

Chapter 5 – Spatial Strategy

The Spatial Strategy provides the overall framework for the quantity of development that should be planned for, and where this development is to be directed, linked to the roles of the towns and villages in Rutland. It identifies settlements that are suitable locations for sustainable development and is a key factor underpinning the distribution of development.

The Spatial Strategy seeks to reflect the long-term Future Rutland Vision which states that:

Rutland’s market towns of Oakham and Uppingham will thrive as vibrant destinations to shop, socialise and enjoy life – both for those who live locally and the many thousands of people who come to the County every year.

Towns and villages will promote inclusion, retain their sense of identity, and encourage even greater community spirit – all things that help to give Rutland its distinctive feeling of closeness, familiarity, and security.

Wherever new homes are needed, they will be built in a way that protects and enhances the things that matter most to everyone – Rutland’s sense of community and its unique rural identity.

To achieve this vision the spatial strategy identifies that Oakham and Uppingham as the county’s towns, will continue to be the key locations for new development and change over the plan period. Development in the towns will be supported by the strategic joint development of Stamford North which adjoins the County boundary at Stamford, and small to medium scale housing and employment development in the 21 Larger Villages. Larger Villages are considered to be of a size that can support small scale local community facilities such as a village shop, public house, village hall or community centre, recreation and/or play facilities and which may already include a primary school or medical centre. These are identified below in Policy SS1(b).

The Local Plan provides a suite of policies to help guide the location, design, form and scale of development, as well as policies which will require new development to deliver necessary infrastructure, biodiversity net gain and address the governments carbon zero objectives. These policies are included within the Climate Change, Housing, Economy, Sustainable Communities, Environment and the Infrastructure and Delivery Chapters. Policies within the Economy; Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure and Delivery chapters also seek to maintain and improve community health and well-being and deliver community benefits from new development.

By setting out the locations where development can take place, the spatial strategy will help to protect the countryside, from inappropriate development. In addition, supported by a suite of policies, primarily set out in this Spatial Strategy chapter and

in the Environment chapter, these policies seek to protect the landscape character, ecology, biodiversity, heritage and Rutland Water Area.

What will this policy do?

A number of factors contribute to quality of life and help make Rutland a good place to live, work and study. For the success of the County to continue, it is important to make sure the Local Plan provides for the appropriate levels of growth in a way that will deliver sustainable development.

Policy SS1 establishes the levels of employment and housing growth needed for the plan period and sets out where this development should be located to support the local economy and provide for housing needs. It must do this whilst maintaining the quality of life for residents as well as the quality of the natural and built environment.

Policy SS1 - Spatial strategy for new development

The Local Plan allocates sufficient land together with existing commitments and development built since 2021, to deliver:

- **at least 123 dwellings per annum (2460 over the 20-year period 2021-2041) and**
- **a minimum of 16 hectares for new employment generating uses, (with the aim of generating additional jobs) over the Plan period 2021-2041 to address the objectives of the Economic Strategy.**

a) the majority of new development will be focussed within the Planned Limits of Development (PLDs) of Oakham (and Barleythorpe) and Uppingham, and on land adjacent to Stamford North as part of an urban extension. This will be met by allocated sites (see policies H1, H2 and E1) and through windfalls on sites compliant with the other policies in this plan.

b) in the defined Larger Villages listed below, development of allocated sites (see policies H1 and E1) and windfall sites within the Planned Limits of Development will be permitted:

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

c) development will be limited to small scale redevelopment and infill* opportunities only (subject to the criteria of policy SS3), in the following smaller villages and hamlets listed below:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| - Ashwell | - Glaston | - Stoke Dry |
| - Ayston | - Gunthorpe | - Stretton |
| - Barrow | - Hambleton | - Teigh |
| - Belmesthorpe | - Little Casterton | - Thistleton |
| - Bisbrooke | - Lyndon | - Thorpe by Water |
| - Brooke | - Pickworth | - Tickencote |
| - Burley | - Pilton | - Tinwell |
| - Caldecott | - Preston | - Tixover |
| - Clipsham | - Ridlington | - Wardley |
| - Egleton | - Seaton | - Whitwell |

*** infill development is defined as a small site within a substantially built up frontage. It is expected that housing development on such sites will usually be of 1-2 new dwellings, although exceptionally there may be sites which yield up to a maximum of 5 dwellings.**

d) the reuse and/or redevelopment of land within the defined St George's Barracks and Woolfox Opportunity Areas will be supported where it accords with the requirements of policy SS4 and the principles and requirements of any adopted masterplan, SPD or DPD for the site;

e) places not identified above are considered to be part of the wider countryside where development will only be appropriate if permitted by other policies of this plan, a neighbourhood plan or national policy.

Why is this policy needed?

The NPPF requires the Local Plan to provide a spatial framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities. It states that strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision housing, employment, retail and leisure and other commercial development. Establishing a clear spatial strategy directs development to those locations which are suitable for sustainable development and economic growth. Defining the spatial strategy underpins the scale and distribution of development which will meet the identified needs for the County for the plan period.

