

# Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for the Rutland Local Plan

SA Report to accompany the Pre-Submission Local Plan  
(Regulation 19 Publication Version)

Rutland County Council

October 2024

## Quality information

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## Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
V1.0	22/08/24	Draft for Cabinet	23/08/24	SB	Senior Planning Policy Officer
V2.0	01/10/24	Regulation 19 version	01/10/24	NCB	Technical Director

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned to undertake an independent sustainability appraisal (SA) in support of Rutland County Council's emerging Local Plan.
- 1.2 Rutland County Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan to replace the existing planning policies in the Rutland Local Development Framework.<sup>1</sup> The new Local Plan, which will cover the period to 2041, will be the key planning policy document for the County and will guide decisions on the use and development of land.
- 1.3 This SA Report accompanies the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* document for Regulation 19 consultation.
- 1.4 Key information relating to the new Local Plan is presented in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Key facts relating to the new Local Plan**

Responsible Authority	Rutland County Council
Title of Plan	Rutland Local Plan
Subject	Development plan
Purpose	The Local Plan is a statutory planning document prepared by Rutland County Council. It is the key planning policy document for the County and will guide decisions on the use and development of land.
Timescale	2021 to 2041
Local Plan area	Rutland County ( <b>Figure 1.1</b> )
Summary of content	The Local Plan will set out the strategic vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the County, as well as the planning policies which will help to determine the future location, scale, type and design of new development in Rutland. Upon adoption, it will set out the Council's policies to address housing and employment needs and other associated economic, social, and environmental priorities. It seeks to ensure local development is built in accordance with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. The Local Plan will also include site allocations to meet the vision and objectives of the Plan.
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<sup>1</sup> The current Local Development Framework comprises: Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (October 2010); the Core Strategy DPD (July 2011); and the Site Allocations and Policies DPD (October 2014)

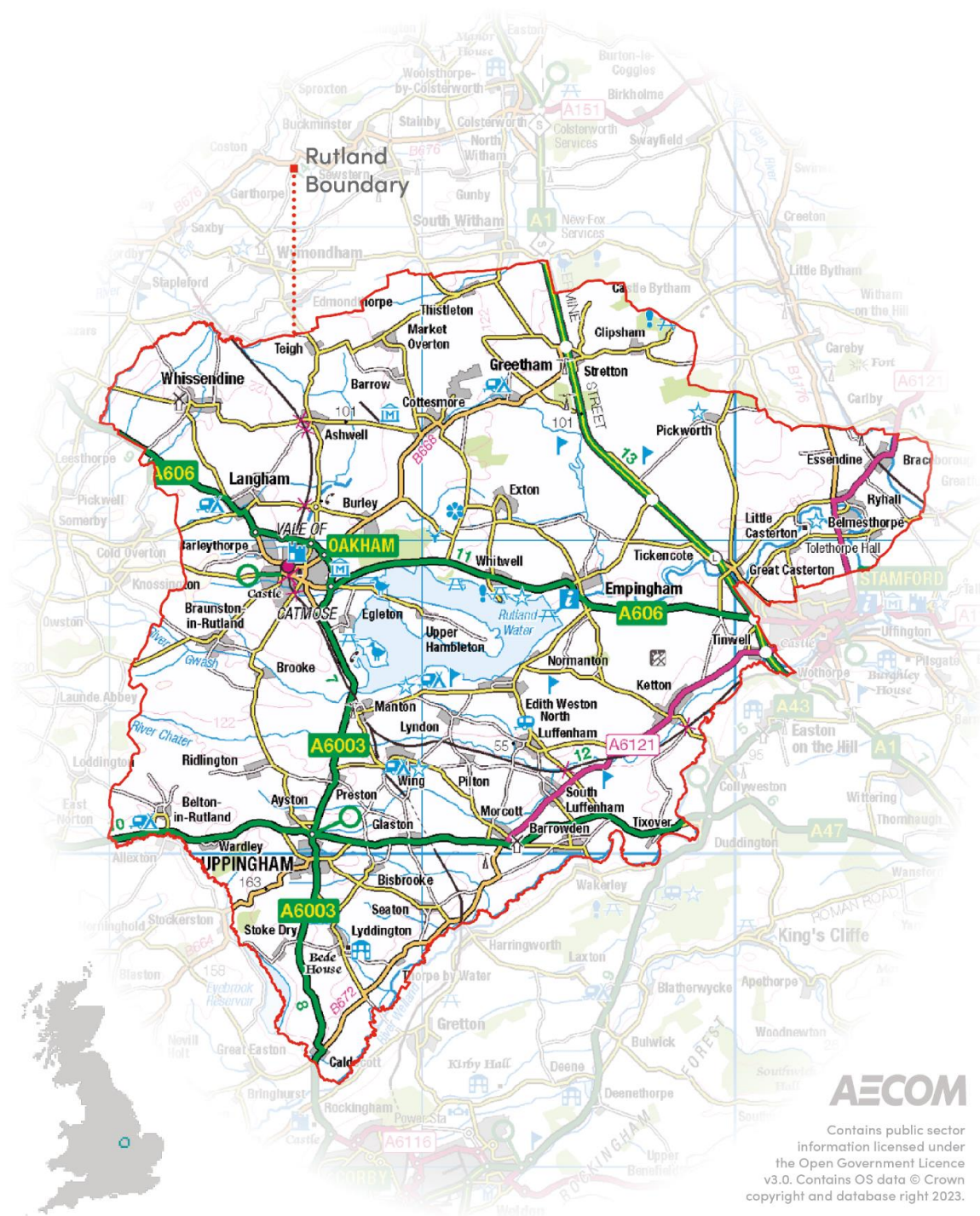


Figure 1.1: Rutland County (the Local Plan area)

## Rutland Local Plan vision and objectives

- 1.5 The vision and objectives for the Local Plan were developed during initial stages of plan making.
- 1.6 The Local Plan seeks to establish a clear vision for the future of Rutland and sets out objectives for delivering that vision during the plan period. This provides the framework upon which the policies and proposals of the plan are built.
- 1.7 The **vision** for the Local Plan is as follows:

*By 2041, the Local Plan will have helped Rutland to make the most of its location, natural features and historic assets to become a leading example of a modern rural county.*

*The Local Plan will have supported the delivery of:*

- *changes that improve people's quality of life, address the impacts of climate change and the need to become carbon net zero*
- *a strong, competitive, and knowledge-based local economy that provides opportunity for indigenous and inward investment and where businesses and entrepreneurs' flourish*
- *a range of high-quality housing that meet the county's minimum housing need and which meets the needs of all sections of the community, including affordable homes, space for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show people and homes which meet specialist needs*
- *healthy, sustainable, mixed communities with easy access to services and facilities by cycling, walking, public transport as well as by private vehicle*
- *development and change which also respects Rutland's rural character and has enhanced the county's sense of community and its unique rural identity*
- *protection and preservation of the natural environment and heritage assets and their setting; and*
- *appropriate infrastructure (particularly education, health, roads, and community facilities) to mitigate the impact of new development.*

*The market towns of Oakham and Uppingham will continue to thrive as vibrant destinations to shop, socialise and enjoy life – both for those who live locally and those who visit. They will continue to be the main focus for additional housing and employment growth, while their role as business locations, service and cultural centres for the county will have been enhanced.*

*Beyond the towns, some planned development will have occurred in the 21 Larger Villages. Small scale, local, development will also have been permitted in the smaller settlements ensuring that our rural communities remain vibrant.*

*The quintessential rural character of the countryside will have been protected and support given to rural diversification and adapting rural activities to meet the challenges of climate change, digitalisation and changing travel patterns.*

*The development needs of communities, businesses and visitors will have been enabled taking particular account of:*

- *climate change and the drive towards carbon net zero*
- *addressing health inequalities and improving the wellbeing of our communities*
- *addressing social and economic inequalities and promoting active travel routes*
- *the area's internationally recognised natural, built, and historic environment; and*
- *the provision of adequate supporting infrastructure.*

1.8 Implementing this vision, the Local Plan has the following **Strategic Objectives**:

*Strategic Objective 1: Climate change*

*Taking positive action to achieve net-zero and reduce our carbon footprint, whilst mitigating and adapting to reduce the impact of climate change and reduce the risk of harm to people, communities, the environment, and the economy.*

*Strategic Objective 2: Delivering sustainable development*

*Delivering development which meets today's needs in a way which ensures the needs of future generations are not compromised.*

*Strategic Objective 3: Meeting housing needs*

*Meeting Rutland's identified current and future diverse housing needs, including the affordability and adaptability of housing, through the provision of well-designed, energy efficient and low/zero carbon new homes.*

*Strategic Objective 4: A prosperous and resilient local economy*

*Supporting business investment and job creation in ways which are compatible with environmental considerations, food security, rural development and supporting visitor attractions to maintain a prosperous and resilient economy in Rutland.*

*Strategic Objective 5: Supporting strong and vibrant communities*

*Promoting health and wellbeing for people of all ages and reduce health inequalities.*

*Strategic Objective 6: Creating safe, inclusive, and resilient communities*

*Supporting all communities across the county to make them safe, inclusive, resilient to change with enhanced community cohesion.*



### Strategic Objective 7: Promoting high standards of design

*Promoting high standard of design in all new development.*

### Strategic Objective 8: Protect and enhance the built and natural environment

*To provide, protect and enhance Rutland's varied and high-quality built and natural environment.*

### Strategic Objective 9: Make effective use of land and natural resources

*Encouraging the effective and prudent use of previously developed land and natural resources.*

### Strategic Objective 10: Ensure development is supported by essential infrastructure and services

*Ensuring development is supported by essential infrastructure and services.*

### Strategic objective 11: Minerals

*Ensuring a steady and adequate supply of minerals to meet national, regional, and local needs whilst avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment and local communities.*

## SA explained

- 1.9 SA considers and communicates the likely significant effects of an emerging plan, and the reasonable alternatives considered during the plan making process, in terms of key sustainability issues. The aim of SA is to inform and influence the plan-making process with a view to avoiding or mitigating negative effects and maximising positive effects. Through this approach, the SA seeks to maximise the emerging Local Plan's contribution to sustainable development.
- 1.10 An SA is undertaken in line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA Regulations). SA also widens the scope of the assessment from focusing generally on environmental issues to include social and economic issues.
- 1.11 The SEA Regulations require that a report is published for consultation alongside the draft plan that 'identifies, describes and evaluates' the likely significant effects of implementing 'the plan, and reasonable alternatives'. The report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan.
- 1.12 The 'likely significant effects on the environment', are those defined in the SEA Regulations as 'including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors'. Reasonable alternatives to the plan need to take into consideration the objectives for the plan and its geographic scope. The choice of 'reasonable alternatives' is determined by means of a case-by-case assessment and a decision.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2009) Report from the Commission to the Council, The European Parliament, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the application and effectiveness of the Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment (Directive 2001/42/EC). (COMM 2009 469 final).

## This SA Report

- 1.13 At this current stage of the plan-making process, RCC is consulting on the proposed *Pre-Submission Local Plan* under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations.
- 1.14 This SA Report has therefore been produced with the intention of informing this stage in the Local Plan's preparation. Specifically, this SA Report has been structured into three parts to address the key requirements stipulated by the SEA Regulations, as follows:
- **Part 1** provides an outline of plan making to date, in association with the parallel SA process (including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives').
  - **Part 2** assesses the policies presented in the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* document, with which this SA Report accompanies at Regulation 19.
  - **Part 3** sets out the next steps for the Local Plan/SA process.
- 1.15 This SA Report addresses the requirements outlined above in turn, as discrete 'parts' of the report.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See **Appendix A** for further explanation of the regulatory basis for answering certain questions within the SA Report, and a 'checklist' explaining more precisely the regulatory basis for presenting certain information.

## **Part 1: What has plan making/ SA involved up to this point?**

## 2. The Scope of the SA

### Scope of the SA

- 2.1 The SEA Regulations require that: “*When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies*”. In England, the consultation bodies are the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England.<sup>4</sup> These authorities were consulted on the scope of the SA for the new Local Plan between March and April 2022.
- 2.2 The baseline information (including baseline data and context review) initially included in the SA Scoping Report provides the basis for the SA process and has been reviewed and updated in light of the responses received at scoping consultation. The responses (along with comments on how these have been considered and addressed through the SA process) are presented in **Table D** within **Appendix B** of this SA Report.

### SA Framework

- 2.3 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SA Scoping Report identified a range of sustainability issues that should be a particular focus of SA, ensuring it remains targeted on the most important issues. These issues were then translated into an SA ‘Framework’ of objectives and appraisal questions.
- 2.4 The SA Framework provides a way in which the sustainability effects of the Local Plan and alternatives can be identified and subsequently analysed based on a structured and consistent approach.
- 2.5 The SA Framework and the appraisal findings in this SA Report have been presented under eight SA Themes, reflecting the range of information being considered through the SA process. These are:
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity.
  - Landscape.
  - Historic Environment.
  - Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources.
  - Climate Change.
  - Communities, Health and Wellbeing.
  - Transportation; and
  - Economic Vitality.
- 2.6 The SA Framework is presented in **Table 2.1** below.

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<sup>4</sup> In line with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because “*by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programme*”.

**Table 2.1: SA Framework for the SA of the Rutland Local Plan**

SA objective	Appraisal questions... Will the option / proposal help to:
<b>SA Theme: Biodiversity and Geodiversity</b>	
1. Support the integrity of internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Protect the integrity of the internationally and nationally designated sites within and within proximity to Rutland?</li> <li>b) Manage pressures on locally designated sites for biodiversity and geodiversity in Rutland?</li> </ul>
2. Protect and enhance habitats and species in Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species?</li> <li>b) Protect key species during the construction and operational phases of new development areas?</li> <li>c) Protect and enhance ecological networks?</li> <li>d) Achieve a net gain in biodiversity?</li> <li>e) Increase the resilience of Rutland's biodiversity to the potential effects of climate change?</li> </ul>
3. Enhance understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support access to, interpretation and understanding of biodiversity and geodiversity?</li> <li>b) Encourage opportunities for engagement with Rutland's biodiversity and geodiversity resource?</li> </ul>
<b>SA Theme: Landscape</b>	
4. Protect and enhance the character and quality of Rutland's landscapes, townscapes and villagescapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support the distinctive qualities of the NCAs and LCAs within and surrounding Rutland?</li> <li>b) Protect and enhance key landscape, townscape and villagescape features which contribute to local distinctiveness?</li> <li>c) Protect locally important viewpoints contributing to sense of place and visual amenity?</li> <li>d) Improve understanding of Rutland's distinctive landscape, townscape and villagescape resources?</li> </ul>
5. Contribute to tranquillity and the quality of dark skies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that new infrastructure provision does not adversely impact on the quality of Rutland's dark skies?</li> <li>b) Minimise the impact on and seek to improve areas of tranquillity?</li> </ul>
<b>SA Theme: Historic Environment</b>	
6. Conserve and enhance Rutland's historic environment, including designated and non-designated heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conserve and enhance the significance of buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest, both designated and non-designated, and their setting?</li> <li>b) Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of conservation areas and their settings?</li> </ul>

SA objective	Appraisal questions... Will the option / proposal help to:
(and their settings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c) Conserve and enhance the special interest, character and appearance of registered parks and gardens, and their settings?</li> <li>d) Conserve and where possible, enhance the wider historic environment, including historic landscapes and their settings?</li> </ul>
7. Conserve and enhance Rutland's archaeological resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Conserve and enhance archaeological resource, including features listed on the Leicestershire and Rutland HER and their settings?</li> </ul>
8. Promote opportunities for enhancing the understanding of Rutland's distinct historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support access to, interpretation and understanding of the historic evolution and character of the environment?</li> <li>b) Ensure that, where possible, development contributes to improved public understanding of assets and their settings?</li> </ul>

### SA Theme: Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

9. Deliver improvements in air quality in Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reduce emissions of pollutants from transport?</li> <li>b) Promote the use of low emission vehicles?</li> <li>c) Promote enhancements in sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>d) Promote enhancements to green infrastructure networks to facilitate increased absorption and dissipation of pollutants?</li> </ul>
10. Ensure the efficient and effective use of land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land?</li> <li>b) Support a brownfield first approach to new development opportunities?</li> <li>c) Support the sustainable remediation of contaminated land?</li> <li>d) Protect the integrity of mineral resources?</li> <li>e) Encourage recycling of materials and minimise consumption of resources during construction, operation, and maintenance of new infrastructure?</li> </ul>
11. Manage Rutland's water resources in a sustainable manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support improvements to water quality consistent with the aims of the Water Environment regulations?</li> <li>b) Ensure that appropriate drainage infrastructure is available to serve new development areas?</li> <li>c) Reduce pressures on wastewater treatment works and the capacity of the existing networks?</li> <li>d) Help to minimise diffuse surface water pollution?</li> <li>e) Protect surface water and groundwater resources?</li> </ul>

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**SA objective**                      **Appraisal questions... Will the option / proposal help to:**

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f) Minimise water consumption?

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**SA Theme: Climate Change**

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12. Reduce the contribution to climate change made by activities within Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, including walking, cycling and public transport?</li> <li>b) Increase the number of new developments meeting or exceeding sustainable design criteria?</li> <li>c) Generate energy from low or zero carbon sources?</li> <li>d) Reduce energy consumption from non-renewable resources?</li> </ul>
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13. Support Rutland's resilience to the potential effects of climate change, including flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that inappropriate development does not take place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking into account the likely future effects of climate change?</li> <li>b) Improve and extend green infrastructure networks to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change?</li> <li>c) Sustainably manage water run-off, reducing surface water runoff?</li> <li>d) Ensure the potential risks associated with climate change are considered through new development areas?</li> </ul>
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**SA Theme: Communities, Health and Wellbeing**

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14. Provide everyone with the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support the timely delivery of an appropriate mix of housing types and tenures?</li> <li>b) Ensure delivery of high-quality, affordable and specialist housing that meets the needs of all Rutland's residents?</li> <li>c) Provide quality and flexible homes that meet people's needs?</li> <li>d) Promote the use of sustainable building techniques, including use of sustainable building materials in construction?</li> <li>e) Provide housing in sustainable locations that allow easy access to a range of local services and facilities?</li> </ul>
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15. Delivery of infrastructure to meet the foreseeable needs of the varied communities of Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Meet the needs of a growing population?</li> <li>b) Meet the needs of those living in rural areas?</li> <li>c) Address the needs of all age groups and communities in Rutland (including residents with protected characteristics)?</li> <li>d) Maintain or enhance the quality of life of all residents?</li> </ul>
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16. Support the quality of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Help remove barriers to activities and reduce social isolation?</li> </ul>
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SA objective	Appraisal questions... Will the option / proposal help to:
neighbourhoods as a place to live	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Enhance community infrastructure?</li> <li>c) Support the energy efficiency of new and existing development, including in reducing fuel poverty?</li> </ul>
17. Improve the health and well-being of Rutland's residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Reduce the impacts of pollution on health?</li> <li>b) Reduce health inequalities?</li> <li>c) Enhance the provision of, and access to, open spaces and green and blue infrastructure provision in Rutland?</li> <li>d) Improve access to the countryside for recreation?</li> <li>e) Encourage healthy lifestyles and active travel modes, including walking and cycling?</li> </ul>
<b>SA Theme: Transportation</b>	
18. Promote sustainable transport use, encourage accessibility, and reduce the need to travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Support the key objectives within the local transport plan and encourage more sustainable transport options?</li> <li>b) Improve access to and quality of sustainable transport modes for all communities to encourage modal shift?</li> <li>c) Promote improved local connectivity and pedestrian and cyclist movement?</li> <li>d) Reduce the number of journeys made and the need to travel?</li> <li>e) Improve accessibility to services, facilities, and amenities?</li> <li>f) Reduce the impact on residents and the built environment from the road network?</li> </ul>
<b>SA Theme: Economic Vitality</b>	
19. Support sustainable economic development in Rutland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Meet local employment land requirements?</li> <li>b) Support traditional and emerging sectors of Rutland's economy?</li> <li>c) Improve internet connectivity to support the digital economy and facilitate flexible working practices?</li> <li>d) Enhance the vitality of Rutland's local centres?</li> <li>e) Support rural diversification?</li> <li>f) Improve accessibility to employment opportunities?</li> <li>g) Enhance training and educational opportunities?</li> </ul>



## 3. Issues and Options (June 2022)

### Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

- 3.1 In June 2022, consultation was undertaken on an Issues and Options document for the Local Plan.<sup>5</sup> The Issues and Options document was the key output of the initial stage in developing the new Local Plan and was prepared under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations 2012.
- 3.2 The aim of the public consultation was to gain stakeholders' views on a range of planning issues and potential options for the future development of the county. These included relating to the following twelve issues:
- Issue 1: Tackling the climate crisis.
  - Issue 2: Determining the appropriate level and location of growth.
  - Issue 3: Meeting identified current and future housing needs.
  - Issue 4: Enabling a prosperous and resilient economy, linked to levels of housing growth.
  - Issue 5: Supporting vibrant town centres and a network of local centres to serve local retail and service needs.
  - Issue 6: Enabling safer and stronger communities, supported with viable and accessible community and cultural facilities.
  - Issue 7: Promoting sustainable and active modes of travel.
  - Issue 8: Ensuring new development is well designed to encourage active and healthy lifestyles and address health inequalities.
  - Issue 9: Conserving and enhancing Rutland's historic assets.
  - Issue 10: Protecting and enhancing the county's biodiversity, wildlife habitats, green and blue infrastructure, and open spaces.
  - Issue 11: Addressing minerals and waste requirements alongside environmental considerations; and
  - Issue 12: Ensuring development is supported by essential infrastructure and services.

### SA work to accompany Issues and Options

- 3.3 To support the Issues and Options stage, an Interim SA Report<sup>6</sup> was produced voluntarily with the intention of informing this stage of preparation of the new Local Plan. Specifically, the Interim SA Report presented an appraisal of a series of high-level approaches and alternatives (hereafter referred to as "options") which were evaluated as part of plan development. This was for the benefit of plan-makers tasked with selecting preferred options for the Local

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<sup>5</sup> Rutland County Council (June 2022 - September 2022) [Issues and Options Consultation](#)

<sup>6</sup> AECOM on behalf of Rutland County Council (October 2022) SA for the Rutland Local Plan, Interim SA Report: Options Appraisal Report

Plan and for consideration alongside the representations received during the consultation.

3.4 The sets of options considered through the SA were as follows:

- Options for reducing energy use and carbon emissions in new buildings.
- Options for low carbon energy and renewable energy proposals.
- Options for housing mix.
- Options for affordable housing.
- Options for self and custom build.
- Options for older persons' housing.
- Options for economic development.
- Options for employment sites within Rutland.
- Options for Rutland's rural economy.
- Options for the visitor economy.
- Options for health and wellbeing.
- Possible policy approach for the protection of historical assets.
- Options for biodiversity.
- Options for open spaces.
- Options for the protection of green and blue infrastructure.
- Options for managing the impact of mineral development.
- Options for identifying sites for waste management.
- Options for managing the impact of waste development.

3.5 Each option was considered against the SA Framework of objectives and assessment questions developed at scoping (**Table 2.1**).

3.6 Presenting the appraisal of these options, the following information was presented in the Interim SA Report:

- A description of the options appraised.
- An overview of the likely significant positive and negative effects of each option; and
- A ranking of the sustainability performance of each option relating to each SA theme to highlight their relative sustainability merits.

3.7 The findings of the options appraisal is presented in **Technical Annex 1** accompanying this SA Report (*Interim SA Report: Options Assessment*).

## 4. Site appraisals

- 4.1 To support the consideration of which sites to potentially allocate through the Local Plan, various site assessments have been undertaken through the Local Plan process.
- 4.2 As a first stage in identifying the sites to be allocated in the Local Plan, developers, landowners, town and parish councils, and other interested parties were invited to submit sites for potential inclusion in plan through a “Call for Sites” process. This was undertaken in 2022.
- 4.3 Subsequent to the Call for Sites, 180 sites have been considered for the Local Plan through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process undertaken to support the development of the Local Plan. These sites have been assessed for their suitability, availability and deliverability to support the choice of housing and employment allocations taken forward through the Local Plan.
- 4.4 In addition, a separate appraisal of each of the sites available within Rutland - as documented in the SHELAA - has been undertaken through the SA process. This is with the aim of informing the proposed allocation of sites through the Local Plan.
- 4.5 As part of the SA, the constraints and opportunities associated with each site were identified using a set of criteria which were developed specifically for the SA process. Based on these criteria, a ‘red/amber/green’ rating was then applied to each site for each criterion to provide an indication of site constraints and opportunities and the relative sustainability merits of the different sites.
- 4.6 The findings of the appraisal of the sites undertaken through the SA process, accompanied by an explanation of the approach and criteria utilised for the appraisal, is presented in **Technical Annex 2** accompanying this SA Report (*SA Report Technical Annex: GIS Site Assessment*).

## 5. Settlement assessments

5.1 To inform the choice of locations for growth, the SA undertook an identification of the key constraints and opportunities associated with key settlements in Rutland. This was undertaken through a settlement assessment.

5.2 A total of 23 settlements in Rutland have been considered through the settlement assessment process, with the selection of the settlements informed by the settlement hierarchy<sup>7</sup>. The settlements are listed below:

- Oakham (with Barleythorpe)
- Cottesmore
- Greetham
- Uppingham
- Market Overton
- Langham
- Edith Weston
- Whissendine
- Empingham
- Exton
- Ketton (with Aldgate and Geeston)
- North Luffenham
- Great Casterton
- South Luffenham
- Barrowden
- Ryhall
- Morcott
- Essendine
- Wing
- Manton
- Lyddington
- Belton-in-Rutland; and
- Braunston-in-Rutland

5.3 Findings for each settlement have been presented in three sections:

- **Settlement overview:** provides a summary of the settlement in terms of its placement within the settlement hierarchy in the Adopted Local Plan, population change between 2011 and 2021, and location within Rutland.
- **Natural environment:** provides a summary of the natural environment designations / features within and immediately surrounding the settlement (within an approximate 500m distance from the settlement edge).
- **Built environment (including transportation):** provides a summary of the built environment designations / features within the settlement.

5.4 The detailed findings of the settlement assessments undertaken through the SA process, including the criteria for determining the relative sustainability merits for each settlement (for each SA theme), is presented in **Technical Annex 3** accompanying this SA Report (*SA Report Technical Annex: Settlement Assessment*).

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<sup>7</sup> Rutland County Council (2023): [Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy Background Report](#)

## 6. Preferred Options Plan: Regulation 18 Consultation (November 2023)

- 6.1 In late 2023, Rutland County Council consulted on a draft Local Plan (*Rutland Local Plan - Preferred Options Consultation November 2023*). The document was an interim stage in developing the new Local Plan and was prepared under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations 2012).
- 6.2 An SA Report was produced with the intention of informing this stage in the new Local Plan's preparation. Specifically, the SA presented an appraisal of the preferred options for the new Local Plan, and reasonable alternatives.

### Consideration of reasonable alternatives

- 6.3 A key element of the SA process is the appraisal of 'reasonable alternatives' for the new Local Plan. In line with regulatory requirements, there is a need to explain how work has been undertaken to develop and then appraise reasonable alternatives, and how the Council considers the appraisal findings when developing the preferred approach for the plan.
- 6.4 The regulations are not prescriptive as to what constitutes a reasonable alternative, stating only that the SA Report should present an appraisal of the "*plan and reasonable alternatives taking into account the objectives and geographical scope of the plan*".

