

Chapter 7 - Economy

The Local Plan aims to meet the objectives of the Council’s emerging Economic Strategy to deliver strong and sustainable local economic growth in Rutland.

The Local Plan seeks to ensure that there is sufficient employment land available in the right places, provide support to the rural economy, the visitor economy and the town centres to ensure that they remain vibrant. Each of these strands contribute to a strong and growing economy. The plan also aims to provide flexibility and choice to the market, capitalising on the strengths and opportunities in Rutland.

The Local Plan provides a key role in supporting a sustainable local economy, setting criteria and identifying sites for local and inward investment to match the long-term objectives and priorities of the Economic Strategy for Rutland (2023) and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period.

This Local Plan is both aspirational and realistic in supporting job creation and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable local economic growth.

Sites for Employment

What will these policies do?

The Local Plan should ensure that a sufficient quantity of land is available for employment generating uses and development in Rutland throughout the plan period.

Policy E1 shows the strategic employment land allocations and their gross areas. The actual floorspace and employment capacity of each site will need to be determined as development proposals are worked up in detail. Local environmental constraints, the eventual use class of occupiers and design issues will be important determinants for each site.

St George’s Barracks is proposed as an Opportunity Area (policy SS5) within this Local Plan. This site may deliver new employment premises and uses in the future; however, the site is not included within the employment land allocations below.

Policy E1 – Strategic employment land allocations

The following sites are proposed as strategic employment development sites. The employment generating use(s) considered most appropriate for each site is indicated, together with the gross site area. Sites areas are also shown on the Policies Map

Car Park 3 Rutland Showground, Oakham	High Quality office and Employment	3.0ha
Uppingham Gate, Uppingham	Range of employment uses	6.8ha
Land North East of Pit Lane, North of Forest Park Industrial Estate, Ketton	Light Industrial and warehousing	3.7ha
Land North East of Pit Lane- East of Chater Business Estate, Ketton	Employment Industrial	4.3ha

Burley Appliances Ltd, Oakham	Industrial	1.0ha
Land at Pit Lane Ketton	Light industrial uses	0.9ha
Land at Home Farm, Tickencote	Suitable for B8	19.4ha
Land off Glaston Rd, Morcott	Employment light industrial and small-scale logistics	1.8ha

Permission may also be granted for other employment generating uses on these sites where the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1) the proposed use will generate new employment opportunities and will achieve economic investment and growth of the County;
- 2) it is demonstrated that the proposed scheme will make a significant contribution to the local economy through the generation of a range of additional jobs;
- 3) the alternative use would not have a detrimental impact on the overall supply and quality of employment land within the County;
- 4) an end user for the proposed development has been positively identified; and/or
- 5) it is demonstrated that the proposed scheme will create significant employment requiring NVQ level 4 or above and/or apprenticeships leading to NVQ level 5 and above.

Policy E2 – Employment development on unallocated sites

In addition to the sites allocated in Policy E1, support will be given to proposals for:

- a) new office development within the defined town centres where it is appropriate to the scale and role of the centres;
- b) new employment development proposals within the planned limits of development defined for the towns and Larger Villages, which are of a scale, use and nature appropriate to their location;
- c) work-live units will be acceptable within defined settlements and as conversion and re-use of existing buildings outside Planned Limits of Development, where they are managed by an organisation committed to their use primarily for employment, as evidenced by a management plan and subject to them remaining in employment use in perpetuity. Loss of work-live units to residential will be resisted; and
- d) the redevelopment and intensification of existing low density, underused or poor-quality employment sites for higher value employment uses, particularly in the towns and local services centres.

Why are these policies needed?

National planning policy aims to ensure that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth, and build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in

the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity. Planning policies should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and which enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.

Employment is important for people's health and well-being and is an essential element of sustainable development. The creation of new, higher skilled jobs is central to this Plan and the Council with its partners will support employment land brought forward on a scale and in locations consistent with these policies.

The Rutland Economic Strategy (2023) establishes a framework with long-term objectives and priorities and offers a robust economic rationale to underpin future investment and delivery from now to 2040. It also seeks to take account of the aims of national guidance by ensuring that well located, good quality employment land which is attractive to businesses is allocated in appropriate, accessible and sustainable locations.

The central vision for the Council's Economic Growth Strategy is to harness the characteristics of the area to build the modern rural economy, with a productive, sustainable, and diverse business base.

To achieve this vision, four objectives form the basis of the Council's strategy:

- 1) New technologies and market industries
 - clusters of technology driven service sectors
 - green industry & agriculture
 - creating high value jobs
- 2) Productive local businesses
 - resilient businesses growing across the County, benefiting from regional supply chains and collaboration, offering good quality local work
- 3) Skilled workers in quality local jobs
 - a highly skilled workforce to meet current and future employer needs
- 4) Thriving places and communities.
 - diverse towns power local economy with successful high streets, employment centres and rural areas

In order to ensure sustainable growth of the local economy there is a need for the County to succeed in retaining, growing and attracting new jobs and securing inward investment. The Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence (July 2023) assesses the economic outlook for Rutland and translates that into suitable recommendations on employment land demand and supply. It provides an evidence base and platform for allocations and plan policy making.

When considering the scale of future needs the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2021) requires consideration of:

- sectoral and employment forecasts and projections (labour demand)
- demographically derived assessments of future employment needs (labour supply techniques)

- analysis based on the past take-up of employment land and property and/or future property market requirements

The Employment Needs & Economic Development Study recommends the following:

- office requirement for 7,450 sqm or 1.5Ha
- industrial and warehousing need for between 18.2 ha and 34.9 ha. With an acceptable mid-point of 26.6 ha be planned for in the Local Plan
- need to acknowledge the wider 'roaming' demand on the A1 corridor that could support a large development with a logistics focus

The study identifies the total jobs that can be supported in the County based on the identified need range from 3,335 to 4,378 additional jobs. For completion, it is recommended that the mid-point of 26.6 ha is reasonable to plan for and this would result in 3,860 additional jobs based on the assumptions used in the Study. However, it concludes that while a range of job creation is possible with the recommended level of need, the link between floorspace growth and jobs growth cannot be wholly reconciled. This is particularly the case for industrial jobs which comprises the greater percentage of the need.