The above approach is intended to meet the minimum housing requirement set out in the Government's calculation of Rutland's Local Housing Need (LHN). However, it is recognised that there are limits to the continued development being added on to the edges of existing settlements. Equally, the Future Rutland Vision looks to a longer time period than the proposed plan period for the Local Plan.

The spatial strategy included in the adopted Core Strategy 2011 has been reviewed to assess whether it remains appropriate. The new spatial strategy recognises the following key roles and relationships of the County's towns and villages:

Oakham is the main town of the County, with range of job opportunities, higher order services including retail, leisure and health facilities for the surrounding rural area and has good public transport links. Existing commitments and new allocations for housing and employment development will seek to sustain its prominence as the main service centre serving the villages in Rutland for shopping, employment, and local services.

Uppingham is the second largest settlement in the County and also serves a rural hinterland through the provision of a wide range of services and facilities within the town. Despite a positive approach to allocating land for housing and employment development in the made Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan, past rates of development in Uppingham have been lower than envisaged through the Core Strategy DPD plan period to date.

Uppingham Town Council are reviewing this made Neighbourhood Plan and propose additional housing and employment land to be allocated to meet the needs of the town for the new Local Plan period. The Local Plan seeks to provide the strategic context to enable locally determined, appropriate additional allocations to be made through the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan.

Oakham and Uppingham are the most sustainable locations for new development and therefore allocations for the majority of new houses and job opportunities will be located in the towns.

The Rutland County boundary with Lincolnshire is close to the town of Stamford in South Kesteven. Evidence has shown that the most appropriate location for the future growth of the town of Stamford is to the north of the town. This development needs some land located in Rutland in order to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable development. This plan therefore includes a proposal for land to form the western end of a larger urban extension to the north of Stamford.

The County's larger villages are defined 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. However, some of these facilities are commercial operations and may close (or open) during the plan period without the need for planning permission. The background paper identifies that villages with more than 150 homes and a population of more than 300¹ people can sustain a local shop or public house and a community centre and recreation spaces. Therefore, these

¹ Population based on the parish population (using 2021 census data) It is recognised that some parishes include more than 1 village and therefore the population may not be the village population. However, Rutland has an average household size of 2.3 people per house therefore the number of houses in a village multiplied by the average household size would indicate that a population size of more that 300 is appropriate.

villages are identified as the Larger Villages where a limited amount of development may help to maintain or enhance their vitality, support existing community facilities, and meet local needs. The spatial strategy lists the larger villages and allocations for small and medium scale housing development are made in some of these villages. (see Chapter 6 Housing).

There are also a large number of smaller villages and hamlets spread across the County. The small villages and hamlets are defined as those with less than 150 houses and a population of less than 300 people. These villages have few or no local facilities and the scale of development required to bring such facilities to the village is likely to be much larger than the existing settlement pattern would accommodate. Promoting development in these villages would not encourage sustainable patterns of growth. In these locations development will, therefore, be limited to small scale infill and redevelopment opportunities.

Supporting Evidence

[Background paper on Spatial Strategy for New Development \(2023\)](#)

Location of Development

What will these policies do?

Planned Limits of Development (PLDs) have been drawn around the two towns and the 21 Larger Villages identified in the development strategy at SS1. The PLDs define the area within which development will generally be considered acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy SS2.

PLDs have not been defined for the small villages and hamlets, where development is not generally considered appropriate. Land outside of defined PLDs (including the small villages and hamlets listed in policy SS1) is considered to be countryside where new development will be limited to the circumstances set out in Policy SS3.

Policy SS3 recognises that outside PLDs there may be some limited opportunity for small scale development immediately adjacent to settlements as infill, rounding off and appropriate redevelopment of previously developed land. This approach will help to protect small settlements and the open countryside from inappropriate development and enhance landscape and townscape character, whilst also allowing some flexibility to allow for limited growth through the application of policy criteria.

Policy SS2 – Development within Planned Limits of Development

Proposals for development within the Planned Limits of Development (PLDs) indicated on the Policies Maps, which are in accordance with all relevant Local Plan policies will be supported in principle.

It should be noted 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 this plan and any made Neighbourhood plan.

Proposals for development on sites which adjoin the Planned Limits of Development of Oakham and Barleythorpe, Uppingham and the Larger Villages (as listed in SS1b) may be permitted for:

- 1) major housing applications only where it is clearly evidenced that the proposal is needed to maintain a sufficient supply of deliverable and developable housing land (usually a 5 year land supply), in accordance with the requirements of national planning policy and Policy SS1 of this Local Plan; or**
- 2) small scale housing proposals for infill and redevelopment in accordance with Policy SS3; or**
- 3) local business and community needs, where the site makes use of previously developed land and is physically well related to the existing built form;**

In all cases it must be demonstrated that the development is sensitive to its surroundings and will 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)

This is a strategic policy and significant changes to PLDs defined through the neighbourhood planning process will be incompatible with it. This does not however prevent Neighbourhood Plans from proposing small scale adjustments to PLDs to allow for additional development which meets their community's needs. Where such allocations are made in a neighbourhood plan the PLD will be reviewed and amended by the subsequent Local Plan review.