### Development of growth strategy options

- 6.5 A key component of the new Local Plan will be to present an overall spatial strategy for the county during the 20-year plan period from 2021 to 2041.
- 6.6 To support the development of the preferred approach for the new Local Plan (i.e., the spatial strategy), the SA process has considered a range of growth strategy options. This is with a view to understanding the relative sustainability merits of different potential spatial strategies for the Local Plan.
- 6.7 These growth strategy options have been developed based on strategic variables associated with the following two components:
- different scales of growth; and
  - different locations of growth.
- 6.8 A discussion of these strategic variables is set out below.

### Different scales of growth

- 6.9 In terms of housing numbers, three variables have been applied for the purposes of the appraisal of the growth strategy options. These are as follows:
- **123 homes per annum:** The current national standard method figure for housing need in Rutland is 123 homes per annum.<sup>8</sup> This equates to 2,460

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<sup>8</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework expects strategic policy-making authorities to follow the 'standard method' for assessing local housing need. The standard method uses a formula to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be

homes over the plan period 2021 to 2041. The figure is based on household growth of 93 per annum and an uplift for affordability of 32%.

- **160 homes per annum:** This reflects current delivery levels in Rutland during the initial part of the plan period since 2021. This equates to 3,200 homes over the current 2006 2026 plan period.
- **210 homes per annum:** In theory higher housing numbers could be delivered in Rutland through the Local Plan to support economic growth in the county. A potential 210 homes per annum equates to 4,200 homes over the plan period of 2021 – 2041.

6.10 The consideration of options with this range of housing numbers will help highlight the sustainability implications of higher and lower growth options in relation to environmental and socio-economic factors.

## Different locations of growth

6.11 A further key variable is the location of growth in Rutland. In terms of alternative spatial strategies, Rutland County Council has been keen to explore different distributions of development across the county. In particular, the Council has sought to explore different distributions between the main settlements in the county, comprising the two market towns, Oakham and Uppingham, the larger villages, and other locations in Rutland.

6.12 In this respect the strategic variables associated with potential locations for development through the Local Plan are as follows:

### Oakham

6.13 Oakham is the largest settlement in Rutland and provides a range of job opportunities, higher order services and facilities for the surrounding rural area, holds a market twice a week and has good public transport linkages with good access by rail and bus to the surrounding higher settlements.

6.14 Oakham has recently experienced (and is currently experiencing) a significant level of growth.

### Uppingham

6.15 Uppingham is the second largest settlement in the county in terms of population. It provides a range of convenience shopping, education, community and health facilities catering for the local area, a weekly market, job opportunities and more limited public transport linkages.

6.16 The emerging Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan will identify sites to meet the housing requirements within the new Local Plan (a minimum of 314 homes), and the SA process has appraised all of the sites already to inform their selection process. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is being progressed to inform neighbourhood plan making, including reasonable alternative options for meeting housing needs (including with respect to housing densities). In light of this, no alternative variables have been considered for Uppingham through the SA.

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planned for, in a way which addresses projected household growth and historic under-supply. The standard method identifies a minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure.

## Quarry Farm

6.17 Quarry Farm comprises the western part of the wider proposed Stamford North development within Rutland. It comprises the remnants of the former brickworks, clay and stone quarry pits and mature and scrub woodland and grasslands. 650 homes could be taken forward in the plan period within Rutland; the whole development, including the part in South Kesteven District could deliver just under 2,000 homes.

## Larger Villages

6.18 The county's Larger Villages are defined by Spatial Strategy for new development Background Paper as those which may have a number of key local services such as a shop, public house, community centre, school and/or recreation and leisure spaces. The study also established that villages with more than 150 homes and a population of more than 300 people can potentially sustain a local shop or public house and a community centre and recreation spaces and are also included in the category.

6.19 The settlements classified by the background paper as Larger Villages are as follows:

**Table 6.1: Settlements classified as Larger Villages by the updated Sustainability of Settlements Study**

Larger Villages		
Barrowden	Exton	Market Overton
Belton	Great Casterton	Morcott
Braunston	Greetham	North Luffenham
Cottesmore	Ketton	Ryhall
Edith Weston	Langham	South Luffenham
Empingham	Lyddington	Whissendine
Essendine	Manton	Wing

## Smaller Villages

6.20 The county's Smaller Villages (**Table 6.2**) are defined by the background paper. Smaller villages as those smaller settlements with fewer than 150 dwellings and less than a population of 300.

6.21 In the Smaller Villages without Planned Limits of Development, there is the chance that a range of small windfall and infill sites will come forward (assuming policy allows).

**Table 6.2: Settlements classified as Smaller Villages by the updated Sustainability of Settlements Study**

<b>Smaller Villages</b>		
Ashwell	Glaston	Stretton
Ayston	Hambleton	Teigh
Barrow	Little Casterton	Thistleton
Belmesthorpe	Lyndon	Thorpe by Water
Bisbrooke	Pickworth	Tickencote
Brooke	Pilton	Tinwell
Burley	Preston	Tixover
Caldecott	Ridlington	Wardley
Clipsham	Seaton	Whitwell
Egleton	Stoke Dry	

### Brownfield sites

6.22 There are a number of previously development brownfield sites<sup>9</sup> suitable, available and achievable for development in the county.

### Woolfox

6.23 The owners of the former Woolfox Airfield and surrounding agricultural land have come forward with proposals for a new Garden Town at the site, which is situated between the villages of Stretton and Clipsham close to the A1. The scale of proposals is however larger than required to meet the need set out above. It is considered that any proposal for this scale of development should be considered as part of meeting future sub-regional housing and employment needs. This site is therefore considered to be a future opportunity area.

### St George's Barracks

6.24 In November 2016, the MoD declared that the St George's Barrack site would be surplus to operational requirements by 2020/21 in light of its Defence Estate Optimisation Programme. The site is expected to be vacated in 2026 and at the time will become a previously developed site adjacent to a Larger Village. At this stage there is insufficient information to allocate the site for a specific form of reuse or redevelopment, however the Local Plan will need to include some measures to manage the delivery of potential development and ensure the best possible outcome for the site, taking account of its brownfield land status.

6.25 St George's Barracks may potentially come forward at a future date. It is not however appropriate to consider at the current time due to questions over what

<sup>9</sup> The NPPF defined previously development land as: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.



will be proposed and how and when it may be delivered. As such a proposal for the site would come forward as a separate Local Plan development plan document (DPD) which will be subject to the SA process. As a result, this site is not included within the options appraisal.

## Establishing growth strategy options for the SA

6.26 As discussed in **Chapter 4**, to support the consideration of which sites to potentially allocate through the Local Plan, various site assessments have been undertaken through the Local Plan process. This includes the SHELAA, Employment Land Availability Assessment and the SA site assessment.

6.27 The outcomes of these assessments have helped inform an understanding of the sites which are appropriate to consider further as allocations through the new Local Plan.

6.28 In relation to the strategic variables set out above, there are a number of different approaches that can be taken to develop the growth scenarios. These comprise:

1. **Growth scenario components which are ‘constants’:** these are the components of the growth strategy options which would be similar across all the options.
2. **Growth scenario components which are ‘variables’:** these comprise the components which can vary across the options.

6.29 In the context of the growth strategy options, the following components can be considered components and variables.

### Constants

6.30 The following components can be considered ‘constants’ for the purposes of the assessment of the growth strategy options<sup>10</sup>.

- **Completions: 193 homes**

There were 193 homes completed in Rutland between April 2021 and 31st March 2023.

- **Commitments: 1,165 homes**

RCC had given planning permission for 1,165 homes as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

- **Uppingham: 513 homes**

RCC have set a minimum housing requirement for Uppingham of 314 dwellings.

The emerging Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan identifies site options which could potentially deliver in the region of 513 dwellings in the town. However, site options (and housing numbers) may be revisited in the coming months reflecting the findings of the SEA and wider evidence base which is being prepared to support neighbourhood plan progress.

- **Quarry Farm: 650 homes**

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<sup>10</sup> These numbers were the latest available figures at the time of completing the reasonable alternatives assessment.

Quarry Farm will be taken forward as part of the wider Stamford North proposals (650 homes). The Rutland county boundary with Lincolnshire is close to the town of Stamford in South Kesteven, making land within the county here an appropriate location for the future growth of the town of Stamford. An urban extension to the north of Stamford requires some land located in Rutland in order to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable development.

- **Oakham: 229 homes (excluding existing commitments)**

Given the role of Oakham as the main town of Rutland, with range of job opportunities, higher order services for the surrounding rural area and good public transport links, it is appropriate to deliver some growth in the town. The SHLAA and other assessments have indicated that three sites are the most suitable, available and achievable for housing. These are:

- Tim Norton Motors (19 homes)
- Land off Brooke Road (140 homes)
- Land at Stamford Road (66 homes)

The total capacity of these sites is 229 homes.

- **Brownfield sites outside of Oakham: 116 homes**

Current and emerging national planning policy has a strong brownfield first approach. In common with many rural authorities, there are a relative lack of brownfield sites in Rutland. As such, the brownfield sites in Rutland which have been assessed as available and suitable can be included in each of the options as a constant.

The sites are:

- Officers mess, Edith Weston (90 homes)
- Easson Garage, Cottesmore (8 homes)
- Main Street, Empingham (6 homes)
- Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall (12 homes)

The total capacity of these sites is 116 homes.

## Variables

6.31 The following components can be considered as 'variables' for the purposes of the growth strategy options.

- **Oakham**

Whilst Oakham has recently experienced (and is currently experiencing) a significant level of growth, there is scope to consider options which deliver higher levels of housing delivery in the town. In this context two additional larger sites in the town are available for housing, as follows:

- Land West of Ashwell Road, Oakham (264 homes)
- Further land south of Brooke Road, Oakham (200 homes)

The total capacity of these sites is 464 homes.

- **Growth on smaller sized sites in Larger Villages**

As identified through the SHLAA process, there are in the region of six smaller sized sites (up to 20 dwellings) suitable, available and achievable for development around the designated Larger Villages.

- Land at Main Street, Cottesmore (8 homes)
- Land East of Stamford Rd, Exton (15 homes)
- Land at The Workshops, Exton (15 homes)
- St Mary's Rd, Paddock, Manton (10 homes)
- Land at Main Street, Market Overton (20 homes)
- Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham (10 homes)

The total capacity of these sites is 78 homes.

- **Growth on medium sized sites in Larger Villages**

As identified through the SHLAA process, there are six medium sized sites (20-100 dwellings) suitable, available and achievable for development around the designated Larger Villages. These are as follows:

- Land North of Mill Lane, Cottesmore (90 homes)
- Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston (84 homes)
- Whitwell Rd South, Empingham (40 homes)
- Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (50 homes)
- Land South of Oakham Rd, Greetham (28 homes)
- Land between Meadow Lane and Belmesthorpe Road, Ryhall (80 homes)

The total capacity of these sites is 372 homes.

- **Potential new settlement**

There is the potential for the Local Plan to take forward a new settlement to deliver a significant number of homes through the Local Plan. In this respect an option can be considered which would deliver a new settlement for up to 1,000 homes and 6ha employment land during the plan period.

## Growth strategy options

6.32 An overview of the growth strategy options considered through the SA process is presented in **Table 6.3**. A more detailed breakdown of the spatial distribution of housing represented by each option, including in relation to key locations in Rutland, is presented in **Table 6.4** and subsequently mapped in **Figures 6.1 to 6.5**. These options reflect existing and likely land availability in the county, as reflected by the outcomes of ongoing evidence base studies being undertaken to inform the Local Plan.

**Table 6.3: Growth options considered as reasonable alternatives**

<b>Growth strategy option</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<p><b>Option 1:</b> Oakham, Uppingham NP allocations, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites</p>	<p>This option would deliver <b>2,907 dwellings</b> over the plan period. It is based only the ‘constants’ outlined above and is indicative of a <b>minimum level of growth</b> in Rutland.</p>
<p><b>Option 2:</b> Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages</p>	<p>This option would deliver <b>2,985 dwellings</b> over the plan period. In conjunction with the assessment of Option 3, it will consider the principle of taking forward <b>smaller</b> vs. larger sites in the larger villages.</p>
<p><b>Option 3:</b> Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</p>	<p>This option would deliver <b>3,279 dwellings</b> over the plan period. In conjunction with the assessment of Option 2, it will consider the principle of taking forward <b>larger</b> vs. smaller sites in the larger villages.</p>
<p><b>Option 4:</b> Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</p>	<p>This option would deliver <b>3,821 dwellings</b> over the plan period. It seeks to deliver additional growth by delivering the sites in both the <b>smaller and larger</b> villages in Rutland, whilst also delivering <b>additional homes in Oakham</b> (recognising the broad sustainability of Oakham as the county’s largest settlement).</p>
<p><b>Option 5:</b> Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and a new settlement</p>	<p>This option would deliver <b>3,985 dwellings</b> over the plan period. It is in essence the same as Option 2, but with the addition of a <b>new settlement</b>. This is with a view to meeting higher housing numbers.</p>

**Table 6.4: Growth strategy options: breakdown of numbers in each location**

	<b>Option 1: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites</b>	<b>Option 2: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 3: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 4: Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 5: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages plus a new settlement</b>
<b>Commitments, completions and windfall</b>					
Commitments	1,165	1,165	1,165	1,165	1,165
Completions	193	193	193	193	193
Windfall sites	45	45	45	45	45
<b>Choices</b>					
<b>Oakham</b>					
Tim Norton Motors, Oakham	19	19	19	19	19
Land off Brooke Road, Oakham	140	140	140	140	140
Land at Stamford Road, Oakham	66	66	66	66	66
Land West of Ashwell Road, Oakham	0	0	0	264	0
Further land south of Brooke Road, Oakham	0	0	0	200	0
<b>Uppingham</b>					
Uppingham NP allocations	513	513	513	513	513

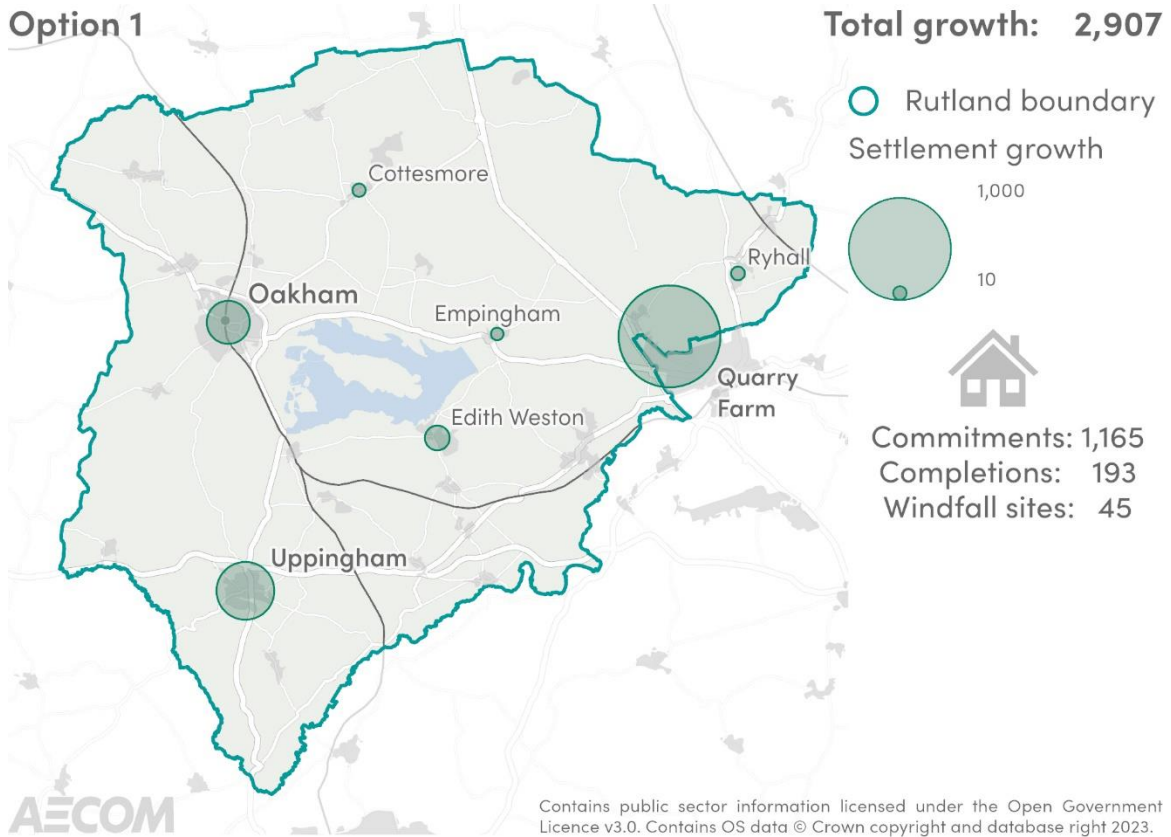
	<b>Option 1: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites</b>	<b>Option 2: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 3: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 4: Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 5: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages plus a new settlement</b>
<b>Quarry Farm</b>					
Quarry Farm	650	650	650	650	650
<b>Brownfield sites</b>					
Officers mess, Edith Weston	90	90	90	90	90
Easson Garage, Cottesmore	8	8	8	8	8
Main Street, Empingham	6	6	6	6	6
Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall	12	12	12	12	12
<b>Small greenfield sites in larger villages</b>					
Land at Main Street, Cottesmore	0	8	0	8	8
Land East of Stamford Rd, Exton	0	15	0	15	15
Land at The Workshops, Exton	0	15	0	15	15
St Mary's Rd, Paddock, Manton	0	10	0	10	10
Land at Main Street, Market Overton	0	20	0	20	20
Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham	0	10	0	10	10

	<b>Option 1: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites</b>	<b>Option 2: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 3: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 4: Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 5: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages plus a new settlement</b>
<b>Medium sized greenfield sites in larger villages</b>					
Land North of Mill Lane, Cottesmore	0	0	90	90	0
Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston	0	0	84	84	0
Whitwell Rd South, Empingham	0	0	40	40	0
Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine	0	0	50	50	0
Land South of Oakham Rd, Greetham	0	0	28	28	0
Land between Meadow Lane and Belmesthorpe Road, Ryhall	0	0	80	80	0
<b>Other large sites</b>					
New settlement	0	0	0	0	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,907</b>	<b>2,985</b>	<b>3,279</b>	<b>3,821</b>	<b>3,985</b>
<b>Local Housing Needs (current standard method 2022)</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2460</b>

	<b>Option 1: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites</b>	<b>Option 2: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 3: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 4: Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages</b>	<b>Option 5: Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages plus a new settlement</b>
<b>Percent of need met through option</b>	<b>118.17%</b>	<b>121.34%</b>	<b>133.29%</b>	<b>155.33%</b>	<b>161.99%</b>
<b>Delivery at current rates (since March 2021)</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>3200</b>	<b>3200</b>
<b>Percent of need met through option</b>	<b>90.84%</b>	<b>93.28%</b>	<b>102.47%</b>	<b>119.41%</b>	<b>124.53%</b>
<b>Economic growth scenario</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>4200</b>
<b>Percent of scenario met through option</b>	<b>69.21%</b>	<b>71.07%</b>	<b>78.07%</b>	<b>90.98%</b>	<b>94.88%</b>

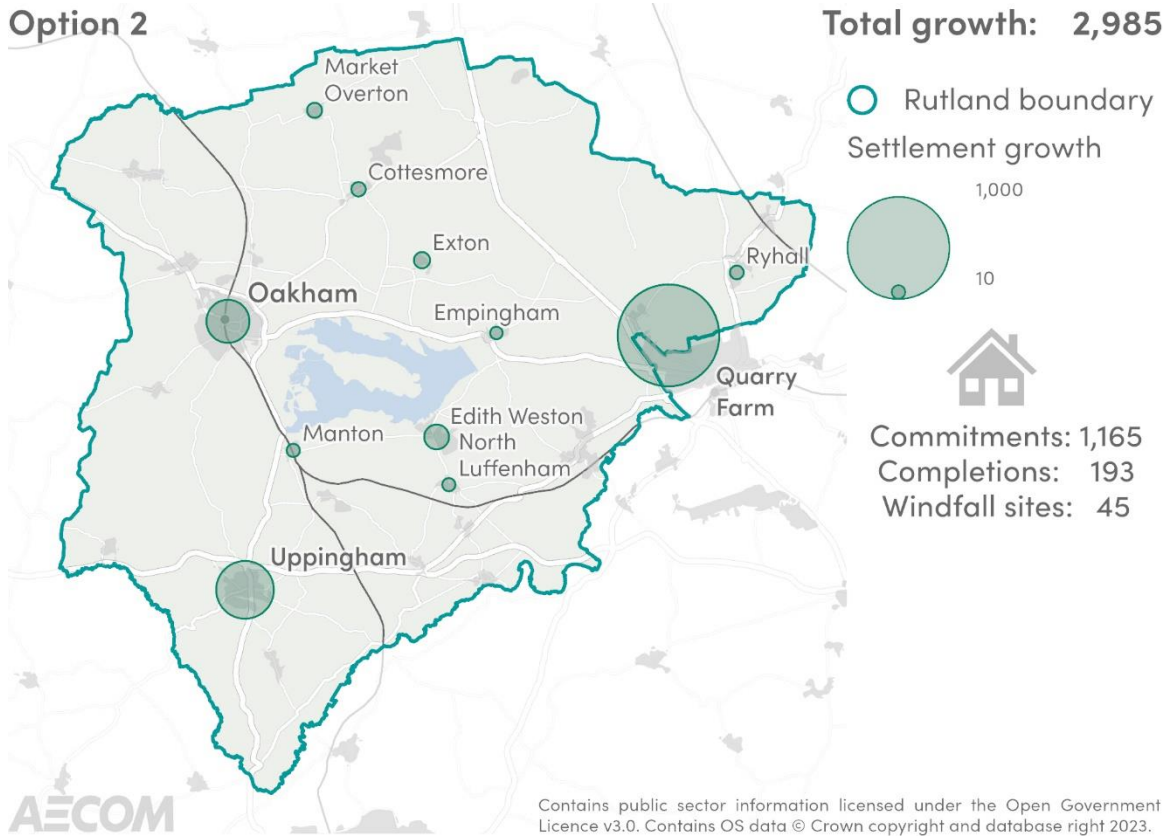


**Option 1**



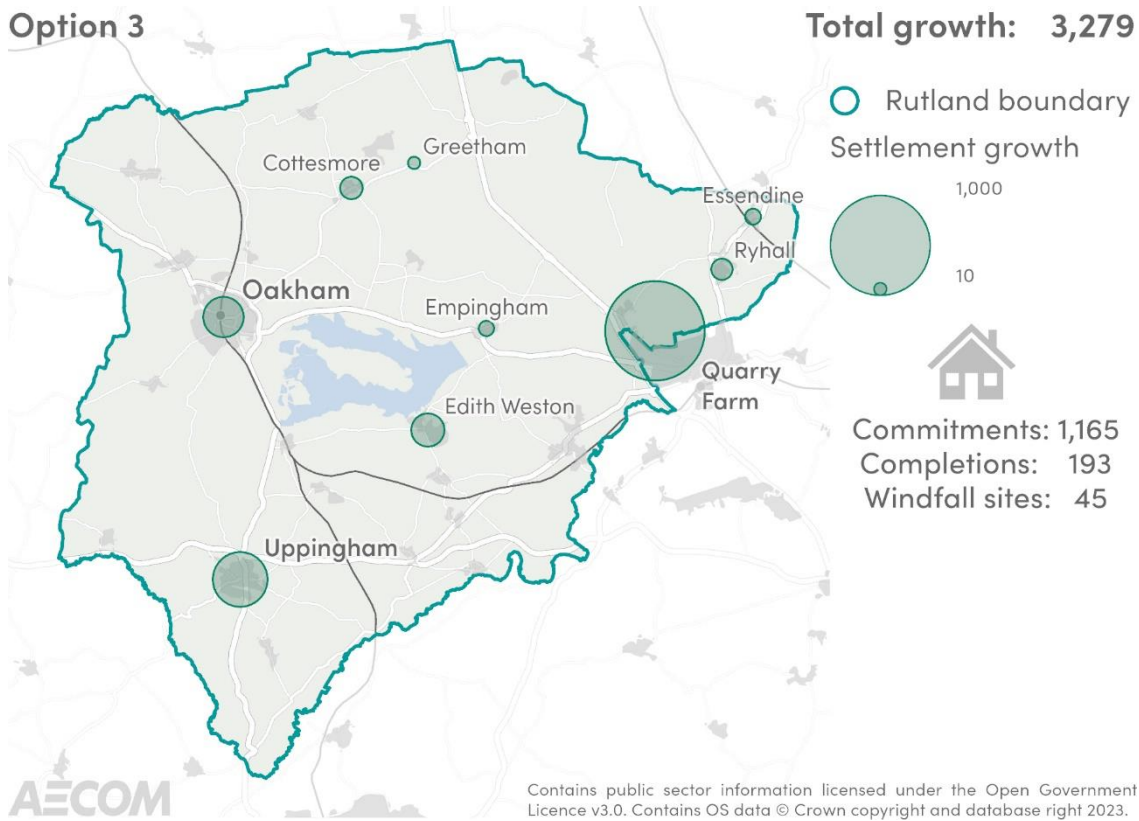
**Figure 6.1: Spatial representation of Option 1, Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm and brownfield sites**

**Option 2**



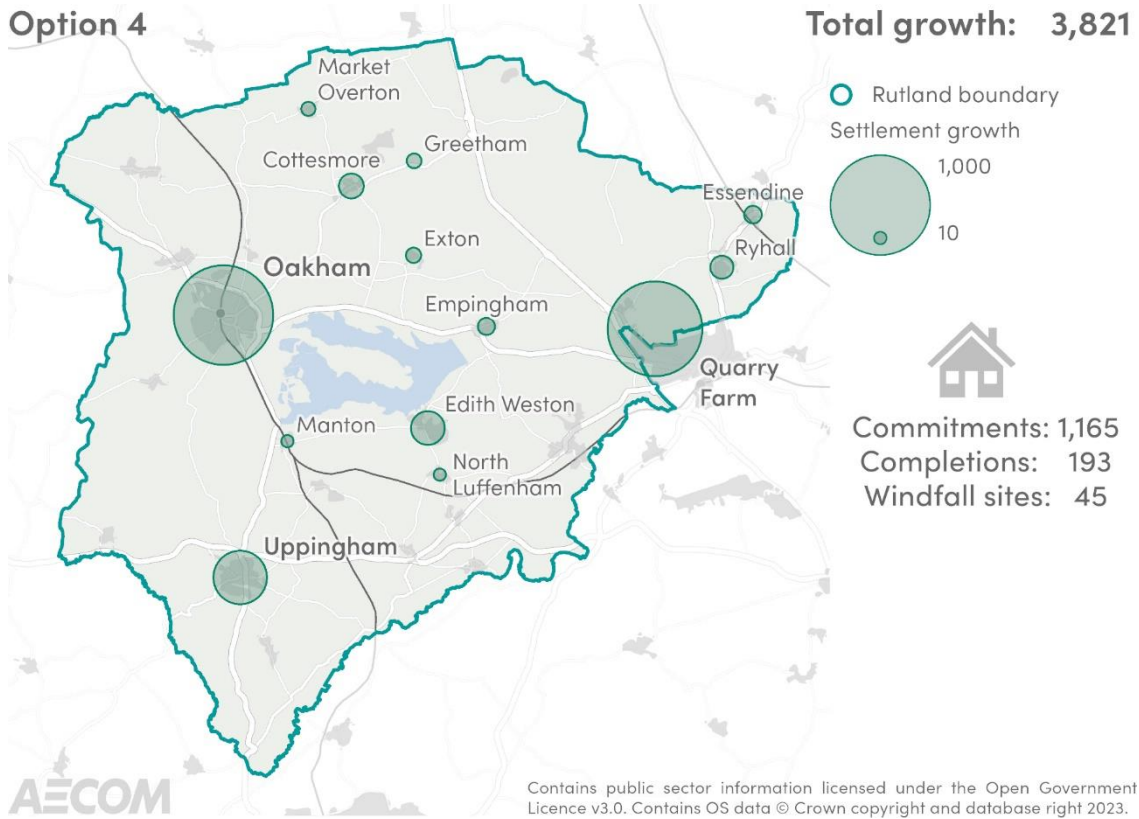
**Figure 6.2: Spatial representation of Option 2, Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages**

