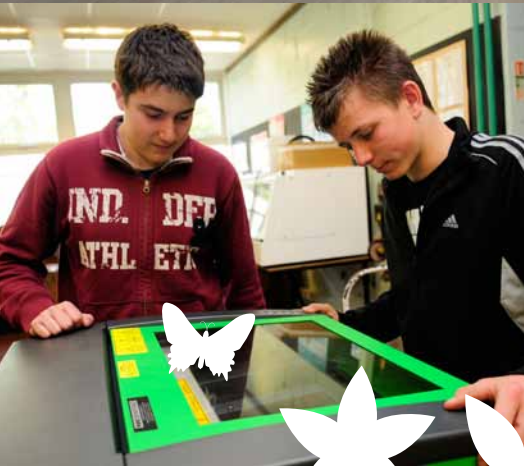


Northamptonshire Arc Background Report



Foreword



At present, there is no single strategy that encompasses all of the county's plans into one coherent approach. Neither is there an approach that expresses priorities in a practical and spatial way.

The purpose of the Northamptonshire Arc concept is to provide this joined-up approach, and in doing so create a strategic policy context for future planning and investment decisions on transport, economic development, environmental and other planning and investment activities. It is an approach based on real and functional economic geography rather than administrative boundaries.

This background report will help to shape and guide important new documents and investment plans in the future. This includes the first statutory Local Economic Assessment, the Sub-Regional Investment Plan and a new style Connectivity Strategy (which will incorporate the role of a Local Transport Plan).

Three thematic outcomes underpin the Northamptonshire Arc and are crucial to creating a cleaner, greener more prosperous county. These are:

- Improved Connectivity
- Leadership on Climate Change and Biodiversity
- A Stronger and Greener Economy

A series of strategic priorities and interventions are identified which help to articulate how the three outcomes will be delivered and represent a 'Transformational Agenda'. These build on existing assets such as our strengths in the high performance engineering and motorsports sectors and growth potential, and new opportunities such as those presented by new technology and innovation and biodiversity, habitat creation, heritage, and recreation.

Importantly the Northamptonshire Arc looks at these three thematic outcomes in an integrated way, rather than in isolation. This will help to align activity, create a commonality, confidence and certainty of purpose, add value and differentiate Northamptonshire from other areas. These will be increasingly important factors in the difficult financial times which lie ahead.

The purpose of publishing this document is to ask for your ideas to help inform how we take forward and develop the Northamptonshire Arc concept and ensure that it is as strong as possible an advocacy document for the whole of the Northamptonshire.

Councillor Jim Harker

Leader of Northamptonshire County Council

Introduction

The need for a Northamptonshire Approach

At present, there is no single, overall strategy which offers a coherent approach to all the county's plans, or expresses our priorities in a practical, spatial way. Moreover, there is no overarching advocacy document for external investment in Northamptonshire.

What is also clear is the need for an approach which articulates and reflects local ambitions at a county level and complements the Northamptonshire Sustainable Communities Strategy. It is essential that this approach acknowledges Northamptonshire's wider strategic location and proximity to London and

the Greater South East and the opportunities and challenges this presents, particularly in relation to the Housing Growth Agenda.

A spatial framework is required which will help to shape and inform responses to external drivers and help to put local priorities and activities into context. It will also help to ensure that Northamptonshire capitalises on its strategic location, access to national networks, and other opportunities. This framework is termed the Northamptonshire Arc.

The Northamptonshire Arc has been adopted by the County Council to guide its decisions on transport, economic

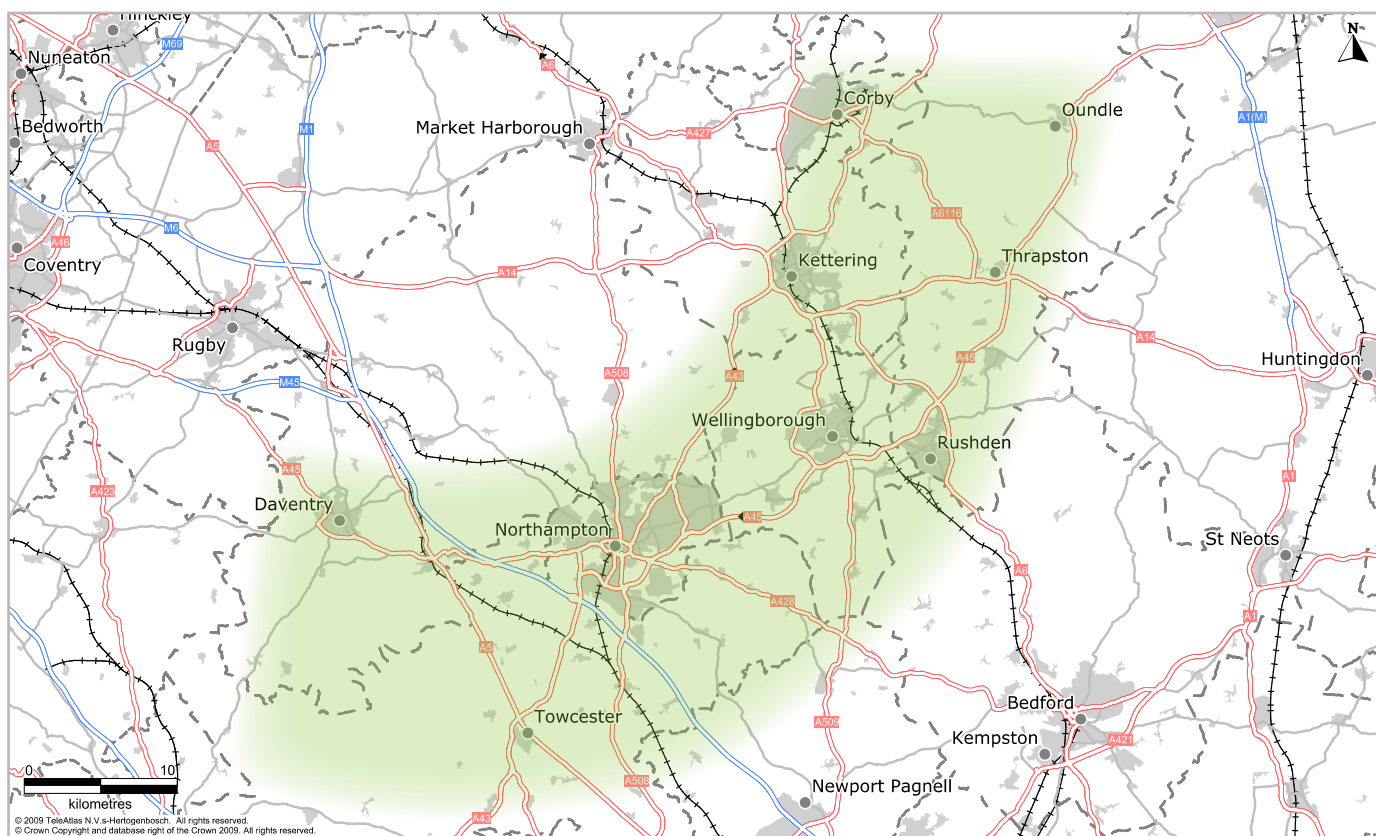


Figure 1 | Northamptonshire Arc



development, environmental and other planning and investment activities. And, is intended to provide an overarching advocacy document for external investment in Northamptonshire. The Northamptonshire Arc will also inform the County Council's input into the county's statutory spatial plans, in particular the Core Strategies for North and West Northamptonshire. It is envisaged that some of the more detailed Northamptonshire Arc proposals and their spatial implications would be considered and tested through the statutory planning process.

The County Council is represented alongside the district and borough councils on the Joint Committees established to prepare and review the Core Strategies. It will seek to ensure that these and other plans for the county offer a coherent approach.

The Northamptonshire Arc is an outcome-led, rather than project led, approach. Three high-level thematic outcomes underpin the Northamptonshire Arc. These are:

- Transformed connectivity
- Leadership on climate change & biodiversity
- A stronger and greener economy

A series of sub-regional priorities (see Appendix A) and activities (see Appendix B) are identified which flow from, reflect, and will help deliver these outcomes. The intention is to provide further clarity and focus, particularly at the county level. This will help to strengthen and align existing activity, demonstrate how this fits with and complements external agendas and local ambitions, and identify and address gaps. It is also to help influence decisions on investment, both internal and external to the county, and action on delivery. It draws on the work of the borough and district councils, joint planning units, regional and local agencies and others.

Northamptonshire Arc - Spatial context and ambitions

In spatial terms, the Northamptonshire Arc (see Figure 1) represents a broad corridor running approximately south-west to north-east from Northampton. It encompasses all the larger towns including Daventry and Towcester in the west and south, Kettering and Corby in the north and Wellingborough, Rushden, Oundle and Thrapston in the east.

It is located strategically between the World City of London and Birmingham, the learning centres of Cambridge and Oxford, and its immediate proximity to the Greater South East. It is also connected by a number of the major economic arteries (both road and rail) which link London with other centres and markets.

As a "cluster" of intrinsically linked centres, the Northamptonshire Arc has the potential to provide an outstanding location to live and offers a diverse choice of employment opportunities, many at the leading edge of their sectors. It can combine the best of urban living with an attractive rural environment which can be the envy of other areas. Part of the Arc concept is an enhanced network of green spaces and a strategic biodiversity corridor connecting and running between the main centres. The concept will span homes, jobs, recreational and leisure opportunities and excellent connectivity encompassing transport and next generation digital connections enabling the opportunity to work, or access many services, from home. High academic and vocational educational attainment will be central to the concept which would also be expected to have the highest environmental credentials in terms of biodiversity, habitat management and the built environment.



This would ensure that local residents enjoy the best life chances and help to make the Arc and Northamptonshire an area of choice for prospective residents, businesses and new investment.

How will it be used?

The Northamptonshire Arc is the overall spatial concept to guide Northamptonshire County Council's future planning and investment in the county and is a key policy and advocacy document for Northamptonshire. It can also help support planning and policy framework documents prepared by the borough and district councils.

The emerging Arc spatial concept has already provided the context for preparing the Northamptonshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan (SRIP) for 2010/11-2012/13. This has recently been approved by the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) and has helped to secure continued Single Programme funding for Northamptonshire in 2010/11.

