Kettering Urban Extension

Employment and Retail Needs

June 2006
Introduction

This background paper is to investigate and present some conclusions as to the non-residential needs of the Kettering urban extension.

It is important in this context however that it is not just the B use class employment uses that will be relevant, but also other uses including retail. This paper will also therefore look at the potential retail requirements resulting from an urban extension development and the way in which these needs can be provided.

The paper will begin by investigating the policy context (solely regarding urban extensions) before going on to discuss the general requirements of an urban extension from a policy point of view.

Following this more general discussion, the employment needs of an urban extension will be ascertained, in what kinds of quantities and of what types.

Background

The Sustainable Communities Plan stated that what makes a sustainable community is:

- A flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth
- Strong leadership to respond positively to change
- Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and long-term stewardship of their community and an active voluntary and community sector
- A safe and healthy local environment with well designed public and green space
- Sufficient size, scale and density and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land).
- Good public transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres
- Buildings – both individually and collectively – that can meet different needs over time and that minimise the use of resources
- A well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes
- Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure
- A diverse, vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it
- A sense of place
- The right links with the wider regional, national and international community
Regional

As a general aim, RSS8 aims to make the East Midlands a region with a high quality of life and sustainable communities that thrives because of a vibrant economy, cultural and environmental diversity, that addresses social inequalities, manages its resources and contributes to a safer, more inclusive environment.

Explicit objectives are:

- To ensure that the location of development makes efficient use of existing physical infrastructure and helps to reduce the need to travel.
- To promote and ensure high standards of sustainable design and construction, optimising the use of previously developed land and buildings.
- To minimise waste and to increase the re-use and recycling of waste materials.
- To improve accessibility to jobs and services by increasing the use of public transport, cycling and walking and reducing traffic growth and congestion.

These objectives are broken down into more Core Objectives that are in the same vein.

Policy 2 sets out the locational priorities for development requiring a sequential approach to the selection of land for development which should be adopted within LDFs. The order of development is:

- Suitable previously developed sites and buildings within urban areas that are or will be well served by public transport
- Other suitable locations within urban areas nor identified as land to be protected for amenity purposes
- Suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas which are, or will be, well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land.
- Suitable sites in locations outside of (that is not adjoining) urban areas, which are or will be, well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land.

Policy 3 sets out sustainability criteria which are to be used in assessing the suitability of land for development (as in policy 2) and includes the availability and location of brownfield land, vacant or under-used buildings; accessibility by non-car modes, etc.

The RSS also promotes better design and the concentration of development in the urban areas.

Its spatial priorities for the southern sub-region (policy 13) are that LDFs and other plans (including economic development strategies) should ensure that
new development is concentrated in, or in planned extensions to, existing urban areas. Northampton’s role as Principal Urban Area (PUA) is to be strengthened; the regeneration of Corby is to be pursued; the role of the small towns should be maintained through the retention of basic services, environmental improvements and the safeguarding of their rural hinterlands from encroachment by larger centres; the quality of villages should not be degraded; and, in those parts of the sub-area influenced by major urban areas in adjoining regions provision for development should respect sustainable development principles.

Policy 22 identifies the regional priorities for employment land which include:

- There is an adequate supply of good quality land for office and industrial uses available for development in sustainable locations.
- Review employment allocations.
- Monitor gains and losses in the overall supply of good quality office and industrial sites and assess the floorspace capacity of allocated sites.

Policy 23 sets out regional priorities for town centres and retail development and includes:

- Bring forward retail and leisure development opportunities within town centres to meet identified need.
- Prevent the development of additional regional scale out-of-town retail and leisure floorspace.
- Monitor changes in retail floorspace on a regular basis.

The RSS also points out priorities regarding rural diversification and tourism. The coverage and quality of ICT provision is also a priority (policy 26).

Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy

The SRS sets out objectives (including achieving a major increase in the number of new houses; providing for a commensurate level of economic growth and skills development in the workforce; to locate development in the main urban areas; regeneration; requiring high standards of design, etc.)

The SRS also highlights meeting existing infrastructure needs and those created by new development (by planning to reduce the need to travel and by creating a shift to more sustainable modes).