**Option 3**

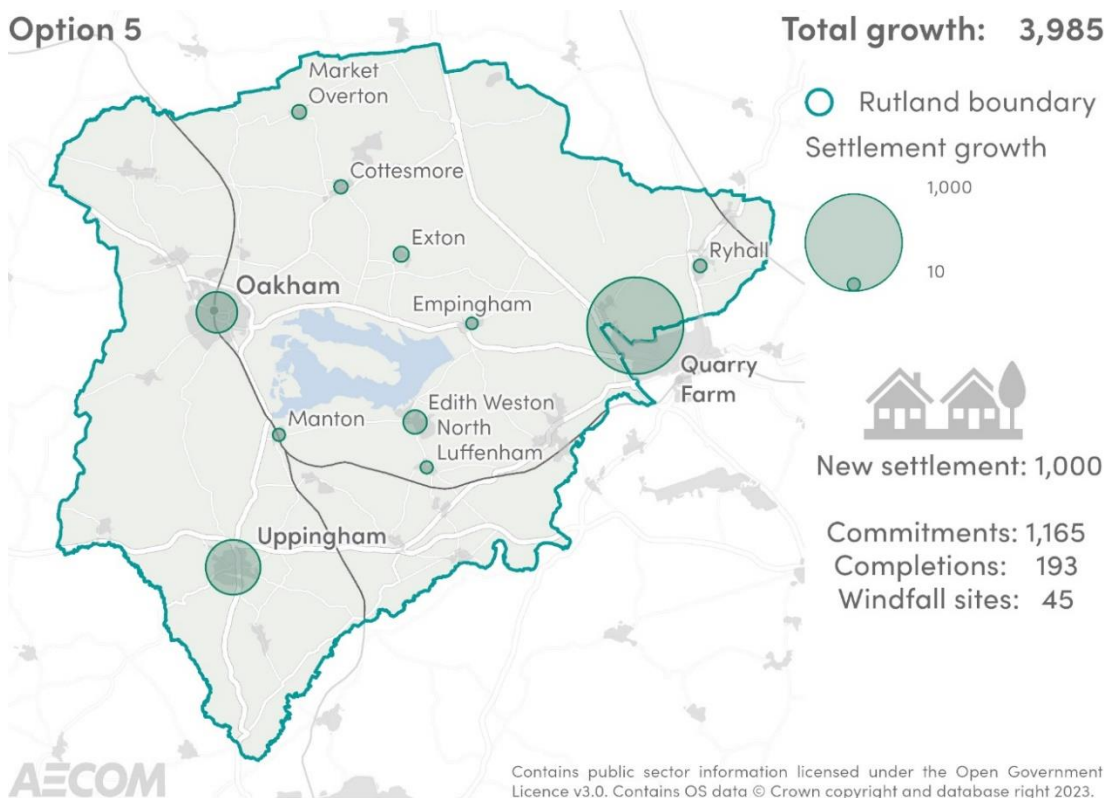


**Figure 6.3: Spatial representation of Option 3, Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites and medium greenfield sites in larger villages**

**Option 4**



**Figure 6.4: Spatial representation of Option 4, Additional sites in Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in larger villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages**



**Figure 6.5: Spatial representation of Option 5, Oakham, Uppingham NP, Quarry Farm, brownfield sites, small greenfield sites in villages and medium greenfield sites in larger villages plus a new settlement**

*Note: The figures above do not denote recent completions or commitments in Oakham, Rutland or the larger villages*

## Other potential options

6.33 It should be noted that there are, in theory, numerous other growth strategy alternatives comprising different combinations of location and site options that could be considered through the SA process. However, it is important that the alternatives considered are suitably distinct in order to allow a meaningful appraisal to be carried out. In this respect the appraisal of the identified options above has enabled the relative sustainability merits of key variables with regards to the Local Plan's spatial strategy to be effectively explored.

6.34 A further element to note is that the SA Report is a vehicle for consultation. Its central purpose is to provide stakeholders (including the general public) with an understanding of the relative merits of different approaches.<sup>11</sup> As such, whilst there is an almost limitless number of combinations of location and site options which could be appraised, there is a need to ensure that the assessment of reasonable alternatives remains accessible, coherent and understandable. This is particularly important given the need to simplify the plan making process to ensure it is accessible to all.

6.35 Taking these considerations into account, the options identified above for the SA are viewed to provide an appropriate vehicle for robustly appraising the key variables that can be considered with regards to the Local Plan's spatial strategy.

<sup>11</sup> Regulation 13 of the SEA Regulations

## Appraisal of growth strategy options

### Appraisal methodology

- 6.36 The growth strategy options presented in **Table 6.3** and **Table 6.4** and **Figures 6.1 to 6.5** above have been appraised. For each of the options, the assessment identifies / evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the SA themes/objectives identified through scoping as a methodological framework (see **Table 2.1**).
- 6.37 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high-level nature of the policy approaches under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors will be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a likely effect, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.
- 6.38 Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a rank of preference. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.
- 6.39 Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations (Schedules 1 and 2). For example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. the effects of the plan in combination with other planned or on-going activities).

### Appraisal findings

- 6.40 **Tables 6.5 to 6.13** below set out the appraisal findings under each SA theme.
- 6.41 Within each table the performance of alternatives is categorised in terms of 'significant effects' and also ranked in order of likely sustainability performance in relation to the SA theme.

#### Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 6.42 **Table 6.5** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SA theme.

**Table 6.5 Appraisal findings; Biodiversity and Geodiversity SA theme**

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
<b>Rank</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	Uncertain	Uncertain	Yes – negative	Yes – negative	Yes - negative

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**Option 1      Option 2      Option 3      Option 4      Option 5**

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**Discussion**

Rutland Water, an internationally designated Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site and nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is located approximately 1km to the east of Oakham. In addition, there are several other SSSIs across the county, including: Empingham Marshy Meadows; Greetham Meadows; Clipsham Old Quarry and Pickworth Great Wood; and Ketton Quarries. Whilst there are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within the county, Cribbs Meadow NNR is located just north of Rutland, in South Kesteven. There are also several Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) located in Rutland, as well as a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, containing habitats and species listed in the annexes of both the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Five of the sites proposed through the options are within 1km of Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site. These are:

- St Mary's Road, Paddock, Manton (c.360m away, **Options 2 and 4**)
- Officer's Mess, Edith Weston (c.420m away, all options)
- Land at Stamford Road, Oakham (c.440m away, all options)
- Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston (c.530m away, **Options 3 and 4**)
- Whitwell Road South, Empingham (c.650m away, **Options 3 and 4**)

In this respect, whilst all options contain sites in proximity to Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site, **Option 1** arguably has the potential to lead to more limited impacts, as only two of the five sites highlighted would be taken forward through the option.

Notably, the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the Local Plan, published in 2020, highlights that "*interest features of Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar may be exposed and sensitive to environmental changes associated with the Local Plan, principally in relation to the cumulative effects of visitor pressure, water quality and air quality affecting the site itself*". However, appropriate assessment concluded that the earlier iteration of the Local Plan will have no adverse effects on the integrity of the site.

In terms of nationally designated biodiversity sites, five sites proposed by the options are within 1km of an SSSI. These are:

- Quarry Farm (c.130m from Great Casterton Road Banks, all options)
- St Mary's Road, Paddock, Manton (c.360m from Rutland Water, **Options 2 and 4**)
- Officer's Mess, Edith Weston (c.420m from Rutland Water, all options)
- Land at Stamford Road, Oakham (c.440m from Rutland Water, all options)

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool / dataset which map zones around each SSSI according to the sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs. Uppingham, along with eight of the Larger Villages within Rutland, do not overlap with SSSI IRZs for the types of development likely to be taken forward through the Local Plan (i.e. residential, rural residential and rural non-residential). However, the eastern half of Oakham and the whole of Edith Weston and Empingham (Larger Villages) overlap with SSSI IRZs for one or more of these development types. In this context, options which seek to deliver higher levels growth in these three settlements (i.e. **Option 4** for Oakham and **Options 3 and 4** for Edith Weston and Empingham) could potentially impact upon the integrity of these nationally designated sites for biodiversity. Comparatively, options which seek to deliver lower levels of growth in these settlements (i.e. **Options 1 and 2**) are less likely to meet or exceed the SSSI IRZ development thresholds.

Land West of Ashwell Road, Oakham (**Option 4**) contains deciduous woodland (9.2% cover), as does Quarry Farm (8.7% cover, all options).

It is also noted that two sites (that make up the different options) overlap a Local Wildlife Site, which are:

- Quarry Farm (51.7% overlap, all options)

**Option 1      Option 2      Option 3      Option 4      Option 5**

- Land West of Ashwell Road, Oakham (1.1% overlap, **Option 4**)

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, options which deliver a **higher quantum of growth** have additional potential to have impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. This is reflected through the ranking of the options, with **significant negative effects** considered more likely under **Options 3, 4 and 5** in the short and medium term. However, it is recognised that all options have the potential to lead to adverse effects under this SA theme. Whilst in practice this will depend to an extent on the location, layout and nature of development, in principle, higher levels of development have potential to result in greater direct effects, such as from land take, disturbance or the loss of key features of ecological value. There is also an increased likelihood of indirect effects, such as from a reduction of ecological connectivity, and changes in land use patterns. It is also important to recognise that the requirement to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on sites embedded by the Environment Act 2021 will help mitigate potential negative effects and facilitate enhancements to ecological networks. It also has the potential to deliver net positive effects for biodiversity in the longer term, depending on the sensitivity of the site, the habitats and species present, and success in application of BNG. In addition, larger developments can also offer opportunities to deliver landscape-scale biodiversity enhancement measures such as habitat creation and enhancements in ecological connections and networks. As such, **Options 3 and 4**, which would deliver medium-scale sites in larger villages, and **Option 5**, which would deliver a new settlement, provide significant opportunities in this regard.

**Landscape**

6.43 **Table 6.6** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Landscape SA theme.

**Table 6.6 Appraisal findings; Landscape SA theme**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>

**Discussion**

The county is not within, nor within the setting of, a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nor does it contain Green Belt land (albeit this is not a landscape designation). However, there are contrasts across the county, with distinct characteristics, sensitivities and features (including important viewpoints) across the various potential locations for growth.

Rutland’s most recent Landscape Sensitivity Assessment<sup>12</sup>, which was completed in 2023, updates previous studies and assesses the sensitivity of land around 26 settlements in total, including the main towns of Oakham and Uppingham and 24 villages. In the absence of specified sites, study parcels have been identified within an outer ‘buffer zone’ extending a distance of 150m from the inner study boundary drawn around the main built-up area of each settlement, unless land immediately beyond presents a clear and discreet parcel relating to a well-defined landscape feature (tree belt, watercourse etc), the settlement edge or neighbouring study parcel.

The results of the study, in terms of sensitivity to housing development, for the two main towns are as follows:

- **Oakham** (highest growth under **Option 4**) – of the 19 study parcels around this town, nine have a high sensitivity, four have a high / medium sensitivity, four have a medium sensitivity, and two have a medium / low sensitivity.
- **Uppingham** (equal growth across all options) – of the 11 study parcels around this town, three have a high sensitivity, two have a high / medium sensitivity, and six have a medium sensitivity.

<sup>12</sup> Rutland County Council (2010 & 2017): ‘Landscape evidence’, [online], available to access via [this link](#)

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
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Whilst growth is the same across all options in Uppingham, **Option 4** is more likely to lead to significant adverse effects on landscape character in Oakham, particular given 47.4% of study parcels around the town have a high sensitivity. However, it is noted that the use of high-quality and sensitive design could help mitigate adverse effects on landscape character to some degree. The results of the study, in terms of sensitivity to housing development, for the villages considered through the options are as follows:

- **Cottesmore** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the eight study parcels around this village, three (or 37.5%) have a high / medium sensitivity, three (or 37.5%) have a medium sensitivity, and two (or 25%) have a medium / low sensitivity.
- **Edith Weston** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the eight study parcels around this village, three (or 37.5%) have a high sensitivity, two (or 25%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and three (or 37.5%) have a medium sensitivity.
- **Empingham** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the six study parcels around this village, one (or 16.7%) has a high sensitivity, three (or 50%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and two (or 33.3%) have a medium sensitivity.
- **Essendine** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the three study parcels around this village, two (or 66.7%) have a medium sensitivity and one (or 33.3%) has a medium / low sensitivity.
- **Exton** (highest growth under **Options 2, 4 and 5**) – of the six study parcels around this village, two (or 33.3) have a high sensitivity, three (or 50%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and one (or 12.7%) has a medium sensitivity.
- **Greetham** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the seven study parcels around this village, two (or 28.6%) have a high / medium sensitivity, one (or 14.3%) has a medium sensitivity, and four (or 57.1%) have a medium / low sensitivity.
- **Manton** (highest growth under **Options 2, 4 and 5**) – of the five study parcels around this village, one (or 20%) has a high sensitivity, two (or 40%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and two (or 40%) have a medium sensitivity.
- **Market Overton** (highest growth under **Options 2, 4 and 5**) – of the seven study parcels around this village, three (or 42.85%) have a high sensitivity, three (or 42.85%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and one (or 14.3%) has a medium / low sensitivity.
- **North Luffenham** (highest growth under **Options 2, 4 and 5**) – of the six study parcels around this village, one (or 16.7%) has a high sensitivity, two (or 33.3%) have a high / medium sensitivity, and three (or 50%) have a medium sensitivity.
- **Ryhall** (highest growth under **Options 3 and 4**) – of the five study parcels around this village, two (or 40%) have a high sensitivity, one (or 20%) has a high / medium sensitivity, one (or 20%) has a medium sensitivity, and one (or 20%) has a medium / low sensitivity.

Of the larger villages, Market Overton is the most sensitive to housing development, with 85.7% of study parcels having either a high or high / medium sensitivity. This is followed by Exton, where 83.3% of study parcels having either a high or high / medium sensitivity. In this respect, **Options 2, 4 and 5**, which deliver a higher level of growth in these two villages, have the potential to result in adverse effects on local landscape and villagescape character in these villages. Conversely, none of the study parcels in Essendine have a high or high / medium sensitivity, whilst only 28.6% of study parcels in Greetham have a high or high / medium sensitivity. In this respect, **Options 3 and 4**, which deliver a higher level of growth in these two villages, are less likely to adversely affect local landscape and villagescape character in these villages. The remaining larger villages have varying levels of study parcels with a high or high / medium sensitivity, ranging from 66.7% for Empingham to 37.5% for Cottesmore.

## Conclusion

Overall, higher growth options (**Options 3 and 4**) have increased potential to lead to **significant negative effects** on the character and quality of Rutland's landscapes through directing a significantly higher quantum of growth to settlements which have a high / medium sensitivity to housing development. It is also recognised that these options, by directing growth to medium sized greenfield sites in larger villages (as opposed to **Options 1 and 2** which direct growth to small

**Option 1      Option 2      Option 3      Option 4      Option 5**

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greenfield sites), have the potential to lead to increased direct impacts on landscape character. In addition, the delivery of larger sites may lead to development which is less in keeping with existing villagescape character associated with the historic evolution of a settlement.

Although delivering a potential new settlement (**Option 5**) could limit growth around existing settlements, development of this scale in one location has the potential to negatively contribute to the special qualities of the LCA(s) at the relevant locations, and lead to **significant negative effects** locally. However, it is noted that this is dependent on the design and layout of the site.

Finally, options which deliver low to medium growth (**Options 1 and 2**) across existing settlements are less likely to adversely affect the character of local landscapes and villagescapes. Whilst **significant negative effects** may still arise on landscape character from the options, this is reflected in the ranking of options.

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## Historic Environment

6.44 **Table 6.7** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Historic Environment SA theme.

**Table 6.7 Appraisal findings; Historic Environment SA theme**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
<b>Rank</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>

## Discussion

Rutland has a rich historic environment; it contains numerous nationally designated listed structures (mostly Grade II listed) and locally important conservation areas are present in most settlements. In addition, there are scheduled monuments within the settlements of Oakham, Edith Weston, Empingham, Great Casterton, and Greetham. There are also two Grade II listed registered parks and gardens in Rutland, namely: Burley on the Hill (located approximately 750m to the east of Oakham at its nearest point) and Exton Park (directly to the west of the A1 trunk road).

Whilst the significance of the effects from each option on features of cultural, built and archaeological heritage assets depends on the location, scale and nature of development (in particular, the detailed design of development including layout, height etc.), it can be considered that a higher level of housing development within a settlement generally increases the likelihood (and potential magnitude) of negative effects on heritage assets locally. This is linked to an increased likelihood of direct and indirect impacts on the fabric and setting of specific features and areas of historic environment interest in or near the settlement.

Three sites proposed by the options are within 250m of a Grade I listed building. These are:

- Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham (c.160m from Church of St John The Baptist, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
- Main Street, Empingham (c.210m from Church of St Peter, all options)
- Officer's Mess, Edith Weston (c.240m from Church of St Mary, all options)

In this respect, whilst all options have the potential to lead to impacts on these sites, **Options 2, 4 and 5** have the potential for additional impacts. Notably, these three sites are all within the larger villages.

In addition, seven sites proposed by the options are within 250m of a Grade II\* listed building. These are:

- Tim Norton Motors, Oakham (c.30m from Hayne House, all options)
  - Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (c.40m from Church of St Mary, **Options 3 and 4**)
  - Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham (c.80m from Bede House Farmhouse, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
  - St Mary's Road, Paddock, Manton (c.190m from Church of St Mary, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
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Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
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- Easson Garage, Cottesmore (c.190m from Church of St Nicholas, all options)
- Main Street, Empingham (c.240m from Old Prebendal House, all options)
- Land at Main Street, Cottesmore (c.240m from Church of St Nicholas, Options **2, 4 and 5**)

As with the above, whilst all options have the potential for impacts, **Options 2, 3, 4 and 5** have potential for additional impacts. Notably, six of these seven sites are within the larger villages. In terms of Grade II listed buildings, over half (12 out of 23) of the sites that make up the different options are within 250m of one.

Whilst nine sites proposed by the options are within 500m of a scheduled monument, only one site – Lane at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (**Options 3 and 4**) – is adjacent to a scheduled monument, which is ‘Essendine Castle moated site’. In this respect, these options have additional potential to disturb nearby designated archaeological remains.

Four sites proposed by the options are within 1km of a registered park and garden; however, only two are within 500m of one – these are Land at The Workshops, Exton (40m from Exton Park, **Options 2, 4 and 5**).

Finally, seven sites proposed by the options fall within, or lie adjacent to, a conservation area. These are:

- Easson Garage, Cottesmore (falls within Cottesmore Conservation Area, all options)
- Main Street, Empingham (falls within Empingham Conservation Area, all options)
- Land at Main Street, Cottesmore (2% overlap with Cottesmore Conservation Area, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
- Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham (adjacent to North Luffenham Conservation Area, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
- Land at the Workshops, Exton (adjacent to Exton Conservation Area, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
- Land North of Mill Lane, Cottesmore (adjacent to Cottesmore Conservation Area, **Options 3 and 4**)
- Land at Stamford Road, Oakham (adjacent to Oakham Conservation Area, all options)

Again, whilst all options are constrained by conservation areas, **Options 2, 3, 4 and 5** are arguably slightly more constrained. Notably, five of these seven sites are within the Larger Villages.

As reflected above, Oakham has a rich historic environment resource, with a large number of listed buildings (including five Grade I) and two scheduled monuments, which are largely covered by Oakham Conservation Area, in the centre of Oakham. In this respect, **Option 4**, which delivers a higher level of growth in the town, has increased potential to impact on the fabric and setting of the historic environment in this location.

Also reflected above, the Larger Villages have a rich historic environment resource and a distinctive historic character. In this respect, **Options 3 and 4**, which deliver a higher level of growth in the larger villages of Cottesmore, Edith Weston, Empingham, Essendine, Greatham, and Ryhall, have increased potential to impact on the fabric and setting of the historic environment of these villages. It is also recognised that **Options 3 and 4**, by directing growth to medium sized greenfield sites in larger villages (as opposed to **Options 1 and 2** which direct growth to small greenfield sites), have the potential to lead to increased direct impacts on the historic environment in the larger villages, including features and areas of heritage interest. In addition, the delivery of larger sites may lead to development which is less in keeping with the historic evolution of a settlement.

By concentrating growth at the potential new settlement, **Option 5** may help ensure that new housing is located away from the most significantly constrained areas in terms of heritage (i.e. away from the existing settlements). However, this depends on location, and a new settlement could potentially be situated in an area of historic environment sensitivity. It also does not eliminate the potential for impacts on below-ground archaeological assets at the chosen location, or potential impacts on the setting of heritage assets in nearby settlements.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
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### Conclusion

Overall, **Option 5** ranks highest, although **uncertainty** is noted due to the aforementioned points. **Options 1 and 2**, which rank second and third respectively due to the more moderate level of growth they deliver, are also associated with **uncertainty** as effects on the historic environment are largely dependent on the design and layout of development, which is unknown at this stage. Finally, **Options 3 and 4** rank fourth and fifth respectively, and are predicted most likely to lead to **significant negative effects** as they direct the highest level of growth to Oakham and the larger villages, which are particularly constrained by designated heritage assets. However, all options have the potential to lead to **significant negative effects** without appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures. This depends on the location, scale and nature of development.

### Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

6.45 **Table 6.8** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources SA theme.

**Table 6.8 Appraisal findings; Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources SA theme**

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
<b>Rank</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	No	No	Uncertain	Yes – negative	Yes – negative

### Discussion

#### Air

Air quality in Rutland is generally good. Monitoring for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) occurs at 11 sites across the county; the results of which are included in the annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs), the most recent of which was produced in 2019.<sup>13</sup> According to the 2019 ASR, there are no AQMAs in the county. Therefore, there is no formal requirement to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). However, Rutland County Council have encouraged and supported measures to mitigate emissions. This includes (but is not limited to) policy guidance; transport planning; public information campaigns; car lift / share schemes; and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points at certain locations (including offices in Oakham).

It is reasonable to assume that the level of air pollution generated from specific site allocations will correspond to the scale of development, as there are likely to be more private cars on the road under the higher growth options, especially given the relatively rural nature of Rutland. Therefore, **Option 1** is likely to lead to the lowest generation of air pollution, and **Option 5** the highest. With regards to Option 5, it also recognised that the location of a potential new settlement may not currently not connected via comprehensive public transport networks, which would potentially necessitate the use of the private car.

#### Previously developed land

Given the location of a potential new settlement under **Option 5** is not determined, it is uncertain whether the delivery of a significant new settlement has the potential to take place on brownfield or greenfield land.

**Options 1, 2, 3 and 4**, given the limited availability of brownfield land in Oakham, Uppingham and the larger villages, are less likely to support the efficient use of land. This is due to the options having less potential to deliver a significant proportion of development on brownfield land (and, conversely, more on greenfield land). They perform less favourably in this respect.

#### Mineral resources

The following 15 sites proposed through the options overlap, either fully or partially, with a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA):

- Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall (fully, all options)

<sup>13</sup> Rutland County Council (2019): '2019 Air Quality ASR', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
• Land South of Glebe Road, North Luffenham (partially, <b>Options 2, 4 and 5</b> )					
• Main Street, Empingham (fully, all options)					
• Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (fully, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					
• Quarry Farm (fully, all options)					
• Whitewell Road South, Empingham (partially, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					
• Land South of Oakham Road, Greetham (fully, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					
• Land at the Workshops, Exton (fully, <b>Options 2, 4 and 5</b> )					
• Land North of Mill Lane, Cottesmore (partially, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					
• Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston (fully, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					
• Land at Main Street, Market Overton (fully, <b>Options 2, 4 and 5</b> )					
• Land at Main Street, Cottesmore (partially, <b>Options 2, 4 and 5</b> )					
• Officer's Mess, Edith Weston (partially, all options)					
• Land between Meadow Lane and Belmesthorpe Road, Ryhall (fully, <b>Options 3 and 4</b> )					

In this respect, the majority of the sites that make up the different options overlap, either fully or partially, with a MSA (only eight of the 23 sites do not overall with an MSA). Nevertheless, it is recognised that the sites that comprise **Option 1** do not overlap with any MSAs, and this option performs most favourably in this respect.

Development taken forward through **Option 5** may or may not lead to the sterilisation of minerals resources, depending on location (although it should be noted that this could be mitigated against if the economic mineral extraction area were safeguarded from development through a masterplan).

### Agricultural land

The key considerations in terms of supporting the efficient use of land in the county are the need to avoid unnecessary loss of the highest quality 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land. In relation to this, the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being BMV land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. Not all locations in Rutland have had recent detailed ALC undertaken; due to this, there is a reliance on less detailed pre-1988 national classifications for agricultural land. Under this older classification, subdivision of Grade 3 agricultural land into 3a (BMV land) and 3b (poorer quality land) is not available.

Notably, none of the sites (that make up the different options) overlap with Grade 1 agricultural land. In addition, only four sites overlap, partially, with Grade 2 agricultural land. These are:

- Land off Brooke Road, Oakham (1% overlap, all options)
- Land South of Brooke Road (29% overlap, **Option 4**)
- Land West of Ashwell Road, Oakham (22% overlap, **Option 4**)
- Land between Meadow Lane and Belmesthorpe Road, Ryhall (19% overlap, **Options 3 and 4**)

The majority of the sites also overlap, either fully or partially, with Grade 3 agricultural land. The exception to this is Tim Norton Motors, Oakham (all options) and Land off Brooke Road, Oakham (all options).

In light of the above, **Options 3 and 4** have the greatest potential to lead to the loss of BMV land (i.e. Grade 2 and 3a land) in the vicinity of Oakham (**Option 4**) and Ryhall (**Options 3 and 4**). These options also deliver the highest level of growth across the larger villages, and would therefore likely result in the greatest loss of agricultural land, both BMV and poorer quality.

Land around Uppingham is underlain by a mixture of Grade 3a and Grade 3b land, with some areas of Grade 2 land. Therefore, as Uppingham is a constant across all options, they all have the potential to lead to the loss of BMV land (i.e. Grade 2 and 3a land) in the vicinity of the town.

**Option 1      Option 2      Option 3      Option 4      Option 5**

The proposed location for the potential new settlement of (**Option 5**) is uncertain. Given the scale of likely development, and the quality of agricultural land in much of the county, the delivery of a new settlement has the potential to productive agricultural land.