Policy SS3 – Small scale development on the edge of settlements

Proposals for any of the development types listed below and which are very small in scale * will be supported where essential criteria a) – h) below are met:

- 1) redevelopment of previously developed land or buildings;**
- 2) an infill plot within a substantially built-up frontage;**
- 3) where development will improve or enhance the existing settlement edge**

The proposal must:

- a) be well designed and proportionate in size / scale, layout and character to the setting and reflect the existing pattern of development of the immediate locality;**
- b) be adjacent to the existing built form and maintain or enhance the pattern, character and setting of the settlement;**
- c) not extend obtrusively into the open countryside and be appropriate to the environmental, heritage and landscape character with specific reference to the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment 2022 or any subsequent character assessment published by the Council;**
- d) not harm or erode the public amenity of open spaces or gaps that contribute to the character of the village, including sites identified as Important Open Spaces and Frontages;**
- e) support or enhances the vitality of the local community or enable the delivery of essential infrastructure to support growth proposals;**
- g) not have an adverse cumulative impact on the settlement with regard to other developments permitted during the plan period; and**
- h) demonstrate clear evidence of substantial support from the local community** through an appropriate, thorough and proportionate pre-application community consultation exercise. Where this cannot be determined, support (or otherwise) should be sought from the Town or Parish Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group or Forum**

Development of isolated sites outside the existing pattern and form of a settlement will not be considered acceptable.

* Very small-scale development means that which is proportionate in scale and density, and complementary with the size and character of the settlement and its surroundings. It is expected that housing development on such sites will usually be 1-2 new dwellings, although exceptionally there may be sites which yield up to a maximum of 5 dwellings (in order to make the best and most efficient use of land).

** ‘demonstration of clear local community support’ means that at the point of submitting a planning application, evidence should be included which clearly demonstrates local community support for the scheme, generated via a thorough, but proportionate, pre-application consultation exercise. Where demonstrable evidence of local community support or objection cannot be determined, there will be a requirement for support from the applicable Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group. If an applicant is in doubt as to what would constitute a ‘thorough but proportionate’, preapplication consultation exercise, they should contact the local planning authority.

Why is this policy needed?

To promote sustainable development in the countryside, the NPPF expects housing to be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. The NPPF also says that planning policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing development which reflects local needs and policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.

Development within Planned Limits of Development

Planned Limits of Developments (PLDs) define the extent of existing built-up areas of the main towns and larger villages in the County. Development within PLDs is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with detailed policies in this plan. It should not, however, be assumed that all land within the PLDs has potential for future development. PLDs have the following functions:

- define where development will be acceptable in principle because it meets the objectives of delivering sustainable development;
- prevent inappropriate development (or encroachment) across into the countryside and open areas;
- control the scale and location of development by establishing the limit for the outward expansion of settlements;
- encourages sustainable redevelopment within settlements

The PLDs defined in the Local Plan have been reviewed and updated in accordance with new criteria set out in the Rutland Planned Limits of Development Review report 2023. In addition to the criteria and methodology set out in the review the PLDs have also been amended to include within the boundaries:

- sites which are under construction or where planning permission has been granted.
- sites which are allocated for development in this Local Plan or made Neighbourhood Plans (as at 31.03.24)

Defining PLDs help to maintain a sustainable development strategy by focusing the majority of new development in the County’s most sustainable settlements, where

there is better access to services facilities and job opportunities and better transport links.

Development in small villages and hamlets without a Planned Limit of Development

Rutland has a large number of very small villages and hamlets which have few or no services, facilities, or job opportunities. Many of these settlements have a rural character that often merges into the surrounding countryside. These settlements are not sustainable locations for housing growth. Therefore, Planned Limits of Development have not been defined around them and no land has been allocated for development.

There may, however be opportunities for local, very small-scale development to take place on the edges of settlements with PLDs and smaller villages and hamlets. Small scale development on the edge of settlements may help to support the viability and vitality of a village in accordance with the NPPF. Any such development on the edge of a settlement should be limited to infill sites, rounding off and the re-use and redevelopment of previously developed land and buildings and must be located adjacent to the existing built-up part of a settlement. Any housing development that is permitted in these locations will be 'windfalls' to the housing land supply.

Development of isolated sites outside the existing pattern and form of a settlement will not be considered acceptable.

Policy SS3 assumes that development arising from development at the edge of settlements will be very small-scale. This means that which is proportionate in scale and density, and complementary with, the size and character of the settlement and its surroundings. It is expected that housing development on such sites will usually be limited to 1-2 new dwellings, although exceptionally there may be a case for a site to yield up to a maximum of 5 dwellings if this makes the best and most efficient use of land.

Any development provided through this policy also needs to be in keeping with the character of the locality. Care should be taken that such development, does not harm open spaces or gaps that make a positive contribution to the character of the village, including views and vistas, particularly sites identified as Important Open Spaces and Frontages. Careful consideration also needs to be given to the cumulative impact of new development which can, over time, erode the character of rural settlements and/ or lead to the coalescence of groups of buildings to produce a more 'urban' form.

Development proposals on the edge of a settlement must be supported by the local community and evidence that thorough and proportionate pre-application consultation has been undertaken to demonstrate community support will be required as part of the planning application submission. Where demonstrable evidence of local community support or objection cannot be determined, there will be a requirement for support from the applicable Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Plan Group. If an applicant is in doubt as to what would constitute a 'thorough but proportionate', preapplication consultation exercise, they should contact the local planning authority.