Initial reactions

A considerable amount of stakeholder engagement has already taken place on the Northamptonshire Arc. This has included presentations to the Boards of local public sector agencies, face-to-face meetings with business sector representatives, private sector investors, utility and infrastructure

providers. Discussions have also taken place with the borough and district councils, regional agencies (including the Regional Development Agency, Homes & Communities Agency, Government Office and the MKSM Secretariat) and key Government officials.

Initial views have been overwhelmingly positive. These include comments received from private sector representatives and the business community who have welcomed this initiative and the Northamptonshire Arc concept.

Way forward

At this stage this is a draft report. It will now be subject to a formal public consultation. The outcome of this will be reported back to the County Council's Cabinet for further consideration. It will also be offered to district and borough councils and the Joint Committees as a key concept to inform and complement their statutory plans and other planning and policy framework documents.

“The Northamptonshire Arc is an overall spatial concept to guide future planning and investment in the county”

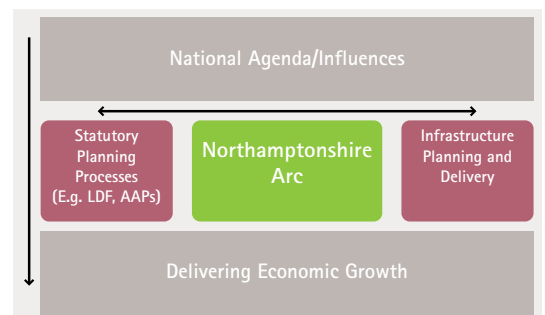


Figure 2 | How the Arc fits in with Planning process and delivery



Background and Local Context

Strategic Drivers

Northamptonshire is undergoing many changes. Key drivers for these include the Housing Growth Agenda and Northamptonshire's strategic location within the UK and close proximity to London and the Greater South East and the implications of this.

The **2003 Sustainable Communities Plan** is at the root of many of the changes anticipated to occur in the county. This Plan identified the Milton Keynes and South Midlands' area as a "growth area", with significant expansion earmarked for Northamptonshire. Indeed, half of the housing growth planned for MKSM will take place in the county. However, for population and housing growth to occur there must be matching expansion in jobs, schools, supporting services and infrastructure etc. This is essential for growth to be "sustainable" and is Northamptonshire's 'deal' with Government.

In addition to the Housing Growth agenda and the need to respond to the current economic recession, there are a number of other strategic drivers which will have an impact on Northamptonshire and need to be considered when taking forward growth area plans. Three drivers associated with having a strong and competitive economy are innovation, the emergence of low-carbon sectors and digital connectivity. Another critical driver is the climate change agenda.

Collectively these drivers imply a large degree of change in the county which needs to be harnessed, led and managed.

There are a number of ongoing strategic initiatives and programmes external to the county which are responses to these national agendas. These also need to be addressed. Specific examples include:

- The Single Conversation (between the Homes and Communities Agency and local authorities)
- Regional Funding Advice
- The Digital Britain Agenda
- Creating Greener Jobs
- The Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) Agenda
- An increasing emphasis on the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) Framework
- Plans to develop a new high speed rail line between London and the North (HS2)
- The National Roads Programme and Managed Motorways proposals

These are only examples and there are many more.



Table 1 | Population forecasts for Northamptonshire (2008-2026)

| Year | Population | % Growth |
|------|------------|------------------|
| 2008 | 686,000 | 2008-11 4.0% |
| 2011 | 715,600 | 2011-16 12.8% |
| 2016 | 766,500 | 2016-21 5.6% |
| 2021 | 820,900 | 2021-26 6.5% |
| 2026 | 877,900 | |

Source: Northamptonshire 2006-based Population Forecasts produced by Northamptonshire County Council

Population

The current population of Northamptonshire is approximately 680,000 and the county is the fastest growing sub-region in England. Since 2001 the population has grown by 7.7%. This is more than twice the national average of 3.3%. This increase has been driven by a combination of economic migration, both international and national, and natural demographic change i.e. more births than deaths.

The 2006-based population projections produced by the Office of National Statistics for Government, and independent forecasts produced by Northamptonshire County Council based on local housing trajectories, predict that the population of the county will rise to about 880,000 by 2026 (see table 1 below).

The majority of this population growth will occur within a broad corridor running approximately south-west (from Daventry and Towcester) to north east (Corby and Wellingborough/Rushden) through the county with Northampton at the centre.

The forecasts highlight a significant increase in the population for the Corby in particular. The County Council's forecasts indicate that Corby's population is set to rise to almost 100,000, a 41% increase from its 2008 figures. Other areas of high growth are Northampton, Daventry, Kettering and Wellingborough which are forecast to see a 21% to 26% increase in their populations between 2008 and 2026. The greatest overall increase in population terms alone will be in Northampton which is set to increase from 205,500 in 2008 to 261,300 in 2026.

The figures for Northampton, Daventry and South Northamptonshire are based on assumptions prior to the release of the draft Core Spatial Strategy. It also needs to be considered that the 2008 figure for Northampton is the population of the

Borough administrative area, whereas the 2026 figure is the forecast for the Northampton Implementation Area which extends beyond the Borough boundary. These forecasts are being reviewed by the County Council to take account of the latest figures on housing completions and revised assumptions on housing trajectories.

These forecasts predict that, in addition to this population growth, there will be a significant increase in older people (e.g. a 68% increase in the number of over 65 and 91% in the number over 85) by 2026. This will have significant implications for new infrastructure and the provision of public and other services. Northamptonshire will also see an increase in the number of young people. Indeed, there are current about 8,000 births each year in the county. This is equivalent to more than 5 additional school classes being created each week. The proportion of growth of young people within the population is higher than elsewhere in the country because of the attraction of Northamptonshire for young people and families and the young age of new incomers.

Health

Health is an increasingly important issue particularly as more people live longer. In February 2009 the Department for Health (DfH) published **Be Healthy, Be Happy: A guide for getting the nation moving**. This highlights the effect that inactivity has on health. The average cost of primary and secondary care costs attributed to inactivity is £5m per Primary Care Trust (PCT) area per year. In the Northamptonshire PCT area the figure is over £9m per year.

Part of Northamptonshire becoming a better place to live and work is helping people lead healthier lifestyles.



Housing growth and affordability

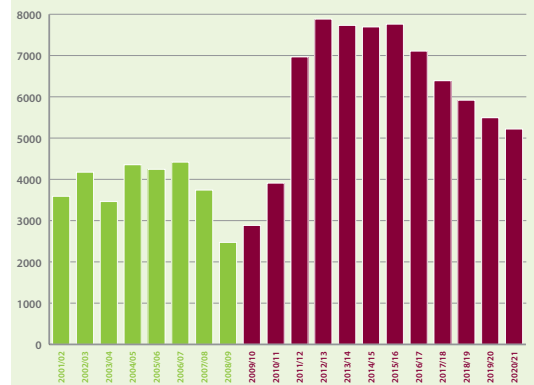
As a result of Northamptonshire's national growth area status more than 125,000 additional homes are planned to be built in Northamptonshire in the period between 2001 and 2026. A significant proportion of this housing growth will be located within the existing urban areas and in major urban extensions. This growth represents a major step change for Northamptonshire and, in scale of increase, is greater than anywhere else in England.

About 43,000 new homes, so roughly one in three, will be built in the Northampton Implementation Area. The majority of the remaining development will be located in and around Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Daventry. The detailed locations of housing and other developments, including new employment, are identified in Core Spatial Strategies and Area Action Plans.

The housing market in Northamptonshire has already responded to this challenge. Housing completions increased from 3,462 in 2003/04 to 4,417 in 2006/07, a rise of 21.6%. However, with the impact of the recession and slow-down in the housing market nationally, completions fell to 2,254 in 2008/09. Figures for 2009/10 are awaited, but again these will be significantly down on previous years. As a consequence annual targets for subsequent years have increased. Positively, the recession has not impacted on developer interest and planning applications have been progressed to an advanced stage for many of the major urban extensions in the county. This means that there is a significant supply in the pipeline.

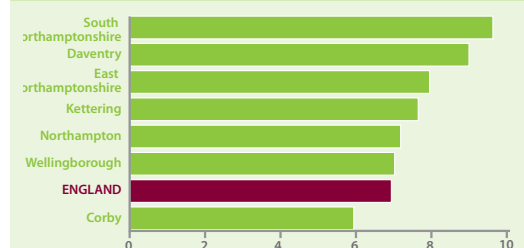
The Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement (LAA2) has a target of increasing the number of new homes completed to 6,018 by 2010/11 from a baseline of 4,354 in 2004/5. Figure 3 shows the latest housing trajectories based on the Annual Monitoring Reports produced by the borough and district councils. These trajectories will in due course need to be reviewed to look further ahead and take account of effects of the recession.

Figure 3 | Housing Trajectories 2008/09-2020/21



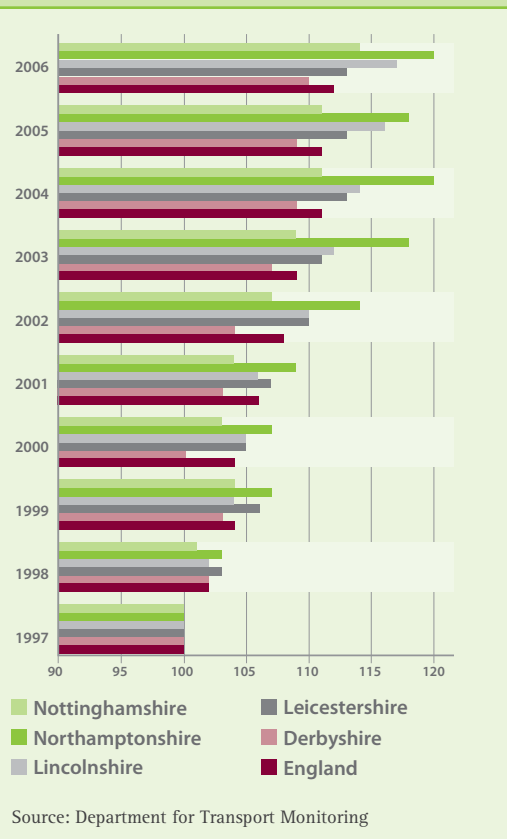
Source: 2007/08 Annual Monitoring Reports and Local Delivery Vehicles

Figure 4 | Lower quartile house price to lower quartile income ratio



Source: CLG Housing lower quartile house price to lower quartile income ratio, 2008 (Note: a higher ratio means that housing is less affordable)

Figure 5 | Traffic Growth Index



One of the main goals of the Housing Growth agenda is to increase access to housing, particularly for local people, but also to accommodate growth generated by the greater South East and London.

