North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update

SYNOPSIS
This report presents to Members the key findings of the North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update, and requests that the updated study be used to inform the development of the Local Development Framework and as a basis for Development Control decisions.

1. Purpose
1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise of the production of the North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update which has been prepared by external consultants on behalf of the Joint Planning Unit. The study will be used to support the production of the Local Development Framework and inform the determination of planning applications.

2. Relevant Background Details
2.1 An integral part of the Local Development Framework process is the production of studies to provide essential background evidence to inform the policies in the Local Development Framework documents. A retail study was published in August 2005 and again in July 2006 that assessed the quantum of additional floorspace that is supportive within North Northamptonshire. External retail consultants, Roger Tym & Partners, have been commissioned by the Joint Planning Unit on behalf of partners to update the retail study to take into account the economic downturn and effect of major retail developments.

2.2 A copy of the report and associated annex documents has been placed in the Members library for reference. The document is also available to view on the Joint Planning Units website at http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/publications/docdetail.asp?docid=1181

3. Key Findings

General
3.1 The Retail Capacity Update shows that the centres in North Northamptonshire continue to perform reasonably in light of the economic downturn, with each of the Growth Towns showing generally good signs of vitality and viability. In particular the positive influence of Willow Place is observed. However there is scope for improvement and all three Growth Towns will need to make provision for additional non food retail floorspace to maintain and improve current market shares and meet the needs of growing populations.

Non Food Retailing
3.2 Positively the study reveals that spending on non food shopping is increasingly being retained in North Northamptonshire. The retention rate has increased from 50% in 2005 to 61.5% in 2010.

3.3 The table below shows how the total ‘pot’ of spending is being distributed between the main shopping destinations and how this has changed since 2005.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Centre</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby Town Centre</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corby Retail Parks</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering Town Centre</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering Retail Parks</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough Town Centre</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough Retail Parks</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rushden Town Centre</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 The study confirms that the completion of Willow Place has secured a clear increase in the number of people that use Corby town centre for non food retailing.

3.5 The consultants demonstrate that the biggest competition for non food retailing outside of North Northamptonshire is from Northampton and Milton Keynes although their popularity has declined over the last five years.

3.6 It is estimated that spending levels on non food shopping in the future will not be as high as estimated in 2005 study, due to revised population projections. The floorspace requirements for non food shopping in North Northamptonshire have been reduced as a result falling from a minimum of 123,109m² to 76,416m². However the study concludes that there is still sufficient capacity for Evolution Corby scheme to come forward by 2021¹.

Food Retailing

3.7 The study explains that spending on food shopping is a localised activity. This is reflected in the high proportion of spending that is retained in North Northamptonshire. The updated study reveals that 87.4% of food retailing is retained in North Northamptonshire which has increased by 5% since 2005.

3.8 The consultants note that all the main food stores within North Northamptonshire are overtrading. Within Corby the most popular food shopping destination is the Asda store at Phoenix Parkway which is over trading by 53%.

3.9 Similar to non food shopping, the study estimates that spending levels on food shopping in the future will not be as high as estimated in the previous study, due to revised population projections. As a result the floorspace requirements for food shopping in North Northamptonshire have decreased by about 15% from 21,235 m² to 18,561m². As part of this there is a short term requirement of approximately 8,650m² net. Since completion of the study, the superstore at St. James Industrial Estate has been granted planning permission with an estimated 4,986m² net sales area for food shopping².

Distribution of Non Food Retailing

3.10 The Retail Study recommends that the greatest proportion of non food retailing is distributed to Kettering, whilst still promoting substantial growth in Corby and Wellingborough. The consultants explain the recommendation is based on the spatial strategy included in the adopted Core Spatial Strategy which anticipates that all the

¹ Table 7.2 of the Retail Study estimates that Evolution Corby will provide 14,211m² comparison goods floorspace
² Estimate based on the Development Control committee report dated 9th February 2011.
Growth Towns are subject to considerable growth in populations. Under this scenario, Kettering town centre has a requirement for between 30,600 m² and 34,400 m² non food shopping floorspace over the study period to 2031, and Corby and Wellingborough each have a requirement of between 22,900 m² and 25,800 m² non food shopping floorspace.

3.11 Significantly the study advises that a reappraisal of the floorspace targets for each Growth Town will be required if it becomes apparent that a different strategy for growth in North Northamptonshire is to be followed.

3.12 Following endorsement of the Statement of Intent on Housing Targets for North Northamptonshire at the Joint Planning Committee on 7th December 2010 it seems inevitable that a different strategy for growth in North Northamptonshire will be tested through the review of the Core Strategy. Therefore a reappraisal of the retail study is expected as part of the review of the Core Strategy. Officers will work closely with the Joint Planning Unit to continue to make the case for higher floorspace requirements in Corby to maintain the regeneration and reflect the ambitions for growth. Corby Borough Council will not accept floorspace requirements that do not reflect the level of growth that is anticipated for the Borough.

3.13 Corby town centre is healthy and performing well although there are also signs of vulnerability. Corby remains the smallest town centre in terms of number of units within North Northamptonshire and there are a number of key attractors missing, including cinema, higher order fashion retailers and anchor department store. Not taking positive steps and building on the momentum of development in Corby town centre will undermine the significant retail and leisure centre. There is considerable scope and clear opportunities to deliver managed growth in the retail and leisure sectors in Corby that will complement the growth anticipated for the Borough and reinforce its position as a leading retail and leisure centre. By 2031 the population of Corby is expected to be largest in North Northamptonshire. The retail offer and position in the retail hierarchy should reflect this.

4. Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities
The Local Development Framework shows how we will deliver the vision for Corby Borough, strategically and spatially. The Retail Study is essential baseline work for that purpose.

Financial
None directly related to this report.

Legal
The Retail Study has been updated to contribute towards a robust evidence base for the Local Development Framework that must undergo public examination in the future.

Performance Information, Best Value, Human Rights, Equalities, Community Safety and Sustainability
None directly related to this report

5. Conclusion

5.1 The updated Retail Study provides a comprehensive and up to date evidence base to inform the North Northamptonshire Local Development Framework and future planning application decisions.

5.2 It is noted that the consultants recommended the reappraisal of floorspace requirements for each Growth Town if it becomes apparent that a different strategy for growth in North Northamptonshire is to be followed.
6. Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that

- Members note the North Northamptonshire Retail Capacity Update that will be used to inform the development of the Local Development Framework and as a basis for Development Control decisions.

- The reappraisal of floorspace requirements for each Growth Town is promoted if a different strategy for growth in North Northamptonshire is to be followed through the review of the Core Strategy.

Background Papers

North Northamptonshire Town Centres – Roles and Relationship Study, August 2005
North Northamptonshire Town Centres – Roles and Relationship Study, July 2006
Development Control Committee report, 9th February 2011

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