Definitions

- *Previously developed land* is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- *Infill development* is defined as a small gap within a continuously built-up frontage.
- *Small scale* (for the purpose of this policy) means development of 5 dwellings or fewer)

Supporting Evidence

[Landscape Sensitivity Report \(July 2023\)](#)

[Planned Limits of Development \(PLD\) Review \(October 2023\)](#)

Large scale development and new settlements

What will this policy do?

This policy establishes the parameters for considering and taking forward large scale development proposals at St George's Barracks once it is vacated by the Ministry of Defence and for land at Woolfox adjacent to the A1 which has been proposed for a new settlement. No allocation is made for these sites in this Local Plan. Instead they have been identified as a Future Opportunity Areas. Policy SS4 provides a framework to help ensure any development is sustainable and holistically planned.

It is expected that St Georges Barracks site will be vacated by the MOD by 2026; at that time, it would constitute "previously developed land" (a brownfield site). Whilst the Woolfox site includes a former WWII airfield, it is considered to be greenfield.

The Council is mindful of potential increases in the Local Housing Need for Rutland and neighbouring areas as set out in the Government's consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.

There is potential for either or both sites to help meet future housing and economic development needs. In so doing, this would ease the pressure for future development on the edges of the County's towns and villages. However, there are considerable complexities in considering the future use and development of both sites. It is proposed that these matters can be explored in greater detail through the preparation of a separate masterplan for each site as either a separate Development Plan Document (DPD), or as part of an early review of the Local Plan.

Policy SS4 – Future Opportunity Areas

St. George's Barracks and an area of land at Woolfox are identified as future opportunity areas, defined on the Policies Map as SS4.

This policy provides a framework to help ensure any redevelopment is sustainable and holistically planned and is aligned to the spatial strategy set out in this plan.

The preparation of a masterplan as part of an early review of the Local Plan or as a separate Development Plan Document will be required prior to a planning application being submitted. Major development proposals on the site not detailed in the approved masterplan, or any proposals that will result in a conflict between uses, will not be supported.

The mix of uses and scale of housing and employment development on each site will be determined by the masterplan approach set out above. Redevelopment proposals for the St. George's Barracks site are not expected

to deliver more than between 350 and 500 dwellings as part of a mixed-use development, although this will be determined within the proposed masterplan approach through a separate Development Plan Document or through an early review to this plan, once environmental considerations have been taken into account.

Site masterplans will be expected to:

- a) set out the layout, mix and scale of uses, including the relationship with existing uses;**
- b) ensure a balanced and inclusive community, providing a mix of the type and tenure of uses. Where this includes housing, it will be expected to meet the needs of all sections of the community (including provision for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation) alongside the provision and promotion of opportunities for employment;**
- c) establish design parameters covering building heights, materials, landscaping, circulation, key features, and views, creating a distinctive environment respecting the site’s designated and non-designated heritage assets;**
- d) assess impacts on the landscape, views into and out of the site and proposed mitigation to make any impacts acceptable;**
- e) demonstrate how the scheme will protect and enhance the natural environment and ecological networks, including the presence of any significant or protected habitat and or species, ensuring a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain and an assessment of likely impacts on ecology generally and on Rutland Water with proposed mitigation measures;**
- f) Provides a network of quality multifunctional green infrastructure and high quality open spaces with green access routes linking to nearby settlements and the wider countryside (for St George’s Barracks these should be away from Rutland Water).**
- g) an evaluation of heritage assets on and off site, including their settings, and known and potential archaeological assets and an understanding of how the historic use and layout of the site may be reflected in the design and layout of new development;**
- h) detail the delivery of an appropriate amount and range of infrastructure to support the uses and community on the site which must be delivered in tandem with or ahead of development;**
- i) provide a detailed transport assessment including proposals for the delivery of sustainable transport and active travel linking the development with other key settlements in Rutland to ensure that reliance on the private car is minimised on the site;**
- j) be supported by a site-specific energy and embodied carbon strategy for the site which investigates the opportunities on the site to deliver net zero carbon development including the potential to offset the energy use of existing homes on the site;**
- k) detail the engagement that has taken place with the surrounding community and necessary infrastructure providers and how any**

necessary mitigation identified have been incorporated in the masterplan;

- l) demonstrate that adequate utilities provision can be achieved in a timely manner to service and support the scale of development proposed;**
- m) set out details of phasing of development and infrastructure and construction management plans including assessment of the impact on the community;**
- n) address issues related to impact on safeguarded mineral reserves;**
- o) provide a clear demonstration that the proposed scheme will be deliverable and viable; and**
- p) detail how the scheme will satisfy the policies of the Local Plan and relevant Neighbourhood Plans, where appropriate.**

For St George’s Barracks the following additional criteria must also be addressed:

- q) be accompanied and influenced by a Heritage Impact Assessment which identifies the potential impact of development on heritage assets including their settings. The masterplan should demonstrate how important heritage assets, such as the Thor Missile site (a Grade II* listed building) will be protected, identifying options for the adaptation and re-use of existing historic buildings where possible; and**
- r) identify how the scheme will integrate with the existing communities of Edith Weston and North Luffenham.**

For Woolfox the following additional criteria must also be addressed:

- s) how development will be accessed, including detailed proposals for a new junction onto the A1 to support the total amount of development proposed on site; and**
- t) identifying how the scheme will integrate with neighbouring uses and local communities, particularly the villages of Stretton and Clipsham.**

Why is this policy needed?