Northamptonshire has a wide variation in house price to income ratios. Figure 4 indicates the multiple of lower quartile house prices over lower quartile income at borough and district level across the county. This indicates that affordability is a countywide issue and is above the national average in all but one district i.e. Corby.





Transport

Official figures show that Northamptonshire's roads have experienced the highest levels of traffic growth in England. Figure 5 shows how traffic has grown across the East Midlands region in the 10 years from 1997-2006. It illustrates that Northamptonshire has consistently seen the highest levels of growth.

The **MKSM Inter-Urban Transport Strategy**, which was published in 2009, identifies the A43/A45 roads linking Daventry and Towcester with the M1 through to Northampton-Wellingborough-Kettering and from Wellingborough-Rushden-Thrapston (A14) are showing significant pressures, especially around Northampton. This is largely due to the combined pressures of substantial local, regional and national traffic movements. These are already reaching 100,000 vehicles per day on some sections. This is comparable with levels of traffic on many major national motorway routes.

The recent Government decision on the design of the new M1 Junction 19 (joining the A14 and M6), which removes any south to east movement between the M1 and A14, will put increased pressure on the A43/A45 corridor for longer distance traffic. **The MKSM Strategy** identifies the A43/A45 corridor as a top priority. The strategy indicates that improvements are needed to enable the scale of growth which is planned for the area, and for it to perform its function as a strategic transport artery. It recommends the need for a comprehensive review considering options of strategic traffic management and public transport improvements as well as infrastructure investment. This recommendation has been taken up by the East Midlands Region and Government and the study will form part of its programme of priority reviews. Work on this, termed the Northamptonshire Growth Towns Study, has already commenced.

Figure 6 highlights the congestion 'hot spots' on the network. Over capacity indicates that traffic levels mean that the junction is operating beyond its existing capacity. These hot spots are clustered around the main urban areas and Northampton in particular.



Figure 6 | Congestion (AM peak) at 2005

Source: Northamptonshire Transport Models, Northamptonshire County Council (2005)

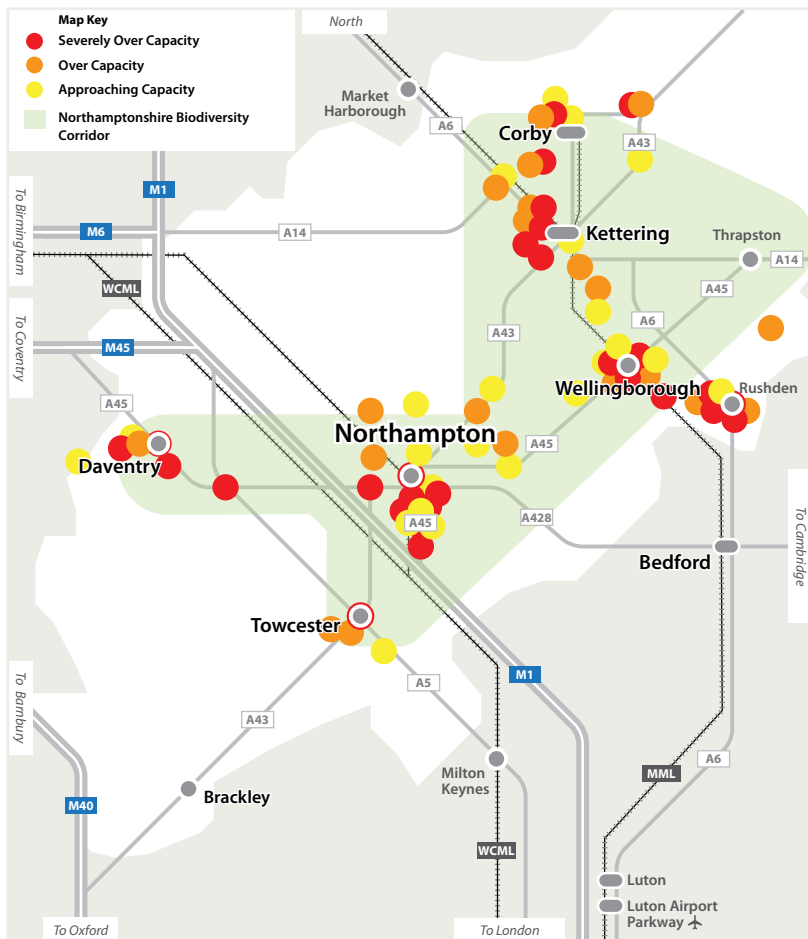
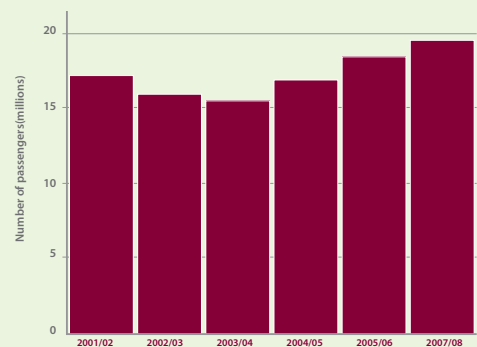


Figure 7 | Forecast Congestion (AM peak) - 2021

© Crown Copyright. Northamptonshire County Council: Licence no. 100019331.
 Source: Northamptonshire Traffic Models, Northamptonshire County Council (2005)

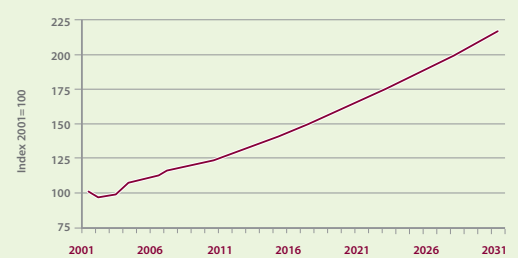
Detailed modelling work, which takes account of predicted housing growth and committed road schemes, suggests that the situation will be significantly worse by 2021. Figure 7 illustrates this scenario, based on the current level of infrastructure investment being maintained. Additional growth to 2026 and beyond will further compound this congestion and increase the number and severity of these hot spots.

Figure 8 | Bus Journeys 2001/02 to 2007/08



Source: Best Value Performance Indicator 102, Northamptonshire County Council

Figure 9 | Bus Patronage at existing trajectory



Source: Northamptonshire Transport Strategy for Growth (2007)

The challenges associated with congestion are recognised in the current Northamptonshire Local Area Agreement with Government (LAA2). This has a target of reducing congestion (NI167) measured by average journey time per mile during the morning peak.



“Northamptonshire’s roads have experienced the highest levels of traffic growth in England”

Rail connectivity and services are crucial to the county’s future economic success. Northamptonshire’s largest urban areas i.e. Northampton, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough, are all located on the West Coast Main Line or Midland Main Line. Current services largely provide for commuters and business travellers to London. However access to long distance services, and connections to other centres, is very limited. This is a particular issue for Northampton given its size and strategic economic and growth importance and potential. It is also an issue for Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough for services northwards. East-west connectivity via rail is also very poor.

Road-based public transport is also important. The LAA2 has a target of increasing the number of local bus passenger transport journeys originating in the county

(NI177). For the third successive year the total number of bus journeys originating in the county has increased, over 19 million journeys being made in 2007/08 - an increase of more than 20% since 2003/04 (see Figure 7). However, it should be noted that this growth is from a low base. For road-based public transport to retain its existing share of journeys, given the projected growth in the county and the potential increase in trip demand, an increase in passenger journeys of 60% on 2001 levels would be required by 2021 (see Figure 8). This is equivalent to approximately 27 million journeys.

With the scale of congestion already being experienced and forecast, it is apparent that a significant step change in public transport patronage will be required over and above existing levels of growth to achieve public transport patronage levels that contribute towards modal shift and help reduce congestion.

Biodiversity and climate change

Most of Northamptonshire’s important wildlife and natural habitats exist within Local Wildlife Sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These are a national initiative, but are locally selected as sites of at least county ecological importance.

Northamptonshire has well below the average proportional area of SSSIs, and has lost more plant species over a period of 50 years than any other English county. More of these sites are being lost through lack of positive management than through development.

Nevertheless, Northamptonshire has some fantastic areas for wildlife including Salcey Forest and Rockingham Forest at each end of the county. There is also active support, through groups such as Wildlife Trust and RSPB, who are looking into opportunities for connecting up habitats throughout the county.

Growth will increase pressures on Northamptonshire’s remaining wildlife habitats. However, managed correctly, growth has the potential both to protect existing natural resources and to enhance and enlarge them. Indeed many of the county’s SSSIs have been created through development and in particular mineral extraction. New development also provides the opportunity to help fund improvements in biodiversity work across the county.

The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2008, sets out action plans for 16 habitats and two species across the county and also identifies a further 158 BAP species that are found in Northamptonshire. This plan provides guidelines and targets for protecting and enhancing biodiversity which are to be implemented by 2015.

Climate Change and Energy

Within the lifetimes of most residents in Northamptonshire today, climate change in the county will mean:

- warmer, drier summers, potentially causing water shortages and problems with overheating
- milder, wetter winters, potentially affecting agriculture and the spread of infectious diseases
- increased chance of extreme weather such as storms and floods.

As Figure 10 below highlights, the size and speed of the changes depend mainly on how much carbon dioxide (CO2) is emitted around the world over the next few decades. This along with other greenhouse gases is cited as the main cause of climate change.