One of the objectives is to create sustainable communities by ensuring that economic, environmental, social and cultural infrastructure needs are met in step with growth.

Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough are identified as growth towns which will grow in a complimentary way. Emphasis will be placed on regeneration of the town centre at Corby while at Kettering and Wellingborough, the emphasis will be on managing growth and job creation in a sustainable way that realises their potential.
MKSM Strategic Policy 3 states that Sustainable Communities will be achieved in the sub-region through the implementation of development in accordance with:

- Designing attractive cities, towns and public places.
- Promoting the highest standards of environmental performance including all aspects of water resource management.
- Ensuring good accessibility (including safe movement by foot and cycle).
- Reducing reliance on the car.
- Maximising on growth opportunities by regenerating deprived communities.
- Protecting and increasing environmental and cultural assets.
- Providing green infrastructure.
- Ensuring that the countryside in and around towns is sensitively designed to assimilate urban extensions into the landscape and accommodate links to and from the wider countryside.
- Improve skills levels, enterprise and innovation support.
- Ensuring a housing supply of the right type, size, tenure, etc.
- Providing social and environmental infrastructure in accordance with current deficits and additional demands.
- Managing and reducing demand where appropriate.
- Taking opportunities for different scales of renewable energy.
- Providing high quality employment land and premises which meets the needs of growing industries.
- Maximising the contribution of previously developed land.
- Promoting and facilitating community development
- Ensuring improved community safety.

MKSM Policy 4 states that all new sustainable urban extensions will require a masterplanning approach developed with appropriate consultation and appraisal. It further states that they should be planned so as to ensure the continued physical separation of the three towns and to prevent coalescence with smaller settlements within and adjoining the growth area.

North Northants. Joint Core Strategy – Preferred Options

The Preferred Options document is not a policy document per se, and as such does not contain policies relating directly to urban extensions. Nine objectives are listed which include:

- Building a more dynamic, self-reliant and wealth creating North Northamptonshire economy which is not overly dependent on in or out commuting to make it reach its potential, through providing the workplaces, jobs and skills to bring this about.
- Ensure that services and facilities are located in town centres and other areas of focus in North Northants. making these places more self-contained and real hearts for their communities.
- Enhance and manage resources. To bring about a step change in biodiversity management and a net gain in Green infrastructure; retaining and enhancing landscape character and distinctiveness.
- Secure provision of the services and facilities needed to sustain and enhance existing communities and support the development of North Northants. including establishing priorities for future public and private investment and collaboration,

Overall, the different constituent parts of the development plan contain very few policies directly related to urban extensions. The following basic provisos can be ascertained however:

- they should be located adjoining existing urban areas
- they should ideally utilise brownfield land where possible
- they should include the necessary infrastructure (physical, transport, social, community and green)
- they should provide opportunities for economic development and skills enhancement (in higher value added, knowledge driven growth sectors) through the provision of high quality employment land
- they should provide for the basic needs of their residents.

**Urban Extensions and Employment Opportunities**

Any assessment of the employment development to be accommodated in the urban extension is likely to be, in the end, heavily influenced by policy desires. For example, there may be a policy desire to accommodate the possibility of full employment within the urban extension, but equally there may be sites elsewhere that are more suitable for certain kinds of development or are preferable in environmental terms, etc. There is also a high probability of people commuting out of the extension to work elsewhere (if the level of employment provision was high, there would also be a high probability of people commuting in from elsewhere).

For these reasons, the approach taken here to assessing the level of employment land required will consist of:

1. Estimating the future levels of population within the urban extension
2. Estimating the numbers of people employed in the various sectors
3. Relating this to land provision under various out-commuting scenarios

For the purposes of this paper, it will be assumed that housing provision in the urban extension will be 4,500 up to 2021 (due to the latest estimates of windfall provision, extant permissions, etc).

**Future Population**

Assuming the housing provision will be completed in line with that envisaged
in the MKSM SRS, but at a higher intensity between 2007 and 2021, then the estimated population would be 10,015:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Population of Urban Extension at 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Force Participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: 1. Estimates based on population, working age proportions and participation rates as forecasted within the APU population forecasts for Kettering Borough undertaken for the JPU. 2. No vacancy rate applied.

