

## **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 and Woolfox are proposed as Future Opportunity Areas (policy SS4) within this Local Plan. These sites may deliver new employment premises and uses in the future; however, the sites are 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.**

<b>E1.1 Car Park 3 Rutland Showground, Oakham</b>	<b>High quality office and other high-quality employment</b>	<b>3.0ha</b>
<b>E1.2 Uppingham Gate, Uppingham</b>	<b>Range of employment uses</b>	<b>6.8ha</b>

<b>E1.3 Burley Appliances Ltd, Oakham</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>1.0ha</b>
<b>E1.4 Land at Pit Lane Ketton</b>	<b>Light industrial uses</b>	<b>0.9ha</b>
<b>E1.5 Woolfox Depot, Great North Road</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>8.2ha</b>
<b>E1.6 Land at Wireless Hill, South Luffenham</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>6.5ha</b>

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) on sites of 1ha or greater demonstrate through an economic impact assessment that the proposed scheme will create significant employment requiring NVQ level 4 or above and/or apprenticeships leading to NVQ level 5 and above.

Policies E1.1 – E1.6 below set out detailed development principles which should be incorporated into the development for each site. They also include a list of additional studies and evidence which will be required to support a planning application for each site. This list is not exhaustive and additional work may be required as part of the planning application process.

### **E1.1 Car Park Rutland Showground**

<b>Policy E1.1</b>	<b>Car Park 3 Rutland Showground</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 130</b>
<p>Site area: 3ha                      Allocated use: High quality office and other high-quality employment</p> <p>The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Retain and buffer the existing mature trees on the site</li> <li>b) Retain and enhance, where possible the hedgerows as shelterbelts which border the site to mitigate landscape and visual impact and enhance existing green infrastructure</li> <li>c) Ensure the location and type of access is in accordance with Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) and is not located via the existing access onto Oakham Road</li> <li>d) Make appropriate provision for surface water flood management through the provision of a SuDS drainage system</li> </ol>		

<p>e) Ensure the provision of measures to enhance pedestrian connectivity and improvements to public transport provision</p>
<p>For Information:</p> <p>An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full transport assessment</li> <li>• SuDS Drainage System</li> <li>• Archaeological Assessment</li> <li>• Badger survey</li> <li>• Great Crested Newt survey</li> <li>• Habitat survey</li> <li>• Agricultural land assessment</li> <li>• Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)</li> </ul>

### **E1.2 Uppingham Gate**

<b>Policy E1.2</b>	<b>Uppingham Gate</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 191</b>
<p>Site area: 6.8ha Allocated use: Range of employment uses</p> <p>The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Retain and enhance existing hedgerows and trees</li> <li>b) Provide access to the site from Northgate and ensure all junctions are designed in accordance with the DMRB</li> <li>c) Ensure any off-site highway works do not result in congestion onto the A47</li> <li>d) Ensure the provision of measures to enhance pedestrian connectivity and improvements to public transport provision</li> <li>e) Take into account the sites topography by ensuring the development is not visually intrusive and harmful to the character of the area</li> <li>f) Ensure that new units would be set away from neighbouring properties and not result in any undue overlooking or overshadowing</li> <li>g) Incorporate measures to reduce noise and disturbance to the adjacent properties, including lighting</li> </ul>		
<p>For Information:</p>		

An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:

- Full transport assessment
- Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) – including surveys relating to the discovery of Potential Roost Features (PRF's)
- Flood risk assessment – including the provision of SuDS
- Archaeological assessment – including pre-determination evaluation by desk based and appropriate field assessment
- Agricultural land assessment
- Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)

### **E1.3 Burley Appliances Ltd**

<b>Policy E1.3</b>	<b>Burley Appliances Ltd</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 21</b>
<p>Site area: 1ha Allocated use: Industrial</p> <p>The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ensure that the mature hedgerows and trees are buffered using semi-natural vegetation which is not incorporated into plot boundaries</li> <li>b) Provide a separate access to that of any residential development provided on the site</li> <li>c) Make appropriate provision for surface water flood management through the provision of a SuDS drainage system</li> <li>d) Ensure that new units would be set away from nearby residential properties and not result in any undue overlooking or overshadowing</li> </ol>		
<p>For Information:</p> <p>An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full transport assessment</li> <li>• SuDS drainage system</li> <li>• Ecological assessment</li> <li>• Bat survey</li> <li>• Badger survey</li> <li>• Archaeological assessment – including pre-determination evaluation by desk based and appropriate field assessment</li> <li>• Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)</li> </ul>		

