

## Appendix 1g – Town Centres

### Section Title – Town Centres

Number of responses - 22

#### Direction of comments received.

Total number of Objections - 7

Total number of Support - 4

Total number of neither Object nor Support - 11

#### Summary of main points

#### Statutory Consultees

##### Historic England

Criteria (i) in policy TCE3 is welcomed **(id.408)**

##### Natural England

Comment in relation to question 3.

- GI corridors strategically underpin the Part 2 Local Plan. GI identified include the Jurassic Way Sub-Regional GI Corridor, Sywell Reservoir to Broughton local GI corridor, Tailby Meadow Local Nature Reserve, as well as other important natural features including the Nene and River Ise Valleys together with the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area. **(id. 393)**
- The River Ise and Meadows SSSI are highly sensitive and any development in the area could increase sediment load, and such proposals must be subject to a condition requiring a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). **(id. 393)**
- The River Ise and Meadows should be considered as containing a habitat of principal importance (Lowland Meadow) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) due to the presence of rare grassland; **(id. 393)**
- Tailby Meadow Local Nature Reserve should be recognised to at least county level importance, and the site and surrounding area should be avoided for development and measures adopted to avoid impacts from recreational pressure **(id. 393)**

#### Desborough Town Council

Objection regarding Policy TCE1. Why has the lawrences site been discounted as a possible site for a medium sized food store, if town centre sites are being given a priority? **(id. 240)**

Objection regarding Policy TCE3. Residential developments in town centre do not result in a loss of use. Why is Lawrences site being considered solely for residential and not a mixed use. **(id. 242; 256)**

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The [Desborough] library should be listed as a service/facility in Policy TCE6.(id. 243; 257)

The old dairy site [Desborough] should be investigated to see if it is large enough for a medium sized food store. (id. 244)

### **Support for Policy TCE3 (1)**

The concentration of retail offer over a smaller area avoids town centre offer from being diluted. (id.12)

Encouraging residential development closer to the centre is supported. (id.12)

### **Comment to Policy TCE4 (1)**

The parameters of a Local Centre within the draft Part 2 Local Plan need to be provided to ensure that any proposed Local Centre does not undermine the vitality and viability of designated town centres. A definition for local centres is proposed within the response which sets out floorspace thresholds and use class types. (id. 164; 165\*)

The reference to '*within the town centre*' should be replaced by '*within a defined town centre*'.(1) (id. 164; 165\*)

The policy must include a definition of the context of a local centre to ensure that development provided is in fact “small scale” (1) (id. 164; 165\*)

[\* Duplicate of comment 164]

### **Comment to Policy TCE5(1)**

The statement that no impact assessment is required below the stated threshold should be removed, in order to maintain freedom to deal with cumulative impacts, and avoid the risk of receiving applications just below the identified threshold. (id. 166)

Can effective implementation of the policy be achieved with respect of applying the national threshold for main town centre proposals located just outside of town centres which are not subject to locally set thresholds? E.g. could a proposal up to 2,500m<sup>2</sup> be pursued in locations adjacent to another centre in the hierarchy without the need to submit an impact assessment? (id. 166)

There needs to be a provision for triggering an impact and sequential assessment for proposals in new local centres above the floorspace thresholds. (id. 166)

### **Comments to Question 3**

Another supermarket in Desborough is needed, but it should be located on the outskirts of the town as there is not a suitable site within the town. (id. 112)

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The need for a new foodstore to serve Desborough/Rothwell area needs revisiting to assess the current capacity need, as the evidence base supporting Policy 12 (NNJCS) is nearly 4 years old, and there has been significant change nationally/locally within the retail industry, including the delivery of Rushden Lakes proposed alterations/extensions. **(id. 163)**

Desborough and Rothwell need more shops, and both are large enough to sustain a supermarket, and in light of cuts to public transport, residents need a local store. **(id. 280)**

A housebuilder identifies that there is the potential for a supermarket alongside residential development could be delivered at RO/205 – land west of Shotwell Mill Lane, Rothwell. **(id. 489)**

### Comments to Policy TCE6 (3)

Closure of Desborough Library and a lack of support from KBC to keep it open is contrary to the objectives set out within policy TCE6. **(id. 113)**

Strong support given to the protection/enhancement of local services in the Hawthorn Road area. **(id.131; 137\*; 138)**

Argyll Street should be included in TCE6 [note comment refers to TCE5 which is incorrected], as it has as many services as those at Hawthorn Road. **(id.131; 137\*; 138)**

Waiting and loading services which serve local service/facilities should also be protected. **(id 131; 137\*; 138)**

Policy TCE6 protected areas should be shown on a map. **(id. 137; 138)**

Paragraph 70 (bullet point 3) of the NPPF [2012] is supportive of policies guarding against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities/services. **(id. 131; 137\* )**