The Employment Needs & Economic Development Report (2023) also considered the suitability of existing employment allocations and new sites which had been proposed to the Council for employment uses to meet future needs. Site allocations have also been assessed against the Council's site assessment criteria to ensure that they are suitable for development.

Rutland is a partner of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), reflecting the close alignment of Rutland with other Greater Lincolnshire partners in terms of its rural economy, its market towns and the importance of sectors such as agriculture, tourism and food and drink. This partnership is considered to be a boost for businesses in Rutland, which can now access services and resources offered by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP and its Business Lincolnshire Growth Hub.

Rutland is primarily a rural area. Reflecting its settlement morphology and the fact that its largest settlement, Oakham, has a population of under 12,000 people. By definition therefore, Rutland has a largely rural economy and Rutland is rightly regarded as a rural County. However, it is important to acknowledge that Rutland, and particularly the east of the County, is well-connected through its proximity to the A1. This gives the County direct access to London but also other major employment centre

In relation to land-based activities, this means a policy framework that is supportive of both diversification (linked to the re-use of, for example, redundant farm buildings) and intensification/movement along the value chain (e.g., through the provision of small manufacturing/production sites). This Local Plan provides policy support for such developments in Policies SS9 and E2.

Policy E1 proposes strategic allocations in the County to ensure that there is sufficient employment land available in the right places to support a strong and growing economy.

The spatial strategy for new employment development focuses economic development on the towns and larger villages. In doing so, The Local Plan seeks to maintain high levels of employment and a thriving local economy that would be consistent with the Council's vision and the objectives and priorities of the Economic Strategy (2023) to identify sufficient employment land and explore opportunities for growth in areas along the A1 corridor and in town centres.

What you have told us

There was overall support (47% respondents) to adopt a longer-term approach and allocate land for employment development to maintain a flexible employment land supply in the Issues and Options consultation. This would allow the Local Plan to meet the full range of needs, provide choice and flexibility in supply, and help support the recovery of the local economy following the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Over a quarter of responses supported the allocation of new sites for employment alongside the County's main transport corridor adjacent to the A1. Along with a quarter supporting sites for employment uses within Rutland to be included as part of any major housing proposal or new settlement.

What alternatives have we considered?

To make no additional allocations of employment land on the basis of previous evidence of an existing over-supply of employment land in Rutland. However, this will not address the identified need to promote economic growth and allocate additional sites shown in new evidence for the County.

Plan for greater growth and inward investment by allocating land up to the higher land requirements indicated in the Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence (2023), in locations which would attract large employers, business park proposals, and maximise the potential of locations adjacent to the A1 to attract new employment to Rutland to enhance the prosperity and resilience of the local economy.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

Which existing policies will this policy replace?

CS13 – Employment and economic development

CS14 – New provision for industrial and office development and related uses

Employment Development within the Planned Limits of Development

What will this policy do?

In addition to the provision of new sites and allocations it is also important that the stock of existing employment land and premises is maintained across Rutland (not just within the Key Employment Areas).

The policy seeks to provide flexibility for employment uses of land and the needs of enterprise. It sets out the Council's requirements for applications for a change of use from employment to other uses including housing. The policy will offer a range of employment opportunities across the County within the built-up areas to accommodate the expansion of local businesses and to ensure that there are opportunities for companies to move into the area.

Policy E3 - Protecting existing employment land and premises

1. Enhancement of employment premises and sites

The Council will seek 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.

The Council will promote and support positive measures to upgrade existing employment areas through supporting appropriate proposals for development/re-development of employment floorspace, upgrading or modernisation of existing premises and/or proposals which make more efficient use of under-used employment sites and premises, where:

- a) **the expansion is in keeping with the existing scale of provision and local area, and**
- b) **it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts would not significantly outweigh the benefits.**

2. Protection of existing employment premises and sites

Existing employment sites and premises will be protected where there remains a reasonable prospect of employment use. Excepting Permitted Development Rights or Local/Neighbourhood Development Orders, change of use from Class E or similar sui generis uses will not be permitted unless:

- a) **it is demonstrated that the site is no longer required and is unlikely to be re-used or re-developed for industrial/commercial purposes. This should include clear demonstration of marketing, viability appraisal and the suitability of the site to accommodate the proposed use - using a methodology to be agreed by the County Council at pre-application advice stage; or**
- b) **the proposed use will generate new employment opportunities and will achieve economic enhancement of the County and an alternative use**

would not be detrimental to the overall supply and quality of employment land within the County or

- c) the existing location poses insurmountable environmental harm or amenity which cannot be satisfactorily resolved. The Council will require evidence that the site has not been made deliberately unviable, that marketing has been actively conducted for a reasonable period of time and that alternative employment uses have been fully explored.

3. Relocation and expansion of existing businesses

The Council will positively encourage the relocation of existing firms wishing to expand within Rutland provided that the development:

- a) will improve their economic and environmental sustainability;
- b) will improve the environment for local residents;
- c) will enhance the sustainable development potential of the location and /or adjoining sites;
- d) is sensitive to its surroundings in terms of scale and design; and
- e) does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads.

4. Office development

The Council will seek to direct office development to the town centres.

5) Range of unit sizes

Where appropriate the Council will require the provision of a range of unit sizes including small and medium sized business units and live-work units in new economic development and mixed-use sites to ensure the needs of businesses are met.

Why is this policy needed?

Protecting and enhancing existing employment sites and premises can make an important contribution to ensure that there is sufficient available floorspace and the opportunity for good quality modern workspace providing employment opportunities in the County. A flexible supply of employment land and premises to meet business needs includes the protection and upgrading of existing sites where these are accessible and there is a good prospect of continued employment use.