### **E1.4 Pit Lane, Ketton**

<b>Policy E1.4</b>	<b>Pit Lane, Ketton</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 4508</b>
<p>Site area: 0.9ha                  Allocated use: Light Industrial uses</p> <p>The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Provide a footway connection to the existing footway in Pit Lane and widening of the existing vehicular access</li> <li>b) Make appropriate provision for surface water management systems, including a SUDS drainage system, taking into account the site’s location within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone</li> <li>c) Incorporate the broadleaved plantation woodland into the scheme design, and ensure the existing boundary hedgerows are retained and enhanced to provide visual screening of the site</li> <li>d) Appropriate buffer strips around habitats of biodiversity value should be included as part of any development proposals</li> <li>e) Ensure the development pays special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Ketton Conservation Area</li> <li>f) Ensure that new units would be set away from neighbouring properties and not result in any undue overlooking or overshadowing</li> <li>g) Incorporate measures to reduce noise and disturbance to the adjacent properties, including lighting</li> </ol>		
<p>For Information:</p> <p>An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SuDS drainage system</li> <li>• Bat activity survey – including Potential Roost Assessment (PRA)</li> <li>• Badger survey</li> <li>• Reptile survey and precautionary method statement</li> <li>• Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)</li> <li>• Archaeological assessment – including pre-determination evaluation by desk based and appropriate field assessment</li> <li>• Light assessment</li> <li>• Noise assessment</li> <li>• Dust and Odour Assessment</li> <li>• Agricultural land assessment</li> <li>• Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)</li> </ul>		

### **E1.5 Woolfox Depot, Great North Road**

<b>Policy E1.5</b>	<b>Woolfox Depot, Great North Road</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 8033</b>
<p>Site area: 8.2ha                  Allocated use: Light Industrial</p>		

The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:

- a) Ensure all border hedges are retained
- b) Make appropriate provision for surface water management systems, including a SUDS drainage system taking into account the risk to downstream locations and the site's location within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone
- c) Provide access to new units via the existing access point adjacent to the existing Zeeco business, off Great North Road
- d) Ensure any development on the site does not impact on the Mineral Safeguarding Area
- e) Take into account the setting of the Horn deserted medieval village and moated site Scheduled Monument to the southwest of the site
- f) Ensure the retention of features within the landscape associated with WW1

For Information:

An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:

- Full transport assessment
- Ecological assessment – to determine the impact of the development of the nearby Bloody Oaks Quarry SSSI and the Woolfox Quarry (Regionally Important Geological Site (RIGS) the adjacent verge and Hardwick Wood (deciduous woodland), taking into account and protected species and BAP priority habitats.
- SuDS drainage systems
- Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) due to the site being location within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA).
- Archaeological assessment – including pre-determination evaluation by desk based and appropriate field assessment
- Heritage assessment
- Require consultation with Natural England on likely risks within the impact zone
- Agricultural land assessment
- Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)

