	Relevant SA objectives
	previously developed land (subject to any biodiversity interest) over greenfield land in identifying sites for development.	
The River Nene Valley is associated with <b>high quality gravel deposits</b> that need to be safeguarded from sterilisation by development. Former gravel pits also represent valuable recreational and biodiversity resource.	The adopted Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan includes policies that seek to prevent sterilisation of mineral resources by development. The Local Plan (Part 2) offers opportunities to take into account Mineral Safeguarding Areas and Mineral Consultation Areas when allocating development. Local Plan (Part 2) also offers opportunities to provide guidance on the outcomes the Borough wishes to see through the restoration of former mineral workings.	SA objective 6 SA objective 15
There are a number of <b>waste facilities</b> in the Borough that should not be compromised by sensitive neighbouring development.	The adopted Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies locations within Northampton Borough that are suitable for waste management facilities. Although waste management facilities are much cleaner than in the past, through the use of technology and waste recovery and recycling, Local Plan (Part 2) offers the opportunity to ensure that site allocations for other types of development (e.g. housing, employment, community facilities) are not compromised by, or do not compromise, the operation of nearby waste management facilities, whether existing or planned. In addition, Local Plan (Part 2) can encourage the incorporation of sustainable waste management practices, plus the re-use of previously developed land and buildings, in site selection and design.	SA objective 16

## 3 Method of approach to the SA

### Sustainability Appraisal Framework

- 3.1 The development of a set of SA objectives (known as the SA Framework) is a recognised way in which the likely environmental and sustainability effects of a plan can be described, analysed and compared.
- 3.2 Although a set of SA objectives was developed for the West Northamptonshire JCS, these were geared to the West Northamptonshire area as a whole, rather than the town of Northampton.
- 3.3 Whilst the SA Framework for the JCS provides useful context, it has been decided to prepare a new SA Framework that is relevant to Northampton Borough, being primarily an urban area, and the matters that will be addressed in the Local Plan (Part 2). It draws on the review of policy objectives, the review of the baseline information, and the key sustainability issues that were identified through this process. Care has been taken to ensure that all the topics listed in Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations are reflected in the SA Framework.
- 3.4 The SA Framework for the Local Plan (Part 2) is presented in **Table 3.1** overleaf. The final column shows how the topics listed in the SEA Regulations are addressed by the SA objectives.



**Table 3.1 SA Framework for Northampton's Local Plan (Part 2)**

SA Objectives	Sub questions: Will the policy or proposal...	SEA Regulations Topics covered
1 Help make suitable housing available and affordable according to the needs of <b>Northampton's population</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for a range of housing type and tenure to meet identified housing needs?</li> <li>• Provide homes for an ageing population?</li> <li>• Provide affordable and social housing to meet identified needs?</li> <li>• Improve the housing stock, in particular in more deprived communities?</li> </ul>	Material assets
2 Reduce the need to travel within, to and from Northampton by providing easy access to jobs, services and facilities and to sustainable travel alternatives to the car.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the provision of public transport services?</li> <li>• Improve walking and cycling networks?</li> <li>• Be within walking and/or cycling distance of the town centre, or on frequent public transport routes to, the town centre?</li> <li>• Be within walking and/or cycling distance of, or on frequent public transport routes to, designated employment areas?</li> <li>• Be within walking distance of local centres?</li> </ul>	Air Population Human health Climatic factors
3 Provide easy access to primary and secondary schools by sustainable modes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be within walking distance of primary schools?</li> <li>• Be within walking and/or cycling distance of secondary schools?</li> </ul>	Air Population Human health Climatic factors
4 Improve the health and well-being of <b>Northampton's residents</b> , promoting healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to health care?</li> <li>• Be within walking and/or cycling distance of sport and leisure facilities, or open space?</li> <li>• Improve access to outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities?</li> <li>• Improve access to open space and the countryside?</li> <li>• Limit the risk of air, noise or light pollution on local people?</li> <li>• Improve access to jobs for the most deprived communities in Northampton?</li> <li>• Improve access to places of worship?</li> </ul>	Human health
5 Reduce crime and the fear of crime in Northampton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce opportunities for crime?</li> <li>• Increase the perception of safety from crime?</li> <li>• Encourage access to, and the provision of, community and youth facilities in</li> </ul>	Population Human health