The Council's Employment Study (2023) provide strong economic justification for the retention and protection of the County's supply of existing employment sites and buildings where they are well located, in order to continue to be available to meet the needs of existing and expanding/modernising businesses. This applies to a range of business uses and types of employment, including office use, light manufacturing, workshops, storage use, and smaller business enterprises in the rural areas. The study concludes that there is a need to protect its employment sites from non-employment uses, such as housing or retail.

The Council recognises that employment generation does not only relate to the B Use Classes, and therefore proposes that a range of employment generating uses

may be appropriate on existing and proposed employment sites. Employment uses are traditionally defined in the Use Classes Order as B2, General Industry, B8, Storage and Distribution and E, Commercial, Business and Service. The diversification of the economy and the decline in traditional manufacturing means that employment opportunities now emanate from a wider range of uses. Not all Class E Uses are appropriate for location on designated employment sites, however it is recognised that there are opportunities for some employment generating, non-B class uses to co-exist alongside the traditional B-class uses on employment sites. There is a balancing act here: the cumulative impact of non-B class uses can have an impact upon the functionality of more traditional B class uses.

The policy allows for mixed use developments to reflect the level of flexibility set out within the NPPF. Mixed use developments may include elements of development that do not fall within the B2 and B8 Use Classes such as trade counters and potentially care/nursing homes, all of which create job opportunity. Proposals for Main Town Centre Uses (as defined in the glossary of the NPPF) will not be supported on designated employment land unless it is first demonstrated that no suitable Town Centre, or edge of centre, sites are available through an appropriate and proportionate sequential test.

Any development proposals for a change of use from an employment use to a non-employment use will need to be justified. These employment sites are important for the economy and any proposal resulting in the loss of jobs will have to demonstrate that the site is no longer viable for employment uses and/or that the loss of the employment would not have a detrimental impact upon the local economy.

What you have told us

Consultation responses at Issues and Options showed a high level of support for retaining existing employment sites and allocations, although some responses acknowledged that a review of existing allocations would be necessary. It also showed that your thought allocating a mix of sites and uses to deliver a long-term approach was appropriate with sites which had good connectivity and established business being supported. Reference was also made to the need to consider impact on local communities and road networks and the current high levels of out commuting from Rutland for work.

What alternatives have we considered?

No alternatives have been considered.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

CS13 – Employment and economic development

CS14 – New provision for industrial and office development and related uses

The Rural Economy

What will these policies do?

The policies will support development which contributes to the rural economy provided it is in the right location and at an appropriate scale and nature. In many cases rural business uses can be the best alternative use for existing buildings in the countryside and villages. They recognise that businesses are important to the rural economy, providing local opportunities for rural communities to live and work in close proximity. The policies set out the requirements for determining development proposals for new and existing businesses located outside the towns and larger villages, and for farm diversification proposals.

Policy E4 - Rural Economy

Outside Oakham, Uppingham and the larger villages, developments which:

- a) provide opportunities for local rural employment development that supports the vitality of rural settlements;**
- b) create or extend rural based tourist attractions, visitor facilities and recreational uses;**
- c) encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, particularly through the conversion of existing buildings and farm diversification;**
- d) encourage the creation of start-ups and scale ups to innovation support and rural diversification;**
- e) encourage the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses and allow for the adaption of modern agricultural practices;**
- f) are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Rutland, as determined by the County Council; or**
- g) support the retention and delivery of community services such as shop and public houses and village halls.**

will be supported where the development:

- i. meets the Strategic Objectives as set out in Policy SS9 of the Local Plan Spatial Strategy;**
- ii. supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within the planned limits of development;**
- iii. would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;**
- iv. is supported by adequate infrastructure;**
- v. is consistent in scale with its location and does not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity;**
- vi. is well sited and designed in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape and built form; and**
- vii. does not conflict with all other policies of the Local Plan.**

Policy E5 - Sustainable farm diversification

Proposals for new rural enterprises within established agricultural holdings will be permitted provided that:

- a) the scheme benefits the economy of the rural area of which it is part;**
- b) wherever possible appropriately located existing buildings are re-used;**
- c) new and replacement buildings are appropriate in scale, form, impact, character and siting to their rural location;**
- d) wherever possible new or replacement buildings should be located within or adjoining an existing group of buildings;**
- e) the diversification scheme would not harm the countryside's rural character, landscape, historical landscape features and wildlife by the nature and level of activity (or other effects such as noise or pollution);**
- f) the proposal does not generate traffic of a type or amount inappropriate for the rural roads affected by the proposal or require improvements to these roads which would be detrimental to their character. Proposals must set out how the scheme will assist in retaining the viability of the farm and its agricultural enterprise, and how it links with any other short- or long-term business plans for the farm.**

Development proposals are expected to aim to meet the highest possible energy efficiency standards.

Why are these policies needed?

Planning has a key role to play in ensuring that the rural economy is viable, meets the needs of existing residents of rural areas and that growth and development is appropriate to the scale of each area and that it has a positive impact upon biodiversity, geodiversity, the landscape and the historic environment.

National Planning Policy supports sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.

The rural economy provides a wide range of important goods and services, including clean water, biodiversity, recreational space and opportunities, food energy and carbon management. Rural land is a vital resource for mitigating and adapting to the various challenges of climate change, such as drought and flooding. The countryside is also home to settlements and communities, where economic activities include agriculture and other farm-based industries, as well as businesses associated with countryside pursuits, including rural tourism and leisure.

The NPPF advises that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make

a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

The Economic Strategy seeks to build a modern rural economy which responds to local businesses, from start-ups and scale ups to innovation support and rural diversification, to reduce rural inequalities, boost entrepreneurialism and innovative business growth. The policies in this local plan need to support this objective by providing the framework against which proposals for new and existing business will be considered. An early action from the Economic Strategy was to review the rural diversification policy to provide support and guidance to those considering diversification.

Traditional rural employment in agriculture, forestry and horticulture has declined over the last few decades and now accounts for less than 1% of employment in the County. It is important that rural economic development is focused on the needs of existing rural businesses and the networks which support them, but also that this rural economic growth does not have a detrimental impact on the countryside which makes Rutland a special place.