In terms of future employment, following the sectoral employment forecasts for Kettering at 2021 used in the North Northamptonshire Employment Land Futures Study (the Preferred Scenario), sectoral employment could be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Employment in the Urban Extension 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining &amp; Quarrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels &amp; Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Comms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fin. &amp; Business Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Admin, Education &amp; Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sectoral totals do not sum as stated due to rounding.

Sectoral employment as forecasted under the preferred scenario has been used as this is the policy being pursued at the regional, sub-regional and North Northamptonshire level. Those sectors marked in blue are those that broadly constitute the planning B use classes.

On the basis of planning for full self-containment in the urban extension (which is actually highly unlikely), the following quantities of land take could be accommodated:
Table 3: Potential Land Take of B Use Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Land Take (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>5.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>18.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2450</td>
<td>28.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is unlikely that all the residents of the urban extension would work within it. Below are produced quantities of land required should different levels of out-commuting occur:

Table 4: Potential Land Take of B Use Classes; with Out-Commuting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Out-commuting level</th>
<th>Use Class</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>17.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>14.82</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>25.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics available from the Census 2001 show that of those economically active residents of the district, 40% work in other districts. Whilst this is a crude measure (movements within the district are not captured), this does highlight that the quantity of land associated with the 40% level of out-commuting in table 4 would be commensurate with work travel patterns at present.

For completeness of information, using the job/dwelling and job/hectare ratios expressed within the last Structure Plan, an urban extension of 4,500 dwellings would require 90 hectares of employment land to be allocated.

The final quantity of land to be allocated however will depend on three main policy considerations:

1. To what degree should a realistic assessment of out-commuting levels be used to derive relevant quantities of employment land?
2. Are all uses suitable to the same degree to be located within the urban extension?
3. To what degree should employment provision be pushed towards the urban extension given employment requirements in other areas of the Borough (and given that there will be an overall requirement for the whole of the district).

It should also be borne in mind that whilst accommodating for the potential future population of the urban extension, this development will not operate in isolation. Therefore whilst lower quantities of land could be provided in anticipation of likely levels of out-commuting, commercial development within the urban extension could be provided to accommodate for more than its own needs, i.e. for the rest of the Borough (although this would be likely to lead to large levels of in-commuting to the extension).
Urban Extensions and Retail Opportunities

It can be seen from the above the B use classes may account for around 46% of the overall employment opportunities for those residents of the urban extension. Other sectors will also potentially be sources of large employment opportunities, this could be particularly true of the public and financial and business services sectors. Within this of course, there will also be those who work within the retail sector.

The general policy steer regarding urban extensions/sustainable communities would require them to meet their own needs and provide the necessary social and community infrastructure. This would point therefore, to the urban extension requiring at least some convenience retailing.

Using the figures within the Roger Tym and Partners Town Centres Roles and Relationships study for per capita expenditure on convenience spending (excluding special forms of trading) at 2021, then total available expenditure for convenience goods would be approximately £16.9 million within the urban extension. For comparison spending, the level of available expenditure would be approximately £44.7 million.

Assuming that existing claims on capacity are proportional to the overall existing claims as stated in the RTP study (over the whole period) and that leakage to other areas for convenience and comparison goods is as the North Northants. preferred option, then:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Retail Capacity of Urban Extension (£ million/sq. metres)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Convenience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Expenditure Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minus Existing Claims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minus Leakage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (sq. metres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of population growth therefore would appear to be able to support essentially localised convenience retail and a not insignificant amount of comparison retail space. Again, however, (as with the employment land) there is the potential to accommodate more than the ‘own’ requirements of the urban extension within it.

For example, policy would essentially state (as would the preferred option of retail capacity allocation) that the comparison retail should be directed towards Kettering town centre. The above do show that there could be capacity to accommodate some comparison retail floorspace. There would be a need however to determine the kind of floorspace that should be provided. The quantity above could be 1 or 2 single, large units or a number of smaller, ‘niche’ retail units. Given the need to strengthen Kettering town centre, the latter of these two options would appear preferable.