SA Objectives	Sub questions: Will the policy or proposal...	SEA Regulations Topics covered
	more deprived neighbourhoods?	
6 Facilitate the growth of Northampton's economy and the availability of jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure a sufficient supply of land to meet local employment needs?</li> <li>• Encourage provision of a range of employment opportunities?</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for start-up companies and expansion of local companies, particularly in high-performance technologies, business and professional services?</li> <li>• Facilitate take-up of employment land and premises in the Northampton Waterside Enterprise Zone?</li> <li>• Enable access and improvements to communications technology (e.g. broadband)?</li> </ul>	Material assets
7 Maintain and strengthen the character and vitality of Northampton town centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard and enhance the historic character and distinctiveness of the town centre?</li> <li>• Encourage the retention and expansion of town centre commercial and retail uses?</li> <li>• Provide for a range of homes within the town centre?</li> <li>• Facilitate the evening economy (e.g. restaurants, bars, and other leisure activity)?</li> <li>• Make the public realm safe and attractive to use by pedestrians?</li> <li>• Ensure that the town centre is adapted to extreme weather events as a result of climate change?</li> <li>• Provides for safe cycling routes and parking facilities?</li> <li>• Provides for safe and easy access to public transport services, including bus and rail?</li> </ul>	Cultural heritage Material assets Population Human health
8 Minimise Northampton's greenhouse gas emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Result in the generation of renewable energy?</li> <li>• Encourage energy conservation?</li> <li>• Minimise increases in greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles?</li> </ul>	Climatic factors
9 Protect and enhance Northampton's biodiversity and geodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the integrity of the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits SSSI, Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA)?</li> <li>• Protect locally designated biodiversity sites from both the direct and indirect adverse effects of development?</li> </ul>	Biodiversity Flora Fauna

SA Objectives	Sub questions: Will the policy or proposal...	SEA Regulations Topics covered
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguard and strengthen local ecological networks both within Northampton Borough and their links with ecological networks in neighbouring districts?</li> <li>• Ensure that known biodiversity of brownfield sites is given due weight reflecting its ecological interest and value?</li> <li>• Take into account opportunities to enhance biodiversity in the layout and design of development, including allowing species to adapt to climate change?</li> <li>• Protect Local Geological Sites from both the direct and indirect adverse effects of development?</li> <li>• Improve access to, and understanding of, nature taking into account its sensitivity to human disturbance?</li> </ul>	
10 Protect and enhance the quality and character of <b>Northampton's</b> landscape and townscape.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect sensitive landscapes in and around the Borough of Northampton?</li> <li>• Conserve and enhance the quality, character and local distinctiveness of <b>Northampton's townscape</b></li> <li>• <b>Protect and improve Northampton's open</b> and green spaces?</li> </ul>	Landscape Cultural heritage
11 Conserve and enhance <b>Northampton's historic</b> environment, heritage assets and their settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, maintain and enhance listed buildings and conservation areas, including their setting?</li> <li>• Protect, maintain and enhance scheduled monuments and archaeological sites, and their setting?</li> <li>• Protect, maintain and enhance historic parks and gardens, and landscapes including the site of the Battle of Northampton, and their setting?</li> <li>• Protect, maintain and enhance the historic pattern and form of development that characterises Northampton?</li> </ul>	Cultural heritage
12 Minimise air pollution in and around Northampton, particularly in the AQMAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid increases in traffic emissions in AQMAs?</li> </ul>	Air
13 Encourage sustainable water management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the risk of pollution to the water environment?</li> <li>• Conserve water resources?</li> </ul>	Water
14 Reduce the risk of flooding to people and property in Northampton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the risk of flooding?</li> <li>• Avoid development within areas of risk of flooding in accordance with Government guidance on flood risk?</li> </ul>	Climatic factors Material assets