“Managed correctly growth has the potential both to protect existing natural resources and to enhance and enlarge them”

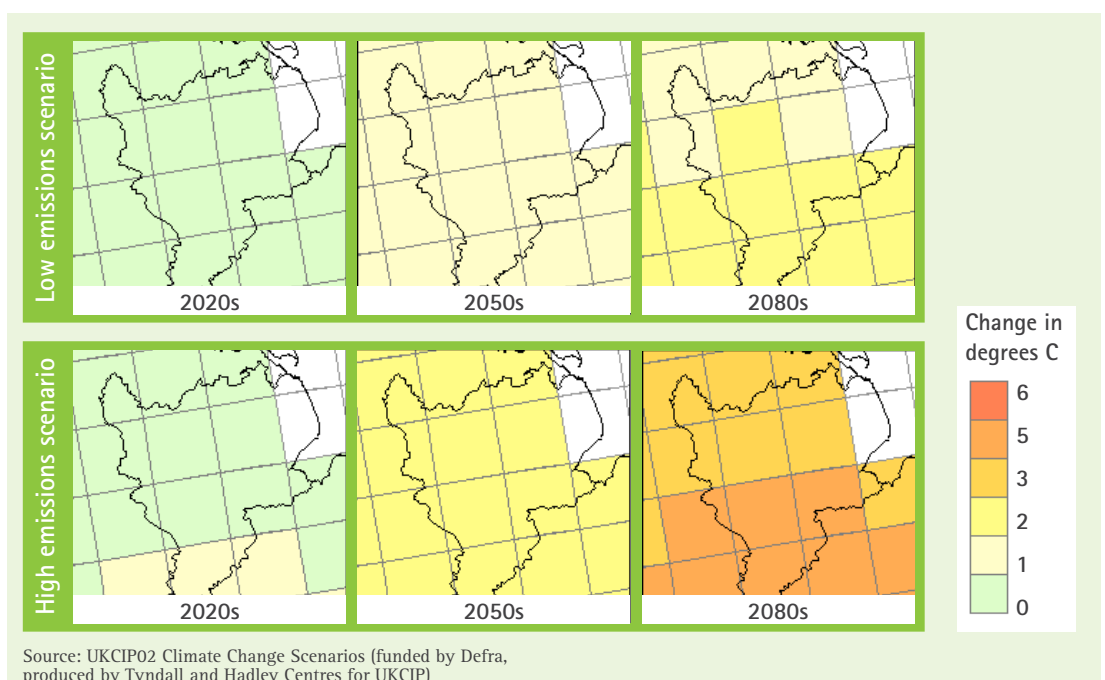


Figure 10 | East Midlands Change in annual daily temperature



As a consequence, climate change and carbon reduction will be a continuing issue in the years to come.

In Northamptonshire, broadly a third of CO₂ emissions are produced by industry, a third by transport and a third by domestic emissions. The impact of new development on overall emissions is becoming increasingly important. For example, it is now mandatory for all new homes to have a rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes. In the future the requirement will be for new development, including homes and community buildings such as schools, to meet much higher standards. With the scale of the growth agenda facing Northamptonshire it is particularly important that new development demonstrates the highest environmental credentials.

The LAA2 (NI186) has already set a target of reducing the per capita use of CO₂ in the county from a baseline of 8.6 tonnes (2005). The target is to reduce this by 8.9% 2010/11. It is expected that continuing reductions beyond this will be sought in subsequent years.

However, even if we prevent the most serious changes by reducing future emissions, some climate change is now inevitable. This is because greenhouse gases emitted in the past will still have an effect for a long time. Preparing for these changing conditions means planning how these might impact on our infrastructure. For example, we need to design our buildings to cope with these changes and look for ways to mitigate the impact of extreme weather events such as flooding, hot weather and severe winters.

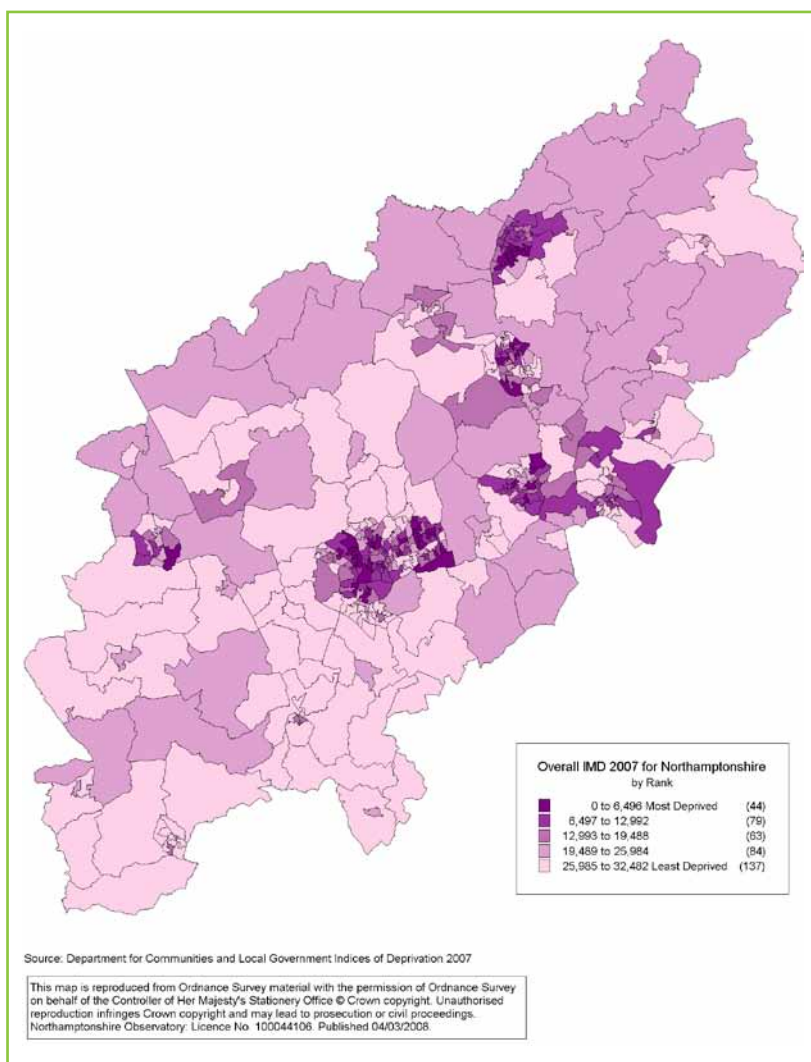


Figure 11 | Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007

Another key element to tackling climate change and reducing our CO2 emissions against a backcloth of growth will be the way in which we better use our energy resources (gas, electricity, oil, fuel) through more sustainable transport systems, developing a low carbon economy, enabling more domestic housing efficiency savings and exploring the opportunities afforded by renewable energy sources.

Employment and the economy

Current forecasts, which take account of various factors including commuting (both into and out of the county), suggest that Northamptonshire will need to create more than 100,000 additional jobs between 2001 and 2026 to ensure that employment growth keeps pace with planned housing and reduce the likelihood of increased out-commuting. We are currently behind on this target.

In 2007 the highest proportions of businesses in Northamptonshire were engaged in business services (30% of all businesses), wholesale and retail (20%) and construction (11%). The largest sectors in terms of employment were wholesale and retail (19% of employment), business services (18%) and manufacturing (15%). Businesses in the county are predominately small with 85% employing 10 staff or less. The county has a high work place to residence ratio indicating that a significant number of people live and work locally.

The unemployment rate (defined for these purposes as the claimant count) is now 4.2% (17,775 people, in January 2010). The rate is just below the England average of 4.3% and the same as the East Midlands average.

There is a general issue in Northamptonshire of low average earnings of employees. This is largely driven by a high number of lower skilled jobs. The LAA2 has a target of increasing



average weekly earnings from a baseline of £427 per week (equivalent to an annual salary of £22,204 a year) in 2007, compared to the national average of £463, to £470 per week (equivalent to £24,440) in 2010/11. This would represent an overall increase of 10%.

Northamptonshire also has pockets of high deprivation. This includes access to service provision and other services such as health care. Figure 11 illustrates the level of deprivation at Lower Super Output Area level as measured by the Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007. This illustrates that areas of higher deprivation are located within the urban areas.

A more detailed analysis of the Northamptonshire economy will be outlined in the first Local Economic Assessment which is currently being prepared. This will be available for comment in the summer of 2010 and finalised later in the year.



“The Northamptonshire Arc”: Delivering Change



The Northamptonshire Sustainable Communities Strategy

The Northamptonshire Sustainable Communities Strategy 'The Best Place in England to Grow' defines the strategic response to these drivers and local context. This sets four key ambitions for the county:

- To be successful through sustainable growth and regeneration
- To develop through having a growing economy and more skilled jobs
- To have safe and strong communities
- Healthy people who enjoy a good quality of life

A local spatial framework is required to complement the Sustainable Communities Strategy and provide a 'place-based' approach. This framework will help to shape and inform responses to external drivers and national agendas. It will take full account of the local context and ambitions, and identify spatial and other priorities. By doing so it will enable appropriate interventions and investments to be brought forward that demonstrate added value and will deliver transformational outcomes. It will also help to ensure that Northamptonshire capitalises on its strategic location, access to national networks, other economic strengths and environment-related opportunities. This framework is termed the Northamptonshire Arc.

Spatial context

In spatial terms, the Northamptonshire Arc represents a broad corridor, running approximately south-west (from Daventry and Towcester) to north-east (Corby and Wellingborough/Rushden/Thrapston) with Northampton at the centre.

All the largest urban areas and the focus of existing population, employment and economic activity including patterns of movement, the bulk of new growth and other development (such as minerals extraction) lie within this corridor. This corridor also comprises the focus for the principal public services and infrastructure including healthcare, education and learning and also cultural facilities (such as cinemas, libraries and galleries). It also includes a significant stretch of the River Nene and the surrounding landscape and the habitats they support.

The Northamptonshire Arc also has an important strategic context in its location relative to the Greater South East as the main component of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-region Housing Growth area. It is also at the cross-roads of a number of strategic transport and economic arteries including the M1, M6, A34/A43/A45, West Coast and Midland Main Lines and the A14. Figure 11 illustrates this strategic context and its relative location to the Greater South East and the two other national Housing Growth areas.

Spatial approach and aspirations

The Northamptonshire Arc encompasses an area of immense potential and one that respects its local heritage and the environment. It is an area where the towns and the rural areas complement each others offers. It is one where local ambitions in terms of place-shaping, growth, regeneration and local distinctiveness are supported.

The area will become an outstanding location of choice for innovation-led employment, with top academic and vocational educational attainment and with new housing built to the highest environmental standards and affordable for local people.

“The Northamptonshire Arc encompasses an area of immense potential”





Making this happen will involve excellent connectivity between homes, jobs and the superb cultural, recreational and leisure opportunities on offer. This will be centred on providing better transport and digital connections, lowering carbon emissions and protecting the outstanding environment of the area.

By embracing the benefits of change and focusing on quality and growth in the main towns, the Northamptonshire Arc will blend the best of modern urban living, enhanced by networks of parks and other green spaces, with lovely tranquil villages and countryside.