On the convenience side, the RTP report found a need for 6,752 sq. metres of floorspace for Kettering and 683 sq. metres for Desborough/Rothwell.
(under the status quo scenario). Under a scenario of distributing convenience space with growth, then Desborough/Rothwell could have 2,419 sq. metres; Rushton/Broughton could have 1,726 sq. metres and Kettering central could have 3,439 sq. metres (these figures are proportionate to the level of population at 2031).

Overall, there would appear to be capacity within the Borough to accommodate the level of convenience retail 'expected' within the urban extension (albeit these figures are to 2031). Equally however, more floorspace could be accommodated within the urban extension to serve a greater area than its ‘natural’ catchment – this figure could for example be the Kettering central floorspace under the ‘match the distribution of growth’ scenario.

In terms of land take, typical convenience net to gross ratios are 60%, whilst the ratio for ‘high street’ comparison stores is 70%. Using these ratios, the respective land take could be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Retail Capacity of Urban Extension (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (sq. metres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There appears to be a dearth of information in terms of what levels of floorspace relate to what kind of centre, however; the University of West of England’s Sustainable Settlements (1995) research indicates that a local centre will serve around 5 – 10,000 people with a district centre serving around 25,000 – 40,000.

**Conclusion**

It can be seen from the above discussion that prevailing policy would require that any urban extension be as self-contained as possible, but that there are other considerations. These considerations relate to the truth that the urban extension will not operate in isolation.

There is the further complication that any commercial development within the urban extension could be designed to serve a wider catchment area than the extension itself.

Given the quantities of floorspace and land required noted above, it can be seen that for retail, the extension could support what could amount to a local/neighbourhood centre with associated comparison floorspace. The level and type of comparison floorspace provided should however be limited in order not to needlessly draw trade away from Kettering town centre.

In terms of employment, the overall requirement for the Borough calculated so far is for approximately 70 ha. The area of search for the urban extension so far undertaken (i.e. the area to the east of Kettering) is stated by Bee Bee as being some 526 ha in area. A net site density of 30 dwellings per hectare (for the 4,500 dwellings envisaged) would result in 150 ha. This would not include
any schools, community infrastructure, strategic landscaping, distributor roads, etc. For illustration, if the land requirements of these other uses is taken to be another 50 ha, then a total of around 200 ha would be required for the housing.

This illustrates that the area east of Kettering so far having been identified will easily accommodate the envisaged level of housing, employment development and the retail requirements.

The overall aims of planning for a sustainable urban extension would appear to require that the opportunity is afforded for as much self-containment as possible. At the same time however, there is a need to integrate the development with the existing urban fabric and encourage the supporting of existing services and facilities.

To this end, and given the floorspace possibilities outlined above for retail and employment, the overall resultant picture may be of a development accommodating a neighbourhood centre (retail wise) as mentioned above with surrounding office space.

The Kettering Employment Study (KES) identified sites surrounding east of Kettering (and east of Kettering itself) as good sites, with sites BL1, 2 and 3 all scoring highly in terms of commercial and sustainable viability. B8 was ascertained to have strong demand on sites BL1 and BL2 (with perhaps some office and B2 on site BL1) and some B2 on site BL2. Site BL3 was ascertained to be mainly of interest for B8 development.

Even if the total amount of office land being needed for its ‘own needs’ was provided for within the extension, some 14 ha (at present) of B1 office land would be needed to 2021 elsewhere within the Borough.

In terms of wider leisure activities (restaurants, cinemas, etc.) The level of housing provision envisaged will not be large enough to accommodate any significant leisure provision and this is probably best thought of as generally being undertaken within the town centre, the vitality of which the urban extension would support. Any interest that has been shown in Kettering by leisure operators has been for locations in the town centre.

It would appear therefore that perhaps the best direction for the urban extension would be the limited neighbourhood centre and the provision of office space capable of meeting its ‘own needs’. B2 provision and B8 provision are unlikely to be acceptable within the development due to its residential nature. However, B8 and some B2 development would appear to be well accommodated on sites adjacent to the A14, to the south of the east of Kettering area (including its southern end). This may point to the basics of the format of the urban extension development.