SA Objectives	Sub questions: Will the policy or proposal...	SEA Regulations Topics covered
15 Encourage the efficient use of land in Northampton and protect its soils and mineral resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve the re-use of previously developed land and buildings?</li> <li>• Encourage the remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>• Avoid the sterilisation of mineral resources?</li> <li>• Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>• Avoid inappropriate of unstable land and, where possible, bring it back into productive use.</li> </ul>	Soil Material assets
16 Facilitate sustainable waste management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the recovery, re-use and recycling of waste materials?</li> <li>• Avoid locating sensitive land uses close to waste management facilities?</li> </ul>	Material assets

## Use of the SA Framework

- 3.6 The findings of the SA of the Options Consultations Paper are presented in SA matrices, which include a colour coded symbol showing the score for the site/policy against each of the SA objectives along with a concise justification for the score given.
- 3.7 The use of colour coding in the matrices allows for likely significant effects (both positive and negative) to be easily identified, as shown in the key below.

### Key to SA scores

<b>++</b>	Significant positive effect likely
<b>++/-</b>	Mixed significant positive/minor negative effect likely
<b>+</b>	Minor positive effect likely
<b>0</b>	Negligible effect likely
<b>?</b>	Likely effect uncertain – the effect could be positive or negative
<b>-</b>	Minor negative effect likely
<b>+/--</b>	Mixed significant negative/minor positive effect likely
<b>--</b>	Significant negative effect likely
<b>+/-</b>	Mixed minor positive/minor negative effects likely
<b>++/--</b>	Mixed significant positive/significant negative effects likely

- 3.8 Where a potential positive or negative effect is identified but there is a considerable degree of uncertainty about the likelihood of the effect materialising, the score and relevant colour code for the positive or negative effect is used in the appraisal, but a question mark (?) added to the score to indicate that there is uncertainty attached to the effect.

### SA of the Options Consultation Paper

- 3.9 The Options Consultation Paper that is the subject of this SA Report is a short paper that comprises:
- A vision of Northampton in 2029.
  - The objectives of the Local Plan (Part 2).
  - An overarching statement on the strategy and a series of questions relating to three key topics:
    - Providing new homes.
    - Creating a prosperous economy.
    - Our retail centres.
  - Comments on infrastructure.
  - Sections on providing a supply of land to meet housing needs, an assessment of land availability, other opportunities, providing supply of land to meet employment needs.
  - A list of example development management policies.
- 3.10 Some of the items included in the Options Consultation are for information only, for example with respect to the work being undertaken on land availability for housing and employment uses, and the list of example development management policies.

- 3.11 It is quite difficult to carry out SA of such a high level document, and therefore it was decided that the focus of the SA should be on the objectives, as these will provide the direction for the preparation of the Local Plan (Part 2), and on the questions, since these are the areas where decisions between choices have to be made by the Council, and where the Council is seeking the views of the public.
- 3.12 Although the **Options Consultation Paper's** objectives lend themselves to SA using the '**Key to SA scores' shown above**, it is not possible to assign significance to the effects' of the questions posed by the Options Consultation Paper. Therefore, a different approach has been used as follows.
- 3.13 It is assumed that the question being asked indicates the policy direction that the Council is proposing. For example, where the question sets out a suggested policy approach and asks whether or not the respondent agrees or not, it is assumed that the Council is proposing to pursue this policy approach. Open-ended questions have not been subject to SA.
- 3.14 On the basis of the above assumption, the SA seeks to identify whether the policy approach is likely to result in a positive or negative effect on an SA objective or not, without attempting to determine how significant the effect might be, which is not possible at this level of detail. The following symbols have been used.
- ✓ = policy approach likely to result in a positive effect on the SA objective.
  - X = policy approach likely to result in a negative effect on the SA objective.
  - ? = likely effects of policy approach on SA objective uncertain.
  - 0 = policy approach unlikely to have any effects on the SA objective.
- 3.15 For most questions there are only two options – agree or not agree. The Options Consultation Paper does not detail a range of reasonable alternative approaches to issues but seeks the **public's views on some key policy directions for the Local Plan (Part 2)**. In this respect, it is a limited form of options consultation. The Council will consider further its approach to reasonable alternatives in the next stage of preparation of the Local Plan (Part 2). The primary focus will be the SA of reasonable alternative sites for housing, employment and other development proposals (not including the strategic development locations such as sustainable urban extensions, which have already been subject to SA of the JCS), as these are where significant effects, whether positive or negative, are most likely to occur.
- 3.16 We have also provided comments from an SA perspective on the overall strategy contained within the Options Consultation Paper and other aspects where we felt it would be helpful for us to do so.