Northampton will become a major regional economic centre sitting between the World City of London and Birmingham. The Northamptonshire Arc recognises Northampton's growth offer and its potential role as a regional economic centre. It also

recognises the benefits that this can bring to the wider Arc area. It is intended that Northampton will gain a reputation as a place with a thriving riverside providing the focus and heart for its surrounding network of neighbouring communities. It will be at the cultural heart of this region and fulfil a role as the leading retail, entertainment and employment, health and learning centre based on a thriving and growing economy and proud of its theatres, museums and professional sports teams.

In the east of the Northamptonshire Arc, Wellingborough will be a focus for high profile offices around the station and a key gateway to London and the mainland of Europe, via its Eurostar connections at St Pancras, and East Northamptonshire a principal focus for recreation and tourism and a high quality rural living environment. This area will also include a main stretch of the new biodiversity corridor.

To the south, Towcester and Brackley will be successful, historic market towns, with strong and innovative economies centring on high performance engineering. These serve the needs of their rural catchments and have a good range of local facilities. Located between these towns, Silverstone will enhance its status as a world-class sporting venue, fostering high technology motorsport business at the forefront of technology and underpinned by a state of the art educational campus and supporting development.

At the western edge of the Northamptonshire Arc, Daventry will be an invigorated historic market town with jobs at the cutting edge of environmental technologies and sustainable building, offering attractive retail opportunities for the town and surrounding area.



Figure 12 | Strategic Location of the Northamptonshire Arc

In the north of the Northamptonshire Arc, Corby will be recognised for its strengths in manufacturing and in sports provision and as a role model for successful regeneration and growth. Kettering will be a main retail centre and a focus for healthcare.

Proposed Outcomes

Three thematic outcomes underpin the Northamptonshire Arc and these spatial aspirations. These are:

- Transformed connectivity
- Leadership on climate change & biodiversity
- A stronger and greener economy

These outcomes are inter-connected and complementary. For example, economic success depends on connectivity and our response to both will impact on climate change and biodiversity.

To achieve these outcomes we need to identify strategic priorities, key interventions and iconic infrastructure proposals. Together these will form a Transformational Agenda for Northamptonshire.

Outcome - Transformed Connectivity

Exploitation of the Northamptonshire's central location linking the Greater South East and Midlands is crucial to economic success. This location is enhanced by the number of key strategic arteries which run through it or close to it. This is illustrated in Figure 13.

Four nationally led projects are fundamental to improved external connectivity and generating growth through new jobs and opportunities. These are:

- HS2, High Speed Rail Line between London and the Midlands
- Upgrades to the Midland Mainline
- M1 improvements
- A14 investment

Rail connectivity

The proposal for a new High Speed Rail Line (termed HS2) between London and the Midlands initially, and then the north, has the potential to bring major economic benefits to Northamptonshire. This could involve significantly better services on the existing West Coast Main Line as high speed paths and connections to the inter-city network are freed up by services transferring to the new Line.

Strategic Priority 1 – Support the opportunities provided by the HS2 proposal to secure better inter-city connections

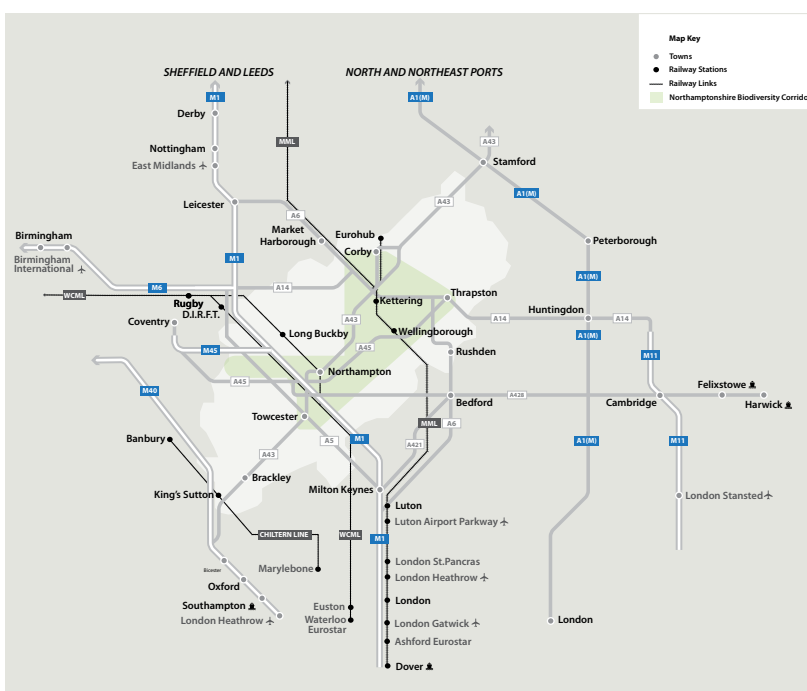


Figure 13 | External connectivity of Northamptonshire



Upgrades to the Midland Main Line, including electrification northwards of Bedford into the county and north to Sheffield, have the potential to improve connections to services across London, reduce pollution (estimated CO2 saving of 40%), and enable reliable journey times of under 45 minutes to London from Northamptonshire. It is important that improvements benefit Northamptonshire Arc and a frequency of high speed services serve Northamptonshire and take advantage of access to long distance services including the international Eurostar services via St Pancras.

Strategic Priority 2 – Secure a minimum of two fast services (with journey times of less than 40 minutes) per hour from the Northamptonshire Arc to London on both the West Coast and Midland Main Lines

Strategic Priority 3 – Better rail connections and reduced journey times to Birmingham, Manchester and other major centres

Strategic Priority 4 – Optimise the potential benefits provided by the connections to Eurostar services

Road connectivity

Strategic road connections are crucial to economic growth. Further improvements to the M1 could have major implications for Northamptonshire, particularly in relation to proposals for hard shoulder running and ramp-metering. The implications of such measures will need to be carefully assessed, including any impact on the local network and congestion.

The A14 provides international, national and local connections east-west. However, it suffers from congestion which would be made worse by future growth. As a result further investment is essential. It is also clear that significant growth in the north of the county, particularly in relation to Corby and Kettering, will be inhibited without further investment in the A14. This is notwithstanding the current investment in improvements around Kettering.

Strategic Priority 5 – Utilise the potential provided by new technology and other measures to secure better reliability on the existing strategic national road network which connect the Northamptonshire Arc with other areas



“The Arc area is at the strategic cross-roads of key transport and economic arteries including the M1, M6, A14, A34/43/45 and the West Coast and Mildand Main Lines”

Strategic Priority 6 – Secure investment and improvements to the strategic road network to support economic growth in the Northamptonshire Arc

The MKSM Inter-urban Transport Strategy and other work indicate that the A43/A45 through Northamptonshire, and especially around Northampton, is showing significant pressures. Further capacity issues are also forecast at junctions around Towcester and Wellingborough up to 2021. This is largely

due to the strategic role the route plays as a link with the South Coast ports and M4 (via the A34), the M1/M6 (which connects the midlands and north), and the A14 (which provides a link with the East Coast ports). This route currently represents a "national infrastructure gap" in the strategic network and there is a strong case for its re-designation as a strategic national network alongside the A14 and other key routes. With or without this re-designation, significant investment is needed to tackle congestion and its wider costs particularly on the approaches to Northampton. Indeed, similar to the A14, it is clear that economic growth and prosperity will be inhibited without further investment.

Strategic Priority 7 – Gain recognition for the A34/A43/A45 between the M4 and A14 as an 'infrastructure gap' in the strategic national network

It is clear that some local road improvements will be essential to address existing deficits and facilitate growth within the Northamptonshire Arc. These include on the following connections:

- Corby and Kettering (including the Corby Link Road)
- Kettering and Wellingborough (including the Isham Bypass and Isham to Wellingborough Improvements)
- Northampton and Kettering
- Northampton and Wellingborough
- Northampton and Daventry (including the Flore-Weedon Bypass)

Other improvements, including those needed to key urban orbital and radial routes and problem junctions within Northampton and the other growth centres, will also be needed to ensure the effective operation of the road network and release economic growth. This includes the need for a Towcester Bypass at the southern end of the Northamptonshire Arc.



Figure 14 | Possible Northamptonshire Arc transit network (incorporating Midland Main Line electrification)



From a health, congestion and climate change perspective, good urban design that takes account of the needs of cyclists and pedestrians, offering safety and convenience through dedicated cycle lanes, for example, can help tip the balance in favour of active, carbon free travel for shorter journeys. This can also contribute, if done well and in the right place, to removing traffic from our roads.

Strategic Priority 8 – Deliver improved reliability and resilience on the Northamptonshire Arc road network by utilising a package of measures, including new technologies

Strategic Priority 9 – Improve the Northamptonshire Arc (urban and inter-urban) road network where this is needed to support economic growth and as part of comprehensive approach which also incorporates investment to support public transport, low carbon modes and 'smarter choices'

Inter and intra-urban mass transit

Traffic growth in the county is already extremely high by national standards. Increasing population density, if left unaddressed, will lead to increasingly high and undesirable levels of congestion and pollution. This will increase costs to businesses and make the county less attractive to investment.

The success of the Northamptonshire Arc concept, and the three outcomes identified above including transforming connectivity, will only be achieved if local residents are able to access jobs, education and public services using a sustainable transport system. Furthermore, high quality transport connectivity creating a realigned set of options, choice and independence for those without access to the car, is crucial. Indeed,

while road improvements will of necessity have to form part of the overall programme of works addressing the needs of the county and existing infrastructure deficits through targeted investment, developments in other modes will also be essential.

The MKSM Inter-Urban Transport Strategy indicates that there is significant potential for improvements to the inter-urban bus network, including its scope, its operation and its quality of service. The biggest challenges to this are arguably a negative perception of roads-based public transport offer in Northamptonshire (in comparison with the car), availability of information, and unpredictability of journey times by public transport due to congestion within the urban areas.

A series of studies and investigations have analysed growth on the transport network and identified problem corridors. Potential options and solutions have been looked at against the Government 'DaSTS' goals. The findings indicate that no single project offers the step change in public transport needed. However, one project has been identified which acts as a foundation for addressing the forecast increase in demand for travel, and managing its impact on the transport network, and without which it is believed success will not be sustainable. This is the development of a high quality Northamptonshire Arc Transit (NAT) network. This complements the promotion of electrification of the Midland Main Line (MML) and other strategic interventions in the Transformational Agenda.