The Local Plan seeks to build on the healthy rate of business formations and the number of small firms in the County. Small firms and the highly skilled, knowledge-based businesses, which tend to have a low environmental impact, are likely to be most appropriate for the market towns and larger villages where they can take advantage of existing buildings and previously developed land. Sites identified for general employment development will help to meet the needs of local businesses, business start-up and relocations of businesses.

The Plan generally supports the principle of development which contributes to the rural economy provided it is in the right location and at an appropriate scale and nature. In many cases rural business uses can be the best alternative use for existing buildings in the countryside and villages.

Agricultural development and rural diversification proposals provide important opportunities to support and expand employment opportunities in the County and will generally be supported.

The policy ensures support for the rural economy outside the main towns.

What you have told us

Growth is desperately needed within the County, especially in rural areas. Rural enterprises should be supported provided that they are sustainable with 72% of respondents at Issues and Options supporting the option to support and encourage genuine proposals for rural enterprise (such as conversions of existing buildings and limited new build where required).

While the rural economy exists at a low concentration it is highly mixed and because of its nature the Council should look to support appropriate proposals throughout the whole County where it will make a positive contribution. Economic growth will help ease house affordability issues and will leave more money to be invested on becoming net zero.

What alternatives have we considered?

No alternatives have been considered.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by these policies?

CS13 – Employment and economic development

CS14 - New provision for industrial and office development and related uses

CS16 – The rural economy

SP7 - Non-residential development in the countryside

Employment and Skills

What will this policy do?

The policy will help to meet county-wide requirements for skill enhancement. by introducing the requirement for Employment and Skills Plans for major developments within the County in order to use the opportunities presented by development to improve local employment and training.

Policy E6 - Employment and skills

The Council will encourage development proposals that support the following:

- a) raise skills levels and increase employability;**
- b) tackle skills shortages in existing and potential business sector clusters that are, or have the potential to be, strengths in the local economy;**
- c) promote skills on strategic housing and employment sites particularly with regard to construction skills;**
- d) address barriers to employment for economically inactive people (including those who have a disability, long term sickness or leaving education); and**
- e) provide for the development of childcare facilities within or close proximity to employment sites.**

Employment and Skills plans will be required for:

- the construction phases of residential development of more than 50 homes and commercial schemes of more than 1000 sq. m.; and**
- the occupancy phase of commercial schemes that provide more than 50 jobs.**

Why is this policy needed?

The Council recognises that the skills and education of the labour force is crucial to the economic viability, flexibility and competitiveness of the local economy. The Council's Economic Strategy recognises the transition to net zero means changes for how we live and work. National issues, particularly the high cost of living and inflation, compound local challenges and accentuate the need for us to take a new approach to sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

This will help address employment shortages in Rutland particularly in hospitality, finance, data science and analysis. The lack of available workers locally intensifies competition for labour. Housing can be expensive which creates a challenge finding young professionals and people to fill junior roles and acts as a barrier to accessing work and supporting local enterprise.

Rutland County Council, as the local planning authority, can request contributions, either financial or in kind, through planning obligations for measures directly related to a development. This arrangement derives from Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Employment and Skills Plans in the County will set out site-specific measures delivering jobs and training for local people. These measures will be negotiated on a site-by-site basis and will not be unduly onerous while still delivering real benefits on the ground. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (25), which states that developments should not be subjected to a scale of obligations that would threaten their ability to be developed viably.

These plans will be required for the construction phases of residential development of more than 50 homes and all commercial schemes of more than 100 sq. m.

The main evidence to support the need for Employment and Skills Plans in Rutland are:

- skills shortages within the County;
- the changing demographic and inactivity have increased over the last 5 years - of the economically inactive, there are higher proportions of retirees and those looking after family/home;
- workplace earnings are lower than resident earnings, indicating that higher jobs within Rutland are largely offering lower pay whilst highly educated Rutland residents out-commute to higher paid jobs.

This policy can be applied to new developments where there are opportunities to provide apprenticeships or training thus raising skills and attainment and supporting people into higher paid employment, potentially connecting employers and employment opportunities to local schools, colleges, training organisations and voluntary services. This will encourage local skills and employment development.

The Council's Economic Strategy recognises the transition to net zero means changes for how we live and work. National issues, particularly the high cost of living and inflation, compound local challenges and accentuate the need for us to take a new approach to sustainable, inclusive economic growth; including enabling well educated Rutland residents to work within the County thus reducing commuting.

What you have told us

This issue was not specifically raised in the previous consultation.

What alternatives have we considered?

To not apply Employment and Skills Plans to new development.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

No current adopted planning policies in place with respect to employment and skills

Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

What will this policy do?

The policy will try to improve the provision and quality of digital communications including broadband across Rutland to ensure that all new workplaces are connected by fibre or are able to be connected in the future.

Policy E7 - Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

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.

Where it can be demonstrated that FTTP is not cost effective, then alternative technological options, for example Superfast Fibre to the Cabinet or Fixed Wireless Access, should be provided. For such schemes, provision in the form of ducting and other necessary infrastructure for the future delivery of FTTP should be provided.

The Council will require applicants to demonstrate evidence of discussions with service providers and documentary evidence in relation to the cost effectiveness of providing connections via the submission of a Digital Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Why is this policy needed?

High quality digital infrastructure is crucial to the success of businesses and also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities, services, and employment. Well-connected places attract modern businesses and can create the conditions for new clusters of digital and creative businesses to emerge.

Access to high quality digital infrastructure can also facilitate social inclusion, enable home working, diversify the rural economy, enhance educational and social opportunities, as well as improve access to a wide range of services that are increasingly provided online. Consequently, high quality digital infrastructure will make a significant contribution towards the delivery of sustainable development.

New development should ensure that it has considered any need and demand resulting from the development and taken proactive steps in engaging with service and infrastructure providers to ensure that there is high-speed fibre broadband connectivity or mobile internet coverage in the development.