The NPPF advises plan makers that the supply of a large number of new homes can often be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided that they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities.

The Council is mindful of potential increases in the Local Housing Need for Rutland and neighbouring areas as set out in the Government’s consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.

This Local Plan does not, allocate the St. George's or Woolfox for development to meet the housing need proposed for the initial Local Plan period as this Local Plan is based on the current NPPF 2023 requirements. It is recognised, however, that either (or both) site(s) may be required to meet future development needs for both housing and economic development, therefore policy SS4 sets out the baseline requirements for developing future allocations for them as opportunity areas

St George's Barracks

In November 2016, the Ministry of Defence announced that the St George's Barracks site located between the villages of Edith Weston and North Luffenham would close. The timetable for the site to close has been extended and it is now expected that it will be vacated in 2026.

The site is significant in size, extending to about 265 hectares. About a third of the site in the northwestern corner comprises military housing, a community shop, workshops, aircraft hangers, open space and sports and recreational facilities and infrastructure associated with its current and former military uses. This area of the site would be suitable for re-use and or redevelopment once the site is vacated. The remaining site is subject to ecological, geological and heritage constraints which would significantly restrict opportunities for re-use or redevelopment.

This site includes extensive areas of airfield land, technical buildings, and housing and community and leisure facilities for use by service personnel. With the expected closure of the barracks, there is an imperative to plan for the future use and development of the site which also accommodates a Grade II* listed structure (Thor Missile site) and a significant area identified as a mineral safeguarded area.

Development proposals for the re-development of the site remains uncertain at the point of preparing the Local Plan and therefore no specific proposal is included for the site. However, the plan needs to ensure that a policy framework is in place to guide the development of proposals and to help ensure any redevelopment is sustainable and holistically planned and aligned to the spatial strategy set out in this plan. The site is therefore identified as a future opportunity area which would be the subject of a separate Development Plan Document (DPD).

Once vacated the site will become a major brownfield site (previously developed). National planning policy requires councils to make the most effective and efficient use of brownfield land and it is expected that the Ministry of Defence will want to explore all opportunities for the re-use and reclamation of the site.

The barracks were established on the site of the former RAF North Luffenham airfield in 1998. They became the home of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in 1999, of the King's Own Royal Border Regiment in 2003 and of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery in 2007. In April 2013 16th Regiment Royal Artillery received the Freedom of Oakham on behalf of the barracks. In July 2014 16th Regiment Royal Artillery moved

to Baker Barracks, Thorney Island. 2 Medical Regiment, Royal Army Medical Corps and 1 Military Working Dogs Regiment, Royal Army Veterinary Corps moved into St George's Barracks later that year.

Prior to the Army taking over the site in 1998, it was used by the RAF. The station was built as a training airfield, opening in 1940. It was later taken over by 5 Group of RAF Bomber Command as a heavy bomber base and was expanded by the building of concrete runways later in the war.

From 1959 to 1963, North Luffenham was the base for PGM-17 Thor intermediate range ballistic missiles, operated by No. 144 Squadron RAF. The Thor missile site was listed as a Grade II* building in 2011.

When the RAF vacated the base, the gates from the main entrance were donated to the village of North Luffenham. The gates which bear the station badge were later erected at the entrance to the village's recreation ground.

The military heritage is deeply ingrained in the site including listed buildings related to the Thor missile site, current operational buildings, streets, spaces, trees, and landscaping and therefore what remains when the operational use of the site ceases will continue to be influenced by its military past.

There is already a community at St. George's, and this will continue to be the case once operational use ceases. It is vital that the future of the community is well managed to ensure a sustainable future for current and future residents. Therefore, this Local Plan will look to ensure that the impacts of this change are well managed to deliver the best possible outcomes for the community through future joint working between the County Council, Ministry of Defence, and other involved partners in terms of planning for its future sustainable development in line with the spatial strategy set out in this plan.

Key issues include:

- the unique and important site is of national significance in its heritage.
- existing biodiversity and ecology on site.
- the specific nature of the site and challenges in relation to integration and improved access both across the site itself and to other settlements, supporting connectivity and future sustainability.
- the risk of fragmented nature of current infrastructure across the site and challenges around infrastructure specification and standards affecting opportunities for future public authority adoption.
- the relationship of new development to neighbouring communities.
- the scope for the retention and development of existing employment opportunities.

The St. George's site offers the opportunity to provide for appropriate employment as part of a comprehensive development proposal. Redevelopment proposals are not

expected to deliver more than between 350 and 500 dwellings as part of a mixed-use development, although this will be determined within the proposed masterplan approach through a separate Development Plan Document or through an early review to this plan, once environmental considerations have been taken into account.