A new NAT network would utilise modern technology such as active demand management and real time information to make efficient use of the existing and new infrastructure and ensure traffic moves smoothly. Mass transit links between the main urban centres (and town centres) and growth locations within the Arc will transform internal connectivity.



To support the infrastructure improvements, a programme of Smarter Travel projects will provide tailored information and incentives and support behaviour change. It would also help to ensure that the benefits of new investment are 'locked in'. An indicative MML and NAT network is illustrated in Figure 14.

Strategic Priority 10 – Secure support for and implement a Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit urban and inter-urban network (NAT)

Strategic Priority 11 – Ensure that major growth locations provide connections to and support the Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit network

Strategic Priority 12 – Identify and deliver the first 'pilot' phase (subject to funding) of a Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit network by 2013

Delivery and funding

The Northamptonshire Arc provides a clear and bold agenda which is able to lead and shape change, but is also adaptable and responsive. This is not a short term approach. It needs a longer-term strategic view. The priorities listed in Appendix 1 and the interventions listed in Appendix 2 are all key pieces in the connectivity jigsaw.

Some interventions can be delivered quickly and at a relatively low-cost. These include "congestion busting" measures within the towns, the "travel centres programme" and "on-demand travel information". These important, and relatively low-cost, interventions will help to ensure that best use is made of the existing network and travel choices and also promote new opportunities. This also includes first phases on the NAT network particularly within the urban areas and where growth is underway. In parallel with this, work will need to be accelerated on priority medium and longer-term transformational interventions to ensure



that Northamptonshire is well placed to benefit from the economic recovery, attract investment, and able to manage the step change in housing growth which is expected..

Viability is a crucial issue, particularly in the current economic climate, and Northamptonshire is conscious that there will be significant constraints on the public purse. A principal source of funding will be 'Section 106' funds from new development, especially where projects have been identified to help mitigate the impact of new housing or other development.

Northamptonshire County Council already operates a 'pooled' approach for Section 106 contributions for transport improvements in the Northamptonshire Arc towns. Because of the scale and pace of development in Northamptonshire, Section 106 funds will need to be supplemented with other funding. This includes Growth-related funding and mainstream transport funding from Government. These funding streams are essential to help release growth and the income it will generate both locally and nationally. Other innovative forms of funding need to be and are being explored.

Through this approach, Northamptonshire's intention is that it is not overly reliant on mainstream Government funding to deliver its ambitions for transforming connectivity. This means that to deliver the highlighted transformational interventions and to provide the maximum flexibility, it is taking a programme-led approach. This will help to optimise the potential from all the main funding streams. It also reflects the intrinsic linkages and interdependencies between the interventions and the need to deliver the connectivity jigsaw as a whole. This is essential if the outcome of transformed connectivity is to be achieved to the full.

Without this approach, tackling both external and internal connectivity, the support and investment required from Government and the private sector cannot be delivered.

Leadership on Climate Change and Biodiversity

The drivers impacting the county include a number of 'environmental' issues, including climate change, healthier living, conservation, the promotion of biodiversity and the need to promote sustainable new communities.

Climate Change and Energy

Northamptonshire has produced a Climate Change Strategy for 2010-2014 which sets out a framework for individual and collective action to:

1. Raise awareness of the issues of Climate Change and its impact on Northamptonshire
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the county
3. Plan for and adapt to the inevitable impacts of Climate Change

Councils are working on their own strategies to reduce their CO2 emissions. Northamptonshire County Council is working on a 'Low Carbon Leadership' strategy to substantially reduce its own CO2 emissions. This will also embrace opportunities for renewable energy and demonstration projects. Projects like this are further developed across organisations with the input of the Countywide Climate Change Officers' Group. These include emerging local ideas concerning carbon reduction programmes such as 'Carbon Sink Forests' promoted by Forestry Commission.

The Northamptonshire Arc will provide a context that allows these interventions to be combined to give added value and support.

Pivotal to the success of this approach will be the development of a 'low carbon economy' for Northamptonshire where:

- all waste is minimised – via reduce, reuse, recycle;
- energy is produced using low carbon energy sources and methods – via renewable & alternative energy sources, fuels and sequestration (CO2 storage);
- all resources (in particular energy) are used efficiently – via more efficient energy conversion devices, combined heat & power, district heating;
- wherever practical local needs are served by local production – food, materials, energy, local supply chains; and
- higher awareness and compliance with environmental and social responsibility initiatives – by industry, commerce and individuals.

This will require a collective approach and a significant step change in the way we do things now to make a low carbon economy a reality in Northamptonshire in the future.

Strategic Priority 13 – Support 'low-carbon growth' through reducing the impact of development on climate change

Biodiversity

Some of these 'environmental' drivers can be addressed, in part, through utilising opportunities provided by the county's waterways and in particular the River Nene and the neighbouring landscape. This is already recognised as an internationally important area for wetland birds and has some of the best opportunities for large scale wetland habitat restoration linked to the re-use of former mineral sites.

The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) will provide the initial guidance on projects that improve biodiversity levels across Northamptonshire.

A key transformational intervention involves the creation of a new strategic Biodiversity Corridor. This corridor would extend from Daventry in the west to Thrapston in the east. Although extending more broadly, it is primarily focused on the River Nene and will promote safe and healthy local environment, with well-designed and accessible public and green spaces. It will provide a combination of new habitats and excellent recreation and leisure opportunities.

The River Nene in the east of the Arc contains a wide range of wetland habitats with huge potential for connecting them up. Other important areas include the Yardley and Whittlewood Ridge in the south, the sandy and limestone grasslands in the west, the Rockingham Forest and the network of ancient woodlands and flower-rich grasslands in the north of the Northamptonshire Arc.

There are important factors underpinning the direction and implementation of the biodiversity agenda and the creation of a Strategic Biodiversity Corridor. For example, it is important to strengthen the integration between urban areas, locations for new growth and the rural areas. It is also essential to protect sensitive areas and the natural environment. This can be achieved in part through effective land management.



“It is important to strengthen the integration between urban and rural areas”



The county's BAP identifies that strengthening biodiversity is key to sustainable development. As well as increasing the desirability of the area, which in turn brings economic benefits through visitors, it also provides climatic stability through functioning life-support systems. Conservation of wildlife and the enhancement of the character of the area all contribute to the biodiversity agenda.

Whilst this is high a priority, it is also important to ensure that access and enjoyment of protected areas is provided. This can be achieved through investing in conservation and recreational facilities to create greater enjoyment for residents and visitors alike. Investing in waterside areas and the waterways is another way of supporting biodiversity and at the same time increase visitor enjoyment and make these areas desirable places that people will want to visit. This approach can also support the rural economy by promoting a thriving, sustainable and forward thinking living and working countryside.

To further support and strengthen biodiversity, 'living landscapes' (i.e. large areas of rich habitat), strategic tree planting and sustainable drainage systems are all a vital part of green infrastructure. Looking into the choice of land uses and carefully selecting which crops are grown can add to the areas increased photosynthetic capability, which in turn increases CO2 absorption. This aids climate stability and contributes to this at a local level.

The biodiversity agenda provides a valuable opportunity to understand and benefit from our enjoyment of the natural environment. To achieve the required outcomes, all efforts towards increasing biodiversity and adapting to climate change should support the BAP. Where appropriate, new planting and extensions to woodlands should be undertaken to aid in the absorption of CO2.

Flooding should be minimised through careful planning in the positioning of developments. A reduction in habitat fragmentation should be maintained and other measures in the challenge to reduce energy use and tackle climate change should be undertaken in order to relieve pressure on the landscape and maintain an environment that is complementary to the wildlife that inhabits it.

What is good for wildlife is also good for existing and future communities. By linking up existing sites and creating a functioning network of wildlife movement corridors we will allow wildlife to thrive and adapt to climate change. This will involve protecting and enlarging existing areas ranging from wetlands to natural green spaces in urban areas. These provide reservoirs of plants and animals which can colonise other areas and popular destinations for recreational pursuits.

Recent initiatives, including Stanwick Lakes and Irchester Country Park at the eastern end of the Northamptonshire Arc, Daventry and Brixworth Country Parks in the west, and Salcey Forest in the south, illustrate the potential for such an approach.

From a health perspective, the quality of our outdoor environment has a direct influence upon levels of physical activity. The opportunity to explore safe, attractive and interesting areas can be a significant motivator for recreational walking and cycling. Natural environments offer important settings for health-enhancing physical activity.

Future activities will include mapping out opportunities associated with the corridor, better management of existing sites, restoring new sites and creating new sites and linkages and promoting understanding and pride in local areas and their distinctiveness.



“Northamptonshire has been at the heart of the Formula 1 industry since 1950 when Silverstone hosted the first F1 Grand Prix”

The Biodiversity Corridor will also help to demonstrate that Northamptonshire is leading the way in delivering greener growth.

Strategic Priority 14 – Establish and support a new multi-functional strategic Biodiversity Corridor with linkages to the main towns

A stronger and greener economy

The economic success of the Northamptonshire Arc will be achieved by building on its existing strengths and competitive edges. Northamptonshire has the privileged position of being at the centre of the world’s motorsport industry. In particular, this includes high performance engineering. The iconic circuit of Silverstone, for example, is home to successful industrial and educational developments, as is Rockingham, which is working on the development of a new Education Centre. Northampton is also home to the globally recognised Cosworth Engineering brand, which reinforces our pedigree in this sector, as well as Ilmor Engineering, who have been developing and manufacturing Formula 1 and IndyCar engines for over 25 years. There are also other numerous other centres of engineering excellence linked to this sector within the Arc.

From a logistics viewpoint, we are at the leading edge in the UK. This is largely because Northamptonshire is ideally placed with its central location and excellent transport links by road, rail and air. We also host businesses from all over the world. Many of these are located in the main towns and business parks within the Arc.

Employment and Skills

Having the right skills is crucial to sustained growth and being able to adapt to change. Although Northamptonshire performs well against national levels for Level 4 (i.e. degree equivalent) qualifications, further investment and effort is needed to maintain and enhance the right skills levels needed to attract higher value activities and new employers and to utilise the opportunities provided growth in new sectors of the economy.

The housing growth agenda provides a potential economic opportunity. A long term solution is needed to ensure that the skills and jobs required for the construction and built environment sectors are delivered locally. Projects such as Construction Futures, the Northampton Vocational Centre and local skills centres will help us achieve this through direct investment.