*[duplicates comment 131]*

The boundary identifying Argyll Street services/facilities should be Broadway and Roundhill Road. **(id. 138)**

The policy is supported as local areas with shops and amenities such as Hampden Crescent and Hawthorn Road play a crucial community role. **(id. 281)**

Recommend bullet point 3 is altered to remove the word 'economically' from the sentence, as many community/cultural facilities are dependent on discounted/peppercorn rents/subsidies/funding. However, they offer social value and support the vibrancy/viability of surroundings. **(id. 342)**

The services listed in the paragraph under bullet point 4, should also include

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*'cultural facilities'*. (id. 342)

### **Implications of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018)**

The emerging draft SSP2 Local Plan was prepared prior the publication of the NPPF (2018), which makes minor changes to the superseded NPPF (2012). In particular, section 2 made additional provisions which require planning policies to:

- Make clear the range of uses permitted in town centres and primary shopping areas;
- Plan at least ten years ahead when allocating a range of suitable sites in a town centre with a greater focus on meeting anticipated main town centre use needs.
- Recognise residential development often plays an important role in ensuring vitality of centres.

Individual market town chapters within the draft SSP2 Local Plan allocate specific sites in terms of opportunity redevelopment sites. Town centre boundaries are also set out within each town section of the draft SSP2 Local Plan defining their extent. The draft SSP2 Local Plan covers the period up to 2031, which is in excess of 10 years. It is acknowledged that the opportunity redevelopment sites are based on urban renewal ambitions as opposed to an assessed town centre capacity need, notwithstanding the existing identified need for a supermarket to serve the Rothwell and Desborough area. However, other parts of the Development Plan will fulfil this policy requirement within the principal growth town of Kettering through a review of the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (KTCAAP).

Justification for not setting primary shopping areas in the market towns was discussed in paragraph 6.4 of the SSP2 Local Plan and SSP2 Background Paper: Town Centres and Town Centres Update. Although the NPPF (2018) maintains a need to define the extent of primary shopping areas, this position remains unchanged due to the characteristics of these small market towns. Emerging Policy TCE3 relates specifically to 'Residential Development Within the Town Centres', recognising that residential development plays an important role in ensuring vitality of town centres.

### **Summary of Officer Comments**

Further criteria will be added to protect GI corridors in relation to policy TCE1 which sets out criteria to be applied to proposals for a medium sized food store serving Rothwell and Desborough.

Proposals for a supermarket will need to follow the sequential test in accordance with the NPPF, therefore prioritising town centre first locations, before considering edge of town centre locations and then other assessable locations that are well connected.

Further work will be undertaken to identify the current position in relation to

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the Desborough library to determine whether there is scope to safeguard the library for a community use.

Further work will be undertaken to investigate the facilities available on Argyll Street to consider whether this should be included as a local centre in the Pre-Submission version of the SSP2, together with maps defining the extent of the local centres.

The need for a medium sized food store responds to a strategically identified need set out within the Joint Core Strategy. The retail offer provided through Rushden Lakes does not meet local daily needs, but rather, a wider retail offer comprising convenience and comparison goods retail. It is considered that Rushden Lakes will not have an impact on the medium sized food store need referred to within the draft SSP2 Local Plan.

Consideration will be given to including a definition of what constitutes a 'Local Centre'

The Lawrence's site is subject to legal restrictions which prevent a supermarket retail use from being established on this site.

The Old Dairy site will be assessed and investigated for potential use as a medium size food store.

Policy TCE6(3) will be amended to refer to refer to economically or socially viable to reflect the role these facilities play, and supporting text will be updated to reflect this. 'Cultural Facilities' will be included in the list of services and facilities.

### **Next steps**

The following next steps proposed are:

1. Further criteria will be applied to protect GI corridors from development and associated impacts (including the River Ise and Tailby Meadows SSSI) relating to Policy TCE1;
2. Update Policy TCE6 to include libraries within the list of services and facilities, and include a requirement which gives preference to the retention of buildings for a replacement use which comprises a community use where a community use has been lost. This would allow for mixed use development with community use being a part of that use. Accompanying text will also be updated to reflect this;
3. Investigate whether there is scope for the Argyll Street retail area of Kettering to be identified as a local centre for protection;
4. Prepare maps identifying the extent of local centres referred to within Policy TCE6;
5. Define the term '*local centre*' and its parameters to ensure they involve retail proposals of an appropriate scale to clarify Policy TCE6, and protect the vitality/viability of designated town centres;
6. Assess and investigate the Old Dairy Site, Desborough to establish whether it has potential to deliver a medium sized food store;

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7. Amend Policy TCE6, Bullet 3 to exclude '*economically*' and state '*economically and/or socially*', and include '*cultural facilities*' in the list of services and facilities included by reference.