**Waste**

Waste generation is an inevitable consequence of development, including both waste generated by construction and waste generated during occupation. The management of waste, including the minimisation of waste generation in the first instance and the encouragement of the re-use, recycling and recovery of waste materials, would all be undertaken on a site-by-site basis. It is therefore considered that individual development is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on waste generation. In this context, it is reasonable to assume that the level of waste generated will correspond to the scale of development. Therefore, **Option 1** is likely to lead to the lowest generation of waste, whilst **Option 5** is likely to lead to the highest generation of waste. However, it is recognised that larger schemes can present an opportunity to incorporate innovative waste management practices and technologies. Therefore, it is noted that **Option 5** has the most potential to support sustainable waste management within a potential new settlement.

**Water resources**

Rutland is within the supply area of Anglian Water and is located in an area of high water stress. It will be important to consider the New Local Plan’s effects on water resources. In this respect, it is considered that higher growth options (**Options 3, 4 and 5**) will place a greater demand upon the already stressed supply, whilst lower growth options (**Options 1 and 2**) will represent less of an additional burden. However, it is anticipated that the Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs) prepared by water supply companies will address long-term water supply issues associated with growth. There may also be potential for the development of a potential new settlement (**Option 5**) to provide opportunities for innovative design techniques to support the efficient use of water resources.

Whilst eight of the sites proposed by the options are within 250m of a statutory main river, the southern boundary of Land at Stamford Road (all options) lies adjacent to a river, as does the southwestern boundary of Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall (all options). In this respect, all of the options have the potential to pollute nearby rivers from the runoff of source point pollution from new development.

It is also noted that nine of the 23 sites proposed through the options overlap a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) – this includes zones 2 and 3. In addition, all of the sites fully overlap a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).

**Conclusion**

Overall, options which deliver a **higher quantum of growth** are more likely to have an increased effect on air, land, soil and water resources. This is reflected through the ranking of the options, with **uncertainty** noted under **Option 3**, and **significant negative effects** considered likely under **Options 4 and 5** as these options deliver the highest quantum of growth.

**Climate Change**

6.46 **Table 6.9** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Climate Change SA theme.

**Table 6.9 Appraisal findings; Climate Change SA theme**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
<b>Rank</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes – negative</b>

**Option 1****Option 2****Option 3****Option 4****Option 5**

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**Discussion****Climate change mitigation**

Road transport is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Rutland. High car dependency and the rural nature of the much of the county, as well as issues relating to public transport provision, mean that car ownership within Rutland is higher than the regional average. Only 10.3% of households in Rutland do not have access to a car or van, compared to 23.5% nationally (Census 2021). Due to this, all options have the potential to lead to increases in greenhouse gas emissions from transport given that they all propose development. In addition, none are likely to give rise to significant improvements in sustainable transport choices that would offset the increase in car-based trips.

However, delivering growth in the larger towns of Oakham (highest under **Option 4**) and Uppingham (all options) is likely to better support the use of sustainable transport modes, given residents have good access to local services and facilities in these towns.

The county is served by a rural bus network, a public rights of way (PRoW) network, and there is a substantial joint cycleway / footway network. In this respect, given they form nodes to local transport networks, directing growth to Oakham and Uppingham would help to encourage a modal shift and reduce reliance on the private vehicle, helping to minimise an increase in emissions.

Additionally, it is noted that Oakham has the only railway station in the county, which provides direct links to the east coast main line, Stansted Airport, Birmingham, and a limited twice daily service to London St Pancras. Increased development at Oakham under **Option 4** is therefore likely to lead to positive effects by locating more people in walking / cycling distance to the railway station, providing sustainable access to employment, services and facilities outside of the county.

**Option 4** – alongside **Option 3** – also directs a high level of growth to the larger villages. Whilst these villages have a reduced range of services and facilities on offer when compared to Oakham and Uppingham, they still have some services and facilities, and all of the larger villages that make up to the options are less than 400m from the nearest bus stop. Whilst many residents will likely opt to travel by car to access wider services and facilities at the larger settlements, where bus services are good, residents will likely utilise them.

The delivery of a potential new settlement through **Option 5** would potentially, in the longer term, be of critical mass to deliver significant new infrastructure to reduce the need to travel, and also, potentially, new sustainable transport networks. However, this depends on location, and a location away from services, facilities and amenities, and not currently connected to high quality public transports will have negative effects in this regard through and stimulating an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from transport. It is noted though that any large-scale development proposal will be required to produce a highway and transport assessment to detail how existing infrastructure and services can cater for the proposed development, or where they do not, will be required to put in place mitigation measures.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of the other contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, the sustainability performance of development partially depends on energy efficiency during operation. This could include the inclusion of elements such as energy efficient design (i.e. positioning development to maximise solar gain) and the provision of renewable energy on-site. Whilst it is considered that this can only be assessed on a site-by-site basis, it is noted that there are generally more opportunities to integrate low carbon and renewable energy into large-scale developments. For example, large-scale photovoltaic systems can be combined with community heating schemes to support renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. In this respect the delivery of a potential new settlement through **Option 5** could lead to additional opportunities.

**Climate change adaptation**

The Rutland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Update (2020) highlights that fluvial flood risk is of limited spatial extent within the county and that the majority of the higher risk flood zones (2 and 3) are located in rural areas away from the existing built-up areas.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Rutland County Council (2018): 'Moving Rutland Forward – Rutland's Fourth Local Transport Plan', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>15</sup> Rutland County Council (2020): 'Rutland SFRA Update', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

**Option 1      Option 2      Option 3      Option 4      Option 5**

Nevertheless, there are a number of areas where the flood map shows properties at risk and these include parts of Oakham. A number of small watercourses flow through Oakham and close to the town; however, high flood risk areas are relatively limited, located in a small area to the east of the main settlement. It is therefore predicted that directing growth to Oakham (highest under **Option 4**) and Uppingham (all options) would result in a residual neutral effect as, in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2019) and national policy, new development should be avoided in the highest flood risk areas and suitable mitigation implemented where necessary.

Several of the larger villages are identified as having areas at high risk of fluvial flooding. Whilst several of the sites that make up the different options overlap with Flood Zone 2 / 3 to a small degree (<5% overlap), Land East of Stamford Road, Exton (**Options 2, 4 and 5**) has a 17% overlap with Flood Zone 2 / 3, whilst Land between Meadow Lane and Belmesthorpe Road, Ryhall (**Options 3 and 4**) has a 21% overlap with Flood Zone 2. Therefore, these options – particularly **Options 3 and 4** as the site in Ryhall delivers more homes – reduce opportunities to avoid the highest flood risk areas, with potential to lead to increased pressures on the floodplain. However, as discussed above, it is considered that appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented in accordance with national planning policy and the SFRA (2009).

Any impact of a new settlement (**Option 5**) in terms of reducing the risk and impact of fluvial flooding depends on the proposed location such a settlement.

The county is generally at low risk with regard to surface water flooding as identified in the SFRA (2020). In this context, options that deliver growth in those limited areas which are at risk of surface water flooding are not anticipated to lead to significant effects given risk would be reduced through the 'exception test'<sup>16</sup> and higher-level policy requirements. To this effect, the use of good design principles (i.e. the siting and design of development) will likely mitigate against adverse effects.

All options present an opportunity to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change through providing improvements to green infrastructure networks. It is considered that the delivery of large-scale development at a potential new settlement (**Option 5**) will likely be able to provide for a higher level of publicly accessible green infrastructure provision than development at existing settlements. Taking forward this site would also though also result in the large-scale loss of greenfield land in the countryside, with implications for climate change adaptation.

**Conclusion**

Overall, due to the contribution of new development proposed through the options in the context of wider regional, national and global impacts on climate change, no significant effects are anticipated. Options have been **ranked in terms of their quantum of growth**, with the increased number of new homes predicted to lead to increased adverse effects.<sup>17</sup>

**Communities, Health and Wellbeing**

6.47 **Table 6.10** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Communities, Health and Wellbeing SA theme.

**Table 6.10 Appraisal findings; Communities, Health and Wellbeing SA theme**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
<b>Rank</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – mixed</b>

**Discussion**

Each option will deliver a significant number of new homes (including a mix of types, sizes and tenures, with a proportion of affordable housing) to meet existing and future housing needs, with the potential for **significant positive effects**. As the number of homes being delivered increases, the significance of the positive effect also increases. Overall, through delivering the highest quantum of

<sup>16</sup> Under the exception test, the developer needs to show that the sustainability benefits of the development to the community outweigh the flood risk.  
<sup>17</sup> Committee on Climate Change (2017): 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

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Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
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growth, **Option 5** has the greatest potential to deliver a broader range of housing types and tenures in the county (assuming that Local Plan policies on affordable housing are fully delivered). However, it is recognised that this could be undermined if a new settlement is located in a rural, isolated location and not necessarily well-situated in terms of access to services, facilities and amenities, employment opportunities, and key locations for socialising.

It is considered that directing higher levels of growth to the main towns of Oakham (highest growth through **Option 4**) and Uppingham (all options) will likely deliver a mix of housing to meet local needs in these settlements. Notably, positive effects are anticipated through the delivery of affordable housing in the two locations with the broadest range of services, facilities and amenities, employment opportunities and public transport networks in the county.

Increased development in the Larger Villages through **Options 3 and 4** will also help provide an increased variety of housing for a wider range of social groups, including younger people and those with particular needs. This has the potential to increase community vitality and will contribute towards meeting localised housing needs in these settlements.

Conversely, **Option 5**, which delivers 37% of growth at the potential new settlement, could lead to residual negative effects on the Larger Villages as an appropriate mix of housing may not be delivered in the settlements where the need exists most. This has the potential to impact on the community vitality of these settlements.

Rutland has low levels of deprivation and based on 2019 data, ranks 303 out of 326 local authorities regarding overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), where 1 is the most deprived. Despite this ranking, pockets of deprivation still exist within the county – but these are masked by wider prosperity. In line with other rural areas, Rutland fares less favourably regarding the ‘Barriers to Housing and Services’ domain, ranking 160 out of 326 local authorities.

Focusing growth at Oakham (highest growth through **Option 4**) and Uppingham (all options) would therefore lead to positive effects in terms of contributing towards lower levels of deprivation relating to this category, through ensuring residents have suitable access to services and facilities. This is because these settlements are the largest settlements in the county and are therefore the locations with the broadest range of services and facilities and public transport networks. It is, however, also recognised that increased growth at the Larger Villages (**Options 3 and 4**) might support local amenities and increase community vitality in these locations, and therefore positive effects are noted in this respect.

Depending on existing pressures on services and facilities, **Options 3 and 4** though have the potential to place increasing demands on existing amenities that will affect the quality of services used by existing residents. On the other hand, due to the requirements for developers to support infrastructure and services, for example through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements / payments, there is potential for new development to support the provision of new and enhanced facilities and services, as well as transport links. This will support accessibility to services and amenities in existing settlements.

The potential new settlement (**Option 5**) may be disconnected from existing settlements and the services and facilities they provide. Growth in an inaccessible location would not support the vitality of existing settlements, including relating to the viability of local services and facilities, and not deliver growth in areas with the largest need. This will adversely affect the quality of life of residents.

In terms of accessibility to educational facilities, seven sites proposed by the options are not within 750m (or walking distance) of either a primary or secondary school. These are:

- St Mary’s Road, Paddock, Manton (3.8km from nearest school, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
  - Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (2.4km from nearest school, **Options 3 and 4**)
  - Land at Main Street, Market Overton (2.3km from nearest school, **Options 2, 4 and 5**)
  - Land South of Oakham Road, Greetham (1.2km from nearest school, **Options 3 and 4**)
  - Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston (c. 1km from nearest school, **Options 3 and 4**)
  - Whitwell Road South, Empingham (c.900m from nearest school, **Options 3 and 4**)
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	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
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In this respect, **Options 3, 4 and 5**, as well as **Option 2** to a lesser degree, are all likely to result in the reliance of the private car to access schools, unless bus routes to these schools exist from these settlements. Notably, these sites are all within the Larger Villages.

Only one site – Land North of Pennine Drive, Edith Weston (**Options 3 and 4**), is over 500m from the nearest Important Open Space.

### Conclusion

Overall, **Option 4** is likely to bring the broadest range of benefits for this SA theme given that it would deliver the second highest quantum of growth (after Option 5), focused at the main towns and Larger Villages, where access to services, facilities and amenities, employment opportunities and public transport networks are most favourable. This option has the most potential to deliver a broader range of housing types and tenures in the settlements where it is most needed; support accessibility; and deliver new community infrastructure. Whilst **Option 5** delivers the highest quantum of growth, it is ranked last and predicted to lead to **mixed significant effects** due to the potential for a new settlement to undermine the viability of existing settlements. The remaining options are ranked in terms of their quantum of growth.

## Transportation

6.48 **Table 6.11** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Transportation SA theme.

**Table 6.11 Appraisal findings; Transportation SA theme**

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
<b>Rank</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>

### Discussion

High car dependency and the rural nature of the much of the county, as well as issues relating to public transport provision, mean that car ownership within Rutland is higher than the regional average; only 10.3% of households in Rutland do not have access to a car or van, compared to 23.5% nationally (Census 2021). Due to this, all of the options have the potential to lead to increases in traffic and congestion given that they all propose development. In addition, none are likely to give rise to significant improvements in sustainable transport choices that would offset the increase in car-based trips.

However, delivering growth in the larger towns of Oakham (highest under **Option 4**) and Uppingham (all options) is likely to better support the use of sustainable transport modes, given residents have good access to local services and facilities in these towns.

In terms of sustainable transport networks, the county is served by a rural bus network, a public rights of way (PRoW) network, and there is a substantial joint cycleway / footway network. Oakham has the only railway station in the county, which provides direct links to the east coast main line, Stansted Airport, Birmingham, and a limited twice daily service to London St Pancras, and also the best linked by bus. Increased development at Oakham under **Option 4** is therefore likely to lead to positive effects by locating more people in good proximity to public transport networks, including the rail and bus network. This will promote accessibility by sustainable transport modes.

**Option 4** – alongside **Option 3** – also directs a high level of growth to the Larger Villages. Whilst these settlements have a more limited range of services and facilities on offer compared to Oakham and Uppingham, they still have some services and facilities, and all of the Larger Villages where sites are proposed by the options are accessible by bus. Whilst many residents of these settlements will likely opt to travel by car to access services and facilities, where bus services are good, residents will likely utilise them.

The delivery of a potential new settlement through **Option 5** would potentially, in the longer term, be of critical mass to deliver significant new infrastructure to reduce the need to travel, or new sustainable transport links, with the potential for positive effects. However, a new settlement has the potential to be delivered in an unsustainable location away from key services, facilities and



**Option 1                      Option 2                      Option 3                      Option 4                      Option 5**

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amenities, or not currently be connected to high quality public transports. To this effect, it is noted that any large-scale development proposal will be required to produce a highway and transport assessment to detail how existing infrastructure and services can cater for the proposed development, or where they do not, will be required to put in place mitigation measures.<sup>18</sup>

Overall, **Option 4**, which delivers a higher level of growth in Oakham, which is the settlement with the broadest range of services and facilities and public transport links, ranks most favourably in relation to this SA theme. Given uncertainties, **Option 5** is ranked least favourably in relation to sustainable transport.

## Economic Vitality

6.49 **Table 6.12** below sets out the appraisal findings concerning the Economic Vitality SA theme.

**Table 6.12 Appraisal findings; Economic Vitality SA theme**

	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
<b>Rank</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Likely significant effects?</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – positive</b>	<b>Yes – mixed</b>

### Discussion

Unemployment in Rutland is low; only 1.9% of people aged 16 years and over are economically active and unemployed, compared to 3.5% nationally (Census 2021). In addition, 37.9% of people aged 16 years and over hold a Level 4 qualification or above, compared to 33.9% nationally (Census 2021). In terms of occupation, 18.2% of people aged 16 years and over in employment are managers, directors and senior officials, compared to 12.9% nationally (Census 2021). In this respect, Rutland has a highly skilled workforce, which is reflected by the percentage of the population in managerial occupations. It will be important that future growth supports this workforce.

According to the Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence<sup>19</sup>, the largest employment sectors in Rutland are education (12.2%); public administration and defence (12%); and wholesale and retail (11.6%). Rutland has particular strengths in comparison to the region and nationally in the mining and quarrying sector, public administration & defence, agriculture and hospitality (1,900 jobs) sectors.

Public sector generates 31% of all jobs in Rutland. However, this is driven by high levels of employment in the education sector, which will include employment in Rutland’s several large privately owned schools. Rutland also retains a strong local manufacturing sector. In terms of service sectors, professional, scientific and technical, followed by business administration and support services, have the strongest roles.

In light of the above, increased growth across the settlement hierarchy should support the economic vitality of settlements; helping ensure residents have suitable access to local employment, services and facilities, and that the service offer expands positively. Oakham is the main service centre for Rutland and offers diverse retail and shopping opportunities. **Option 4**, which delivers a higher level of growth in Oakham, will therefore perform positively in terms of promoting the sustainable growth of this main centre and directing growth to the location with the best accessibility to employment opportunities (both within and outside of the county).

**Options 3 and 4** deliver a higher level of growth at the Larger Villages. Directing higher levels of growth to these settlements is likely lead to positive effects in relation to this SA theme through supporting local amenities, and increasing economic vitality and viability in these locations. Due to the role of the Larger Villages as centres for the rural economy, the options also have the potential to support localised economies, including through supporting diversification. It is also recognised

<sup>18</sup> Rutland County Council (2018): ‘Moving Rutland Forward – Rutland’s Fourth Local Transport Plan’, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

<sup>19</sup> Icen Projects Limited on behalf of Rutland County Council (August 2023): ‘Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

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<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>	<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Option 5</b>
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that the Larger Villages where allocations would be taken forward through the options are all relatively well located in terms of access to the main transport routes.

Increased growth in the main town of Oakham (**Option 4**) and the larger villages (**Options 3 and 4**) has the potential to support the vitality of local centres and retailing to a greater degree. This has the potential to support the visitor economy through protecting and enhancing key selling points in the county, such as independent shops and restaurants.<sup>20</sup> In this context, the delivery of **Option 5**, which directs a large proportion of growth to a potential new settlement, would likely limit investment in these locations. This could limit the offer available in these settlements, impacting negatively on the local economy.

The delivery of a potential new settlement through **Option 5** presents the opportunity to deliver significant areas of new employment land as part of mixed-use development. In this respect the delivery of a mixed-use large-scale development through the potential new settlement (**Option 5**) is likely to support economic growth through the delivery of suitable business premises. However, the delivery of a potential new settlement is considered less likely to enhance the vitality and viability of existing towns and local centres, given its relatively isolated location.

In terms of the specific sites taken forward by the options, three of the sites are located over 7.5km from the nearest safeguarded employment site. These are:

- Land South of Oakham Road, Greetham (7.8km from Lands End Way, Oakham, Options 3 and 4)
- Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall (7.9km from Pit Lane, Ketton, all options)
- Land at Manor Farm Lane, Essendine (9.8km from Pit Lane, Ketton, Options 3 and 4)

In addition, a further ten sites are over 5km from the nearest safeguarded employment site; nine of these 10 sites are located in the larger villages. In this respect, **Options 3 and 4**, and to a lesser degree **Options 1 and 2**, have the potential require a degree of reliance on the private car to access existing employment opportunities.

Overall, **Options 3 and 4** perform most favourably, with **significant positive effects** predicted; **Option 4** is ranked first as it delivers a higher level of growth, including at the main town of Oakham. It also delivers 91% of growth in relation to the Economic Growth Scenario. Whilst **Option 5** delivers in excess of the full level of growth suggested by the Economic Growth Scenario, the option ranks third, with **mixed significant effects** anticipated. This is given growth through a new settlement will do less to benefit the economic vitality and viability of existing settlements in Rutland. **Options 1 and 2**, by delivering a more moderate level of growth, perform less favourably, with **Option 1** – which only delivers 69.2% of growth in relation to the Economic Growth Scenario – ranking least favourably.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

## 7. Developing the preferred approach

- 7.1 The preferred approach for the Rutland Local Plan is to direct growth to sustainable locations within Rutland, primarily focused within the planned limits of development (PLD). Aligning with **Option 1** and **Option 2**, growth will be focused in Oakham, Uppingham (via Neighbourhood Plan allocations), Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm), brownfield sites and small greenfield sites in larger villages.
- 7.2 Specifically, provision is made in the new Local Plan for the delivery of at least 123 homes per annum (based on the standard housing method) with an additional allowance for flexibility. The new Local Plan therefore makes provision for 2,705 new homes distributed in accordance with the spatial strategy in Policy SS1. A total of 1,576 homes have been delivered via completions and commitments since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Residual housing needs will be delivered via site allocations within the new Local Plan (see Policy H1), with growth primarily directed to the most sustainable locations within Rutland. This is further discussed within **Part 2** of this SA Report.
- 7.3 Consideration has also been given to:
- The constraints and opportunities within each settlement, with the results of the settlement assessment (see **Technical Annex 3**) indicating that no location is free from constraints.
  - Site availability within settlements, as whilst a settlement may perform favourably from a sustainability perspective, there might not be any suitable and/or available sites reflecting the findings of the site appraisals (see **Technical Annex 2**).
  - The fact that some settlements have arguably received their ‘fair share’ of development over recent years and have therefore over-delivered in terms of housing numbers.
- 7.4 With respect to Woolfox and St George’s Barracks, whilst both sites represent large-scale growth opportunities for Rutland (including garden community potential), they are recognised as potentially longer-term opportunities for growth. There is an expectation that there may be some delivery on these sites within the emerging plan period (i.e., before 2041) (see Policy SS4). However, given the complexities of the sites, the new Local Plan proposes to explore these matters through a separate Development Plan Document (DPD), or as part of a targeted review of the new Local Plan in due course.
- 7.5 St George’s Barracks (once vacated) would constitute a brownfield site of ‘previously developed land’ and a future opportunity area for between 350 and 500 homes. The new Local Plan does not seek to preclude development opportunities at this location, and a policy framework for the site is proposed through the new Local Plan (see Policy SS4).
- 7.6 It is recognised that housing targets for Rutland could increase in the coming months in light of the planning reforms proposed through the latest [NPPF consultation](#) (which closed in September 2024). The planning reforms include a proposal to reintroduce mandatory housing targets for local authority areas,

including updated housing figures based on the revised housing calculation method set out in the consultation.

- 7.7 Reflecting the above, it is likely that Rutland County Council will commence an early review of the new Local Plan (once adopted) in order to appropriately plan for additional growth identified through the revised housing method.

## **Part 2: What are the SA findings at this stage?**

## 8. Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)

### Purpose of Part 2 of this SA Report

8.1 This chapter presents appraisal findings and recommendations in relation to the *Pre-Submission (Regulation 19)* version of the Local Plan.

### Local Plan contents, aims and objectives

8.2 The Pre-Submission Local Plan's vision outlines that:

*“By 2041, the Local Plan will have helped Rutland to make the most of its locations, natural features and historic assets to become a leading example of a modern rural county”.*

8.3 To help implement the vision, the Pre-Submission Local Plan then sets out eleven strategic objectives, as follows:

- Strategic objective 1: Climate change
- Strategic objective 2: Delivering sustainable development
- Strategic objective 3: Meeting housing needs
- Strategic objective 4: A prosperous and resilient local economy
- Strategic objective 5: Supporting strong and vibrant communities
- Strategic objective 6: Creating safe, inclusive, and resilient communities
- Strategic objective 7: Promoting high standards of design
- Strategic objective 8: Protect and enhance the built and natural environment
- Strategic objective 9: Make effective use of land and natural resources
- Strategic objective 10: Ensure development is supported by essential infrastructure and services; and
- Strategic objective 11: Minerals

8.4 These are described in more detail in **Chapter 1** of this SA Report.

### Policies

8.5 To implement the vision and strategic objectives, the Pre-Submission Local Plan presents a range of policies which will set the framework for development in Rutland over the period to 2041.

8.6 The policies, which are grouped under eight themes, are set out in **Table 8.1** below.

**Table 8.1: Policies presented in the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* document**

<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>
<b>Climate change</b>	
CC1	Supporting a circular economy
CC2	Design principles for energy efficient buildings
CC3	Resilient and Flexible Design
CC4	Net Zero Carbon (Operational)
CC5	Embodied Carbon
CC6	Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management
CC7	Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings
CC8	Renewable Energy
CC9	Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure
CC10	Wider Energy Infrastructure
CC11	Carbon Sinks
CC12	Carbon Sequestration
CC13	Provision for Electric Vehicle charging and Electric Bike parking
CC14	Flood Risk
<b>Spatial strategy</b>	
SS1	Spatial Strategy for New Development
SS2	Development within Planned Limits of Development
SS3	Small scale development on the edge of settlements
SS4	Future Opportunity Areas
SS5	Use of military bases and other secure residential establishments for operational or other purposes
SS6	Re-Use of Redundant Military Bases and Prisons
SS7	Residential Development in the Open Countryside
SS8	Non-Residential Development in the Countryside
SS9	Conversion of Buildings Outside PLDs
SS10	New Agricultural Buildings
<b>Housing</b>	
H1	Sites Proposed for Residential Development
H2	Cross-Boundary Development Opportunity – Stamford North
H3	Housing Density
H4	Meeting all Housing Needs
H5	Accessibility Standards
H6	Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding
H7	Affordable Housing
H8	Rural Exception Housing

<b>Policy Reference</b>	<b>Policy Name</b>
H9	First Homes Exception Sites
H10	Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
<b>Economy</b>	
E1	Strategic Employment Land Allocations
E2	Employment Development on Unallocated Sites
E3	Protecting Existing Employment Land and Premises
E4	Rural Economy
E5	Sustainable Farm Diversification
E6	Employment and Skills
E7	Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)
E8	Local Visitor Economy
E9	Caravans, Camping, Lodges, Log Cabins, Chalets and similar forms of Self-Serviced Holiday Accommodation
E10	Town Centres and Retailing
E11	Primary Shopping Areas
E12	Sites for Retail Development
E13	Retail in the Neighbourhood Centres and Larger Villages
<b>Sustainable communities</b>	
SC1	Landscape Character
SC2	Place Shaping Principles
SC3	Promoting Good Quality Design
SC4	Pollution Control
SC5	Designing Safer and Healthier Communities
SC6	Community Facilities
SC7	Provision of New Open Space
<b>Environment</b>	
EN1	Protection of Sites, Habitats and Species
EN2	Local Nature Recovery Strategy
EN3	Biodiversity Net Gain
EN4	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
EN5	Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees
EN6	Protecting Agricultural Land
EN7	Green and Blue Infrastructure
EN8	Important Open Space and Frontages
EN9	Local Green Spaces
EN10	Rutland Water area
EN11	Eyebrook Reservoir Area



Policy Reference	Policy Name
EN12	The Historic and Cultural Environment
EN13	Protecting Heritage Assets
<b>Minerals and waste</b>	
MIN1	Spatial Strategy for Minerals Development
MIN2	Mineral Provision
MIN3	Safeguarding Rutland's Mineral Resources
MIN4	Development Criteria for Mineral Extraction
MIN5	Site-Specific Allocations for the Extraction of Building Stone
MIN6	Safeguarding of Minerals Development
MIN7	Borrow Pits
MIN8	Development Criteria for other forms of Minerals Development
MIN9	Restoration and Aftercare
MIN10	Implementation
WST1	Capacity Requirements and Spatial Strategy for Waste Development
WST2	Waste-Related Development
<b>Infrastructure and delivery</b>	
INF1	Infrastructure and Connectivity
INF2	Securing Sustainable Transport
INF3	Walking and Cycling and non-car-based journeys
INF4	Supporting Community Health and Wellbeing

## Spatial strategy

- 8.7 **Table 8.2** below highlights the preferred sites that are proposed for residential development over the plan period, as set out in Policy H1 (Sites proposed for residential development) of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*.
- 8.8 As highlighted in Policy H2 (Cross-boundary development opportunity – Stamford North), Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm) is allocated for development as part of a larger development opportunity extending eastwards known as Stamford North. The majority of this development site is allocated in South Kesteven District.
- 8.9 In addition to the below, RCC have set a minimum target of 314 dwellings for Uppingham Town. Allocations will come forward through the emerging Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan, which will likely exceed the minimum target.