Woolfox

The site is known as “Woolfox” and it lies within the administrative area of Rutland County Council. Woolfox is located directly to the east of, and with access to, the A1 in Rutland. The site is also strategically well placed between the existing market towns of Oakham (approx. 9.6 miles to the west), Stamford (approx. 6.6 miles to the south), Grantham (approx. 16.6 miles to the north) and Bourne (approx. 12.3 miles to the east) (‘the Site’). It is circa 3.7 miles from the boundary with the adjoining South Kesteven District.

The Woolfox site extends to approximately 503 hectares (1,242 acres) and comprises a former Airfield and agricultural land, as outlined on the Policies Map. It is understood that the former RAF Airfield on the site was constructed in 1940 and was used through the Second World War for training and live missions. After the war, the airfield continued to be used for training until 1953. Part of the airfield adjacent to the A1 was subsequently used for Bloodhound I missiles until 1964, and the site was sold by the MOD, and purchased by the current landowner family in 1966. A number of derelict buildings or evident remains of former buildings, along with significant areas of extensive hard surfacing from the former runways, taxiways, roads and tracks remain present on the site.

Like St George’s, the Woolfox site is also subject to environmental and geological constraints and similarly there are uncertainties and complexities to a development in this location. Unlike St George’s, the Woolfox site is not considered to meet the definition of previously developed land.

The Council received proposals for the development of a new community at Woolfox, through the Call for Sites. The proposal submitted in 2023 included an expected capacity of at least 4,000 houses together with over 100 hectares of employment land (although previous submissions have referred to the potential of the site delivering higher capacities than this). Should such a large scale, long term new settlement proposal be considered appropriate and deliverable, there may be scope for it to address wider sub-regional needs.

Allocating a development of the scale and nature proposed for Woolfox would compromise the delivery of the proposed spatial strategy set out in this plan and potentially the plans of neighbouring areas. Therefore, the proposals put forward are not considered to be deliverable within the context of the assessed employment and housing needs for Rutland for this plan period. However, the Council is mindful of potential increases in the Local Housing Need for Rutland and neighbouring areas

as set out in the Government’s consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system.

The scale, nature and deliverability of a proposal for Woolfox will need to be determined through a masterplan to be prepared either as part of an early review of the Local Plan or as a separate Development Plan Document. This will be required prior to a planning application being submitted.

This Local Plan does not, therefore, allocate the Woolfox site. It is recognised, however, that the site may contribute to meeting future development needs of Rutland, particularly if it is possible to develop a sub-regional basis for its consideration and therefore policy SS4 identifies Woolfox as a future opportunity area.

Supporting Evidence

Whilst large amount of evidence was prepared to support the previous proposals for each site it is expected that a new evidence base will be required as part of the preparation of a master plan for both sites.

Military Sites, Prisons and Other Secure Residential Establishments

What will these policies do?

Operational facilities in Rutland currently include Kendrew Barracks at Cottesmore (formerly RAF Cottesmore), St George's Barracks at North Luffenham and HMP Stocken. It is expected that the use of these facilities will change and may need to expand during the plan period. A separate policy (SS4) is included for St George's Barracks which is expected to close in 2026. Policies SS5 and SS6 will not apply to the redevelopment of St Georges Barracks.

The following two policies will enable the Council to plan positively for the continuing operational use and potential change of use which may arise from these sites during the plan period. The MOD, as a Crown body, also has permitted development rights on Crown Land whereby planning permission would not be required for certain types of development and so Policy SS6 would not be applicable to such proposals.

Policy SS5 – Use of military bases and other secure residential establishments for operational or other purposes

Development required for the continued operation of military bases or prisons will be acceptable within (and immediately adjacent to) the areas shown on the policies map, provided that, wherever possible, it would:

- a) re-use previously developed land and buildings;**
- b) keep the use of undeveloped land to a minimum and is justified on the basis of national prison or defence requirements;**
- c) not lead to undue disturbance to nearby local communities through traffic, noise, military, or prison activity;**
- d) protect and enhance the countryside and character of the landscape, natural and cultural heritage, and heritage assets and their settings;**
- e) provide satisfactory access arrangements and not result in unacceptable levels of traffic on the surrounding highway network;**
- f) incorporate high quality design which makes provision for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and waste management;**
- g) incorporate satisfactory water and wastewater arrangements ensuring there is no increased risk of flooding and pollution;**
- h) ensure that potential risks from former uses of the sites are assessed and that soil and groundwater are cleaned up where necessary, in line with requirements of Policy SC4.**

The small-scale development of an individual building, or part of a military base or prison for alternative uses which are not required for the operation of the establishment, will be given favourable consideration provided that it complies with the key requirements set out in Policy SS6 (Re-use of redundant

military bases and prisons) and that it would not adversely affect the operational use of the establishment.

Policy SS6 – Re-use of redundant military bases and other secure residential establishments

Any proposal for the comprehensive re-use or redevelopment of redundant military bases and other secure residential establishments should be planned and developed in a holistic and co-ordinated manner.

Proposals must be in accordance with an agreed development brief or masterplan setting out the main requirements of the scheme. This could form part of a supplementary planning document or a development plan document to be prepared in consultation with the landowner, prospective developers, the Council and local communities.