The UK is a world leader in creative industries. This sector has significant potential in Northamptonshire and this is already being nurtured through the new Portfolio Innovation Centre in Northampton which is located at the University. Further activity is needed to realise the potential provided by this sector which is typically highly skilled and qualified to Level 3 and above. Attracting these businesses will help to create higher value jobs.

Capitalising on Northamptonshire's strong heritage and tourism offer is important. This includes destination management and promotion such as via the 'Let Yourself Grow' campaign. Targeted public realm investments such as Northampton's Market Square, can also help to attract investment and visitors.

Raising pupil attainment and school performance is also critical to attract prospective employers. Northamptonshire is in competition with other areas and young people need to have the necessary



skills to fulfil their potential. Investment in schools to ensure that they have the capacity to support growth and provide the necessary opportunities is hugely important. Schools also have an important role to play at the centre of local communities.

Strategic Priority 15 – Secure, target and deliver investment in schools to raise attainment, improve performance, widen opportunity, support economic growth and strengthen their role at the centre of local communities

A new approach and relationship is needed especially working with the trade associations and employer representatives. Sector Skills Councils need to be involved in diplomas, schools and apprenticeships. This will help give the business edge to training and help make our young people work ready. Support is also needed for people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and other disadvantaged groups and individuals.

The governance and environment for skills development is changing through the new 14-19 agenda. We need to ensure that service delivery is seamless, joined-up and continues to respond to the needs and aspirations for the local economy. Effective partnership mechanisms need to be in place to address worklessness issues. A good example of this is the existing activity through the Future Jobs Fund programme which will create 500 new temporary job opportunities during 2010 and 2011.

Looking ahead to activity in 2010/11 and beyond, priority areas for activity include ensuring that skills progression delivers higher level skills and, in particular, raises the profile and participation in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM) activities. This will support Northamptonshire's strengths in High Performance Engineering. Moreover, the wider STEM related sectors have the potential to make

a major contribution to growing and greening the local economy, increasing competitiveness, raising its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increasing incomes. It is vital that there are STEM-related jobs available locally for young people. Priority sectors include construction/built environment, engineering, logistics, creative and business services.

Strategic Priority 16 – Identify and implement measures to ensure that Northamptonshire becomes a leader in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related activities and sectors

It is also important to raise the profile of an enterprising culture to ensure that it is embedded across all areas, including enhancing links between learning and skills providers and businesses. This includes encouraging stronger links between businesses and schools focused on enterprising activities such as through the Young Enterprise initiative.

Enterprise and Innovation

Support for enterprise and innovation is pivotal to a competitive and prosperous economy. Looking ahead, the future economic success of Northamptonshire largely depends on it being able to embrace knowledge and technology intensive sectors. These have the potential to create additional jobs and wealth and increase productivity levels. They also have the potential to utilise opportunities provided by the low carbon agenda. Crucial to this is high-speed fibre optic broadband provision.

The Northamptonshire Arc generally achieves download speeds above 2mbps. However, parts of Northampton and Kettering still suffer from slow download spots and are still some way off achieving the target set within the Government's Digital Britain report of every home having at least 2mbps broadband by 2012.

Looking ahead, it is clear that compliance with this target will not be enough to meet local ambitions and attract investment to the area, particularly in knowledge-based and innovation sectors. An improvement in digital networks will be complementary to the transformed connectivity outcome. It supports the ability to provide up to the minute travel information and reduce the need to travel with improved access in the home. This will enable increasing numbers of people to work and access services from home

A priority for the Northamptonshire Arc is to have a fibre optic network in place which delivers speeds far in excess of the Digital Britain targets and enables it to offer the best in next generation digital connectivity. This in turn will help to attract, and indeed retain, knowledge and technology intensive sectors and businesses.

Enabling infrastructure includes "fibre in the ground" to areas of new housing and other developments and upgrading existing exchanges. It also involves ensuring that new exchanges enable the best in next generation connectivity and the provision of 'above the ground' technology to allow improved connectivity for all areas including the more rural parts of Northamptonshire.

Strategic Priority 17- Make Northamptonshire a compelling business case for next generation digital connectivity

The Northamptonshire Arc supports existing key sectors and clusters such as in the High Performance Engineering and Motorsport industries based in the wider Silverstone area. The presence of the Silverstone motor racing circuit in the south of the county has been a significant contributing factor towards the creation of a specialised cluster of high performance engineering companies servicing the needs of the motor sport industry. This sector has an annual turnover of £0.6 billion in

the Northamptonshire Arc. In addition, there are numerous companies providing a valued supply chain to the motorsport industry, including 450 high performance engineering companies who employ over 10,400 staff.

The Silverstone Circuit Masterplan has the potential to generate 3,000 new jobs through commercial, education and leisure related development. The objectives of the Masterplan are:

- To improve track-related facilities to modern Grand Prix standards and promote Silverstone as the home of British motorsport and racing
- To enhance and strengthen Silverstone circuit as a centre of automotive and high technology excellence for the UK
- To create opportunities for the development of employment and sustainable economic growth by attracting business, education and active outdoor tourism of the highest quality
- To provide an attractive venue for leisure activities enabling development that is sustainable both in terms of its construction and operation
- To create a development that integrates well into its local environment and which provides an attractive countryside setting for high value and scale enterprises to locate and develop, including cultural and physical landscapes
- To develop sustainable transport and innovative access proposals
- To shape a development which will be complementary to, and not in conflict with, the growth plans of Towcester

Strategic Priority 18 – Support high-performance engineering and motorsport industries in Northamptonshire and the role of Silverstone as the focal point for automotive and high technology excellence in the UK and worldwide



The skills attracted to and developed in the county and surrounding areas can be a catalyst for growth in other high performance sectors, and also emerging sectors associated with developing a 'low carbon' economy. This can help halt and in time reverse the decline in manufacturing in the county. Development in this area should contribute 'better' or higher value jobs, thus contributing to economic growth. An early initiative involves the development of a High Performance Engineering (motorsport) Strategy.

The new iCon facility at Daventry which is dedicated to promoting and fostering innovation in construction has a key role to play in building services and engineering-based innovation. This facility will open in 2010/11. The environmental implications of this work have the potential to establish Northamptonshire as a leader in low carbon technologies and we need to ensure we capitalise on this potential early on.

Waste management is a growing sector in Northamptonshire, particularly with the pressure to divert more waste away from landfill to more sustainable methods of treatment and management. A centre of excellence for waste management is based at Northampton University. This sector has considerable potential for further growth and innovation which needs to be harnessed.

Strategic Priority 19 – Ensure that Northamptonshire is an exemplar for construction-based innovation and delivery of low-carbon growth

Northamptonshire sits at the hub of England's logistics industry and as such the skills needed to assemble, sort and dispatch large volumes of goods are present in large quantities. However, with the ever increasing speed with which data can move around the country and the world, there will be a growing demand for large volumes to be assembled sorted and dispatched in an analogous way to the way which goods are handled. The increasing demand for internet TV, video on demand and high quality downloads of premium content will require new ways of 'packing and dispatching' the product to the end user. The opportunity exists for the county to develop the infrastructure and skills needed to meet this demand, building on its historic capabilities in the logistics environment. Excellent digital connectivity will be crucial to success.

“Development in this area should contribute ‘better’ or higher value jobs”



Regeneration and town centres

The future economic and wider health of Northamptonshire relies to a large degree on the success of its town centres. These need to once again become the focus of economic and other activity. It is essential that much of the new jobs growth which is required to keep pace with new housing is located in the town centres.

This will only be achieved through creating the right climate for investment. Central to this is identifying, promoting and bringing forward investment opportunities. Sometimes this will involve the public sector playing a lead role, particularly where economic viability or land ownership may be a challenge to regeneration. The County Council's Fit for Market programme is an example of one form of intervention. Improving connectivity is also important to attract private sector investment and encourage new employers to locate in town centres.

Key town centre regeneration projects are being identified through the Area Action Plans. The Northamptonshire Arc will provide further support to this by promoting infrastructure and investment needed to support town centres.

The public sector also has an important role to play in terms of asset utilisation i.e. making the best use of property. This has the potential to reduce costs, generate income and capital receipts which can be reinvested in service delivery and act as a catalyst for regeneration and growth.

Northampton a Growing Regional Economic Centre

The economic success of the Northamptonshire Arc depends on Northampton and its central area playing a pivotal role for the wider region and fulfilling its potential. Therefore, developing the role of Northampton as a new regional centre is a high priority. This includes utilising the scope and regeneration opportunities provided by the riverside.

Northampton will perform the dominant role as the commercial, cultural and retail heart of the Northamptonshire Arc and wider region. It is already the focus of much of the planned housing and job growth. Action is needed to address the barriers which are currently inhibiting it performing this role. Without this, public and private sector investment, including retail spend, will continue to be lost to the county either to nearby competing centres such as Leicester, Milton Keynes, Peterborough or further afield.

A transformational intervention which complements this role and the establishment of the NAT network is the proposal for the regeneration of Northampton Castle station. This will provide a new station facility, additional parking, better facilities for users and an iconic gateway for Northampton. Detailed design and planning work is already underway involving Network Rail and local partners. This project will release land for mixed uses incorporating residential and commercial development, and an improved public realm.



Two other transformational projects which complement the regeneration of the waterside and Castle Station areas are the expansion of the Grosvenor Centre, which will involve the demolition of the Greyfriars Bus Station and a potential new office development led by the County Council. A further project involves the transformation of the Market Square to enable it to become once again a thriving area and the focal point for the town.

Strategic Priority 20 – Support the economic growth of Northampton to enable it to become a powerful and growing regional centre

Strategic Priority 21 – Focus attention to regenerate Northampton's central area to enable it to become the commercial, cultural and retail heart of the Northamptonshire Arc and the focus for new employment and other economic activity



Stronger urban areas

Support for Northampton as a regional centre does not mean that the other towns should not see major investment. Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and Daventry in particular have important roles to play as centres for significant growth and regeneration. Both public and private sector investment will be important to their success.

The regeneration of Corby town centre is an excellent example of the role a proactive public sector can play. The Corby Cube (see Figure 16), which is currently under construction, is a key urban regeneration project for the town and an important community building. This has received an excellent BREEM rating highlighting its sustainable credentials. Plans for the regeneration and expansion of Daventry town centre are also advanced, as are those for Kettering and Wellingborough.

The focus on improving connectivity will help to ensure that the benefits of investment and growth are shared.

Other towns such as Rushden, Towcester and Brackley also have clear ambitions for regeneration which require support. The role of smaller towns and the rural areas is also important and access to services will be a crucial issue to address.

