

LOCAL CENTRES

NS/9 – Local centres

Defines the facilities to be provided in the five local centres serving neighbourhoods within the settlement and that will be developed along the central busway through the settlement. Each centre will provide a basic suite of convenience shopping, amenity and primary school facilities, with one co-located with the secondary school for Northstowe. Timing of the availability of these facilities with occupation of housing in each neighbourhood is addressed in other policy.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	~	~	~	
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	(-)	(-)	(-)	Additional facilities will make demands of energy and other resources in absolute terms but are essential to serve the local community if there will be new housing anyway.
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	(-)	(-)	(-)	As above.
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	~	~	~	
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	~	~	~	
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	~	~	~	
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	~	~	~	
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	~	~	~	Relevant issues subsumed in comments below.

3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	+	+(+)	++	Aim is to ensure the settlement is sub-divided into local neighbourhoods with a basic set of supporting amenities on hand and within walking distance, supplementing the broader range of amenity to be provided in the town centre. It would be desirable to require developers to provide at least some basic local amenity (eg. a convenience store) at the time the first homes are available for occupation in a particular neighbourhood so that local residents are encouraged to use local facilities from the outset, supporting sustainable transport initiatives.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	+	+	+	Main impact is in ensuring every home is within 400m of a set of basic amenities. We assume detailed design will aim to ensure housing for the less able will be located as close as convenient to the neighbourhood / local centre.
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	(-)	(-)	(-)	As for 1.2 and 1.3.
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	+	+	+	Encourages access to basic services on foot, and aligning centres along the bus route encourages non-car access to other parts of the settlement for those services and amenities that cannot be provided 'on the doorstep'.
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	(+)	(+)	(+)	In principal the co-location of facilities can contribute to community focus, especially if the primary school can be used for small-scale community activities in the evenings to ensure the local centre does not have an abandoned feeling to it once the daytime amenities are closed.
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	?	?	?	It is assumed some open space will be part of the design for the local centre.

6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	+	+(+)	++	Very clearly the primary objective of this policy, though the range of facilities will grow slowly.
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	+	+	+	Supports less mobile, disabled and those without a car in providing basic facilities close at hand.
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	?	?	?	Again, use of primary school for community facilities in the evening would be advantageous.
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	+	+	+	Explicit mention is made of need to provide limited employment of appropriate types for some local residents (ie. these assumed to be in addition to jobs in retailing in the local shops).
7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	+	+	+	Supportive.
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	+	+	+	Intrinsically supportive because it aims to create a hierarchy within the settlement so that it is not totally dependent on what can be provided in the town centre, and this appears intrinsically beneficial in terms of its overall vitality.
Summary of assessment: A strongly sustainable policy which extends the concept of the settlement and retail hierarchies outlined in the Core Strategy DPD into the structure of Northstowe so that amenity is distributed across neighbourhoods to improve the ease of access to retailing, primary education and other key facilities, and which will benefit both able-bodied and disabled residents alike. This approach, coupled with the alignment of these centres along the central, spinal bus route will support sustainable transport initiatives (see also policy NS/14).				
Summary of mitigation proposals: Ideally the AAP should require at least one amenity – preferably a local convenience store – to be available at the time the first properties are occupied in each neighbourhood. This will encourage residents to use local facilities from the outset, using the bus service to the town centre as a second choice for those services and amenities that it is not economical to provide at local centre level.				

Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: There are potential synergies between locating a basic set of amenities conveniently close to residents, and policies on healthy lifestyles and sustainable transport choices.