**Table 8.2: Proposed site allocations for residential development**

Site	Number of dwellings	Brownfield or greenfield
<b>Oakham Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>Greenfield</b>
Land South of Stamford Road	94	Greenfield
<b>Uppingham Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Larger Villages Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>Mix</b>
Officer's Mess, Edith Weston	85	Brownfield
Whitwell Road South, Empingham	28	Greenfield
Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall	11	Brownfield
<b>Stamford Total</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>Greenfield</b>
Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)	650	Greenfield
<b>Total Supply</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>Mix</b>

8.10 In addition to the above, 'The Paddocks Site at Langham' is allocated for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation.

8.11 A further site, comprising three areas of the Five Counties Extension, Greetham, has been proposed for an allocation for Travelling Showpeoples accommodation.

8.12 In terms of strategic employment land allocations, six sites have been allocated, as set out in **Table 8.3** below.

**Table 8.3: Proposed site allocations for strategic employment land**

Site	Size	Use
Car Park 3 Rutland Showground, Oakham	3.0 ha	High quality office and employment
Uppingham Gate, Uppingham	6.8 ha	Range of employment uses
Burley Appliances Ltd, Oakham	1.0 ha	Industrial
Land at Pit Lane Ketton	0.9 ha	Light industrial
Woolfox Depot, Great North Road	8.2 ha	Industrial
Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham	6.5 ha	Industrial
<b>Total Supply</b>	<b>26.4 ha</b>	<b>Mix</b>

## Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Local Plan policies

8.13 The appraisal of the policies in the *Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19 Publication Version)* document has been presented through the eight SA Themes. In undertaking the appraisal, the policies were reviewed to determine which are likely to have a positive or negative environmental effect under each SA Theme.

8.14 Where a causal link between policies and SA Themes is established, significant effects are identified through the judgement of the consultants with reference to the evidence base (i.e. the scoping information). The appraisal uses the criteria in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations, that is:

- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects
- the cumulative nature of the effects
- the transboundary nature of the effects
- the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)
- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)
- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to-
  - special natural characteristics or cultural heritage
  - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or
  - intensive land-use; and
  - the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.

8.15 Where likely significant effects have been identified, these are described in summary tables for each SA Theme.

8.16 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the strategic nature of the Rutland Local Plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also affected by the limitations of the baseline data. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure assumptions are explained in full. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms.

8.17 For each SA theme, the appraisal has been presented two-fold.

- Commentary on the proposed Local Plan spatial strategy, including the proposed site allocations; and
- Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan document as a whole.

## Biodiversity and Geodiversity

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

8.18 Rutland Water, an internationally designated Special Protection Area (SPA) / Ramsar site and nationally designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is in the centre of the county, approximately 550m east of the eastern settlement edge of Oakham. In addition, there are 18 other SSSIs located either fully or partially within the county. Whilst there are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) within the county, Cribbs Meadow NNR is located approximately 200m north of Rutland, in South Kesteven. There are also 359 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) located in Rutland, as well as a variety of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitats, containing habitats and species listed in the annexes of both the European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and the European Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

8.19 In light of the above, three of the preferred housing sites are within 1km of Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site. In order of proximity, these are:

- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (420m away).
- **Land South of Stamford Road** (440m away).
- **Whitwell Road South, Empingham** (649m away).

8.20 Due to their proximity, these three sites have a greater potential to adversely impact the Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site.

8.21 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)<sup>21</sup> has been undertaken for the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*. An earlier iteration of the HRA Report accompanied the *Preferred Options Plan* at Regulation 18 consultation in November 2023. The findings of the HRA conclude:

*“Most aspects of the plan will have no significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination due to the absence of effect pathways. Screening has demonstrated that there will be either **no effects or no significant effects alone or in combination on the interest features of Barnack Hills and Holes SAC or Grimsthorpe SAC.**”*

*Appropriate assessments have been undertaken for Rutland Water SPA/Ramsar and Baston Fen SAC in relation to those aspects where effect pathways are present (in combination water quality, air quality and visitor pressure effects, and effects on species away from the sites), taking into account specific and cross-cutting policy-based mitigation and avoidance measures that have been incorporated into the plan. These appropriate assessments have employed additional analyses and data to resolve uncertainties present at the initial screening and have concluded that (as currently drafted) **the Preferred Options Local Plan will have no adverse effects on the integrity of Rutland Water SPA, Rutland Water Ramsar, or Baston Fen SAC, alone or in combination.**”*

8.22 The HRA has since been reviewed to consider the updates within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*. Rutland County Council have confirmed that the recommendations within the HRA (to date) have been reflected within the policy

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<sup>21</sup> Rutland County Council (2023): [HRA for the Preferred Options Plan \(Regulation 18 Consultation\)](#)

framework. On this basis, providing that any additional recommendations within the updated HRA Report are also incorporated into the policy framework, no significant effects are anticipated (either alone or in-combination) to the integrity of European designated sites.

8.23 In terms of nationally designated biodiversity sites, in addition to the three sites highlighted above which are within 1km of Rutland Water SSSI, the following sites are within 1km of a SSSI:

- **Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham** (employment site) is adjacent to Luffenham Heath Golf Course SSSI.
- **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** is 130m from Great Casterton Road Banks SSSI.
- **Land at Pit Lane, Ketton** (employment site) is 264m from Ketton Quarries.
- **Areas 1, 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham** (GT&TS site) is 503m from Greetham Meadows SSSI.

8.24 Due to their proximity, these four preferred sites have increased potential to adversely impact these SSSIs. Therefore, without appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, these sites have the potential to lead to adverse effects on the integrity and special features of the SSSI.

8.25 SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool / dataset which map zones around each SSSI according to the sensitivities of the features for which it is notified. They specify the types of development that have the potential to have adverse impacts at a given location. Natural England is a statutory consultee on development proposals that might impact on SSSIs.

8.26 The following two preferred sites for housing fall within SSSI IRZs for development of 50 units or more and any residential developments outside of the existing settlement / urban area with a total net gain in residential units:

- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (85 homes on brownfield land)
- **Land South of Stamford Road** (94 homes on greenfield land)

8.27 Due to this, development at these sites may require further consultation with Natural England as planning progresses. It is noted that developments on brownfield sites are potentially less likely to lead to further consultation compared to greenfield sites.

8.28 Notably, 51.7% of **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** covers a candidate LWS. Whilst it is recognised that this part of the LWS could be retained and incorporated within green infrastructure provision and wider biodiversity enhancements, it is unclear at this stage whether this is possible, especially given over half of the site – which will deliver 650 homes – covers the LWS. Additionally, **Woolfox Depot, Great North Road** (employment site) is located adjacent to 'Rutland County golf-club (A1) verge – north', meaning this site has the potential for indirect adverse effects on the LWS.

8.29 With respect to locally important ecological areas, four of the preferred sites either contain or are in proximity to a BAP Priority Habitat. These are:

- **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (8.7% of the site contains deciduous woodland).
- **Land at Stamford Road** (adjacent to deciduous woodland).
- **Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham (employment site)** (adjacent to deciduous woodland).
- **Areas 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham (GT&TS site)** (both within 1m of deciduous woodland).

8.30 Development at these four sites will likely need to retain and enhance habitats on site / adjacent / nearby and may require mitigation (such as buffer zones) to minimise the potential for adverse impacts on them.

8.31 Overall, some of the preferred sites within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* have the potential to lead to significant negative effects on biodiversity and geodiversity; however, **uncertainty** is noted at this stage. This is because effects will depend to an extent on the design and layout of development, and the implementation of biodiversity enhancement measures. Nevertheless, it is noted that larger, greenfield sites have the potential to result in increased direct effects, such as from land take, disturbance or the loss of key features of ecological value. There is also an increased likelihood of indirect effects, such as from a reduction of ecological connectivity, and changes in land use patterns.

8.32 It is important to recognise that the requirement to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on sites, embedded by the Environment Act 2021, will help mitigate potential significant negative effects and facilitate enhancements to ecological networks. It also has the potential to deliver net positive effects for biodiversity in the longer term, depending on the sensitivity of the site; the habitats and species present; the extent to which existing habitats are lost; and success in application of BNG. Larger developments can also offer opportunities to deliver landscape-scale biodiversity enhancement measures such as habitat creation and enhancements in ecological connections and networks.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.33 As noted above, the county contains the Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site and SSSI and 18 other SSSIs. There are also 359 of LWSs located in Rutland, as well as a variety of BAP Priority Habitats. Whilst no significant negative effects on biodiversity assets from the spatial strategy can be readily identified, there will be a need for potential effects on biodiversity, linked to the site allocations, to be avoided and mitigated. In this context, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* sets out provisions which will a) help limit potential effects from new development on features and areas of biodiversity interest in the county; and b) support enhancements.

8.34 For example, Policy EN1 (Protection of Sites, Habitats and Species) outlines that development resulting in a significant harm to biodiversity, including designated sites and other important habitat, will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. The policy supports the mitigation hierarchy: avoid, minimise, compensate. In exceptional circumstances where detrimental impacts of development cannot be avoided (e.g. by locating development at an alternative site), Policy EN1 stipulates that the necessary compensatory

measures will need to be secured by the developers. The provisions of this policy should therefore positively contribute to protecting the integrity and quality of the county's ecological and geological assets.

- 8.35 With a focus on Rutland Water SPA / Ramsar site and SSSI, Policy EN10 (Rutland Water Area) recognises the importance of this internationally designated site, outlining that development in the Rutland Water area should be carefully designed and located to ensure that it respects the nature conservation features of the site and does not have an adverse impact on its wildlife interests. Policy EN10 outlines that new development will be limited to small-scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within five defined recreation areas only. In all cases, the proposals must demonstrate (amongst other considerations) that the special nature conservation interests of the site are protected. Hence, this policy provides a range of provisions which will help protect habitats, species and the nature conservation role of the Rutland Water area.
- 8.36 With a focus on Eyebrook Reservoir SSSI and RIGS, Policy EN11 (Eyebrook Reservoir Area) recognises the importance of this nationally designated site, outlining that new development will be limited to small-scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within the Eyebrook Reservoir Area. This is providing these uses are not detrimental to the special nature conservation interests of the site. As with the above policy, Policy EN11 performs well by helping to ensure the protection of the Eyebrook Reservoir area from inappropriate development.
- 8.37 More broadly, Policy EN4 (Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows) seeks to protect important trees, woodlands and hedgerows across the county. It favours the retention and enhancement of existing trees, woodland and hedgerows over the planting of new trees. This is important given that mature trees often hold significant ecological value for local ecosystems. In support of this, Policy EN5 (Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees) seeks to protect ancient woodlands and ancient and veteran trees. Hence, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well in recognising the importance of such trees.
- 8.38 In terms of ecological connectivity, Policy EN2 (Local Nature Recovery Strategy) requires development proposals to demonstrate that a positive contribution will be made to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), as required under the Environment Act 2021. In addition, Policy EN7 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) requires new development to integrate existing and new green and blue infrastructure (GBI) into the scheme design from the outset. Importantly, Policy EN7 outlines that the design and layout of new GBI will need to deliver BNG and supports ecosystem services. Strengthening this, Policy SC2 (Place Shaping Principles) outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals must have regard to biodiversity and ecological networks within the wider landscape.
- 8.39 With a focus on BNG, Policy EN3 (Biodiversity Net Gain) outlines that development will only be permitted where a BNG of at least 10% is demonstrated and secured in perpetuity (for at least 30 years). This will be quantified using the latest DEFRA metric or agreed equivalent.
- 8.40 The policy for Stamford North, Policy H2 (Cross-boundary development opportunity – Stamford North) also includes specific requirements to mitigate against potential harm to biodiversity and wildlife in the area, 10% biodiversity

net gain on site, and a need to include translocation of notable species where appropriate.

- 8.41 Finally, Policy H10 (Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) outlines that (amongst other considerations) proposals for sites for Gypsy and Traveller and / or Travelling Showpeople must minimise the impact on sites / areas of nature conservation value, including the internationally designated nature conservation site of Rutland Water. In this respect, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* considers implications for biodiversity assets throughout its policy framework, and not just within the most relevant policy.
- 8.42 Overall, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well under this SA theme by providing appropriate protection to designated sites and habitats and species through its policy framework, whilst also supporting ecological connectivity through GBI improvements. Whilst the spatial strategy locates some growth near designated sites, habitats and species, the policy framework should serve to mitigate any adverse effects that might arise as a result of development. Providing any recommendations within the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) are also incorporated into the policy framework, **no significant effects** are predicted.

## Landscape

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

- 8.43 Rutland is not within, nor within the setting of, a National Park or National Landscape, nor does it contain Green Belt land (albeit this is not a landscape designation). Nevertheless, the county has distinct landscape characteristics, sensitivities and features (including important viewpoints) across the areas covered by the preferred sites.
- 8.44 Rutland's most recent Landscape Sensitivity Assessment<sup>22</sup>, which was completed in 2023, updates previous studies and assesses the sensitivity of land around 26 settlements in total, including the main towns of Oakham and Uppingham and 24 villages. In the absence of specified sites, study parcels have been identified within an outer 'buffer zone' extending a distance of 150m from the inner study boundary drawn around the main built-up area of each settlement. This is unless land immediately beyond presents a clear and discreet parcel relating to a well-defined landscape feature (e.g. tree belt, watercourse etc), the settlement edge or neighbouring study parcel.
- 8.45 The results of the study, in terms of sensitivity to housing and employment development, for the two main towns are as follows:
- **Oakham** – of the 19 study parcels around this town, nine have a high sensitivity, four have a high / medium sensitivity, four have a medium sensitivity, and two have a medium / low sensitivity.
  - **Uppingham** – of the 11 study parcels around this town, three have a high sensitivity, two have a high / medium sensitivity, and six have a medium sensitivity.

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<sup>22</sup> Rutland County Council (2010 & 2017): 'Landscape evidence', [online], available to access via [this link](#)



- 8.46 The preferred sites for housing deliver 8.0% of homes in Oakham, and the percentage of residual housing need to be delivered in Uppingham (via Neighbourhood Plan allocations) is 26.6%. Hence, there is potential for growth to lead to adverse impacts on landscape and townscape character in Oakham (where 68.4% of study parcels have a high or high / medium sensitivity) and Uppingham (where 45.5% of study parcels have a high or high / medium sensitivity). However, the use of high-quality and sensitive design could help mitigate adverse impacts on landscape character to some degree.
- 8.47 With regard to the employment sites, two of the six sites are in Oakham, and one is in Uppingham. Hence, there is potential for the employment sites to lead to adverse impacts on landscape and townscape character in Oakham and Uppingham.
- 8.48 The results of the study, in terms of sensitivity to housing development, for the three larger villages that comprise the preferred sites, are as follows:
- **Edith Weston** – of the eight study parcels around this village, three have a high sensitivity, two have a high / medium sensitivity, and three have a medium sensitivity.
  - **Empingham** – of the six study parcels around this village, one has a high sensitivity, three have a high / medium sensitivity, and two have a medium sensitivity.
  - **Ryhall** – of the five study parcels around this village, two have a high sensitivity, one has a high / medium sensitivity, one has a medium sensitivity, and one has a medium / low sensitivity.
- 8.49 In this respect, the preferred sites have the potential to result in adverse effects on local landscape and villagescape character in these villages.
- 8.50 With regard to the employment sites, one of the six sites are in Ketton; of the eight study parcels around this village, three have a high sensitivity, two have a high / medium sensitivity, one has a medium sensitivity, and two have a medium / low sensitivity.
- 8.51 Notably, two out of five housing allocations are brownfield, and in this respect the preferred sites perform fairly well, particularly as brownfield sites are limited across Rutland given its largely rural nature. However, it is noted that the largest preferred site for housing – **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (650 homes) – is greenfield. However, the site is located in areas less sensitive from a landscape perspective, within proximity to the built-environment.
- 8.52 With regard to the employment sites, three of the six sites are greenfield (and one additional employment site is mixed), and in this respect the preferred sites do not perform so well from a landscape perspective. However, impacts are dependent on the proposed uses at these sites.
- 8.53 Overall, some of the proposed site allocations for housing and employment land within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* have the potential to adversely impact the character and quality of Rutland's landscapes by directing growth to settlements which have a high or high / medium sensitivity to development. It is also recognised that two of the preferred sites, by directing growth to relatively large greenfield sites on the edge of Stamford and Oakham, have the potential to lead to increased direct impacts on landscape character. The delivery of

large sites may lead to development which is less in keeping with existing townscape character associated with the historic evolution of a settlement. Hence, **significant negative effects** have the potential to arise at this stage. However, it is recognised that by directing growth to larger greenfield sites has the potential to deliver wider landscape-scale benefits through the inclusion of green and blue infrastructure through design.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

- 8.54 As outlined above, Rutland has distinct landscape characteristics, sensitivities and features (including important viewpoints). Rutland's most recent Landscape Character Assessment (2022) outlines that the county overlaps five different landscape character types. These range from high plateau landscapes across large areas of the north east and south west, to lowland valleys in the centre and north west and on the county's southern border along the Welland Valley. Notably, Rutland's most recent Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023) highlights that many undeveloped parts of the county are sensitive to housing development.
- 8.55 In response to this, Policy SC1 (Landscape Character) outlines that new development is expected to reflect and respond to Rutland's varied landscape character and contribute to the distinctive qualities of the landscape character type in which it is located. This includes the distinctive elements, features and other spatial characteristics identified in the most recent Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (2022). The policy outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals on the edge of settlements should reflect local identity, including how development relates to landform and landscape features. In this respect, Policy SC1 should help prevent inappropriate development from taking place.
- 8.56 With a focus on design, Policy SC2 (Place Shaping Principles) is in place to ensure that all new development is appropriate in scale and design to the location, character and features of the setting and landscape within which it is situated. The policy outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals must have regard to Rutland's Landscape Character Assessment (2022) and Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2023). In this respect, where site allocations overlap parcels with a high sensitivity to housing development, mitigation measures will likely be put in place.
- 8.57 In addition, Policy SC3 (Promoting Good Quality Design) outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals must demonstrate how they will be visually attractive and make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, vernacular, townscape, streetscape, and landscape character. Development proposals must also be integrated into the wider surroundings, being sensitive to edges of settlements, views, landscape character, history, built form and street character, and should be of an appropriate scale, density, massing, height, and material, given the context of the area. Hence, this policy will help ensure that new development respects local context, identity and character.
- 8.58 With a focus on density, Policy H3 (Housing Density) outlines that new residential development is required to make the most efficient use of land whilst responding to local character, context and distinctiveness. The policy outlines that residential densities will vary dependent upon the local area context and

character and the sustainability of the location, but generally should be no less than 25dph. In this respect, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* acknowledges that sensitivity varies across the local landscape by ensuring that housing density is determined on a site-by-site basis.

- 8.59 In terms of development in the countryside, Policy SS7 (Residential Development in the Open Countryside) outlines that new-build housing will only be permitted in the open countryside where the proposal is either a) for affordable housing on rural exceptions sites; b) housing to meet a proven essential need for rural workers; c) re-use, adaptation and conversion of rural buildings; d) Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites to help meet identified accommodation needs; e) where the principle of residential accommodation has previously been established and remains extant (or where a valid permission exists); or f) where development is proposed in accordance with paragraph 84 of the NPPF. In essence, there needs to be a determined need for housing in the countryside, which should prevent a significant scale of inappropriate development.
- 8.60 Adding on to the above, Policy SS8 (Non-Residential Development in the Countryside) highlights that non-residential development in the countryside will only be supported where it is for certain purposes, including (but not limited to) where it supports the rural economy. Policy SS9 (Conversion of Buildings outside PLDs) outlines that proposals for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside outside the PLD will only be permitted where landscape character is not adversely affected. Additionally, Policy SS10 (New Agricultural Buildings) outlines that agricultural buildings will be permitted in the countryside where impacts on landscape character are minimised. These policies should also prevent inappropriate development from taking place in the countryside.
- 8.61 More broadly, Policy EN7 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) requires new development to integrate existing and new GBI. In addition, Policy EN8 (Important Open Space and Frontages), which seeks to protect important open space and frontages, outlines (amongst other considerations) that development must have regard to its contribution to enhancing the attractiveness of the town or village setting when viewed from surrounding land. Moreover, Policy SC2 (Place Shaping Principles) outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals must have regard to a) public access to, and community value of, the local landscape and nearby open spaces; and b) visual intrusion and impact on the openness and tranquillity of the countryside.
- 8.62 The policy for Stamford North, Policy H2 (Cross-boundary development opportunity – Stamford North) also includes specific requirements to limit impacts on landscape and townscape character. This includes the provision of sensitive landscaping to the northern and western edges of the site, and a commitment to respond positively to green infrastructure opportunities in the area.
- 8.63 Finally, Policy H10 (Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) outlines that (amongst other considerations) proposals for sites for Gypsy and Traveller and / or Travelling Showpeople must minimise the impact on landscape character.
- 8.64 Overall, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well under this SA theme by ensuring that local landscape, townscape and villagescape character is

protected and enhanced (where possible). The policy framework recognises that some areas are more sensitive to housing development than others, and these areas should be provided the most protection. However, the spatial strategy locates some development in sensitive landscapes and/or on large greenfield sites. Whilst the design and layout of development may mitigate the identified potential significant negative effects to some degree, it is uncertain as to the extent which negative effects will be mitigated. As such, **uncertainty** is noted at this stage.

## Historic Environment

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

8.65 Rutland has a rich historic environment; numerous nationally listed features of historic significance and locally important conservation areas are present in most settlements. In addition, there are scheduled monuments within the settlements of Oakham, Edith Weston, Empingham, Great Casterton, and Greetham. There are also two Grade II listed registered parks and gardens in the county, namely: Burley on the Hill (located approximately 1km to the east of the eastern settlement edge of Oakham) and Exton Park (located directly to the west of the A1 trunk road).

8.66 Whilst the significance of the effects from the preferred sites on features of cultural, built and archaeological heritage assets depends on the location, scale and nature of development (in particular, the detailed design of development including layout, height etc.), it can be considered that a larger scale of housing development within a settlement generally increases the likelihood (and potential magnitude) of negative effects on heritage assets locally. This is linked to an increased likelihood of direct and indirect impacts on the fabric and setting of specific features and areas of historic environment interest in or near the settlement. In this respect, preferred site **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)**, which will deliver 650 homes on greenfield land on the northern edge of Stamford, is likely to lead to significant negative effects on the historic setting of Stamford.

8.67 With a focus on the proximity of the preferred sites to nationally designated listed structures, one of the preferred sites are within 250m of a Grade I listed building. This is **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (240m from Church of St Mary). Due to its proximity, this site has the potential to adversely impact the setting of the Grade I listed building.

8.68 Three of the preferred sites are within 500m of a scheduled monument. In order of proximity, these are:

- **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (21m from 'Ermine Street, section south of Quarry Farm')
- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (117m from 'Village cross at junction of Well Cross and King Edward's Way')
- **Whitwell Road South, Empingham** (206m from 'Moated site with fishponds and enclosures at Empingham')

8.69 Whilst these sites are unlikely to directly impact on the fabric of the archaeological remains and other features of significance that comprise these

scheduled monuments, the historic setting of these features may be impacted by development at some of these locations.

8.70 Finally, four of the preferred sites fall within, or lie close to, a conservation area. These are:

- **Land at Stamford Road** (adjacent to Oakham Conservation Area).
- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (8.2m from Edith Weston Conservation Area).
- **Land at Pit Lane, Ketton** (employment site) (13.1m from Ketton Conservation Area).
- **Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall** (54.0m from Ryhall Conservation Area).

8.71 While at these preferred sites there is potential to adversely impact the setting of the conservation areas, the use of high-quality and sensitive design could help mitigate adverse impacts on the conservation areas to some degree. This is considered below within the 'commentary on the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* as a whole' section. It is also noted that conservation areas have stricter planning controls to ensure development is appropriate.

8.72 In terms of potential impacts on historic landscape character, just under half of the preferred sites for housing or employment (five of twelve [including one mixed]) are brownfield, and in this respect the preferred sites for housing or employment perform well, particularly as brownfield sites are limited across Rutland, which is very rural in nature. However, it is noted that the largest preferred site – **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (650 homes) – is greenfield. This site, therefore, has increased potential to lead to increased direct impacts on historic setting of these locations, including through leading to development which is less in keeping with the historic evolution of a settlement.

8.73 Overall, whilst it is noted that effects on the historic environment are largely dependent on the design and layout of development, a number of the preferred sites have the potential to lead to negative effects without appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures. The significance of these effects depends on the location, scale and nature of development.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.74 As noted above, Rutland contains a significant number of nationally and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their heritage interest. This rich and diverse historic environment of Rutland is reflected by the policy framework for the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*, which has a strong focus on conserving and enhancing the fabric and setting of heritage assets.

8.75 For example, Policy EN13 (Protecting Heritage Assets) outlines that the Council will apply national policy to development proposals which affect designated heritage assets, or their setting, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. Meanwhile, development that has the potential to affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered with respect to the scale of any harm or loss, as well as the particular significance of the heritage asset and its setting. Adding to this, Policy SC2 (Place Shaping Principles) states that all development proposals will be assessed in relation to statutory,

national and local designations and their setting. Policy SC2 outlines that proposals must also consider conservation area appraisals. In this respect, the policy framework provides robust protection to both designated and non-designated heritage assets, reflecting their varying significance and level of statutory protection.

- 8.76 Supporting the above, Policy EN12 (The Historic and Cultural Environment) seeks to ensure that new development protects, conserves and, where possible, enhances historic assets and their settings. It also outlines that development should respect the historic landscape character and contribute to its conservation, enhancement or restoration, or the creation of appropriate new features. Policy EN12 outlines that a Historic Impact Assessment may be required to support proposals which affect historic assets and their settings, which should ensure that potential significant negative effects are avoided. Given impacts on the significance of a heritage resource can be diverse, the implementation of Historic Impact Assessment is an appropriate mechanism for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment.
- 8.77 Archaeological resources are recognised as an important component of the county's historic environment through Policy EN13, which states that development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance. The policy outlines that development proposals that would result in the removal or destruction of remains of archaeological interest that are considered to be of equal significance to a scheduled monument will not normally be permitted. In this respect, the policy framework provides protection to non-designated archaeological remains in addition to those that are designated.
- 8.78 The policy for Stamford North, Policy H2 (Cross-boundary development opportunity – Stamford North) also includes specific requirements to limit impacts on key archaeological sites. This includes through stipulating that an appropriate buffer for the protection and enhancement of the setting of the Scheduled Monument at Great Casterton is provided, the extent to which should be informed by a Heritage Impact Assessment.
- 8.79 Policy EN8 (Important Open Space and Frontages) seeks to protect important open space and frontages from inappropriate development. To achieve this, the policy outlines that new development must have regard to the peripheral or transitional open character of open spaces in contributing to preserving the form and character of settlements, including heritage assets. Adding to this, Policy SC1 (Landscape Character) outlines (amongst other considerations) that development proposals on the edge of settlements should reflect local identity, including the consideration of historic settlement pattern and separation and the historic form of a settlement. Hence, the policy framework recognises the importance of the landscape in relation to the historic environment, including through its role in the setting of heritage assets.
- 8.80 More broadly, Policy SC3 (Promoting Good Design) outlines that proposals must be integrated into the wider surroundings, being sensitive to edges of settlements, views, landscape character, history, built form and street character, and should be of an appropriate scale, density, massing, height, and material, given the context of the area. With a focus on the countryside, Policy SS9 (Conversion of Buildings outside PLDs) outlines that proposals for the

conversion of existing buildings in the countryside outside the PLD will only be permitted where the historic environment is not adversely affected. Finally, Policy H10 (Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) outlines that (amongst other considerations) proposals for sites for Gypsy and Traveller and / or Travelling Showpeople must minimise the impact on heritage assets. In this respect, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* considers implications on the historic environment throughout its policy framework, and not just within the most relevant policy.