## **E1.6 Wireless Hill, South Luffenham**

<b>Policy E1.6</b>	<b>Wireless Hill, South Luffenham</b>	<b>OPUS ID: 6605</b>
<p>Site area: 6.5ha                      Allocated use: B8 – Storage and Distribution</p> <p>The proposed development should be designed to incorporate the following key principles within the layout:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Retain the existing tree belts on the existing Wireless Hill Industrial Estate's northeast boundary and northwest boundaries, if possible</li> <li>b) Provide visual screening in the form of trees along the site's northeast and northwest boundaries</li> <li>c) Include measures to reduce the amount of artificial light required on site and to limit the impact of light spillage from the site</li> <li>d) Ensure that access to the site via the existing access point on Wireless Hill can be achieved</li> <li>e) Ensure the size and massing of the units mirror those on the existing Wireless Hill site to limit the development's impact on the landscape</li> <li>f) Make appropriate provision for surface water management systems, including a SUDS drainage system taking the site's location within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone</li> <li>g) Ensure any development of the site does not impact on the Mineral Safeguarding Area</li> <li>h) Provide, where possible, enhancements to pedestrian infrastructure to South Luffenham to encourage sustainable travel</li> </ol>		
<p>For Information:</p> <p>An application for this site should be accompanied by the following evidence/surveys which include, where appropriate, evidence that the necessary mitigation measures have been planned into the design and layout of the development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full transport assessment – including considerations for pedestrian connectivity and associated infrastructure for South Luffenham</li> <li>• SuDS drainage system</li> <li>• Archaeological assessment – including pre-determination evaluation by desk based and appropriate field assessment</li> <li>• Ecological assessment - to determine the impact of the adjacent Luffenham Heath Golf Course SSSI and the Stamford Road Roadside Verge Nature Reserves (RVNR), including consideration for protected species and BAP priority habitats</li> <li>• Mineral Resource Assessment (MRA) due to the site being location within a Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA)</li> <li>• Require consultation with Natural England on likely risks within the impact zone</li> <li>• Agricultural land assessment</li> <li>• Engagement with Anglian Water to consider water demands and process efficiencies – related to light industrial uses (particularly food and drink manufacturing)</li> </ul>		

## **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 primarily a rural area, reflecting its settlement morphology and the fact that its largest settlement, Oakham, has a population of under 14,000 people. Although Rutland has a largely rural economy but it is important to acknowledge that particularly the east of the County is well-connected through its proximity to the A1 giving the County direct access to London and other major employment centres. This is complemented by the A47 corridor providing east-west connectivity.

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 and A47 corridors and in town centres.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

## **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 expansion of existing firms, through both relocation within Rutland, as well as the enlargement of existing premises, provided that the development:**

- a) will improve their economic and environmental sustainability;**
- b) will not have an adverse impact on 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 landscape, character, 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

## **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 SS8 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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



## **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 encourages 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) create high skilled employment opportunities to enable Rutland residents who currently commute outside the County to work locally;**
- d) promote skills on strategic housing and employment sites particularly with regard to construction skills;**
- e) address barriers to employment for economically inactive people (including those who have a disability, long term sickness or leaving education); and**
- f) provide for the development of childcare facilities within or close proximity to employment sites.**

**Employment and Skills plans will be required as part of the submission of a planning application 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 are likely to 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.

## **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

## **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, must be provided. For such schemes, provision in the form of ducting and other necessary infrastructure for the future delivery of FTTP is required, where possible.**

**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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

## **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 SS8, 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 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

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

## **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**
- f) they have good access to public rights of way or cycle paths; and other non-vehicular means of access; and**
- g) 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

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

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

## **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 500m<sup>2</sup> 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 SPD**



**\* 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 was undertaken for Rutland in 2023. 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

[Rutland Retail, Leisure and Town Centres Study 2023](#)  
[Shop Fronts SPD 2015](#)

## **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**

**E(a) 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 E(a) 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-E(a) uses in the primary shopping areas are managed to ensure that they support, and do not come to dominate, the predominantly E(a) 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 (E (a)) to financial services (Ec,i)), and restaurants and cafes (E(b)) 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 retail uses (E(a)) 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 Class E(a) uses (see Glossary) which may be appropriate in the primary shopping areas are banks, building societies and other financial services covered by E(c,i) Use class, E(b) uses such as restaurants and cafés, some sui generis 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 Class E(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 security and any subsequent updated guidance on this issue. This SPD may be updated following the adoption of the Local Plan.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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

## **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 E(a) 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.

## **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.

## **Supporting Evidence**

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

## **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 (typically this is expected to be under 300 sqm) 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 proportionate to the existing settlement or the planned expansion of that settlement 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 consider 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. 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 sqm. 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.

### **Supporting Evidence**

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