## 4 Findings of the SA of the Options Consultation Paper

### SA of Local Plan (Part 2) objectives

- 4.1 The Council has decided that objectives set out in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy are still appropriate to use as objectives for the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2). The JCS objectives were subject to SA at the time of the preparation of the JCS.
- 4.2 However, it has been decided to subject them again to SA within the context of the Northampton Local Plan (Part 2). The findings are shown in **Table 4.1** and are summarised below.
- 4.3 The Local Plan (Part 2) objectives are unlikely to have any significant negative effects (--). Most of the objectives are likely to have significant positive (++) or minor positive effects (+) in relation to the SA objectives, or negligible (0) effects. All the objectives have at least one significant positive effect where they directly address SA objectives, although a small number of minor negative effects (-) and mixed effects (+/-) have also been identified.
- 4.4 Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 6 – Housing, and Objective 3 – Economic Advantage, focus on the delivery of housing or employment land and therefore respectively score a significant positive effect (++) in relation to SA objective 1: Housing and SA objective 6: Economy. Most of the other Local Plan (Part 2) objectives are likely to result in a mixture of positive and negative effects (+/-) or minor negative effects. While they will help to achieve the housing and employment development needed in the Borough, construction of new homes and employment development could potentially have negative effects on environmental receptors and could result in increased car traffic within the Borough. However, there would be opportunities for good design and construction techniques to mitigate potential effects and even have beneficial effects, e.g. on the setting of a heritage asset through sensitive design. For some of the SA objectives, the potential minor negative effect is shown as uncertain (-?), as it will depend on how and where the housing and employment development is delivered across the Borough.
- 4.5 The Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 7 – Supporting the Town Centre focuses on regeneration and service provision of town centres. Therefore, it is considered likely to have significant positive effects (++) on SA objective 6: Economy, and SA objective 7: Town centre vitality.
- 4.6 The Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 1 – Connections, and Objective 2 – Infrastructure and Development seek to make sustainable travel a priority and ensure social, physical and green infrastructure is adequately provided. Therefore, this objective directly addresses SA objective 2: Sustainable travel, and indirectly SA objective 8: Minimise greenhouse gases and SA objective 12: Air pollution with a significant positive effect (++) for each. Similarly the Local Plan (Part 2) objective 12 – Green Infrastructure seeks to protect natural species and enhance existing strategic green infrastructure network resulting in a significant positive effect (++) for SA objective 9: Biodiversity and geodiversity.
- 4.7 The Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 5 – Educational Attainment, and Objective 4 – Specialist Business Development, are likely to have a significant positive effect (++) on SA objective 6: Economy. These Local Plan (Part 2) objectives seek to develop a skills base within the community and support opportunities for specialist employment. Objective 5 – Educational Attainment is also directly supportive of SA objective 3: Access to education and so a significant positive effect (++) is also likely for this SA objective.
- 4.8 Two Local Plan (Part 2) objectives, 10 – Climate Change, and 9 – High Quality Design, are likely to result in significant positive effects (++) or minor positive effects (+) in relation to most SA objectives. Objective 9 – High Quality Design directly addresses SA Objective 10: Landscapes and townscapes and SA objective 11: Historic environment and so significant positive effects (++) are expected for these SA objectives. The Local Plan (Part 2) objective on Climate change will

have a have a significant positive effect on SA objective 8: Greenhouse gas emissions, SA objective 12: Air pollution, SA objective 13: Sustainable water management and SA objective 14: Flood risk.