Proposals should demonstrate and ensure that they:

- a) re-use existing land and suitable buildings and where appropriate minimise any built development on undeveloped land within the curtilage; and**
- b) minimise disturbance to nearby local communities through traffic, noise, other activities or uses;**
- c) protect and where possible, enhance the countryside and character of the landscape, natural and cultural heritage and heritage assets and their settings;**
- d) be subject to a transport assessment demonstrating that the proposal can be accessed satisfactorily, or mitigate unacceptable traffic impact on the surrounding road network and will be accessible or could improve access by public transport and include measures to encourage walking and cycling;**
- e) incorporate high quality design and construction including the need for energy efficiency, renewable energy, and waste management;**
- f) ensure appropriate new and/or improved physical, social and community infrastructure is provided to serve the needs arising from the proposed development and during construction;**
- g) incorporate satisfactory water and wastewater arrangements ensuring there is no increased risk of flooding and pollution;**
- h) ensure that potential risks from former uses of the sites are assessed and that soil and groundwater are cleaned up where necessary, in line with requirements of Policy SC4.**

Why are these policies needed?

Operational facilities in Rutland form an important part of the local economy and community. Sites generally include extensive areas of land and buildings including ex-airfields, technical buildings, community, and leisure facilities for use by service personnel, as well as military housing.

Development in connection with the use of military bases and prisons will normally need planning permission with the exception of some special arrangements concerned with national security and defence urgency and enforcement.

Sites are often located in remote countryside locations where new development would normally be restricted; it is recognised however that some flexibility may be needed where development is needed for operational purposes. Policy SS6 for operational uses of military and prison sites recognises the need to be flexible in considering proposals which are necessary for the continuing operation of such sites. Site boundaries within which the policy applies are shown on the Policies Map. Operation uses will not be expected to extend beyond these boundaries. The policy also allows for the alternative use of an individual building or part of a military base or prison where it is small in scale and would not adversely affect the use of the area for operational purposes.

Proposals for the re-use of a redundant military base or prison other than St George's or Woolfox (which are covered by a separate policy) are likely to be significant and may need to be considered via a review of the local plan or through the development of a separate Development Plan Document. Policy SS6 sets out the key requirements that need to be considered for any alternative uses of the remaining military base or prison setting out criteria relating to the re-use of existing land and buildings, disturbance to local communities, protecting the countryside, landscape and ecology, accessibility, design and construction, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. The detailed requirements of any alternative uses would need to be the subject of a master plan or development brief or through a development plan document and must be based on robust evidence. Proposal will be subject to publicity and consultation. Major proposals, beyond those proposed within this plan, would need to be considered in the context of the spatial strategy and are likely to trigger the review of this local plan.

Supporting Evidence

None

Development in the open Countryside

What will these policies do?

Rutland is a largely rural county. This rurality together with the attractive open landscapes, mean that non-essential development in the rural countryside of the County is inappropriate and will be restricted. However, there are certain types of development which are considered essential to maintain a thriving and active rural community and economy. Policies SS7 and SS8 set out the types of development which are considered acceptable subject to the specific criteria included within policies and policy SS9 provides criteria against which proposals for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside will be considered.

Policy SS7 - Residential development in the open countryside

New-build housing will only be permitted in the open countryside where the proposal is for the following uses, and which specifically meet the requirements of NPPF and subject to the relevant policies of this plan:

- **affordable housing on rural exceptions sites (Policy H8)**
- **housing to meet a proven essential need for rural workers**
- **conversion of buildings outside PLDs (Policy SS9)**
- **Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People sites (Policy H10) to help meet identified accommodation needs**
- **where the principle of residential accommodation has previously been established and remains extant (or where a valid permission exists), and the proposal results in an improved design or impact on the character of the surrounding area**
- **where proposed development is in accordance with paragraph 84 (regarding Rural Housing) of the NPPF**

Policy SS8 – Non-residential development in the countryside

Non-residential development in the countryside will only be supported where it is for one of the following purposes:

1. **essential for the efficient operation of a rural use (such as agriculture, horticulture, equestrian or forestry uses); or**
2. **essential for the provision of sport, recreation, and visitor facilities where the countryside is the most appropriate location; or**
3. **essential investment in infrastructure including utilities, renewable energy and roadside services required for public safety purposes; or**
4. **a rural enterprise comprising small scale alterations, extensions, or other development ancillary to an existing established use which is appropriate in the countryside; or**
5. **new employment growth comprising sustainable rural tourism, leisure, or rural enterprise that creates local employment opportunities and supports the local economy and communities and where no acceptable alternative can be identified within existing permitted or allocated sites, or within or through redevelopment of existing commercial premises;**

- 6. an extension of an existing employment site, which will not intensify uses at the site to the detriment of existing public access routes and highways and which is of a size which is in keeping with the existing employment use and appropriate to its location; or**
- 7. economic projects which have a functional need to be located in the countryside and have a demonstrable economic benefit to the County and significantly outweighs any harm and there are no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts; or**
- 8. farm diversification that supports waste management development; or**
- 9. mineral development that supports the provision of minerals for aggregate purpose, cement production, locally sourced building materials or processing of recycled aggregate; or**
- 10. involves the conversion of existing rural buildings for business and employment generating uses in accordance with Policy SS9.**