What you have told us

This issue was not specifically raised in the Issues and Options consultation.

What alternatives have we considered?

To not include a policy on this matter and leave it for the market to provide.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

SP14 – Telecommunications and high-speed broadband

The Visitor Economy and Tourism

What will this policy do?

The Policy supports the visitor economy and encourages high quality, tourism development in Rutland where it is proposed in sustainable locations which optimise and respect the benefits of Rutland's heritage and the character of its building and landscape.

Policy E8 - Local Visitor Economy

Proposals which support the local visitor economy, which are in accordance with the Spatial Strategy of Policy SS9, will be supported where they:

- a) make provision for visitors which is appropriate in use and character to Rutland's settlements and countryside; or**
- b) support or enhance existing tourist and visitor facilities; or**
- c) support the retention and enhancement of existing overnight accommodation and the provision of new overnight accommodation; or**
- d) provide new tourism provision and initiatives in Oakham and Uppingham and the larger villages which would also benefit local communities and support the local economy.**

Sustainable rural tourism development of an appropriate scale and use which utilises the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings in the countryside will also be supported where they are located adjacent to or closely related to the towns and villages which respect the setting and character of the location.

Why is this policy needed?

An integral part of a thriving local economy in Rutland is a sustainable visitor economy and rural tourism. National Policy requires local policies to support and enable rural tourism and leisure developments. Promoting a year-round visitor economy is an objective within the Council's Economic Strategy (2023) which includes support to enhance tourism sectors.

The market towns of Oakham and Uppingham, the stone-built villages, attractive countryside and Rutland Water combine to make Rutland a desirable destination to visitors. The visitor economy is an important sector of Rutland's local economy, attracting over 1.8 million visitors a year, generating over £141 million and supporting 1,700 jobs.

In addition to major attractions, the rural parts of the County provide appealing walking and cycling routes, waterways, and other varied attractions. The agricultural landscape has encouraged a range of agri-tourism businesses which are

complimented by the County's marketing focus on quality food and drink and the strapline, *The County of Good Taste*.

Employment related to tourism in Rutland includes a wide range of activities catering for visitors including overnight accommodation (e.g., hotels, bed and breakfast, self-catering establishments and camping and caravan sites), cafes, pubs and restaurants, visitor attractions and Rutland Water which provides a diverse range of leisure activities in addition to sailing, fishing, walking, cycling and bird watching facilities. Oakham and Uppingham with their historic character, weekly markets and retail assets contribute to the local tourism economy in addition to the growth in out-of-town garden centres.

The Council has adopted Discover Rutland's Tourism Strategy 2020-2025 ^[1] which identifies tourism as a sector of the local economy which is capable of increasing economic growth all year round by attracting different types of visitors throughout the year. It acknowledges the need to increase the number of permanently employed staff in tourism jobs and to raise the profile of jobs in tourism.

The Council supports high quality tourism development in Rutland in the most sustainable locations which optimise and respect the benefits of Rutland's heritage and the character of its building and landscape. Tourism development that meets these requirements and encourages the extension of the tourist season throughout the year will be particularly supported. Recreation and tourism development in the vicinity of Rutland Water is addressed in Policy EN10

Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence (2023) identifies that the issues for the visitor economy are more complex, particularly given the links to the housing market. However, the intention ought to be to support sustainable forms of tourism (particularly where there are (or could be) strong local supply chains) and to plan for an appropriate local infrastructure for the visitor economy (linking to Oakham and Uppingham Town Centres in particular, but also recognising the significance of heritage attractions).

The policy reflects evidence and the Council's desire to encourage the sustainable growth in the County's visitor economy and to support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments where these will benefit rural businesses, communities and visitors and enrich the character of the local area.

The policy supports the tourism role of Oakham and Uppingham through the retention and improvement of existing visitor facilities and attractions and the provision of new facilities and services in sustainable locations.

What you have told us

[Discover Rutland's Tourism Strategy 2020-2025](#)

Over 66% of respondents supported the development of new tourist attractions and for the Council to seek and encourage new tourist attractions into Rutland. Comments related to focusing growth around existing attractions, to enable an holistic approach to visitor management, and improved co-ordination of issues such as highways, car parking, sustainable transport and events.

There was support for considering creating a new asset/attraction for the County to encourage new business, tourism, etc. This could perhaps be to do with renewable energy, leisure, sport, or academic.

There were suggestions also to look beyond just Rutland Water – by developing the history, museum and archaeological resources in the area to attract visitors to the region.

It was also suggested not to just focus on specific locations or tourism in certain areas, as Covid has clearly demonstrated that this would represent a terribly weak local economic base, but to diversify.

What alternatives have we considered?

To concentrate solely on existing tourist sectors and look to retain and expand existing tourist facilities in Rutland.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

[Discover Rutland's Tourism Strategy 2020-2025](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

CS15 - Tourism

Caravan and Camping Sites, Lodges, Log Cabins, Chalets and similar forms of Self-Serviced Holiday Accommodation

What will this policy do?

The policy requires proposals for new caravan and camping sites, lodges, log cabins, chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation to be located in appropriate locations with flexibility to allow existing businesses within the countryside the opportunity to expand where appropriate.

The preferred location for caravan and camping sites, lodges, log cabins, chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation is within or adjoining the planned limits of development of a sustainable settlement. This is to enable visitors to access a range of services by a choice of travel modes (including on foot). Such development will not normally be permitted in the Countryside in order to protect the area. This would not prevent the expansion of existing businesses to an appropriate scale, or the re-use of existing buildings subject to other relevant local plan policies.

Policy E9 – Caravans, camping, lodges, log cabins, chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation

In areas outside the Rutland Water Area and the Eyebrook Reservoir Area, Caravans, Camping, Lodges, Log Cabins, Chalets and other similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation will only be acceptable where all of the following criteria are met:

- a) they are well related to an existing settlement and/or tourism attraction or recreation facility;**
- b) provision is made to minimise disruption and prevent pollution;**
- c) they are located with convenient access to supporting facilities;**
- d) they would not result in an unacceptable increase in the amount of car travel;**
- e) they are not of a scale and design which would be detrimental to environmental, amenity and highway considerations; and**
- f) they are not detrimental to visual amenity and the appearance of the landscape.**

Where planning permission is granted for this type of development, planning conditions and/or legal agreement will be used to prevent the accommodation being used as a permanent residence.