- 4.9 The Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 11 – Protecting and Building Communities should have a significant positive effect (++) for SA objective 7: Town centre vitality. The policy seeks to ensure new development in urban areas effectively supports and links new and existing communities physically and socially, to achieve social cohesion and address the areas of deprivation identified in parts of the Borough. A couple of other minor positive (+) effects have been identified for some SA objectives.
- 4.10 The Local Plan (Part 2) Objective 8 – Heritage directly addresses heritage assets and their role in providing a sense of place and local distinctiveness. The Objective also seeks to ensure that development conserves and where possible enhances their setting. Therefore, this policy is identified as having a significant positive effect in relation to SA objective 11: Historic Environment and SA: objective 10: Landscape and townscape.
- 4.11 Whilst there is no Local Plan (Part 2) objective directly relating to health and well-being, a number of the other Local Plan (Part 2) objectives should give rise to minor positive effects overall on SA objective 4: Health and well-being.



**Table 4.1: SA scores for Northampton Local (Part 2) objectives**

SA Objectives →	SA1: Housing	SA2: Sustainable travel	SA3: Access to education	SA4: Health and wellbeing	SA5: Reduce crime	SA6: Economy	SA7: Town centre vitality	SA8: Greenhouse gas emissions	SA9: Biodiversity and geodiversity	SA10: Landscape and townscape	SA11: Historic Environment	SA12: Air pollution	SA13: Sustainable water management	SA14: Flood risk	SA15: Efficient use of land	SA16: Sustainable waste management
↓ Local Plan (Part 2) objectives																
Connections	0	++	0	+	0	+	0	++	0	0	0	++	0	0	0	0
Infrastructure and development	0	++	0	+	0	+	+	++	+	0	0	++	0	0	0	0
Economic Advantage	0	0	0	+?	0	++	+?	+/-	-?	-?	0	+/-	0	0	0	0
Specialist Business Development	0	0	0	+?	0	++	0	+	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	0
Educational Attainment	0	+	++	+	+	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Housing	++	0	0	+	0	+	0	+/-	-?	-?	0	+/-	0	+	0	0
Supporting the town centre	0	+	0	0	0	++	++	+/-	0	+?	0	+/-	0	0	0	0
Heritage	0	0	0	0	0	+	+	0	0	++	++	0	0	0	0	0
High Quality Design	+	0	0	+	+	+?	+?	+?	0	++	++	0	0	+?	0	0
Climate Change	0	+	0	+	0	+?	0	++	0	0	0	++	++	++	0	+
Protecting and Building Communities	0	0	0	+	+	+?	++	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green Infrastructure	0	+	0	+	0	+?	0	0	++	+	0	0	0	+	0	0

## Providing new homes

- 4.12 The SA of the questions relating to housing provision is shown in **Table 4.2**.
- 4.13 All question options have a positive effect (✓) on SA objective 1 (housing) as they are all directly related to the provision of housing.
- 4.14 The effects of the quantity of development to be delivered within Northampton Borough have already been appraised in the SA of the Joint Core Strategy. It is acknowledged that more housing and associated traffic is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. However, the option question seeks to increase the density of dwellings per hectare across the Borough, with higher densities in the town centre and other centres and key transport corridors. This should enable access to jobs, services and facilities without the need to travel by car, which would give rise to positive effects (✓) on SA objectives relating to sustainable travel (SA objective 2), greenhouse gas emissions (SA objective 8) and air pollution (SA objective 12). Prioritising sites that can be delivered in the short-term or allowing for greater flexibility through a 20% housing land supply buffer, could potentially undermine or dilute the delivery of the spatial strategy if easy to deliver sites that are less well aligned with the strategy of higher densities in the town centre, other centres and key transport corridors were to come forward at the expense of, or in advance of, sites that are more challenging to deliver but better aligned with the strategy.
- 4.15 The higher density of housing in the town centre should help to support town centre vitality (SA objective 7). The emphasis on delivery of housing to higher densities, with a focus on prioritising sites that can be delivered in the short term, and with a 20% housing land supply buffer are all likely to support the local economy, temporarily through construction activity, and in the medium to longer term by providing homes for people working or wishing to work in the Borough (i.e. the labour supply). Similarly, the provision of smaller market dwellings (1 and 2 bed homes) should help to provide a range of housing, particularly for younger workers, single households and couples who make up an important component of the workforce. Taken together, these should have a positive effect on SA objective 6.
- 4.16 Identifying sites for specialist housing and sites specifically for the provision of older persons housing will have a positive effect (✓) on health (SA objective 4). The effects of the other options on health are difficult to determine at this stage, as they will be influenced by the design of development and access to open space, sport and leisure facilities, and healthcare facilities. It is noted that the strategy seeks to deliver a wider green infrastructure network that will link to the surrounding open countryside, and will include access to parks, sports facilities and well maintained local space, but this will need to be tested through the assessment of individual sites, and associated infrastructure, at the next stage of plan preparation.
- 4.17 An uncertain effect (?) is expected for all options against SA objective 15: Efficient use of land. Although the introductory text to the questions states that the focus of the strategy will be on brownfield land, it also states that this could be on ***"other available sites within the existing built up area and elsewhere in the Borough"***, and therefore it is not yet possible to determine how well this SA objective will be met until individual sites have been assessed. A minimum density of 40 dwellings per hectare outside of the sustainable urban extensions will be expected, which will encourage the efficient use of land. In the town centre, other centres and along key transport corridors, the Options Consultation Paper indicates that densities will be higher although specific targets are not mentioned.
- 4.18 For SA objectives 9: Biodiversity and geodiversity, 10: Landscapes and townscapes, and 11: Historic environment, the potential effect is shown as uncertain (?) as development could potentially have negative effects on environmental receptors. However, it will depend on how and where the housing development is delivered across the Borough, and there could be opportunities for good design and construction techniques to mitigate potential effects and even have beneficial effects, for example by using developer contributions to provide multi-functional green infrastructure.
- 4.19 It is noted that the strategy seeks to enable the provision of new schools and avoid inappropriate development within the flood plain, but it is not possible to determine the likely effects on access