- 8.81 Overall, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well under this SA theme by ensuring that heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, and their settings, including the wider historic landscape, are protected. The policy framework recognises that designated heritage assets should be offered greater protection than non-designated assets, however it still provides protection for both. Nevertheless, the spatial strategy locates some development in locations of sensitivity for the historic environment. Whilst the design and layout of development may mitigate negative effects to some degree, this depends on the delivery of development, and therefore **uncertainty** is noted.

## Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

- 8.82 **Air quality** in Rutland is generally good. Monitoring for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) occurs at 11 sites across the county; the results of which are included in the annual Air Quality Annual Status Reports (ASRs), the most recent of which was produced in 2019.<sup>23</sup> According to the 2019 ASR, there are no AQMAs in the county. Therefore, there is no formal requirement to develop an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). However, Rutland County Council has encouraged and supported measures to mitigate emissions. This includes (but is not limited to) policy guidance; transport planning; public information campaigns; car lift / share schemes; and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points at certain locations (including offices in Oakham).
- 8.83 It is reasonable to assume that the level of air pollution generated from the preferred sites will largely depend on the location of development, with the most sustainable locations being Oakham, Uppingham and the edge of Stamford, in South Kesteven District. Approximately 89.5% of residual housing needs are likely to be delivered in the vicinities of these three towns during the plan period (reflecting the preferred housing allocations within the plan and the number of homes expected to come forward via allocations within the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan). In this respect, the preferred housing sites perform well by locating growth near existing services, facilities and amenities, as well as employment opportunities and educational facilities.
- 8.84 In terms of soils resources just under half of the preferred sites for housing (two out of five) are **brownfield**. In this respect, the preferred housing sites perform well, particularly as brownfield sites are limited across Rutland, which is very rural in nature. However, it is noted that the largest preferred housing site – **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (650 homes) – is greenfield. Hence, there will still be some loss of greenfield land through the preferred spatial

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<sup>23</sup> Rutland County Council (2019): '2019 Air Quality ASR', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

strategy. However, it is recognised that this is largely unavoidable given the relatively few brownfield opportunity sites within Rutland.

8.85 With a focus on **mineral resources**, the following eight preferred sites for housing and employment overlap, either fully or partially, with a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA):

- **Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall** (fully).
- **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (fully).
- **Land at Pit Lane, Ketton** (employment site) (fully).
- **Woolfox Depot, Great North Road** (employment site) (fully).
- **Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham** (employment site) (fully).
- **Areas 1, 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham** (GT&TS site) (fully).
- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (partially).
- **Whitwell Road South, Empingham** (partially).

8.86 In this respect, the majority of the preferred sites for housing and employment overlap, either fully or partially, with an MSA. Therefore, the preferred sites have the potential to lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources in the county. However, given the extent of the areas covered by the MSA designation, significant effects are perhaps less-likely.

8.87 The key consideration in terms of supporting the **efficient use of land** in the county is the need to avoid unnecessary loss of the highest quality 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land. In relation to this, the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) classifies land into six grades (plus 'non-agricultural' and 'urban'), where Grades 1 to 3a are recognised as being BMV land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. Not all locations in Rutland have had recent detailed ALC undertaken; due to this, there is a reliance on less detailed pre-1988 national classifications for agricultural land. Under this older classification, subdivision of Grade 3 agricultural land into 3a (BMV land) and 3b (poorer quality land) is not available.

8.88 None of the preferred sites overlap with Grade 1 agricultural land. In addition, only three of the preferred sites for housing and employment overlap, either fully or partially, with Grade 2 agricultural land. These are:

- **Car Park 3, Rutland Showground, Oakham** (employment site) (96% overlap).
- **Burley Appliances, Oakham** (employment site) (89% overlap).
- **Uppingham Gate, Uppingham** (employment site) (67% overlap).

8.89 The majority of the preferred sites for housing and employment overlap, either fully or partially, with Grade 3 agricultural land. Therefore, whilst the preferred sites for housing and employment have the potential to lead to the loss of BMV land (i.e. Grade 2 and 3a land), uncertainty is noted at this stage as it is not clear whether the Grade 3 agricultural land overlapping the majority of sites is Grade 3a land (BMV) or Grade 3b (poor quality).



- 8.90 Land around Uppingham is underlain by a mixture of Grade 3a and Grade 3b land, with some areas of Grade 2 land. Therefore, the preferred sites for housing and employment have the potential to lead to the loss of BMV land (i.e. Grade 2 and 3a land) in the vicinity of the town. As the site allocations within Uppingham will be determined by the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and the Local Plan does not have preferred sites in the town, the Local Plan spatial strategy will not influence the specific location of growth in this settlement.
- 8.91 **Waste generation** is an inevitable consequence of development, including both waste generated by construction and during occupation. The management of waste, including the minimisation of waste generation in the first instance, and the encouragement of the re-use, recycling and recovery of waste materials in the second instance, would all be undertaken on a site-by-site basis. In this respect, it is reasonable to assume that the level of waste generated will correspond to the scale of development. However, it is recognised that larger schemes can present an opportunity to incorporate innovative waste management practices and technologies, and **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (650 homes) performs well in this respect.
- 8.92 With a focus on **water resources**, Rutland is within the supply area of Anglian Water and is located in an area of high-water stress. It is therefore important to consider the Local Plan's effects on water resources. It is considered that higher growth will place a greater demand upon the already stressed supply. In this respect, the relatively moderate level of growth proposed under the preferred spatial strategy (1,182 homes to meet residual needs) represents less of an additional burden. It is anticipated that the Water Resources Management Plans (WRMPs) prepared by water supply companies will address long-term water supply issues associated with growth.
- 8.93 Three of the preferred sites for housing and employment are within 250m of a statutory main river (this includes **Land at Stamford Road**, adjacent to its southern boundary). Therefore, these preferred sites for housing and employment have the potential to pollute nearby rivers from the runoff of point source pollution from new development. However, it is recognised that this will likely be considered during the site design stage, with mitigation measures put in place to limit pollution. The wider policy framework within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (discussed below), also contains measures which seek to protect the quality and integrity of water resources from new development areas during the plan period.
- 8.94 It is also noted that five of the preferred sites for housing and employment overlap with a Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 2 (outer zone) and / or 3 (total catchment). These are:
- **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm).**
  - **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston.**
  - **Land at Pit Lane, Ketton** (employment site).
  - **Woolfox Depot, Great North Road** (employment site).
  - **Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham** (employment site).

8.95 Therefore, these five sites have a greater potential to pollute groundwater sources used to supply drinking water. However, it is recognised that the SPZ designation provides a degree of protection to these areas.

8.96 Overall, by delivering a relatively moderate level of growth (1,182 homes), the preferred spatial strategy reduces the severity of potential negative effects on air, land, soil and water resources. Growth is largely contained within or in proximity to planned limits of development, which will help to safeguard areas of open countryside from inappropriate levels of development. Whilst it is recognised that some of the preferred sites overlap MSAs and SPZs, in light of the widespread coverage of these areas / zones across the county, and the protection provided by these designations, **no significant effects** are predicted.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.97 As noted above, air quality in Rutland is generally good. Nevertheless, due to the rural nature of the county, future development will still likely result in an uplift in the use of private cars, which has the potential to lead to deteriorating air quality locally. In response to this, Policy SC4 (Pollution Control) outlines that development should seek to minimise pollution and, where possible, contribute to the protection and improvement of the quality of air, land, and water. Specifically, development that would result in significant air pollution would only be permitted if the potential negative effects can be mitigated to an acceptable level.

8.98 With a focus on land and soil resources, it is expected that the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* will positively promote the most efficient use of land. However, where this is not possible due to the lack of brownfield sites, the policy framework ensures that development is sensitively designed in order to avoid causing significant adverse impacts to land and soil resources. Most notably, Policy EN6 (Protecting Agricultural Land) is in place to protect BMV agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a) from new development. The policy only permits development which would lead to the loss of such land where a) the land is allocated for development in the Local Plan; b) no other more suitable sites are available; or c) it will be used for photovoltaics (PV) (only Grade 3).

8.99 The *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has a robust suite of policies on waste reduction. For example, Policy CC1 (Supporting a Circular Economy) supports proposals which demonstrate their compatibility with, or the furthering of, a strong circular economy. The policy requires that development proposals set out their approach to site waste management and how construction waste will be addressed following the waste hierarchy together with the five R's of waste management: refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle. Supporting this, Policy SC3 (Promoting Good Quality Design) highlights that development proposals should include measures to secure the management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy during both the construction and operation phases. Other relevant policies include:

- Policy WST1 (Capacity Requirements and Spatial Strategy for Waste Development), which outlines that the development of a sustainable waste management network for Rutland will be supported through the recognition of waste as a resource. It will involve the provision of facilities to meet the indicative waste management capacities.

- Policy WST2 (Waste-Related Development), which accepts waste-related development where it meets the criteria set out within the policy.

8.100 The protection of minerals within the county is a key focus of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*. For example, Policy MIN3 (Safeguarding Rutland's Mineral Resources) seeks to protect MSAs from unnecessary sterilisation as a result of new development. In addition, Policy MIN1 (Spatial Strategy for Minerals Development) outlines that the extraction of mineral resources will be focussed within the limestone for aggregates and building stone Area of Search (AoS), as well as the cement primary and secondary materials AoS. Policy MIN1 also outlines that small-scale extraction of non-aggregate minerals for building / roofing stone and clay, where linked to historic environment conservation outcomes, will be supported in rural areas or within settlements. Moreover, Policy MIN4 (Development Criteria for Mineral Extraction) permits proposals for extraction of minerals where it can be demonstrated (amongst other considerations) that it is required to maintain a sufficient supply of material. Notably, preference will be given to proposals for mineral extraction at allocated sites. Other relevant policies include:

- Policy MIN2 (Mineral Provision), which highlights that the Council will make provision for the extraction of 5.6 million tonnes of crushed rock (limestone) during the plan period, in addition to maintaining a sufficient stock of permitted reserves for limestone and clay in order to supply the Cement Works at Ketton. The policy will also support the supply of minerals where necessary for conservation purpose and/or maintaining the local distinctiveness of the built environment within Rutland. In this respect, the Local Plan recognises the economic value of continuing the production of building materials in the county for conservation purposes.
- Policy MIN5 (Site-Specific Allocations for the Extraction of Building Stone), which outlines that proposals for the extraction of building stone at M1 New Road, Hooby Lane (yield unknown) will be permitted in accordance with other relevant Local Plan policies.
- Policy MIN6 (Safeguarding of Minerals Development), which seeks to safeguard the provision to be delivered by the allocated and committed mineral extraction sites by ensuring that proposals for non-minerals development within / adjacent to an allocated site are justifiable.
- Policy MIN7 (Borrow Pits), which outlines that permission will be granted for borrow pits where it meets the criteria set out within the policy.
- Policy MIN8 (Development Criteria for Other Forms of Minerals Development), which outlines that permission will be granted for other forms of minerals development where it can be demonstrated that the development complies with relevant Local Plan policies and avoids and/or mitigates potentially adverse impacts to acceptable levels.
- Policy MIN9 (Restoration and Aftercare), which states that all temporary minerals and waste development must include a restoration scheme to secure delivery of high-quality restoration and aftercare, including provisions for ongoing management and maintenance where necessary.
- Policy MIN10 (Implementation), which sets out that the implementation of minerals and waste development will be controlled and managed through

the use of a) planning conditions; b) planning obligations and/or legal agreements; c) monitoring of permitted operations by the planning authority; and establishment of a Local Liaison Group.

8.101 Finally, with a focus on water resources, Policy CC6 (Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management) states that all new dwellings should achieve the Optimal Housing Standard of 110 litres per day per person for water efficiency as described by Building Regulation G2. The policy provides additional support for development proposals that go further than this minimum requirement. Policy CC6 also highlights that new development must utilise permeable paving; drought resistant planting; green roofs (only when the roof is flat and not being used for PV or thermal solar panels); and rain harvesting (only when there is garden area included in the plot). More broadly, Policy SS10 (New Agricultural Buildings) outlines that agricultural buildings will be permitted in the countryside where impacts on water quality are not adversely affected. In this respect, the policy framework seeks to recognise that the county is in an area of high-water stress by ensuring that new development is efficient in its use of this resource.

8.102 Overall, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has a robust set of policies on air, land, soil and water resources, with a particular focus on minimising waste and protecting mineral resources. Whilst the spatial strategy will inevitably lead to the loss of some BMV agricultural land, this is largely unavoidable due to the limited number of brownfield sites in Rutland. In light of this, **minor positive significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

## Climate Change

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

8.103 With respect to **climate change mitigation**, road transport is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in Rutland. High car dependency and the rural nature of the much of the county, as well as issues relating to public transport provision, mean that car ownership within Rutland is higher than the regional average. Only 10.3% of households in Rutland do not have access to a car or van, compared to 23.5% nationally (Census 2021). Due to this, by delivering growth, the preferred spatial strategy has the potential to lead to increases in GHG emissions from transport. It is also unlikely to give rise to the required improvements in sustainable transport choices that would offset the increase in car-based trips.

8.104 However, it is recognised that the most sustainable locations are Oakham, Uppingham and the edge of Stamford, in South Kesteven District. It is recognised that most of the growth during the plan period will be directed to these main towns. In this respect, the preferred sites for housing perform well by supporting the use of sustainable transport modes, given residents have good access to existing services, facilities and amenities in these towns. Notably, Rutland is served by a rural bus network, a public rights of way (PRoW) network, and there is a substantial joint cycleway / footway network. Due to the main towns forming key nodes to local transport networks, directing growth to these settlements would help to encourage a modal shift and reduce reliance on the private vehicle, helping to minimise an increase in emissions.

- 8.105 Notably, Oakham has the only railway station in the county, which provides direct links to the east coast main line, Stansted Airport, Birmingham, and a limited twice daily service to London St Pancras. Stamford, which is located just outside of the county in South Kesteven District, also has a railway station on this line. The preferred sites for housing deliver 62.9% of residual housing needs in Oakham and the edge of Stamford. This will likely lead to positive effects by locating people in walking / cycling distance to the railway station. However, it could be argued that by directing more growth to Oakham and the edge of Stamford, the preferred sites for housing would perform even more favourably in this regard.
- 8.106 The preferred sites for housing also deliver some homes (10.5%) in the larger villages. Whilst these villages have a reduced range of services and facilities on offer when compared to the main settlements, they still have some services and facilities. All of the preferred sites for housing within the larger villages are also less than 400m from the nearest bus stop. Whilst some residents will likely opt to travel by car to access wider services and facilities at the main towns, where bus services are good, residents will likely utilise them.
- 8.107 In terms of the other contributors to GHG emissions, the sustainability performance of development partially depends on energy efficiency during operation. This could include the inclusion of elements such as energy efficient design (i.e. positioning development to maximise solar gain) and the provision of renewable energy on-site. Whilst it is considered that this can only be assessed on a site-by-site basis, it is noted that there are generally more opportunities to integrate low carbon and renewable energy into large-scale developments. For example, large-scale PV systems can be combined with community heating schemes to support renewable energy and increased energy efficiency. **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** (650 homes) performs relatively well in this respect.
- 8.108 With respect to **climate change adaptation**, the Rutland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Update (2020)<sup>24</sup> states that fluvial flood risk is of limited spatial extent within the county. The majority of the higher risk flood zones (2 and 3) are located in rural areas, outside of the built-up areas. This SFRA is currently being updated.
- 8.109 Despite this, there are a number of areas where the flood map shows properties at risk, including Oakham, as several small watercourses flow through / near the town. However, high flood risk areas are isolated to a small area to the east of the main settlement. It is therefore considered that directing growth to Oakham would result in a residual neutral effect. This is because, in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and national policy, new development should be avoided in the highest flood risk areas and suitable mitigation implemented where necessary.
- 8.110 Several of the larger villages are identified as having areas at high risk of fluvial flooding. Two of the preferred sites overlap with Flood Zone 2 / 3 to a small degree (<5% overlap). Therefore, the preferred sites do not entirely avoid the highest flood risk areas, with potential to lead to increased pressures on the floodplain. However, as highlighted above, it is considered that appropriate

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<sup>24</sup> Rutland County Council (2020): 'Rutland SFRA Update', [online] available to access via [this link](#)

mitigation measures will be implemented in accordance with national planning policy and the SFRA.

- 8.111 Rutland is generally at low risk of surface water flooding, as identified in the SFRA (2020). The preferred sites that overlap those limited areas which are at risk of surface water flooding are not anticipated to lead to significant effects given risk would be reduced through the 'exception test'<sup>25</sup> and higher-level policy requirements. The use of good design principles (i.e. the siting and design of development) will likely mitigate against adverse effects, as will the use of natural drainage systems (including SuDS).
- 8.112 Notably, the preferred sites present an opportunity to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change through providing improvements to green infrastructure networks. This is particularly true of the brownfield sites, which may currently be lacking such infrastructure.
- 8.113 Overall, in the context of wider regional, national and global contributions to and impacts on climate change, the preferred sites are unlikely to represent a significant change in the baseline. As a result, **no significant effects** are anticipated.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

- 8.114 The delivery of 1,182 new dwellings over the plan period (to meet residual needs), and a minimum of 26ha of employment land (including existing commitments and development built since 2021), will increase the built footprint of Rutland, with associated increases in GHG emissions. However, the extent to which this takes place on a per capita basis depends on the implementation of policies designed to limit emissions, which is explored further in the commentary on the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* below.
- 8.115 In terms of climate change mitigation, Policy CC2 (Design Principles for Energy Efficient Buildings) outlines that development proposals should aim to meet the highest possible energy efficiency standards. The policy outlines that planning applications should demonstrate within the Energy Statement how the following principles have influenced the development proposed: solar gain; insulation; passive heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC); the use of renewable energy for heating; and the generation of renewable energy on-site.
- 8.116 With a focus on net zero, Policy CC4 (Net Zero Carbon (Operational)) outlines that all development proposals should provide for the maximum generation of renewable electricity as practically and viably possible on-site. Meanwhile, Policy CC5 (Embodied Carbon) seeks to ensure that embodied carbon associated with new development is reduced, where practical and viable, by choosing materials that are associated with fewer carbon emissions. The policy favours the reuse of existing buildings over their demolition, as this is associated with fewer carbon emissions. Additionally, Policy CC10 (Wider Energy Infrastructure) supports proposals that are necessary for, or form part of, the transition to a net zero carbon sub-region. This could include energy storage facilities and upgraded or new electricity facilities. Such proposals will

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<sup>25</sup> Under the exception test, the developer needs to show that the sustainability benefits of the development to the community outweigh the flood risk.

need to be appropriately located to mitigate any harm they may lead to on the surrounding environment.

- 8.117 Carbon sequestration, which is an important and often overlooked aspect of climate change mitigation, is also considered within the policy framework of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*. For example, Policy CC11 (Carbon Sinks) seeks to protect, and where possible enhance, existing carbon sinks. Meanwhile, Policy CC12 (Carbon Sequestration) supports proposals that demonstrate carbon sequestration through nature-based solutions. Notably, this will have knock-on benefits for biodiversity, the wellbeing of residents and the local landscape. It will also benefit climate change adaptation, as an increase in green infrastructure will help mitigate flooding, by reducing non-permeable surfaces, and manage drought by providing localised cooling.
- 8.118 Continuing the theme of energy efficiency, Policy CC7 (Reducing Energy Consumption in Existing Buildings) highlights that development proposals concerning existing buildings should, where possible, improve the energy efficiency of the building through a submitted Energy Statement. With a focus on renewable energy, Policy CC8 (Renewable Energy) supports proposals for renewable energy schemes, whilst Policy CC9 (Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure) seeks to protect existing or approved renewable energy infrastructure from development.
- 8.119 In terms of climate change adaptation, Policy CC3 (Resilient and Flexible Design) outlines that development proposals should consider, in their design, how they might minimise / prevent overheating, flooding and wind exposure, as well as flexibility to future social, economic, technological, and environmental requirements. With a focus on flooding, Policy CC14 (Flood Risk) states that all major development proposals will be considered against the NPPF, including application of the sequential test and, if necessary, the exception test. The policy outlines that, where appropriate, development proposals should incorporate SuDS.
- 8.120 Adding to the above, Policy EN7 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) requires new development to integrate existing and new GBI through design (i.e. natural drainage solutions). This includes ensuring that the design and layout of new GBI supports climate change adaptation and drought resilience, including through the use of appropriate habitats and drought resilient species. This, combined with the policies outlined above, all contribute positively towards climate change adaptation.
- 8.121 Overall, by providing a thorough consideration of both climate change mitigation and adaptation, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan's* policy framework performs well under this SA theme. Whilst the spatial strategy will inevitably lead to an increase in GHG emissions, the delivery of sites in sustainable locations – combined with the policy framework – should minimise emissions where possible. Due to this, minor **positive significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

## Communities, Health and Wellbeing

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

- 8.122 The preferred sites for housing will deliver a significant number of new homes (including a mix of types, sizes and tenures, with a proportion of affordable

housing) to meet residual housing needs, with the potential for significant positive effects. Delivering the majority of new homes in the main towns of Oakham, Uppingham and the edge of Stamford, in South Kesteven District, will likely deliver a mix of housing to meet local needs in these settlements. Positive effects are anticipated through the delivery of housing (including affordable housing) in the locations with the broadest range of services, facilities and amenities, employment opportunities and public transport networks in the county.

8.123 In addition to the above, delivering a percentage of new homes to the larger villages will also help provide an increased variety of housing for a wider range of social groups, including younger people and those with particular needs. This has the potential to increase community vitality and will contribute towards meeting localised housing needs in these settlements.

8.124 Rutland has low levels of deprivation and based on 2019 data, ranks 303 out of 326 local authorities regarding overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), where 1 is the most deprived. Despite this, pockets of deprivation still exist within the county – but these are masked by wider prosperity. In line with other rural areas, Rutland fares less favourably regarding the 'Barriers to Housing and Services' deprivation domain, ranking 160 out of 326 local authorities.

8.125 Focusing growth at Oakham and Uppingham would therefore lead to positive effects in terms of contributing towards lower levels of deprivation relating to this category, by ensuring residents have suitable access to services and facilities. This is because these settlements are the largest settlements in the county and are therefore the locations with the broadest range of services and facilities and public transport networks. It is, however, also recognised that growth at the larger villages might support local amenities and increase community vitality in these locations.

8.126 Whilst the preferred sites for housing have the potential to place increasing demands on existing services, facilities and amenities, the requirements for developers to support infrastructure and services, for example through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements / payments, means there is potential for new development to support the provision of new and enhanced facilities and services, as well as transport links. This will support accessibility to services and amenities in existing settlements.

8.127 All but one of the preferred sites for housing are within 750m (or walking distance for most people) of either a primary or secondary school. In this respect, development at the preferred sites for housing has a high chance of encouraging travel by active or public transportation to access schools compared to development located further away. The exception is **Whitwell Road South, Empingham**, which is 899m away from a primary or secondary school. It is also worth noting that **Areas 1, 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham** (GT&TS site) are also located further than 750m from a primary or secondary school (3.4km, 3.4km, and 3.2km away from a primary or secondary school, respectively).

8.128 Additionally, all of the preferred sites for housing are within 500m of the nearest Important Open Space. This will benefit the health and wellbeing of residents. However, again, it is worth noting that **Areas 1, 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham** (GT&TS site) are located further than 500m of



the nearest Important Open Space (620km, 769km, and 587km away from the nearest Important Open Space).

8.129 Overall, the preferred sites are likely to bring a broad range of benefits for the vitality of communities given that they would deliver a sustainable level of growth which will support local services and facilities. In addition, they focus growth at the towns and larger villages, where accessibility to services, facilities and amenities is most favourable in the county. Due to this, **significant positive effects** are predicted.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.130 Policy H1 (Sites Proposed for Residential Development) outlines the preferred sites allocated for development, which will deliver a total of 1,182 new dwellings. Policy SS1 (Spatial Strategy for New Development) allocates the total of 2,460 dwellings over the plan period, which includes existing commitments and development built since 2021. This is equivalent to 123 dwellings per annum. Policy SS1 also allocates a minimum of 26ha for employment generating uses. The majority of new development will be focussed within the planned limits of development (PLDs) of Oakham and Uppingham, and on land adjacent to Stamford. Some development will also be permitted in the defined larger villages. In this respect, the spatial strategy performs well by delivering an appropriate level of growth for the county in the most sustainable locations.

8.131 Policy SS2 (Development within Planned Limits of Development) supports proposals within the PLDs where impacts on settlement form, built heritage, character and important open space are considered acceptable. The policy highlights that not all development will be acceptable within the PLDs as proposals will be considered on their own merits with regard to the policies of the Local Plan and any made Neighbourhood Plans.

8.132 Whilst the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* does not allocate the St George's Barrack site for development, it does identify it as a 'Future Opportunity Area'. In light of this, Policy SS4 (Future Opportunity Areas) provides a framework to help ensure any redevelopment of St. George's Barracks is sustainable and holistically planned and is aligned to the spatial strategy set out in the plan. The preparation of a masterplan, with the status of a Development Plan Document, will be required prior to a planning application being submitted. The policy states that redevelopment proposals are not expected to deliver more than 350-500 dwellings as part of a mixed-use development.

8.133 Policy SS5 (Use of Military Bases and Other Secure Residential Establishments for Operational or Other Purposes) supports development required for the continued operation of military bases or prisons. Alongside, Policy SS6 (Re-Use of Redundant Military Bases and Prisons) outlines that any proposal for the re-use or redevelopment of redundant military bases and prisons should be planned and developed in a holistic and co-ordinated manner. Specifically, proposals must be in accordance with an agreed development brief or masterplan setting out the main requirements of the scheme.

8.134 Policy H4 (Meeting all Housing Needs) outlines that development proposals for sites of 10 or more dwellings should provide a range of house types, sizes,

and tenures to meet the general and specialist needs for housing in Rutland as identified in the latest Housing Market Assessment or other up-to-date evidence of local housing need. This includes specialist housing for older people, family homes, and affordable housing. With a focus on affordable housing, Policy H7 (Affordable Housing) outlines that all major residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings (or with a site area of 0.5 hectares or more) will be required to make provision, onsite, for a minimum of 30% of the scheme's total capacity as affordable housing. In the Designated Rural Areas (all parishes outside Oakham and Uppingham), developments of between 6-9 dwellings inclusive will also be required to make affordable housing provision for 30% of the scheme's total capacity. These policies will therefore support the provision of a wide range of types and tenures of housing in Rutland.