Why is this policy needed?

There continues to be considerable demand for camping, glamping and caravanning facilities in Rutland, as evidenced by enquiries to Rutland Tourism, particularly in locations well related to Rutland Water. Whilst such development can provide a welcome form of accommodation for tourists and other visitors to the area, it can

have a major impact on the local environment, visual amenity and on levels of car usage in the local area.

Policy EN10 (Rutland Water Area) makes it clear that caravan and camping sites will not be acceptable within the defined Rutland Water Area except in the three defined recreation areas of Sykes Lane, Normanton and Gibbet Lane subject to such development being appropriate to the area in terms of its scale, location and impact on the surrounding area.

Policy EN11 (Eyebrook Reservoir Area) makes it clear that caravan and camping sites will not be acceptable within the defined Eyebrook Reservoir Area.

In the countryside there is evidence of increased demand for self-catering accommodation in static holiday caravans, camping, glamping and holiday lodges, cabins, chalets or similar buildings or structures not designed as appropriate for use as permanent residences. The siting, scale and intensity of use of sites for such uses must be carefully considered in order that a proposal minimises its impact on the landscape, the environment and surrounding uses.

What you have told us

This subject was not included in the Issues and Options consultation.

What alternatives have we considered?

We have not considered any alternatives to this policy.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland's Economic Strategy \(May 2023\)](#)

[Rutland Employment Needs & Economic Development Evidence \(2023\)](#)

[Discover Rutland's Tourism Strategy 2020-2025](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

SP24 – Caravan and camping sites

SP25 - Lodges, log cabins, chalets and similar forms of self-serviced holiday accommodation

Town Centres and Retailing

What will this policy do?

The NPPF directs the development of retail and other town centre uses towards town centres in the first instance, and for development outside town centres compliance with the sequential and impact ‘tests’ needs to be demonstrated. The main town centre uses considered suitable for Oakham and Uppingham town centres based on the NPPF definition include retail and leisure development.

The policy sets out the retail hierarchy in line with government guidance in order to promote the town centres’ long-term vitality and viability and develop vibrant and prosperous market towns and villages and support sustainable communities with locally accessible services. The policy also sets out the criteria which will be used to determine planning applications for town centre and retail uses.

Policy E10 – Town Centres and Retailing

Main Town Centre uses* will be supported where they are located in accordance the following retail hierarchy:

- **Oakham: Main Town Centre – serving the whole of Rutland**
- **Uppingham: Town centre – serving Uppingham and the surrounding rural catchment and tourists**

The Town centres are defined on the policies map. Where proposals for main town centre use developments are not located within the defined town centres a sequential approach will be followed with preference given first to sites on the edge of the defined town centres prior to the consideration of out-of-centre sites.

Proposals for all town centre and retail uses should:

- a) **support the vitality and viability of the defined town centres;**
- b) **support the ‘evening economy’ and complementary leisure uses outside the primary shopping frontage;**
- c) **demonstrate they will not have an adverse impact on the town centre through an Impact Assessment (for retail and leisure proposals of 500m² gross or more and for town centre uses outside of the defined town centres). Where the Council requires an independent review of this work the cost will be borne by the applicant;**
- d) **consider the use of upper floors above shops and commercial premises for residential or office purposes where appropriate; and**
- e) **demonstrate good shop front design in accordance with the Council’s adopted Shop Front Design Guide.**

* **main town centre uses are defined in Annex 2 of the [NPPF](#)**

Why is this policy needed?

The NPPF includes the principles of retail and town centre development set out in the 'Ensuring the vitality of town centres' section. Paragraph 86 continues the 'town centre first' principle which recognises centres as being at the heart of communities. It requires planning policies to positively promote competitive town centre environment. The main town centre uses considered suitable for Oakham and Uppingham town centres based on the NPPF definition include retail and leisure development.

The NPPF directs the development of retail and other town centre uses towards town centres in the first instance, and for development outside town centres compliance with the sequential and impact 'tests' needs to be demonstrated. Any new applications for retail or other town centre uses on the edge of, or outside of, the defined town centres in the County should therefore demonstrate that there are no sequentially preferable sites available, and that no 'significant adverse' impacts will arise on existing defined centres.

The NPPF requires local planning authorities to identify a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail (and leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development) needed in town centres. Where town centre sites are not available, then appropriate edge of centre sites should be identified for main town centre uses.

The Economic Strategy (2023) recognises the importance of vibrant town centres and high streets in supporting the retail and visitor economy and as an important part of the character and sense of place of the County.

A Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023 was undertaken for Rutland. The report updated the previous retail capacity evidence base undertaken in 2016 and provides an updated assessment of the vitality and viability of the two main centres of Oakham and Uppingham and the quantitative and qualitative 'need' for additional floorspace in the County over the period to 2041.

Convenience Goods Floorspace Requirement

There is very limited quantitative 'need' for new convenience goods floorspace, with a requirement up to 2041 of 1000sqm net additional convenience floorspace over the new Local Plan period. There is only one supermarket in Uppingham, as such, there is scope to improve choice in the town with need directed towards improving convenience shopping provision in Uppingham, to reduce the amount of convenience goods expenditure which is spent outside the town and facilitate more sustainable patterns of shopping.

Any applications for new convenience goods provision would need to demonstrate compliance with the sequential and retail impact policy tests. As part of the impact assessment, consideration should be given to the impact on any loss of spend/turnover of the Co-Op store on the overall vitality and viability of the town centre in Uppingham and consider the impact on linked shopping trips between this store and other uses in the town centre.

Town Centre Strategy for Rutland

The town centre strategy for Rutland aims to provide a high-quality shopping 'experience', maximising the benefits of tourist trade, and improving the mix of retail and non-retail outlets to increase length of stay and spend.