to education (SA objective 3) and flood risk (SA objective 14) until the assessment of individual sites.

4.20 The effects on all other SA objectives are considered to be negligible (0).

**Table 4.2: SA scores for housing options**

SA Objectives →	SA1: Housing	SA2: Sustainable travel	SA3: Access to education	SA4: Health and wellbeing	SA5: Reduce crime	SA6: Economy	SA7: Town centre vitality	SA8: Greenhouse gas emissions	SA9: Biodiversity and geodiversity	SA10: Landscape and townscape	SA11: Historic Environment	SA12: Air pollution	SA13: Sustainable water management	SA14: Flood risk	SA15: Efficient use of land	SA16: Sustainable waste management
↓ Options																
Apply a 20% housing land supply buffer	✓	?	?	?	0	✓	0	?	?	?	?	?	0	?	?	0
Apply a residential density of 40 dwellings per hectare outside of the sustainable urban extensions, with higher densities in the town centre, other centres and along key transport corridors	✓	✓	?	?	0	✓	✓	✓	?	?	?	✓	0	?	?	0
In allocating sites for housing development, priority should be given to sites that can be delivered in the short term	✓	?	?	?	0	✓	?	?	?	?	?	?	0	?	?	0
Identify sites for specialist housing	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	0	?	0
Identify sites specifically for the provision of older persons' housing	✓	0	0	✓	0	0	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	0	?	0
Allocations for general housing should include a proportion of smaller market dwellings (1 & 2 bed)	✓	0	0	0	0	✓	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	0	?	0
Specify a threshold or proportion of serviced plots to ensure the delivery of custom-build and self-build plots	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	?	?	0	0	0	0	?	0