- 8.135 The policy framework considers the adaptability of homes through Policy H5 (Accessibility Standards), which outlines that all new dwellings are required to be adaptable and accessible as defined in part M4(2) Category 2 accessible and adaptable dwellings of the Building Regulations, unless, by exception only, where M4(2) is impractical and unachievable.
- 8.136 The needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are considered through Policy H10 (Meeting the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople). The policy seeks to meet the need identified in the latest Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment (GTTSA) over the plan period. This was identified as 16 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 33 plots for Travelling Showpeople.
- 8.137 More broadly, Policy H6 (Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding) outlines that proposals for self and custom build housing, to be occupied as homes by those individuals, will be supported by the Council where they are in conformity with all other relevant local and national policies. Additionally, Policy H8 (Rural Exception Housing) permits small sites for affordable housing, within or adjoining villages as an exception to normal policies of restraint provided that they meet the requirements set out within the policy. Meanwhile, Policy H9 (First Homes Exception Sites) permits small exception sites for first homes within or adjoining Oakham and Uppingham on land not allocated for housing provided that they meet the requirements set out within the policy.
- 8.138 With a focus on design, Policy SC3 (Promoting Good Quality Design) states that development proposals must demonstrate how streets and spaces have been designed to be high quality and attractive; have a clear function; encourage healthy lifestyles, active travel, and social interaction; and include trees and other natural elements such as water. They must also demonstrate how they provide and connect to a range of conveniently located and accessible local services and community facilities and high-quality public spaces to create vibrant communities and places. In doing so, this policy will support high-quality developments that support the health and wellbeing and quality of life of residents.
- 8.139 Adding to the above, Policy SC5 (Designing Safer and Healthier Communities) seeks to ensure development proposals promote, support and enhance physical and mental health and wellbeing, and thus contribute to reducing health inequalities. The policy outlines that major development proposals of 50 or more dwellings, or of 0.5ha or more for other types of

development, should be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to show the impacts of the proposal on criteria set out within the policy.

- 8.140 Policy INF4 (Supporting Community Health & Wellbeing) sets out the Council's plans to work with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Health Board and developers to main and improve facilities which support the health and wellbeing of communities. Under this policy, land is allocated to the **South of Whitwell Road, Empingham** for the development of a new medical centre.
- 8.141 With a focus on green / open spaces, Policy SC7 (Provision of New Open Space) outlines that all new residential developments of 10 dwellings or more will be required to provide new or enhanced publicly accessible open space. Residential development proposals of 300 or more dwellings will also be expected to make provision on-site for outdoor sports facilities. Policy EN9 (Local Green Spaces) protects existing LGS, as identified within adopted Neighbourhood Plans, from development in line with the NPPF. In addition, Policy EN7 (Green and Blue Infrastructure) requires new development to integrate existing and new GBI. This includes ensuring that the design and layout of new GBI encourages healthy and active lifestyles.
- 8.142 More broadly, Policy SC6 (Community Facilities) supports development proposals that protect, retain or enhance the provision, quality or accessibility of existing community, education, leisure, and cultural facilities.
- 8.143 Overall, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well from a community wellbeing perspective. This is given its proposed delivery of an appropriate number of new homes to meet local needs, of a range of types and tenures including affordable homes and specialist housing. These will be delivered in the more sustainable and accessible locations and will support the vitality of the main towns and larger villages in Rutland. The policies also support developments which promote health and wellbeing and quality of life, including through the protection of existing green / open spaces, and the delivery of new spaces through GBI provision on-site. In light of this, **positive significant effects** are anticipated in relation to the SA theme.

## Transportation

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

- 8.144 High car dependency and the rural nature of much of the county, as well as issues relating to public transport provision, mean that car ownership within Rutland is higher than the regional average. Only 10.3% of households in Rutland do not have a car or van, compared to 23.5% nationally (Census 2021). Due to this, the preferred sites have the potential to lead to increases in traffic and congestion.
- 8.145 However, focusing growth in the main towns of Oakham, Uppingham and the edge of Stamford, is likely to better support the use of sustainable transport modes, given residents have good access to local services and facilities in these towns. As noted under the climate change SA theme, the county is served by a rural bus network, a PRow network, and a substantial joint cycleway / footway network. In addition, Oakham has the only railway station in the county. Stamford, which is located just outside of the county in South Kesteven District, also has a railway station on this line. Growth at Oakham

and the edge of Stamford is therefore likely to lead to positive effects by locating people in good proximity to public transport networks, including the rail and bus network. This will promote accessibility by sustainable transport modes.

8.146 Growth is also directed to the larger villages. As noted under the climate change SA theme, these villages have some services and facilities, and all of the preferred sites for housing within the larger villages are within walking distance (<400m) to a bus stop. Whilst some residents will likely opt to travel by car to access services and facilities, where bus services are good, residents will likely utilise them. However, it is noted that **Areas 1, 2 and 3 of Five Counties Extension, Greetham** (GT&TS site) are 1.4km from the nearest bus stop as there is currently no pedestrian crossing over the A1 in proximity to the site. Additionally, **Woolfox Depot, Great North Road** (employment site) is also 3.1km from the nearest bus stop.

8.147 Overall, by delivering a significant proportion of new homes in the main towns, where the broadest range of services and facilities and key nodes to public transport networks are located, the preferred sites perform relatively well. However, **no significant effects** are anticipated at this stage as the quantum of growth is unlikely to lead to significant improvements to existing transport infrastructure, including new public transport or active travel routes. One exception, however, relates to the delivery of **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)**, which, when combined with the proposed allocations associated with the proposals in South Kesteven, is of a size which has the potential to deliver significant new transport infrastructure.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.148 As noted above, car ownership within Rutland is higher than the regional average. Due to this, growth as a result of the implementation of the spatial strategy within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has the potential to lead to increases in traffic and congestion. In addition, with the exception of the Land North of Stamford proposals, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* is unlikely to give rise to significant direct improvements in sustainable transport choices that would offset the increase in car-based trips.

8.149 In response to the above, Policy SC3 (Promoting Good Quality Design) states that development proposals should demonstrate how they have been designed to prioritise and encourage sustainable and active travel modes such as walking, wheeling, cycling and the use of public transport. They should also make provision for sufficient parking and cycle storage, as well as EV charging points in accordance with Policy CC13 (Provision for Electric Vehicle charging and Electric Bike parking), which supports proposals that include EV parking provision that exceeds or improves on the requirements set by Building Regulations. The policy also sets out that appropriate provision should be made for secure and covered bicycle parking suitable for e-bikes.

8.150 Also supporting active travel, as well as public transport provision, Policy INF2 (Securing Sustainable Transport) outlines that new development which will have an impact upon the county's transport network will be expected to (amongst other considerations) a) minimise the distance people need to travel to shops, services and employment opportunities; b) give priority to active travel solutions through the delivery of an integrated walking and cycling network; and

c) make adequate provision (where appropriate) to put in place or improve bus routes, services and passenger facilities.

8.151 Adding to the above, Policy INF3 (Walking and Cycling and Non-Car Based Journeys) outlines that development proposals should facilitate active travel by incorporating appropriate measures within the design and layout of proposals which give priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, people with impaired mobility, and users of public transport. This will be achieved by providing a network of high-quality pedestrian and cycle routes and green corridors, linking to existing routes and PRow, wherever opportunities exist. This will ensure that the needs of active travel and public transport users are considered from the offset, as opposed to retrospectively, with positive effects anticipated.

8.152 More broadly, Policy INF1 (Infrastructure and Connectivity) will ensure that all new development is supported by the provision of necessary infrastructure to meet the needs arising from new development in a timely way. Additionally, Policy SS9 (Conversion of Buildings outside PLDs) outlines that proposals for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside outside the PLD will only be permitted where traffic is not adversely affected. Finally, Policy INF4 (Supporting Community Health & Wellbeing), which allocates land south of Whitwell Road, Empingham to enable the development of a new medical centre, sets out the Council's plans to change the existing Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the existing 40mph speed limit to 30mph along the site frontage. These policies perform well in this respect.

8.153 Overall, whilst the spatial strategy will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of private cars on the roads across Rutland (and to wider destinations), it locates development in the most sustainable locations to help minimise this where possible. In addition, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan's* policy framework supports active travel and public transport, including the connection of these networks to new development. It also supports EV charging infrastructure, which is important due to the rural nature of the county. In light of this, **positive significant effects** are considered likely at this stage.

## Economic Vitality

### Commentary on the spatial strategy within the Pre-Submission Local Plan

8.154 Unemployment in Rutland is low; only 1.9% of people aged 16 years and over are economically inactive and unemployed, compared to 3.5% nationally (Census 2021). In addition, 37.9% of people aged 16 years and over hold a Level 4 qualification or above, compared to 33.9% nationally (Census 2021). In terms of occupation, 18.2% of people aged 16 years and over in employment are managers, directors and senior officials, compared to 12.9% nationally (Census 2021). Hence, Rutland has a highly skilled workforce, which is reflected by the percentage of the population in managerial occupations. It will be important that future growth supports this workforce.

8.155 According to the Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence<sup>26</sup>, the largest employment sectors in Rutland are education (12.2%); public administration and defence (12%); and wholesale and retail (11.6%).

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<sup>26</sup> Icenl Projects Limited on behalf of Rutland County Council (August 2023): 'Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence, [online] available to access via [this link](#)

Rutland has particular strengths in comparison to the region and nationally in the mining and quarrying sector, public administration & defence, agriculture and hospitality (1,900 jobs) sectors. In terms of service sectors, professional, scientific and technical, followed by business administration and support services, have the strongest roles.

8.156 In light of the above, increased growth across the settlement hierarchy should support the economic vitality of settlements; helping ensure residents have suitable access to local employment, services and facilities, and that the service offer expands positively. Oakham is the main service centre for Rutland and offers diverse retail and shopping opportunities. By delivering 8.0% of residual needs in Oakham (alongside the existing commitments and completions), the preferred sites for housing perform favourably by promoting the sustainable growth of this main centre, which has the best accessibility to employment opportunities (both within and outside of the county).

8.157 The spatial strategy also deliver a proportion of homes to the larger villages. Directing growth to these settlements is likely lead to positive effects in relation to economic vitality through supporting local amenities, as well as increasing economic vitality and viability in these locations. Due to the role of the larger villages as centres for the rural economy, the preferred sites also have the potential to support localised economies, including through supporting diversification. It is also recognised that the larger villages where the preferred sites are located are all relatively well located in terms of access to the local bus service (all sites are within 400m of a bus stop).

8.158 Increased growth in the main towns of Oakham and Uppingham, as well as the larger villages, has the potential to support the vitality of local centres and retailing to a greater degree. This has the potential to support the visitor economy through protecting and enhancing key selling points in the county, such as independent shops and restaurants.<sup>27</sup>

8.159 In terms of access to employment, two of the preferred sites for housing are located over 5km from the nearest safeguarded employment site. These are:

- **Land South West of Belmesthorpe Lane, Ryhall** (7.9km from Pit Lane, Ketton)
- **Officer's Mess, Edith Weston** (5.3km from Pit Lane, Ketton)

8.160 Overall, as the preferred sites for employment deliver a moderate level of growth, it is likely to support a boost to the local economy by creating new jobs. As such **positive effects** are considered likely as a result of the level of growth proposed.

### Commentary on the Pre-Submission Local Plan as a whole

8.161 As noted above unemployment in Rutland is low. In addition, more people aged 16 years and over hold a Level 4 qualification or above when compared to the national average. Similarly, more people aged 16 years and over in employment are managers, directors and senior officials when compared to the national average. Hence, Rutland has a highly skilled workforce, which future growth will need to consider.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

8.162 To ensure that the local economy continues to grow and support the county's workforce, Policy E1 (Strategic Employment Land Allocations) proposes six sites as strategic employment development sites within Rutland. These sites are located across Oakham, Uppingham, Ketton, South Luffenham and Woolfox and include a range of uses, such as office and employment spaces and industrial uses. This will support the availability of suitable employment land for a range of uses.

8.163 In terms of windfall development, Policy E2 (Employment Development on Unallocated Sites) supports proposals for employment development within the PLD defined for the towns and larger villages. In addition, work-live units will be supported within the PDL, whilst the conversion and re-use of existing buildings will be supported outside the PLD. The redevelopment and intensification of existing low density, underused, or poor-quality employment sites for higher value employment uses will also be supported, particularly in the town and local service centres. In this respect, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs favourably with regards to encouraging a range of business types and supporting the start-up and expansion of new businesses, including at the micro-scale.

8.164 Strengthening the policy framework, Policy E3 (Protecting Existing Employment Land and Premises) seeks to protect and enhance existing employment sites and premises in order to maintain a supply of good quality commercial sites and premises to meet the needs of businesses and the local economy. This is reinforced by Policy E4 (Rural Economy), which seeks to strengthen the rural economy by supporting certain types of development outside of the towns and larger villages. More broadly, other relevant policies include:

- Policy E5 (Sustainable farm diversification), which permits proposals for new rural enterprises within established agricultural holdings provided that they meet the criteria set out within the policy.
- Policy E7 (Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)), which outlines that all new commercial proposals of 100sqm or over shall be provided with FTTP connections to an approved industry standard within the building together with suitable ducting / cabling to the public highway to allow connections to be made.
- Policy E8 (Local Visitor Economy), which supports proposals which strengthen the local visitor economy providing that they meet the criteria set out within the policy.
- Policy E9 (Caravans, Camping, Lodges, Log Cabins, Chalets and similar forms of Self-Services Holiday Accommodation), which accepts caravans, camping, lodges, log cabins, chalets and other similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation in areas outside the Rutland Water Area and the Eyebrook Reservoir Area, provided that it meets the criteria set out within the policy.

8.165 With a focus on employability and skills, Policy E6 (Employment and Skills) supports development proposals that will help to a) raise skills levels and increase employability; b) tackle skills shortages; c) create high skilled employment opportunities; d) promote construction skills; e) address barriers to

employment for economically inactive people; and f) provide the development of childcare facilities.

8.166 With a focus on retail, Policy E10 (Town Centres and Retailing) supports main town centre uses where they are located in accordance with the retail hierarchy, with Oakham being the main town centre serving the whole county and Uppingham being a town centre serving the town and surrounding rural catchment and tourists. Focusing on the larger villages, Policy E13 (Retail in the Neighbourhood Centres and Larger Villages) supports the expansion and additional provision of local shops of a scale appropriate to the existing settlement or the planned expansion of that settlement. This is providing that the proposal adds to the range and accessibility of goods and services within the location, or it is demonstrated that the proposal will improve the viability of the existing business. More broadly, other relevant policies supporting retail include:

- Policy E11 (Primary Shopping Areas), which supports E(a) retail uses within the Primary Shopping Area. The policy outlines that proposals for non-retail uses in the primary shopping frontages will only be permitted where they meet the criteria set out within the policy.
- Policy E12 (Sites for Retail Development), which seeks to identify suitable site(s) which meet the identified need in Oakham for new retail development proposals for non-food retail – Use Class E(a) at ground floor level with other appropriate town centre / residential uses at upper floors.

8.167 Overall, by providing a suite of policies dedicated to the economy and employment, with a focus on both the need for new and improved employment sites and support for upskilling, the policy framework of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* performs well. As such, **positive significant effects** are predicted at this stage.

## Cumulative effects

8.168 Whilst the geographic scope of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* only addresses the area covered by Rutland, the in-combination effects of new development proposed through the adopted or emerging Local Plans for the Local Planning Authorities adjoining or in close proximity to the county have the potential to lead to cumulative effects. This includes relating to adopted or emerging Local Plan documents for:

- Harborough
- Melton
- South Kesteven
- Peterborough
- East Northamptonshire
- Corby

8.169 As such, the in-combination effects of housing growth across these Local Planning Authority areas (and further afield) have the potential to lead to cumulative effects.



8.170 Furthermore, the combination of Local Plan proposals and other proposals and activities being taken forward in the wider area have the potential to lead to cumulative effects. Examples include:

- Proposed transport schemes in the county, including in Oakham town centre.
- The development of Stamford North (taken forward through the South Kesteven Local Plan) and upgrades to the A1/A606 junction.
- Minerals proposals.
- Proposals to increase visitor numbers to Rutland Water.
- Activities designed to enhance sub-regional green infrastructure networks.
- Melton Mowbray Distributor Road and urban extensions to Melton Mowbray.
- Urban extensions to Corby.
- Enhancements to the railway network in the county to increase capacity for freight, and implications for existing level crossings (including in Oakham).

8.171 In this context, potential effects (both positive and negative) which may occur as a result of the in-combination effects of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* and other plans and proposals in the area include the following:

- Increases in traffic flows and congestion from the in-combination effects of development and capacity enhancements, with potential impacts on air and noise quality and landscape character. However, the in-combination effects of proposals on enhancing public transport and pedestrian and cycle infrastructure may help limit potential negative effects and secure positive effects in this regard.
- Cumulative impacts on ecological networks from the in-combination effects of new development and associated infrastructure on habitats and biodiversity corridors. However, enhancements to green infrastructure provision facilitated through the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* proposals and other projects in the area, as well as an increased focus on biodiversity net gain, have significant potential to support local, sub-regional and regional ecological networks.
- Impacts on regional housing demand from the in-combination effects of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* and other Local Plans in the sub-region not meeting full local housing need.
- Impacts on flood risk from the in-combination effects of new development, including relating to surface water and fluvial flooding. However, the provisions of the NPPF and measures and policy approaches implemented through the relevant plans and proposals will limit the significance of effects.
- Changes in land uses resulting from the UK leaving the European Union, including associated with the replacement of schemes such the Common Agricultural Policy with new agricultural subsidy regimes.
- Improvements to accessibility resulting from the in-combination effects of enhancements to public transport and walking and cycling networks.

- 8.172 Regarding the development at Stamford North development, which is being taken forward through the new South Kesteven Local Plan, Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm), which is allocated through the draft Rutland Local Plan, is dependent on the delivery of this development. In terms of in combination effects of the development at Stamford North with the remaining allocations being taken forward through the draft Rutland Local Plan, it is acknowledged that some of the key areas being taken forward for housing and employment are relatively close to Stamford North. This includes site allocations at settlements in proximity to Stamford, including Empingham and Ryhall. In this respect, there is potential for minor in-combination effects to arise from the development at Stamford North and new development being taken forward through the draft Rutland Local Plan.
- 8.173 In relation to the above, Policy H2 (Cross-boundary development opportunity – Stamford North) recognises the cross-boundary nature of this development by reiterating that a proposal for the development of Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm) will only be supported where it is in accordance with an agreed Masterplan or Development Brief or as part of a comprehensive planning application for the whole of the Stamford North development area. This is expected to include (amongst other things) an appropriate full transport assessment and phasing plan for the entire site. This will help limit the in-combination effects of development at Stamford North and development which takes place elsewhere on traffic and congestion in the area, with associated benefits for air and noise quality and the health and wellbeing of residents.
- 8.174 As highlighted above, for many potential cumulative effects, the policy approaches proposed by the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* will help reduce the significance of these in-combination impacts. However, monitoring for the various Local Plans will be a key means of ensuring that unforeseen adverse environmental effects are highlighted, and remedial action can be taken where adverse environmental effects arise.
- 8.175 No additional mitigation measures or recommendations have been proposed relating to the potential effects identified. This reflects the carefully designed spatial strategy and robust policy framework which are put forward through the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*. In particular, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* will help limit the magnitude and scale of the potential negative environmental effects associated with the delivery of 2,460 dwellings and a minimum of 26ha of employment land over the plan period to 2041.
- 8.176 It should be noted, however, that the policies put forward through the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* do not prevent the likelihood of negative effects taking place, including those highlighted in the SA Report for the proposed site allocations. Instead, they reduce the likelihood of significant negative effects resulting from new development in Rutland. It should also be noted that the delivery of housing allocations and employment provision in the county will require inevitable trade-offs to take place between the various environmental, social and economic elements which have been highlighted through the SA process to date.

## Conclusions and recommendations

### Conclusions

- 8.177 The *Pre-Submission Local Plan* **performs favourably for the Biodiversity and Geodiversity SA theme** by providing appropriate protection to designated sites and habitats and species through its policy framework, whilst also supporting ecological connectivity through green and blue infrastructure improvements. Whilst the spatial strategy locates some growth near designated sites, habitats and species, the policy framework should serve to mitigate any adverse effects that might arise as a result of development. Providing any recommendations within the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) are also incorporated into the policy framework, **no significant effects** are predicted. It is important to recognise that the requirement to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) on sites, embedded by the Environment Act 2021, will also help mitigate potential significant negative effects and facilitate enhancements to ecological networks.
- 8.178 **Uncertainty is noted under the Historic Environment and Landscape SA themes.** This is because it is difficult to predict effects with regard to the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* as impacts on cultural heritage and landscape are largely dependent on the design and layout of development, which is unknown at this stage. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the policy framework seeks to mitigate adverse impacts on heritage assets and landscape character as a result of development.
- 8.179 With respect to the **Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources SA theme**, growth is largely contained within or in proximity to planned limits of development, which will help to safeguard areas of open countryside from inappropriate levels of development during the plan period. The *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has a particular focus on minimising waste and protecting mineral resources, and also seeks to incorporate nature-based solutions through the design of new development areas. Whilst the spatial strategy will inevitably lead to the loss of some BMV agricultural land, this is largely unavoidable due to the limited number of brownfield opportunity sites in Rutland. In light of this, **minor positive significant effects** are predicted at this stage.
- 8.180 Regarding the **Climate Change SA theme**, whilst growth in the county will ultimately lead to an increase in GHG emissions, this is largely unavoidable and when considering the global scale of climate change, relatively insignificant. Moreover, the policy framework seeks to ensure that future development is associated with low embodied carbon emissions and is resilient to the impacts of climate change, such as increasing flooding. In light of this, **minor positive significant effects** are predicted at this stage.
- 8.181 The preferred approach within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* is to direct growth to sustainable locations within Rutland, primarily focused within the planned limits of development (PLD). This approach is likely to deliver growth in locations which have the broadest range of services and facilities, and accessibility to public transport networks. The policy framework also seeks to deliver a suitable mix of housing, including provision for affordable housing and specialist accommodation for key demographics, which will support residents quality of life. Additionally, safeguarding employment sites and identifying additional sites for employment land will help to support the local economy and

local job opportunities. On this basis, **positive significant effects are anticipated with respect to the Communities, Health and Wellbeing SA theme and Economic Vitality SA theme.**

8.182 Delivering a significant proportion of new homes in the main towns will support growth in the most accessible locations in Rutland with respect to public transport networks. The allocation at **Part of Stamford North (Quarry Farm)** for 650 homes is of a size which has the potential to deliver significant new transport infrastructure. In addition, the *Pre-Submission Local Plan's* policy framework supports active travel and public transport, including the connection of these networks to new development. It also supports EV charging infrastructure, which is important due to the rural nature of the county. In light of this, **positive significant effects are considered likely at this stage for the Transportation SA theme.**

### Recommendations

8.183 Whilst no specific recommendations are made at this stage, it is recognised that there is a need for careful monitoring to ensure that development is delivered in line with the policy framework and objectives of the plan.

## **Part 3: What are the next steps?**

## 9. Next steps and monitoring

### Next steps

- 9.1 This SA Report accompanies the *Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19 Publication Version)* document for subsequent examination.
- 9.2 At Examination, the Inspector will consider representations (alongside the SA Report) before then reporting back on the Local Plan's soundness or identifying the need for modifications. If the Inspector identifies the need for modifications to the Local Plan, these will be prepared (and undergo SA) and will then be subject to consultation (with an SA Report Addendum published alongside).
- 9.3 Once found to be 'sound', the Local Plan will be formally adopted by RCC. At the time of adoption, an SA 'Statement' must also be published.

### Monitoring programme

#### Monitoring in SA

- 9.4 The SEA Directive states that *'member states shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes...in order, inter alia, to identify at an early-stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action'* (Article 10.1). In addition, the Environmental Report (or SA Report) should provide information on a *'description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring'* (Annex I (i)). To limit the potential burdens related to monitoring associated with the SA process, monitoring should be undertaken smartly. For this reason, the proposed monitoring framework should focus on those aspects of the environment that are likely to be negatively impacted upon, where the impact is uncertain or where particular opportunities for improvement might arise.

#### Proposed monitoring programme

- 9.5 **Table 9.1** outlines suggestions for a monitoring programme for measuring the Local Plan's implementation in relation to the areas where the SA has identified significant opportunities for an improvement in sustainability performance to arise. It also seeks to monitor where uncertainties relating to the appraisal findings arose and suggests where monitoring is required to help ensure that the benefits of the Local Plan are achieved through the planning process.
- 9.6 The purpose of monitoring is to measure the significant sustainability effects of a plan, as well as to measure success against the plan's objectives. It is therefore beneficial if the monitoring strategy builds on monitoring systems which are already in place. To this end, the indicators of progress chosen for the SA require data that is already being routinely collected at a county level by RCC and its partner organisations, or whose collection is already planned. It should also be noted that monitoring can provide useful information for future plans and programmes, including future reviews of the Local Plan.

**Table 9.1: Proposed monitoring programme for the Rutland Local Plan**

Focus of monitoring	Indicator	Data source	Suggested frequency
Effect of housing, employment and infrastructure on GHG emissions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of new developments meeting the highest possible energy standards and net-zero carbon (Policy CC2, Policy CC3 and Policy CC4).</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Efficient use of land and sustainable use of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage loss of BMV land from new development areas.</li> <li>Percentage of new developments supporting the principles of a circular economy (Policy CC1).</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Effect of housing, employment and infrastructure on the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of new developments accompanied by a Historic Impact Assessment (Policy EN12).</li> <li>Proportion of developments with compensatory measures delivered (e.g., opportunities to enhance heritage assets and their settings).</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Local and strategic green and blue infrastructure provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developments granted planning permission for new green infrastructure assets.</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Population and distribution of key biodiversity species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area, condition, and connectivity of target priority habitats.</li> <li>Population and distribution of priority species.</li> <li>Developments granted planning permission within designated wildlife sites or Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats.</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Protecting and enhancing key sites of biodiversity importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of planning approvals that generated any adverse impacts on sites of acknowledged biodiversity importance.</li> <li>Percentage of major developments generating overall biodiversity enhancement.</li> <li>Hectares of biodiversity habitat delivered through strategic site allocations.</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developments granted planning permission contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3.</li> <li>Proportion of new developments which incorporate nature-based solutions through the design of the scheme.</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual
Affordable housing delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of affordable dwellings completed (net), broken down by tenure and type of site.</li> </ul>	RCC	Annual

## 10. Appendices



# Appendix A - Regulatory requirements

As discussed in **Chapter 1** of the main report, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the SA Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. **Tables A, B and C** link the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2 requirements and explains this interpretation.