The towns of Oakham and Uppingham should promote unique attractions such as their heritage assets, historic buildings and cultural features which can differentiate a centre and improve its attractiveness. To ensure that the town centres have a viable function moving forward they must provide an attractive shopping and leisure experience.

Both Oakham and Uppingham town centres are well-positioned to take advantage of this trend (particularly Oakham with its proximity to Rutland Water). The growth of the café/restaurant sector is important to the future vitality and viability of the town centre, but this should not come at the expense of its core shopping function. A wider strategy must deliver a mix of town centre uses to enhance the attraction of a centre and increase frequency of visit and dwell time. A vital component of this will be making town centres as accessible as possible, with sufficient and affordable car parking, as well as investment in public realm and place marketing initiatives.

This strategy allows for the retail needs to be met on sites in or close to the edge of the existing retail centre of Oakham town centre, through the identification of sites on the edge of the town centre to accommodate additional comparison goods development of an appropriate scale along with a bulky goods-format allocation in an out-of-centre location.

The strategy does not preclude development opportunities from coming forward in Uppingham, but any schemes will be expected to be relatively small-scale appropriate to the role and function of the town and should not detract from the focus of the strategy being on Oakham as the higher-order centre.

Ensuring that the market towns remain vibrant and attractive to both residents and visitors is a Council priority. Oakham is, for the most part, an attractive town centre and the historic quality of the centre should be preserved and enhanced where possible.

Commercial leisure uses, particularly cafes and restaurants, are making an increasingly important contribution to the vitality and viability of Oakham and

Uppingham town centres, and applications which seek to further enhance provision should be supported in principle.

Support will be given for suitable planning applications for residential or office purposes above ground floor retail level and for the development of an 'evening economy' including complementary leisure uses such as cafés and restaurants in order to diversify the offer of the centres and support the vitality and viability outside of retail trading hours.

In assessing development that will impact on the shop fronts in Rutland, the Council will have regard to the Council's SPD (March 2015) on shops fronts including signs and shop security, the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan and any subsequent updated guidance on this issue.

Policy E10 will ensure new retail development will be directed to the Oakham town centre area allowing it to develop and strengthen its role as the principal comparison-shopping destination in the County. A variety of town centre uses will be encouraged, including food and drink, leisure, and cultural uses that add to the liveliness, attractiveness, and economic resilience of the centre.

Given the relatively small size of the town centres in the County and their more limited role and function compared to larger/higher order centres, they are more vulnerable to potential impacts of new development outside their town centres. On this basis the threshold of 500 sq. (gross) is retained. This threshold is applicable to applications for all types of main town centre uses which are proposed to come forward outside of a policy-defined town centre. The assessment will be in accordance with the NPPF and examine the impacts of the proposal on the existing town centre.

The policy will ensure all applications for development of main town centre uses outside a defined town centre are required to demonstrate compliance with the sequential test, irrespective of the quantum of floorspace proposed.

The policy should, in principle, support proposals which introduce residential uses or appropriate 'main town centre uses' on upper floors, in other to support additional town centre residential populations or diversify the range of uses in a centre.

What you have told us

The majority of those responding to this issue in the Issues and Options consultation supported going beyond the current approach to adopt a wider strategy to support a range of activities in town centres and to take account of the changes in their use.

Suggestions were made that this strategy should include greater flexibility in encouraging vital uses within town centres and move towards thinking that town

centres will be more about social interaction in the future otherwise accepting a move away from the selling of goods, to include some services on our High Streets

The suite of policies proposed have sought to develop such an approach. There was support new and local business encourage and make it easy for people to come into their local town.

What alternatives have we considered?

To carry on as before and not develop a wider strategy for Rutland.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

CS17 – Town centres and retailing

Town centre areas and primary shopping areas

What will this policy do?

Local Planning Authorities should pro-actively promote competitive town centre environments that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer. To do this it is advised that Local Plans define the extent of the town centres and primary shopping areas and set policies that make clear the range of uses which will be permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of town centres. This policy addresses this requirement.

Policy E11 - Primary shopping areas

A1 retail uses will be supported within the Primary Shopping Area shown on the policies map. Proposals for non-retail uses in the primary shopping frontages will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the proposal:

- a) will not result in an adverse cluster of non-retail A1 uses in the primary shopping area;**
- b) will retain a 'shop-like' appearance with an active frontage;**
- c) will not harm the predominantly retail character of the primary shopping areas; and**
- d) will provide a direct service to the public.**

Why is this policy needed?

The Policy is needed to provide guidance on the extent to which non-retail uses may be permitted in the primary shopping areas. Proposals involving a change of use of ground floor premises in the primary shopping areas must complement the retail offer and should not lead to an over dominance of non-retail uses, which would detract from the overall retail experience in the central part of the town centres.

It is important the proportion of non-A1 uses in the primary shopping areas are managed to ensure that they support, and do not come to dominate, the predominantly A1 retail function of this area.

In line with the recommendations of the Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023 the Main Town centre uses should be maintained and enhanced through the primary shopping area policy and as such no further changes are warranted to the primary areas in Oakham.

The Policies Map defines the extent of the Oakham and Uppingham town centre areas and identifies primary shopping areas where loss of retail floor space for other purposes would be opposed where it would contribute to damaging the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The implications of changes to permitted development

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 has introduced greater flexibility to enable a more straightforward change of use within shopping frontages. Of particular relevance, the amendments allow permitted change from retail premises (A1) to financial services (A2), and restaurants and cafes (A3) without a time limit on that change of use. The move is designed to reduce vacancies on high streets.

The Council's policy framework has effectively protected and enhanced the primary shopping area in recent years. If it is considered the permitted development changes of use are having a detrimental impact on the primary shopping areas i.e., the dilution of A1 uses underpinning footfall and connectivity across the town centres, then the Council may consider the use of Article 4 directions necessary to assist in the protection of primary shopping areas for Oakham and Uppingham town centres. The use of an Article 4 direction would prevent such a change of use where considered inappropriate and harmful to the vitality and viability of the shopping frontage.