All proposals will be expected to demonstrate that criterion a)-h) below are met:

- a) the development cannot reasonably be accommodated within or adjoining the Planned Limits of Development of towns and villages;**
- b) the amount of new build or alteration is kept to a minimum and the local planning authority is satisfied that existing buildings available elsewhere in the County are not suitable for the purpose;**
- c) the development itself, or cumulatively with other development, would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the landscape, visual amenity, and the setting of towns and villages and is of a scale, design, and layout appropriate to the context;**
- d) the development would not generate an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic movements, and it is capable of being served by public transport or otherwise is readily accessible by means other than by private car to a significant residential workforce if employment intensive uses are proposed. Where is it related to a tourism use it must also be located in close proximity to PROW/footpaths and cycleways;**
- e) access arrangements and parking facilities will be provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards. (See also Appendix 5 Parking Standards);**
- f) a sympathetic relationship and scale to the surrounding areas that shows consideration of the landscape, habitat, built and historic environment contexts, the opportunities to deliver on-site habitats and protect key species;**
- g) a satisfactory relationship with neighbouring uses in order that the amenities of nearby residents, in particular, are protected; and**
- h) where appropriate, crime prevention measures are incorporated.**

Policy SS9 - Conversion of buildings outside PLDs

Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings in the countryside outside the Planned Limits of Development will only be permitted provided that:

- a) the building is structurally sound, of permanent construction, and capable of conversion without rebuilding or significant alteration or extension;**
- b) the resultant building use will not have an adverse effect on the rural character of the area in respect of the nature and level of activity likely to be generated, including the resultant traffic level;**
- c) the resultant building and ancillary areas are sympathetic to its setting in terms of form, bulk and visual design;**
- d) where the building is of historic or architectural importance, there is no adverse effect on the character and appearance or features of architectural or historic interest, internally and externally, which the building or its setting possesses; and**
- e) the traffic to be generated by the new use can be safely accommodated by the site access and the local road network.**

A structural survey may be required to demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion. Provision for accommodating protected species identified by a survey will be incorporated into the scheme. Where necessary, planning conditions will be imposed removing relevant Permitted Development Rights under the General Permitted Development Order.

Policy SS10 - New agricultural buildings

Agricultural buildings will be permitted in the countryside provided that:

- a) their scale, siting, design, materials and use of landscaping minimise the visual impact on the landscape and ensure they are not prominent on the skyline;**
- b) new buildings are grouped with any existing buildings. Isolated buildings will only be permitted where their location is essential to the agricultural activity being undertaken and where they are not situated in a prominent location;**
- c) they will not have an adverse effect on residential amenity in terms of noise, dust, smell or disturbance from vehicular movements;**
- d) if housing livestock, they are not within 75 metres of a watercourse unless the Council is satisfied that all biological run offs of waste can be contained; and**
- e) if created to contain biological waste to have an impermeable base together with provision for containment of any product of such storage, in order to prevent leakage, overflow or spillage of such product into the environment.**

Why are these policies needed?

Housing

To promote sustainable development in the countryside, the NPPF expects housing to be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In the absence of special circumstances, local planning authorities should avoid permitting new isolated homes in the countryside. Exemptions to this are made within NPPF for specific types of housing.

Policy SS7 above is intended to preclude the development of new-build open market housing which, for strategic reasons, is not needed in the countryside. The policy does not, however, preclude the development of specific types of open market housing in rural locations; for example, dwellings resulting from the conversion of rural buildings. It would also not prevent alterations to, or extensions of, existing buildings. There is a significant lack of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites across the County which is the reason for the inclusion within this policy.

Non- Residential uses

The NPPF supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

The Local Plan makes provision for development that is essential for the efficient operation of agriculture, horticulture, equestrian or forestry and that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside.

The Council will generally encourage the change of use of suitable existing buildings for agricultural purposes to related uses supporting rural growth such as small craft workshops, rural diversification and Agri-tech uses. The Council will also permit additional, small-scale extensions or ancillary new development where it can be achieved in accordance with the criteria set out in the Policy.

To be ancillary, the scale of new development would not be expected, either individually or cumulatively, to exceed 50% of both the volume and the footprint of the existing building unless it is clearly demonstrated that a larger development necessary and appropriate in the location.

Policy SS8 also recognises that there are forms of outdoor recreational and sports development, including the expansion of existing facilities, which are of a land extensive nature such that the countryside is the only appropriate location. A critical requirement for this type of activity will be avoiding development that is visually intrusive to the form and character of the wider countryside setting.

The policy also recognises that there is scope for agricultural diversification to provide waste related development (such as facilities for anaerobic digestion and other forms of composting) and mineral development, provided that essential criteria are met to ensure mitigation to acceptable levels of impact can be achieved.

It should be noted that certain changes of use of agricultural buildings to dwelling houses and to commercial uses do not require planning permission, subject to prior approval of the local authority in respect of certain matters. Further details are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

Supporting Evidence

None