## Creating a prosperous economy

- 4.21 The SA of the questions relating to the economy is shown in **Table 4.3**.
- 4.22 Positive effects (✓) are expected for all options against SA objective 6: Economy, and SA objective 7: Town centre vitality.
- 4.23 The release of low value office stock for other uses could not only help to improve the vitality of town centres, but it could allow for greater surveillance, increasing the perception of safety from crime. Therefore that option scored a positive (✓) against SA objective 5: Reduce crime. A positive effect (✓) is also expected against SA objective 1: Housing, due to the potential for oversupplied, dated, low value office stock to be released for the purpose of housing.
- 4.24 Similarly, the fourth option allows for the release of employment for other uses, once a period of active marketing has been undertaken, and therefore also scores a positive effect (✓) against SA objective 1: Housing.
- 4.25 The Borough will continue to promote the retention and re-use of land in employment use to provide for a range of businesses resulting in positive effects (✓) for SA objective 15: Efficiency of land use.
- 4.26 The effects on all other SA objectives are negligible (0). The strategy is to make best and most efficient use of land within the Borough. This includes a flexible approach to land that is already in use or designated for employment activity but where other uses, such as housing, may be more appropriate. Given that this land is already in use, and the likely emphasis on quality of design of new development within the strategy, it is considered at this stage that such a policy approach to change of use is unlikely to have an adverse effect on sustainability issues such as biodiversity and geodiversity (SA objective 9), landscape and townscape (SA objective 10), the historic environment (SA objective 11), and flood risk (SA objective 14). However, where individual sites for changes in use are to be identified in the Local Plan (Part 2), the effects of such changes will need to be tested through the SA process.
- 4.27 Similarly, where other uses are to be considered in Local Plan (Part 2) for specific sites that are currently in employment use and/or designated for employment use, the effects of designating these sites for other uses against SA objectives such as sustainable travel (SA objective 2), access to education (SA objective 3), health and well-being (SA objective 4), greenhouse gas emissions (SA objective 8), air pollution (SA objective 12) and flood risk (SA objective 14), will need to be assessed by the SA.

**Table 4.3: SA scores for economy options**

SA Objectives →																
↓ Options	SA1: Housing	SA2: Sustainable travel	SA3: Access to education	SA4: Health and wellbeing	SA5: Reduce crime	SA6: Economy	SA7: Town centre vitality	SA8: Greenhouse gas emissions	SA9: Biodiversity and geodiversity	SA10: Landscape and townscape	SA11: Historic Environment	SA12: Air pollution	SA13: Sustainable water management	SA14: Flood risk	SA15: Efficient use of land	SA16: Sustainable waste management
Do you agree that there is demand for more small scale office space, especially in the town centre?	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Dated, low value office stock in the town centre is oversupplied	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Outside of the town centre, some medium and larger office allocations should be released to provide small or medium sized industrial and distribution uses to help meet demand for these uses	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
In demonstrating that existing employment sites have been actively marketed before they are considered for release to other uses, active marketing should be required to be undertaken for a minimum period of 12 months or 24 months	✓	0	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0

## Our retail centres

- 4.28 The SA of the option questions relating to retail centres is shown in **Table 4.4**.
- 4.29 All three options for retail centres seek to allow more flexibility for other uses to be introduced in centres, which could result in positive effects (✓) for housing (SA objective 1).
- 4.30 All three options also support an efficient use of land through allowing new development on previously developed land where existing uses have become unattractive or vacant resulting in a positive effect (✓) on SA objective 15.
- 4.31 A greater mix of uses and a more vibrant town centre will have a positive effect (✓) on the perception of safety of crime (SA objective 5).
- 4.32 Promoting a balanced range of retail and other town centre uses will provide more reasons for people to come into, and stay longer in, the town centre having positive effects for the economy (SA objective 6).
- 4.33 Creating a range of retail and other uses in the town centre will help maintain and strengthen (✓) the character and vitality of the town centre (SA objective 7).
- 4.34 The effects on the landscape and townscape (SA objective 10) and the historic environment (SA objective 11) of a more flexible use of land within town and other centres, where many of the **Borough's built historic assets can be found**, are uncertain until further detail is supplied. For example, the re-use, refurbishment or replacement of medium and larger office allocations with other uses in the town centre, could give rise to either negative or positive effects depending upon the contribution of the existing building to the townscape and setting of historic assets, the alternative use proposed, and the nature and design quality of the re-used, refurbished, or replacement building.
- 4.35 Attracting more people to the town centre could have a negative effect on Air Quality **Management Areas (AQMAs) which are mainly concentrated around Northampton's town centre** and/or located near to significant arterial road routes. However, focusing development in urban areas may also offer more sustainable transport choices. Therefore an uncertain effect (?) is expected for SA objective 8 (greenhouse gas emissions) and SA objective 12 (air pollution).
- 4.36 The effects on all other SA objectives are negligible (0).