Non-retail A1 uses (see Glossary) which may be appropriate in the primary shopping areas are banks, building societies and other financial services covered by A2 Use class, A3 uses such as restaurants and cafés, some A4 and A5 uses such as public houses and hot food takeaways which complement the function of the area and do not compromise the amenity of surrounding residents. In addition, public sector services such as Council, health and community hub services should be encouraged to locate within the primary shopping area. Outside of A Use Class, other main town centre uses will usually be more appropriate elsewhere within the town centre boundaries where a more diverse mix of uses is encouraged.

In assessing development that will impact on the shop fronts in Rutland, the Council will have regard to the Council's SPD (March 2015) on shop fronts including signs and shop security¹ and any subsequent updated guidance on this issue. This SPD may be updated following the adoption of the Local Plan.

What you have told us

In the Issues and Options consultation, we asked if we should develop a policy that encourages Class E uses to be located within a defined town centre or primary shopping area (with the inclusion of residential on upper floors if considered acceptable), with a requirement to provide active street frontages. The majority of those responding agreed with this approach, suggesting that it is desirable to retain some identified area which can be seen as retail/social interaction within the centre of the two towns and not just have retail converted to houses or offices.

What alternatives have we considered?

Not to define a primary shopping area in the two towns

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

SP12 – Town centre area, primary and secondary shopping frontages

Sites for retail development

What will this policy do?

The provision of an allocation for non-food retail uses in Oakham may assist in reducing expenditure leakage and supporting more sustainable patterns of shopping. However no suitable sites have been suggested for retail development in the town centre. As part of this consultation, landowners are encouraged to propose sites within Oakham for consideration for retail development.

Policy E12 - Sites for retail development

The Council will actively work with landowners to identify a suitable site (s) which meets the identified need in Oakham for new retail development proposals for non-food retail - Use Class A1 at ground floor level with other appropriate town centre or residential uses at upper floors. This search for a site will follow the sequential approach to location.

Why is this policy needed?

Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023 updated the retail capacity figures for Rutland with respect to convenience goods, comparison goods and bulky goods. Evidence shows that there remains a qualitative deficiency of 'bulky' comparison goods retail to serve Rutland. There is a need to retain an allocation for 'bulky goods' comparison goods floorspace within Oakham, however the availability of suitable sites which meet the sequential approach set out in national policy remains an issue. The site which has previously been allocated for this purpose in Oakham has not been delivered and in reviewing sites for allocation the site is now considered more suitable for housing development.

As part of this consultation, landowners are encouraged to propose sites within Oakham for consideration for retail development.

Comparison goods floorspace requirement

Oakham town centre should continue to perform a role and function as the highest-order centre in Rutland. Whilst there is no identified quantitative need for additional comparison goods floorspace for Rutland over the new Local Plan period, any applications seeking provision of this nature should be directed towards Oakham in the first instance and should, where necessary, demonstrate compliance with the sequential and impact retail policy tests. It is important that any new development is of a scale appropriate to the role and function of Oakham as a small market town.

Due to a lack of suitable land within the town centre and the format of this type of retail uses (which often require larger retail floorspace with on-site car parking) means that it is more likely to be appropriate on the edge of the town centre.

What you have told us

This issue was not specifically covered by the Issues and Options consultation.

What alternatives have we considered?

It is possible not to allocate a specific site for retail development to meet the identified need, instead have a criteria-based policy upon which any proposals for new retail development would be considered. If no suitable site is forthcoming the Council will include a policy which would provide the framework against which speculative proposals can be assessed.

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023](#)

Which existing policies will this policy replace?

SP3 – Sites for retail development

Retail in the Neighbourhood Centres and Larger Villages

What will this policy do?

The policy recognises that local neighbourhood and village shops are important to rural communities and contribute to sustainable development and the health and wellbeing of communities. The policy therefore provides support to small scale proposals for new and expanded local shops within villages and neighbourhood centres. The protection of community facilities, including local shops is also covered by policy SC6 .

Policy E13 - Retail in the neighbourhood centres and larger villages

Local shops form an important resource for businesses, visitors and residents.

The expansion and additional provision of local shops of a scale appropriate to the existing settlement or the planned expansion of that settlement (typically this is expected to be under 300 sq.m. net floorspace) will be supported by the Council provided 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.

New retail facilities within neighbourhood centres and the larger villages should take account of the existing population and their needs as well as the strategic needs of any new development.

Policy SC6 will be used to considered proposals which would result in the loss of existing shops.

Why is this policy needed?

It is important to support and protect the role of neighbourhood centres and community shops in the larger villages and the Council will support proposals for the conversion or extension of shops that are designed to improve their viability, and will actively seek to restrict the loss of such services, to preserve and enhance the settlement's vitality and viability.

Whilst it is considered that other centres in the County are unsuitable locations for new retail and town centre uses, applications which seek to deliver local-scale enhancements to shopping provision (typically expect this to be under 300 sq.m. net floorspace) may be acceptable and should be considered on individual merits.

Local neighbourhood shops are important in providing for the day-to-day needs of local communities in both the towns and the villages. Typically, these include a small range of shops of a localised nature such as a small convenience store and newsagent. These existing uses will be protected and where a need is established, new shops to meet day to day needs within communities will be supported.

What you have told us

This issue was not specifically covered by the Issues and Options consultation; however, we did ask about protecting and supporting the provision of new community facilities (which includes shops) which was supported by 97% of respondents and a quarter of respondents identified a local shop as being important for a community.

Suggestions were also made that travelling post offices, community run "online" grocery ordering service for those without broadband /internet, community owned shops and pubs and multi-functional facilities (such as a shop in a pub) should be supported.

What alternatives have we considered?

To have no policy relating to local shops

Supporting Evidence

[Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023](#)

Which existing policies will be replaced by this policy?

No current adopted planning policies in place with respect to retail in neighbourhood centres and larger villages