

- 2.4.37** The Sub-area's important environmental and cultural assets need to be protected and enhanced and new development will need to be sensitively located and designed to achieve this. For example new development should respect the character of distinctive areas of countryside such as Rockingham Forest. Areas like the Nene Valley can also provide opportunities for sport and informal recreation and contribute to the network of green infrastructure that will be necessary to secure sustainable communities.
- 2.4.38** Further guidance on growth in the Southern Sub-area is contained in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy and is available at www.goem.gov.uk. Part B of this Sub-Regional Strategy is included below in Section 4.1.

Policy 11

Development in the Southern Sub-area

Development should be concentrated in, or in planned extensions to, existing urban areas in accordance with the policies and proposals in Section 4.1 below and the following spatial priorities:

- *Northampton's role and function as one of the Region's five Principal Urban Areas should be strengthened by new public transport infrastructure and facilities;*
- *The regeneration of Corby should be supported by a level of housing development that will significantly reduce the need for in-commuting. New transport infrastructure and improved connections to the national rail passenger network will also support regeneration. Development should be located and designed to respect the character of the surrounding countryside, taking particular account of the distinctive qualities of the landscape, woodland, and settlement pattern of Rockingham Forest;*
- *The roles of Kettering and Wellingborough as Growth Towns and Daventry as a Sub-Regional Centre should also be significantly strengthened;*
- *the roles of the small towns in the Sub-area should be maintained through the retention of basic services and facilities, environmental improvements and the safeguarding of their rural hinterlands from encroachment by larger centres;*
- *the quality of villages should not be degraded by inappropriate growth;*
- *the natural and cultural heritage of the Sub-area should be protected and enhanced, in particular Special Area of Conservation covering the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits; and*
- *in those parts of the Sub-area influenced by major urban areas in adjoining regions provision for development should respect sustainable development principles.*

Three Cities Sub-area Priorities

- 2.4.39** The Three Cities Sub-area contains the three largest cities of the Region – the Principal Urban Areas of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. These are major commercial, industrial, administrative and cultural centres. They contain many of the Region's key companies, its largest shopping destinations, the main centres of higher education and healthcare, and other public services.
- 2.4.40** There are a number of large and medium sized settlements in the Sub-area. Some, like the Sub-Regional Centres are relatively free standing. Others such as Eastwood/Kimberley and Long Eaton are strongly related to Nottingham and/or Derby. The development needs and opportunities of these settlements should be considered in the light of their relationship to

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the Principal Urban Areas. Birmingham and Coventry influence the south west of the Sub-area and there are close local functional relationships between Ashby, Swadlincote and Burton, and between Hinckley and Nuneaton.

- 2.4.41** The Nottingham-Derby Green Belt, extending to over 60,000 hectares, is the main area of Green Belt lying entirely within the Region. This is drawn tightly around the urban area of Nottingham and has a vital role in preventing the coalescence of the Nottingham and Derby conurbations and the towns in the Erewash Valley. The Sub-area also includes the area around Leicester where a long established green wedge policy has successfully controlled urban sprawl around the city.
- 2.4.42** A strategic review of the Green Belt was undertaken in relation to development requirements up to 2026 as part of the evidence base for the Three Cities Sub-regional Strategy in Section 4.2 below.
- 2.4.43** Derby, Leicester and Nottingham all have relatively high concentrations of economic, social and physical deprivation within their inner areas and in some outer housing estates. Addressing this deprivation is a key regeneration priority for the Region which is being pursued in collaboration with *emda* and urban regeneration companies in the three cities. Such regeneration activity must be broadly based and contribute to social, economic and environmental objectives. It should also improve the accessibility of new opportunities to those most in need and help to reduce out-migration, particularly from Leicester and Nottingham.
- 2.4.44** The integration of transport and land-use development is particularly important within the major built-up areas in the Sub-area. Areas of new development should be identified in sustainable locations, promoting where possible the use of previously developed land, and contributing to regeneration initiatives. Derby, Leicester and Nottingham also have the potential to support sustainable transport facilities within the built up area, as well as inter-city linkages to reduce commuter journeys by car.
- 2.4.45** As well as bringing about the physical regeneration of the three cities, it is important that measures are focused on the needs of communities, particularly at improving educational and training achievement levels. This will enable local people in more deprived areas to be better able to share the benefits of economic growth.
- 2.4.46** The Sub-area contains the Region's only international airport, East Midlands Airport (EMA), which is situated near Castle Donington. EMA is a key national and regional asset, and is important both as a passenger and freight hub facility. In the past there has been pressure for development in the vicinity of the Airport. However, urbanisation of the area around EMA would not lead to a sustainable pattern of development, and would in the long term undermine its operational viability. Instead related development should be focussed where possible in surrounding urban areas, in particular the three Principal Urban Areas and the Sub-Regional Centre of Loughborough.
- 2.4.47** The Sub-area contains many important environmental assets, including most of the National Forest, Charnwood Forest, the rivers Soar and Wreake and the Trent Valley, some of which have been degraded by past development. There are significant opportunities to enhance such assets as part of regeneration and 'green infrastructure' initiatives. The Sub-area also includes the River Mease Special Area of Conservation and most of the internationally designated Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site – the only such designation in the East Midlands. While this brings a range of economic, environmental and social opportunities to the Sub-area, the World Heritage Site's outstanding universal value and unique cultural assets should be afforded appropriate levels of protection.

- 2.4.48** The Three Cities Sub-Regional Strategy in Section 4.2 below seeks to build upon the existing inter-relationships between Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, and to develop further complementary roles and services that will promote a more sustainable pattern of development and improve collective economic performance.

Policy 12

Development in the Three Cities Sub-area

Development should support the continued growth and regeneration of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, and maintain and strengthen the economic, commercial and cultural roles of all three cities in accordance with the policies and proposals in Section 4.2 below. This will be achieved by ensuring that the agreed Growth Point Programme of Delivery for the 3 Cities and 3 Counties is achieved both in overall numbers of dwellings and in the agreed phasing of development and that provision is made for:

- *a mix of housing types;*
- *a balance in the provision of jobs and homes within and adjoining urban areas to reduce the need to travel;*
- *employment land to meet the needs of indigenous manufacturing and distribution uses and to encourage new investment;*
- *regeneration of deprived inner urban areas and outer estates;*
- *enhancement of transport links and public transport accessibility both within and between the cities, to reduce car use, especially commuting;*
- *retailing, office, residential, entertainment and service uses within central areas, to provide for a mix of uses to support the vitality and viability of the city centres; and*
- *the protection, development and enhancement of green infrastructure to address past environmental degradation and contribute to the development of sustainable communities.*

Outside Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, employment and housing development should be located within and adjoining settlements. Such development should be in scale with the size of those settlements, in locations that respect environmental constraints, in particular the River Mease Special Area of Conservation, and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, and the surrounding countryside, and where there are good public transport linkages.

Development associated with East Midlands Airport should be focussed where possible in surrounding urban areas, in particular the Principal Urban Areas of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and the Sub-Regional Centre of Loughborough.