**Table 4.4: SA scores for retail options**

SA Objectives →	SA1: Housing	SA2: Sustainable travel	SA3: Access to education	SA4: Health and wellbeing	SA5: Reduce crime	SA6: Economy	SA7: Town centre vitality	SA8: Greenhouse gas emissions	SA9: Biodiversity and geodiversity	SA10: Landscape and townscape	SA11: Historic Environment	SA12: Air pollution	SA13: Sustainable water management	SA14: Flood risk	SA15: Efficient use of land	SA16: Sustainable waste management
↓ Options																
Allow more flexibility in some smaller centres for other uses to be introduced	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	?	0	?	?	?	0	0	✓	0
Review the retail frontages policy, which restricts non-retail uses in some sections of frontage, to allow greater flexibility for non-retail uses in some areas	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	?	0	?	?	?	0	0	✓	0
Within the town centre, some of the medium and larger sized office allocations are oversupplied	✓	0	0	0	✓	✓	✓	?	0	?	?	?	0	0	✓	0



## Overall comments

- 4.37 The Northampton Local Plan (Part 2) is set within the context and parameters of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. It needs to be consistent with the JCS, and provides greater detail at the Borough level of how the growth and delivery of development will be delivered within the town.
- 4.38 The strategy of the Local Plan (Part 2) is to make the best and most efficient use of the urban area, by ensuring that housing is delivered to densities that are appropriate for an urban area, and that are highest in the town and other centres, and on key transport corridors. This should help to deliver densities of population that can use and support local facilities, such as schools, shops, sport and leisure facilities, without the need to use a car and also facilitate use of sustainable modes of transport such as buses. This in turn should have positive effects on greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, if fewer car journeys are required. The strategy also seeks **to provide a range of homes to meet the varying needs of Northampton's residents**, including at all life stages.
- 4.39 With respect to employment and retail uses, the strategy seeks to adopt a flexible approach, which again seeks to make the best and most efficient use of land. This could lead to the change of use of land currently in employment or retail use to other uses, for example for housing, which could change the character of some areas. Although this could be seen by some to be undesirable, if planned and managed well the effects should be positive.
- 4.40 The strategy emphasises the need for high quality, energy, water and waste efficient design of new development, to provide for open space, sport and leisure facilities, and community facilities such as schools. It aims to protect and strengthen the green infrastructure network, and biodiversity. It also seeks to highlight **the Borough's historic environment** in shaping development. There will be challenges in making this happen, but the strategy is setting the right direction in sustainability terms.
- 4.41 Urban areas inevitably undergo constant change. They need to reinvent themselves to respond to changing circumstances, whether this is the digital economy or climate change. In doing so, they need to retain their character and distinctiveness, as expressed through their historic assets, their open spaces and wildlife, their watercourses, and their communities. The creation of new communities should not be at the expense of existing communities. Instead, they should be mutually reinforcing, creating a network of neighbourhoods, **supporting and using the Borough's assets** to best effect in a sustainable way.
- 4.42 The strategy set out in the Options Consultation Paper seeks to do this. The test will be how this translates into detailed development proposals in Local Plan (Part 2). It will be important that they are in line with, and support, the vision, objectives and strategy set out in the Options Consultation Paper. The next stages of the SA process will test how well this is being achieved in line with sustainability principles.

## 5 Next steps

- 5.1 The Options Consultation Paper and this Sustainability Appraisal Report will be made available for a six week consultation period commencing **Wednesday 21 September** and concluding on **Wednesday 02 November 2016**. Comments should be submitted to the Planning Policy Team by **5pm on Wednesday 02 November 2016** (see the Options Consultation Paper for details of how to respond).
- 5.2 All comments will be considered and will help to inform the preparation of a Draft Local Plan (Part 2) which will be published for consultation in March 2017.
- 5.3 As the Local Plan (Part 2) is drafted, it will be subject to the later stages of the SA using the SA Framework presented in **Chapter 3**. A full SA report, incorporating the later stages of the SA process, will then be produced and made available to other stakeholders and the general public for wider consultation alongside the Draft Local Plan (Part 2).

LUC  
August 2016