Strategic Priority 22 – Support the key growth centres of Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Towcester and Wellingborough and the important role of other towns, particularly Rushden, in relation to their regeneration plans and ambitions

“A readily available supply of employment sites and land is critical”

Employment Land

A readily available supply of employment sites and land is critical to continued economic growth. However, this needs to be in sustainable locations particularly in terms of its impact on the transport network. Bringing forward town centre sites, particularly for commercial and office-related businesses, retail and leisure uses, will be a priority. These should be complemented by a supply of land in other sustainable locations to meet the needs of existing and new businesses and meet job targets.

Any adverse impact of bringing forward employment land on the environment needs to be minimised. This can be done in part through targeting brownfield land opportunities and utilising low carbon technologies. A key mechanism for supporting activity is the County Council's Fit for Market programme which is designed to stimulate private sector investment to bring forward sites and premises.

These interventions are crucial to tackling some of the impacts of the current recession and also importantly helping to combat arguably the most significant risk to Northamptonshire that, regardless of targets, jobs will not keep pace with houses.

Strategic Priority 23 – Support activities to bring forward employment sites and ensure that the town centres in the Northamptonshire Arc are the focus for much of the new commercial and employment-related development

Making it happen

The emerging Northamptonshire Arc spatial concept has already provided the context for preparing the Northamptonshire Sub-Regional Investment Plan (SRIP) for 2010/11-2012/13. This has recently been approved by the East Midlands Development Agency (emda) and has helped to secure continued Single Programme funding for Northamptonshire in 2010/11. This funding will be vital to help manage the impact of the recession and support economic growth and support some of the activities highlighted in this report.

Looking ahead, the Northamptonshire Arc and the Transformational Agenda will help to shape and guide the formulation and content of important new documents and investment plans. These include the first statutory Local Economic Assessment and the Single Conversation between the Homes & Communities Agency and local authorities in Northamptonshire and the Core Strategies for North and West Northamptonshire. It will also provide the context for the preparation of a new style Connectivity Strategy. This will encompass the next Local Transport Plan. The intention is also to produce a series of prospectuses which focus on specific aspects of the Northamptonshire Arc. The first of these will be a Transforming Connectivity Prospectus. Others will include Environment & Biodiversity and the Economy.



Appendix A

The Northamptonshire Arc: 'The Big Idea'

Proposed Outcomes and Strategic Priorities

Outcome: Transformed connectivity

Strategic Priority 1 – Support the opportunities provided by the HS2 proposal to secure better inter-city connections

Strategic Priority 2 – Secure a minimum of two fast services (with journey times of less than 40 minutes) per hour from the Northamptonshire Arc to London on both the West Coast and Midland Main Lines

Strategic Priority 3 – Better rail connections and reduced journey times to Birmingham, Manchester and other major centres

Strategic Priority 4 – Optimise the potential benefits provided by the connections to Eurostar services

Strategic Priority 5 – Utilise the potential provided by new technology and other measures to secure better reliability on the existing strategic national road network which connect the Northamptonshire Arc with other areas

Strategic Priority 6 – Secure investment and improvements to the strategic road network to support economic growth in the Northamptonshire Arc

Strategic Priority 7 – Gain recognition for the A34/A43/A45 between the M4 and A14 as an 'infrastructure gap' in the strategic national network

Strategic Priority 8 – Deliver improved reliability and resilience on the Northamptonshire Arc road network by utilising a package of measures, including new technologies

Strategic Priority 9 – Improve the Northamptonshire Arc (urban and inter-urban) road network where this is needed to support economic growth and as part of comprehensive approach which also incorporates investment to support public transport, low carbon modes and 'smarter choices'

Strategic Priority 10 – Secure support for and implement a Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit urban and inter-urban network (NAT)

Strategic Priority 11 – Ensure that major growth locations provide connections to and support the Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit network

Strategic Priority 12 – Identify and deliver the first 'pilot' phase (subject to funding) of a Northamptonshire Arc Mass Transit network by 2013

Outcome: Leadership on climate change & biodiversity

Strategic Priority 13 – Support 'low-carbon growth' through reducing the impact of development on climate change

Strategic Priority 14 – Establish and support a new multi-functional strategic Biodiversity Corridor with linkages to the main towns

Outcome: A stronger and greener economy

Strategic Priority 15 – Secure, target and deliver investment in schools to raise attainment, improve performance, widen opportunity, support economic growth and strengthen their role at the centre of local communities

Strategic Priority 16 – Identify and implement measures to ensure that Northamptonshire becomes a leader in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) related activities and sectors

Strategic Priority 17- Make Northamptonshire a compelling business case for next generation digital connectivity

Strategic Priority 18 – Support high-performance engineering and motorsport industries in Northamptonshire and the role of Silverstone as the focal point for automotive and high technology excellence in the UK and worldwide

Strategic Priority 19 – Ensure that Northamptonshire is an exemplar for construction-based innovation and delivery of low-carbon growth

Strategic Priority 20 – Support the economic growth of Northampton to enable it to become a powerful and growing regional centre

Strategic Priority 21 – Focus attention to regenerate Northampton's central area to enable it to become the commercial, cultural and retail heart of the Northamptonshire Arc and the focus for new employment and other economic activity

Strategic Priority 22 – Support the key growth centres of Corby, Daventry, Kettering, Towcester and Wellingborough and the important role of other towns, particularly Rushden, in relation to their regeneration plans and ambitions

Strategic Priority 23 – Support activities to bring forward employment sites and ensure that the town centres in the Northamptonshire Arc are the focus for much of the new commercial and employment-related development



Appendix B

The Northamptonshire Arc: 'Delivering Change'

The Transformational Agenda

| Project/Activity | Category | Sponsor | Lead Arc Thematic Outcome | Relevant Strategic Priority | Key milestones and delivery timescale |
|--|----------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| High Speed Rail (HS2) | Nationally led | To be confirmed | Transformed Connectivity | 1, 2, 3 | Government White Paper in March 2010 |
| Midland Main Line Rail Electrification to Sheffield | Nationally led | To be confirmed | Transformed Connectivity | 1, 2, 3, 4 | To be confirmed |
| West Coast Main Line Path and Speed enhancements | Nationally led | To be confirmed | Transformed Connectivity | 1, 2, 3, 4 | To be confirmed |
| A14 capacity and demand measures | Nationally led | Highways Agency | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 6 | Initial works underway |
| M1 capacity and demand measures | Nationally led | Highways Agency | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 6 | To be confirmed |
| A34/A43/A45 designation as part of the National Strategic Road Network | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 6, 7 | To be confirmed |
| A43/A45 Key Junctions and Approaches Package including A5 improvements | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council with the Highways Agency | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 | Technical studies due to report mid 2010. A5 improvements and timing dependent on development at Towcester |
| Northampton Orbital & Radial Improvements | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 | Informed by first stage DaSTS report in mid 2010 |
| 'Northamptonshire Arc' Transit network | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 | Initial concept through business case, to detailed scheme design, approvals and implementation from 2010/11 |
| Northampton Castle Station redevelopment | Locally led | West Northamptonshire Development Corporation with Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 1, 2, 3, 10, 20, 21, 23 | GRIP4 stage report late 2010 |
| Northampton Central Bus Interchange | Locally led | To be confirmed | Transformed Connectivity | 10, 13, 20, 21 | Technical work underway |

| Project/Activity | Category | Sponsor | Lead Arc Thematic Outcome | Relevant Strategic Priority | Key milestones and delivery timescale |
|--|-------------|---|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Daventry to Northampton connectivity improvements, including A45 Flore-Weedon Bypass | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 8, 9, 10, 11, 20, 22 | Dependent on development at Daventry. Appeal decision expected in mid 2010. |
| Kettering to Wellingborough connectivity improvements, including Isham Bypass and Isham to Wellingborough Improvements | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 8, 9, 10, 11, 22 | Construction of Isham Bypass element 2010/11-11/12 |
| Corby to Kettering connectivity improvements, including Corby Link Road | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 8, 9, 10, 11, 22 | Construction of Corby link Road element 2010/11-11/12 |
| Daventry urban transit | Locally led | To be confirmed | Transformed Connectivity | 10, 11, 13 | Dependent on development at Daventry. To be confirmed |
| Travel centres programme | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 | To be confirmed |
| On-demand travel information | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 | To be confirmed |
| Green links | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council | Transformed Connectivity | 9, 14 | To be confirmed |
| Northamptonshire Arc Biodiversity Corridor | Locally led | To be confirmed | Leadership on climate change & biodiversity | 13, 14 | To be confirmed |
| Northampton Grosvenor Centre and Greyfriars redevelopment | Locally led | Legal & General / Northampton Borough Council | Stronger and greener the local economy | 20, 21, 23 | To be confirmed |



| Project/Activity | Category | Sponsor | Lead Arc Thematic Outcome | Relevant Strategic Priority | Key milestones and delivery timescale |
|--|-------------|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I-Con (Sustainable Construction), Daventry | Locally led | Northampton University | Stronger and greener the local economy | 13, 16, 17, 19, 22 | Construction 2009/10–2010/11 |
| Off site manufacturing park for construction modules | Locally led | To be confirmed | Stronger and greener the local economy | 13, 16, 17, 19 | To be confirmed |
| Silverstone Masterplan including High Performance Engineering & Motorsport centre of Excellence, Silverstone | Locally led | Silverstone Circuits | Stronger and greener the local economy | 16, 17, 18, 22 | To be confirmed |
| Next Generation Broadband & Utilities pilot | Locally led | To be confirmed | Stronger and greener the local economy | 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 | To be confirmed |
| Technologies Innovation centre for Logistics | Locally led | To be confirmed | Stronger and greener the local economy | 16, 17 | To be confirmed |
| Northamptonshire Fit for Market Programme | Locally led | Northamptonshire County Council with Northamptonshire Enterprise | Stronger and greener the local economy | 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23 | Programme for 2010/11 to be confirmed |

Comments and further information

A considerable amount of initial stakeholder engagement has already taken place over recent months on the Northamptonshire Arc. However, this is a draft report and comments are invited on the Northamptonshire Arc concept. This includes views on the strategic priorities and activities listed in Appendices 1 and 2.

Comments on the Northamptonshire Arc and this report should be sent to **bigidea@northamptonshire.gov.uk** by Friday 16th July 2010.

Further information

For further information and updates contact
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