**Table A: Questions answered by the SA Report, in accordance with an interpretation of regulatory requirements**

Report section	Questions answered	Regulatory requirement met
<b>Introduction</b>	What is the plan seeking to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.</li> </ul>
	What is the scope of the SA?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level.</li> <li>Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance.</li> <li>Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan.</li> <li>The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.</li> <li>Key environmental problems/ issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e., provide a 'framework' for) assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Part 1</b>	What has plan-making/ SA involved up to this point?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach).</li> <li>The likely significant effects associated with alternatives.</li> <li>Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives assessment/ a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Part 2</b>	What are the SA findings at this current stage?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely significant effects associated with the Plan.</li> <li>The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the Plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Part 3</b>	What happens next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A description of the monitoring measures envisaged.</li> </ul>

**Table B: Questions answered by the SA Report, in accordance with regulatory requirements**

<u>Schedule 2</u>	<u>Interpretation of Schedule 2</u>	
<i>The report must include...</i>	<i>The report must include...</i>	
1. an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	i.e. answer - <i>What's the plan seeking to achieve?</i>
2. the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i>
3. the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected;	The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level	
4. any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC;	The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan'	i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i>
5. the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	
6. the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors;	Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance	i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues &amp; objectives?</i>
7. the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan;	Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal	
8. an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach')	i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> [Part 1 of the Report]
9. a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.	The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan.	
	The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan	i.e. answer - <i>What are the assessment findings at this current stage?</i> [Part 2 of the Report]
	The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan	
	A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring	i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> [Part 3 of the Report]

**Table C: ‘Checklist’ of how (throughout the SA process) and where regulatory requirements are or will be met**

Regulatory requirement	Discussion of how the requirement is met
Schedule 2 requirements:	
1. An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.	Chapter 1 ( <i>‘Rutland Local Plan vision and objectives’</i> ) presents this information and an overview of the contents of the plan is provided in Chapter 8. The relationship with other plans and programmes is also set out in the SA Scoping Report (2022).
2. The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.	These matters were considered in detail at the scoping stage, which included consultation on a Scoping Report published in 2022. The outcome of scoping was an ‘SA Framework’, and this is presented within Chapter 2 ( <i>‘The Scope of the SA’</i> ).
3. The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected.	
4. Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC.	
5. The environmental protection objectives established at international, national, or community level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.	The Scoping Report (2022) presents a detailed context review and explains how key messages from the context review (and baseline review) were then refined to establish an ‘SA framework’. The context review informed the development of the SA framework and topics, presented in Chapter 2, which provide a methodological ‘framework’ for appraisal. With regard to explaining “how... considerations have been taken into account” - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6 explains how reasonable alternatives were established in-light of available evidence.</li> <li>• Chapter 6 also sets out the detailed appraisal of growth strategy options.</li> <li>• Chapter 7 explains the Council’s ‘reasons for supporting the preferred approach’, i.e., explains how/ why the preferred approach is justified in-light of alternatives appraisal (and other factors).</li> <li>• Chapter 8 sets out the findings of the appraisal of the <i>Pre-Submission Local Plan</i> and provides a summary of the findings and any recommendations.</li> </ul>
6. The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape, and the interrelationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6 explains how reasonable alternatives were established in-light of available evidence.</li> <li>• Chapter 6 also sets out the detailed appraisal of growth strategy options.</li> <li>• Chapter 8 sets out the likely significant effects of the <i>Pre-Submission Local Plan</i> on the environment, and provides a summary of the findings and any recommendations.</li> </ul>

## Regulatory requirement

## Discussion of how the requirement is met

between the above factors. (Footnote: these effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short-, medium-, and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects).

As explained within the various methodology sections, as part of appraisal work, consideration has been given to the SA scope, and the need to consider the potential for various effect characteristics/ dimensions.

7. The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce, and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme.

Where necessary, mitigation measures are identified within the alternatives appraisal (in Chapter 6) and appraisal of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (in Chapter 8).

8. An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 6 deal with '*reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with*', in that there is an explanation of the reasons for focusing on particular issues/ options.

Also, Chapter 7 explains the Council's '*reasons for selecting the preferred option*' (in light of alternatives appraisal). Methodology is discussed at various places, ahead of presenting appraisal findings, and limitations/ assumptions are also discussed as part of appraisal narratives.

9. A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10.

Suggested monitoring measures are detailed in Chapter 9. It is also anticipated that monitoring measures will be detailed in the SA Adoption Statement.

10. A Non-Technical Summary of the information provided under the above headings.

A Non-Technical Summary (NTS) is provided separately.

The SA Report must be published alongside the Draft Plan, in accordance with the following regulations: Authorities with environmental responsibility and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the Draft Plan or programme and the accompanying IIA Report before the adoption of the plan or programme (Art. 6.1 and 6.2).

At the current time, this SA Report is being published alongside the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (Regulation 19 Publication Version).

The SA Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the Plan. The SA Report prepared pursuant to Article 5, the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6, and the results of any transboundary consultations entered into pursuant to Article 7, shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan or programme and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.

The Council will take into account this SA Report and consultation responses when preparing the Local Plan for submission.

# Appendix B - SA Scoping Responses

## Table D: Summary of scoping responses

Consultation Response	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
<b>Historic England</b>	
<i>Response received from Historic Environment Planning Adviser on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2022</i>	
<p><b>General Comments</b></p> <p>Historic England strongly advises that the conservation team of your authority and your archaeological advisors are closely involved throughout the preparation of the SEA/SA of the Rutland Local Plan. They are best placed to advise on; local historic environment issues and priorities, including access to data held in the HER; how the policy or proposal can be tailored to minimise potential adverse impacts on the historic environment; the nature and design of any required mitigation measures; and opportunities for securing wider benefits for the future conservation and management of heritage assets.</p> <p>To assist with your preparation of the SA in relation to the assessment of effects upon the historic environment we refer you to Historic England’s Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment, 2016 (HEAN8): Historic England Advice Note 8: Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>	<p>The consideration of likely significant effects to both designated and non-designated assets has been considered through the SA.</p> <p>The recommended guidance notes have been essential sources of reference throughout the SA process.</p>
<p><b>SA Themes – Table 1.2</b></p> <p>Historic England welcomes the identification of the Historic Environment as a distinct SA theme (SA theme 3), and the inclusion of non-designated and locally important heritage assets within this theme. However, we also consider that opportunities for enhancement to the historic environment and threats from impacts upon heritage assets, including those at risk, should be referenced here, especially as these are mentioned later within the document.</p> <p>In addition, we welcome in inclusion of SA theme 2: Landscape but consider that better linkages could be made to the historic environment theme, especially with regard to landscape, townscape and villagescape character.</p>	<p>The links between heritage and landscape / townscape character have been explored within the appraisal sections (Chapters 3, 6, and 8) within the SA Report – particularly with respect to the relationship between the natural and built-environment, and the potential for green and blue infrastructure to positively contribute (and enhance) the historic environment and landscape / townscape character.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 4: Historic Environment</b></p> <p><b>Policy Context –</b></p> <p>Table 4.1 ‘Plans, policies and strategies reviewed in relation to the Historic Environment SA theme’ sets out a comprehensive list and we are pleased to see specific reference to Historic England’s guidance and advice notes in para.4.7. One recent publication is Historic England’s Climate Change Strategy, March 2022, which we also suggest referencing. This can be accessed via the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/features/climate-change/our-strategy/">https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/features/climate-change/our-strategy/</a></p>	<p>The recommended advice notes have been useful reference sources throughout the SA process, particularly with respect to the consideration of likely significant effects to the historic environment associated with the policies and proposals in the <i>Pre-Submission Local Plan</i>.</p>

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

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### Summary of Current Baseline –

We are pleased to see that this baseline presents a comprehensive background into the designated and non-designated heritage assets of the Plan area, and also encompasses heritage at risk.

### Summary of Future Baseline –

We welcome reference to the design and layout of new development offering opportunities to enhance the historic setting of settlements, support landscape character and better reveal the significance of heritage assets. However, we suggest that in some cases the wording could be amended to better reflect that of the NPPF, such as 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets' (NPPF para.190) and 'enhance or better reveal' the significance of the setting of heritage assets and Conservation Areas (NPPF para.206).

Historic England also welcomes the recognition given in the SA Scoping document that the new Local Plan has the potential to establish cross-cutting provisions relating to development, particularly with regard to the functionality of open spaces and landscape connectivity.

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### Chapter 4: Historic Environment

#### Key Sustainability Issues –

We consider that a thorough range of key sustainability issues in relation to the historic environment have been identified and are pleased to see heritage at risk and the absence of Conservation Area appraisals and management plans for many of the County's Conservation Areas identified as such.

Historic England also considers that other sustainability issues should be included here, such as improving the energy efficiency of historic buildings and taking into account their embodied carbon value when considering the retention and re-use, versus their replacement.

#### SA Objectives and Appraisal Questions

Historic England welcomes SA Objective 6: "To conserve and enhance Rutland's Historic environment, including designated and non-designated heritage assets' and the four appraisal questions identified. However, we suggest adding 'and their settings' after 'assets' in the objective and amending the wording of d) from 'protect' to 'conserve'.

We are also pleased to see the inclusion of SA objective 8: "To promote opportunities for enhancing the understanding of Rutland's distinct historic environment". However, we suggest adding some further decision-making criteria to reflect all of the Key Sustainability Issues identified under this theme, as well as wider sustainability issues regarding the historic environment, such as:

The recommendations have been considered and the SA Framework updated as appropriate.

The Pre-Submission Local Plan includes a policy which encourages Heritage Impact Assessments to accompany proposals. It is anticipated that these assessments will incorporate further detail with respect to the heritage significance of any features/assets/areas (on site, or within the setting of the site), alongside recommended mitigation and enhancement measures to support the integrity and resilience of the historic environment.

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

- “Will it tackle heritage at risk?”
- “Will it improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings?”
- “Will it re-use/retain historic buildings or fabric?”

### Chapter 6: Climate Change

Historic England welcomes SA Objectives 12 and 13 and would also like to stress that we recognise that the historic environment sector has a role to play in tackling the climate crisis, through mitigation, adaptation and communication.

Historic England has a wealth of technical guidance on this subject which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/advice/technical-conservation-guidance-and-research-brochure-pdf/>

The recommended guidance notes have been essential sources of reference throughout the SA process.

In addition to the above comments, Historic England are concerned that it is not clear from the document as to how impacts will be evaluated, as there is no framework, or mechanism, for assessment included.

The document does not therefore set out how policies or site allocations will be assessed or provide detailed information about how potential significant effects will be identified (both positive and negative); for example, using professional judgement and reference to evidence base documents.

We strongly recommend that this is included within a revised SA Scoping document.

The SA Framework of objective and assessment questions (see Chapter 2) provides a way in which the sustainability effects of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* and alternatives can be identified and subsequently analysed based on a structured and consistent approach.

Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 within the SA Report presents the likely significant effects of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* on the historic environment.

## Environment Agency

*Response received from Planning Specialist on April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022*

### Introduction

The document is clearly set out explaining the purpose of the SA Scoping Report in line with key legislation and policy requirements. We note that paragraph 1.16 explains that the SA themes included in table 1.2 incorporate the ‘SEA topics’.

We suggest that the table includes an additional column to clearly show the relevant SEA topic in relation to each SA theme.

We suggest that specific reference should be made to the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). The outcome of that assessment may provide information which will be relevant to the assessment of options through the SA/SEA.

Comments noted.

The SA has reflected on the findings of the HRA within the appraisal of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (Chapter 8). The HRA includes recommendations for plan makers, which have been incorporated into the Plan.

### Section 2 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

We welcome the information included on biodiversity and habitat retention. Where applicable, we recommend

The extent to which the policies and proposals within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* seek to enhance the provision of, and access to, open spaces and green and blue infrastructure has been a

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

consideration to other local policies, plans or strategies such as those related to green and blue infrastructure networks.

key consideration through the SA process (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 of this SA Report).

### Section 5 Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

#### Policy context

We suggest that the additional plans and programmes listed below should be considered by the SA and during the preparation of the Rutland Plan:

- The Environment Act 2021
- Water Abstraction Plan (Defra, 2021)
- Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England (2018)
- Meeting our Future Water Needs: A National Framework for Water Resources (Environment Agency, 2020)
- Draft Drought Plan 2022 (Anglian Water, March 2021)
- Land contamination risk management (Environment Agency, 2021)
- Relevant abstraction licensing strategies, Abstraction licensing strategies (CAMS process) - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))
- South Holland, South Kesteven and Rutland Outline Water Cycle Study, Technical Report and Planning Summary Report, Final January 2011
- The latest Infrastructure Delivery Plans

We note that the Water Framework Directive has been included in paragraph 5.2 and Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) has been included in paragraph 5.29. We suggest that these are also included in the list of documents in Table 5.1.

In addition, Water Cycle Studies and Infrastructure Delivery Plans help provide an understanding of what infrastructure is needed for the plan period to support the delivery of sustainable growth. The current Water Cycle Study (2011) only covers the period up to 2026. We recommend this is updated to reflect the new plan period proposed for the Rutland plan, that covers the period up until 2041.

The recommended guidance notes, plans and programmes have been essential sources of reference throughout the SA process.

Rutland County Council have been updating their evidence base to inform the development of the Local Plan. It is recognised that the evidence base continually evolves to reflect emerging policy drivers at both the national and local level. The SA has considered the most up-to-date evidence (where possible) to inform its assessment findings.

### Section 5 Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

#### Water Resources

We are pleased that the scoping report recognises that water resources in the Rutland area are limited. We can confirm that the local authority is a serious water stressed area: Water stressed areas – 2021 classification - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

The SA should take this into account when evaluating policy options and site allocations with a view of minimising the demand on water resources where possible. For example, we would recommend that the plan should require new dwellings

The potential impacts to water resources associated with the policies and proposals within the Pre-Submission Local Plan has been a key consideration through the SA, presented through the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6 of this Report) and appraisal of the plan (Chapter 8 of this Report).



## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in building regulations part G2. This standard would help minimise the risk of shortages as a possible effect of climate change.

We therefore suggest that water supply is adequately addressed in the baseline information and key sustainability issues. We recommend additional appraisal questions are considered for objective 11 to ensure the Plan addresses water resource matters effectively, to ensure the growth strategy in the plan will not negatively impact water resources, for example:

- ‘Increase the resilience of Rutland’s water resources to consider the potential implications of climate change on water supply?’
- ‘Support enhancements to green and blue infrastructure to support water supply and provide wider environmental benefits?’

### Section 5 Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources

#### Water Resources

We support the inclusion of Tables 5.2 and 5.3 which highlight the ecological and chemical water quality status of waterbodies covering Rutland. We also agree with the reference to the data catchment explorer and the draft river basin management plan interactive mapping tool in paragraph 5.28, which will be explored in subsequent phases of the SA process. We suggest that the main reasons for the water management issues and why the waterbodies are not currently at good status is set out in the baseline information. Please see the challenges tables on the data catchment explorer.

We welcome the inclusion of the Water Companies Water Resources Management Plans in the policy context. In addition, we recommend that the Water Companies' Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans are also included in the policy context to be considered in the SA. These plans focus on the water quality aspects and may indicate if there are sewage capacity shortfalls.

The NPPF sets out that strategic policies should set out the overall strategy and make sufficient provision for infrastructure, including water supply and wastewater. We do not consider wastewater infrastructure to be appropriately considered in this report.

Firstly, we agree that future development has the potential to affect water quality through diffuse pollution, wastewater discharges, water run-off, and modifications, which is set out in paragraphs 5.35 of the report. However, the report does not sufficiently consider the severity of the potential risk. We advise that future development has a very high potential to affect water quality in the Rutland area. In addition, paragraph

The potential impacts to water resources associated with the policies and proposals within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has been a key consideration through the SA, presented through the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6 of this Report) and appraisal of the plan (Chapter 8 of this Report).

The *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (see Chapter 11: Infrastructure and Delivery) provides a policy framework to ensure that new development areas are appropriately served by key infrastructure (including with respect to water supply and wastewater).

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

5.35 states that 'water companies are likely to maintain adequate water supply and wastewater management over the plan period...'. We do consider it appropriate for the SA and the new Local Plan to assume that water companies will maintain adequate wastewater management over the plan period to accommodate any future growth. To ensure that growth can occur without a deterioration in the water quality of the area, it is important for the LPA to liaise with the water companies to ensure they have suitable measures planned, and to gain assurance that these measures will be in place, in time to deal with any increased flows from any future developments included in the new local plan. The report does not refer to existing or future capacity of water recycling infrastructure to meet the needs of both new development and existing commitments. This information is important to ensure planned growth is sustainable considering the future demand without causing negative impacts to the environment.

Whilst we acknowledge that water resources has its own subsection and SA objective in the report, which includes water quality, drainage, wastewater treatment and pollution, we suggest that water quality aspects receive their own dedicated subsection and SA objective to ensure they are adequately addressed in the SA and plan-making process.

### Contaminated land and remediation

A high priority is placed on protecting groundwater within principal aquifers and groundwater catchments used for drinking water supply, especially for minerals and waste or other potentially polluting developments.

The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection sets out our position on a range of activities and developments that should be considered for future policies and allocations: The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)).

We recommend reference is made to sustainable remediation in the baseline data and in objective 10 'Ensure the efficient and effective use of land'. More information is available at [www.claire.co.uk/projects-and-initiatives/surf-uk](http://www.claire.co.uk/projects-and-initiatives/surf-uk), including the National Quality Mark Scheme.

The recommended reference has been incorporated into the SA Framework (assessment question 'C').

The potential impacts to water resources (including groundwater resources) associated with the policies and proposals within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* has been a key consideration through the SA, presented through the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6 of this Report) and appraisal of the plan (Chapter 8 of this Report).

### Minerals and Waste

The report recognises the Government's 25-year plan to tackle the growing problems of waste and pollution and highlights the National Planning Policy for Waste which will ensure a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use and management.

However, we note there is no baseline information or objectives relating to waste in the report which should be considered in the SA process. Any proposed waste facilities must have regard to other spatial planning concerns such as the use of sustainable materials, circular economies and the placement of sites in regard to potential amenity concerns.

No specific sites for waste management use have been identified within the *Pre-Submission Local Plan*.

Policies WST1 and WST2 enable sites to come forward where they are in line with relevant Local Plan policies. The *Pre-Submission Local Plan* highlights that the waste management industry is becoming more flexible and therefore identifying specific sites required throughout the plan period may be

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

### Section 6 - Climate change

#### Policy context

The scoping report includes key documents to shape the SA process. We suggest consideration is given to the following national plans, policy, and programmes:

- Planning and Energy Act 2008
- Flood Risk Regulations 2009
- UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (Committee on Climate Change, 2022)
- The Glasgow Climate Pact – Key outcomes from COP26 (UN, 2021)

National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy (Environment Agency, 2020)

- Land use: Reducing emissions and preparing for climate change (Committee on Climate Change, 2018)
- British Energy Security Strategy (HM Government, April 2022)

In addition, we suggest including the latest Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Studies (please see comment in response to Section 5 above). We note that the SFRA for Rutland was published in 2009, and that an update was prepared in April 2020 covering the period 2018 to 2036 for the former plan period (referenced in paragraph 6.26 of the scoping report). It is recommended that the SFRA is updated to reflect the new local Plan which is proposed to cover the period up until 2041, to inform the SA of the Local Plan and the site allocations and policies as the Plan evolves.

seen as too rigid and may not reflect advancements in waste management technologies and changes in industry interest.

The recommended guidance notes, plans and programmes have been essential sources of reference throughout the SA process.

Rutland County Council have been updating their evidence base to inform the development of the Local Plan (including the SFRA).

The SA has considered the most up-to-date evidence (where possible) to inform its assessment findings.

### Section 6 - Climate change

#### Flood Risk

In general, we are happy with the points that have been raised regarding flood risk in the report. However, we suggest that flood risk should be included within the Land and Water section, as well as within the Climate Change section. It is important to differentiate between the current risks and the appropriate land use for development, as well as setting out an approach to tackle flood risk which would result as an impact of climate change. Further information is set out below to clarify what information we would suggest in each section.

#### Flood risk within Climate Change

This is about making our current properties and businesses resilient to the future impacts of climate change from both

The potential flood risks associated with climate change and within land, soil and water have been explored through the SA process, particularly through the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6) and appraisal of the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* (Chapter 8).

Opportunities to deliver nature-based solutions through design to tackle flood risk issues (e.g., green and blue infrastructure, open spaces, sustainable drainage) is a

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

surface water and fluvial flood risk, which has been suitably referenced within this report. Additional data is also available on climate change allowances for peak river flows in England by river basin districts.

key focus within the Local Plan's policy framework.

### Flood risk within Land and Water

This is about protecting areas which are known to store water where there is flooding or known flood risk and to identify opportunities available to create open spaces which will help to reduce flood risk and provide other benefits including biodiversity improvements. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the overarching approach to steer new development towards areas with the lowest probability of flooding, as well as drawing in information from the SFRA and previous Local Plan. We suggest this could be included in the SA objective to 'Ensure the efficient and effective use of land'.

### General comments

The baseline information helpfully provides key information for each topic area. We suggest that in some cases it would be helpful to set out the current threats or concerns where possible, to link to the key sustainability issues and SA objectives. For example, in the biodiversity section, an overview of the condition of the 19 SSSIs would be useful to highlight whether any of the sites are in decline or in unfavourable conditions to ensure this can be effectively addressed in the Plan.

The SA Framework includes the following objective within the 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity' theme: *Support the integrity of internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites*

It is expected that proposals will deliver net gains for nature in line with national policy drivers, which will directly and indirectly support the condition of designated sites (e.g., by expanding ecological networks within the plan area).

### Green Infrastructure

We welcome the reference to Green Infrastructure throughout the report, including sections on climate change, biodiversity, landscape and communities, health and wellbeing. We are pleased that in the communities, health and wellbeing section, it has been referred to as 'green and blue infrastructure'.

It is important that reference to green infrastructure clearly includes blue infrastructure to ensure the approach taken in the Plan contributes to securing healthy water-based environments which will help achieve multiple benefits, including a diverse network of habitats which can support more species.

The extent to which the policies and proposals within the Pre-Submission Local Plan encourage green and blue infrastructure enhancements has been a key consideration through the SA process. Particularly within the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6) and appraisal of the plan (Chapter 8).

## Natural England

*Response received from Lead Adviser on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022*

### Policy Context

Natural England have not reviewed all of the plans listed; however, it appears that the policy context is generally suitable. We would like to specifically draw your attention to the following information which may be relevant to:

The recommended guidance notes, plans and programmes have been essential sources of reference throughout the SA process.

## Consultation Response

## How the Response was Considered and Addressed

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### Section 6: Climate Change

- NE, EA and FC shared vision to use nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency (2020)
- NE and RSPB Climate Change Adaptation Manual (2020)
- Natural England's climate change risk assessment and adaptation plan (2021)

### Section 7: Communities, Health and Wellbeing

- Natural England have recently produced Green Infrastructure Principles that underpin the GI Framework. The principles are intended to provide a baseline for different organisations to develop stronger green infrastructure policy and delivery.

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### Baseline Information

Natural England generally agree that the data within the Summary of Current Baseline Information is factually correct, relevant, and suitable for the plan.

We would like to draw your attention to the recently completed condition assessment for Rutland Water SSSI, carried out in March 2021, which is not referenced within the Baseline information. Please find the condition assessment attached to the email containing this letter.

Please also see attached our general advice on sources of local plan evidence on the natural environment.

The condition assessment has been a useful evidence source for the SA.

Potential impacts to European and nationally designated sites associated with the policies and proposals in the *Pre-Submission Local Plan* have been assessed in Chapter 8 of this SA Report.

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### Key Sustainability Issues

Generally, we agree with all of the key sustainability issues described within the Scoping document. We would advise a few additional Key Sustainability Issues:

- **Section 5: Air, Land, Soil and Water Resources:** Air quality impacts from agriculture. 88% of ammonia emissions come from agriculture; ammonia can lead to significant environmental impacts via contributing to nitrogen deposition and eutrophication.

- **Section 6: Climate Change:** One of the Key Sustainability Issues in Paragraph 6.27 states 'The new Local Plan should seek to maximise opportunities to support actions in tackling climate change. This may include through encouraging sustainable transport technologies, such as the use of electric vehicles, and through the use of sustainable drainage systems'. We suggest the wording of this could be broadened to reference a focus on Nature Based Solutions, as opposed to simply referencing SuDS.

Natural England is keen to promote nature-based solutions for climate change, particularly through the implementation of local plan policies. These measures include the installation of green roofs and walls in new buildings; the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) and wetlands; planting of street trees; habitat creation and enhancement to

The recommendations have been considered and the SA Framework updated (where appropriate).

Opportunities to deliver nature-based solutions through design to tackle climate change impacts (e.g., green and blue infrastructure, open spaces, sustainable drainage) is a key focus within the Local Plan's policy framework.

## Consultation Response

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providing increased connectivity between fragmented areas of habitat to build up resilience to climate change and contribute to the Nature Recovery Network.

### Sustainability Objectives and Appraisal Questions

Natural England would like to suggest the following amendments/additions to the Sustainability Objectives and accompanying Appraisal Questions:

#### Section 2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity:

- We welcome the wording of SA Objective 2, to protect and enhance habitats and species in Rutland, but would suggest that SA objective 1 should also refer to enhancing designated sites, as well as protecting their integrity.

- We suggest alteration of the wording of Appraisal Question 2 c) to reference contributing to the wider Nature Recovery Network, a major commitment in the Government's 25-year environment plan. I.e., 'Protect and enhance ecological networks and contribute to the wider Nature Recovery Network'.

#### Section 6: Climate Change:

- Appraisal Question 13 b) could also be altered to refer to the Nature Recovery Network.

- Sustainability Objectives 12 and 13 could benefit from an Appraisal Question regarding Nature Based Solutions. For example, a question asking if the option/proposal will contribute to Nature Based Solutions to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.

#### Section 7: Communities, Health and Wellbeing:

- We would like to particularly welcome the inclusion of SA17, and Appraisal questions 17 c) and d), regarding improving health and wellbeing of residents via access to open space and the countryside.

#### Section 8: Transport:

- We suggest it may be advantageous to have an Appraisal question in the transport section specifically referencing improving access to, knowledge of, and enhancement of Public Rights of Way.

### Monitoring of the Plan

We note that Section 7 includes paragraph 7.29, regarding Health and Wellbeing Indicators, however, few specific monitoring indicators have been identified to allow assessment of the remainder of the plan performance against the SA objectives.

As set out in Planning Practice Guidance, you should be monitoring the significant environmental effects of implementing the current local plan. This should include

The recommendations have been considered and the SA Framework updated (where appropriate).

It is expected that proposals will deliver net gains for nature in line with national policy drivers, which will directly and indirectly support the condition of designated sites (e.g., by expanding ecological networks within the plan area and contributing to the wider Nature Recovery Network).

The extent to which the policies and proposals within the Pre-Submission Local Plan encourage nature-based solutions (e.g., green and blue infrastructure, open spaces, sustainable drainage) has also been a key consideration through the SA process. Particularly within the assessment of reasonable alternatives (Chapter 6) and appraisal of the plan (Chapter 8).

A proposed monitoring programme for the Rutland Local Plan is outlined in Chapter 9 within this SA Report.

The effectiveness of the policies and proposals in this Local Plan will be monitored by Rutland County Council using appropriate indicators and targets. The Council has developed a framework for

## Consultation Response

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indicators for monitoring the effects of the plan on biodiversity. It is important that any monitoring indicators relate to the effects of the plan itself, not wider changes. Bespoke indicators should be chosen relating to the outcomes of development management decisions.

monitoring the Local Plan that can assess the extent to which the strategy, vision and strategic objectives and policies and proposals are being achieved.

Whilst it is not Natural England's role to prescribe what indicators should be adopted, the following indicators may be appropriate:

- Number of planning approvals that generated any adverse impacts on sites of acknowledged biodiversity importance.
  - Percentage of major developments generating overall biodiversity enhancement.
  - Hectares of biodiversity habitat delivered through strategic site allocations.
  - Number of planning approvals incorporating SuDS/other Nature Based Solutions
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